

GENDERED RURAL TRANSFORMATION AND PEASANT-WORKERS:
THE CASE OF THE WOMEN OF THE *GREENHOUSE*, WESTERN
ANATOLIA, TURKEY

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

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IN PARTIAL FULLFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

MARCH 2020

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ABSTRACT

GENDERED RURAL TRANSFORMATION AND PEASANT-WORKERS: THE CASE OF *GREENHOUSE* WOMEN, WESTERN ANATOLIA, TURKEY

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March 2020, 442 pages

The neoliberal re-structuring of global agri-food relations in rural Turkey has had devastating effects on small-producer households, who face the peasantry's loss of stature, decoupling from production, and migration. This also leads to a deepening of the category of peasant-workers and proletarianization. In line with this, rural women withdraw from production, while only a limited number replace their previous status as unpaid family laborer with paid labor.

This study focuses on the laboring experiences and practices of peasant-worker women employed as waged labor in an agribusiness called the *Greenhouse* in the Bakırçay Basin (Western Anatolia, Turkey) from a feminist perspective. It aims to explore the patterns of the emerging gender labor regime on the basis of these women's own perspectives. The regime covers women's paid and unpaid labor at the *Greenhouse*, at home and in the fields. The niches the women create to transform and change their lives with reference to empowerment are also taken into account.

In sum, this study argues that both the category of peasant-worker and the process of proletarianization is gendered.

Keywords: peasant-worker, proletarianization, gender labor regime, rural transformation



ÖZ

KIRSAL DÖNÜŞÜM VE KÖYLÜ-İŞÇİLERE TOPLUMSAL CİNSİYET PERSPEKTİFİ İLE BAKMAK: SERA İŞÇİSİ KADINLAR ÖRNEĞİ, BATI ANADOLU BÖLGESİ, TÜRKİYE

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Mart 2020, 442 sayfa

Kırsal Türkiye’de küresel tarım-gıda ilişkilerinin neoliberal yeniden yapılanması, küçük üreticiler üzerinde yıkıcı etkilere yol açtı. Küçük üretici kitleleri köylülüğün itibar kaybı, üretimden kopma ve göç ile yüz yüze kalırken, bu aynı zamanda köylü-işçi kategorisi ve proleterleşme sürecinin derinleşmesine neden oldu. Kırsal bölgedeki kadınlar aynı doğrultuda üretimden çekilirken, çok sınırlı bir kısmı önceki ücretsiz aile işçisi konumunu ücretli işçi konumu ile değiştirebildi.

Bu bağlamda, tez çalışması *Sera* olarak bilinen bir tarım şirketinde ücretli işçi olarak istihdam edilen köylü-işçi kadınların çalışma deneyimi ve pratiklerine feminist bir bakış açısı ile odaklanıyor. Bu çalışma, ortaya çıkan toplumsal cinsiyet emek rejimi içerisindeki örüntüleri kadınların perspektiflerini merkeze alarak anlamaya çalışmaktadır. Söz konusu rejim kadınların serada, evde ve tarlada gerçekleşen ücretli ve ücretsiz emek biçimlerini kapsamaktadır.

Güçlenmeye referansla, kadınların hayatlarını dönüştürmek ve değiştirmek için yarattıkları nişler de dikkate alınmıştır. Özetle, tez çalışması köylü-işçi kategorisinin ve proleterleşme sürecinin toplumsal cinsiyetlendirilmiş olduğunu iddia etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: köylü-işçi, proleterleşme, toplumsal cinsiyet emek rejimi, kırsal dönüşüm



DEDICATION

To the memory of my father, who, in August 1970, joined tobacco producers in the village of Güneyköy, Eşme, to spearhead the establishment of tobacco unions, organizing a rally where he gave a rousing and motivating speech to the producers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Finishing this Ph.D. has been a long journey, during which I lost loved ones, but also gave birth, and a new person joined my life, bringing sleepless nights as well as pure joy and happiness. There is not room on these pages to thank everyone who supported and encouraged me, but I would like to take this opportunity to mention a few of them.

In acknowledging all those who have contributed to this thesis, I would first like to mention my advisor Prof. Dr. Ayşe Gündüz Hoşgör for her support and constructive criticism every step of the way, as well as my co-advisor, Prof. Dr. Helga Rittersberger Tılıç, who regularly made me reconsider my premises and reshape and reevaluate my approach.

I am also grateful to Prof. Dr. Suavi Aydın, who has been more than just a jury member for this research. Having the chance to work with him on the project *Towards a Deeper Understanding of Rural Europe* (2009-2010) drew my attention to rural Anatolia and the striking change it has undergone. I would additionally like to express my gratitude to the members of my examining committee, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa Şen, Assist. Prof. Dr. F. Ayşın Koçak Turhanoglu and Assist. Prof. Dr. Kurtuluş Cengiz for their valuable comments and constructive criticism.

During my doctoral studies, I also found the chance to work with Assoc. Prof. Emeritus Klaus Schulte of Roskilde University, Prof. Laura Enriquez of the University of California Berkeley and Prof. Kira Kosnick of Goethe University, each of whom contributed to this study and extended my intellectual perspective. Having the opportunity to participate in the seminars at METU's Department of Sociology organized by Prof. Dr. Mehmet Ecevit on the dynamics of the

transformation in rural Turkey gave me an essential insight into the issues of this study.

Finishing this study would not have been possible without the love and solidarity of my friends. They have all been invaluable to me and I would particularly like to thank Sha nsal, Yasemin Akis Kalaylıođlu, Atakan Bke, Smeyye Hořđr Bke, Nadire Atıcı, iđdem Manap Kırmızıgl, Latife Akyz, Ruřen Iřık, Duygu Nesli Yiđiter, Neslihan Demirkol, Bilge Pınar elik and Hazal Kızıltuđ. Their friendship gave me the strength not only to complete the writing of this thesis, but also to overcome the difficulties we collectively face in our lives regarding academia and politics.

I would like to express my special thanks to Kate Ferguson for her attention and patience during the proofreading process. I would also like to thank the women of AMARGI Feminist Magazine, from whom I learned a beautiful perspective on feminist practice and theory, solidarity and collective work. Nazire Toymuradova took such wonderful care of my son, allowing me to leave the house and concentrate on and write my thesis with complete peace of mind. My partner, mother and sister formed a powerful support team. My sister found time in-between her own difficult training to help take care of the baby, while my mother made monthly visits to Istanbul to do the same. Without such an organization of care and domestic work, it would not have been possible for me to work on this thesis in a systematic way.

And, thank you to Stefo, for being my life partner, comrade and love. I could only do this because you made me believe that I could. Whenever I fell, you took my hand; whenever I lost motivation you gave me hope.

Finally, thank you to the women of the *Greenhouse* who accepted me into their lives, sharing with me their experiences and thoughts, their pains and happiness,

their secrets, their hopes and their dreams. You helped this thesis to become flesh and bones. I am grateful to each and every one of you.



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ARIP	Agricultural Reform Implementation Project
ÇAYKUR	The General Directorate of Tea Enterprises
DIS	Direct Income Support
EBAŞ	Meat and Fish Products Inc.
EBK	The Meat and Fish Board
EPDK	Energy Market Regulatory Authority
İGSAŞ	Istanbul Fertilizer Industry Inc.
İŞ-KUR	Turkish Employment Agency
KOSGEB	Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization of Turkey
NTAE	Non-Traditional Agricultural Export
SAP	Structural Adjustment Policies
SEK	The Milk Industry Board of Turkey
TARİŞ	Raisins, Cotton and Oil Seeds, Fig and Olive/Olive Oil Agricultural Sales Cooperatives Unions
TEKEL	The General Directorate of Tobacco, Tobacco Products, Salt and Alcohol Enterprises
TİGEM	The General Directorate of Agricultural Enterprises
TNC	Transnational Company
TŞFAŞ	Sugar Factories Turkey Inc.
TSKB	Agricultural Sales Cooperatives Union
TÜGSAŞ	Turkish Fertilizer Industry Inc.
TZDK	The Board of Agricultural Equipment of Turkey
YEMSAN	Fodder Industry InC

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose of the Study and General Description of the Greenhouse

When you take the highway north towards Çanakkale from Izmir, you come upon the turnoff for Bergama and Kınık. As that turnoff fades into the distance, you reach Dikili. The towns of the fertile Bakırçay Basin are visible just beyond the turnoff. As you travel along the highway between these two cities, you pass through typical Aegean countryside — fields, olive groves, summerhouses and hotels. But all of a sudden, the landscape changes, and stretched out before you, like a bright white sea, are row upon row of greenhouses. If you are familiar with the area, the sheer number of them may arouse in you a sense of awe, because you know that until recently, they did not exist in such numbers. The greenhouse sea is as calm as a ghost town; from the outside you see no sign of life. The plastic walls conceal the number of people who work there, and under what conditions. But if you happen to pass by as the workers clock off, you will see hundreds of women heading back to their homes in the surrounding villages or in the poor neighborhoods of nearby towns. The dominant category in rural Turkey is still formed of small producers, and women are predominantly unpaid family laborers in family businesses, which is why these women, who have made the move to working shifts in these greenhouses, are of sociological interest. What can women greenhouse workers tell us about the process of rural transformation from a gender perspective? I argue that this phenomenon provides a local case through which the larger narratives of global capitalism and patriarchy, which have undergone the process of neoliberal restructuring, can be seen in flesh and bones.

The neoliberal restructuring of rural Turkey has brought economic and social decline to small producers and strengthened the blurred category of peasant-worker¹ in Western Anatolia. This process overlaps with the emergence of agribusinesses — in the form of export-oriented and large-scale greenhouses — in the Bakırçay Basin², where the cheap labor force is predominantly composed of rural women. This dissertation explores the following question: In the age of globally restructured agri-food relations, what are the patterns of the emerging *gender labor regime*³ for rural women employed as waged labor in agribusiness

¹ Among other terms that will be discussed in detail in chapter 2, I prefer to use the concept of peasant-worker to describe the ambiguous status of the small producer masses, while defining the process they have been through as proletarianization. The category of peasant does not refer to a historical, homogenous and/or essentialist category free of the dynamics of capitalist system. On the contrary, it is approached within the neoliberal-capitalist system that affects the classes within the peasantry in different ways. In this sense, for the purposes of the study, those described as peasants (and those who used to be so described) are petty commodity producers. In addition, the process of proletarianization does not imply an irreversible ending for the women some of whom have neither been totally dispossessed nor lost the ties that connect them to the practices and knowledge of their previous lives as small producers. In this study I therefore argue that even though the term is reminiscent of class formation, class consciousness, alienation or blue-collar workers employed in industry in the Orthodox Marxist sense, the proletarianization of peasant women should be investigated separately with its own specificities.

² “The Bakırçay Basin is one of the most significant sub-basins in the North Aegean Basin. It is located in Western Anatolia and primarily composed of the land irrigated by the Bakırçay river. It includes both urban and rural areas of the districts of Bergama, Dikili, Kınık and Aliaga, located in the province of Izmir. The area’s mountains extend from east-west. As well as small river valleys and lowlands, its topography is generally rolling, ravine and hilly” (Velibeyoğlu, 2015: 29). More information on the Bakırçay Basin’s social and physical geography will be given in Chapter 3.

³ Scholars use the concept of gender regime in various ways. Morell and Bock define “rural gender regimes” as “(...) promising analytical frameworks for comparing gender relations in diverse rural settings. By formulating gender relations in terms of citizenship rights, this approach elevates the concerns of rural gender relations to broader discourses located at the nation state level” (2008: 3-4). They argue that the “social and economic citizenship” formed by gendered frameworks in evolving welfare states are significant for gender regime analysis. While Connell differentiates gender regime from gender order, defining the former as “a regular set of arrangements about gender within a particular institution, such as a school, or a workplace and the latter as broader patterns of gender relations in a society” (Connell, 2002 in Findlay, 2015: 16). Finally, Walby argues that the concept of “gender regime” has two issues: “first, the definition of the field of inquiry given by the term regime, second, the nature of the relationship between the elements of the gender regime” (2004: 7). Walby says her model is abstracted on four levels: (I) regime as overall social system, (II) various forms of gender regime that are differentiated (i) from domestic to public (ii) the degree of gender inequality (III) a series of domains, such as economics, polity and civil society (IV) a series of social practices (2004: 10).

in the Bakırçay Basin? In line with this question, this thesis operationalizes the labor experiences and practices of peasant-worker women employed in one of those greenhouses, which will be referred to in this thesis as '*the Greenhouse*'.

When it was established in the beginning of the 2000s, the *Greenhouse* caused quite some conflict in the area, since the ownership of the lands it acquired had been a source of dispute between the villagers, the Treasury and the local municipality for many years. The sale of these lands to third parties by the local municipality only served to deepen the dispute. The judicial procedure eventually found in favor of the local municipality; however, the greenhouse units had already been constructed without waiting for the final verdict.⁴ Villagers believe that the plots of land registered to them were intentionally mixed up, resulting in the loss of their lands. In spite of the “silence” towards the *Greenhouse* now, at the beginning there was pushback from the villagers. A woman from Korkutlar Village⁵ says:

At first lots of people reacted [against it]. The men of the village took their tractors down to the greenhouse. They didn't let the officials take their measurements. Fights broke out. The transformer was broken. Then they took all the men into custody. The women of the village were left just like that, all the men were gone! In the end they came with the gendarmes, there was nothing we could do. What could we do? You know you can't stop them. They've got

In a similar fashion to the conceptualization in the study of Muñoz (2008), I use the term “gender labor regime” to describe both the working conditions of women in paid work and the perception of greenhouse work as “women's work” in rural labor markets. The term is also used in this study to include the reorganization of reproductive labor. In this sense, the concept of the gender labor regime brings together paid and unpaid work of women, while also seeing these two forms of work not as static concepts but in a state of change. This provides an understanding through which to explore the possibilities for women's empowerment.

⁴ This information is based on interviews conducted during the fieldwork.

⁵ I will introduce the list of the participants in the following pages.

powerful people behind him. It might be all over now, so you don't see it, but deep down everyone's still angry at them.⁶

The *Company* behind the *Greenhouse* is a very powerful agglomeration, and greenhouse production is only one of its diverse interests. It has actively made significant investments in the same region in sectors such as stockbreeding, poultry, export-oriented fruit growing, online food sales and finally agri-tourism,⁷ making the *Company* one of the biggest buyers of land in the Bakırçay Basin.⁸ The *Greenhouse* produces various kinds of tomatoes, as well as other products, both in soil-based and soilless (perlite and coco peat-based) units. The facilities also include a nursery and packaging house. After production, the products are packaged and mainly exported to Russia and European countries by the *Company's* own means of transportation. The *Greenhouse* also sells its products to well-known supermarket chains, such as Tesco (United Kingdom) and EDK (Germany). While the efficiency rate⁹ is around 40 tons per decare for

⁶ I witnessed this anger several times. For example, after establishing the greenhouse units, the *Greenhouse* blocked the commonly used road for its own usage. From then on, the villagers could not take that road, despite it being a shortcut to the town and highway. In another instance a villager expressed his displeasure at the fact that his land remained in the middle of the purchased areas, surrounded by greenhouse units. He said he is under pressure to sell it against his will.

⁷ The *Company* is an umbrella holding whose sub-companies are active in the construction, energy and insurance sectors. That is why they take advantage of their heavy construction equipment for land grading during the construction of greenhouse units, as well as for the organization of fruit orchards.

⁸ In addition to the *Company* buying lands in the area, villagers of Korkutlar are also asked to sell their houses to the *Company* for use in their projects on agro-tourism, but the villagers refuse to do so. According to 2015 data provided by the *Greenhouse* for my research, out of 600 decares of land, 360 decares is dedicated to soilless production, while 240 decares are given over to soil-based greenhouse units. However, the company has increased its land to more than 1,000 decares in recent years.

⁹ Efficiency rate refers to the amount of agricultural product harvested per decare.

soilless units, the profitability rate is approximately 33%,¹⁰ a pleasing figure for the manager and the head engineer of the *Greenhouse*.

Although declared to be a story of business success, what lies behind the *Greenhouse* seems to be privatization and misuse of natural resources. First of all, the units designed for soilless production¹¹ are constructed on extremely fertile agricultural land that was previously used for the cultivation of tobacco, wheat and tomatoes. The lands were neither “barren” nor “infertile”, as the manager of the *Greenhouse* asserted during my field research. I met women and men who had cultivated that land and worked there as daily laborers prior to the establishment of the *Greenhouse*. Similarly, areas on which the greenhouse units and fruit orchards now stand used to be shared pastures used by small-scale animal farmers in a village located next to the *Greenhouse*. Having lost their shared land, the farmers had to squeeze into a smaller pasture that was not big enough for all their animals. Stockbreeders therefore had to either sell their animals or reduce their numbers as they could not afford to buy artificial animal feed. Perhaps the most striking misuse is that of the underground water and geothermal energy resources “rented” by the *Greenhouse* to bring down the cost of heating.¹² The management states that the geothermal energy is used in a

¹⁰ It is more likely than that since costs are also shared by the State as I was told during the interview with head engineer. Yet he does not know the exact numbers for each cost item. State subsidies to large-scale agribusinesses will be detailed in the following chapters.

¹¹ By 2018, it is stated that the total area of soilless greenhouse production in Turkey is approximately 12,000 da. of a total area of greenhouse production of 772.091 da. (<https://www.tarimorman.gov.tr/Konular/Bitkisel-Uretim/Tarla-Ve-Bahce-Bitkileri/Ortu-Alti-Yetistiricilik>, last visited 15.09.2019). Soilless production in Turkey is mainly concentrated in the region of Western Anatolia Region at 55.1%, followed by South Anatolia (at 42.7%), with the Marmara Region coming next at 2.1%. The reason behind the domination of Western Anatolia compared to South Anatolia, where greenhouse production first started, is the area’s geothermal energy sources (Ertaş, 2013: 40).

¹² Heating is the highest cost in greenhouse production, with experts stating that it can account for up to 60% of all expenditures (Ekber Yıldırım 2018, ZMO 2015). With 4344 da. of land in Turkey heated by geothermal energy, the country ranks first in Europe and seventh in the world

renewable way in order not to destroy the resource itself. However, I was also told by the head engineer that at one stage the recycling system was not working efficiently and therefore for four months the *Greenhouse* had to drain away all the water rather than recycling it back to the source.¹³ In addition, the head engineer claimed that intense use of chemicals triggers a dramatic change in local insect populations. That was not the case in the first five years of the *Greenhouse*, when pest control was kept minimum in the units since there was no need for it. However, pest control was increased following an intense infestation of greenfly in the fruit orchards. The elimination of the greenfly population resulted in the proliferation of red spider and whitefly, which are the “enemies” of tomatoes. After unsuccessful attempts at biological control, the *Greenhouse* turned to “contact chemicals” (with potent ingredients) as a way to fight the pests.

In sum, sustaining the greenhouse production has led to the misuse of fertile land, geothermal energy and underground water, as well as the privatization of these resources. This has also disturbed the ecological balance in the area, as confirmed by the head engineer himself: “We disturbed the ecological balance; in the past there was a natural habitat here.”

1.2. Theoretical Framework and Methodology

This study seeks answers to the following question: What can this export-oriented, large-scale, non-traditional, modern agribusiness — established in the

in terms of potential for geothermal energy (<https://www.tarimorman.gov.tr/Konular/Bitkisel-Uretim/Tarla-Ve-Bahce-Bitkileri/Ortu-Alti-Yetistiricilik>, last visited 15.09.2019).

¹³ The *Greenhouse* takes advantage of being the largest greenhouse in Europe heated by geothermal energy from a single center. Geothermal energy and underground water are two reasons behind the *Company*’s decision to pick the Bakırçay Basin for investment. An agricultural engineer whom I interviewed in Dikili said, “The state sold underground water to them. We don’t know how much for. They say the Provincial Administration got the money! Underground resources are privatized.” The head engineer says the *Company* has five or six water wells but he is not sure if they bought it or rented for 49 years. However, as seen in the example above, there seems to be no proper checks in case of misuse.

middle of villages and on the edge of highway that connects towns and cities — and its hundreds of women workers tell us about rural transformation today? Literature on rural transformation, both national and international, agrees that there is a strong tendency towards the diversification of income-generating activities, since traditional work, i.e. agricultural production and animal husbandry, no longer meets the needs of the small-producer masses in rural areas (Kay, 2006; Luz Cruz-Torres, 2004; Deere, 2005; Akram-Lodhi & Kay, 2009; Razavi, 2002; Öztürk, 2012; Gündüz Hoşgör & Suzuki, 2016, 2017, 2018a, 2018b). This reveals patterns of proletarianization and accordingly complex categories as conceptualized under different names: “semi-proletarian” (Kay, 2006; Keyder & Yenal, 2013), “village-based proletariat” (my translation, Özügürlü, 2011), “peasant-worker” (Güler, 2014) and “land-based/free-floating labor” (Ertürk, 1998).

When it comes to the category of the peasant-worker and the process of proletarianization, one of the most striking issues seems to be the “structural break”, i.e. the swift decline of women’s status as unpaid family laborers in small-scale production (İlkkaracan & Tunalı, 2010: 123). This is also seen as a reason behind the low rate of female participation in the labor force, both on a national and local (rural) level:¹⁴ “Female labor force participation rates have also been decreasing in rural areas, which parallels with declines in agricultural

¹⁴ The table below shows disaggregated data about women’s labor force participation on the basis of place of origin and marital status.

Table 1.1. Employment Rates by Sex, Marital Status and Location (2013)

Marital Status	Female %		Male %	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Single	29.2	30.7	52.4	51.4
Married	40.9	22.0	73.9	72.0
Divorced	35.5	42.4	62.8	61.9
Widow	13.0	5.5	19.7	17.2

Source: TURKSTAT, 2015, p. 86 in FAO, 2016, page 18.

employment overall. For example, while the rural female labor force participation rate was 50.7% in 1988, it decreased to 36.7% in 2013” (FAO, 2016: 18). In this sense, there are diverse paths for women to follow under rapid rural transformation: while the majority withdraws from production, only a very limited number replaces it with paid work. When they do so, gendered rural labor markets in rural Turkey both confine women to precarious working conditions and also offer certain advantages for them (Gündüz Hoşgör & Suzuki, 2016, 2017, 2018a, 2018b; Suzuki & Gündüz Hoşgör, 2019).¹⁵ In this sense, a new gender labor regime has emerged in rural areas that is closely related to the dynamics of rural transformation itself.

This study takes a socialist-feminist perspective, on the basis of its critiques on capitalism and patriarchy. Having rejected the privileged position of paid labor, this perspective underlines the significance of women’s unpaid labor in diverse forms of reproductive labor, comprehensively defining women’s labor as a combination of paid and unpaid work, therefore prioritizing gender division of labor in the research and analysis (Hartsock, 1983; Peterson, 2005; Weeks, 2011). Not only does the study concentrate on women’s labor practices as areas of exploitation and domination, but it also seeks to enable possibilities for struggle and change. The latter approach acknowledges women’s positions as agents, giving priority to women’s perspectives (Heckman, 2014; Donovan, 2014). In this sense, this research is based on a case study in which I follow a

¹⁵ According to the FAO publication *State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA)*, although women’s participation in rural labor markets varies considerably across regions, it is invariable that they are over represented in unpaid, seasonal and part-time work, and women are often paid less than men for the same work. The authors argue that rural and agricultural feminization varies across regions and over time. That is why it “is not a general trend but mainly a sub-Saharan Africa phenomenon, as well as observed in some sectors such as unskilled labor in the fruit, vegetable and cut-flower export sector” (SOFA Team and Doss, 2011: 28-30). In this sense, the *Greenhouse* with its vegetable export production seems to be a case for agricultural feminization. As Buğra argues, in their analysis of the characteristics of the post-1980s economy in Turkey, many scholars have observed similar tendencies to those mentioned in literature on the feminization of labor. Globally relocated industrial production, and the eroded position of the full-time male proletariat may push “malleable and obedient” women workers to find jobs in order to compensate for the reduced family income. She argues that the flexible export-based production regime may require a women’s labor force in Turkey (2013: 141).

feminist methodology. While employing qualitative techniques, I primarily gather data through in-depth interviews and participatory observation. Therefore, I conducted fieldwork that lasted for more than two years with several visits. I participated in the production process at the *Greenhouse*, the daily routines of the women in their homes and villages and during social occasions. I also draw on statistical data — such as female employment rates, income levels in rural areas, agricultural production design, or levels of agricultural production — in order to have a better understanding of structural change in the Bakırçay Basin of Western Anatolia.

1.3. Significance of the Thesis

This study aims to contribute to the literature on rural and feminist studies. Contemporary rural studies do not adequately focus on the issue of gender, something that is particular not only to the literature in Turkey, but also to the discipline itself: “Gender analysis remains on the margins of the sociology of agriculture” (Allen & Sachs, 2007: 4). Razavi (2002, 2012) and Deere (2005) also argue that the gender dimensions of rural transformation need to be stressed much more strongly. In this sense, from a socialist feminist perspective, this work aims to draw attention to women’s labor and its changing status under rural transformation.

Rural women as unpaid family laborers have been the focus of a limited amount of research in rural transformation literature in Turkey (Berik, 1987, 1990; Candan & Özalp-Güenalp, 2013; Ertürk & Yaman, 2013; Karkıner, 2009; Ertürk, 2011). Yet when their status changes from unpaid to waged labor, there are even fewer studies based on the experiences of women in large-scale and non-traditional businesses in rural areas (Gönüllü, 2014; Gündüz Hoşgör & Suzuki, 2016, 2017, 2018a, 2018b; Suzuki & Gündüz Hoşgör, 2019; Atasoy 2017). According to the distribution of women employees in a workplace, only 0.06% of workplaces in rural areas employ 500 or more women. 89% of women who

are employed in rural areas work in workplaces employing less than 10 women (Toksöz, 2014: 45). Toksöz argues that this is because women mostly work as unpaid family laborers. This drastic difference makes the case of the *Greenhouse* more exceptional. As such, while family run greenhouses are more frequently problematized in the literature (Ertaş, 2013), the same is not true for the more recent phenomenon of greenhouses run by export-based large-scale agribusiness linked to global capitalist chains in rural areas (Köstepen, 2005). More generally, contemporary studies on peasant-workers and the process of proletarianization are, in the main, approached as gender neutral (Keyder & Yenal, 2013; Özuğurlu 2011). This study therefore attempts to disaggregate the process of proletarianization and explore women's unique experiences within rural labor markets, with the aim of providing a comprehensive understanding of gendered rural transformation.

This thesis also points to a blindness towards the subject of rural labor in feminist studies, in which rural women labor are rarely the primary area of research. In an article analyzing the literature on women's labor in Turkey, especially since the 1980s, Ecevit asks "Did we ignore rural women?" (my translation): "The answer revealed by my bibliography (consisting of studies conducted on women's labor until 2007) is that we have not focused on rural women's labor to the extent that we have on urban women's labor. We have not made enough effort to understand the nature of that labor. (...) The topic of rural women's labor was occasionally elaborated by rural sociologists and rural economists yet they did not take a gender perspective" (2011: 137).¹⁶ Ecevit underlines the limited number of feminist rural studies, indicating that there are

¹⁶ Ecevit also mentions that "Publications related to women's labor is only 6% of the total. On the other hand, only 5% of master's and Ph.D. theses focus on rural women's labor between 1980-2007. In the beginning of the 1990s, with respect to studies by feminist economists (Berik, 1990), sociologists and anthropologists (Ertürk, 1990; Yalçın-Heckman, 1990; Sirman, 1990; Morvaridi, 1992), we believed that the academic interest on rural women's labor would continue, yet this did not happen" (2011: 137). Özuğurlu (2011) underlines the same issue regarding the bibliography he prepared. In this context, it is seen that the category of "petty commodity producers" is becoming less frequently studied in the field, as is the issue of gender.

unfortunately only a few exceptions, such as the studies by Gündüz Hoşgör (1997, 2011), Sirman (1990), Ertürk (1990, 1998), and Kandiyoti (1997).

In addition to self-critiques on the limited number of feminist rural studies in Turkey, other scholars point to “unconnected areas” that remain understudied within feminist theory regarding gender and food. Sachs and Allen (2007) argue that connections between women’s work in the agri-food sector (material), their responsibility for food-related work at home (socio-cultural) and their relationship with eating (corporeal) need to be studied and adequately theorized. They also call attention to ignored areas of “structural issues and social change” compared to the rich literature on “body politics and gendered eating patterns”.

This study therefore attempts to enrich the literature in the “material domain” via experiences of women of the *Greenhouse*. It aims to contribute to contemporary rural studies, with a focus on the changing status of women’s labor from a gender perspective. In addition, it intends to contribute to the growing literature on feminist studies with an emphasis on the “gender labor regime” and women’s alternative strategies within it. In this way, the study also attempts to demystify “the models of village women” (Onaran, 1999) that are analyzed only on the basis of their disadvantaged positions. In order to do so, it attempts to underline the complexity of their reality with references to the experiences of the women themselves.

1.4. Research Questions and Chapter Overview

The study addresses the drastic shift in women’s labor in rural Turkey from unpaid family laborers to paid laborer while critically approaching the gender-neutral category of peasant-worker and the process of proletarianization. In light of the significant role played by global capitalism and patriarchy under the neoliberal restructuring of agri-food relations, the main research question looks at the patterns underlying the gender labor regime in the agribusiness referred to

in this study as “the *Greenhouse*”, whose labor force is predominantly women living in the rural Basin. It is my hope that the research question will offer a better understanding of gendered rural transformation, crystallized in the proletarianization of women peasant-workers and the newly emerged gender labor regime in the Bakırçay Basin.

This study examines the gender labor regime through three aspects: the working regime at the *Greenhouse*, women’s work in agricultural production and husbandry, and their reproductive labor. The formulation as such paves the way for the organization of the discussion chapters. The chapters The *Greenhouse* Experience and Feminization of Work: “Greenhouse Work as Women’s Work” explore the first aspect — what characterizes work at the *Greenhouse* — and also problematizes the association of greenhouse work primarily with women’s labor. It also explores women’s previous work experience to understand what motivates women who formerly worked as unpaid family laborers and/or daily laborers in tobacco, cotton and olive production to participate in paid work. The second aspect focuses on the (re)organization of reproduction work. The chapter on Reproduction, Perceptions of Work and Complicated Empowerment questions how and in what ways women deal with reproductive labor, analyzing the limitations and achievements within these two different worlds of the women, and focusing on possibilities for empowerment. Finally, the third aspect is an exploration of women’s work in small production, discussed in the chapter on Women and Rural Transformation. How women compare and contrast the fields vs. the *Greenhouse* is important for understanding the drastic shift in their labor use. It also gives place to women’s future prospects in small production and their hopes for future generations in light of the rural transformation they have experienced at first hand.

This thesis is composed of eight chapters. The following two chapters detail the theoretical and methodological perspectives that guide the research. The first of these, Chapter 2 Gendered Agribusiness: Understanding Rural Change from a

Feminist Perspective, presents a discussion on the category of peasant-workers in a changing rural Turkey. While focusing on the contemporary tendency of proletarianization, it also offers a critical review of the existing literature in the field. It then offers an introduction of women in contemporary rural Turkey and proposes a conceptual framework for the analysis of the labor practices and experiences of women in a gendered agribusiness. This conceptual framework details the concepts of the “gender labor regime” and “women’s perspectives”. Chapter 3 Methodology focuses on methodological aspects of the study. The chapter presents the methods employed, case study and fieldwork are introduced, but also examines my experience in the field as a researcher. The chapter then introduces the list of participants on the basis of certain socio-demographic aspects, i.e. age, education, marital status, age-to-work and whether or not they are registered with social security or not. After a brief summary on the participants’ ethnic-religious background and patterns of migration, the chapter focuses on the women’s working patterns (i.e. whether or not they have experience of non-agricultural work), as well as the working lives of the male members of their households.

Chapter 4 Greenhouse Experience explores women’s laboring practices at the *Greenhouse* and consists of four main sections: the characteristics of the gender labor regime, neglected infrastructure, workplace safety and workers’ rights at the *Greenhouse*. The characteristics of the regime are detailed with references to a performance system based on control and hierarchy, job flexibility and insecurity, mobbing and stress, as well as the coping strategies women employ. The discussion of the workplace infrastructure looks at recreational areas, water units, meals and shuttle services. The section on workplace safety concentrates on security measures at work and the use of chemicals. Finally, workers’ rights are analyzed through the payment system used, breaks and leaves, social security and union rights. Although this chapter details a working day at the *Greenhouse*, it does not address the reasons behind such work being predominantly carried out by women.

This issue is the focus of Chapter 5 Feminization of Work: “Greenhouse as Women’s Job”, which seeks to explore the reasons behind the powerful association of work at the *Greenhouse* with women’s labor. The chapter primarily analyzes the gender division of labor at work, before presenting a discussion of the three main reasons behind the feminization of work: “women’s nature”, restrictions on the lives of rural women and finally the view of the man of the house as the breadwinner. Why “women’s nature” is considered to be more suited to working at the *Greenhouse* is discussed with reference to the three forms it takes: the idea that women’s nature is more suited to at the *Greenhouse*, and the similarity of such perceptions in relation to both agricultural work and domestic and care labor. Restrictions on women’s lives refer to obstacles that women face in terms of education, mobility and job opportunities. Furthermore, economic deprivation of the households to which these women belong is reflected by an urgent need for cash and high levels of debt, which brings additional restrictions on the women’s lives. The view of men as the rightful breadwinners also plays a role here, strengthening the feminization of *Greenhouse* work as it is low paid, flexible and temporary. Finally, this chapter looks at how the *Company* legitimizes the domination of women workers. Besides references to “women’s nature”, it seems that the *Company* also takes advantage of women workers as a docile, low paid and flexible labor force. This brings with it the issue of harassment, an issue that can be considered somewhat of an Achilles’ heel, as it is important for the *Company* to maintain its reputation as a safe workplace.

Having defined women’s work as composed of paid and unpaid labor, Chapter 6 Reproduction, Perceptions of Work and Complicated Empowerment completes the picture of women’s work with a look at the women’s home lives after their shift is over. It focuses on the burden of reproductive labor, which is primarily composed of caregiving and domestic chores among others. The chapter analyzes how women re-organize the “women’s tasks” that are attributed to them. In addition, the idea of work and the realities of the *Greenhouse* do not

only shape their own perceptions, but also shed light on the gendered context in which women participate in paid labor. That is important for understanding the potential such work has to change, reverse and transform women's lives. Yet, this study argues that empowerment has no automatic, linear or direct relation to paid labor. Any conclusions we draw on this issue cannot be black and white, but rather form a gray area composed of both limitations and achievements.

In this sense, women's thoughts, judgments, aspirations and dreams help us to understand their path of proletarianization in gendered rural transformation. Chapter 7, Women and Rural Transformation, therefore starts with a classification of the women in terms of their diverse relations to small-scale agricultural production and husbandry. Women either (i) have become completely detached from agricultural production (ii) continue such production in a limited way, or (iii) actively continue such production. This classification takes into account the class structure on the basis of women's ownership, regardless of whether or not they hold the title deed to their properties. This chapter then further explores how the women themselves compare and contrast being a peasant and a paid worker, i.e. fieldwork and *Greenhouse* work. The women's reasons and rationale for holding a preference regarding a particular kind of work provides important details about how they experience the transformation itself. The final section of this chapter provides an overview of women's future prospects in both small-scale production and their hopes for the following generation. What do they think the future holds for small producers? What do they desire for their children? Their answers can be taken as foresights into the possible direction of the pendulum that swings between traditional and non-agricultural ways of living in the category of peasant-worker.

Finally, Chapter 8 presents the conclusion of this study and provides answers to the main research question: In the age of globally restructured agri-food relations, what are the patterns of the emerging gender labor regime for rural women employed as waged labor in agribusiness in the Bakırçay Basin? The

answers give clues about the characteristics of gendered rural labor markets in the Basin when women withdraw from agricultural production and husbandry. They highlight what awaits women when the balance in the blurred category of peasant-worker tips even more to the side of worker. In addition, the change in their status does not seem to lighten the burden of reproductive labor, which is still attributed to women in the home. However, not only do the women's answers reveal their (un)changing roles in production and reproduction, they also provide niches through which women construct possibilities and alternatives to change and transform their lives. Finally, this chapter offers an overview of the women's perspectives regarding the changes they have experienced and of their prospects and hopes for the future. In sum, the chapter attempts to both describe and analyze the gender labor regime emerging in the Basin, which is re-shaped by dynamics of neoliberal restructuring and women's potential to struggle and change on the basis of their experiences and practices. It is hoped that this dissertation provides a deeper understanding of gendered rural transformation and women's agency within it.

CHAPTER 2

GENDERED AGRIBUSINESS: UNDERSTANDING RURAL CHANGE FROM A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

The literature of the field reveals an increasing interest in the growth of agribusiness and, correspondingly, in women's increased participation in wage labor in rural areas. Aware of the fact that the construction of labor markets are not independent from the existing inequalities, studies reveal the close relation between the expansion of the global agrifood value chains and the growth of flexible and feminized labor markets (Raworth, 2004; Tallontire et al., 2005; Bain, 2010; Gündüz Hoşgör & Suzuki, 2018a, 2018b; Deere 2005; Bonanno & Cavancanti, 2014; Mannon et al., 2012; Baas et al., 2008; Allen & Sachs, 2007). Barrientos, Bee and Matear (1999) also critically highlight the significant role of women as “working miracles in the Chilean fruit export sector”. This same pattern can also be observed in other examples from around the world: from Mexico, via its booming “export-flower sector” (Appendini, 2010) or tomato exports (Barndt, 2002, 2013), or Chile, via its grape exports (Bee, 2000) or fruit sector (Jarvis & Vera-Toscano, 2004), to India (Mies, 1986) and Vietnam (Kabeer & Van Anh, 2002).

In this sense, while the literature focuses on the integration of women's labor into waged work, either in specific agri-export zones or greenhouses/packing houses in rural areas, there are also “factory studies” that focus on the gender labor regime with reference to the “global factories” in countries/regions under rapid agrarian change and transition (Muñoz, 2008, 2014; Salzinger, 2004; Ching Kwan Lee, 1995). In addition, with the aim of gendering the global commodity chains, studies attempt to reveal women's important position within these chains (Dunaway, 2001). In her study *Tangled Routes, Women, Work and*

Globalization on the Tomato Trail (2002), Barndt reveals the critical role women play in every step of tomato production and export, i.e. packing in a Mexican export zone depends on women's labor, as does the sale and marketing in Canadian supermarket chains, which employ mainly women workers. All these studies analyze the process of proletarianization and the blurred category of the peasant-worker while conceptualizing the varied positions of women's labor in the newly emerging rurality. Export-based large-scale holdings linked to global capitalist chains are the key actors, as is the case in this study.

As will be discussed in the following chapters, despite its importance, the theme of rural labor is currently understudied and accordingly not problematized with a gender perspective in Turkey, especially when it comes to the conceptualization of peasant-workers and the analysis of the particularities of proletarianization. While primacy is given to the household as an analytic unit to understand rural change, it appears as an androcentric obstacle not only to understanding the intra-household power relations but also to specify the women's position within the household and paid work. For this reason, I believe in the necessity of using a socialist-feminist perspective to analyze the patterns of the gender labor regime revealed in capitalist-patriarchal rural structures for peasant-worker women employed in an agribusiness.

Before attempting an alternative reading of gendered agribusiness from a feminist perspective, which will be presented in the following chapters, it is important to explain the theoretical ground of this study. This thesis draws inspiration from socialist feminist critiques of conventional political approaches. Shortcomings in the analysis of capitalism based solely on the relation between waged labor and capital has long been criticized by feminists (Weeks, 2011). This focus draws its strength from the well-known bias, i.e. "masculinizing the (valorized) public sphere of power and formal (paid) work and feminizing the (marginalized) family/private sphere of emotional maintenance, leisure and caring (unpaid) labour" (Peterson, 2005: 510). Categorizing labor in this

patriarchal way results in areas of unwaged labor that are inherently seen as outside the economy or even as anomalous to the capitalist system itself. Such a division may also lead to the naturalization and legitimization of the organization of those areas in which unpaid women's labor has been one of the most striking examples (Mies, 2005). In addition, attributing more value to wage labor than other forms of labor ignores how domestic labor has been approached as invisible and devalued, i.e. gendered. Socialist feminists pay attention to the concept of gender in order to understand the important role it plays in re-organizing women's work, in all forms, within the capitalist-patriarchal system.

In this sense, I argue that the waged labor of women may only be understood on the basis of "the work of women", in which women's responsibilities — in and out of the market — are shaped by gendered categories, as one of the main structuring dynamics. Weeks describes the concept of work as any "productive cooperation organized around, but not necessarily confined to the privileged model of waged labor" (2011:14). Hartsock (1983) criticizes the narrow Marxist conception of production, asserting women's work could be "caring labor", "emotional labor", "maternal labor", "kin work" or more generally "reproductive labor". In this sense, the legacy of the socialist feminist tradition seems to be an "expansion of the category" (of work) through following the worker "not only from the marketplace to workplace but also from workplace to domestic space" and as such one finds not only the traces of class hierarchies but also "the gendered forms of exploitation and patterns of inequality" (Weeks, 2011: 25).

This framework also explains why the term patriarchy is a prerequisite for this study in understanding the particular path of rural transformation that is crystallized in the gendered agribusiness.¹⁷ While the gendered patterns of

¹⁷ It is safe to say that the term itself has been problematized and criticized by various scholars who defend and reject the use of the term "patriarchy". Some argue that patriarchy is an "outdated and overused" or "monolithic and universal" concept that cannot cover the differences among women and therefore prevents us from grasping the life strategies adopted by women in their real lives and leads us to stereotypical and short-cut formulas (Kandiyoti, 1997; Connell,

proletarianization in agribusiness are re-shaped and re-created on the basis of prevailing patriarchal ideologies, women's subjectivity also deals with the change in question with reference to the patriarchal structures that themselves are also exposed to rapid rural change.

In this regard, the aim of this study is to understand and analyze the gendered labor practices of rural women in agribusiness. This requires an understanding of not only the household but also the newly emerged and constructed labor market, i.e. 'greenhouse work' in my case. In other words, this study focuses on the working practices of women in large-scale export-oriented greenhouse in the Bakırçay Basin, in reproductive labor as well as in small-scale agricultural production and husbandry. These all form a particular gender labor regime and women's positioning within it.

The next two sections are organized as follows: the first part analyzes the category of peasant-workers in changing rural Turkey with a focus on the tendency towards proletarianization on the basis of a critical review of the literature. The second sub-chapter briefly discusses women's changing position in contemporary rural Turkey. Moreover, it introduces the conceptual framework that will be used in the study to try to develop a gendered understanding of women's agribusiness practices. This framework includes the concept of *gender labor regime*, in which women's work experiences are shaped through the main

1987). In accordance with the debates, the concept of the patriarchy lost its central position in the 1990s, while the category of gender appeared as a significant candidate to replace it. Even though the critiques made for the term patriarchy soon began to be applied to gender too, it appears that gender has become a more commonly used concept. The term patriarchy has been reformulated in order to avoid a deterministic approach of the concept as fixed, universal, structured and enduring. In order to understand the diverse forms of patriarchy in an elaborated way, one needs an alternative perspective that not only focuses on gender inequalities and hierarchies but also sees women's agency within the system. Such an understanding may give us an indication of some of the specific connections between our everyday lives and practices and the larger framework of social structures within which they are organized (Weeks, 2014). However, aware of its limitations, I argue that patriarchy still stands as powerful term in explaining the gender hierarchies and inequalities, i.e. gender order (Johnson 2005) since it retains its power as a central term (Kandiyoti, 1995).

principle of gender division of labor, and *women's perspectives*, which reflects their attitudes towards working life, as well as the strategies of resistance and consent they have developed to cope with the change, and examines whether their experiences of work pave the way for empowerment.

2.1. Peasant-Workers in Changing Rural Turkey

Rural transformation in Turkey seems to have moved on to *another phase* due to the acceleration of neoliberal politics, deepening commodification and the almost silent unorganized masses in rural areas.¹⁸ Even though it has been widely accepted that the 1980s was the historical turning point in terms of the history of capitalist-patriarchal system on a global level, the radical consequences of the process on small producers, households and family farm businesses in rural areas increased markedly from 2000 onwards. Chapter 7, Women and Rural Transformation, looks at how this process has been experienced in Western Anatolia and particularly the Bakırçay Basin. Yet, it could be asserted that the ways in which gendered rural labor has been “restructured” by the change itself remains an unanswered question in the literature that analyzes the nature and dynamics of rural transformation in Turkey.

There is no doubt that the steady restructuring of small-scale agricultural production has led to significant changes. However, academic interest on the issue, especially when we look at research enriched with field studies, is far from sufficient. Tekeli states, “Studies on rural transformation unfortunately lost their value after the 1980s. During this period there were some significant

¹⁸ We can, however, see examples of protest in the fight for ecological concerns by civil/local organizations and villagers against thermic/hydro-electric plants or mining, and also in the struggles of small producers — especially tobacco and hazelnut producers — crystallized in their demonstrations (e.g. “The Farmers’ Cry Rally”, 2005, Manisa, and the “Ordu Hazelnut Rally”, 2006) (Gürel, 2014). These demonstrations were actually preceded by those held by wheat producers in Manisa and Tekirdağ in 2000 (Aydın, 2001: 14). Although it can be said that the number of demonstrations motivated by the problems of agricultural production has dropped, we cannot characterize rural areas as totally silent in terms of social opposition.

developments, including the expansion of irrigated farming and the growth of greenhouse cultivation, which induced a demand for labor. The numbers of villages with a declining population have become a majority of the total. Many villages are inhabited almost completely by older people and retirees. In such villages there is almost no market-oriented production. Inhabitants in these villages live on their retirement pensions or remittances from abroad. In some villages inhabited by retirees, population growth can be observed. Living on retirement pensions means there is a return to the village. The depopulated villages are not the same villages of earlier periods, and even those who remained in their villages have changed. Unfortunately, however, we have no comprehensive study typifying the transformations that have taken place in villages after 1980” (2008: 53).

Sirman (2001) also underlines the same issue, stating that there are two main reasons for the decreasing interest in rural studies in the field of social sciences in Turkey. The first of these is related to the inadequacy of Marxist/modernist explanations of the Agrarian Question, which are criticized by post-structuralists for not problematizing the issues of development and productivity. The second is the lack of studies based on fieldwork due to financial limitations. Similarly, Aydın mentions the academic disinterest on the “Agrarian Question” after the 1980s, with the exception of a few studies still conducting fieldwork, which he believes is because of the “domination of the neoliberal understanding in every field” in academia (2001: 12). Likewise, discussions on “modes of production” and “transitions from pre-capitalism to capitalism” petered out after the 1970s.

2.1.1. Critical Review of Literature

Studies that focus on the change in terms of its class-based character and the possibility for differentiation and/or fragmentation within the agrarian classes hold an important place in the existing literature on rural transformation, providing fertile ground for further discussions. While the neoliberal

transformation of rural politics, markets and economic activities are themes that have come into prominence in some studies (Aydın, 2010; Boratav, 2009; Çakmak, 2004; Huricihan, 2006, 2017; Oyan, 2002), others focus on the particular consequences of the process on the small peasantry, as well as this group's responses to the process. (Ecevit, 1999; Aysu, 2013; Aydın, 2001; Çalışkan, 2010; Keyder & Yenal, 2013; Öztürk, 2012; Özuğurlu, 2011; Sönmez, 1993; Gürel, 2014).¹⁹ Integration into the European Union through the Common Agricultural Policy is also another issue analyzed in the literature (Günaydın, 2006). Yet, even among the inspiring studies mentioned above, studies that re-define the change with a *gender dimension* are more limited.²⁰ Studies of just a handful scholars shed light on this limitation.

The study of Ecevit (1994) analyzes the disadvantaged position of rural women within exploitative capitalist production and household relations, explaining the set of socio-economic and political conditions that shape the status of rural women in Turkey. Ecevit states that women are excluded from economic and political power due to the uneven relations that reflect dominated position of women in rural areas. Gündüz Hoşgör and Smits (2006) focus on the status of rural women with reference to regional differences in Turkey. In addition, Ertürk (1990) critically discusses the socio-economic position of rural women living in the South-East Anatolia on the basis of modernization, national integration and planned rural development.

Although no one can ignore the steady decline in the number of fieldwork-based studies on rural in Turkey, there are a small number of very powerful case studies. For instance, in her study of rural women working as carpet weavers,

¹⁹ For the literature on rural transformation and/or the agrarian/peasant question in Turkey during the 1980s, see the studies of Akşit (1988, 1993), Aydın (1986a, 1986b, 1987), Keyder (1983), Erdost (1988) and Seddon and Margulies (1982) (Büke, 2019: 352).

²⁰ Besides those mentioned in the text, additional related literature can be found in the bibliography.

Berik (1987, 1990, 1995) draws attention to the diverse combinations of modes of carpet production, agricultural structures and family types to understand gender relations in a particular rural transformation on the basis of four different types of villages from various regions in Turkey. This allows us to see how gender relations have been affected by the differences underlying home-based versus workshop production, labor-intensive versus capital-intensive agriculture, as well as nuclear and extended family structures. She analyzes the gender division of labor, gender hierarchies and discipline and control over women's labor by men and/or older women. Sirman's studies (1988, 1990, 1996) also provide rich anthropological and sociological data regarding particular empowerment strategies reinforced through family ties and the ritual of marriage by women who belong to small producer households. In addition, the complex relations amongst rural women, including both solidarity and competition, and the role of labor usage played in family businesses compared to the large-scale agricultural businesses in cotton production in the Söke Plain in Western Anatolia are salient issues analyzed in her work.

In her study "Development and the Changing Social Position of Rural Women: The Analysis of Two Cases in the Black Sea Region through the Experience of Turkey" (my translation), Gündüz Hoşgör (2011) analyzes the diverse effects of rural development projects on rural women in the region in question. Based on an approach that the socio-economic differences in rural women's positions are closely related to the particular social strata and region to which they belong, she discusses two cases: while the first focuses on mountain-villager women who took out small-scale micro-credit loans within the context of rural development projects, the second evaluates the consequences of macro-scale fishery politics on women living in coastal villages. This study is also important for its interest in the fishing industry, which remains an understudied topic within rural

studies.²¹ Although limited, there are some recent studies focusing on rural women with a feminist perspective. Atakan Gönüllü (2014) investigates rural women's "changing experiences with patriarchy" based on a case study in Avanos, Central Anatolia. She argues that without a radical reorganization of the care labor, it is unlikely that rural women can be freed from the burdens of patriarchy and capitalism. Likewise, Karkıner (2009) made a feminist analysis of rural women in the village of Alibeyli in Western Anatolia. She connects the diverse actions of the women — i.e. social, economic, ideological and political — with the diverse uses of women's labor in the village. Focusing on women's subject-positions, she questions how women experience these positions in capitalist and patriarchal structures. In addition, Sabahat Mura (2016) concentrates on the wage labor processes of agricultural labor markets, where she analyses the strategies of women workers in Adapazarı, Northwestern Turkey. She criticizes the mainstream literature, which "objectifies, victimizes and otherizes" the workers. Finally, Kocabıçak (2018) examines the reasons behind the exclusion of women from land ownership in rural Turkey.

As a consequence, one may say that the literature clearly suffers from a lack of studies focusing on rural change with a gender perspective. It is safe to say that, within that limited literature, studies conducted on the issue of agribusiness from a gendered perspective are even more rare. While topics such as the ways of domination of transnational corporations (TNCs), the internationalization of rural production and marketing, the patterns of proletarianization and contract farming have been discussed in recent literature, gender in large-scale agribusiness complexes remains understudied, with only a few examples in Turkey (Gündüz Hoşgör & Suzuki, 2016, 2017, 2018a, 2018b; Yıldız, 2017). As this limited number of studies focus on the issue of greenhouses, they mainly analyze small-scale, family labor-based greenhouses (Köstepen, 2005; Ertaş, 2013), a very

²¹ Yeniay (2015) also analyzes the radically changing position of fisherwomen who were excluded from subsistence production and forced into the process of proletarianization at Gökova Bay, Muğla under the rapid changes of neoliberal politics regulating small-scale fishery.

different system from the subject of this study, which focuses on a technological and capital-intensive large-scale greenhouse.

In this context, I believe that understanding women's labor practices in an agribusiness through gendered dynamics leads to a more comprehensive definition of the process of rural transformation. In order to reach such an understanding, gender should be taken into consideration as a “constitutive element” in the analysis. The change in rural areas does not only refer to the gendered consequences but also requires an understanding in which gender is a significant dynamic that determining the change itself.

2.1.2. A Contemporary Tendency in Rural Turkey: Proletarianization

This section reviews studies of the responses of small producers to the neoliberal restructuring in the post 1980s period, in order to position the gendered agribusiness within rural transformation. Several authors underline that these responses should be considered within the wide variety in terms of region/area and the history of capitalism in relation to that particular region/area, product, landholding size etc. in Turkey (Gündüz Hoşgör & Smits, 2006; Keyder, 1983; Akşit, 1985).

Responses²² are also conceptualized in the literature as a “means of resistance” (Sirman, 1990), “survival” (Sönmez, 1993; Ertürk, 1998; Günaydın, 2009) or “subsistence” strategies (Aydın, 2001), or “coping mechanisms/strategies” (Öztürk, 2012; Keyder & Yenal, 2013). Although it is difficult to say that these strategies in question have been analyzed with a special interest in gender, one

²² Why responses are primarily discussed is to build an alternative to the mainstream understanding of change as a top down phenomenon, seeing social actors as passive and exposed only to the macro-changes. Without acknowledging the agency, this approach says little about small producers and how they respond to the change in question. In this sense, an alternative approach, i.e. bottom up, also provides an adequate framework to understand the particular experiences of rural women in agribusiness practices through proletarianization, as this thesis aims to analyze.

should make an exception for the “subsistence” strategies conceptualized by Aydın (2001), in which the over-exploitation of women’s labor is introduced as a means of survival for the household. He views the “maximization of women’s labor” as a subsistence strategy for small peasant households under the deepening rural crisis. Ertürk (1998) also mentions the uneven allocation of the burden of work, which is increasingly allocated to women and less to men due to the gender-based roles and codes under worsening conditions for agricultural production.

The main strategy that characterizes rural households is that of *patterns of proletarianization through income maximization*. It is safe to say that this strategy is not something peculiar to Turkey, but rather a global one, especially experienced by the periphery countries of the global South (Kay, 2006; Luz Cruz-Torres, 2004; Deere, 2005; Akram-Lodhi & Kay, 2009; Razavi, 2002). Due to the neoliberal restructuring politics, “scale” concerns and subsidized non-traditional agro-exports, small-scale producers/family farms are forced to generate their income through a diversification of economic activities.²³ As discussed in the previous pages, this is not a recent phenomenon in Turkey either; it dates back to the late 19th century, especially in the regions of Western and South Anatolia, which were integrated into global capitalist markets relatively early. However, it could be asserted that under contemporary conditions, this tendency is gaining more importance.

²³ In order to understand what “income maximization” refers to in Turkey, we can point to the Soma mine tragedy even if it is an extreme example. As is known, Soma and other close towns used to be tobacco centers before the restructuring politics directly affected the lives of hundreds of thousands of tobacco-producer families. Male members of these peasant-originated families had/have to seek income in the mines. This was also observed during my fieldwork, and a detailed analysis supported by the field work data will be presented in the following chapters. The age-cohort of the mine workers who died in the tragedy reveals that the land no longer offered a solution to poverty. It is clear that agriculture and husbandry held no future for the younger generations, who have to seek other employment options. A video interview with Ayşe Gündüz Hoşgör, entitled “Rural Transformation and its Impact on Soma”: <http://www.metu.edu.tr/video/somada-kirsal-donusum-ve-yansimalari> (last visited 27.12.2016).

In this context, the rural life, *as we know*, seems greatly weakened. In other words, the income from agriculture and husbandry as a *primary income* in rural areas tends to be replaced by other means of income where available. In order to survive, households are more than ever obliged to diversify their labor usages, with non-agriculture activities emerging as one of the “options.” According to the 2006 Household Labor Force Survey data, “rural male workers in agriculture earn on average 2.34 lira (\$1.17) per hour while rural male workers in non-agriculture earn on average 3.21 lira (\$1.65) per hour (that is, 37 percent higher wages)” (World Bank Report, 2009: 30). These numbers also give clues about how low wages are in agriculture and non-agriculture in rural labor markets.²⁴

This study argues that the process of proletarianization should not be seen as a class/gender-neutral phenomenon.²⁵ As Kay (2006) mentions, diversified income could refer to both “survival/pauperization” and “accumulation/capitalization”. While the first refers to securing their survival, the latter could mean achieving prospect and wealth, used for further investment. Kay also stresses the tendencies towards “semi-proletarianization and de-agrarianization” as a consequence of globalization in rural areas. In this context, he raises the question of how to interpret the effects of Structural Adjustment Policies as a way to eradicate poverty, as an instrument for in-depth capital accumulation and enrichment, or as a mere survival strategy for peasant households that are exposed to difficulties in competing with cheap food imports and local capitalist farmers. In accordance with these issues, it is not only households of small landholders and landless tenant farmers/agricultural laborers but also the women in those households who seem to be comparatively more vulnerable to the effects

²⁴ The minimum wage was 435 TL. In 2008 that was approximately equal to \$353.

²⁵ Scoones (2009) briefly explains the historical trajectory of the livelihoods perspective that emerged in the 1990s, where this perspective failed and what it had to offer, as well as “new foci, new priorities” to “re-energize livelihoods perspectives”. Even though the livelihoods perspective successfully analyzes the multiplicity and richness of a differentiated “new rurality” on the basis of “livelihood diversification”, it still suffers from the lack of understanding of the class/gender-based dynamics behind the motivations to maximize income.

of rural change. When those households have to maximize their income under increasingly difficult conditions to sustain agriculture/husbandry, they seem to be integrated into the market as cheap labor force under insecure working conditions. For this reason, income maximization could be rather defined as “forced choices”, instead of being a pure “alternative”, “option” or “offer”.²⁶

In addition, as discussed in detail in the following pages, income maximization is a process in which gender plays an important role.²⁷ It is therefore important to discuss whether there is any particularity regarding women’s proletarianization, and if so, what are the possible trajectories, experiences and consequences for women. In other words, I believe that questions regarding the gendered characteristics of proletarianization through income maximization and how these have affected women’s lives are significant, as in the case of greenhouse.

2.1.3. Studies on Peasant-Workers

Patterns of proletarianization through income maximization create a particular form of labor among small-producer households in rural Turkey. Such a category seems to be open to diverse conceptualizations: studies conducted in different rural areas of Turkey focus on “patterns of proletarianization” and define the process with different concepts, such as “peasant-worker” (Güler, 2014), “semi-proletarian” (Keyder and Yenal 2013), “village-based proletariat (my translation, Özügurlu 2011) or “land-based/free floating labor” (Ertürk, 1998). In his study

²⁶ A similar attitude can be seen in the literature on the issue of land grabbing, where some studies favor the change: “However, in the frame of ‘co-opted feminism’ some of the problematic developments around ‘land grabs’ are celebrated as potentially creating jobs for women” (Razavi, 2012: 4). Razavi criticizes such a perspective for not analyzing the long-term effects of land grabs on the community in general and on women in particular.

²⁷ We also see that a diversification away from agriculture has been a gendered process in a global sense, and like the feminization of labor/agriculture, it may take on different patterns in different parts of the world. In this sense, the cases from Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa or India are important examples (Razavi, 2012; Deere, 2005).

of hazelnut producers in the Black Sea region, Sönmez (2001) also classified “three new types of peasants” that have arisen within the neoliberal transformation of contemporary rural life.

When it comes to the diverse conceptualizations in order to define and analyze what characterizes contemporary rural Turkey in terms of labor patterns, it is best to start with Ertürk’s study of “Community, Convention and Trends of Change in Rural Turkey”, in which she uses the concept of “land-based/free floating labor”, that is “the outcome of the survival strategies”. This term refers to “(...) smallholders [efforts] to maintain their status as independent family cultivators on their land while integrating into the non-subsistence, non-agriculture and non-rural sector” (1998: 103). It is quite striking that although the study was conducted shortly before the devastating consequences of rural transformation escalated after the 2000s; one may say that the study foresightedly points to many significant issues describing rural areas today. The study, which included villages of the provinces of Samsun, Sinop, Çorum and Van analyzes household labor use patterns to understand how they respond back to the changes of modernization, as well as globalization.²⁸

According to Ertürk, “Reducing uncertainty in everyday life gains priority not only because the risk factor becomes more complex under market conditions but because conventional modes of ensuring security are also undermined” (1998: 102). The way she analyzes the effects of the structural change of globalization on rural households bears a resemblance to Keyder and Yenal’s perspective on the risky market for rural producers. Keyder and Yenal also underline the

²⁸ In this context, Ertürk argues that in the age of globalization, “rural households are increasingly pulled into a cash nexus in reproducing their livelihood” (1998: 102). She therefore makes a distinction between those households whose survival strategies are determined by security maximization and those whose strategies are determined by wealth maximization on the basis of their resource base.

concept of “casino capitalism”²⁹ to define the insecure conditions that particularly affect small producers (2011, 2013). Ertürk asks the question: “(...) why do people in Turkey, continue to remain on their land? To state the question differently, why is the current level of rural-urban migration much lower than its potential?” (1998: 101). She argues that contradictory forces of globalization are at work: on the one hand unemployment and part time/seasonal work are globally on the rise, on the other hand, the primary importance of the land as income provider has declined yet the rural population still needs to secure its livelihood. However, “(...) pressure to leave the land has become greater than even before, but ironically places to go have become scarce. (...) smallholder cultivators have responded by diversifying their resource base and joined the band of land-based/free-floating laborers. Instead of permanent migration, seasonal/temporary population movements have become the model of survival” (1998: 111). As a result, “the potential for permanent exodus from rural areas is significantly curtailed” (1998: 119). Today rural labor seems to be confined more to its local borders. That strengthens the process of proletarianization at a local level.

Ertürk also draws attention to the gender division of labor in terms of money generation: mainly women and the elderly are left to work the land, while men find work outside the village and children serve as a reserve army of labor. In all the cases analyzed by Ertürk, women’s labor is closely associated with agricultural production and tasks on the land, whether owned or rented. In other words, off-farm wage labor is not associated with women, and the land-

²⁹ In Keyder and Yenal’s analysis, the concept of casino capitalism used to explain the rural transformation remains gender-neutral. However, casino capitalism also implies “gendered costs of crises” in which one comes across “loss of secure jobs and earning capacity due to women’s concentration in precarious forms of employment, lengthened work hours for women, decreased participation of girls in education...” (Peterson, 2005: 514).

based/free-floating labor force is primarily composed of male labor.³⁰ Yet the question of how women have been affected by the recent changes requires a re-analysis of the association of women with agricultural production/land. In this context, this study will try to show another use of women's labor, employed in a large-scale greenhouse as workers that is very different from that well-known picture.

A similar conceptualization to Ertürk's "land-based/free floating labor" is that of the "village-based proletariat", detailed in Özügürü's study, "The Capital Trap for the Small Peasantry: Observations on Peasantry and Agricultural Studies in Turkey" (my translation) (2011). Özügürü analyzes the transformation of the small peasantry, as well as individual peasant households. According to the findings of the detailed field study conducted between 2007 and 2009, one type of type of household comes to the fore, that of the village-based proletariat with very limited (mostly less than nine decares) or no land. Unlike the standard proletariat household, this type of household is composed of waged laborers who are mainly employed in non-agricultural jobs in and around the villages. Özügürü asserts that this is the most common and homogenous category in the villages.³¹ While agricultural production is increasingly becoming an occupation carried out by middle-aged workers, younger members of the rural population, i.e. those under 30 years of age, tend to work in non-agricultural jobs. Similar to Ertürk and Keyder and Yenal's focus on "risk", Özügürü underlines the perception of the village-based proletariat, who see farming as a very risky occupation compared to non-agricultural jobs. He also states that the perception

³⁰ Ertürk defines "the most vulnerable rural households" as those only relying on family labor, with little or no access to other resources. "Men, women and children of the households at the lower end of the security scale must engage in wage labor to sustain family subsistence. Men are often involved in construction work in the cities, women who are less mobile, are likely to engage in wage work in and around the village" (1998: 118). This stratum can include the waged-women labor in off-farm economic activities.

³¹ Özügürü conducted his research on rural areas of the provinces of Antalya, Şanlıurfa, Adana, Konya, Çorum, Tekirdağ, Ordu, Van, Manisa and Malatya.

of risk is not limited to the category in question, but seems to be embraced by other categories of small peasantry too. Such a cultural rift points to a drastic change in the perception of waged labor in the eyes of the peasantry. While it used to be considered as drudgery, waged labor is now associated with a secure and sustainable income, compared to the risky conditions of agriculture (2011: 96-98). In this sense, Özügürü's study not only explores further differentiation and fragmentation between the diverse categories of the small peasantry, but also examines the conditions that form such categories in contemporary rural Turkey. In addition, both the economic and cultural reflections of recent global phenomenon of "village-based proletariat" are explored in his study.

In their article "Agrarian Transformation, Labor Supplies, and the Proletarianization Processes in Turkey: A Historical Overview", Keyder and Yenal (2011) designate three patterns of proletarianization: semi-proletarianization by informal means, part-lifetime proletarianization under globalization and dispossession by force. The second pattern is going to be the focus for the purposes of this study. After the 1970s, a new labor regime began to dominate the urban labor markets where part-time, temporary and irregular forms of employment come to the forefront for rural new-comers, as consonant with the global changes. In this sense, this type of waged labor refers to households who secure their living as a result of a complex combination that includes income, subsistence production, small business in the market, rent, money transfers, and also gifts. In other words, unlike the category of "lifelong proletarianization", it does not seem possible for these households to live off the family income alone. Keyder and Yenal argue that the second temporary pattern has also become a permanent characteristic of rural employment relations under the restructuring dynamic of globalization. Increased commodification has also radically modified the traditional use of land. This leads to two interconnected issues: firstly, opening land to other non-agricultural uses, i.e. construction and tourism, and secondly, difficulty in accessing the commons, i.e. pastures and grasslands. Consequently, what we have witnessed is intensified and diversified

non-agricultural economic activities and temporary proletarianization in rural Turkey (Keyder & Yenal, 2013: 154-157). However, these intensified non-agricultural economic activities do not lead to a permanent detachment from the rural. In contrast to the previous generations of peasants who migrated to the cities, peasants today still continue to live in the villages from where they go to work daily, weekly or seasonally. As a result, Keyder and Yenal (2013) assert that although there are significant regional differences with reference to the “opportunities” for non-agricultural economic activities, temporary waged labor has become a permanent feature of the contemporary rural Turkey. In this sense, their conclusion resembles Ertürk’s conclusion (1998) that there is a non-permanent exodus from rural areas although each see different reasons for that conclusion.

Keyder and Yenal argue that fully dispossessed workers point to a radical rural breakdown, stating that those who are not dispossessed are therefore not totally disadvantaged. From this perspective “proletarianization through dispossession” leads to ill-pay, a decrease in the standards of labor power, shrinking local markets and finally an increase in reproductive costs. The authors welcome proletarianization that does not lead to dispossession. However, the patterns of proletarianization still appear striking for the masses in rural Turkey today, even if they have not been dispossessed. Özügürlü states that the village-based proletariat is a recent and global phenomenon: “Villagers younger than 30 work in conditions reminiscent of those of the era of unbridled capitalism in the 19th century in organized industrial zones and factories controlled by various capitalist enterprises. I call these people village-based workers. Service buses bring them to the factories an hour from their homes where they work 12-hour shifts and have no proper workers’ rights, for which they receive minimum wage or less. Child workers are also employed in these factories. The drama of *The Grapes of Wrath* has thus become reality in Turkey today. People take out loans from the banks, cannot repay their debts, then are jailed or their land is

confiscated. (...) These are dark days for villagers taking out bank loans to support agricultural production, and things are only going to get tougher.”³²

As in the studies of Keyder and Yenal (2011, 2013), Güler (2014) focuses on the concept of “semi worker-peasant” with reference to diverse periods crystallized in four generations of peasant origin who worked in a ceramic factory in Çanakkale, in Western Anatolia. According to his study “Big Boss and His Workers, Working Class, Peasantry and Paternalism” (my translation), the process of proletarianization that goes beyond the spatial borders of the villages creates a new labor form in which being both peasant and worker share common ground. The factory, established in the town of Çan, takes advantage of the characteristics of small land ownership and low-productive land use that form the specific category of the semi-peasant-worker (2014: 127). Four generations of proletarianization also provides a historical reading of rural labor. While the 1970s was a period of full-time and secure employment in import-substitution accompanied by organized working-class movements, we witness another pattern of proletarianization in the 1980s with the export-oriented regime of accumulation. In such a pattern, the third and fourth generations experience subcontracting, flexibilization of labor, the loss of difference underlying skilled/unskilled labor and the age of automation, resulting in job losses, especially between 1987 and 2010 in the case of this factory.

The first generation of the semi peasant-workers has strong ties to their rural background; the income provided from agriculture and husbandry still plays an important role in the household economy. However, these ties begin to be lost in the second and third generations. Güler argues that these two generations’ ties to rural life are minimized. What such a minimization reveals can be seen in the period of transition to the system of subcontracting in the factory. Given the minimized ties to the land, semi peasant-workers are aware of the fact that there

³² https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/perspectives_turkey_6_eng.pdf, last visited 27.12.2017

is no option left for them other than being employed in the factory, even though, as new subcontractors, they have to work for less than two-thirds of their previous income. One worker says, “You have to either start as a subcontractor on Monday or you don’t. Then you go back to the village. But you sold everything you had in the village; your land is covered with grass now. When you say ‘Let’s go to the village’, your wife/kids say no. The reason why there hasn’t been a social uproar is, in my opinion, the support of the family. (...) They would send half of the harvest to the workers in the town. They would take wheat, fruit, tomatoes, peppers, everything from the village. (...) This was the situation for a normal worker. However, when their parents began to die, support from the villages was cut off. Now, no one says ‘let’s go to the village’” (2014: 169). This shows the importance of rural ties, even in cases where the workers are not involved directly in the agricultural production. Additionally, we see that there is a contemporary crisis in the dying rural society, whose population is aging and distanced from agricultural production and husbandry, and correspondingly, the difficulties faced by semi-peasant-workers trapped between the conflicting aspects of the contemporary rurality.

To conclude, even though the process of proletarianization is discussed with reference to dispossession, income maximization, spatial, regional and generational differences and migration, it is mostly not aggregated on the basis of gender. Such an approach results in the evaluation of the process as androcentric and gender-neutral in those studies mentioned above, with the exception of that of Ertürk. How and in what ways the tasks within the two different worlds occupied by the peasant-workers are allocated on a gender basis are not problematized. This thesis argues that to understand the relocation of rural women’s labor (in the course of neoliberal restructuring) requires a gender lens. This lens is also necessary to explore the shift from unpaid family laborer to paid laborer in an agribusiness and the patterns of the emerging gender labor regime for those peasant-women workers. The theoretical ground for such an understanding will be addressed in the next section.

2.2. Theorizing Gendered Agribusiness

2.2.1. Women in Contemporary Rural Turkey

The change on the trajectory of women's labor from the agricultural sector to the service sector has demarcated labor markets since the 1980s. By 2019, the share of agriculture in employment in Turkey had decreased to 17.3% (4.818 million of a total of 27.795 million within the employed population). While the number of women working in agriculture is 2.062 million, this figure is 2.756 million for men. The decrease in the number of women employed in agriculture is 132,000 compared to 2018.³³ According to TURKSTAT's 2017 "Women in Statistics" report, the percentage of women employed as regular and casual employees is 65.2%, while 14% are employers and 9.3% self-employed workers. The majority of women's employment in agriculture is still made up of unpaid family laborers, in spite of the drastic change in the total number of unpaid family laborers in Turkey, which decreased from 12.2% in 2014 to 9.8% in 2019.³⁴ When it comes to informality, the gender gap widens drastically: 2.232 thousand women out of 2.382 thousand (93.7%) who work informal while there are 2.228 thousand men out of 2.915 thousand men (76.4%). In addition, as stated in the TURKSTAT report "Agricultural Holdings Labor Wage Structure" (2016), there is a significant wage difference between women and men agricultural workers, with women working as daily laborers receiving 46 TL and men 59 TL.³⁵ According to Gündüz Hoşgör, "Even though women have a significant economic role in agriculture, their labor cannot be made visible and conceptualized under the category of unpaid family laborer" (2011: 224). This thesis tries to go one step

³³ Labor Force Statistics, March 2019, Turkish Statistical Institute, Press Release. Last visited, 27.06.2019, <http://web.turkstat.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=30683>

³⁴ <http://www.tuik.gov.tr/UstMenu.do?metod=temelist>, last visited 27.06.2019

³⁵ <http://web.turkstat.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=21722>, last visited 27.06.2019

further by exploring another story that comes to light when women who previously worked as unpaid family laborers start working in a “visible” way as wage laborers.

Regarding the invisibility issue, there has been a lack of gender-disaggregated data collection. The work carried out by women does not seem to be made as visible as it deserves to be. Toksöz argues that the significant contribution of women to the economy also tends to be systematically understated, especially in household labor force statistics.³⁶ She proposes that “In this context, one should pay attention to this very primary issue, which is the exploration of the fields that provide the gender-based similarities and differences in working life. As existing concepts — such as work, unemployment or income — do not cover women’s unpaid and informal labor; they are inadequate in providing the big picture regarding working life” (2014: 15).

Women working in agriculture as unpaid family laborers make up a significant part of this invisible mass. Yet that category has also undergone drastic change. It is clear that if gender-neutral data is disaggregated, significant clues about the gendered patterns of rural change appear. According to the TURKSTAT report, Employment Status by Age and Sex,³⁷ the total number of unpaid family laborers in agriculture decreased from 2.668 million in 2014 to 2.440 million in 2018. The share of women also fell from 2.047 million in 2014 to 1.880 million in 2018. The share of men as unpaid family laborers has always been significantly lower than the share of women: male unpaid family laborers only form 22.9%

³⁶ We can see parallels here with cases in Latin America. For instance, what Bee argues in her study of Chile reveals that women’s labor in agriculture is not counted in the census of 1992: “(...) in the Comuna of Canela in the Fourth Region, 76% of women were categorized as being economically inactive”, although they were responsible for “the raising of animals, care of the family garden (*huerto*) and work on the family farm” (2000: 259). The underestimation of women’s labor as inactive and invisible is also supported by Deere, in her study of “The Feminization of Agriculture? Economic Restructuring in Rural Latin America” (2005).

³⁷ <http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreTabloArama.do>, last visited 27.06.2019

(560,000) of the total unpaid family laborers in agriculture in 2018. (The share of men was 23% in 2014).³⁸

As mentioned by Filiztekin and Gökhan, when the data for internal migration with a specific focus on employment status is disaggregated on a gender basis, it is quite telling that women as unpaid family workers are leaving the agricultural sector in high numbers, compared to men: “A significant percentage of the population, especially women, is involved with agriculture. However, for migrants this percentage is relatively small, while all other economic activities constitute a higher percentage of the migrant population. (...) Female migrants concentrate on agriculture, social and personal services, manufacturing followed by trade related activities” (2008: 13).³⁹

³⁸ Previously, 76% of the 2.446.000 women in the agricultural sector were employed as unpaid family labor in Turkey (TÜİK, 2010). This was equivalent to almost one in every two women working in the agricultural sector being employed as an unpaid family laborer (Gündüz Hoşgör & Smits, 2008).

³⁹ It is even more striking when compared to the findings of 1990 and 2000.

Table 2.1. Male and Female Employment Status in 1990 and 2000

Male				
Employment Status	1990		2000	
	Population	Migrants	Population	Migrants
Regular/Casual Employee	50.10%	80.19%	54.47%	85.01%
Employer	1.96%	1.74%	3.58%	1.72%
Self Employed	30.66%	13.39%	28.15%	8.63%
Unpaid Family Worker	17.26%	4.66%	13.78%	4.64%
Female				
Employment Status	1990		2000	
	Population	Migrants	Population	Migrants
Regular/Casual Employee	17.71%	60.36%	24.28%	61.33%
Employer	0.23%	0.46%	0.90%	0.82%
Self Employed	7.29%	6.57%	5.98%	3.26%
Unpaid Family Worker	74.77%	32.60%	68.84%	34.59%
Female's Economic Activity	1990		2000	
	Population	Migrants	Population	Migrants
Agriculture	82.07%	43.03%	75.64%	42.09%

However, the female activity rate has also been regularly decreasing in Turkey. While the female labor participation rate stood at 45.8% in 1985, by 2005 it had fallen to 29.8% (Gündüz Hoşgör, 2008: 36). According to the statistics released by TURKSTAT in 2017, this figure had shown a very slight increase, rising to 32.5%.⁴⁰ In line with the data presented, there has been a decrease in agricultural employment for women: while this percentage stood at 76% in 1990, it dropped to 63% in 2001, 42% in 2006 and finally 32% in 2014. By 2018 the figure had fallen to 28%.⁴¹ While 26.8% of women are employed in the agricultural sector, this figure stands at 14.9% for men (TURKSTAT, 2017).

İlkkaracan and Tunalı describe what they call a “structural break” that occurred after 2000 in relation to the radical downturn of agricultural employment: “Unpaid family workers, regardless of gender, have the fastest declines. The decrease in female unpaid family workers of close to one million corresponds to half of the total decline, while unpaid male family workers and male own-account workers together make up the remainder” (2010: 106). As a result, this creates an even wider gender gap in rural labor markets, which is in line with the decline in the share of unpaid family workers (2010: 123). In this context, it is

Table 2.1. cont'd

Mining	0.02%	0.06%	0.03%	0.04%
Manufacturing Ind.	6.66%	12.81%	6.62%	11.14%
Electricity, Gas, Water	0.07%	0.18%	0.09%	0.13%
Construction	0.13%	0.47%	0.21%	0.31%
Trade, Restaurants, Hotels	1.64%	3.81%	3.66%	5.71%
Transport, Communication, Storage	0.46%	1.48%	0.67%	1.22%
Financial and Related	1.83%	4.96%	2.80%	5.07%
Community, Social, Personal Services	6.88%	32.32%	10.23%	34.28%

Source: TURKSTAT 1990; 2000 (Filiztekin and Gökhan 2008)

⁴⁰ Women in Statistics, March 2018, Turkish Statistical Institute, Press Release <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=27594> last visited 27.06.2019

⁴¹ The World Bank, Employment in Agriculture, Female (% of Female Employment) <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.AGR.EMPL.FE.ZS/countries?page=5> last visited 27.06.2019

important to determine the common characteristics of labor force participation rate in rural areas for women. These characteristics are revealed in Dayıoğlu and Kırdar's report "Determinants of and Trends in Labor Force Participation of Women in Turkey". Dayıoğlu and Kırdar argue that "Women become less likely to participate in the labor market as they age" and "younger cohorts of women in rural areas are less likely to participate in the labor market" (2010: 24). They point to several potential reasons underlying such a decline in labor force participation in rural areas: "geography regarding the regional differences, in and out migration, fertility rates, a fall in agricultural wages and earnings, production shift from more to less labor-intensive crops and a fall in the fraction of households engaged in self-account agriculture in rural areas" (2010: 52).

According to this report, the decline in family-run establishments, which once meant the participation rates of rural women in the labor force were higher than those of urban women, has been quite remarkable. Based on the fact that the "labor force participation rate in rural areas for women has been declining itself," Dayıoğlu and Kırdar argue that, "the fall in the importance of self-employed agriculture is not due to a transition to wage-work in agriculture but a transition to other sectors." (2010: 58) According to the 2012 TURKSTAT report on wage structure, another characteristic is the wage gap between permanent male and female agricultural workers: women workers in this area receive 858 TL (approximately \$476) per month, men receive 1128 TL (approximately \$626) (Candan & Günal, 2013: 95). The report not only shows the importance of agriculture for female labor force participation, but also give us striking clues about the repositioning of women's labor in rural areas. Dayıoğlu and Kırdar also conclude that, "The changes in agricultural activities will exert a strong influence on the trends in the labor force participation of women" (2010: 6). This leads us to think about the new rurality for women in accordance with the drastic changes on rural structures, labor markets, politics and relations.

What İlkaracan and Tunalı argue in their article “Agricultural Transformation and the Rural Labor Market in Turkey” (2010) regarding the changes in the position of women as unpaid family laborers seems to be in line with the findings of Dayıoğlu and Kırdar (2010). Dayıoğlu and Kırdar argue that “We find that the agricultural labor force is ageing at unprecedented rates as the young and women opt for nonparticipation. Women, who typically contribute to the small family farm as unpaid family labor, face the biggest challenges as the distinctions between the rural economy and the economy become blurred. Although there are signs that the rural economy took a more diverse form in the post-ARIP period (Agricultural Reform Implementation Project⁴²), rural labor markets do not appear to hold much promise for the working-age population” (2010: 120). According to the authors, the rural market has become a market, “as we know.” However, despite the fact that rural market has become more economically diversified, it is not a very promising one, especially for women. They also underline the special obstacles for rural women in the market.

To conclude, women have experienced drastic changes in rural areas, yet the existing literature does not seem to prioritize their experiences from a gender perspective. The questions underlying what happens when women who worked as unpaid family laborers shift to wage labor need further attention in the context of a new rurality. In this sense, the working experiences of peasant-worker women need to be uncovered through their own perspective, which will provide an insight into the way they evaluate and interpret the change they themselves have experienced.

⁴² This was a set of rural policies introduced after the 2001 economic crisis in Turkey. I discuss the details of the program in the next chapter, where I explore the neoliberal restructuring of agri-food relations in rural Turkey, particularly in the Bakırçay Basin in Western Anatolia.

2.2.2. Conceptual Framework

There is no doubt that gender lenses are required if rural studies are to achieve a more comprehensive analysis of the changes and transitions occurring at the moment. I argue, however, that this should not solely consist of “adding” gender dimension into existing studies (Peterson, 2005) through asking the question of how women have been affected by the process itself. However, a gendered perspective must begin by accepting that gender is one of the constitutive factors of what rural Turkey has experienced during the neoliberal period. This brings me to the one of the main aims of this thesis: How to consider this particular shift of rural women from unpaid family labor to waged labor, as one of the significant paths of rural transformation in Turkey. Özbay (2015) argues that paid work offered liberation from the patriarchal family, yet it was socially selected by age and gender. While Özbay focused on young men, we now see that it is women in the rural labor markets.

In the search for the labor practices and experiences of peasant-worker women employed in an agribusiness in a time- and space-specific context, i.e. the *Greenhouse* in the Bakırçay Basin, Izmir in the late 2010s, this study has two key concepts that elucidate those practices and experiences. These are the *gender labor regime*, in which a gendered division of labor is the main driving force in regulating both household and work relations, and the interpretation of change and transition from the *women’ perspective*, including its impact on their life. The first concept focuses primarily on the characteristics of women’s paid labor in the rural labor market with specific reference to the feminization of work. In order to have a more complete understanding of women’s work, the concept of the gender labor regime also takes into consideration reproductive work as well as work in agricultural production/husbandry. The second concept focuses on the women’s own viewpoints, which provides an elaborated understanding of the issue of empowerment regarding the case of work at the *Greenhouse*, in which

the practices of resistance, negotiation, adaptation and/or liberation are intertwined.

2.2.2.1 The Gender Labor Regime.

The concept of the gender labor regime addresses two important points: the particular characteristics of the work regime in question in the new rural reality and its specific relation to pre-existing forms of working practices, again determined by a gendered division of labor. While the first point covers an exploration of what defines the gender labor regime, in which women have integrated into the labor market as wage laborers in rural areas, the second point focuses on the trajectory of women's labor usage, taking (dis)continuities into account, when they shift from unpaid family laborer to wage laborer. The (dis)continuities are observed on the basis of care work and domestic chores, as well as women's relation to agricultural production/husbandry.

Regarding the first point, Razavi argues that, under the transition and intensified commodification in rural areas, "(...) labor regimes are likely to be gender-stratified and women are likely to be employed as a casualized labor force, with no access to land for self-subsistence and thus dependent on money wages to buy food" (2012: 4). The new gender labor regime tends to define the conditions of the jobs available.⁴³ Its precarious nature is reflected in low wages, long working hours, a lack of unionization, job insecurity, health problems, mobbing, etc.⁴⁴

⁴³ One must begin with the limited opportunities in rural labor markets for women who want to work as wage laborers in Turkey. It becomes even harder for women to find a job with social security, and most of the time women do not receive a decent income as a result of lack of alternative employment.

⁴⁴ The term "precarity" could be useful here, even though it mainly evokes the conditions and terms of urban labor markets and workers. For instance, in the study "Lost Women Workers: A Fieldwork Study of Informal Work" (my translation), Kümbetoğlu, User and Akpınar (2012) focus on informal work and women workers, showing the deep level of exploitation of women working in the food, textile and service sectors under precarious working conditions. In

In line with these precarious conditions, agribusinesses that concentrate on the non-traditional agro-export sector have been highly associated with a flexible use of feminized labor (Deere, 2005; Bain, 2010). For instance, Muñoz (2008) describes two tortilla factories located in Mexico and the USA. Despite belonging to the same company these two factories are differentiated from each other on the basis of migrant-based labor regime and a gender-based labor regime. The attributed female characteristics, the devaluation of women's work, and sexual harassment shape the gender regime in the factory located at Mexico.

Aware of the fact that the feminization of agriculture may take many forms,⁴⁵ what I try to understand in this study is the particular path it follows in relation to agro-export production. As Buğra (2013) argues, many scholars have observed similar tendencies regarding the feminization of labor when they analyze the characteristics of the post-1980s economy in Turkey. Globally relocated industrial production and the eroded position of the full-time male proletariat may push “malleable and obedient” women workers to find jobs in order to compensate for the reduced family income. Buğra states that the flexible export-based production regime may demand a women's labor force in Turkey (2013: 141). The seasonality of agricultural production seems to be helpful in legitimizing the use of flexible women's labor. Yet beyond the nature of the production cycle, flexibilization not only refers to women whose reasons to start/leave work are mostly related to “women's issues” regarding reproductive responsibilities but also abusive practices of working systems resulting in job loss/job insecurity (Maertens, 2010; Dey de Pryck & Termine, 2014). In this

accordance with that, one may even assert that precarity has gendered patterns for the women peasant-workers in rural areas.

⁴⁵ The feminization of agriculture has not had one certain definition or path, its direction and consequences differ in diverse contexts. According to the World Bank report, “Within the household, market orientation can differ with the gender of the cultivator, and women are often more likely to be engaged in subsistence farming and less likely to cultivate cash crops. Large-scale production of nontraditional and high-value agricultural exports has, however, increased women's wage work in fields, processing, and packing” (2008: 78-79).

context, this study goes one step further, as it discusses a year-round production with the same precarious conditions of those seasonal/flexible ones, that does not guarantee a stable work life in the new rural context. The concept of the gender labor regime also problematizes the attributed “female characteristics” of so-called “women's jobs”, i.e. manual dexterity, nimble fingers or obedience (Dolan & Sorby, 2003). Salzinger (2003) criticizes the attributed female characteristics as an “employer fantasy” in her study conducted in a maquila in a Mexican export-zone.

Regarding the second point related to the concept of the gender labor regime, what accompanies such women's jobs is the “devaluation of women's work”. The jobs are considered as an extension of women's reproductive labor. Undervaluation of the work performed by women with reference to the undervaluation of women's work at home or in small-scale production again shows that women's labor must be seen as a totality on the basis of its diverse forms in every sphere of life.

This thesis therefore explores the (dis)continuities that characterize the new gender labor regime and the previous regime in which women worked as unpaid family workers in small-scale agricultural production and at home. Such an exploration requires a perspective that problematizes patriarchal structures based on the gender division of labor. The way in which the pre-existing gendered labor forms in rural areas have been carried over into the new ones through the patriarchal lines provides a deeper understanding of the gender labor regimes in rural areas. Correspondingly, Bee argues that “in rural areas experiencing agro-export expansion, they are also dependent on the agrarian structure of the region and women's position within them. Agro-export expansion rarely takes place in a pristine environment, rather it is overlaid on existing social, political and economic conditions that can shape the nature of women's incorporation into the export economy” (2000: 257).

Questions about how and under what conditions female members of families of peasant origin have been integrated into rural labor markets remain mainly unanswered in the literature on rural transformation in Turkey. As discussed, the present literature does not primarily focus on gendered characteristics of the ongoing diversification away from agriculture.⁴⁶ In this context, the studies of Gündüz Hoşgör and Suzuki (2016, 2017, 2018a, 2018b) and Suzuki and Gündüz Hoşgör (2019), which focus on the employment of rural women as waged workers in export-oriented seafood-processing factory in Black Sea Region, provide significant findings. According to the authors, the mountain villages suffer from out-migration, an aging population and the end of tobacco cultivation. Under these circumstances, the role of women who participate in paid labor has been vital to those households whose income possibilities have already dried up. Gündüz Hoşgör and Suzuki underline the occupational segregation at the factory with reference to gender: while the management, transportation and marketing are run by men, the tasks that make the sea snails a commodity — cleaning, sorting, sterilizing and packaging — are carried out by women. Women's work is irregular and temporary, and requires passivity rather than physical power or technical knowledge (2016). Gündüz Hoşgör and Suzuki also analyze rural women's participation in paid labor on the basis of the (dis)empowerment of young women and the effects on intra-household relations (the father-daughter relationship in particular) in order to discuss not only the integration of women into the market economy but also to a modern form of patriarchy (2017). The authors also explore the process of feminization of aging in many forms, i.e. active aging, devaluation of the elderly and (lack of) social

⁴⁶ Participation in paid labor can take many forms besides those seen in the agro-export sector. An early study conducted by Berik (1990) used research conducted in Konya, Milas, Isparta and Niğde; in Milas and Isparta where are economically diversified and dominated by small production, the work burden may increase for both men and women yet also create — to some extent — a flexible gender division of labor. Yet in Konya and Niğde where are dominated by mechanized agriculture or that have become gradually more distanced from agricultural production as a source of income, one may see a more unequal gender division of labor and work burden. Berik argues that the minimization of the contradictions of diverse demands towards women labor is the common characteristic shared by all these different cases. In other words, when women are asked to work in carpet weaving either at home or outside, the possible contradictions are minimized through the overburden of women.

policies for the elderly in rural areas. As such, the authors look at what meaning the participation in paid work holds in the lives of elderly women, with specific reference to their own work experiences and coping strategies to overcome poverty (2018a). The authors also investigate the nature of the *rapana venosa* (a type of edible sea snail) as a “commodity” which connects the poor rural women of the Black Sea Region as producers to the poor consumers of Japan through global chains (2018b).

Atasoy (2017) focuses on the shifting relations of food and agriculture from a comparative global political economy perspective in order to understand the structural change, which she defines as “the neoliberal re-making of Turkey”. She focuses on a wide range of issues in contemporary rural Turkey, such as the commodification of land, food and labor, the expansion of supermarketization, the notion of certification and the paternalistic labor relations in agriculture. Atasoy also highlights how the changes in question coexist with traditional ways of production and marketing. Based on in-depth interviews and analysis, her study also includes historical insights. Regarding the labor regimes, she underlines the complementary nature of two labor regimes in her fieldwork, legitimized within “the institution of personalized and public paternalism” (2017: 209). These two regimes are formed by local women at a greenhouse and Kurdish migrants working in the fields in Central Anatolia.

2.2.2.2. The Women’s Perspective.

While the concept of the gender labor regime provides an understanding of women’s work both in the household, small production and in agribusiness in the changing rural area of the Bakırçay Basin, the concept of “women’s perspective” focuses on their subjectivities. I believe that the question of how the new gender labor regime has affected women’s lives and how they themselves evaluate the process will contribute to the existing literature in Turkey. In this sense, through this second concept, I try to understand how and in what ways women deal with

the possible tensions between the new multiple roles of being a wife, mother and peasant-worker: How does this (re)shape their work burden? Does it bring new forms of subordination? What kinds of new opportunities does this provide for empowerment?

Looking at the change from the perspectives of women provides a particular vantage point. The analysis of women's perspective and experiences not only explains the material domain of their specific lives, but also helps to acknowledge women's agency to intervene in that domain. Ecevit (1994) argues that attributing women to passive position ignores the essential role played by women in agricultural structures. Such an understanding may also result in an interpretation of patriarchal ideologies as inevitable and stable.

In this regard, structure and agency need to be formulated as organically linked to each other in a unity. Such an understanding attempts to overcome the dichotomy of structure and agency in which the determining power of structure on the agents is immutable. An analysis of the Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) with specific reference to their effects on the women's lives could be an example of this. While the literature discusses the nature of macro-structural changes and women's own individual lives, it views the process as though women *alone* are exposed to the SAPs or other neo-liberal rural politics. Razavi, on the other hand, underlines the importance of women's agency, arguing, "(...) that liberalization and globalization are not top-down processes manipulating women as passive pawns, but also that women are resisting: women are thus both heavily affected *and* fighting back" (2012: 4). Therefore, the question of how women respond to the big story of "globalization", "rural transformation" or "neoliberalization" must be included in the analysis, and responses to this question may provide an alternative reading of social change, from the women's perspectives. It is also important, however to take "social formation" into account; as Weeks argues, "The notion of gendered subjectivity necessarily presupposes some conception of social formation within which it is constructed

and maintained. (...) Without an understanding of such a totality, one may come across “the subject overestimating its capacities for self-creation and self-transformation” (Weeks, 2014: 183). In accordance with this view, socialist feminists prioritize the experiences of women to establish a systemic analysis of the pervasive practices of domination, in which they see the possibility for social change through the feminist struggle. It underlines women’s agency in a system in which they are not only exploited and suppressed, but of which they are also a revolutionary part through their own interventions, coping strategies and struggles (Donovan, 2014).

For this very reason, the search for the subversive potential of women’s laboring practices helps to re-define “work”, as well as women’s agency in which examples of oppression and exploitation coexist with other alternatives. The socialist feminist understanding of the issue acknowledges the construction of the alternatives, since “women’s laboring practices are not only constraining but also potentially enabling” (Weeks, 2014). The relation between women’s participation in waged labor and empowerment has been one of the most discussed topics within feminist literature. The concept has led to criticisms due to its definition being based on Western capitalism, with implications of individualism, consumerism and personal achievement. It is argued that empowerment as a process draws its strength rather from radical changes in multiple spheres that are “interpersonal, structural, psychological and discursive” (Molyneux, 1999: 868, in Erman, Kalaycıoğlu & Rittersberger-Tılıç, 2002: 395).

On this issue, Ecevit (1998) warns us not to jump to the conclusion that such participation automatically brings about women's liberation. While the positive relation between women’s liberation and waged work can only be asserted very roughly, detailed studies show us that, other than those who participate in the labor market as professionals, women’s gains are in fact rather limited. Ecevit additionally states that there are “universal” characteristics of women’s labor,

including within the labor markets in Turkey, which reflect women's secondary status and disadvantaged position.

On the other hand, limiting women's working experiences to practices of exploitation and oppression seems to be also problematic as it refuses to recognize any benefits or new possibilities working life provides for women (Lim, 1990). Pearson, for instance, makes a self-critique with reference to her well-known study "Nimble Fingers Make Cheap Workers: An Analysis of Women's Employment in Third World Export Manufacturing" (1981): "We were ignoring the ways in which that experience continually reformulated specific women's gender identities and the ways in which women were active agents in the interaction between capital accumulation and traditional forms of gender identities" (1998: 181). Pearson indicates that uncontested and undifferentiated approach to gender identities and controls leads to the analysis of women's experience in wage labor as "structurally determined by capital and patriarchy", instead of "open to negotiation and reconstitution by women workers themselves".

Similarly, Harding (2004) opens up a new discussion underlying the importance of "experiences of women" and "women's standpoint" in understanding the issue of empowerment. She argues that the "work experiences of women", i.e. "its spaces, relations and temporalities, its physical, affective and cognitive practices, its pains and pleasures" do not necessarily equate to a women's "standpoint". In this sense, "standpoint" emerges as an "achievement", something for which the oppressed groups must struggle. It is safe to argue that a standpoint is beyond a simple viewpoint or perspective since empowerment "requires a distinctive kind of knowledge (knowledge for one's projects), that kind of knowledge can emerge only through political processes" (Harding, 2004: 8).

To sum up, I attempt to understand women's empowerment as neither linear nor unidirectional when it comes to their participation in waged labor. Exploring the

patterns of women's working experiences in the new gender labor regime prioritizes women's perspectives, while they deal with new forms of subordination, as well as the multiple roles and opportunities available in the regime.



CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1. The Methodological Perspective

In this research I followed feminist methodology in order to understand and analyze the experiences of the women working at the *Greenhouse*. Aware of the fact that there is no consensus on a single definition of feminist methodology, it is still useful to underline the commonalities of such an approach.⁴⁷ The five principles outlined by Pini (2003) in her article on feminist methodology and rural research could be illuminating in this area. These principles are (1) “a focus on gender”, (2) “value given to women’s experiences”, (3) “rejection of the split between subject and object”, (4) “emphasis on empowerment” and (5) “emphasis on political change/emancipation”. Although it is important to acknowledge that none of these principles are unproblematic, they are useful in that they distinguish feminist methodology from the traditional social science methodology which does not consider the experiences of women as a source of knowledge due to its personal and private, and therefore non-generalizable, subjective nature. This is in accordance with the “androcentric bias” of traditional social science, which considers itself value-free and objective. Unlike traditional research, feminist methodology examines the political challenge and change in the gendered power relations it attempts to understand and analyze. This requires seeking an answer not only to the question of “what?” but also of “how?” Raghuram, Madge and Skelton (1998) underline two important

⁴⁷ While this research has a socialist feminist theoretical perspective, its methodological approach is defined as feminist methodology. In spite of the two different names, I argue that these two are connected to each other that they prioritize women’s experience and take it as a vantage point, with certain political motivations, to explore, analyze and change.

questions of feminist research: does the research makes women's lives visible, and does the researcher acknowledge and problematize her own position within the research?

This brings me to the hierarchical relation between researcher and researched as conditioned by traditional social science. Feminist methodology requires an attempt to empathize with the experiences of the subjects.⁴⁸ Odih defines the "conscious partiality" that is constructed by feminist research and "dialogue" (Collins, 1991, quoted in Odih, 2007) through the sharing of subjectivity, i.e. "a partial identification with the research object" (2007: 19), in other words it is neither mere subjectivism nor empathy. Instead it aims to provide a "two-way discussion" between the researcher and subject, which ultimately has something to both parties.

However, feminist methodology has also been criticized due to its essentialism. Considering women experience as a primary and direct source of knowledge is risky when it implies a unified category of women with a certain attributed consciousness. If it is considered that only the category of women can hold the knowledge of what it is to be a woman, then feminist research constitutes a regime of truth and subjugation (Odih, 2007). This necessitates an understanding of the multiple and complex experience of women. In this sense, it is safe to argue that analyzing experiences from the perspectives/standpoints of women without losing the solid ground of the feminist subject remains a hot debate. Such an analysis attempts to understand the particularity of women experiences, viewing women's lives as a particular and privileged vantage point from which to understand capitalist forms of patriarchy (Hekman, 2014). Yet, they also re-evaluate differences within "the category of women". As nicely formulated by

⁴⁸ It does not ignore the power of the researcher, as stated by Pini: "The final shift in power in the research process, the power over data, to interpret and publish was (and is) weighed in my favor. I am the one who is able to determine what is said and by whom and where this is published" (2007: 424).

Hekman, the issue is “(...) to valorize ‘the difference’, to claim that the differences among women are significant both theoretically and practically, while at the same time rejecting postmodernism on the grounds that it obviates the possibility of the systemic knowledge that is necessary for social change” (2014: 107). On this issue, Odih proposes that the experience of the women as a significant starting point for research, “the production of sociological knowledge necessitates that these first-person narratives are theorized” (Odih, 2007: 19). As Armstrong argues, “Through sharing these experiences, feminist theorists have sought to understand them within the context of larger social structures and processes, to show how these structures and processes shape and are shaped by women’s work” (1990: 12-13). Likewise, Weeks (2014) underlines the necessity of the “specific connections” that should be located between everyday lives and practices and the “larger framework of social structures within which they are organized”.

The principles of feminist methodology summarized above become more important, when it comes to the area of interest in this research, i.e. women’s laboring practices, since there has always been a threat of the experiences of male employment being generalized to reflect the experiences of women. As a result, the male experience set the standard that causes the differences in working conditions or in paid employment are ignored (Armstrong, 1990).⁴⁹ The methodology followed in this research values women’s experience and attempts to make it visible. In addition, the learning process in the field that arises from the interaction between researcher and interviewees makes the research a dynamic and flexible process. In this context, it “enables movement parallel to the movement of labor” (Ertürk, 1998: 105).

⁴⁹ This does not, however, mean that feminist research aims to construct *another* category composed of experiences of women employment in return. Rather, the aim is via embracing the differences between women in order to uncover and reveal the process by which gender is constructed.

As I focused on how the women of the *Greenhouse* perceive and experience laboring practices, I preferred to employ qualitative research techniques. Data were primarily gathered through in-depth interviews and participatory observation via fieldwork for the case study. Even though there is an ethnographic aspect to my research methods in that I conducted the fieldwork on the basis of being part of the women's daily lives (such as participating in the production process at the *Greenhouse*, and spending the day and night with the women in their homes), it is still difficult to say that it is pure ethnographic research, because I carried out the fieldwork periodically, and there was no uninterrupted period of research spent in the Bakırçay Basin. I also made use of statistical data such as the numbers of women employed in diverse sectors in the rural labor markets, the cultivated area used for agricultural production in the Bakırçay Basin, or the income levels of the rural population in Western Anatolia. The data helped me to understand the structural changes that occurred after the late 1990s and 2000s in the Bakırçay Basin. Before proceeding to the introduction of the case study and fieldwork, it is important to mention that in spite of selecting the case with a theoretical awareness, given the nature of the data the aim of this research is not to verify the theory. Likewise, it does not claim "statistical representation and quantitative verification" (Ertürk, 1998). On the other hand, as Kandiyoti (2012) states, qualitative analysis is used as an explorative analysis tool. In other words, it focuses on the trends, patterns and tendencies of peasant-worker women's labor in the rural Bakırçay Basin after the 2000s.

3.1.1. Contextualizing the Bakırçay Basin during the Neoliberal Restructuring of Agri-Food Relations in Rural Turkey

The macro politics characterize the neoliberal restructuring of rural Turkey dates back to 1980,⁵⁰ a time when privatization, free trade, the elimination of subsidies and the re-organization of administrative structures had become topical issues (Günaydın, 2009; Oral, 2006). Yet the radical implementation of these had to wait for the severe economic crisis of 2001 (Aydın, 2010, 2017).⁵¹ The early 2000s also overlaps with the emergence and rise of agribusinesses in the form of greenhouses in the Bakırçay Basin, Western Anatolia. This section, therefore, aims to give an idea of how and under what conditions the *Greenhouse* came to the scene. In this sense, first I briefly summarize the rural politics of the period, and then give space to the effects of these politics on the small producer masses in the Bakırçay Basin.

3.1.1.1. Rural Politics in Turkey in the 2000s: Neoliberal Restructuring.

The Agricultural Reform Implementation Project (ARIP) was initiated immediately after the economic crisis of 2001. Its primary object was to provide

⁵⁰ The economic crisis of 1994 also helped the neoliberal policies to be embraced and implemented. The set of neoliberal policies known as the “Decisions of 1994” (*1994 Kararları*) was a significant example of this. Furthermore, agriculture was one of the five fields to be reformed in the “Staff Monitoring Agreement” signed with the IMF in 1998. Boratav (2009) characterized the period between 1998 and 2007 as the “IMF-World Bank Regime” with an emphasis on neo-liberal pro-market policies. Agriculture was considered a burden on the state, and in order for this burden to be lifted the state must refrain from engaging in any manner of economic interventionism. “The IMF and the World Bank regard the ‘state’ and the ‘market’ as two polar opposites with respect to the optimal use of resources: state action is believed to lead to waste, while the free market is seen as the most effective guarantor of efficient resource use” (Aydın, 2001: 16). The policies that took shape around this framework and in the process of conforming to the EU Common Agricultural Policy led to radical changes in the rural sphere.

⁵¹ Keyder and Yenal (2013) offer some possible reasons for this delay: inner discussions of the World Trade Organization on the free trade of agricultural-food products, Turkey’s European Union candidacy during the late 1990s, the political atmosphere in Turkey during the 1990s (coalition governments and the various parties’ desire to win votes) and finally the prominence of the politics of the IMF and the World Bank, especially after the economic crisis of 2001.

fiscal rationalization for public support to agriculture in a wider agricultural development agenda. During its first stage (2000-2005), the project implemented certain reforms on agricultural subsidies to reduce fiscal support to state and quasi-state marketing enterprises and credit subsidies and debt write-offs. The second stage of the project (2005-2008) focused on competitive agricultural production and rural development measures. This included strengthening farmers' organization, the introduction of agri-environment schemes, the instigation of land consolidation activities and credit support. Öztürk argues that ARIP was "Made in the context also of Turkey's growing linkage to the EU (...) and with the end goal for the agricultural sector that the country will be in line with the EU Common Agricultural Policy, CAP – Turkey made many commitments in the context of the IMF stand-by agreement in 1999 and letters of intent that followed including the Economic Reform Credit Agreement with the World Bank in 2000, and the Agricultural Reform Implementation Project (ARIP) instigated in 2001. (2012: 90). The commitments on the basis of radical liberalization led to the privatization of state agricultural monopolies such as TEKEL (cigarettes and beverages), TŞFAŞ (sugar), and ÇAYKUR (tea)⁵² as well as rendering agricultural sales cooperatives dysfunctional. The cooperatives lost their power to regulate production and marketing conditions for the most important agricultural products such as grapes, figs, olives, tobacco, hazelnuts, cotton and sunflowers. Other than hazelnuts and sunflowers, these products are all widely associated with the region of Western Anatolia.

⁵² As Büke mentions, the full list of privatizations and dysfunctional institutions is striking: *Husbandry*: The Meat and Fish Board (EBK); Meat and Fish Products Inc. (EBAŞ); Gönen Food Industry Inc.; The Milk Industry Board of Turkey (SEK); Fodder Industry Inc. (YEMSAN). *Input production and distribution*: The General Directorate of Agricultural Enterprises (TİGEM); The Board of Agricultural Equipment of Turkey (TZDK); Turkish Fertilizer Industry Inc. (TÜGSAŞ); Istanbul Fertilizer Industry Inc. (İGSAŞ); The Agricultural Bank of the Republic of Turkey (T.C. Ziraat Bankası). *The production, storing, marketing and commerce of agricultural crops*: The General Directorate of Tobacco, Tobacco Products, Salt and Alcohol Enterprises (TEKEL); Sugar Factories Turkey Inc. (TŞFAŞ); The General Directorate of Tea Enterprises (ÇAYKUR); Agricultural Sales Cooperatives Union (TSKB). (Günaydın, 2010: 166-167; cf. Aydın, 2017: 259, in Büke 2019:11, my translation).

Furthermore, during the implementation period of the ARIP, a new system, known as “Direct Income Support” (DIS), was introduced. Through this system direct payments were given to “(...) target groups that are not linked to production, input or income level. It is generally suggested for the purpose of liberalizing the global agricultural trade by mitigating the market distortions” (Bayaner & Bor, 2006: 15-20). The price-policy intervention by the state, (i.e. setting prices in supported purchases according to the global commodity exchange) was abandoned. Subsidized credits with minimum interest provided to producers by the Agricultural Bank were also abandoned. Support for input costs was swept away, after which producers found themselves in a system of agricultural production clearly demarcated with one of the most expensive input costs.

In other words, the DIS (for five years) and the Alternative Crops Projects (one year) were formulated as “stopgap measures to smooth the effects of radical neoliberal transition. Alternative Crops Projects aimed to bring about a shift from traditional agricultural products (such as tobacco, hazelnut or cotton) to alternative ones via help with the costs of input, care and harvest of the alternative products. A budget of US\$ 161.6 million was allocated to reduce the areas used to grow hazelnut and tobacco with the aim of shifting from the production of these crops to new crop varieties. In general, the restructuring of agricultural production, i.e. the shift from traditional to alternative products could be seen as the main target of these projects. The aim was to open the national market to international capital penetration in the form of transnational corporations (Aydın, 2010: 13-14).

DIS sharpened the inequalities already present in rural Turkey. As the support was distributed on the basis of the title deed, sharecroppers and tenant farmers — whose importance for agricultural production cannot be ignored — were automatically excluded, while absentee landowners were rewarded even though they were not directly involved in the production process. This led to a

decoupling from production for many households. The direct support was provided to every landowner who possessed up to 50 hectares of land, a rather large plot size when compared to the average, considering that “More than 90% of farm households have no more than 20 ha of land, and 66% of all holdings are less than 5 ha in size. The latter is mainly oriented towards self-sufficiency and have lower than average income” (OECD, 2011: 19).⁵³ DIS accelerated the over-production of certain crops at the expense of others, which multiplied the risk of loss of agricultural diversity and food sovereignty. DIS payments ended in 2008 due to the reasons mentioned above.

Numerous reforms were introduced in line with the intended shift from traditional to alternative crops. Very briefly, I will only focus on the certain laws that regulate tobacco production, use of meadow and pastures, soil preservation and land utilization and land consolidation. They have dramatically affected the region of Western Anatolia in terms of small-scale production and husbandry.⁵⁴ The Tobacco Law passed in 2001 primarily aimed at the withdrawal of the state from tobacco production. The motivation behind the desire to reduce tobacco production was based on production figures provided by the State Treasury for 1998 and 1999. It was asserted that more tobacco was being produced than TEKEL (State Monopoly for Tobacco, Cigarettes and Alcoholic Beverages) could buy. However, according to TURKSTAT and TEKEL, the total tobacco production stood at 144,000 tons in 2001 and 153,000 tons in 2002. These

⁵³ Alongside more commercial farms/agribusinesses, the majority of agricultural holdings in rural Turkey are small-size, family-run and fragmented. The total utilized area of agricultural land in 2018 was 37.797.000 ha. (41.196.000 ha in 2002), while the average size of agricultural holdings in 2001 was 6.1 ha. (<http://www.tuik.gov.tr/UstMenu.do?metod=temelist>, last visited 11.11.2019). According to research on the agricultural structure in Turkey conducted by TURKSTAT in 2016, 80.7% of the total holdings were less than 10 ha, while their land formed 29.1% of the total land. The majority of agricultural land holdings were less than 50 ha in size.

⁵⁴ Other significant legal changes include the Seed Law (2006), the Wholesale Market Law (2010), the Municipality Law (2012) and the Irrigation Associations Law (2011) (Büke, 2019). Değirmenci (2017) draws attention to Seed Law (2006) which was updated in 2018 to prevent producers from using the seeds without certificates.

figures were well below the annual domestic demand of 180,000 tons announced by the State Treasury itself (Aydın, 2010: 13). At the time the law was signed, tobacco was cultivated in 5,001 villages by a total of 575,796 families. Most tobacco-producing households had to abandon tobacco cultivation, and once the producers stopped cultivation, tobacco factory workers also lost their job. According to the numbers given by Aydın, the numbers of tobacco-producing households fell from 583,400 in 2000 to 222,400 in 2006, while tobacco production dropped from 208,000 tons in 2000 to 117,600 tons in 2006 (2010: 23). The recent statistics given by Turkish Statistical Institute for 2018 show that the area used for tobacco planting was 929,368 decare, while production was 80,200 tons,⁵⁵ revealing a steady decrease.

As a result, transnational companies have started to dominate the tobacco and cigarette market. While TEKEL was sold to the British American Tobacco Company in 2008, Japan Tobacco International started production in 1993 in a factory in Torbalı, Western Anatolia. That factory has become one of the leading production sites among the factories owned by the company globally. Of the products produced there, 20% are exported to over 30 countries.⁵⁶ TEKEL stopped its support purchases from producers at advantageous prices (additionally, grape-processing factories owned by TEKEL ceased purchasing grapes from producers). Production was restricted through the quota system and the role of intermediaries became stronger. Along with the end of subsidies, contract-based production has led to an even more drastic reduction in the area used for tobacco production.

The number of tobacco-producing households also fell dramatically. According to Akçaöz, Kızılay and Özçatalbaş (2010), the number of tobacco-producer

⁵⁵ http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreTablo.do?alt_id=1001, last visited 27.06.2019.

⁵⁶ <https://www.jti.com/middle-east/turkey>, last visited 27.05.2019.

households fell by 49% between 1999 and 2004. In the 2010s, the figure stood at approximately 50,685 (Aysu, 2013: 14). The Chamber of Agricultural Engineers indicates that the age of tobacco producers rose to 45 in 2015. Having calculated the average of the last five years, the annual income of the tobacco producer is 9,146 TL, (\$3,425) which is below the minimum wage.⁵⁷ The figures work out at an approximate monthly income of \$300 in 2017, which is again below the minimum wage. Then the average age of tobacco producers in Western Anatolia increased to 47 in 2017, which reflects younger generations leaving tobacco production (Report of the Tobacco Experts Association, 2017). The latest report of the Tobacco Experts Association (2018) shows that the total cost per kilo is 15.16 TL (\$4.33) yet it is sold at just to 16.70 TL (\$4.77). This again falls below the minimum wage, since the average production per household is 1500 kg annually.⁵⁸ By 2018, it was little higher for the province of Izmir: the average cost of tobacco per kilo was 16.80 TL (\$6.25) while the average selling price was 21.75 TL. The profit does not always cover costs and expenses.⁵⁹ Furthermore, we can extrapolate from these figures that the producer earns no more than what s/he would as a (daily) laborer on her/his own field.

Changes in production design is shown in the table below. While production of traditional agricultural crops has shrunk on the basis of sown area and production level in tons, the share of alternative crops seems to be on the rise. The decrease in the former compensates with an increase in fertility due to the “advanced” technology in terms of seed, fertilizer and/or pest control. The driving force of agricultural production, especially for export, are fresh fruits and vegetables. The area used for planting vegetable gardens and fruit, beverage and spice crops in

⁵⁷ http://www.zmo.org.tr/genel/bizden_detay.php?kod=23479&tipi=38&sube=0, last visited 26.07.2019).

⁵⁸ http://tutuneksper.org.tr/files/sidebar/Tutun_Raporu_2018.pdf, last visited 26.07.2019.

⁵⁹ <https://izmir.tarimorman.gov.tr/Menu/90/2018-Yili>, last visited 27.06.2019.

the total utilized agricultural lands rises from 3.604.000 hectares out of 41.196.000 hectares in 2002 to 4.241.000 hectares out of 37.797.000 hectares in 2018. In line with that, the share of area of cereals and other products fell from 68,318 hectares in 2002 to 53,989 hectares in 2018 in Izmir.⁶⁰

Table 3.1. Sown Area and Production in Tons for Certain Crops in Turkey, 2002-18

Crop	Sown area (da)		
	Production in tons		
	2002	2011	2018
Wheat	93,000,000	80,960,000	72,992,701
	19,500,000	21,800,000	20,000,000
Barley	36,000,000	28,688,331	26,119,403
	8,300,000	7,600,000	7,000,000
Rye	1,500,000	1,276,530	1,109,025
	255,000	365,750	320,000
Corn	5,000,000	5,890,000	5,919,003
	22,100,000	4,200,000	5,700,000
Sugar Beet	3,724,680	2,972,648	2,921,044
	16,523,166	16,126,489	17,436,100
Potato	1,980,000	1,429,849	1,359,373
	5200,000	4,613,071	4,550,000
Raw Cotton	7,210,770	5,420,000	5,186,342
	2,541,832	2,580,000	2,570,000
Sunflower	5,500,000	6,557,000	7,344,651
	850,000	1,335,000	1,949,229
Soybean	255,000	264,209	328,483
	75,000	102,260	140,000
Safflower	400	131,668	146,932
	25	18,228	35,000

⁶⁰ <https://biruni.tuik.gov.tr/bolgeselistatistik/tabloOlustur.do>, last visited 26.07.2019.

Tomato (Only production)	9,450,000	11,003,433 7,573,431 (table) 3,430,002 (paste)	12,150,000 8,414,920 (table) 3,735,080 (paste)
Grape	5,300,000 3,500,000	4,725,454 4,269,351	4,170,410 3,933,000

Source: TURKSTAT, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Ministry of Customs and Trade and Turkish Statistical Institute.

Like agricultural production, husbandry in rural Turkey is mostly small-scale, as shown by the table below. Research on agricultural holdings with cattle reveals the huge gap, with the percentage of businesses owning less than 50 cattle making up forming 95.5% of the total, while the number of businesses with 300 or more cattle forms just 0.2% of the total of such businesses in Turkey. However, the total number of cattle owned by these businesses represents 14.4% of the total number of cattle in Turkey.⁶¹

Table 3.2. Holding Structure of Husbandry in Rural Turkey

Number of Animals	Total Share
1-4	44.5%
5-9	22.2%
10-19	17%
20-49	11.8%
50-149	3.9%
150-299	0.4%
300 and more	0.2%

Source: “Research on Agricultural Structures”, TURKSTAT, 2016

⁶¹ The small agricultural holdings tend to shrink, compared to the past: “Farms rearing bovine animals (cattle and buffalo) are concentrated in the holding size-group of 1-4 heads (60%), whereas the number of bovine animals is concentrated in the holding size-group with 10-19 heads (25%) (TurkStat, 2008)” (OECD, 2011: 21).

The crisis of small-scale husbandry resembles that of agricultural production. Rising expenses, low profits, decreasing subsidies, increasing import of animal products and the unwillingness of the younger generations to continue to work in this area are the main sources of complaints. As such, for those involved in small-scale husbandry, meadows and pastures, i.e. “the commons”, become of vital importance, and their loss is not sustainable for the majority of stockbreeders. Yet, the Meadow Law⁶² (2011) legitimizes the misuse of pastures and meadows. According to this law, the Energy Market Regulatory Authority (EPDK) and the Ministry of Energy became the main actors. On demand of the Ministry of Energy, it would be possible to establish infrastructure facilities and plants for the production/extraction of energy, electricity, natural gas, petroleum and minerals in meadows and pastures. They would also be used for the new settlements to be established in the disaster areas. Tanrıvermiş and Aliefendioğlu (2019) state that although the meadows are non-registered public lands for the benefit of the rural population, they can be expropriated through declassification by the relevant provincial governorate commission as “meadow and rangeland”. After this, the areas can be registered and used by the Treasury for new investments.

Laws regulating “soil protection and land utilization” and “land consolidation” also brought radical change. The Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock states that “Legal arrangements are carried out in order to prevent the fragmentation of agricultural lands. Within this scope the, “Indivisible Parcel Size” regulation was introduced, which prevented the fragmentation of special product lands and marginal agricultural lands to less than two hectares, cultivated agricultural lands to less than 0.5 hectare and greenhouse agricultural lands to less than 0.3 hectare. The sale of agricultural parcel shares the area of which is lower than the Indivisible Parcel Size was prohibited. (...) In the last three years; a total of 4.2 million agricultural parcels were transferred to the heirs

⁶² The full name of this law is the “Regulation on the Amendment of Pasture Regulation” (<https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2005/04/20050412-4.htm>, last visited 12.10.2019).

without division and 651 thousand hectares of agricultural land was prevented from fragmentation by sale. While 450 thousand hectares of land in total was consolidated in Turkey between 1961 and 2002, i.e. over 41 years, 5 million hectares of land was consolidated between 2003 and 2016, i.e. just 14 years. It is planned to achieve land consolidation of 14 million hectares.⁶³ In 2006, 45% of agricultural lands below 0.5 hectares, 64% of agricultural lands between 0.5-0.9 hectares, and 84% of the agricultural lands that are between 1-1.9 ha are composed of two or more pieces in rural Turkey. The percent of landholding below 2nd hectares is 22% (Değirmenci, 2017: 774).

The outcome of the ARIP could be summarized in the following way: “(...) an overall contraction in crop production (of 6%), in livestock numbers (of 20%) and in the use of previously subsidized inputs (particularly chemical fertilizers which have dropped by over 25%)” (Jacoby 2008: 259). Following the closing of ARIP period,⁶⁴ which was characterized by the DIS, another product-based support called the Agricultural Basin Model — rural Anatolia is divided into 30 basins — was introduced. According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the aim of this support was, “to plan and increase production while protecting natural resources and implement an efficient and rational agricultural support policy based on agricultural basins. For each basin, the strategic, specific, supply deficit and competitive products have been selected. (...) The products to be

⁶³ “Structural Changes and Reforms on Turkish Agriculture 2003-2013”, https://www.tarimorman.gov.tr/SGB/TARYAT/Belgeler/Faaliyet%20Kitapları/ENG_TURKIYE_GENELI.pdf, last visited 02.08.2019.

⁶⁴ The ARIP had a huge impact on the small-producer masses, yet there were irregularities in terms of implementation that were highly criticized by actors such as the OECD. The Agricultural Law adopted in 2006 was criticized for not being market-oriented. It “(...) defines support linked to production as a key instrument of agricultural policy, thus undermining ARIP’s market-oriented objectives and moving Turkey further away from the principles of the reformed CAP. Consequently, as from 2006, producer support based on commodity output increased, while DIS payments decreased and were eventually abolished, in 2009. However, area-based payments, such as the so-called ‘fertilizer’ and ‘diesel’ payments, are increasing in importance. Moreover, import protection remains unchanged, with major staples and related products being heavily protected, while protection on net-imported products and on intermediate inputs to export-oriented manufacturing is relatively lower” (OECD, 2011: 11).

supported have been identified by determining the regions where the products that are most efficiently produced using Agricultural Basins' data. Moreover, in order to plan and lead the fruit production and increase the exportation, the suitable basins have been determined for the fruit species and the product maps have been prepared.”⁶⁵ As such, there was a focus on competitive export-based fruit production with selective support.

Oyan (2010) criticizes the Basin Model.⁶⁶ Sixteen products (out of 150 different crops cultivated throughout rural Anatolia) were supported, yet these were already supported before the Basin Model, and production rates generated by the changes made within the Model were not as high as expected. With the implementation of the Basin Model, 2.9 billion TL (equivalent to \$1.34 billion in 2010) support would be increased to 3.9 billion TL (equivalent to \$1.80 billion in 2010). While support to oil seeds (sunflower, soya bean, canola, cotton and safflower) increased the most, a sharp decrease was seen in the support for olive, corn and wheat. The Basin Model seems to have many problematic elements. First of all, it was not clear how or under what criteria the supports would be distributed. There was also a lack of long-term planning and of a detailed program for the producers to decide when/what to cultivate.⁶⁷ In addition, there were certain products (such as wheat, barley and corn) that were supported in every basin, which means the farmers from South or North Anatolia would, receive the same support, despite the fact that fertility rates for those crops vary in different regions. Another problematic aspect is that support for wheat and corn fell, even though the production of these crops barely met the needs of the

⁶⁵ http://www.tarim.gov.tr/Belgeler/ENG/changes_reforms.pdf#search=basin%20system, last visited 02.08.2019.

⁶⁶ <http://www.bianet.org/biamag/bianet/119405-tarimda-dogrudan-gelir-destegi-bitti-sira-havza-bazli-modelde>

⁶⁷ Yıldırım, A. E. Agriculture: Strategy Documents and Reality (*Tarımda Strateji Belgeleri ve Gerçekler*) Perspectives, No. 6-3, Heinrich Böll Stiftung.
http://tr.boell.org/sites/default/files/perspectives_6_dergi_taslak_tr_son.pdf

country. The Basin Model also increased import rates⁶⁸ and exclude traditional crops such as hazelnuts, sugar beet or tobacco.

In 2017 the number of basins rose to 945, with each town with an agricultural production now considered a “basin”.⁶⁹ The high number of basins creates

⁶⁸ This is an outcome not only of the Basin Model, but also of the others policies that preceded it. The export/import figures for certain crops in Turkey in 2018 are shown in the table below.

Table 3.3. Export and Import: Production in Tons and Value for Certain Crops

Product	Import in Tons	Import in Value (thousand \$)	Export in Tons	Export in Value (thousand \$)
Wheat	5,781,340	1,289,013	30,532	10,898
Barley	655,533	150,359	4,033	846
Oat	-	-	38	17
Paddy	59,625	21,927	83	86
Raw Cotton	766,947	1,408,406	154,340	246,246
Sunflower	712,122	361,115	47,474	114,590
Corn	2,119,446	421,266	48,107	18,205
Soybean	2,660,353	1,115,398	21,220	12,079
Safflower	47,927	11,127	611	234
Cole	21,486	10,631	40	27
Lentil	355,324	156,942	298,574	194,235
Chickpea	92,959	118,613	117,413	102,693
Dried Beans	37,423	41,300	19,830	24,430
Potato	21,729	14,852	261,584	26,576
Sugar Beet	466	8,362	16	26

Source: TURKSTAT, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

⁶⁹ <https://www.tarimorman.gov.tr/sgb/Belgeler/SagMenuVeriler/BUGEM.pdf>, last visited page 22.11.2019

suspicion about the legitimacy of the categorization of rural areas as “basins”. Although there are 21 crops eligible for support, the subsidies are still far from adequate. To conclude, the Basin Model seems to be incapable of solving the problems in agriculture. On the contrary, it again sharpens the existing inequalities.

Large-scale businesses, for instance, have benefited from interest free credits, further plans or direct supports to input costs. According to the report by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry,⁷⁰ “The agricultural credit interest rate which was 59% in 2002, became interest free for irrigation, forage crops, fisheries, certified seed, seedling, sapling production, modernization of greenhouses, livestock activities and interest rate decreased to 8,25% for other agricultural activities in 2013” (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, 2016: 35). Large-scale businesses are further supported if they are export-oriented.⁷¹ Çakmak also underlines that large-scale businesses benefit most from the support. In 2015, producers were provided the subsidies worth \$3.7 billion. While 55% of these producers received less than 1000 TL, their share in the total subsidies was only 10%. On the other hand, only 4% of producers received more than 10,000 TL yet, their share in the total subsidies was 40% (2016:21).

Recently, market prices accounted for 72% of producer support in 2016-18 dominate the supports. This figure is composed of domestic price support, tariffs,

⁷⁰https://www.tarimorman.gov.tr/SGB/TARYAT/Belgeler/Faaliyet%20Kitapları/ENG_TURKIYE_GENELI.pdf last visited 15.09.2010

⁷¹ Direct supports to input costs are introduced on the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry website as follows: Diesel and Fertilizer Subsidy — 15.35 TL/da, Good Greenhouse Farming Subsidy — 150 TL/da, TARSİM (Greenhouse Insurance) Subsidy — 50% of the policy, Greenhouse Bombus Bee Subsidy — (with a maximum of 2 da, 60 TL/Colony, Subsidy to Support the Use of Biological and Biotechnological Solutions in Greenhouse Plant Production — (package total) 520 TL/da, Small Family Business Subsidy — 100 TL/da for greenhouse owners with lands under 5 da.
<https://www.tarimorman.gov.tr/Konular/Bitkisel-Uretim/Tarla-Ve-Bahce-Bitkileri/Ortu-Alti-Yetistircilik>, last visited 15.09.2019

other import barriers, payments based on output, variable input use and commodity output. Other payments are also given to producers, such as premium payments (deficiency payments) and payment on the basis of current area and animal numbers (such as agricultural insurance programs). There has been a significant decline in the total support to agriculture as a share of GDP since the mid-1990s (OECD, 2019: 417-418).

In addition, the Ministry introduced the idea of Agriculture-Based Specialized Organized Industrial Zones (*Tarıma Dayalı İhtisas Organize Sanayi Bölgesi*), regulations for which were made and announced in the Official Gazette in 2017 under the name *Regulations for Agriculture-Based Specialized Organized Industrial Zones*.⁷² There is no doubt that the question of how these zones will restructure rural areas in Turkey will occupy contemporary discussions on non-traditional use of land and labor. According to Ekber Yıldırım (2019) that there are currently over 25 such zones. The provinces of Amasya, Van, Ankara, Eskişehir, Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, Malatya, Elazığ, Kars, Şanlıurfa, Sivas, Afyon, Erzincan, Gümüşhane, Çorum and Hatay focus on stockbreeding, while Denizli, Ağrı, Samsun, İzmir, Adana, Zonguldak and Yalova are selected for greenhouse cultivation and the cut-flower sector. These zones are again planned to be constructed on common pastures and land belonging to the Treasury. However, Ekber Yıldırım also says this is not a well-planned and feasible idea, since important parameters such as the suitability of the land for such an investment, possibilities for production, suitability of the selected product or export are generally ignored.⁷³

⁷² <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2017/11/20171125-4.htm>, last visited 15.09.2019.

⁷³ <https://www.tarimdunyasi.net/2018/11/12/tarimda-yeni-moda-ihisas-organize-sanayi-bolgesi-kurmak/>, last visited 15.09.2019.

3.1.1.2. Outcomes on the Bakırçay Basin, Western Anatolia

The region of Western Anatolia could be considered as one of the regions in which the commercialization of agriculture and integration into the market economy had already begun during the 19th century under Ottoman rule (Pamuk, 2005), a process that continued under the Republic (Kasaba, 1988). The export of fig, raisin, grape and cotton was significant. Keyder and Yenal underline the unevenness in the transformation of the countryside “(...) mostly because markets have penetrated into different regions in a staggered manner. The Mediterranean and the Aegean littoral, along with parts of the Black Sea coastal strip, integrated into markets relatively early, with peasants transforming into petty commodity producers” (2011: 62).

In order to understand the extent of rural transformation in the Bakırçay Basin, it is important first to take a look at the historical background of rurality and agriculture in the area. Gürel (2014) argues that Western Anatolia had a complicated landholding structure during the 19th century. The majority of producers were from the small peasantry who either had their own land or were tenant farmers on a second party's land (regardless of land ownership). This reality co-existed with big landowners and capitalist farms owned by foreigners (mainly British). By 1868, one third of the agricultural land in Izmir and around had been bought by British capitalists, by the 1890s the area of foreign-owned land had reached between 2,400,000 and 2,800,000 decares (2014: 315). Therefore, the small peasantry in the form of a non-dispossessed semi-proletariat was historically present in Western Anatolia.

Throughout history Izmir, as the leading city of the region, has been a prominent port connecting Europe to Asia. In the mid-19th century the city and its hinterland was selected by the Ottoman Empire as the most important site to apply its project of integration to European capitalism. The first railway constructed in the Ottoman Anatolia was the Izmir-Aydın line, completed in

1865. During the period 1912–1922, Christian communities, especially the large Greek population of Smyrna (Izmir) and the region, were excluded from the region's economy and agricultural production as a result of nationalization processes that culminated in ethnic cleansing/population exchange following the Greek–Turkish war of 1919-1922. The TARİŞ cooperative⁷⁴ — which for a long time was one of the biggest companies in Turkey— was established in 1912. The Izmir Economic Congress, the first economic congress in the history of the newly founded Turkish Republic, was held in Izmir in 1923. The aim of the Congress was to determine the economic policies in order to achieve economic independence, which was considered as a necessary step for achieving the political independence of the country. Likewise, two significant political parties, the Liberal Republican Party (1930) and the Democrat Party (1950) were very active and influential in the region due to their liberal economic positions. Gündüz Hoşgör and Smits (2006) say that mechanization and links to the capitalist market had already taken place in the 1950s, differentiating Western Anatolia from other parts of the country.

While small cultivated plots dominate rural Western Anatolia, one can also find a relatively high number of larger and more commercial and specialized farms. A wide range of agricultural crops are produced and exported due to the advantageous climatic conditions and fertile lands of the region. When we consider that fresh fruit and vegetables are the driving force of agricultural export in Turkey, the region takes on even greater importance. Western Anatolia is also one of the most mechanized agricultural regions in Turkey, with the number of tractors and other equipment used in agriculture and husbandry being relatively high. According to data from the Union of Turkish

⁷⁴ TARİŞ is the combination of syllables from the Turkish words for “agriculture” (*tarım*) and “work” (*iş* –here used to refer to İşbank, the first bank founded in the Republic of Turkey). The Aydın Cooperative of Fig Producers, a corporation established in 1915, was also regarded as the foundation of TARİŞ. The name TARİŞ is shared by the four main sales cooperatives in Western Anatolia: TARİŞ Raisins Agricultural Sales Cooperatives Union, TARİŞ Cotton and Oil Seeds Agricultural Sales Cooperatives Union, TARİŞ Fig Agricultural Sales Cooperatives Union and the, TARİŞ Olive and Olive Oil Agricultural Sales Cooperatives Union.

Chambers of Agriculture, the region ranks first in the number of tractors bought, with a total of 15,360 in 2018.⁷⁵ Tourism, especially in the coastal areas, is one of the most important sources of income for the region. Rich underground resources make the region “attractive” for new investments in wind, thermic and geothermal energy and mining.

The Bakırçay Basin consists of the towns and villages of the districts of Bergama, Kınık, Dikili and Aliğa⁷⁶ on mountainous and lowland terrains. Located in the North Aegean, they are districts of the province of Izmir, the third biggest province in Turkey. The Bakırçay Basin has a rich and diversified rural life and economy in terms of crop patterns, production for both market and subsistence, tendencies for proletarianization, commodification of land, patterns of migration, mechanization of agriculture, off-farm employment possibilities, links to (inter)national markets and diverse ethnic-religious rural populations.

⁷⁵ <https://www.tzob.org.tr/basin-odasi/haberler/traktorde-artist-oraninda-guneydogu-dogu--sayida-ege-ic-anadolu-marmara...>, last visited 7.07.2019).

⁷⁶ The industrial town of Aliğa is not a primary focus of in this study.

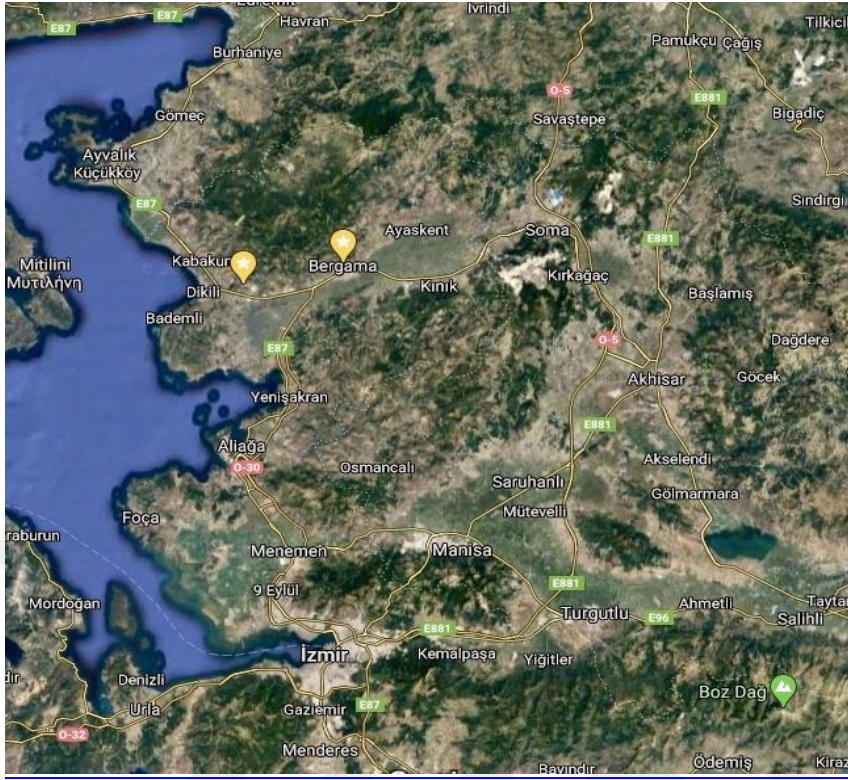


Figure 3.1. Location of the Bakırçay Basin

The Bakırçay Basin is a highly area region where irrigated agriculture is predominant on large arable lands, especially on the plains, thanks to the Bakırçay River of Bakırçay which is 129 kilometers in length and flows through the provinces of Izmir and Manisa. Agricultural production covers a wide range of crops: cotton, wheat, barley, oat, varieties of corn and bean, fig, onion, garlic, potato, sunflower, olive, cabbage, celery, spinach, leek, tomato, melon, watermelon, squash, okra, eggplant, cucumber, carrot, radish, grape, pomegranate, plum, cherry, peach, apricot, walnut, almond, chestnut, pear, quince and pine nut. The villages, especially those located in the Bergama and Kınık plains, are the biggest tomato and pepper production centers in the region. They produce both for the local area and the big cities in the vicinity. Even

though monoculture-based agriculture exhausts the land, the region still boasts surprisingly high agricultural efficiency rates.⁷⁷

The majority of agricultural holdings are small in size, and it is rare to find a holding with more than 50 hectares of agricultural land.⁷⁸ A decrease in the number of holdings with the smallest land area has been observed in these three towns through the statistics of the Farmer Registration System.⁷⁹ Although the changes in holding size and tendency toward land consolidation were frequently mentioned by the producers that I interviewed, there is a need for detailed research to compare historical data on the basis of average holding size and landownership characteristics in the region.

⁷⁷ 600 kilos of cotton and 10 tons of tomatoes can be harvested per decare. One of the agricultural engineers that I interviewed told me these numbers were much higher than the ones taught in their higher education textbooks at the Faculty of Agriculture.

⁷⁸ Table 3.4. Number of Holding Units in Bergama, Dikili and Kınık in 2018

Town	0.1 – 5 ha	5 – 10 ha	10 – 20 ha	20 – 50 ha	50 ha +	Total
Bergama	6100	1900	900	285	15	9200
Dikili	729	314	161	67	14	1285
Kınık	1500	340	60	8	-	1908

Source: Bergama Chamber of Commerce, Annual Report 2018, <https://berto.org.tr/faaliyet-raporlari/>, last visited 12.10.2019

⁷⁹ The Farmer Registration System was established in 2000. It aims at providing a central database to evaluate, report and control the agricultural subsidies. It is mandatory for farmers to be registered in the system in order to benefit from the subsidies. An agricultural engineer based in the Dikili Directorate of Agriculture and Forestry states that the number of small-scale producers has been in decline. In the year 2000, there were 2,000 registered farmers on the system in Dikili, by 2017 this number had decreased to 1,285. Likewise, while the total number of registered farmers in Bergama in 2011 was 9,695 this number had decreased to 9,200 in 2017. Farmers with land (0.1 ha–5 ha.) form the majority, and their number declined from 6,500 in 2011 to 6,100 in 2017 (Bergama Chamber of Commerce, Annual Report 2017, <https://berto.org.tr/faaliyet-raporlari/>, last visited 12.10.2019, Annual Report of the report prepared by Bergama, Dikili and Kınık Directorate of Agriculture and Forestry 2011).

In the towns, industry has not properly improved yet, tourism, the service sector in general and the construction sector⁸⁰ are thriving. Besides a small number of cotton gin, pickle, flour and olive oil factories, there are food-processing establishments — particularly tomato sauce factories — related to the region's main agricultural products. Some of the large-scale producers, previously dealing with tomato production for sauce, have recently extended their production to dried tomato for export. Therefore, they start to run large-scale agribusinesses covering processing, packaging and transportation. The region also has large-scale stockbreeding farms, but the biggest change in the region comes from large-scale investments in the form of greenhouses. These greenhouses have become the driving force of the agricultural sector, especially in Bergama and Dikili. Recently, Kınık has been selected by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food as an Agriculture-Based Specialized Organized Industrial Zone, with the authorities promising to establish large-scale complexes through which hundreds of people would be employed in agricultural production, stockbreeding and food processing.

In addition to the proliferation of greenhouse investments, the area has been under severe attack from mining companies due to its rich underground resources. The mining companies (mainly gold and coal) are mostly interested in large pastures that belong to villages as commons. In this context, the Bakırçay Basin has a unique place in the unwritten history of rural resistance movements in Turkey on the basis of its political heritage. The resistance of the villagers of Bergama against “Eurogold”, a multinational gold-mining company, that lasted more than ten years earned the area a special place in this history.⁸¹ Although the

⁸⁰ Dikili is the leading town in Izmir with regard to the growing construction sector due to its summer tourism. Bergama is preparing to open the ancient historical site of *Pergamon* to tourism, following its addition to the UN World Heritage List in 2014.

⁸¹ One of the strongest environmental movements of the 90s in Turkey, the Bergama Movement lasted from 1990 to 2005 but ultimately the villagers were unable to stop the mining activities.

villagers were ultimately unable to protect their land from Eurogold, in recent times there have been staunch objections to companies who come to the area with new projects.

The neoliberal restructuring of rural Turkey (based on the adoption of international norms and agreements and active state intervention for the sake of capital) and the ARIP/post-ARIP period have had a destructive effect on the area. This is true both for the Bakırçay Basin and for Western Anatolia in general. In line with the defunct agricultural sales cooperatives, TARİŞ lost its power and independence in the region, resulting in insecurity and greater risks for the masses who were previously protected by the cooperatives in the phases of production, marketing and sales. In relation to the law on soil protection and land consolidation, the former head of the Chamber of Agricultural Engineers in Izmir says that the average size of agricultural parcels in Izmir (3.7 hectares) is well below the national average (7 hectares) (Tekeli, 2017), and therefore, the effects of the law will be more detrimental on the lands of Izmir (Interview with Ferdan Çiftçi, 2014).

For the small-producer masses, deregulation means facing world markets on their own. In this sense, the responses of the mountain and plain villages to neoliberal restructuring outlined above are different in my case.⁸² The Tobacco Law hit the mountain villages of the Bakırçay Basin harder as these villages were formerly characterized by small husbandry and tobacco cultivation. I also observed that tobacco used to be the only product grown in these villages for sale on the market, while other products were produced for the use of the household

Although legal gains were made by the villagers, the Eurogold Company overcame any legal obstacles with the support of local/national authorities (Akdemir, 2013).

⁸² The responses to the process are not only composed of the shift in production design. Contract farming, a preference for cultivating less labor-intensive crops, diversification of income generating activities, and revival of subsistence production are other coping mechanisms for producers. However, decoupling from production, dispossession and migration are also observed. These will be discussed in detail in Chapter 7, Women and Rural Transformation.

and animals. The production pattern changed dramatically in the early 2000s, with a significant impact on the local population, since the mountain villages' barren and arid soil is not suitable for other agricultural products. Therefore, producers generally cultivate tobacco between the olive trees or plant new olive trees on land previously used to grow tobacco. The change on the sown area is clear, as shown in the table below. In 2018 the total area sown for tobacco production in the province of Izmir was 23,812 decares, while the production level was 2,154 tons.⁸³

Table 3.5. Sown Area/Production of Tobacco in the Izmir province, Western Anatolia, Turkey

Years	Turkey Tobacco Sown Area (decare)	Western Anatolia Tobacco Sown Area (decare)	Izmir	Turkey Production/Tons
1990	3,202,360	-	-	219,063
2000	2,365,690	134,554	-	200,280
2005	1,853,420	113,491	-	135,247
2008	1,468,741	96,754	50.200	93,403
2010	813,335	62,238	48,555	53,018
2011	766,575	-	43,977	45,435
2018	929,318		23,812	80,200

Source: Turkish Statistical Institute, Republic of Turkish Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock and Izmir Provincial Directorate of Agriculture and Forestry.

⁸³ <https://izmir.tarimorman.gov.tr/Menu/90/2018-Yili>, last visited 13.05.2019.

The mountain (and slope⁸⁴) villages turn to olive growing, as an alternative product. From 2004 to 2018 there have been fluctuations in the level of olive production in tons — 1,600,000 tons in 2004, 1,464,000 tons in 2008, 1,820,000 in 2012, 1,730,000 tons in 2016, and finally 1,500,467 in 2018 — while the number of trees has shown a steady increase — 107,100 (2004), 151,630 (2008), 157,061 (2012), 173,785 (2016) and 177,843 (2018). According to data from the Izmir Provincial Agriculture and Forestry, the area of olive groves has grown from 967,775 decares in 2013 to 977,289 decares in 2016. It was 972,240 decares in 2018.⁸⁵ In addition, the number of trees planted in the Izmir province for both table olives and olive oil rose from 12,504,380 in 1997 to 16,703, 808 in 2017. While the production was 25,733 tons for table olive and 249,314 tons for olive oil in 2013, it increased to 38,837 tons for table olive and 298,440 tons for olive oil in 2017. The increase land used for olive production seems to be in line with the strategy of the mountain villages in the Izmir province to change their production design from tobacco to olive.

On the contrary, the plain villages have more options regarding production design. In this sense, the traditional product known as “Bakırçay cotton” (famous for its special fiber) has been replaced by maize, tomato, soy and other crops. The producers state that this strengthens contract farming in the Bakırçay Basin. TNCs (Monsanto, Cargill, etc.) and other national companies (such as AGROMAR, Kermes or Fitol) impose the contracts mostly for the production of canola, safflower, sunflower and maize. Regarding cotton, the sown areas in Western Anatolia decreased from 1,428,000 decares in 2005 to 981,000 decares in 2011. The share of cotton has recently increased due to the premium payment that is higher compared to other products. This is considered as a guarantee by

⁸⁴ Villages on the slopes are primarily olive-producers. Olive-production is supported by limited husbandry and pensions in aging villages. Most of the villagers prefer to turn back to villages only for harvest picking time.

⁸⁵ <https://biruni.tuik.gov.tr/bolgeselistatistik/degiskenlerUzerindenSorgula.do>, last visited 13.05.2019.

the producers, resulting in a return to cotton production. Producers in the Bakırçay Basin express that even though cotton production is not profitable as expected, the premium payment still covers their costs. Another issue in the area is the rising tendency towards growing tomatoes for the production of tomato paste, which is now preferred over the production of edible tomatoes, which requires higher standards. As I was told by the producers, even if the tomatoes are crushed, rotten or burned because of transportation or the intense use of chemicals during production, they are still accepted by the tomato paste factories. Regarding the change in crop patterns, it is observed that the cultivated land for vegetables in the Izmir province decreased from 44,170 hectares in 2000 to 37,737 hectares in 2018, while the same figures for cereal cultivation stand at 79,006 hectares in 2000 and 58,262 hectares in 2018.⁸⁶ The table below includes the production in tons and the sown areas for cotton, maize, sunflower, wheat and tomato between 2002 and 2018 in the Izmir province.

⁸⁶ <https://biruni.tuik.gov.tr/bolgeselistatistik/degiskenlerUzerindenSorgula.do#> and <https://izmir.tarimorman.gov.tr/Menu/90/2018-Yili> last visited 15.10.2019.

Table 3.6. Sown Area and Production in Tons for Certain Crops in the Izmir Province

<i>Crop</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Sown Area (da.)</i>	<i>Production in Tons</i>
<i>Cotton</i>	2005	502,780	-
	2011	217,057	116,622
	2013	194,050	111,161
	2016	220,205	127,065
	2018	320,154	180,173
<i>Sunflower</i>	2002	-	1,534
	2018	-	5,408
<i>Maize</i>	2002	-	14,776
	2013	685,793	2,732,011
	2018	646,994	3,115,600
<i>Tomato</i>	2005	120,748	-
	2013	149,922	904,050
	2016	125,243	869,028
	2018	122,548	895,441
<i>Wheat</i>	2013	353,732	163,741
	2018	314,978	137,743

For many in the Bakırçay Basin, high costs with low return make small-scale production unsustainable. The table below, showing prices per kilo, gives an idea about the difficulty of maintaining small-scale production. When the increase in the price of products is compared to the increase in the basic costs, such as additional labor force, pesticide or gas, it becomes clear that the former does not cover the latter, thus leaving households in economic deprivation. For instance, changes in the prices of the diesel oil used in rural areas is striking: it rose from

3.00 TL in 2008 to 5.74 TL by the end of 2018.⁸⁷ Meanwhile, the exchange rate for the US dollar rose from 1.52 TL to the dollar to 5.28 the dollar.⁸⁸

Table 3.7. Price of Certain Crops, 2010-2018

Product	Price (TL/Kg)		
	2010	2015	2018
Maize	0.47	0.66	0.85
Cotton	1.23	1.32	2.38
Tobacco	6.86	13.79	16.28
Tomato	1.0	0.85	1.30

Source: TURKSTAT, Agricultural Structures (Production, Price, Value)
TURKSTAT Summary of Agricultural Statistics

In addition, even though in any of the years mentioned in the is table producers are certainly underpaid for their products, the expenses of daily laborers still occupied the majority of the budget of the small producers, especially if s/he is dealing with a labor-intensive product, such as cotton, tobacco or tomato. According to the findings of TURKSTAT's Agricultural Holdings Labor Wage Structure report, the average wages of seasonal agricultural workers between 2010-2018 for women and men respectively were as follows: 25 TL/35 TL (2010), 46 TL/59 TL (2015), and finally 67 TL/82 TL (2018). Ironically, given that this represents a significant expense for the small producer as employer, the wages given do not provide good living conditions for the laborers.

⁸⁷Turkish Petroleum archives, <https://www.tppd.com.tr/en/former-oil-prices?id=35&county=430&StartDate=31.12.2010&EndDate=31.12.2018>, last visited 11.07.2019.

⁸⁸<http://www.tcmb.gov.tr/wps/wcm/connect/TR/TCMB+TR/Main+Menu/Istatistikler/Doviz+Kurlari/Gosterge+Niteligindeki+Merkez+Bankasi+Kurlarii/>, last visited 11.07.2019.

For example, the Izmir Provincial Directorate of Agriculture and Forestry calculates the minimum costs for tobacco, maize, tomato and cotton for the year 2016. While the profit for tomato was only 0.25 TL per kilo, it was 3.76 TL for tobacco, 0.11 TL for silage maize, 0.18 TL for corn, and 0.61 TL for cotton. Among all of these products, tobacco has the lowest efficiency rate, at 95 kg/da. which makes a high profit nearly impossible unless one has enough land to produce it in vast quantities. The efficiency rates for the others products are 615 kg/da. for cotton, 4.600 kg/da. for tomato, 5.900 kg/da. for silage maize and 1.220 kg/da. for corn. Of the total production costs, the percentage of labor costs is 41% for silage maize, is 36% for corn, 40% for tomato and 48% for cotton. Again, tobacco has the highest percentage with 67% of the total production costs going towards labor.⁸⁹

When it comes to the small-scale stockbreeders in the Bakırçay Basin, it is safe to say that their fragile budget cannot tolerate any additional costs. The commodification of fodder is hard for stockbreeders to afford, so if there are meadows and pastures for free use, it is easier to sustain husbandry as an economic activity for those households. In line with that, I came across examples of households that were unable to sustain small-scale husbandry as the commons were unavailable. For example, shrinking pastures have severely affected husbandry in the village of Korkutlar. My meeting with the headman of Korkutlar (2014) who has been in this position since 1997, revealed a radical decrease in herd size. While in 1997 the village had around 1000 cattle, today this number is just 150. Similarly, the number of sheep and goats has decreased from 10,000 to 3,500. Many households have given up raising cattle due to the increasing costs and turned to sheep and goat farming instead. Those with cattle generally have them for subsistence needs. As the pastures used for generations by the villagers of Korkutlar have shrunk, artificial feeds have become a central input cost in husbandry. The villagers were forced to squeeze their animals into

⁸⁹<https://izmir.tarimorman.gov.tr/Lists/SolMenu/Attachments/66/İZMİR%20İLİ%202016%20YILI%20MALİYETLERİ.pdf>, last visited 11.07.2019.

the remaining pastures, but this limited pasture space is not sufficient to properly feed many animals. The owners therefore tried to feed their animals with artificial fodder, but this was not affordable. Having changed from commons to commodity, feeding could be seen one of the main reasons for households giving up husbandry. Since the villagers already faced difficulties in sustaining husbandry, losing the commons did nothing but sharpen the issue. A similar story to that of Korkutlar can be seen in five other Yörük⁹⁰ villages of Dikili located in close proximity to each other.

The statistics also show a decrease in meadows and pastures on a local, regional and national level. According to the data, the area of meadows and pastures in Western Anatolia was 1,027,900 hectares (equal to 1.32% of the total land) in 1970, it had decreased to 615,900 hectares (equal to 0.79%) by 1991. By 1998 we can see a slight increase, at 802,879 hectares (equal to 1.03%), but this was followed by a striking decrease to 276,805 hectares by 2018. The total area of meadows and pastures in Turkey in general dropped from 21,698,400 hectares in 1970 to 11,059,666 for the years 1998-2018.⁹¹ For the Izmir province the figures stood at 5,134,100 decares for 2013, dropping by 2018 to 5,062,340 decares of a total land area of 12,086,112 decares. These figures represent a decrease in the area of meadows and pastures in the province of 7,176 decares in just five years.

To sum up, the Bakırçay Basin comes into prominence as a significant local unit through which to observe the local outcomes of and responses to the process neoliberal restructuring as a global dynamic. The rapid changes in the ways of carrying out small-scale production overlap with the emergence of large-scale and export-oriented agribusinesses. It seems that the Bakırçay Basin revitalizes

⁹⁰ Yörüks are traditionally a nomadic pastoral group. They were forced into settled lifestyles during the late Ottoman and early Republican period. The villages of Mavili, Korkutlar, Yıldır, Selamlı, Sadıklar and Devrinciler are called Yağcıbedir Yörük.

⁹¹ <https://www.tarimorman.gov.tr/Konular/Bitkisel-Uretim/Cayir-Mera-ve-Yem-Bitkileri>, last visited 12.07.2019.

its historical ties to global markets through newly emerged large-scale investments linked to global export chains and precarious labor. Yet, the complete picture can only be grasped, if the agency of the women as a constitutive force of the change and their own path(s) within it are included in the analysis.

3.1.2. Introduction of the Case Study and Fieldwork

In the very beginning of the research, I was planning to focus on the survival strategies of small producer households and women's particular role in those strategies. In order to continue the traditional rural economic activities in the villages in the neoliberal age, in which they are put under increasing pressure, these households needed to appeal to survival strategies. For this reason, I chose the Bakırçay Basin in the province of Izmir as a rural area to start the fieldwork. There were several reasons behind that choice. First of all, it is located in the region of Western Anatolia, which was historically linked to global capitalism earlier and in a much stronger way than many other rural regions in Turkey. Highly dominated by small producers, it is an important region the production of fresh fruit and vegetables both for domestic markets and for export as well as to the production of its traditional — though waning — products such as olive, cotton or tobacco. In addition, non-farming activities are highly diverse in the area due to tourism, rich underground resources and heavy industry. As a result, Western Anatolia has a significant “pull factor” in contrast to other less developed parts of rural Turkey (Gündüz Hoşgör & Smits, 2006). Therefore, I anticipated that the villages would still be highly populated and that these survival strategies would be apparent especially among younger generations. These suppositions were also supported by other research conducted on that area (Keyder & Yenal, 2011, 2013).⁹²

⁹² Keyder and Yenal describe the area as composed of “predominantly diversified petty-commodity producers who benefit from relatively fertile lands, but more importantly from early integration into markets, proximity to urban spaces (such as small trade and transportation) and

With these motivations, I made four visits to the Bakırçay Basin in 2014 and 2015, at first using the network established through Aydın's study⁹³ (2011) to reach the headmen of the villages. During the first visit, I met with headmen, women and men from various villages of the districts of Dikili, Bergama and Kınık. The villages were selected on the basis of diverse geographical locations and crop patterns, i.e. mountain village (Marlıca), lowland village (Sundurgu) and slope village (Mavili). Marlıca is a former tobacco-producing village, Sundurgu still has diversified production on its fertile lands, and Mavili mainly produces olives. My second visit was to Mavili in the district of Dikili, where I was invited to the olive harvest. During this visit I stayed in the headman's house in the village, which provided me with a valuable opportunity to get to know the villagers, especially the women. I worked in the olive harvest, picking olives with women who are both olive grove owners and daily laborers and also interviewed a *dayıbaşı*, or middleman.⁹⁴ I visited an olive oil factory and talked to the factory operator there, and I also travelled to other five neighboring Yörük

the ready accessibility of employment in town and city centers while continuing to be active in the village, make these villages into vibrant communities. They often have growing and younger populations who are open to experimenting with the new crops, inputs and technologies – a capacity for adaptation that has gained a new importance as globalization has widened the spectrum of opportunities. (...) Here, one finds market adaptation, diversified production and various sources of income in the household: income may derive from agriculture and non-agriculture activities, transfers and rents, from sporadic and seasonal employment within and outside the village. Self-employment still provides a good chunk of the household income; yet this income must be supplemented, usually with the wages of temporary employment in part-lifetime migration” (Keyder & Yenal, 2011: 62-63).

⁹³ Aydın, S. (2011). *The Social Effects of the Irrigation Project of Bakırçay Mansap Plains*. Unpublished report.

⁹⁴ “*Dayıbaşı*” (middleman) is an important agent in the agricultural labor regime in Turkey. As Çetinkaya briefly explains, “Labor intermediaries are the people who are providing and organizing seasonal labor force demanded by employers in labor intense agricultural production in different regions of Turkey. (...) From the eyes of the seasonal agricultural workers, intermediaries are not only the people who are finding job for them but also, they are meeting their basic needs. This is very crucial point, since seasonal agricultural labor force is supplied from very poor regions in Turkey. At the same time intermediaries are important actors for employers due to their controlling functions of agricultural work process. (...) In this context labor intermediation in Turkey has lots of meaning other than finding job for workers and worker for employers. Labor intermediation is a legal job which is controlled and regulated by law yet mostly executed as informal” (2008: 3-5).

villages that deal in stockbreeding and olive cultivation, and talked to the headmen and villagers. Finally, I visited the District Directorate of Agriculture in Dikili, where I interviewed two agricultural engineers.

In one of my last visits, I focused on the villages of Bergama, where agricultural production still plays an important role in spite of the rising numbers of producers who are decoupled from agriculture. The Bergama Plain has several areas known as active agricultural centers, such as Dağıstan, Ayazkent, Göçbeyli or Bölcek. I intended to explore the effects of crop changes (to corn and tomato) on the use of household labor including the changing use of women's labor, too. As such, I conducted interviews with both small and middle-scale farmers. I visited the municipality of Bergama and interviewed the mayor and vice-mayor (also the former director of the Agricultural Bank) Since they had governed Bergama for a long time, the information given during this interview was quite useful to understand the changes in the area.⁹⁵ I also visited the District Directorate of Agriculture in Bergama, where I obtained local statistics regarding agricultural production and husbandry and conducted an interview with the spokesperson of the Bergama Environment Platform.

I also had the opportunity to meet and interview the owners of a large-scale agribusiness in Kınık called *Tomato-Land*, which deals with the production and export of dried tomatoes and peppers. This company has its own fields, greenhouse and packing units, where women are predominantly employed. I also met an agricultural engineer at the District Directorate of Agriculture in Kınık who was extremely helpful in creating the network in the Bakırçay Basin used within this study. I interviewed a large-scale farmer who owns 60 hectares of land on the Kınık Plain, in addition to two gas stations and a store selling agricultural equipment. I also interviewed the mayor of Yayakent Municipality in Kınık.

⁹⁵ The municipal elections of March 2019, were won by the Justice and Development Party in Bergama, a municipality that had previously been under the Republican People's Party.

Finally, I had a meeting with the head of the Chamber of Agricultural Engineers in Izmir, who provided me with detailed information about the rural changes in the province, on the basis of the towns and villages that I was interested in. I also visited the villages of Çamavlu and Yukarıbey on the Kozak Plateau in the Bakırçay Basin, which deal with pistachio production and small-scale husbandry. What makes the Kozak Plateau special was the ongoing resistance there. With one of the largest areas of pastureland in Turkey — almost a whole side of the Madra Mountain — the villages in the plateau have been on the agenda of companies for large-scale investments. During my visit, I met the headman and villagers and talked about the threat to their commons. What I tried to grasp was the crucial role that pasture as “commons” plays for the surviving of small-scale husbandry. These visits enabled me to understand under what conditions small agricultural production and husbandry are sustained by the locals.

Pre-research showed me that Keyder and Yenal’s description that I gave at the beginning of this chapter does not seem to cover the majority of the villages. The villages were far from the described as vibrant rural areas described. The description offered by Tekeli is much closer to what I observed: “After the transformations that occurred in agriculture in Izmir, peasant farming has disappeared and the rural population has radically decreased. As a result of these developments, in addition to other reasons, there are many abandoned villages or villages with a reduced population and no young population in the Izmir region. Some villages have disappeared amidst growing non-agricultural usage. In some special cases, villages have managed to preserve their existence.” (2017: 197).

The difference between what I expected to see and what I actually saw in the field changed my point of view, as I generally witnessed declining villages with aging populations. What I have observed during the pre-research revealed sharp differences between the villages in terms of crop pattern, land fertility, location or landownership, which requires a more subtle analysis. While the villages are being depopulated, I also witnessed an unwillingness among the young people

left behind in the villages to continue to engage in rural life.⁹⁶ That group naturally includes the women, whose changing use of labor within traditional rural activities I sought to explore. In this sense, the open-ended interviews with olive, tobacco, tomato and corn producers, as well as a shepherd, and stockbreeders from diverse villages helped me to understand the specific conditions that enable them to continue production. My meetings with the older villagers helped to illustrate the changes in the Basin, while the friendly conversations with generations of women gave me an insight into their stories.

I ultimately decided to trace the impacts of a large agribusiness that was frequently mentioned by the people I met. Many women from the rural areas I visited either referred to it or knew someone who worked there. It was the *Greenhouse*. The visits showed me that the *Greenhouse* has brought about change not only in the livelihoods of the villagers⁹⁷ but also in the lives of the women. At this point, a woman worker at the *Greenhouse* from the village of Korkutlar, Dikili, took me to meet others and to see the *Greenhouse*. She also gave me detailed information about land appropriation, the decline in husbandry, decoupling from agricultural production, as well as the characteristics of labor regime in the *Greenhouse*. I also met the *Greenhouse* manager and head engineer and visited the greenhouse units and other businesses of the *Company* to grasp how they perceive the radical change in which they play a significant role. As a result, I decided to focus on the *Greenhouse* which is a critical hub for the rural women of the Bakırçay Basin.

⁹⁶ I interviewed two young women from two different villages who are “*the last unmarried girls*” of their villages. There was also a common expression that I heard in the villages to explain the aging population: “I am 50 years old; the youngest person in the village!”

⁹⁷ For example, I spent a week in the village of Korkutlar, Dikili, where substantial pastures were appropriated, and later on changed hands, by different actors. The *Greenhouse* was established on these lands in the early 2000s. In Korkutlar, husbandry has been the main livelihood of the villagers since the settlement of its Yörük population. After losing their pastures, the villagers faced more difficulties in sustaining husbandry. I talked to villagers who had lost their registered land to understand how losing the *commons* has affected households dealing with small-scale husbandry. The details will be given in Chapter 7, Women and Rural Transformation.

After I determined my area of focus in the Bakırçay Basin and visited the *Greenhouse*, I held a meeting with the manager in order to explain my project and obtain “permission” to be there during the course of my fieldwork. I then worked with the women at the Greenhouse for the following weeks, while at the same time visiting them to conduct interviews at their homes in either the villages or towns after work. Given the massive number of women employed by the Company at the *Greenhouse*, I decided to concentrate on a limited number of units so that I could gain a deeper understanding of the women working there. I held 33 in-depth interviews with women, as well as informal interviews with the male members of the households in 2016. Even though not full interviews as in the case of the 33 interviewees, conversations with other women during breaks, home visits or work enabled me to conduct further semi-structured interviews. I also participated in the social events, such as *köy hayrı*,⁹⁸ such as weddings, engagements, birthday parties and circumcision ceremonies.

3.2. My Experience in the Field

In this section I will touch upon the obstacles and constraints, as well as the advantages, I encountered as a female researcher during the fieldwork. Some of the obstacles and constraints stem from my being a female researcher in the field, while others were caused by the fact that the research prioritized an analysis of the specific position of workers in the rural labor market through their own experiences. The first of these unavoidably left me facing specific attitudes about gender roles, while the second required me to form a long-term relationship of trust with women working for an oppressive corporation. Forming this relationship of trust required me to make some fundamental changes to the envisioned methodological framework, by abandoning certain methodological tools. While this subsection will cover the ways, I dealt with the constraints and obstacles I encountered for both the above-mentioned reasons, being a female

⁹⁸ A social event in which the whole village participates to celebrate the coming of spring.

researcher also brought its own advantages and facilitated the fieldwork in a number of ways.

Being a female researcher in the field led me to encounter a number of examples of manhood during the fieldwork.⁹⁹ Although my main research subjects were women, at times the men in their lives would come between us in the position of gatekeeper, violating the confidentiality of the interviews. Sometimes the men would not “*give permission*” for the interview to take place; even if they were not physically present, some would disrupt the interview by constantly calling the interviewee on her phone; but in many of the interviews, the men joined us and were part of the discussion.¹⁰⁰ For example, the husband of one of the women responded to the request for an interview as though he were the one being addressed, rejecting the request by saying, “My old lady doesn’t understand all that stuff.” In another example, one of the workers, Elmas, said that she would not be able to talk to me because her husband had not given permission. It was the idea of another worker, Adile, to invite Elmas to her house, so that her husband would not see us conduct the interview. As such, we were hosted in Adile’s house, enabling Elmas to get permission from her husband to leave the house to visit her friend.¹⁰¹ In other examples, some men simply sat in on the interviews and listened to what was being said, while others gave their own responses to the questions. In fact, during one interview the husband of the interviewee was sitting in the next room, but even from there he believed it appropriate to shout answers to some of the questions from where he sat. In such situations I made efforts to find even more private spaces within the

⁹⁹ Mainly fathers and husbands, but also in some examples, ex-husbands.

¹⁰⁰ Those in the final group made it difficult for us to discuss private issues such as harassment. After a few interviews I decided not to ask this question if there was a man present. My concern was not only that I might not get a full answer to the question, but that hearing the answers to such questions might put the women in a difficult position in relation to their husbands.

¹⁰¹ Adile’s house was seen as a “safe” house, because she was a widow whose grown-up son was studying at boarding school.

“privacy” of the interviewee’s homes. In general, this would be the kitchen, while the women were doing jobs with no men present, such as preparing food, doing the dishes, hanging the laundry, or serving tea. As such, in some of the recordings, the interviews are accompanied by the sounds of running water, children or the television.

At times I noticed that some men were upset at the fact that I wanted to “only” speak with women. Some of the interviewees’ husbands saw the fact that I prioritized and was only interested in the information provided by women as a threat to their authority. Sometimes they made fun of, scoffed at or belittled the interviews. I regularly witnessed such behavior, for example, by Bircan, the husband of Bedihe whose house I frequently visited. Suffering a crisis of masculinity triggered by my presence, he regularly humiliated his wife in front of me, trying to depict her as, “too stupid, passive, incapable”. He also had outbursts of anger. In certain situations, although not always, the presence of the men in their house was a source of tension for me. In particular, I noticed that the men who had worked, or who still worked, in the mine shared common characteristics in the form of anger-management issues, were prone to violence and had alcohol problems. These men were unable to communicate with me in a healthy way. For example, when I went to Merve’s house, her husband did not come to speak to us at all, and when it was time for his shift to start, he went to work without a word. Indeed, it was because Merve knew he would be going to work, leaving us alone for the entire evening, that she had specifically chosen that day to invite me to her house.

In families where I developed a closer relationship with the interviewees, there were husbands who “resented” me. Once, when I went to do an interview with Servet, she whispered to me while we were in the kitchen, “Go and get some information from Adil [her husband] too.” In such situations, after finishing my interviews with the woman, I also carried out open-ended interviews with the

men of the family.¹⁰² The men were eager to talk to me about the social changes they had witnessed, but focused on the part of the research topic that looks at rural transformation while downplaying the importance of women's experiences. As such, they generally spoke of their own life stories, interwoven with the changes that had occurred in their villages.

However, despite the obstacles I outlined above, in the main, the men made my fieldwork easier. Since public spaces tend to be seen as "male" spaces, when I needed to go somewhere (mountain villages or distant neighborhoods with poor transport links) the men helped me. When waiting or walking in the streets they would accompany me and ensured I reached my destination safely. My position as a female researcher made me, in their eyes, "a school girl" who had been "left in their charge", and thus they wanted to make sure I was properly looked after.¹⁰³

¹⁰² I tried to do this not only with men who requested an interview, but in every household where I had completed my main interviews.

¹⁰³ I did experience a few exceptions to this. For example, when one of my interviewees was going to take the *Greenhouse* shuttle bus early one morning (around 6 a.m.) she sent her husband to "accompany" me to the bus station. However, her husband decided to call on one of his friends on the way. His friend ran a liquor store but had not yet opened the shop, and I was made to sit together with a group of men as we took this break, the reason for which I did not understand. This situation made me feel uncomfortable, a feeling exacerbated by the fact that the previous evening I had spent hours listening to his wife tell me stories of his domestic violence. When I learned that there were no *dolmuş* buses available I asked him to take me back to the women, which he did, although while doing so he took an unnecessary detour in the car, again making me uncomfortable.

In another example, I was staying the night at a house where I had stayed on previous occasions. I slept in the bedroom of my interviewee's 12-13-year-old sons, the only room in the house with heating other than the parents' bedroom. My interviewee said that if her son had not been sick, she would have made him sleep elsewhere but that she felt sorry for him. A number of times she said, "He wouldn't do you any harm," but these frequent declarations made me nervous, and I spent the entire night on tenterhooks.

I experienced a similar situation in a *dolmuş* while going to a mountain village. The driver of one of the *dolmuş*, which I used frequently to reach the village, was shot to death by a woman who declared, "Rapists have no right to live!" After this event, using the *dolmuş*, the only way to reach the mountain villages, made me nervous. In addition, I turned down an interview with the *mukhtar* of one mountain village due to his discomfiting behavior and the fact that he personally called me for a one-to-one meeting.

Furthermore, the obstacles and limitations I encountered were not always caused by men. At times, the women did not see their own experiences as having any value, and a number of interviewees said to me, “What could I have to say?”¹⁰⁴ The women did not see their working lives or the work they do as being of any importance. Women who had brought up their children while earning money to put towards household expenses through handcrafts such as knitting, crocheting or making lace would say “I didn’t do anything, I just stayed at home.”¹⁰⁵ Similarly, women who worked in the fields as casual labor would disregard the work they did, saying, “There was no social security, it doesn’t count”. This is the reason why, when I asked when they started working, many women said “[When I started] at the *Greenhouse*.” They did not count the years they had spent working prior to the *Greenhouse* because they were not in receipt of social security.¹⁰⁶ There were also women who themselves encouraged their male

¹⁰⁴ Pini argues, “The lived experiences of women represent a legitimate form and source of knowledge” (2003: 422). However, as stated above, feminist researchers face the same difficulty of self-devalorization of rural women when it comes to their own experiences. Whatmore (1991), whose aim was to reveal “the everyday experience of these women”, had difficulties in convincing farm women that their non-agricultural work was of sufficient interest to study. Rural women interviewed by Pini were not sure that they were the right people: “They were willing to assist rather than being appropriate people to research. The common concern was that they would not have the answers to the questions” (2003: 422).

¹⁰⁵ As in the example of Elmas, this money that is considered unimportant in fact represents a significant contribution to the household budget. Most of the women are paid for such work in cash, while some say they exchange their produces for necessities, such as cooking oil. Despite this, men do not see such work as having any value: “I did it after finishing the housework. I’d get 10 TL for one piece of embroidery, enough to cover what I’d buy at the market. There were some difficult times. No money, endless debts. One time, all the wages were gone. There was no money to buy bread. We didn’t know what to do. I’d given someone some embroidery but she hadn’t given me the money. Anyway, that day she brought the money. Even my husband said, ‘I’m over the moon.’ But he’d always get mad at me, saying, ‘What are you doing, sitting there knitting all the time.’” Women undervalue home-based work; it is associated with “housewifely duties” whose economic and social contributions are mostly ignored (Erman, Kalaycioğlu & Rittersberger-Tılıç, 2002: 400).

¹⁰⁶ Deere sees the “under-enumeration of women in agriculture” as the main problem when analyzing changes in rural women’s work. The reasons behind this are diverse: When asked their primary occupation, women say “housewives”, ignoring their engagement in economic activities. Seeking only income-generating activities also does not account for subsistence production. Finally, understanding work in the fields as equal to agricultural production makes women’s role

relatives to participate in the interviews and would redirect questions on topics such as money, figures, costs and sales to the men.

Sometimes women found it emotionally difficult to tell their stories. Difficult childhoods, poverty or the difficulty of being a girl/woman in rural areas, and in addition to this, tales of domestic violence, verbal violence, threats, oppression, rape or the Soma mine disaster and its aftermath all made it difficult for the women to share their experiences with me.¹⁰⁷ During the interviews there were women who fell silent, decided not to tell a story they had begun, or started to cry; for me, listening to these stories that were so hard to tell was in itself difficult. Mostly, however, the women were open and willing to share; they trusted, supported and welcomed me. One of the advantages of being a female researcher was the fact that I was able to form genuine relationships and be invited into their private spaces. If I had only spoken to the women in the *Greenhouse*, I would have heard much more limited versions of their stories. However, I visited the women's houses on their invitation, and spending the night there¹⁰⁸ and going to work with them in the morning gave me the

critical in livestock production, kitchen gardens and post-harvest processing activities (2005: 17-18).

¹⁰⁷ Although I listened to and witnessed many stories of love, the levels of violence in rural areas were revealed through the interviews. Three of my interviewees spoke openly of familial rape, while another told me that her husband had threatened her because she "refused to carry out her marital duties". A number of women spoke of being married at a young age against their wishes, without making any references to rape, although I believe that such examples may also include hidden stories of rape. Furthermore, domestic violence was another form of violence that I frequently came across in the interviews. One of my interviewees told me that after being taken into hospital with a gunshot wound and severe injuries from having been beaten, she ran away to Istanbul to a women's shelter. Accounts of divorce also included violence. The most "civilized" of all of these was the interviewee who told me that she and her divorced husband respected each other but that at first her husband "couldn't get used to the idea" and when he left the house he left his gun there so that "when she regrets it she can shoot herself." Two of my interviewees had also attempted suicide.

¹⁰⁸ While hosting me in their houses overnight the women bore in mind that I was "unmarried" (i.e. "a virgin") and that I was "in their care". As such, they would either put their husbands to bed in another room and have me sleep in with them, or have me sleep in another room with their daughters. At other times, while the men slept inside the house, we would sleep on the roof or

opportunity to witness at first hand their daily routine, what they did in their spare time, as well as many other details of this kind.¹⁰⁹ Had I used a different methodology, I would not have had the chance to interview any of the women who worked at the *Greenhouse*, particularly those who lived in small villages.

At the same time, this helped to overcome the difficulties related to carrying out a study with women on their labor histories and current working lives. After a few interviews, it became clear that the question set that was designed to look at

balcony. In addition, I was hosted at their houses when the younger men of the household were away. While I was there, the women's husbands would mostly make sure they were out of the house by going to the local coffee house.

Concerns about the "researcher girl's honor" also arose for another reason: After I had taken a few days off from the fieldwork, one of the women was surprised when I returned to the *Greenhouse*. She said she had been told, "She's gone. She won't be back." In fact, one woman even said, "It's because her mother doesn't want her hanging around here all on her own so she came and took her back to Izmir." This seemed to be a collective wish put into words, because I knew that there were women who were uncomfortable at the fact that I was carrying out my fieldwork alone. Going to the villages as "a lone girl", staying with people I did not know, and me being "brave" enough to do so was cause for surprise but was also seen as strange. It was regularly pointed out that on this and many other points I was from a very different world of female experience than my interviewees.

Although I recognize how being hosted in the women's houses was enriching for the fieldwork, there were a few examples where it created limitations. Being in the women's house meant that as well as responding to my request to interview them, they also felt the need to treat me as a guest. Two women told me that since the construction of their houses was not complete and because they did not have furniture, they would not be able to invite me to their homes. I realized that the women saw me not as a researcher but as "A guest who needed to be properly looked after". One example reveals a combination of the issues of "honor" and "lack of finances". Serpil told me that even though she would like to host me, she was unable to because she lived in a one-room house where she slept together with her brothers.

¹⁰⁹ At times this had a positive and encouraging effect on women who kept their distance or were disinterested in my research, or who had turned down my interview request, and over time these women too became involved in the research. For example, Güldeste agreed to an interview after watching my interview with her close friend, Sabriye, thus obtaining an idea of the process. When Bingül saw that I was interviewing the other women, even though her husband had not given her permission, she sent me a message: "Tell Ceren to come, I'll tell her my life story. I won't shut up for two whole hours. I'll speak to her alone, won't have anyone else there, and I won't listen to my husband either." Indeed, throughout the interview I had the impression that she was doing something important for herself, that she had opened herself up and was speaking of things she had never spoken about with anyone else. She had arranged everything for the interview; she sent away the young boy who had brought me to the house, saying she did not want to speak in front of him. Her daughters-in-law only came into the room to serve food and drinks — Bingül had told them what to bring — and left immediately. At certain points during the interview she cried, and though she told me many personal stories she also said there were other things she did not wish to talk about.

women's working lives was limited in that it was impossible to understand the women's working lives without also looking at their personal life stories. It was only possible to understand what part their employment history plays in their lives by listening to their life stories. This required a period of time beyond an in-depth interview, an opportunity that the time spent in the women's homes provided, at least in part. Since the interviews were not concluded in one session, I went to many houses a number of times, and since the women have a great deal of work to do in the home — gardening, cooking, cleaning, childcare — the interviews were at times conducted while the women carried out their housework, and at others “when the work allowed”.

On the other hand, although the women opened up their houses to me, at the beginning speaking about certain topics made them uncomfortable. These topics included the questions I asked them about their work at the *Greenhouse*. Even though the interviews were carried out within the family home, the women did not want to discuss “sensitive” issues such as workplace health and safety, experiences of workplace accidents and the management's attitude towards them or the “original” payment system applied by the company.¹¹⁰ The initial interviewees were concerned that they might lose their jobs, that what they said during the interview would be heard by others, and that they and their family would suffer. They often asked me, “What are you going to do with these

¹¹⁰ One example was during a conversation with Gülizar about wages:

- They deposit it in the bank. Sometimes they deposit too much then take it back. I don't know.
- What do you mean?
- Yes, yes. [The accountant] comes, tells those who have been overpaid, says you have to give this much back. We bring that money and give it back.
- How much?
- They'll hear what I said and fire me. [Laughs nervously]
- That won't happen, Gülizar, anything you say here stays with me.
- Sometimes they deposit more. For example, last month I paid back 70 TL. Some paid back 180. That's how it is.
[...]
- What happens when there's an accident?
- [Pauses.] I don't know, they take them to hospital. [Smiles halfheartedly.] I'm afraid something will happen.
[I turn the recorder off.]

answers?” or “Do the people at the *Greenhouse* know you’re doing this?” As the relationship of trust between myself and the women grew stronger, this fear subsided, and at times the women would refer to events that had happened on the days I spent with them at the *Greenhouse*, saying, “You see what it’s like!” As such, these topics became less sensitive and the women got used to me as an outsider. However, I was also forced to make some changes to the methods I followed during this process. I had planned to use a Dictaphone during the interviews, but after using it for the first few interviews, I decided to abandon it. During the interviews I only took notes, and later combined these with the field journal. I noticed that, even during the same interview, once the Dictaphone was turned off, the women’s anxiety and reluctance to talk eased significantly. However, I still occasionally faced questions such as, “What will happen to those notes?” or “They won’t get into anyone else’s hands, will they?”

However, when speaking about the sensitive topics outlined above, the women were never completely free of feelings of anxiety and reluctance.¹¹¹ Even in the final interviews, the women expressed such concerns, no matter how long they had known me or how much they trusted me.¹¹² As well as removing the

¹¹¹ The long-term nature of the fieldwork alleviated some of this anxiety. After a while, my “coming and going” became routine. Other than during the visits of varying lengths that I made during the first year, I did not make any further visits to the *Greenhouse*, but instead reached out to other women through the contacts I had formed there. This meant that I was no longer being observed by the employer. I did not return to the area just in relation to the *Greenhouse*, but also went to attend events to which I was invited such as village festivals, weddings and olive harvests. Furthermore, during this time, some of the women left the *Greenhouse*, got new gobs, got married and had children. This also gave me the opportunity to follow the developments in these women’s lives.

¹¹² This was not only related to the relationship of trust that the women had formed with me. As will be described in the following chapter, the women working in the *Greenhouse* form a heterogeneous group in terms of marital status, age, ethnic-religious background, education and work experience. Different preconceptions about each other forms the foundation for trust/mistrust among the different sub-groups. This can be illustrated through the words of one interviewee: “I don’t really trust the ones from Poyracık. I know some of the workers but they don’t keep their mouths shut. They are Çepnis, Alevi. There are Kurds there too, and Alevi, it’s mixed, like here. But there aren’t many people who’d tell you what I’m telling you. If they’ve got a loose tongue it will quickly spread. And when it gets out it’s all over, for all of us, they wouldn’t leave anyone there. I mean if the bosses hear about it, if they hear it came from us,

Dictaphone from the interview format, I also took out questions that made the women uncomfortable such as “What happens if someone falls ill?”, “Is safety in the workplace ensured?” and “How much do you get paid?” Because such information that would usually come out while waiting for the shuttle bus, eating lunch or during breaks became taboo issues when asked as direct questions during the interviews. While working in the greenhouse, talking to and spending time with the women, I had the opportunity to witness examples from daily life related to my question set. For example, one of the headings within the question set was dismissals. But the day that Bedia was fired, workers who had just started at the greenhouse and had not previously witnessed intimidation by Nizam, the head engineer, began to be afraid of him. This reminded everyone of their own experiences of being reprimanded, and a number of different memories were recounted. Had the women been asked about these issues in question form, their answers would have been much more limited and reserved.

In this micro-cosmos I was part of throughout (and to a certain extent beyond) the field work it was not only myself carrying out observations. The women were also observing and judging me and assessing our differences. The women would often stress my status as an urban (from Izmir), educated (University), middle-class woman, while also pointing out the ways in which I did not meet their expectations of such women: “You don’t look like you’re from Izmir.” (Because I am “natural”, don’t have my eyebrows trimmed, wear makeup or wear the clothes they would expect of someone from Izmir.) “You don’t seem like you’re educated.” (Because they found me “modest” rather than condescending, and because I spoke with everyone and listened to them.) Their comparison here was with the engineers working at the *Greenhouse* who came

they’d throw us out the door straight away. But look, if I had a house, I could live in I wouldn’t keep any of this to myself.”

from urban areas and had a university education.¹¹³ After a while, when somebody asked me what I did or who I was, the women would answer for me. The most common answer was “researcher girl” but sometimes they would also say that I was an *intern*, *student*, *writer* or *journalist*. Some said, “She’s writing about our lives”, while others would say, “She’s comparing life today with life ten years ago.”

Our difference in terms of social class took on different forms in different contexts. Once, due to the fact that they saw my social position as closer to that of the *Greenhouse* engineers, they took the anger they felt towards the engineers out on me. When Kader was talking about the ill treatment of the workers by the engineers, she suddenly began addressing me: “That’s your job, to shout. Right now, you say ‘Give the workers leave, don’t shout at them while they’re working’, but when the time comes and you’re an engineer you’ll say, ‘There’s no leave!’ and you’ll shout at us.” Another area in which our difference in social class was underlined was the question “How old are you?” that initiated every conversation. According to the women and their families, the fact that I “didn’t show my age, looked younger than I really was” was down to the fact that I “had had an easy life, had never worked in the fields, hadn’t worked much, and had never had to struggle.”¹¹⁴ My hands were often pointed out in support of this argument. However, despite my differences being acknowledged in such ways by the women, as a result of the deepening relationships that developed throughout the fieldwork, I noticed that they started to position me as relatively

¹¹³ The distance between us was very clear for the women: “There are engineers in the *Greenhouse* too, but we can’t associate ourselves with them. So, we say ‘Good morning, Güniz Hanım’ and carry on our way. We know our boundaries, we can associate with you, otherwise this [coming to our houses, staying with us, talking] wouldn’t have happened.”

¹¹⁴ This was sometimes seen by the women as “lack of experience”. When I learned that Ümmühan, born in 1986, was younger than me, I said, “From now on I’ll just call you Ümmühan, in that case,” but she objected, saying, “I’ve lived through much more than you, keep calling me ‘abla’ [‘big sister’].” The women carry the marks of the heavy work they do on their bodies, and they appear older than their years and worn down. When observing married couples, the women often appeared older than their husbands despite actually being younger.

closer to themselves in the social hierarchy formed around the duality of “bosses” and “workers”. The few months in the early stages of the fieldwork during which I worked at the *Greenhouse* together with the women strengthened this perception, and ultimately this was one of the dynamics that facilitated the field work.

As well as the women, the general manager and head engineer of the *Greenhouse* were also weighing me up. I could sense that they did not view me as a threat but that they were still checking up on me.¹¹⁵ These people in managerial positions were very pleased with the working environment at the greenhouse, which gave them a certain confidence that enabled them to “permit” me to carry out my research. They would compare the greenhouse with tomato-paste factories. They told me that even if I wanted to, I would not be granted access to those factories because the management would not allow it: “They don’t really look at quality for tomatoes used in paste. Crushed, rotten, blackened, calcium burned... If you saw it, you’d never eat industrial tomato-paste again. They say it’s really problematic, of course I don’t know if they’d take [you] or not to see the tomato-paste factory or other places like that. But they wouldn’t take you in, I doubt it.” At the same time, according to the women, my presence sometimes led the management to act more “normal”. The insults and shouting that the workers frequently mentioned were reduced to a minimum in my presence.

The head engineer was frequently in the *Greenhouse*, while the general manager was rarely seen. My encounter with the general manager at the early stages of the fieldwork was watched with interest by all of the workers in that unit. What was

¹¹⁵ In this sense, interviewing the men in managerial positions or conducting the fieldwork with their “eye” on me at the *Greenhouse* complicated the research. As being both young, female and a “student”, I had always an inferior position compared to their power attributed by acknowledged hierarchies (being older, male and in a position of superiority at the workplace). This also confirms that, “The second wave (feminist) notion of sharing power in the research process naively assumed power is held only by the researcher over the researched” (Pini, 2003: 424). It is rather more grift process. Pini (2003) argues that she herself had the experience of being sexualized, dismissed and/or derided during her interviews with men in positions of leadership in the sugar industry.

said during that meeting as well as our body language served as data for the workers in their assessment of me. The general manager, Arda, had called me over and asked how I found the *Greenhouse* and how my work was going. This impromptu conversation was brought to an end with Arda's question, "So now you've seen how people earn their daily bread, what 'sweat of the brow' really means, haven't you?" and my response, "I certainly have..."¹¹⁶

3.3. List of Participants

While this sub-section introduces the participants on the basis of age, marital status, number of children, age-to-work, education, place of birth and ethnic/religious origin and migration patterns, it also covers the work biographies of women before the *Greenhouse*. In other words, the kinds of jobs they had previously and the characteristics of their working histories ending at the *Greenhouse* are the two main topics detailed in this section. In addition, I explore the basic socio-demographic information and working lives of the males of the household, i.e. the husbands or fathers of the women.

3.3.1. Age, Education, Marital Status, Age-to-Work and Social Security

There was a total of 33 participants; 11 aged between 20 and 34, 15 between 35 and 50, and seven over 50. Regarding marital status, the majority (20) are married. Of the remainder, three are widows, three divorced, five single and two engaged. Of those with children, the number of children varies from one to four. However, only one woman has four children, and only two women have three children. The rest have either one child (5 women) or two children (18 women). Seven of the interviewees have no children. These figures appear to be in line with the findings of research carried out at Hacettepe University (2013) on

¹¹⁶ I will return to this loaded exchange in chapter 7, Women and Rural Transformation, where I discuss the general manager's views on the *Greenhouse* workforce, the rural transformation in the area and contemporary agri-food relations.

population and health. According to this study, the fertility gap between urban and rural is shrinking, while in the regions of Western and Central Anatolia the fertility rate is too low to sustain the population.¹¹⁷

When it comes to the women's education level, the vast majority (21) completed primary school.¹¹⁸ Four of the women completed and only one woman graduated from high school. While there are two illiterate women, there are another two who know how to read and write even though they are unschooled. There is also one woman who is continuing her education online to obtain a high school diploma. There are two young women in higher education: One is enrolled in a four-year program in Economics at Ege University, Izmir, and one is enrolled in a two-year program in Food Quality Control at the Department of Food Processing at Balıkesir University.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ http://www.hips.hacettepe.edu.tr/tnsa2013/rapor/TNSA_2013_ana_rapor.pdf, last visited 27.06.2019.

¹¹⁸ Especially for the 35-50 and over 50s age groups, women say that educating girls in rural areas is not that important for people. There are many women who mentioned their desire to continue their education yet were not allowed to do so. Girls considered to be "women" soon are supposed to get married soon after their primary education. While this has sometimes been intertwined with the economic burden of sending children to school, girls are also seen as unpaid family (child) laborers. "Because of poverty. And I'm a girl. My teacher said to my dad, give her to the state as a boarding student, but there was no school bus in the village. My dad said 'I want to send you to school but I don't have the money.' I've always regretted it. Whenever I go past Bergama High School, I feel a knot in my stomach. There were three of us in the village who the teacher said should continue to study — two girls and a boy. And you know they sent the boy to the free boarding school. The girls stayed behind; the boy studied. He's a lieutenant now. I'm so proud of my lieutenant friend." Sabriye

¹¹⁹ Even though I did not have the opportunity to conduct a complete interview with other educated young women employed at the *Greenhouse*, there are a couple of other female students who work as seasonal labor at the *Greenhouse*. For example, Ayşe (aged 19) is a student of Graphic and Advertising Design. Like Solmaz, one of my interviewees, Yağmur (aged 19) is a student of a two-year program in Food Quality Control at the Department of Food Processing at Balıkesir University. During one of my visits, the results of the university exam were announced, and these young workers shared with me the news about which programs they had been accepted to. For example, Fırdevs (aged 18) was accepted to a two-year program in the Department of Economics at Uşak University. However, she was not excited by the news since she was not sure if her father would allow her to live in another city for her education. For this reason, she told me that she would like to go to university in Izmir, which is much closer to her family. In sum, one may from time to time come across women in higher education among the workers at the

It is clear that age-to-work is quite early among the participants. All of the women started working before the age of 18, the legal minimum wage for work. In other words, all of the women used to be rural child laborers. The majority of women started work at the age of 7 while a minority started around the age of 12; this of course is when the women remember the first time they went to work. Age-to-work is as early as 5 years old for one woman, while the latest age is 16. The majority started their working life in the fields in agricultural production. Women say that they either helped their families in their own business or got paid as daily laborers (*yevmiyeci*). However, they mention that even though they were employed as daily laborers in at the fields they always worked alongside family members. One of the interviewees stated that she used to receive half of the daily wage (*yevmiye*) for a whole day's work since she was a small child. The majority of the women underline the hardship of the days when, as children, they worked in the fields.¹²⁰ In addition to agricultural production, the women also worked in husbandry as shepherds, or in carpet weaving. Very few women stated that they worked in off-farm jobs, when they were children. There were only 3 off-farm jobs mentioned: cashier, factory worker and greenhouse worker. All of the others began their working lives in traditional rural activities, i.e. agricultural production, husbandry or carpet weaving.

Table 3.8. Age, Education, Marital Status, Age-to-Work and Social Security

<i>Name</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Marital Status</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Age-to-Work</i>	<i>Social Security</i>
Adile	45	Widow	Primary School	11- agricultural laborer	Yes (from her deceased husband)

Greenhouse workers but they are only a limited number of young women who are generally following a two-year program.

¹²⁰ An example of this comes from Meliha: "I grew up poor, they made me work a lot. At 6 I'd herd the sheep, look after the animals, at 7 I planted tobacco, they always made me plant tobacco. We planted tobacco, barley, vetch, wheat, we planted chickpeas. I'd harvest with a sickle... We had lots of animals, we wouldn't go to bed until ten or eleven at night. We'd milk the sheep, fetch water from the well, at five in the morning we'd be stripping saplings."

Bedihe	35	Married	Secondary School	7- agricultural laborer	Yes (first 6 months of employment uninsured)
Bingül	44	Married	Illiterate	7- agricultural laborer	Yes (first 4 months of employment uninsured)
Saadet	23	Married	Unschoolled but learned literacy on her own	12- agricultural laborer	Yes
Deste	51	Married	Primary School	7- agricultural laborer	Yes
Elmas	41	Married	Primary School	5-husbandry	Yes
Devrim	20	Single	University Student	15-Greenhouse worker	Yes (from her mother)
Fadime	45	Married	Primary School	8- agricultural laborer	Yes (employed seasonally, uninsured for 3 years at the beginning of her working life)
Gülcan	47	Married	Primary School	12- agricultural laborer	Yes (a year and a half employed uninsured)
Güldeste	36	Divorced	One-year attendance at primary school – recently learned literacy	7- agricultural laborer	Yes (a year and a half employed uninsured)
Gülizar	42	Married	Primary School	6- agricultural laborer	Yes (a year and a half of employment uninsured)

Gülsün ¹²¹	55	Married	Primary School	11- agricultural laborer	No (seasonally employed)
Gülyüz	61	Married	Illiterate	7- agricultural laborer	Yes (from the beginning)
Halime ¹²²	24	Engaged	Secondary School	5- agricultural laborer	Yes (from the father)
Hamiyet	44	Married	Primary School	11- agricultural laborer	Yes (first 4 months of employment uninsured)
Hediye	41	Married	Primary School	10- agricultural laborer & carpet weaver	Yes (first week of employment uninsured)
Kevser	22	Engaged	Not finished Secondary School	16- agricultural laborer	Yes (first 4 months of employment uninsured)
Leyla	21	Single	Primary School	14- factory worker	Yes (first 2 weeks of employment uninsured)
Meliha	38	Married	Primary School	6-husbandry, agricultural laborer	Yes
Merve	33	Married	Not finished Secondary School	12-agricultural laborer	Yes (first 20 days of employment uninsured)
Nadide	57	Single	Primary School	6- agricultural laborer	Yes (first 4 months of employment uninsured)
Nurgün	49	Widow	Not finished primary school	7- agricultural laborer	No (awaiting retirement from work in tobacco production)
Sabriye	39	Married	Primary School	9- agricultural laborer	Yes (first 5 months of employment uninsured)

¹²¹ Left the Greenhouse job during the fieldwork.

¹²² Left the Greenhouse job during the fieldwork.

Seher	42	Divorced	Attending online high school	13- cashier at a supermarket	Yes (from the beginning)
Selma ¹²³	33	Married	Primary School	7- agricultural laborer	No
Semiha	55	Widow	Primary School	7- agricultural laborer	Yes (first 4 years of employment uninsured)
Serpil	25	Married	Secondary School	8–10 agricultural laborer	Yes (from the beginning)
Solmaz	20	Single	University Student	7- agricultural laborer	No (seasonally employed without insurance)
Servet	54	Married	Primary School	6- agricultural laborer	Yes ¹²⁴
Ümmühan	30	Married	Primary School	12- agricultural laborer	No ¹²⁵
Yonca	20	Single	Secondary School	10- agricultural laborer	Yes (from the beginning)
Yüksel	39	Divorced	High School	11- agricultural laborer	Yes (first 2 months of employment uninsured)
Zahide	53	Married	Primary School	7- agricultural laborer	Yes ¹²⁶

¹²³ Left the Greenhouse job during the fieldwork.

¹²⁴ For the first two years Servet was employed without insurance, then she left and worked in tobacco cultivation for a year. When she returned to the *Greenhouse*, she was insured in 2014.

¹²⁵ When I met Ümmühan in 2016, she was a worker at the *Greenhouse*. However, she has also worked at the Greenhouse in 2012 for six months. She told me, she quit her job at the Greenhouse due to lack of social security. She returned to the greenhouse as a seasonal worker in 2013. In 2016, she once again took up a job at the *Greenhouse* but decided to leave after falling pregnant. It was only in this last period at the Greenhouse that the Company paid her social security payments.

¹²⁶ For the first two years Zahide preferred to work without registering for social security since was not sure that she could stand the conditions there. After she felt confident enough, she was insured.

3.3.2. Ethnic-Religious Background and Migration Patterns of Women of the Greenhouse

There is a variety among the women in terms of their ethnic-religious background. I also observed that the ethnic-religious background of the women actively affects their migration patterns. While ten of the participants are Alevi, the rest are Sunni Muslim. While one of the Alevi women is Kurdish, the rest are Çepni. Çepni women (9), Yörük women (13) and Yerli¹²⁷ (4) women are the three main groups of participants in this research. In addition, there are two Kurdish women and one Laz migrant woman from Korgan, Ordu, in the Black Sea Region and another participant who is from Nevşehir in the region of Central Anatolia. Finally, there are two Manav migrant women are from the district of Simav in the Kütahya province. One came from the village of Sakallı, the other from the village of Dereardı, both of which are sparsely populated mountain villages. One other Manav woman among the participants grew up in the local area.

Table 3.9. Ethnic-Religious Origin of Participants

<i>Ethnic-Religious Origin</i>	<i>Yörük</i>	<i>Çepni</i>	<i>Yerli/ Muhacir</i>	<i>Manav</i>	<i>Kurdish</i>	<i>Other</i>
<i>Number</i>	13	9	4	3	2	2

While eight of the 33 women currently live in the surrounding villages, the rest migrated to the peripheral towns of Bergama, Kınık and Soma. While four women are from mountain villages (Tortular and Olgunlar, District of Bergama), three of them live in plain villages (Çay and Yelpınar, District of Bergama).

¹²⁷ The terms *Yerli* and *Manav* are used in this research on the basis of local people's own definitions. In contrast to the generally accepted use of these two terms, in which they have the same meaning, *Yerli* refers to migrants from Balkan countries, mainly Bulgaria and Macedonia, while *Manav* people identify themselves as local to the Bakırçay Basin.

Only one woman is from a village located in a valley (Korkutlar, District of Dikili). It is safe to say that while the mountain and valley villages are in decline, those located in the plains have, to a certain extent, managed to maintain their population. Of the interviewees, 25 live in towns.¹²⁸ Either the women themselves or their parents all experienced migration from the villages.¹²⁹ Women in the Çepni group are originally from certain villages of the district of Kınık — Ellili (4 women), Taştepe (3 women), Belibolu (1 woman) — and from the village of Deliklitaş in the district of Balıkesir (1 woman). The Yörük women migrated from a variety of different villages: two women are from the village of Kertelli in the province of Uşak, one is from the village of Arlanlı in the province of Balıkesir, while the rest are from villages in the district of Bergama — Solanlar, Ramizler, Periköy and Selamlı. Solanlar, Kertelli and Arlanlı are mountain villages, Selamlı and Periköy valley villages and Ramizler a plain village. Five women live in the town of Cinge, in the district of Soma, four out of the five also migrated from diverse places. Two of these women are from mountain villages of the Kütahya district, and one is from the district of Korgan in the Ordu Province. While one Manav woman says that she is local to Cinge — therefore no migration experienced — another Manav woman says that she was born there but that her family migrated from the village of Arlanlı in the Balıkesir Province¹³⁰ and that her mother gave birth to her in Cinge when she was 16. There are also women who migrated from other provinces to the towns and villages of the Bakırçay Basin. For example, Saadet and Leyla are two

¹²⁸ The reasons behind the migration of either women or their parents will be discussed in Chapter 7, Women and Rural Transformation. It will be seen that the migration patterns also show variety on the basis of the geographical position of the village or certain economic activities, as well as ethnic-religious origin.

¹²⁹ There is an interesting geographical imagination that is crystallized in the words of women. According to the women, the concept of rural area refers to the mountain villages, while villagers living in the valleys or plains do not consider themselves to be living in rural areas.

¹³⁰ Arlanlı Village, Balıkesir is a Manav and Yörük settlement that dates back to the late 19th century.

Kurdish women who originally come from the village of Bulanık from the Province of Muş in Eastern Anatolia. While Saadet came to the village of Tortular to marry her husband, Leyla was born in Bergama just after her family migrated there.

The study also includes a group of women who call themselves “Yerli/Muhacir”, whose families migrated from various Balkan countries, such as Macedonia, Greece, Kosovo and Bulgaria. Unlike their grandparents all four of these women them were born in the Bakırçay Basin. Two of them were born in villages (Yayakent Village in Kınık and Yelpınar Village in Bergama), and while one of them still lives in Yelpınar, a village of Macedonian migrants, the other migrated to the neighborhood of Poyracık in Kınık. The other two women were born in the town of Kınık and have lived there their entire lives. The area of the town in which they live is known among the locals as “Göçmen Evleri” (Immigrant Houses).¹³¹ The area used to be religiously segregated between Muslim and Non-Muslim (mostly Greek) communities. In this sense, *Göçmen Evleri* is located within the boundaries of the Muslim area. Both of these women live in the Yukarı Mahalle neighborhood.¹³² There are three Manav women among the participants. While one of them is originally from Cinge, Soma, the other two are from mountain villages in the district of Simav, Kütahya, and later settled at Cinge. The women migrated in 1996 and 2004.

When it comes to the Sunni-Yörüks, six of the 13 women live in villages, while the others have recently migrated to towns. All of the women migrated to the city of Bergama, except for Serpil, who lives in Cinge, Soma due to her family’s

¹³¹ The houses are spatially organized for more than one family living side by side, while there is a yard-garden in the middle for common use. The houses of the women that I visited during the fieldwork seem to be in line with that organization.

¹³² The names of other neighborhoods used in daily language by the locals also reflect this historical segregation. Nadide says, “There are neighborhoods known as Türk Cedit and Gavur [Infidel]. Only one street separates the Muslim and non-Muslim areas! There are still Rums coming from abroad to see their families’ old houses.”

earlier search for employment opportunities in the mines there. Of the six Yörük women who live in villages, three live in mountain villages, two plain villages, and one in a valley village. Those who live in neighborhoods of Bergama (4 women) have mainly settled in the Fatih Neighborhood, with one woman living in the Gazi and Maltepe Neighborhoods.

The migration patterns of the Çepni women are quite striking compared to the other groups. All nine of them have a story of migration and they all live in the district of Kınık, where they have settled in the peripheral neighborhoods of Fatih/Çaltı (3), Yenimahalle (5), and Poyracık (1). It is particularly interesting to note that almost all (8) of these women were born in the mountain villages. Only one of the Çepni women was born in the town a year after her family settled in Kınık. This suggests that the rural change in the Bakırçay Basin has been more significant for the Çepni group living in the mountain villages with limited opportunities for sustainability.

There are also ten other “migrants” who came from rural areas of different provinces, including the provinces of Ordu (Laz), Kütahya (Manav), Balıkesir (Çepni)¹³³, Manisa (Yörük), Uşak (Yörük)¹³⁴, Muş (Kurdish) and Nevşehir (unknown). Of these 10 women, only one was born in an urban area (in Nevşehir), while the others have a rural background from mountain villages. Two Çepni women among these migrants also settled in neighborhoods of Kınık with a predominantly. The Yörük women chose to settle in similar areas in Bergama, and the Manav women did the same in Cinge.

¹³³ Another three families from the same village (Deliklitaş, Balıkesir) also chose to settle in the same neighborhood of Kınık.

¹³⁴ The population of this village is not only composed of the Yörük, but also the Roma who settled down there after the former group.

There are three main types of migration pattern among the participants: (I) from mountain villages of the districts of Kınık and Bergama to the peripheries of the towns (particularly for the Çepni women), (II) from mountain villages in other districts to the peripheries of Kınık, Soma and Bergama (particularly for Manav and Yörük women) and (III) from the plain villages of Bergama to the peripheries of the town of Bergama (particularly for Yörük women). This reveals that the labor force at the *Greenhouse* is primarily composed of women originally from villages. According to the Human Resource Unit, such women make up 60% of the total labor force.

Table 3.10. Residential Information of Participants

Town/District	Bergama	Kınık	Cinge, Soma	Dikili
Village	7	-	-	1
Neighborhood	8	12	5	-
Total	15	12	5	1

When it comes to the characteristics of the houses in the towns of Bergama, Kınık and Soma, it is striking that many of the participants describe the location of their houses in a very similar way. When I would ask them how to find their houses in order to conduct the interviews, I would receive responses from the women along the following lines: “It is the end of the town of Kınık”, “It’s the last street in Kınık,” or “It’s on the periphery of Bergama, you’ll see that there is no Bergama after our home!”, “Where our home is it’s like a village, it’s kind of a slum but the neighborhood relations are good!” Very few of the participants stay in the centers of the towns in question; those who do live in houses with poor infrastructure, one of which is located in a neighborhood on the verge of collapse. In some cases, the towns have expanded to incorporate these areas after these women and/or their families settled there. Some houses have outside toilets, some are located in the middle of cultivated fields. It would not be wrong to say that the majority of the women live in neighborhoods of the towns that

resemble villages. In addition, the majority have small gardens next to their houses for subsistence production.

In sum, as suggested by the intra-regional and cross-regional migration patterns summarized above, it is safe to say that the Bakırçay Basin has been a very attractive hub, especially for those living in declining mountain villages. The Bakırçay Basin not only provides opportunities for employment via the rich mines, and limestone or stone quarries, but the greenhouses seem to be a new address for younger generations of women belonging to small-producer households to make money.

Table 3.11. Migration Patterns of the Women of the *Greenhouse*

<i>Name</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Current Place of Residence</i>	<i>Place of Origin - Year of Migration</i>
Adile	45	Cenkyeri, Soma	Kargan, Ordu
Bedihe	35	Yenimahalle, Kınık	Ellili Village, Kınık - 1980 (one year before her birth)
Bingöl	44	Yenimahalle, Kınık	Taştepe Village, Kınık - 1976 ¹³⁵
Saadet	23	Tortular Village, Bergama	Muş, Malazgirt, Nurettin Village - 2011
Deste	51	Tortular Village, Bergama	No migration
Elmas	41	Cinge, Soma	Sakallı Village, Simav, Kütahya - 2004
Devrim	20	Fatih Neighborhood, Bergama	Kertelli Village, Eşme, Uşak - 1996
Fadime	45	Yelpınar, Bergama	Pınarbaşı Village, Gördes, Manisa - 1992

¹³⁵ Due to a conflict among family members that resulted in murder, her family was socially excluded and finally exiled to Kınık: “We were children, they excluded us. They’d beat us. Throw stones at us. [When we arrived] there weren’t many of our people [Çepnis] in Kınık. There were few of us, we were a minority.”

Gülcan	47	Korkutlar Village, Dikili	No migration
Güldeste	36	Gazipaşa Neighborhood, Bergama	Solanlar Village, Bergama, 1994 – Olgunlar Village, Bergama - 2011
Gülizar	42	Fatih, Kınık	Taştepe Village, Kınık - 1974
Gülsün	55	Yayakent, Kınık	Poyracık, Kınık
Gülyüz	61	Yenimahalle, Kınık	Deliklitaş Village, Balıkesir - 2012
Halime	24	Yelpinar, Bergama	No migration ¹³⁶
Hamiyet ¹³⁷	44	Fatih Neighborhood, Bergama	Ramizler Village, Bergama -1982
Hediye	41	Cinge, Soma	Dereköy Village, Simav, Kütahya - 1996
Kevser ¹³⁸	22	Tortular Village, Bergama	No migration
Leyla	21	“Bağlar”, Atatürk Neighborhood, Bergama	No migration ¹³⁹
Meliha	38	Yenimahalle, Kınık	Ellili Village, Kınık - 1999
Merve	33	Cinge, Soma	No migration
Nadide	57	“Göçmen Evleri” Central Kınık	No migration
Nurgün	49	Yenimahalle, Kınık	Kozpınar Village, Bigadiç, Balıkesir, - 1982 Ellili Village, - Kınık - 1996
Sabriye	39	Fatih Neighborhood, Bergama Center	Periköy Village – Bergama 2005

¹³⁶ Yeniköy is village of Macedonian migrants who settled there in 1926-1927.

¹³⁷ Even though her family migrated to the town, they did not give up agricultural production. The family would spend winters in the town and go to the fields during the summer. After Hamiyet got married, she ceased to be part of this cycle.

¹³⁸ After my fieldwork, she left the *Greenhouse*, got married and moved to Bergama.

¹³⁹ Leyla’s family migrated from the village of Bulanık (Malazgirt, Muş) in 1976. She is the second generation of her family to live in the Atatürk Neighborhood, Bergama. The area in which she lives, known as “Bağlar”, has a predominantly Kurdish population.

Seher	42	Maltepe Neighborhood, Bergama Center	Nevşehir
Selma	33	Bergama, Atatürk Neighborhood	Selamlı Village, Bergama - 1999
Semiha	55	“Göçmen Evleri”, Central Kınık	No migration
Serpil	25	Cinge, Soma	No migration
Solmaz	20	Fatih, Kınık	Taştepe Village, Kınık - 2015
Servet	54	Köşkdüzü Neighborhood, Poyracık, Kınık	Belibolu Village, Kınık - 2010
Ümmühan	30	Çay Village, Bergama	Örtülü Village, Kınık - 2005
Yonca	20	Olgunlar Village, Bergama	No migration
Yüksel	39	Fatih Neighborhood, Bergama	Kertelli Village, Eşme, Uşak - 1996
Zahide	53	Fatih Neighborhood, Kınık	Ellili Village, Kınık - 1987

The information shown in the table below belongs to women workers whom I met during the fieldwork at the *Greenhouse*. Although I occasionally had the chance to talk to them, I could not conduct complete interviews as I did with the others. However, I still give them a place in the study to give a better view of the different categories of women at the *Greenhouse*.

Table 3.12. Age, Ethnic-Religious Origin, Place of Origin and Migration Patterns

Ethnic-Religious Origin	Age	Current Place of Residence	Place of Origin - Year of Migration
Gülistan (Kurdish)	21	Dündarlı Village, Kınık	Mardin - 2010
Gülbeniz (Çepni)	41	Poyracık, Kınık	Belibolu Village, Kınık - 2012
Gönül (Çepni)	20	Pınarköy, Bergama	No migration
Bedia (Yörük)	34	Bergama	Ürkütler Village, Bergama - 2014
Nurhayat (Yörük)	30	Bergama	Ürkütler Village, Bergama - 2016
Nurgül (Çepni)	38	Pınarköy, Bergama	No migration
Büteyra (Yörük)	22	Poyracık, Kınık	Yörük Village - 2013

As seen in the table, there are six women aged 20-34, and only one from the next age group, 35-50. These additional participants are composed of three Yörük and three Çepni women and one Kurdish woman. All but two of these migrated from their villages after 2000. Two women who have not experienced migration are Çepni women living in mountain villages. They are seasonal workers at the *Greenhouse*. According to these women, the main reason behind the migration is economic, i.e. limited options for employment within village life.

3.3.3. Working Patterns of Women of the Greenhouse

Whether the participants had any experience of off-farm jobs before they started work at the *Greenhouse* is also important to understand the women's profile in a more complete way. In the table below, traditional rural activities refer to small agricultural production, small-scale husbandry, daily work (*yevmiyeci*) and carpet weaving. Daily work not only covers harvest work, but also includes forest labor, i.e. hoeing the land around the pine trees, weeding, spreading seeds or planting seedlings, and post-harvest work, which includes picking the last olives left after the harvest.¹⁴⁰

Table 3.13. Working Patterns of the Women of the *Greenhouse*

Age	<i>From Traditional Rural Activities to Greenhouse Work</i>	<i>From Off-farm Jobs to Greenhouse Work</i>
20-34	7	4
35-50	6	9
Over 50	5	2
Total Number	18	15

The women also worked in a variety of off-farm jobs. Regarding the generational differences between the three age groups regarding their experience of off-farm jobs or lack thereof, we can see that five of the women over 50 years old worked in traditional rural activities before starting work at the *Greenhouse*, while two had prior experience of off-farm jobs. However, it is important to mention that these two women spent a very limited time at those jobs. While Zahide worked only 45 days at a canned food factory, Servet spent 7 months working at a

¹⁴⁰ Post-harvest olive picking is generally carried out by poor households of the Çepni group or mountain villagers who come to pick the olives left in the trees after the harvest. As far as I observed during my fieldwork, the olive grove owner generally does not demand any price from those households for the collected olives.

tomato paste factory.¹⁴¹ When we take into account the women's early age-to-work, the period of time in question spent in off-farm jobs makes up a very small part of their working lives (a total of 46 years in work for Zahide and 47 for Servet). In sum, even though these two women have experience of off-farm jobs, this were for short periods of time and the main income they earned throughout their working lives was primarily based on traditional rural activities.

However, this changes when it comes to the other two age groups. Seven of the 11 women aged 20-34 say that they directly applied to the *Greenhouse* job after working in traditional rural activities. While four of those seven women still live in the villages, three of them migrated to towns (two of them migrated themselves, the third with her parents). The other four women in this age group stated that they worked in off-farm jobs before the *Greenhouse*, in tomato paste, canned food and textile factories, in an agricultural development cooperative,¹⁴² or as salespersons, cooks, dishwashers and cleaning ladies (in summer houses). Serpil, for example, worked as a janitor at a secondary school for a few months. Formerly agricultural producers, Ümmühan and Merve were employed in different kinds of off-farm jobs, while from time to time they returned to the rural activities in question, before finally taking on work at the *Greenhouse*.

¹⁴¹ Many *Greenhouse* women worked in one specific tomato paste factory. Workers are paid on daily basis, and the work is divided into two shifts (morning and night). Middleman/An intermediary works for that business, too and some of the women (3) found work there through middleman/intermediary, while others found it on their own. Women complain that the job there is irregular, exhausting, uninsured and low-paid. They also dislike the working conditions and say they have to stand in front of the assembly line for the entire 12-hour shift. The workers get no lunch break, and instead are allowed to take 10-minute break in small groups. Women also say that the unit in which they work is far from the canteen, making it impossible to go for lunch. They find the assembly line odd, and even in some cases nauseating. When compared to the tomato paste factory, the majority of the women say they appreciate the conditions at the *Greenhouse*. Yet, it seems that this factory continues to be another hub for the local labor force. One of the women states that her brother-in-law works as a middleman for that factory and he recruits workers from diverse places, such as Soma, Savaştepe, Arpaşek, Işıklar, Küçükaya or Bergama.

¹⁴² This women's job was to package peanuts for sale in the cooperative.

Among the women of this age group, it is only Leyla whose work biography is composed of exclusively off-farm jobs.¹⁴³ Additionally, even though Halime never worked in off-farm jobs before the *Greenhouse*, after her work there, she worked as a salesperson, a cook and as a worker at a cotton factory. She was employed at each for very short periods of time: 18 days, seven days and ten days respectively.

The women in the 35-50 age group appears to have had a broader range of experience in off-farm jobs than the younger generation. Six of the 15 women in that age group started work at the *Greenhouse* with no experience of off-farm jobs. All of those women are migrants from mountain villages, except for Sabriye, who is from a valley village.¹⁴⁴ Nine women in this age group had experience of off-farm work before the *Greenhouse*, working in textile and tomato paste factories or as school janitors, dishwashers, *gözleme*¹⁴⁵ sellers, cooks, cashier at restaurants or grocery stores, salespeople, tea-servers, cleaning ladies and care workers. Beside these common jobs, Adile says that she used to pick coal from the waste produced by the state-owned coal mine, both to meet her own needs and to sell.¹⁴⁶ There are also two women who used to work at

¹⁴³ Her family was socially excluded due to conflicts that happened in their original village of Bulanık, Muş. Because of this, her family has been divested of their inherited land.

¹⁴⁴ Sabriye was employed as a textile worker, yet she only remained in this job for three days. She would have liked to continue but she was unable to leave her son with anyone else so she had to quit.

¹⁴⁵ A traditional pastry often sold as fast food.

¹⁴⁶ Adile says, “We’d collect coal from the earthworks. It’s illegal to take state property, but everyone did it. We’d carry bags of coal on our back. We couldn’t keep it up, it was [bags of] rocks after all. We’d carry them to the pine forests. Then after 7 kilometers we’d take them with tractors. When it got to two tons, you’d get 1000 lira for it. You’d wait the whole day, maybe there’d be none, maybe there’d be lots. They came and emptied it all out, we’d sort through it. One year I went there. Once the coal exploded and it hit my sister-in-law. She died on the spot. After that my husband wouldn’t let me go there. I never went back.”

*yufka*¹⁴⁷ shop. Finally, for one-year Elmas worked from home as a piece-rate worker,¹⁴⁸ and many of the women make money out of lace, knitting or crochet. Four women either continued to work in off-farm jobs while also working in the *Greenhouse* or went into off-farm employment after leaving the *Greenhouse*.¹⁴⁹ Interestingly, as an exception to the rest of the participants, three of the 33 women — Merve, Ümmühan and Adile — seem to have created another sphere of work inside the *Greenhouse*. While Ümmühan sells the lettuce she produces, Adile sells her share of the olive oil that the family production. Merve, however, is more of an entrepreneur in this sense: not only does she only sell her share of olives, but she also sells the *gözleme* that she prepares the night before on the shuttle in the morning.¹⁵⁰ She has also introduced the women to a special kind of mushroom (said to be good for the health) for them to sell.

When it comes to the relation between ethnic-religious groups and participation in off-farm jobs, it is clear that for the Yörük and Yerli groups, the majority (12 out of 17 women), have no experience of off-farms jobs, as opposed to the Çepni women, of whom almost half had off-farm experience before starting work at the *Greenhouse*. The off-farm experience of the Çepni women was only in the tomato paste and canned food factories. (except for two Çepni women who had a few days experience working at the *Greenhouse* while also employed at the same

¹⁴⁷ A thin sheet of dough used to make traditional foods.

¹⁴⁸ She would arrange pieces of *helva* (a sweetmeat made with flour) into boxes at home. Her employer would then come to her house and give her payment based on the number of boxes.

¹⁴⁹ Meliha, for example returned to the tomato paste factory after spending a few months at the *Greenhouse*. She then went back to her job at the *Greenhouse*, where she remained up to the time we met during my fieldwork. Güldeste worked two jobs at the same time: at the *Greenhouse* during the daytime, and as a dishwasher and cook in a café at night. After leaving the *Greenhouse*, Seher took a job as a welder in a steel factory.

¹⁵⁰ The shuttle is another place where women sell their textile products, in addition to food or other agricultural products.

tomato paste factory.)¹⁵¹ This means that all the work in the service sector or in family-based business summarized above was carried out by the other non-Çepni women.

All the women in the Yerli group say that they have never been involved in “somebody else’s job” outside their place of origin or current residence in the village/town. Of the women in the Yörük group, on the other hand, slightly more than half worked in off-farm jobs. While three of the seven Yörük women still live in villages, the other four are migrants who settled in neighborhoods of Soma and Bergama. Half of the Yörük women (3) who started their off-farm working lives at the *Greenhouse* still live in the villages of Bergama, while the rest migrated to the city of Bergama.

Table 3.14. Experience of Off-Farms Jobs on the Basis of Ethnic-Religious Origin

<i>Ethnic- Religious Origin</i>	<i>Yörük</i>	<i>Çepni</i>	<i>Yerli/ Muhacir</i>	<i>Kurdish</i>	<i>Manav</i>	<i>Other</i>
<i>DG / OF</i>	6 / 7	5 / 4	4 / -	1 / 1	1 / 2	- / 2
<i>Total</i>	13	9	4	2	3	2

DG= Direct *Greenhouse* Employment (no off-farm experience)

OF= Off-farm Experience

In sum, it is clear that participation in off-farm jobs becomes more significant for younger generations, in comparison to the women aged over 50. This does not, however, mean that traditional rural activities have vanished from the working lives of the rural women in this research, since the number of women with no off-farm experience (17) is still higher than those with off-farm experience (16).

¹⁵¹ In addition, whether or not they had experience of off-farm jobs, all of the Çepni women come from mountain villages but migrated to the towns of Kınık.

Even though the numbers are close, it is critical to remember that only two women have never dealt with traditional rural activities.¹⁵² However, bearing in mind the deepening crisis in the rural Bakırçay Basin, it is likely that the participation in off-farm jobs will play a more significant role in the lives of these women. The perception of the women towards traditional rural activities and village life will be detailed in Chapter 7, Women and Rural Transformation.

Although all of the women started their working lives at very early ages in traditional rural activities alongside their families, the younger generations in particular are increasingly likely to take on off-farm jobs, when available. The tomato paste and textile factories that are located in the peripheries of the towns are employment hubs for local women. The majority of women with off-farm work experience (12 out of 16), have worked at one of those factories. Almost the same number of women (11) worked in the service sector; these jobs were as a cook-dishwasher (2), salesperson (3), school janitor (2), *yufka*-maker (2), cashier (1), *helva*-maker (1), *gözleme*-seller (1) and worker at agricultural development cooperative (1). Among those women, the number of those who worked alone in the business of an employer outside the family (9 women) is higher than those who worked with family members in a family business (2 women): While one of those worked out of the home with other family members selling *gözleme*, the other stayed at home with her family as a piece-rate worker. However, as all the jobs mentioned are in the local area, women are still surrounded by acquaintances or relatives. The women generally informed each other and went to work together (which is especially true for factory jobs), as happened in the *Greenhouse* case. In this sense, the network created through ethnic-religious groups or neighbors, friends or relatives becomes critical in participation in those jobs.

¹⁵² While one originally comes from an urban-based lower-middle-class family (the daughter of a soldier), the other participant and her family lost their share of inherited land due to family conflicts.

It is important to mention here that for those with experience in off-farm jobs, there is no linear direction via which they start with traditional activities and end up with off-farm jobs, instead these women have always back and forth between the two. The women's relationship with off-farm jobs is a complicated one, and participation in such work has always been supported by the availability of traditional rural activities (mostly as daily laborers). This is in part because of the nature of the off-farm jobs in which they participate in the rural labor markets — women mostly work as irregular, uninsured and flexible labor in seasonal and short-term jobs. There are only two examples of women who worked for more than a year in the same job: Leyla worked as worker at canned food factory for three years and at a textile factory for two years, while Hamiyet worked at the same *yufka*-place for seven years, a unique case among the participants. The other women's period of employment generally varies from just a number of days to a few months. The reasons behind moving from one off-farm job to another are various, for example they include the women's persistent demand for social security, and the impact of the Soma Disaster. These will be discussed in Chapter 6, Reproduction, Perceptions of Work and Complicated Empowerment, in which I focus on the reasons and motivations behind the women's participation in paid labor.

3.3.4. Working Lives of the Household Males

Because we're farmhands, villagers, I work in the mine. It's all trees, whether I'm using a spade or a pickaxe. Miner and former tobacco producer

The table below shows the employment characteristics of the males in the participants households — primarily the husbands, and to a lesser degree the fathers or fiancés.¹⁵³ The total number of the males is 33; this number includes one man who is the father of one participant and the ex-husband of another

¹⁵³ The working lives of the children of the participants will be detailed in Chapter 7, Women and Rural Transformation.

(counted only once), as well as the fiancé of one participant. Before analyzing their position in the rural labor markets, I will give brief information regarding their age, level of education, ethnic-religious origin and migration patterns.

The age of the males is categorized under three main groups, as for the women of the *Greenhouse*. While there are only three males aged between 20 and 34, there is an equal spread between the other two age groups, with 15 men in the 35-50 age group and 15 in the over-50 age group. There are four main ethnic main groups among the men: Yörük (13), Çepni (9), Manav (4) and Yerli (4). In addition, there is one Kurdish man, one Laz man, and one man (ethnic origin unknown) from Nevşehir.¹⁵⁴ When it comes to education level, it can be said that the men have a higher level of education than the women: 20 of the 33 completed primary school education, three continued to secondary school yet could not complete their secondary education. Five of the men did not complete their primary education —three of them dropped out in the final grade, while the other two did not attend primary school yet they know are literate. Two men completed secondary school and four graduated from high school. One of those four says he started to follow a higher education program online but gave up. Finally, two of the men are university.

Regarding migration patterns, 18 men live somewhere other than their place of origin. Of those 18, 16 migrated from various villages (14 from a mountain village, 1 from a plain village and 1 from a valley village), compared to two who migrated from a town. When it comes to the time of the migrations, the majority moved from their villages during the mid-1990s. There are a few examples of earlier migration and only three cases of migration after 2000.

¹⁵⁴ The distribution of the ethnic-religious origin of the males is different than that of the women, since there are interethnic marriages. While it seems that marriage between the Manav and Yörük groups and the Yörük and Kurdish groups is accepted, marriage between the Yörük and Çepni/Tahtacı groups is not welcomed. Furthermore, all of the Çepni marriages that I observed during the fieldwork were intraethnic, while the Manav, Yörük or Kurdish marriages varied.

The mountain villages in question are/were primarily tobacco-producing villager, besides dealing with subsistence production and small-scale husbandry. Many participants stated that the villages left behind are depopulated and in decline. It is also important to note that the majority of these households possess little or no agricultural lands or animal stock. For those who do own land, it tends to be in the highlands where soil fertility is relatively low.¹⁵⁵ Therefore, seeking employment plays a key role in the migration stories of these men, and overall it seems to be the mines that form the most attractive employment opportunities for them. Indeed, some of the men were already employed in the mines before migration, and they decided to settle in the peripheries of the towns after marriage. This topic will be discussed in a more detailed way in Chapter 7, Women and Rural Transformation.

Fifteen of the men did not experience migration. Ten of these still live in the villages (or are deceased),¹⁵⁶ while five of them live in the peripheral neighborhoods of the towns of Kınık, Bergama and Soma. However, it should be mentioned that five of these 15, have a story of migration that happened early in their lives or in their families' past. While the families of two of the males migrated from mountain villages while they were babies or toddlers, the grandparents of three men were originally from Balkan countries.

¹⁵⁵ In contrast to the main profile, there are a few families who used to be involved in small-scale husbandry. However, they too sold what they had and migrated to the towns since their children refused to continue in husbandry.

¹⁵⁶ The reason for this number being higher than the number of women participants is that it includes the ex-husband of Güldeste and the husband of Gülyüz, both of whom live in villages.

Table 3.15. Age Groups of the Men

<i>Age Groups</i>	<i>Number</i>
20-34	3
35-50	15
Over	15

Table 3.16. Ethnic-Religious Origin of the Men

<i>Ethnic-Religious Origin</i>	<i>Yörük</i>	<i>Çepni</i>	<i>Manav</i>	<i>Yerli</i>	<i>Kurdish</i>	<i>Other</i>
<i>Number</i>	13	9	4	4	1	2

Table 3.17. Education Level of the Men

<i>Education Level</i>	<i>Primary School</i>	<i>Secondary School</i>	<i>High School</i>	<i>University</i>
<i>Number</i>	20	2	4	2

According to the findings, the mineral, stone, limestone and gold mines or the perlite factory are hubs for the men to find employment. Ten of the men work at one of these as laborers (5), operators (1), technicians (1) and drivers (3).¹⁵⁷ Another area of employment is the construction sector. Of those in this area, one man owns his own business,¹⁵⁸ while the other two are employed as laborers.

¹⁵⁷ According to the Human Resource Unit, there are many women workers at the *Greenhouse* who are the wives of miners. It was also stated that after the Soma Disaster, the Unit noticed a rise in applications of the male ex-miners to the *Greenhouse*.

¹⁵⁸ He works as a kind of middleman in the construction sector, providing laborers when necessary.

The *Greenhouse* also seems to be an important destination for the men (3). The number of men involved in traditional rural activities, is 7 out of 33. These men work as agricultural producers (1), stockbreeders (2), daily laborers (1) and small agricultural producers (3). Yet the money made from these activities is always backed by other sources of income, either earned by the men themselves or by other members of the family. For example, in addition to working in cotton production, Halime's father work as a gardener during the high season in touristic sites, while Halime works at the *Greenhouse*, her mother as a daily laborer and her brother — occasionally — as a driver. Similarly, Bilal works in the baker's or barber's occasionally while also taking on irregular shifts at the mines. In addition to the aforementioned jobs, the men work at the market (2), or are employed as a soldier, night watchman, tradesman, waiter or mechanic. While five of the men are retired ¹⁵⁹ but continue working in other jobs, two are unemployed. According to data collected on workers' families by the Human Resources Unit, approximately one third (no exact number given) of the husbands of the women working at the *Greenhouse* are unemployed. It is hard to know the exact number as men can frequently move from one job to another with breaks in between. I would often hear the women say from the women "Yes/No, he will (not) be working next week!"

While 16 of the males have a regular income, 17 have an irregular income. The former group is composed of workers/drivers at the mineral, stone and limestones pits, greenhouses and retirees as well as the soldier and night watchman, the latter group includes the men who deal with small agricultural production and husbandry or who work as construction workers or waiters. It is also important to mention that if the four retirees were not retired, their income would be counted as irregular, since they (2 men) are currently working as

¹⁵⁹ There are differences among them: two of them are more privileged compared to others who retired via BAĞ-KUR (social security for the self-employed) and private mine company. One is a retired worker from a state owned mine, while the other is retired prayer leader of a mosque.

salesmen at the local market, middlemen in the construction sector and olive tree grafter. Therefore, if these men were included, 12 of the 33 men in receipt of a regular income compared to 21 with an irregular income.

It is not always the work itself that is irregular, the men themselves sometimes prefer being employed *only* from time to time. When the work is irregular, it tends to be seasonal, short term, insecure, uninsured or low paid, as in the case of the women. However, this is the situation only for three of the men in this research: while one driver is not regularly paid, two workers and one middleman in the construction sector only work during the summer as and when jobs are offered to them. Whether or not the men have a regular income or not, it is a common point for all the households in this research that the household budget is supported by the income of the women at the *Greenhouse*. In words, the regular income of the women, or their irregular financial support always contribute to the household budget, while in many cases what the women earn forms the backbone of the household income.¹⁶⁰

It is also clear that working in off-farm jobs has already been a working pattern among the men. There is only one man employed as a worker at the stone pit who continues in agricultural production and small-scale husbandry with the help of his family. Compared to the women, the men seem to experience a more fundamental break from traditional rural activities. Although there are some examples in which the household has chosen to deal with agricultural production, the men still do not leave their jobs. Instead, they do both. One of the main sources of income is always the off-farm jobs taken on by the men. Unlike women in the over 50 age group, the men in the same age group (15) are more

¹⁶⁰ The level of monthly income and how much money the women and men contribute to the household budget will be discussed in the following chapters.

involved in diverse off-farm jobs.¹⁶¹ Only seven of the 33 men (who are also over 50 years old) deal with traditional rural activities for their primary income. Yet they all used to be supported by others whose income came from non-farm jobs. All these males are/were villagers: three are deceased, the other four still live in the village. Three of these four men are involved in small-scale husbandry and cotton production; one is currently unemployed. In the other two age groups (18 men), we see that participation in off-farm jobs is common for all. While few of the men were employed before carrying out their obligatory military service, the majority entered employment after military service. On the other hand, starting working life with traditional rural activities is the same for both groups. While age-to-work is relatively early, as for the women, age-to-off-farm work seems to be earlier than for the women.

Whether or not they are in receipt of a regular income seems to be closely related to the men's age group. All of those aged 20-34 have a regular income, and the same is true for the majority of those aged 35-50 (nine with a regular income owner compared to six with an irregular income). However, the situation is reversed for the older age group (over 50), in which 12 of the out 15 men have an irregular income, and only three have a regular income. This is mostly because this age group includes many males who are involved in traditional rural activities that are economically insecure and uncertain.

¹⁶¹ The participants also underline the decline of the traditional rural activities that were once available to the men. For example, Güldeste says the men used to go to the vineyards as daily laborers, yet this is no longer the case. Once the olive harvest is complete, there are no other employment options left for the males. The desire to "escape from farming and husbandry" lay the foundation for men to participate in off-farm jobs. One example is the husband of Bingül, who left his village and wanted to be a miner since he had no land and therefore always had to work as a daily laborer in the fields. He started work in the mines when he was 18 years old, and retired after working for 20 years in the state-owned mine. The narratives of the women include many similar cases — not always about their husbands, but about their brothers, fathers-in-law or sons. The reasons behind the participation of the men in off-farm work are various. Although it is important to touch upon these stories to understand the story of the women, a more detailed analysis is beyond the scope of this research.

The characteristics of the jobs taken on by the men in the rural labor markets also show variety. Although a detailed analysis of the duration for which the men work at each off-farm job is not the priority of this research, I can still argue that the men tend to work for a much longer time in these off-farm jobs compared to the women. While there are only two examples in which women had worked at a place of employment for long period of time, many of the men of their households had done so. Ramazan, for example, has been working at the *Greenhouse* for eight years, while the majority of workers/drivers at the mine, stone and limestone pits or perlite factory have also worked for long periods of time in their jobs. This is not the case, however, for those working in the service sector, and also there is less variety in terms of employment in the service sector among the men compared to the women.

Five of the nine Çepni men are in receipt of a regular income, while the remaining four have an irregular income. Among Yörük men these figures are six with a regular income, and seven with an irregular income. While there is a variety of off-farm jobs taken on by women in the Çepni and Yörük groups, as seen above, the same is not true for the men of those groups. Three of the four Manav men have regular incomes, since all of them are employed at the mines. Finally, all of the Yerli males receive an irregular income due to their involvement in agricultural production and husbandry.

The number of the men who are registered for social security is 16, while 17 males are uninsured.¹⁶² Especially for the older generations or the producers of certain agricultural products (i.e. tobacco or cotton), which at one time were quite profitable, the total number of insured days (i.e. the number of days of

¹⁶² I also came across examples in which women pay off their fathers' and fathers-in-law's debts with the money they earn at the *Greenhouse*. When finished, Halime's and Yonca's father as well as Saadet's father-in-law (all small agricultural producers and stockbreeders) will be able to retire thanks to the efforts of their daughters/daughters-in-law.

work counted towards there, social security payments) is relatively low, considering their working lives that span over 40 years. Halime's father, for example, had only 29 days of social security payments, while Semiha's husband had 785 days. Many men who were once involved in traditional rural activities were uninsured, and it was only after moving into off-farm (insured) jobs that they were registered for social security.

Table 3.18. Working Lives of the Men of the Households

<i>Name</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Marital Status</i>	<i>Age of Household Male¹⁶³</i>	<i>Occupation of Household Male</i>
Adile	45	Widow	43 (deceased)	Tradesman
Bedihe	35	Married	35	Former miner, irregularly employed in bakery and barber, agricultural laborer, mostly unemployed
Bingül	44	Married	43	Retired from the state mine, currently employed as underground mine worker
Saadet	23	Married	35	Former tobacco producer, former-miner. (After the Soma Disaster) woodcutter employed through İş-Kur, currently <i>Greenhouse</i> worker
Deste	51	Married	53	Unemployed, (rarely) agricultural laborer
Elmas	41	Married	40	Former agricultural producer, currently underground mine worker
Devrim	20	Single	42 (Father)	Waiter
Fadime	45	Married	51	Retired <i>imam</i> , currently employed in construction
Gülcan	47	Married	53	Former tobacco producer, dairy

¹⁶³ Here the male in question is the husband, unless otherwise indicated.

				farmer, grocer, repair man, water seller, <i>gözleme</i> seller, currently works as a driver
Güldeste	36	Divorced	46	Olive producer, driver at the local market once a week.
Gülizar	42	Married	39	Former tobacco producer, currently truck driver
Gülsün	55	Married	55	Former tobacco producer, currently construction worker,
Gülyüz	61	Married	65	Shepherd and agricultural producer in the mountain village of Balıkesir
Halime	24	Engaged	57	Cotton producer, gardener during the summer
Hamiyet	44	Married	46	Former agricultural producer, currently mechanic
Hediye	41	Married	45	Former agricultural producer/stockbreeder, currently mine worker
Kevser	22	Engaged	55 (Father) 25 (Fiancé)	Father: Agricultural producer/stockbreeder Fiancé: greenhouse worker (former tobacco producer)
Leyla	21	Single	55 (Father)	Former wheat producer, currently worker in construction sector
Meliha	38	Married	39	Former tobacco producer, waiter, bakery apprentice and miner, currently night watchman
Merve	33	Married	36	Former agricultural producer, currently mine worker
Nadide	57	Single	57 (Father, deceased)	Agricultural producer
Nurgün	49	Widow	Age unknown (Father) 55 (Husband, deceased)	Both agricultural producers

Sabriye	39	Married	42	Former shepherd, currently driver at stone pit
Seher	42	Divorced	45	Specialized sergeant
Selma	33	Married	40	Former tobacco producer and shepherd, currently shovel operator at perlite factory
Semiha	55	Widow	55 (deceased)	Agricultural producer, stockbreeder, laborer (laying agricultural infrastructure in fields), worker in the thread factory, agricultural laborer
Serpil	25	Married	32	Former electrician, agricultural producer, currently technician at state mine
Solmaz	20	Single	63 (Father)	Former agricultural producer and stockbreeder, currently stallholder at local bazaar
Servet	54	Married	57	Former tobacco producer, stockbreeder, middleman, currently greenhouse worker ¹⁶⁴
Ümmühan	30	Married	33	Agricultural producer, stockbreeder and worker at limestone pit
Yonca	20	Single	58 (Father)	Stockbreeder and agricultural laborer
Yüksel	39	Divorced	42	Former tobacco producer, textile worker, <i>döner</i> ¹⁶⁵ -seller, farm laborer, cleaner at a touristic site, agricultural laborer, currently employed in a beerhouse
Zahide	53	Married	51	Former tobacco producer, retired state miner, currently tree grafter

¹⁶⁴ Secondary income comes from rented lands.

¹⁶⁵ Traditional meat dish often sold as fast food.

The information shown in the table below belongs to men and women whom I met during the fieldwork at the *Greenhouse*. Although I occasionally had the chance to talk to them, I could not conduct complete interviews as I did with the others. However, I still give them a place in the study to give a better view of the different categories of women at the *Greenhouse*.

Table 3.19. Working Background of the Males in the Households of *Greenhouse* Workers

Name	Age	Marital Status	Age of Household Male	Occupation of Household Male
Adem (male) (Yerli from Yelpınar, Bergama)		Married	55	Former cotton producer Greenhouse worker
Afife (female) Seasonal worker (Çepni from Pınarköy, Bergama)	55	Married	59	Former agricultural laborer, daily laborer at stockbreeding farm
Büteyra (female) (Yörük)	21	Married	23	Woodcutter employed through İş-Kur (Turkish Employment Agency) (daily laborer)
Gönül (female) Seasonal worker (Çepni from Pınarköy)	19	Engaged	22	Former agricultural laborer, currently working as a laborer abroad
Gülbeniz (female) (Çepni from Kınık, Migrated from Belibolu Village)	41	Married	45	Former tobacco producer, unemployed
Makbule (female) (Yörük, Bergama)	32	Married	36	Agricultural producer
Serap (female) (Çepni, Kınık, migrated from Tarlaca Village)	30	Married	32	Mine-worker
Ayça (female) Seasonal worker (Yerli from Yelpınar)	24	Single	50 (Father)	Agricultural producer Coffeehouse owner

As seen in the table above, there are three men aged 20-34, three aged 35-50 and finally two over 50. While Adem is employed as a greenhouse worker, his

secondary income comes from his rented land. There are two men who continue working in agricultural production. One is the husband of Makbule. However, for the last 18 months his earnings have been supported by his wife's wages: "We used to be farmers but couldn't earn money from it, so we had to give up agriculture. Diesel is quite expensive." Her husband still cultivates wheat on a small area of land as well as growing a limited amount of olives. The other producer is also the owner of the village coffee house. While there are two daily laborers in addition to one unemployed male, there are also two workers from the *Greenhouse* and the mine among the men. Gönül's fiancé is also from a Çepni mountain village called Pınarköy. He used to work as a daily laborer before being a migrant worker.

To conclude, unlike the women, even though the work may be short term, seasonal, low-paid, insecure or uninsured, the men's working life seems to continue with no long breaks, unlike the women who are the primary caregivers and responsible for domestic chores at home. The men also seem to take advantage of their relative mobility to seek employment opportunities or to go to work, unlike the women, for whom commuting alone or for long distances is not looked upon favorably. These patterns underlying the paid labor of men and women will be detailed in Chapter 5 Feminization of Work: The *Greenhouse* as a Woman's Job.

CHAPTER 4

THE GREENHOUSE EXPERIENCE

How can I explain it all in just a few words...? Ümmühan

Today was my first day working in the Greenhouse, the engineer thought it would be good for me to see the whole of the production process, so he sent me to unit 3 where everything was just starting. There were no plants in the greenhouse yet, preparations were being made for planting. First all the plants are lifted and everything's properly cleaned. The more plants there are in the greenhouse and the more developed those plants are, the more it lowers the heat, in the Greenhouse lingo it gets called the "green component". But unfortunately, this wasn't the case in greenhouse 3, it was like a desert there, there might not have been any direct sunlight but in that greenhouse, there was something that really burned you. A few times I felt like I was going to faint. I went and put my hair and head in the water. We controlled little nozzles called 'drips', the drips are put into the perlite that is used instead of soil, and give out the water mixed with fertilizer that feeds the plants. It's important that the drips aren't blocked, broken, and so on. The hours spent on that job were difficult. You can't help but wonder if this is where we've got to in the agri-food relations. All these people working in this sweltering heat for a little money to produce chemical-filled plastic tomatoes that are going to be sent far away. By the 3:15 break I was ready to drop; I didn't know how I would make it until five o'clock. 'I don't think I can't do it!' I thought. The others kept me going, they said 'You squared up to the mountain, are you really going to run at the sight of a rabbit?' We made ourselves get back to work, and suddenly it was five o'clock. (Field Notes)

This chapter will explain the labor regime at the *Greenhouse*, the setting behind my field note above. In particular it asks, what is an ordinary working day at the *Greenhouse* like from the perspective of the women who work there? With the help of this question, I will first try to find the basic characteristics of the labor regime, including details of the performance system that forms its main principle, which brings discipline, control and hierarchy¹⁶⁶ to the workplace. In

¹⁶⁶ Below is a list of terms used in relation to the hierarchical system of the greenhouses:

- *budamacı*: a worker (*eleman* or *hasatçı*) who prunes the plants.

relation to this, I will discuss mobbing¹⁶⁷ as a managerial tool and its psychological effects on the women. Two other significant dynamics of the system — flexibility and job (in)security — will also be examined. Moreover, the labor regime is defined by the conditions of infrastructure and work safety at the *Greenhouse*, as well as their physical effects on women's health. Correspondingly, the *Greenhouse*'s attitudes towards workers' rights will be examined on the basis of some of the most important aspects: the issues of breaks and leave, insurance, unionization and payment. Finally, I address the question of how the women deal with the regime with reference to their coping strategies, which can be characterized as consent and resistance.

4.1. Characteristics of the Gender-Labor Regime at the Greenhouse

In this section, I will detail the characteristics of the regime on the basis of its three main constituents: performance, flexibility and mobbing. While the performance criteria lead to control over and hierarchy among the workforce, flexibility appears in various forms and threatens job security. In this sense, the managers do not shy away from using extreme forms of mobbing as their main tool. However, the women workers, as active agents, develop certain strategies to cope with these constituents of the regime.

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- *dolamacı*: an experienced worker (*eleman*) who is responsible for tying the tomato plant as it grows.
 - *eleman*: a worker who is technically more experienced and holds more responsibility.
 - *hasatçı*: a “non-skilled” worker who is obliged to do whatever is asked by the engineers.
 - *mühendis*: an agricultural engineer who is responsible for the production process and for the workers in a certain unit.
 - *yatırmacı*: an experience worker (*eleman*) who lifts tall plant and redirects the direction of its growth by feeding the shoots through previously installed strings.

¹⁶⁷ Mobbing is legally defined in Turkey according to private rather than public law, and is included under the “Law of Obligations” rather than the Labor Law. Mobbing may include a number of different violations of employees, such as psychological and sexual harassment, violation of the decency of the employee and even the integrity of his/her body.

4.1.1. Performance, Control and Hierarchy

The performance, or quota system, is a system that calculates worker's daily performance with reference to the number of rows they complete at the *Greenhouse*.¹⁶⁸ Each greenhouse unit is composed of a certain number of rows on which the tomato plants grow. Women are expected and forced to finish the assigned number of rows every day. The number can vary according to the difficulty of the work. Women state that a normal workday requires them to finish 18 rows. However, this number can decrease to 4-6 rows and it can also increase to 40 rows. A worker's performance is strictly monitored by the engineer. Every day, the engineer writes down the number of rows completed by the workers to evaluate them. Using this information, she compares the workers' performances over the short and long term. It is clear that as well as the managers, the engineers and the head engineer, hold the ultimate authority over workers.

At the *Greenhouse*, the women feel that their every move is under strict observation and control. Whether they are allowed to talk to each other, the number of rows they have to finish, when and where they take breaks and so on is always subject to orders and/or permission. In this sense, the performance system also works as a system of discipline and control. Some of the workers told me that the engineers and managers use the greenhouse rows to monitor the women's performance. While hiding in the rows, they secretly check the woman working in the adjacent row. In addition, it is said that the general supervisor and head engineer also come over to the units just before the day ends to check who works until the end of the day and who does not.

¹⁶⁸ The narratives of the women are not in line with the Human Resources Unit, which says there is no official evaluation system: "We are working on a new system called EVO. It is going to make worker's performance clear in the eyes of the managers. However, at the moment we cannot say which of the workers works since we have no statistical data to hand. Only the engineer could have an idea of who works well in their unit as s/he is always there with them to observe."

The performance system is described as a “greedy” system that is never “satisfied”. The number of finished rows is never enough for the engineers, who always demand more. If a worker does less than the expected number of rows, the following day she is forced to improve her performance and do more. If she already is above the average, then she is expected to exceed her own limits.

He says, do 30 rows, how on earth can I do that? Nizam, the head engineer says, ‘Should I bring [last year’s] records and hang them here?’ Apparently, I did that many last year and they recorded it. I might have done it last year but how can I do it every time? Güldeste

Every day they write down how many rows you’ve done. If you’ve done less than usual, they ask why, but that’s not how it works, you can’t work at the same speed every day. Gülizar

Underperformance is one of the main reasons for workers being fired, since the worker risks being labeled as “slow”, “unsuccessful” or “problematic” by the managers. Some of the women state that the managers occasionally “get rid of” such workers. Another interviewee says that she was frequently told that “After the daily performance evaluation, those who underperformed will be fired by evening.” Never being appreciated for the score they make is a common narrative repeated by the majority of the women. Only negative feedback seems to be on used by the engineers and managers.

When it’s easy [work] I can do 40 rows. But they never say ‘thank you’, they never say ‘that’s great’. Even when it’s heavy work, I need to do at least 10-15 [rows] because if you don’t, they say, ‘I’ll get rid of you. You obviously don’t need the job. Kevser

As the head engineer has the day-by-day data based on the engineer’s records, he is aware of the differences between the workers’ performances. He once told me that the minimum wage should not be given to all the workers, since the performances vary from one to another. As a result, “in order to avoid unfairness among workers” he suggests that “payment should be made on the basis of the

number of the rows completed by the worker”.¹⁶⁹ In other words, he suggests a piecework system instead of the minimum wage. He also points to how costly social security payments are for the *Greenhouse*, suggesting that cooperating with “Employment Agencies”¹⁷⁰ could be a good option, since the state then would share the financial burden of social security payments for the *Greenhouse*.

In addition, there is a specific hierarchy among women workers at the *Greenhouse* based on the performance system. There are two types of workers: *hasatçı* and *eleman*: While the *eleman* workers is technically more experienced and has more responsibilities, *hasatçı* workers are obliged to do whatever the engineers and head engineer tell them. For instance, cleaning the carts used for the harvest or preparing the solutions for the plants are the basic duties of the *eleman*. *Eleman* workers generally carries out specific jobs, i.e. they have a clear job definition compared to *hasatçı* workers. They generally work as *dolamacı*, responsible for tying the tomato plants as they grow, or *yatırmacı*, responsible for lifting tall plants and redirecting the direction of growth by feeding the shoots through previously installed strings. However, the *hasatçı* does the cleaning of the greenhouse units, weeding out undesirable parts of the plants, harvesting or preparing the drip canals at the beginning of production. *Hasatçı* women state that they do “anything” or “whatever’s needed” at the *Greenhouse*. This also lowers the costs of maintenance work at the *Greenhouse*, that is covered by the labor of the women who work as *hasatçı*. Paradoxically, however, such work remains unrecognized and is not counted towards the women’s performance: “We sweep up, wash, plant, harvest. I’m a *hasatçı*, not an *eleman*, if they say

¹⁶⁹ A “bonus system”, has already been implemented in the packing department. One of the interviewees who works there says that for two years the packages completed by the workers have been counted by the engineer. Each worker is assigned a numeric code, against which the number of packages s/he completes is registered. The person who completes the most packages by the end of the day is awarded a bonus of between 50 and 100 TL.

¹⁷⁰ Special units operated under the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services to help match employees with employers.

‘clean the toilet’ I clean the toilet. ’Cause we’re only temporary, you know.”
Solmaz

Another significant difference is that while those working as *eleman* are permanent workers within a certain greenhouse unit, *hasatçı* workers can be sent to work in any unit as required. In other words, *eleman* workers regularly work in the same unit, unlike *hasatçı* workers who move from one unit to another throughout the day. Although this may at first seem unimportant, it means a lot to the women both physically and psychologically. *Eleman* workers are allowed to have their own belongings and keep them in the cupboards in the unit in which they work, yet *hasatçı* workers need to carry such items from one unit to another due to their “temporary” status. Those items, i.e. extra clothes, food or personal cups, plates and cutlery, are vital for daily life at the *Greenhouse*, since they provide a modicum of comfort to the workers as the *Company* does not supply such items. Therefore, the workers see being able to store such items in a specific unit as a privilege by the workers, and the lack of this privilege makes the life of the *hasatçı* at the *Greenhouse* even harder.

Staying in one greenhouse, being an *eleman* is better. You go from one greenhouse unit to the next, it’s more tiring. You carry all your things, then you realize you left your cup in the other greenhouse. You forget things. Carrying all your stuff is hard. It’s not far, but no matter how close it is, going back and forth is tiring. Gülcan

Working as a *hasatçı* also means being employed under more strict rules, which brings an additional psychological burden for the women. They are subject to more radical forms of mobbing than those who work as *eleman*. Their work life is characterized by permanent surveillance. One *eleman*, who had previously worked as a *hasatçı* for two years, says, ‘The two types of workers get the same (money). But those who work as *hasatçı* should get more. They’re the ones that get most tired. And they’re always being watched, they’re not allowed to listen to music, for example. They’re not allowed to talk. They’re treated unfairly, that’s what I say.’ As stated before, the position of *hasatçı* is a temporary on.

This means both working seasonally for a short period of time and job insecurity. *Hasatçı* workers can be easily discarded by the managers, while *eleman* workers appear to be more vital for the sustainability of production at the *Greenhouse*.

Based on the information briefly summarized above, being an *eleman* at the *Greenhouse* could be seen as a more privileged position, compared to being a *hasatçı*. Underlying the “superiority” of the *eleman* is the inner hierarchy created through the performance system. If she works well enough, a “successful” *hasatçı* worker could be promoted to the level of *eleman*. For the majority of the workers, *eleman* has a higher status than *hasatçı*: “*Eleman* is like the owner of the greenhouse unit, the responsible person there.” One woman distributed a special dish called *lokma* to everyone at the greenhouse in celebration after she learned that she had become an *eleman*.¹⁷¹

Hierarchy is also observed between the white-collar managers, i.e. the head engineer and engineers, and the workers in general at the *Greenhouse*. A few examples from daily life show how rigid the hierarchy is. After working for a few hours in the early morning, a 15 minute-break is given for some rest and breakfast. The pre-prepared breakfast is served in the canteen for the engineers only, while the workers have to prepare their own breakfast. As the breaks are very short, an assigned worker leaves the unit five minutes before the break starts to make the tea, slice the tomatoes and set the table. The workers then come and eat what they prepared at home. After 15 minutes, the assigned worker is again responsible for clearing the table and washing the dishes. The assigned worker can barely find time to eat and rest during the breaks, and most of the time she only runs between the table and the sink to finish her duties before the engineers get angry with her. While the tea was previously offered by the *Company* both for breakfast and afternoon breaks, it was later removed later due

¹⁷¹ While it is possible to talk about a certain amount of promotion among the women workers at the *Greenhouse*, this is not the case for the men. The male workers seem to be employed in the same positions with no upward mobility from lower-paid to higher-paid jobs.

to “austerity policies”. The engineers, on the other hand, still enjoy prepared food and tea, supplied by the *Company*, in the canteen during the afternoon break.¹⁷² Such a striking difference between the employee strata leads to workers feeling undervalued. As stated by Adile:

At first the class difference really got to me. For example, breakfast. The others eat their breakfast at a table. Us they put on crates. It was strange for me. I said, ‘They can’t treat the workers differently.’ They said, ‘They can. You’ll get used to it.’

In sum, there is a rigid hierarchy not only between the white-collar employees of the *Greenhouse* and the workers, but also between *eleman* and *hasatçı* workers. The system categorizes workers as “fast” or “slow”, while inner hierarchies strictly regulate the daily life at the *Greenhouse* and are deepened through the performance system. The labor regime pits women workers against each other and permanently forces them to increase their performance.¹⁷³ The fact that there is a divided workforce under the pressure of permanent production naturally weakens the collective power of women and gives the managers more leeway to exercise strict disciplinary policies, as will be seen in the following pages. Furthermore, the system seems to result in additional hardship and exhaustion

¹⁷² However, it is only in the greenhouse units where there are tables and desks that the workers can take advantage of the breaks. Units without such facilities make the workers’ daily lives more difficult as they have to spend their break time sitting on tomato boxes, which they use as both tables and chairs under the burning sun during the summer. As there is no shady spot designed for the workers to eat or rest, the workers generally use the shadows cast by trucks, or by the plastic walls or main power engines of the greenhouse units. In addition, even if the unit has the necessary facilities, most of the time it is still impossible for the workers to spend their breaks there due to the high temperatures inside the unit. As a result, it is very common to see almost all of the workers outside during the breaks, taking shelter in any shady spot they can find.

¹⁷³ This system guarantees not only a divided workforce at the *Greenhouse* but also the constant, uninterrupted flow of production. Permanency is extremely significant for the greenhouse production. As Bee (2000) argues, agro-export production reorganizes the nature of agriculture. It is the new normal to consume exported fresh fruits throughout the year regardless of location and season.

for the worker in general, beyond the specific category to which they belong.¹⁷⁴ Since the working realities at the *Greenhouse* blur the hierarchy between workers, the “privileged” status of the *eleman* becomes artificial and invalid when the criteria of the performance system are at work.

4.1.2. The Rule of Three Days: Flexibility and Insecurity

They always say, ‘This is the Greenhouse, one person arrives, another leaves.’ They know there are a lot of people looking for work, so that’s why they’re not worried. They don’t give you days off. ‘If you go, you’re not one of us,’ they say.

Anyone who leaves here is likely heading to Bergama. 80% of Bergama has been through this greenhouse. Even if they didn’t stay long, they’ve tried it out. Seher

It is safe to say that flexibility has been an established working pattern at the *Greenhouse*. The notion of flexibility is particularly seen in vague job definitions at the workplace, as well as in the *Company*’s recruitment and dismissal policies. In addition, the *Company* and the women workers have a different interpretation of the notion of flexibility. While flexibility may, in some cases, be in the women’s favor it generally equates to job insecurity, since it is used by the *Company* and the management as a tool to threaten workers and to exercise discipline and control over them.

¹⁷⁴ There is an interesting exception to the rigid hierarchy in question. I was told that a young woman worker had had a secret affair with the engineer in her unit. When the engineer eloped with the woman, her mother, who also worked in the unit, lost her temper. At the end of her shift, and in front of all the workers, she yelled and threw stones at him. The *Greenhouse* management summoned her to make a statement after the incident, surprisingly she was not fired. The engineer and the young woman, on the other hand, resigned from their positions at the *Greenhouse*. As the workers generally do not speak back to the engineers at the *Greenhouse* to avoid being fired, such a direct challenge to an engineer is a very exceptional case, in which it seems that the patriarchal legitimacy of a mother took precedence over the class inferiority. I had an opportunity to meet the mother, as she continues working there; she is still angry with the engineer and has no qualms talking about him negatively.

Job definitions at the *Greenhouse* are somewhat flexible. It is common for workers to be moved from one position to another. Workers in the packing department can easily be assigned to cleaning duties (either of the toilets or the greenhouse units). A woman from the packing department told me that she applied for a job in the greenhouse job, yet was surprised when she was transferred to cleaning few days later. After some time, I understood that the most flexible positions are those in the packing department and in the kitchen, with workers being permanently moved from their original departments to the greenhouse units and vice versa. The tasks at the *Greenhouse* are allocated on the basis of gender, with women holding different responsibilities than men. However, the lines can be blurred and at times they may also do each other's jobs. This topic will be discussed in the following chapter, Feminization of Work. Women also carry out very personal work for the managers at the *Greenhouse*, with such examples being far from out of the ordinary. The following quote shows how flexible the job definitions are:

I've done all kinds of things. The boss's body arrived. They said, 'Go clean the mosque.' I did, what else could I do. 'And the morgue too,' they said. So I wiped it down. I even cleaned the grave with a soapy cloth. I recited the Qul huwa'llahu three times. I mean, I was scared. Would you do it? You wouldn't. We have to follow orders. [...] For example, I'm doing packaging, then they say, 'Go to the cold storage'. Then, 'Go prepare the VIP gift. Then, 'Binali Yildirim¹⁷⁵ is here, go take them food upstairs' Army commanders, police, bosses, they're always there. Am I a servant or something? Let me do my job. What am I? They made me do everything. Halime

The recruitment and dismissal policies of the *Company* are composed of flexible ways of hiring and firing, as well as uncertain probation periods at the beginning.¹⁷⁶ According to most workers the probation period is one week, while

¹⁷⁵ Former Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey.

¹⁷⁶ At the *Greenhouse*, there is no job training before the workers start. The women help each other or the engineer of the unit briefly explains to newcomers what should be done.

some stated that their probation period lasted two months. Although the length of this period is unclear, the *Company* does apply the practice. The *Company* says that during the period, they carefully observe and evaluate the worker to see if she is capable of the work at the *Greenhouse*. However, during the probation period it would seem that the workers are employed with no social security.

The process of recruitment has been institutionalized and formalized, especially with the establishment of the Human Resources Unit.¹⁷⁷ There are certain requirements that need to be met before a worker can start at the *Greenhouse*, though in the past new workers would be employed with need of any official papers or health control. A phrase I frequently heard from many of the workers I interviewed was, “I started working as soon as I arrived at the *Greenhouse*” It was also common for prospective workers to be invited via their relatives who were already working at the *Greenhouse*. Periodic calls for mass recruitment were also an effective way of attracting new workers at short notice.

My mum said, ‘My daughter wants to come.’ When Nizam, the head engineer said ‘bring her,’ I came straight here with my mum, without meeting with anyone. Devrim

He [the head engineer] arranged it, they were hiring en masse. We didn’t do a job application or anything. Now they have to apply, they wait. We just started straight away. Saadet

Flexibility, however, can also refer to the lowering of standards to recruit women in times of need. For example, the harvest months require a huge labor force at the *Greenhouse*, as it is a race against time and so the *Company* employs as many workers as possible without being selective.

The high number of women who leave and/or are fired is another sign of the flexibility of the work. More than half of the women that I interviewed left the

¹⁷⁷ It is ironic that the Human Resources Unit is mostly been referred to by the workers as the “Human Rights Unit”.

job within six months or a year. There are only a handful of women who have worked there for more than for five years. This is also confirmed by the Human Resources Unit, who says that even though the number of people working with the head engineer is fixed (85 people), only one or two of those have been working with him for a long time.¹⁷⁸ The women always calculate the numbers who began working with them and then left the *Greenhouse* after a while:

Just last year, 76 people from Cinge started and left. So many people came and went. Half of the people we started working with aren't here anymore. Merve¹⁷⁹

If I counted all those who came and went it would be at least 200. There aren't even 20 people who have been here for five or six years. They come, then when the man shouts at them, they go, they quit. Elmas

When it comes to the women's flexibility, there are certain gendered patterns regarding their working patterns at the *Greenhouse*. When women decide to leave and/or return to the *Greenhouse*, it is mostly as a result of their "women's responsibilities". Needing to attend to reproductive work is at the top of the list of reasons for women who leave work at the *Greenhouse*. This work includes the

¹⁷⁸ There is a "three-day rule" at the *Greenhouse*: Women believe that if a newcomer survives three days, it is proven that she is capable of working there for a long time. I was told that people leave the *Greenhouse* even within a single day. Gülizar says: "You know, one day the workers are there, the next day they don't come 'cause it's too hard. [Laughs.] I've seen it happen a lot. One came in the morning and left at lunchtime. 'It's too hard,' she said, 'I can't do it.'" There are, however, there are certain exceptions if the worker in question is particularly valuable to the *Company*. In this sense, the notion of flexibility tends to be interpreted to the *Company's* advantage. The *Company* applies a selective recruitment process. If a former worker has proven herself to be skilled, efficient or experienced in the eyes of the engineers, she can easily return to work at the *Greenhouse* even if she has previously left her position there.

¹⁷⁹ The women of Cinge (in the town of Soma) mention that the number of workers has been on the decrease after the Soma Disaster. After the Disaster, miners' wages were increased: "There were 25 of us, now there are 13. The women of the town don't need work. They get 3000 TL from the mine. After the mine disaster, the wages really increased." However, I should mention that I frequently came across wives of the miners among the Cinge workers who are in debt in spite of their husbands' relatively higher wages. For example, even though the *Company* cancelled the shuttle service that took them to work, they rented a minibus themselves in order to be able to keep their job at the *Greenhouse*. Another reason for the decreasing number of women workers from Cinge is that the town of Soma can provide more job opportunities, i.e. sales or cleaning services.

care of children and sick or elderly relatives, as well as domestic chores. When the responsibilities in question are fulfilled, women return to work at the *Greenhouse*. Sometimes it is the unbearable and difficult physical activities at work that force women to leave. For example, women tend to leave the job during the hot summer months and return when the weather cools off:

In the first years, a lot [of workers] would faint from the heat during cleaning. I'd get palpitations, for example. Since there's no social security, when the summer heat started, I left. I thought, why should I put up with it? Then I went back. Ümmühan

While the search for a better job could also be a reason to leave,¹⁸⁰ the main reasons behind leaving the *Greenhouse* are the practices of dismissal and difficult working conditions. The threat of being fired is always present for the workers; “Remove this worker, I don't want her. Someone else will replace her” is a common phrase heard at the *Greenhouse*. Kevser says that “They scream and yell, embarrass you. People leave because of the stress, the pressure. It's always fast work. After a while it gets too hard. You can't do it; you can't take it.” As a result, regardless of the reasons, the working life of women at the *Greenhouse* tends to be non-continuous and short term. Most of the women do not consider the *Greenhouse* job as permanent and long-term, and therefore, very few think that they will retire from that job.

Even though the recruitment process has become more institutionalized, behind the official façade, the dismissal of workers seems to be fairly arbitrary and informal. According to strict disciplinary policies, tardiness or absence at work without reason can result in direct dismissal. This job instability causes the women to feel insecure. In addition, while the women are easily fired, leaving

¹⁸⁰ Although the new job opportunities for rural women in the local market is beyond the scope of this study, it should be briefly stated that there are no well-paid and decent job prospects awaiting the women. In this sense, “a better job” could, from the women's perspective, refer to one without mobbing. More detailed information will be given in the chapter “Reproduction, Perceptions of Work and Complicated Empowerment” where women's perceptions towards work are introduced.

the job tends to be determined by “feminine responsibilities”. Some women have been able to turn the flexibility of the work to their favor, i.e. by looking for a better job or escaping from the heat for a while. However, they mostly squeeze in both *Greenhouse* work and reproductive work at home as a result of a gendered flexible employment system characterized by insecurity and a heavy workload.

To conclude, from replaceable job definitions to the uninsured probation period, work at the *Greenhouse* seems to be characterized by flexibility. This is also similar to the case of rural women workers at the sea-snail processing factory in Black Sea region. Gündüz Hoşgör and Suzuki argue that irregularity and insecurity are the main features of not only the rural women but also the rural men when participating in wage labor: “71% of the interviewees stated that there was no household member who had a regular job. 41% said there is at least one family member who works seasonally or on a daily basis. Most irregular workers are female sea-snail factory workers”. As Gündüz Hoşgör and Suzuki state, this also equates to “un- or insecure employment of male members of their families” (2017: 10).

4.1.3. Mobbing, Stress and Anxiety: “Come on, Come on!”¹⁸¹

Shouts and screams. I’m surprised, ‘Why are they shouting like that.’ They said, ‘That’s just what they do.’ But where we come from you don’t shout at people. We also go to work for other people but there’s no shouting. But anyway, we got used to that too. Nadide

¹⁸¹ In this sense, the similarity to how the miners are treated is striking. After the Soma Disaster, the surviving miners stated that “Hadi de hadi” (Come on, come on!) were the words of “motivation” in at the mines. Even one of them reacted to his mother, saying, “Don’t say ‘hadi’ to me, mum!” <http://www.diken.com.tr/video-somanin-uzerinden-bir-yil-geci-bana-hadi-deme-anne/>

The women of the *Greenhouse* are frequently the subjects of mobbing, an important tool of the work regime. The engineers do not hesitate to devalue and humiliate them for the sake of performance. Mentioned previously, the workers are expected either to finish a certain number of rows per day or to exceed their previous performance. In order to reach maximum efficiency, the engineers constantly push workers to increase their working speed. Verbal rebukes, mistreatment or harsh evaluations are the various methods used to “motivate” the women. Underlining how worthless the workers are compared to the expensive plants or machines, seems to be the main rule in this approach. For example, when the baby greenhouse¹⁸² was rebuilt with a new material that reduces the indoor temperature, the workers were so happy. However, the engineer snubbed their excitement, saying, “Did you think we did it for you? We did it so the machine wouldn’t overheat. Here the machines and the plants have more value than you.” Devaluation and loss of reputation are familiar feelings to every woman there.

The women may feel more comfortable with some engineers, and it can also be observed that they tend to be cheerful while working, talking to each other and laughing. Yet when the head engineer steps into the unit, everybody falls immediately silent. He frequently visits the units without notice, and is well known for his bad temper. He is the person the women are most afraid of while they are working, as he takes his anger out on workers. Almost all of the women complain about him, frequently mentioning how hard it is for them to work under such stress. The women say that they are extremely afraid they might misunderstand him and make a mistake. One told me that she becomes so confused, almost stupefied, because of her fear of the head engineer. Some say they are so terrified that one look from him sends them into a state of complete bewilderment. One interviewee stated that she says all the prayers she knows to

¹⁸² “Baby greenhouses” are generally located at the entrance to the unit; they mainly house a few machines, a table for the workers and cupboards. They are called “baby greenhouse” due to their small size. Not every unit has such a space.

get over her anxiety when she comes across him. Even once I was told, a woman swallowed a loose tooth because of her panic. Many are unwilling to be employed there because of him.

It was very hard. I cried so much. I can't work like this, can't put up with these insults, they scare you. They don't explain nicely. What's so important [about what we do]? I would pray, 'Dear God, if this is not my destiny, show me something else. If it is my destiny, give me the patience to bear it. Adile

I also personally witnessed his bad temper at the *Greenhouse*. Very early in the morning, I and the other workers heard him shouting at one of the women, Bedia. He was criticizing her for not working efficiently. He was shouting very loudly and ended up firing her. I remember the silence in the whole unit, except for Bedia crying and asking to be forgiven and not fired. He said she did not deserve the job because she did not work as hard as she could. The engineer unsuccessfully tried to calm the head engineer and Bedia down. After a while, Bedia apologized to the head engineer several times yet he did not accept her apologies. He was very determined that she was not going to work there any longer. As a result, within an hour, she had signed her dismissal papers and left the *Greenhouse*. The women were very sad about this incident, they were saying, "Who knows why he got angry? But whatever the reason behind is, he took it out on Bedia. Poor Bedia! It's not hard work, but being told off for no reason really gets to you." The women believe that the head engineer never hesitates to take his anger out on the workers, whether or not there is a rational reason for it. Indeed, he does not seem to know any other way to express his anger other than to devalue, humiliate or bully the workers in front of others. I witnessed many times how his terror negatively affects the women. Once, Gülsün told me about a dream she had had the previous night, in which she received a call from Nizam, the head engineer, saying over and over again that he no longer wanted her at the *Greenhouse*. She still remembered the worry and fear she felt after she woke up.

It is not only the head engineer who shouts at the women. The individual engineers for each unit also adopt the same way of “motivating” the women. The women find this particularly offensive when the shouting comes from younger engineers. The engineers are generally very young, almost at the age of the women’s children. Being called only by their name (without honorific titles such as *teyze* [aunt] or *abla* [big sister]) also disturbs the women: “The engineer was shouting, ‘Gülizar!’ I’m old enough to be his mother! They may have an education but they have no respect.” At the very least they wish to be addressed as “Sister X” or “Aunt Y”. They are even prepared to accept being shouted at, as long as the engineer addresses her in the way she would like. The women seem to expect no more than the minimum respect due to their age, yet even this is not shown in the *Greenhouse*. As such, the women’s expectations of the female engineers seem to be low, since they believe that most of the time, womanhood does not unify them. The story of a woman who got her period at work was given to me as an example. The woman had a very heavy period, to the extent that her clothes were about to be stained with blood. She asked to go to the toilet to change but the engineer did not give her permission. As a result, she had to work in her bloody clothes until the break. The women were disappointed in her: “You’re a woman, too. You should understand what she’s going through!”

Most of the time, the head engineer and unit engineers tried to be very kind to the workers, while I was around the units. They would only yell at workers with relatively “neutral” words of “motivation”, such as “come on!”, “faster!” “be quiet!” or “no talking!” However, at other times the engineers would humiliate them with insulting expressions, such as, “Idiots, halfwits, get those fingers moving!”, “don’t stand there staring like a moron” or, referring to the weight of the women, “you’re galumphing along”, “you’re like a bear lifting that cauldron”. From time to time the women say that they understand the engineers yelling at them, since it is “their job”. However, they still oppose it if the engineer is not justified in his/her comments. Some take it much further,

demanding that surveillance cameras be installed in the units.¹⁸³ Güldeste says that this would protect them from unfair accusations. She compares the situation with her previous workplace where surveillance cameras were installed: “It’s not the working that gets you, it’s being unfairly scolded that’s bad. The cafe was easier, there were cameras everywhere. The boss can’t say, ‘you’re good, you’re bad.’ He was always watching us.” Likewise, Bedihe says that the kitchen should also have a camera so that “Everybody hears what kind of [insulting] words are being said to women!”¹⁸⁴

The workers of the other units also experience mobbing. Beyond verbal rebuke and mistreatment, mobbing can sometimes take the form of physical violence. Bedihe told me that the head chef once attempted to hit her in the kitchen since she was critical of the excessive amount of work. Even though she had been protecting herself from his physical assault, she was still under threat of dismissal. Fortunately, she and her two friends were transferred to the greenhouse units at their request, so that they no longer needed to work alongside the chef, who, however, still threatened them, saying, “There’s no room here for people who resist me.”

When it comes to those who “resist”, it may be useful to briefly summarize the kinds of “punishments” that are exercised at the *Greenhouse*. “Exile” is one of the most effective of these. An engineer can send the worker to another unit to work as a *hasatçı*. The woman then has to work with people she does not know in an unfamiliar unit. Sometimes she is made to do the jobs usually assigned to

¹⁸³ Such a demand is different from the experiences of rural women from the Western Black Sea Region, who are employed under surveillance at the factories. Cameras create a self-control mechanism, through which women always feel they are being watched. It prevents them from talking to each other or taking a break. In spite of the bad smell, they are even hesitant to use the shower cabins as they fear being seen by the cameras (Gündüz Hoşgör and Suzuki, 2016).

¹⁸⁴ An interviewee took advantage of the cameras in the packing department when the manager lost his temper and acted threateningly towards her. When the Gendarmerie came to investigate the incident, the camera footage from the day had captured what had happened.

male workers. After this she is again sent to another unit. This woman is therefore, in the words of the workers “exiled”, she does not work permanently in one particular unit, but instead has to move from one unit to another.¹⁸⁵

When we started late, they said, ‘Didn’t I warn you? I’m going to file a report! I’ll have you exiled!’ I was so upset I was crying. We were exiled for three days. They said to us, ‘You used to be an eleman.’ For three days we went from greenhouse to greenhouse spraying chemicals.

There are also “social punishment” in which an engineer gives a worker “a speaking ban” and isolates her from the rest of the unit. Güldeste told me that after she was “thrown out” to another unit, the engineer came after her, saying to the workers in that unit, “No one speaks to her!” Nobody spoke to her for a number of days as they were afraid of being fired. Starting the workday earlier and finishing later is another punishment applied at the *Greenhouse*. There is also a strict “disciplinary code”, the violation of which results in a report being sent to the management. If the workers are outside when the siren is heard¹⁸⁶ or if they make a mistake while working, there is always a chance they will be reported. Not following the cleaning procedures of the cleaning is one of the first reasons for a worker to be sent to the Human Resources Unit.

The women state that being forced to speed up seems to mechanize them. However, they also say that such work also leads to a decline in their intellectual abilities, since it only requires repetitive physical activities. One woman even told me that she has become “stupid” after starting work at the *Greenhouse* as

¹⁸⁵ Women also heard of exiled engineers who had conflict with the head engineer.

¹⁸⁶ To regulate the working hours with the help of the siren sound makes women very anxious, too. It is very high volume. Women are required to be inside at the units by the sound of it. “You were there, you heard it. When you hear the siren, you don’t want to be outside. You’re always afraid you might be left outside. They write up reports. If anyone sees you... People who are outside when the siren goes off get in trouble. If anyone sees... So many people get reported.” Bingül

she is always hearing the same few sentences from the engineer. She believes that as a result, she had difficulty understanding the questions I asked during the interview. I observe some even internalize the detrimental effects of the work. For example, when Elmas cannot remember dates, numbers or events while answering my questions during the interview, she says, “They’re always telling us to be quiet, so we don’t have any brains left.” Likewise, Yüksel tells me she has started to feel less clever during the course of her work at the *Greenhouse*. Similarly, Meliha says that increasing her performance at the *Greenhouse* led to a loss of “her brain’s” capacity to think. Additionally, women suffer from severe psychological pressure at work resulting in feelings of fear, stress, anxiety and devaluation.

I was new. The engineer said, ‘She won’t be able to do it.’ Hearing that, my brain froze. For a whole year she didn’t like me. That really got to me psychologically; why was he so hard on me? Bedihe

Insults [...] don’t motivate people, it damages them psychologically, it’s not good for them. They don’t value their workers. They treat them like donkeys, if you’ll pardon the expression. They want you to work like Isaura the Slave Girl, no one has any value. Seher

Güldeste, an experienced worker, still appreciates the conditions at the *Greenhouse*, which are better than the previous ones she experienced. Her narrative below underlines the ultimate authority of the engineers over the workers in the “past”. Some of those practices, however, are still in use. I can safely argue that the engineers are still capable of firing the women. The only real difference seems to be the establishment of the Human Resources Unit.

Before, the engineer was the boss. Constant threats. Don’t speak with the workers in the other greenhouse, don’t complain about diseased plants. He’d say, ‘This greenhouse has to be finished,’ and as a punishment he’d close the roof and the doors of the greenhouse, open the curtains, and the workers would stay there in that heat. Until you’d finished your row, if you hadn’t filled your water bottle you couldn’t drink water. They tortured many people. You’d done 30 rows but they’d record it as 15. They’d make you do other jobs – pick weeds, clean the toilets, then get back and do your row. If you didn’t do it, they’d get mad. They’d say ‘Get the hell out and don’t come back,’ or ‘I don’t particularly

like this one.’ They’d fire workers. Now they have an HR unit, they ask, ‘Why did you fire her?’ But back then there was no question. When you were cleaning it was always, ‘Don’t stand up,’ or ‘don’t smile, don’t grin.’ People who were fasting [during Ramadan] weren’t even allowed to wash their face and hands. Güldeste

To conclude, extreme forms of mobbing have been among the primary characteristics of working life at the *Greenhouse*. Although there has been little improvement compared to previous years, relations between the engineers and the women are still far from fair. Mobbing in rural areas is a new and understudied phenomenon in the literature of the field. What women experience is unlike to what they are used to in the fields or in other small-scale non-agricultural jobs. Therefore, the peasant origin of the women also shapes their perception of mobbing and makes the experience of mobbing more traumatic. According to MacIntosh workplace bullying may go unnoticed and ignored “because of its sometimes subtle, insidious, and secretive beginnings”. He argues that it “may be compounded in small rural communities where employers and fellow workers may also be neighbors” (2005: 893). However, the *Greenhouse* case is different in that rural women experience mobbing that is not only intense, overt and direct, but also physically and psychologically destructive in an alienated workplace, even though it is carried out in a rural setting. Nevertheless, as the women are not passive victims of the gender labor regime, they develop certain strategies to cope with the conditions in question, through which they strive to change the burden of working at the *Greenhouse*. These strategies will be discussed in detail in section 4.5.

4.2. Neglected Infrastructure: Technology First, Workers Second

It is ironic that the infrastructure for workers is quite neglected in the *Greenhouse*, which sets an example in terms of its advanced technology for production. There is a lack of suitable conditions and facilities at the *Greenhouse* to create decent working environment for the women. In this sub-chapter, I will briefly summarize the infrastructure at the *Greenhouse* in terms of recreational

areas, water units and meals and finally the shuttle buses. Before that, I should state that there is no medical room,¹⁸⁷ shower block or kindergarten¹⁸⁸ available for the workers' use.

4.2.1. Recreational Areas

There are very limited recreational areas available to the workers on the *Greenhouse* premises. The only shady area is the garden of the cafeteria, yet the distance makes it impossible for most of the workers to use as they have only a 15-minute break. A description of an ordinary lunch break could give an idea of the poor conditions at the *Greenhouse* during the summer in particular: It is normal to see a few women trying to get some rest either under a palm tree or the shadow of the huge engines of the greenhouse units. The women lie on the ground, covering their faces with their scarves to protect them from the flies. They try to make themselves more comfortable by lying on cardboard boxes to soften the hard ground. As recreational areas are limited, the workers sometimes use the "baby greenhouse" for eating and rest. However, these spaces are far from ideal. In addition to the high temperature inside (the opposite is true in winter), they are also deprived of fresh air, instead breathing in the chemicals used for disinfection.

So the baby greenhouse is very cold. Now it's fine. But in winter, when it's minus four, it gets very cold. We have breakfast there; in 15 minutes we're frozen. For example, we go for a break, and you can't go outside in that cold, so we stay there, going from one place to another covered in sweat really makes us ill. Yonca

¹⁸⁷ If a worker gets sick at work, the way she is treated differs according to how sick she is. If there is an emergency, she is taken to the hospital. If she is "not that bad", she is allowed either to be taken by her husband from work or to take a rest: "You either take your medicine yourself and lie down [in the baby greenhouse], or you lie down among the rows in the greenhouse." Gülcan

¹⁸⁸ Although many women at the *Greenhouse* have children, none of them come to work with their mothers as there is no childcare center/kindergarten. The only exception I encountered is the daughter of Merve. She has learning disabilities, of which the head engineer is aware, and he accepts her being in the units from time to time.

4.2.2. Water Units and Meals

There is no need to mention how important is for the women to avoid dehydration while working in the hot and humid greenhouse units. However, suitable conditions are not provided to enable the workers to access adequate water. Every greenhouse unit does not have a water unit, and workers therefore have to go to the next unit to fill their bottle or glass. Apart from the lack of water units, the work regime itself ignores the importance of hydration. I was very surprised when I first saw women working for two hours in the mornings without breakfast. Yet, they say, it is not the hunger but the thirst that makes the morning difficult: “Patience. God gives us the patience [to work on an empty stomach]. It’s the thirst that’s hard, really hard.”

In addition, wish during the working day the women are not allowed to drink water whenever they wish, but have to get permission from the engineer. Sometimes an assigned worker goes to fill five-liter plastic bottles of water to bring to the thirsty workers. It is perhaps important to mention here that this was one of the primary tasks the women gave me during the fieldwork, since both working and expending additional energy to provide water to the unit is double burden on the workers.

When it comes to food, as stated earlier, only lunch is provided to the women, and they are not allowed to join the breakfast given to the white-collar employees at the *Greenhouse*.¹⁸⁹ During the fieldwork I too had all my lunches at the cafeteria and sometimes had breakfast with the engineers. The breakfast provided by the *Company* to the white-collar workers is a standard breakfast yet it still includes syrup, olives, jam and cheese and is served with tea. Lunch, on

¹⁸⁹ Women have no place, such as a fridge, to keep the food they bring in from home for breakfast. They do have cupboards but these are not clean and sterile. Once I helped an interviewee cleaning rat droppings from the cupboards. For this reason, especially during the summer time, those cupboards are far from hygienic.

the other hand, is relatively poorer compared to the breakfast, as indicated by the words of one canteen worker:

We make the food for the day and do the prep for the next day. There's not much variety any more, it's always bulgur wheat. There used to be more variety, now there's just three. Some kind of dish along with the bulgur and 'cacik' or yoghurt to go with it. Zahide

Another canteen worker also told me that a second-hand dishwasher had recently been installed; until then the women had to clean all the dishes by hand. Given that there are hundreds of workers eating in the canteen, it is not difficult to imagine what a hard job this was. When it comes to the content of the food served in the canteen, I rarely saw red meat served at lunch. Chicken, sometimes minced chicken, seems to be the meat that is served if necessary. While the women mostly appreciate the fact that lunch is served to the workers at the *Greenhouse*, they also complain about the poor quality of the food. There were often rumors about the lunch break circulating at the *Greenhouse*, such as that the break was going to be shortened to half an hour, instead of one hour, or that the fixed menu meal would be replaced by sandwiches. These rumors strengthened after the company cancelled serving tea to the workers at breakfast, which was previously provided for free.

4.2.3. Shuttle

As a girl, it's hard to get to work. I get up in the morning and it's dark. But I have to go to work. I have to wait for the shuttle. Am I going to wait there all on my own? What else could I do; I'd get my big brother or my dad out of bed. It's a village, the boys would talk. Something would happen. [My dad and brother] would see me onto the shuttle. Halime

The *Company* provides a shuttle service via which workers are gathered from various villages and towns. While many of the shuttle buses come from Bergama and Kınık, there are also minibuses from Cinge (in Soma), Dikili and Altınova. Although the number of shuttles varies, it is generally more than ten buses, each

carrying at least fifty passengers, as well as additional minibuses. While the most crowded shuttles come from Bergama and Kınık, minibuses take workers from far away mountain villages or other smaller towns. For example, the workers in one village-shuttle come from the villages of Tortular, Olgunlar and Karcalı, while another collects the women from the villages of Korkutlar and Selamlı. Some workers also commute independently when their number is too small to be assigned a shuttle. For example, there are only five workers from the village of Narince. These workers therefore take a public bus to Ovacık and then hitchhike to a pick-up point for the *Greenhouse* shuttles. During high season at the *Greenhouse*, it is also common for women from the same village to club together and rent a car/minibus to take them to work.

During the fieldwork, the shuttle service was been re-organized several times by the *Company*, as detailed below. I also heard from Güldeste about the early days of the shuttle system:

Lots of people would come from Kınık. They'd put the boys in the trunk of the shuttle. The bus was bursting at the seams. We had an accident. The police loaded the people from the shuttle bus into three buses. There were 150 of us in a 50-person bus. We'd sit three to a seat. The aisle was always full. We got off and the entire Bayalı road from one end to the other was full of workers. There were so many, they employed everyone, even kids, without any social security. The pickle factory and the Bedir tomato paste factory opened and then there were fewer from Kınık.

My own experience of the shuttle service was not always in line with the quotation above, especially before the privatization of the service by the *Company*. I generally used the shuttles from the workers' houses, where I spent the night, to go to work with them from their towns/villages or vice versa. Most of the time, the aisle was not that crowded, yet there were always a few people who had to stand during the journey. There tends to be a gender separation on the buses, with the women seated in the front seats, while the men prefer the back, especially the very back seats, since there is such a small number of men. Even so, it is not possible to say that there are any real standards related to the

shuttle service. Sometimes — for example in the event of a breakdown or the resignation of a driver — the passengers of one shuttle are boarded to another, resulting in overcrowding on one bus. This has been always a source of complaint for the women.

I later learned that some of the shuttles were cancelled due to the *Company*'s austerity politics. The *Company* limits its service only to the very close towns, preventing certain workers having access to free and relatively safe transport to work. If the villages are far away (e.g. over an hour) and hard to reach (e.g. mountain villages) and/or the workers from those areas are “replaceable”, the shuttles can be easily cancelled. It is safe to say that giving the growing levels of migration to the towns, the *Company* has started to take advantage of the labor pool that has converged in the towns. According to the women, there is only one option left as a result of the *Company*'s austerity politics: pay the price and rent a minibus to take them to a meeting point where they can be transferred to a point on the route of one of the *Greenhouse* shuttles. Such “privatization” of the shuttle service has been a big deal for women as they already make very limited money. For instance, Adile says it costs her 120 TL for 10 kilometers, the amount she spends on food for two to three weeks. The private shuttle comes at six in the morning to take them from Cinge to Kınık, from where they board the *Greenhouse* shuttles. This is not, however, the case for every location. For instance, there are no longer any workers coming from Altınova after the village shuttle was cancelled and the workers could not afford to rent a private shuttle. The shuttles also point to another interesting issue: The spatial organization of the process of proletarianization. I observed that the meeting points for the shuttles become the hearts of this process. Before the *Greenhouse* shuttles, other shuttles stop off at the same point to pick up the mine workers. Very early in the morning, i.e. between 5.30 a.m. and 7 a.m., you can see the “shuttle traffic” and crowds of workers waiting to be picked up by their shuttles and taken to work in mines, factories or greenhouses. This is reminiscent of the “workers’ cafés” in the hub town of Dikili, that form a meeting point for temporary laborers, i.e.

villagers who are temporarily employed in construction or agricultural work (Keyder and Yenal, 2013).

Apart from that, it is also interesting that every worker has her specific seat, and nobody sits in any seat other than her own. While on the road, I was always given the seat of workers who were on leave. If no such seat was available, I had to share a seat with a woman on the bus who I knew well. The park benches where the women sit and wait for the shuttles are also organized on the same principle. I realized this when I used the same shuttle for few of days in succession. The women always sit in the same place on the bench until the bus comes. Having a seat is a serious issue for the women, as having to stand during the journey is very tiring before/after a day of work. It is also important to mention that most of the time the shuttles are used by women to take a rest. Especially in the morning, the whole shuttle bus is often in complete silence as everybody is sleeping before the working day starts. For these reasons, the women are very concerned about keeping their own seat.

Experiencing the shuttle service as a gendered practice is significant, too. The mobility of rural women is very limited and the shuttle is one of the most important facilitators for women to be able to work, even though they live in remote villages.¹⁹⁰ I frequently heard, “How could we go to work, if they canceled the shuttle? We can’t go outside the village on our own.” It is clear that the shuttle makes it possible for rural women to participate in paid work. Indeed, this is such an important issue that some women said they had to leave previous jobs when such a service was. Some also said that they had previously come across other job opportunities with insurance before, but were unable to accept those jobs because there was no shuttle service. Nevertheless, the women

¹⁹⁰ This is a common narrative among women from faraway mountain villages: “We get up around 4:30 in the morning. We get on the shuttle at 4:45. It takes two hours. We get there around 7. We get changed, prepare our solution, unplug our carts and start working our rows.” Kevser. Without the shuttle service, it would be impossible for them to reach the Greenhouse by their own means.

sometimes say that the shuttle alone does not guarantee security, since the route to the pick-up point and waiting there alone are still problematic for women:

Thanks to them I was able to continue. I really love Gülistan and her family. When I first started, they picked me up and dropped me off at my house every day so I wouldn't have to walk alone in the dark. If it wasn't for them, I couldn't have gone to work. Ümmühan

Gündüz Hoşgör and Suzuki also underline the importance of the shuttle for rural women's participation in paid work, arguing that having a factory close to the village, working alongside people from the same village, and commuting to work with "safe" minibuses run by male villagers make women's participation in paid work possible (2016: 118). In this sense, the case of *Greenhouse* is similar. The shuttle service seems to close both the symbolic and physical gap created by the patriarchal system between rural women and paid work.

4.3. Work Safety

The Greenhouse is just like the mine... Only the mine is underground, the Greenhouse above ground. They warn you about work accidents. If you fall, it happened at home! If you get poisoned, it was something outside! Bediye

One year in the Greenhouse makes you age two years. They say you can't work there more than five years; you get sick. Then you start getting all kinds of illnesses. Sabriye

Work safety is another critical feature defining the *Greenhouse* experience for women. In this section I will discuss how the *Company* deals with the issue of work safety, as well as workplace safety violations and their effects on the women's health in the short and long term.

4.3.1. Height, Heat and Bees

Work safety is frequently neglected at the *Greenhouse*. The most common "accident" is the women falling down from a height, as they are not tied up to the

carts when dealing with the highest point of the plants. Especially the women who work as *yatırmacı* and *dolamacı* are at risk of falling as they work 4-6 meters above the ground with no security belt.¹⁹¹

She was fine [when she fell down], she was just in shock. They took her to hospital. Fortunately, the cart didn't fall over completely. When it tipped, she held on to the wires at the top, then they got her down from up there. Sometimes people fall too, but not from very high. Hamiyet

The workers do not wear a complete set of protective gear that includes protective overalls, proper gloves, boots, a face mask or goggles. It is clear that the workers are not provided with adequate means of protection and working without proper equipment is a threat to work safety. A normal workday could give an idea about safety conditions at the *Greenhouse*. I learned from the women that a maintenance worker fell from the roof of the greenhouse unit. Luckily the worker was not seriously injured, since the “accident” took place at a unit whose roof is relatively low compared to the others. Another worker had an “accident” during infestation and was hurt in the neck, resulting in several stitches; one female worker's foot was crushed by the harvest cart, resulting in a lost nail. Although workplace safety is the responsibility of the *Company*, a head-engineer once complained to me about women who wear slippers instead of shoes with steel toe caps that would protect their feet from being crushed by the iron harvest carts.

Another serious problem for the workers seems to be the bees. The special *Bombus* bees are used for pollination at the *Greenhouse* yet they tend to behave unusually because of the high temperatures in the units. I would regularly see the dead bees on the ground in the units. Although the engineers try to protect the

¹⁹¹ The same risk of falling is a serious concern of workers in agricultural greenhouse units with soil. As there is no rail system in such units, the workers have to stand on upside-down boxes to handle the tomato plants. I was told, and also observed myself, that they sometimes use two boxes one on the top of the other. They all state that nobody wants to stand on the boxes but that they have to do so to reach the top of the plants. It is ordinary to hear workers say, “Did you hear that two women in X unit fell yesterday?”

disoriented bees from the heat via ice blocks on the hives, this is not effective. Most of the workers complain about bee stings while working.

The ordinary activities necessary for the tasks are also harmful for the women in the long term. Orthopedic disorders, cardio-vascular problems, sudden weight loss, neurological problems and psychological illnesses are frequently observed among the workers. Even though these are different areas of medical science, in some cases they can be interconnected. Orthopedic disorders include articular rheumatism, herniation of spinal discs or the groin, curvature of the spine and deformation of internal visceral organs. Women carry out repetitive movements throughout the day and it is therefore very common to see a worker who will have, or has already had, an operation for a spinal disc hernia:

You start sweeping at seven in the morning until five in the evening. Almost everyone working in the greenhouse has back problems. For example, if you're a dolamacı you stay still the whole day, you get really stiff. Selma

In addition, orthopedic disorders are sometimes combined with neurological problems, such as a trapped meniscus or nerve. Regarding cardio-vascular problems, drops in blood pressure, palpitations or hypertension are commonly seen among the *Greenhouse* workers. Sudden weight loss is also an issue among the women. For example, Seher weight 72 kilograms when she started working at the *Greenhouse*. After nine months her weight had dropped to 57 kilograms. Yağmur's weight fell from 55 to 47 kilograms in just two months during the summer season. Heat stroke is another example of health problem that occurs at the *Greenhouse*. The combination of high humidity and high temperatures in the greenhouse units is very detrimental to the workers:¹⁹²

¹⁹² The glass greenhouse in particular is famous for its unbearable heat. It is generally the hottest unit with the highest percent of humidity. Once I witnessed humidity levels of 93% in this unit as high humidity is very important for the plants to grow under the glass. On one working day, four women fainted in the glass greenhouse because of the dangerous mix of heat and humidity.

I don't like the heat. I've often thought about leaving. I've fainted twice. It killed me. There's no air, you sweat, sweat and sweat. Like you're in a forest. I can't breathe. It's awful in summer. The workers have no value. Bingül

Women also mention psychological problems. While for some, working in a closed area seems to lead to claustrophobia, the majority complain of panic attacks and stress caused by mobbing. As stated earlier, working at the *Greenhouse* is not only physically hard for women, but also psychologically challenging due to the labor regime imposed there. Fadime complains that her face, hands and arms always come out in rashes from the stress. Ironically, ordinary practices of the workers that lead to health problems in the long run are confirmed by the *Company*. While talking about why women leave the *Greenhouse* in huge numbers, the Human Resources Unit mentions health problems:

Over time health problems appear. Sometimes they can have difficulty breathing as they are constantly in an enclosed space. Or sometimes they can develop back problems from lifting heavy weights. They want to leave because working any longer would be damaging [to their health].

4.3.2. Intense Use of Chemicals

4.3.2.1. Pesticide Drift.

Greenhouse production is a highly fragile practice. As the plants are grown in an enclosed area, they are very vulnerable, and open to any threat that comes from outside. For this reason, the plants are carefully controlled and protected by strict hygiene measures. A worker who forgets to clean her scissors after touching a sick plant can destroy a unit's entire production. Disease being transferred from one plant to another immediately leads to the loss of all products grown in a unit. This is what makes greenhouse production risky. In order to minimize the risk, the engineers' main weapon is pesticide use. However, as the pesticide used is a mix of chemicals and highly detrimental to human health, it should be used with

great care to avoid violating the workers' safety. This, however, has not always been the case at the *Greenhouse*. In the past, women used to continue working inside the units during disinfestation without masks. This changed a year ago because of the checks by labor inspectors. However, the new rule that was introduced, according to which the women should move to another unit during infestation, does not provide full protection to the women since the break given is clearly not enough for the pesticide to clear from the air of the unit. Additionally, women are not allowed to leave the unit even if they are badly affected.¹⁹³

Now they put us back in the greenhouse after [the spraying] but when you go in you cough and cough... They make fun of us, 'These chemicals wouldn't even kill a fly, how would they kill you?' They don't let us outside. Solmaz

The effects of the pesticide are more intensely experienced by those who work a few meters above the ground. Sabriye suspects the pesticide is mixed into the irrigation drips. She complains of there being problems with the air in the greenhouse units very early in the morning as the first drips are sprayed from the sprinkler system: "It's like there's this constant dew falling on you. As soon as the doors open in the morning it chokes us." What is particularly striking is that the *Bombus* bees used for pollination are carefully taken out of the unit each time as they are very costly, while the engineers and the workers continue working inside without masks. In addition, no worker has any information regarding the pesticide or fertilizer used.

As a result, shortness of breath is the least of the health problems suffered by the majority of the workers. I came across workers whose respiratory diseases varied from asthma to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Pesticides are a

¹⁹³ Those who faint or vomit generally take a short break and drink some liquids before re-entering the unit. Almost every woman has a story about this: "Maybe our bodies got used to it. The first year I got so sick, it was such a strong smell. It made me nauseous. They took me out, to the canteen. I drank ayran [drink made of yoghurt and water] and all that. Of course, after a while I went in [to the greenhouse]." Yüksel

reason to leave the *Greenhouse* when the workers can no longer tolerate its side effects. Not only do the chemicals cause respiratory diseases, but there is also a danger of harm to the women's offspring.¹⁹⁴ One pregnant worker told me that she gave up working there as she once fainted as a result of "accidental" pesticide drift:

I breathed in chemicals from the sprinklers. Chemicals had accidentally been added [to the water]. We were working. I fainted in the greenhouse. I was six weeks pregnant. I was scared something might happen, with the chemicals and all that in the greenhouse unit. So I left. Ümmühan

One engineer stated that the working hours should be re-organized, not only to protect the workers from the disinfestation but also to guarantee they having enough fresh air while working. As the air in the greenhouse units has high levels of nitrogen, the women are supposed to have more regular breaks for fresh air, i.e. 50 minutes work followed by a 10-minute break. However, the engineer in question does not have the authority to regulate the working hours, and therefore continues breathing in the pesticides and nitrogen along with the workers. Dermatological problems are also observed among the workers, such as intense itching, rashes or acne. These are common complains of the engineers and workers at the *Greenhouse*, and the majority says they experience pH balance disorders.

Bain (2010) discusses incidents of pesticide poisoning. Such incidents are composed of direct and indirect poisoning, but in the case of the *Greenhouse*, direct poisoning has recently shifted to indirect poisoning. Even though the women do not directly handle the pesticides, they still suffer from the pesticides through dermal contact as they enter the units soon after the spraying and fumigation of the plants or as a result of pesticide drift. Bain underlines that having no direct contact to the drift should not trivialize the issue, since the side

¹⁹⁴ During the fieldwork, a female engineer had a miscarriage. Many women think that it was directly related to the pesticide in the units.

effects of indirect poisoning are also highly damaging. She also argues that the majority of direct poisoning involves men in permanent and full-time positions, as their job is to apply or handle pesticides. Although applying pesticide is considered as a man's job, I also came across women at the *Greenhouse* who did it. I also believe that contamination with chemical residue is common since workers often take their breaks in the units, perhaps eating with hands that have not been cleaned of the chemicals. There are no proper dining facilities in most of the units therefore the workers are never sufficiently far away from the contaminated units and baby greenhouses.

In this context, the *Greenhouse* workers' situation bears similarities to the Chilean agricultural workers who are exposed to highly toxic substances. According to reports by the Chilean Ministry of Health and Department of Epidemiology, agricultural workers exposed to these highly toxic substances can have acute and chronic health problems, including headaches, nausea, abdominal pain, genetic deformations of offspring, miscarriages, infertility, damage to nervous systems, loss of eyesight, skin diseases, and even death (Vallebuona Stagno 2003, 2004, 2005, Estrada, 2005). Aware of the fact that the consequences of pesticide use should be analyzed based on longitudinal studies, I still argue that the detrimental effects on women's health at the *Greenhouse* are clear¹⁹⁵ since there is a critical level of workplace safety violations.

4.3.2.2. Intense Bleach Usage.

The women at the *Greenhouse* are not only responsible for the production in the greenhouse units, but also for their "reproduction", i.e. deep cleaning after the harvest and preparation of the units for the next production process.

¹⁹⁵ Women also follow the negative changes on their health through periodical check-ups (every six month they have a chest X-ray and respiratory function test): "I got asthma after the greenhouse. When I started, I had an x-ray, I had no problems. It's not a healthy place for young people. That's why I didn't want my son to work there." Bingül

Additionally, the items used by workers on a daily basis are also cleaned. An ordinary day of cleaning at a unit gives an idea about the women's cleaning responsibilities and the effects of these tasks on their health. The main product used to clean almost every item in the *Greenhouse* is bleach, which is used for cleaning working tools, the plastic ground sheeting between the rows, the baby greenhouse, toilets, dirty breakfast dishes, workers' hands and uniforms. It is even used to clean the women's headscarves. Pure bleach is diluted with water and poured into large vats for cleaning the plastic ground sheeting in the units. The women mop the floor with the diluted bleach, but I never witness the bleach being rinsed away afterwards, and the smell of bleach seems to permeate the air.

Most of the time, women use bleach without wearing masks or gloves. The masks are provided by the *Company* but the workers do not like to use them. In any case, the masks provided are basic dust masks and are not suitable for such a deep cleaning process. Similarly, women do not wear suitable shoes, with almost everybody wearing plastic slippers, especially during spring, summer and autumn. The women are expected to sterilize their feet in a tub filled with bleach solution, so their feet also come into contact with the bleach every time they enter and exit their unit. Cleaning is one of the hardest physical activities at the *Greenhouse*, and the women say that breathing in the bleach fumes throughout the day in an enclosed area is also very tiring for them. The unbearable heat makes the situation even more difficult. It is, therefore unsurprising that many women have respiratory diseases, and asthma, in particular, seems to be very common:

If I'm struggling to breathe [in the greenhouse] I have [asthma] medication, I take a breath of that. I always have [my inhaler] with me. If I'm really bad, in the evening I go straight to the hospital and they put me on a machine. That opens [my lungs] up. During spraying they send people with asthma to another unit. 'Off you go,' they say, so we don't get short of breath, but when we go in after the spraying, it happens anyway. Güldeste

The women also suffer from dermatological problems: direct contact with the bleach causes wounds on their hands and fingers. Cleaning their uniforms is the women's responsibility, and before the end of the day the assigned workers leave the unit to clean the uniforms of the others work there, making a total of around 15 to 20 uniforms to clean. The uniforms are cleaned in the baby greenhouses, which are generally smaller and hotter than the main unit. However, as the time allowed for cleaning is very limited due to the working rules, the women never have enough time to fully rinse the bleach out of the uniforms. As a result, the women complain that they have itchy rashes when they wear them. I once saw an example of this on Ümmühan's neck. She asked me to touch her neck, it felt rough, as though I were touching paper instead of skin. She told me that this happened after the bleach.

4.3.3. "Accidents": "I fell at home!"

It was not easy for the women to talk to me about "accidents". The majority of women, however, say they are mostly forced to "lie" about accidents at work.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁶ Women are forced to lie not only about accidents but also about other issues, such as severance pay. For example, one interviewee told me that the *Company* tried to force her to give a false testimony in the interests of the *Company* at the trial of a former worker, who was suing the *Company* to receive her severance pay:

Because I'm a long-time worker, they expected me to lie. The woman was taking them to trial for severance pay. They know she's in the right. Instead of 50,000 TL, they wanted to give her 20,000. She was old. She'd worked for them for 7 years. At the Greenhouse they exploit everyone. When they asked me to be a witness, I recorded it on my phone. Isn't it a crime to lie in court? [The manager] told me to delete the recording or they'd make my family's life miserable. He tried to take my phone. (...) They called me to sign some papers. On the paper it said I'd received everything I was owed, my severance. What's this? They said, 'That's the procedure, you have to sign it.' If you want work in the future, if your fiancé wants work, they'll make sure we don't get the job. They have connections to the AKP. I was scared. I signed it. Sometimes I worked with no social security. I gave 8 years of my life. Let me say goodbye [to my friends], I said. There are cameras everywhere. The manager said, 'Haven't you deleted that recording?' I said, 'I'm going to report you to the Show News WhatsApp hotline.' He said, 'I'll break a box over her head.' [During the investigation] one engineer took my side. They looked at the CCTV recordings. It showed the guy went for me. The gendarmes were on their side. It's all bribes. They said, 'If you get a lawyer, they'll get a thousand. They'll take it as far as your family.'

They have no choice but to tell the authorities that they “fell at home; this did not happen at work”. “I fell down the stairs” is another explanation given by the women when asked at the hospitals. The women also say that they are not immediately taken to the hospital; instead, they are kept waiting to see if there is any improvement in their condition, rendering professional medical help unnecessary. However, there is no medical staff at the *Greenhouse* to evaluate such cases.¹⁹⁷

There's no, 'I fell' in the Greenhouse. You say, 'I fell at home, or on the stairs.' We have to sign a paper that says, 'Due to lack of attention...', in other words even if we do fall, we've said it was our own fault. Sabriye

Not only are the women are not only expected to lie to the medical authorities in the hospitals, they are also required to behave in the same way when the job inspectors come to the *Greenhouse* to check the working conditions:

The health and safety inspectors came. The engineers gathered the workers they trusted and told us, 'If they ask, this is how you answer.' They asked us if there are safety protocols, if we get breaks, if we have safety belts. And we can't say no. You don't say that, you don't tell the truth. You know you'll lose your job, they'll fire you. We looked those inspectors in the eye and lied to them. We have to. But later I told everyone that I learned to lie in this greenhouse, they [the management] heard me too, but they didn't say anything. Sabriye

According to Vallebuona Stagno (2005), “the absence of information and training for workers, their lack of awareness about health risks, widespread noncompliance with workplace health and safety regulations, including workers' right to know about these risks, insufficient levels of workplace and regulation and inspection, the absence of government regulations in relation to land and aerial applications” threaten the work safety. In this sense, the *Greenhouse* is a good example. Instead of guaranteeing work safety, the *Company* seems to take

¹⁹⁷ There is a doctor employed by the *Greenhouse*, but he is only assigned to be there two days a week. Despite the occasional presence of a doctor, I never heard a story in which the worker received his help regarding “accidents”.

a different track, either forcing the workers to lie or separating uninsured workers from the insured ones, making workers with insurance do the dangerous work. In other words, uninsured workers are not employed as *yatırmacı/dolamacı* and in general are not asked to carry out risky tasks at the *Greenhouse*.

4.4. Arbitrariness and Forgery: Worker's Rights

Not only do the women face unfair treatment and mobbing while working under the *Greenhouse's* “greedy” performance system without the necessary infrastructure for decent working conditions, but they also experience a deterioration of their basic worker's rights there. This section will focus on the most important aspects of this: payment, breaks and leave, insurance and finally the right to unionize.

4.4.1. Payment

There is a ‘unique’ payment system at the *Greenhouse*. On paper, the workers receive the minimum wage, as required by the labor law. However, in reality this is not the case. The workers are paid on a daily basis (known as *yevmiye*); once a month, the workers' salaries, based on the minimum wage, are deposited into their bank accounts. After this, the *Company's* accountant “re-organizes” the wages and the women are only paid for the number of days that they worked the previous month. During the time of my fieldwork, the *yevmiye* was around 31/32 TL per day. If a worker worked 30 days with no leave, the total of her *yevmiye* would be higher than the minimum wage. In such cases, the accountant would give her the additional amount. Conversely, a worker could work less, thus decreasing her wage. As a result, she is expected to pay back the difference to the accountant. This “re-organization” is always carried out in cash transactions. Behind the facade, other than the white-collar personnel, no worker receives the minimum wage. While this is the system for the permanent workers who work

throughout the year, temporary workers are paid cash-in-hand as they are not officially registered at all.

Sometimes they overpay then take it back. [The accountant] tells those who have been overpaid to bring so much money back. [...] Then they heard what I'd been saying and fired me. [Laughs nervously.] Last month I gave back 70 TL. My [wages] are over 1,000 but do you know what, Ceren? We have four days paid leave. I mean, I need to use it but I don't want to, I'll work instead, otherwise it's the minimum wage. That's how it is. Gülizar

The majority of the workers do not have detailed legal information about the payment procedure. Likewise, the reasons for deductions from the pay — whether it is for the costs of the shuttle or for lunch in the canteen — is not known by the workers. Naturally, this is another reason for workers not to trust the *Company*. The women complain that they are not given the chance even to read the legal papers they are required to sign, as the HR staff sit with them to keep an eye on them. Yüksel says that she was repeatedly told, “Don't you worry about it, just sign” when she asked to read her contract. She says workers cannot get their pay-slips, which are kept by the *Greenhouse* management. If they need their pay slips, for a loan or for some official reason, then they are granted access to them. Women find such a payment system unreliable and unfair. Furthermore, the women say that greenhouse work is highly labor-intensive, especially during the late spring and summer times, and that they therefore deserve at least the minimum wage as well as the legally established leave periods:

They really exploit us. We all know it, how could we not? They're greedy. Everyone keeps quiet, they're scared. They asked me to pay back 150 lira. That was really hard on me, Ceren, because I had earned that money. That day I got sick; I changed my clothes three times. Dripping with sweat. You see how we work. Why did that man die at 41 or 42 years old? He died so young because the [founder of the Greenhouse] treated him so unfairly. Servet

Although the daily payment is standard without exception, prior to 2016 this was not the case, when there was a 1 TL difference between the daily wages of 'old' and 'new' workers at the *Greenhouse*. In other words, old workers used to

receive 32 TL per day, while new workers received 31 TL. When I asked the Human Resources Unit, when a new worker became an old one, I was told that it took eight years:

I'd say it takes around eight years. Privileges are shown to the people who first started working in these conditions, and rightly so. Because those people put up with this place, they've been here all this time, worked so hard.

To conclude, it would appear that the *Greenhouse* employs its workers on the basis of minimum wage only on paper. Behind that official facade, the women's wages are based on a daily rate. However, this money is also paid on the condition that the women finish a certain number of rows in their unit. If a worker's performance drops, she faces losing her job. Paying a *yevmiye* that is tied to the completion of a certain number of rows seems to be an interesting combination created by the *Company*. In this sense, the findings of the study are consistent with Gündüz Hoşgör and Suzuki's (2016) research in the Black Sea region, in which they point out that the women are paid on the basis of cleaned sea snails. According to the authors, the women earn 2 TL per kilo, which works out at 20-30 TL per day. As the participation of rural women in off-farm employment is a global phenomenon, we also see piece rate payment in other rural contexts, such as in Chile. As stated by Jarvis and Vera-Toscana (2004), for agricultural women workers "long days of 12-14 hours or more are often required to earn the minimum salary. Typically paid on a piece rate basis, they tend to face more wage variation and suffer more unemployment than men" (in Bain, 2010: 349). Another example comes from Murcia, Spain where women are occasionally paid by the hour at agro-export packing houses (Muñoz, 2008).

4.4.2. Breaks and Leave

As mentioned previously, not interrupting the flow of the greenhouse production is so important that breaks and leave are primarily organized accordingly. A normal workday at the Greenhouse is composed of three breaks: two short 15-

minute breaks, and a one-hour lunch break. The 15-minute breaks are always under threat of being divided according to the workload. In other words, the breaks are sometimes given arbitrarily. One worker told me that these breaks are sometimes divided into three — i.e. five minutes each — and she complained that this was not enough for them to rest.

Leave is also granted in a similar way to breaks. In the past, the right to leave for a basic worker at the *Greenhouse* did not exist. This was introduced as a result of the competition with the other greenhouses recently established in the area. As a result, other alternatives offering two days of leave a month (compared to none at the *Greenhouse* other than for longtime workers) became more attractive. When workers needed a day off, they had to ask for it as a favor. In 2014, 12 years after the establishment of the *Greenhouse*, workers were granted four days of leave per month. There is a very strict rule regulating leave and linking it with their payment: if the worker exceeds the four day of leave in a month, all of the days not worked, including their statutory leave, is docked from their pay — i.e. if a worker takes one additional day of leave, five days of pay is deducted from their wage for that month. In other words, whatever the reason for it, workers should not ask for additional days of leave, otherwise they have no choice but to accept the pay cut. The women say that even though the rule was set up to prevent the *Company* from the misuse of medical reports, it is still against the interests of the workers:

Just so they don't get a medical report. There are those who get them for no reason, but the rule is applied for people who are really sick too. And not just sickness, for a funeral or something else that happens unexpectedly, if you take five days' leave, they dock five days' wages. Yüksel

The medical doctor acts as an internal mechanism to control the workers' leave, with sick workers primarily required to receive a medical report from the *Greenhouse* doctor. Only after having done so may she obtain another report from other health authorities to extend her leave. Therefore, she still has to go to

the *Greenhouse* to obtain the initial report, and the management does not accept a report issued by an Emergency Unit of a hospital: “For example the doctor comes on Monday and Tuesday. If you get sick on a Thursday you have to wait until the next week for the doctor. Some things just don’t make sense.”

Similar to the *Greenhouse*, we also see the company doctor playing a significant role in the case of Hacienda BC, a tortilla making factory named in a study by Muñoz, where “the doctor routinely underestimates the amount of time a worker should have off for a particular injury,” and “workers are pressured to return to work immediately after an injury” (2008: 103). According to Muñoz, the aim behind this is to avoid interruption to the flow of production. Workers are also not allowed to get a second health report extending their leave if they have already provided one, even if she needs it. I witnessed the fear of a woman who required a serious hernia operation. She was afraid of being fired as she was not well enough to return to work. She needed to take a second health report, but was worried whether the Human Resources Unit would accept it. In addition, receiving standard treatment, such as physical or dental treatment, is not welcomed and is considered non-vital:

Whenever anyone mentions a slipped disc, the head engineer says, ‘I’ve got a slipped disc too, no one ever died of a slipped disc!’ He says the same to anyone with a toothache: ‘No one ever died of a toothache.’

On the contrary, women are “allowed” to work a whole month without leave, and in such cases the additional daily payment is added to the minimum wage. Similarly, during the summer time when the workers are not allowed to take days off due to the heavy workload, they automatically receive the extra money.¹⁹⁸ This naturally results in working long periods of time without leave. I often asked the women when they last time had a day off, and a standard answer

¹⁹⁸ When it comes to overtime, women say they are paid just 1 TL for working an extra hour.

was “A month ago”. Like Güldeste, the women are very used to counting how many days have passed since their last day off:

There’ve been times when I’ve worked 40 days straight. How can you work without a day off? They hold a meeting and say, ‘All leave is cancelled!’ They called us back from annual leave. During the bayram they give three days leave. After the bayram there’s no leave! And they make us pay for those three days, they make us work really hard.

It is clear that the needs of production are more important for the management than the needs of the workers. I witnessed the cancellation of all leave until further notice by the head engineer during the summer because they were trying “a new kind of production”, which is known as summer cultivation.¹⁹⁹ As the workload was heavier than usual, even requests to visit the doctor were denied. However, the women say that if your “excuse” is convincing enough, there is a chance you may be granted leave.²⁰⁰ However, the management has to be informed immediately to avoid being fired, and any such leave is granted on an unpaid basis.

There was this one woman who was a little naïve. Just think, she had three funerals in one year. One after the other. She lost her husband in [the mine in] Soma, before that a relative, then another one. When she couldn’t come, X fired that woman the moment he saw her, asking why she didn’t inform them. Okay,

¹⁹⁹ Summer cultivation mostly takes place around late August in the area. For the first time, the *Company* carried it out earlier to take advantage of an early harvest for the markets. They were planning to harvest the tomatoes just as the field tomatoes were about to finish, i.e. in September/October, which makes the greenhouse tomatoes more expensive at that time. The plants were seeded in late June. However, the process did not work out as planned, since such a production technique is not in line with the local land and weather conditions. Around 2,000 plants had to be removed in one of the units since they were diseased. Additionally, the bunches with an insufficient number of tomatoes were not acceptable. The head engineer told me that the new production technique failed, and profit seemed to be equal to the expenses.

²⁰⁰ Even so, there is no guarantee; as happened to X on the day of her divorce case. They did not grant her permission to leave work in the morning, but when she refused she was fired. Similarly, Sabriye says she had to move house during the night: “They don’t give you leave. 40 days with no leave. We cry while we’re working. If you didn’t need [the job]...” Ironically, good performance could be reason to be refused leave, as happened to Meliha who was not granted permission to take three consecutive days leave.

so we work to get paid. If we give them something, they give us what we're due. But sometimes they can be very cruel. Deste

There are also examples of mistreatment by engineers of workers asking for leave; they humiliate or devalue the person making the request. They insist on knowing the reason behind the leave request, something that can be seen as a violation of the right to privacy, since the worker is forced to tell very personal issues to her superiors. It is clear that arbitrariness and uncertainty characterize the breaks and leave at the *Greenhouse*. There are also gendered consequences of these issues. As the burden of reproductive labor is still shouldered by women, the problematic and exploitative way in which leave is granted at the *Greenhouse* affects women much more than men. They miss the local market day or a doctor's appointment for their children when they are given leave on a day other than they requested.

4.4.3. Insurance

In earlier years at the *Greenhouse*, the women lacked insurance in the form of social security payments. Although the *Company* was established in 2002, social security payments were not provided until the end of 2011. The majority of the long-term workers have a history of working without insurance. The *Company* was not eager to insure its workers, delaying the issue as much as possible. While they promised the women insured employment, in some cases this never materialized, for reasons of never-ending paperwork, probation periods or "strange accidents" that resulted in the workers' social security files being destroyed by fire. The women were told that they "should wait for time to pass", but this time period could be several months or even years.

Everyone worked without social security. I said to the engineer that it would be good to have social security, maybe I'd get a pension. 'Of course, love,' she said, 'it will happen, be patient.' Nizam, the head engineer said, 'There's nothing we can do, it will happen later, work for a while. It takes time, time.' So, I worked for a year and a half with no social security.

Of the 33 women, 30 are insured. Five of those, however, are already registered with social security via a family member (3) or a husband (2). Therefore, the number insured by the *Company* itself is 25. As three workers quit the Greenhouse job during/after the fieldwork, they have no social security for the time being. These women worked at the *Greenhouse* without insurance at the beginning of their employment. The length of time the women worked without insurance varied: The shortest period I was told of was two weeks, while the longest was four years. What motivated the *Company* to become more attentive on the issue of insurance also seems to vary. First and foremost is the emerging competition with the other greenhouses that opened at the same area. When the new greenhouses provided insurance to the workers, it was time for them to do the same so as not to lose its potential pool of workers, who immediately shifted to the new greenhouses.

There's a high turnover, in the past it was even higher. Because of the people without social security. If they don't get it, they go to another greenhouse. In the other greenhouses they did it straight away. Hamiyet

The Soma Disaster is another reason for the *Company* to be more cautious about uninsured workers at the *Greenhouse*. The majority of the women say that following the disaster, more workers were insured. Another reason that seems to have forced the *Company* to change its policy seems to be complaints from the workers.²⁰¹ These two issues led to stricter checks by labor inspectors. However, although the checks became more frequent, it is hard to say that they were to the benefit of the workers:

They came to check our social security in 2014. Again we hid up in the hills. I'm registered as a gas pump attendant in Ankara. I have social security but since I'm not registered at the Greenhouse, I still have to hide when they come.

²⁰¹ Except from few names that I know in person who have in legal conflict with the *Company*, I do not have any information about the number of the cases/legal complaints against the *Company*.

[...] What can we do, we hid among the trees, ate apples. They're tasty apples, big and juicy. Usually we can't eat apples like that, they always go out for export. Merve

However, such a change does not mean that all of the workers employed at the *Greenhouse* are insured. There are still several types of workers who are not insured²⁰²: those under 18 years old, i.e. child workers; students, whom the women believe are insured by their "schools" and temporary workers who are there for a short period of time. For example, Hasan, the son of one interviewee, started working at the *Greenhouse* when he was 15 years old, as he wanted to make money instead of going to school. Since his mother was a good worker, the head engineer approved her son's employment. Hasan is now 18 and has been working there for three years without insurance.²⁰³ The student workers may also be child labor, as they are mostly high-school students employed during the summer time when the schools are closed. Additionally, some university students work at the *Greenhouse* to make some money for the coming academic

²⁰² The total number of workers is not "certain". While the women estimate it to be around 500-600, the "official" number given by the Human Resources Unit is 380: "Only 150 of them are men, the rest are women". The HR Unit unofficially told me that the number of workers they presented to me was *less* than it is in reality, but that the *real* numbers could not be given to me. However, during a meeting, I was told that the total number is 650, 350 of which are women. While there are 250 permanent male workers, another 50 are employed as temporary workers on a daily basis. 350 women are formally registered at the *Greenhouse*, while 250 men are registered at the *Company's* other businesses, i.e. on construction sites located in Kütahya. I have also come across workers who stated that when they check their personal information via the online "*e-devlet*" system they see that the name of the *Company* or the area in which they are employed is different than their real position. Likewise, the head engineer mentions 450-500 workers. He adds that from time to time they recruit temporary workers through the middlemen of the local area, such workers generally work for a week to ten days. To conclude, the HR Unit says that the number of the workers changes. During the cleaning or maintenance periods, more workers are employed. The number of workers the *Greenhouse* seems to increase and decrease according to the season, workload or type of the work. As verified by the *Company* itself, it is clear that there are certain malpractices regarding employee registration and insurance.

²⁰³ As Hasan's mother told me, in the beginning the *Company* did not insure him since he was under 18. When she asked the manager if the *Company* was going to insure her son, he said "Who else on earth would insure an under 18 year old? She responded, "They do at Bedir's Factory." However, he was not convinced and, ironically, said, "We don't do such a thing here! And anyway, it is forbidden to employ under 18s."

year. For example, one university student has been working at the *Greenhouse* since she was 16. She is not insured, as she and her mother believe that her scholarship will be cut if the *Company* insures her.²⁰⁴

On the other hand, women have a certain demand to be insured. I frequently observe women checking their insurance online (using the *e-devlet* system) using smart phones. The older women who are not familiar with such technology ask the younger workers to check their insurance payments. Women waiting for to be insured are even reproachful:

They didn't give us social security for so many years. They gave it to X, because she and her husband had split up and she was in need. I said to the manager, of course I was a bit scared of him, even though he was younger than me, I said, I wish I'd divorced my husband then come here, you'd have given me social security too. Semiha

At first I didn't do it because I wasn't sure if I'd last two years. Then I got it. I wouldn't go if I didn't have social security. That's the truth. Zahide

In some cases, women do not insist on receiving insurance for various reasons. If the woman already has insurance (through retirement or her husband) or if she has other plans, like changing jobs, she does not demand insurance. Another reason for not requesting insurance is when the woman is not sure whether she will continue working at the *Greenhouse*. Moreover, there are also women who want to remain temporary workers due to the unbearable heat, therefore they are willing to accept being employed without insurance. I met one woman who had worked for five years with no insurance. She was so disturbed by the heat that she would only work there during the winter. Another reason seems to be the religious activities that coincide with the summer time, such as the month of Ramadan. Most of the women think that working and fasting would be too hard, so they quit the job for one month and return after the end of Ramadan. Nadide,

²⁰⁴ I have come across other examples, too. It is commonly believed by the students and their families that being insured leads to the loss of scholarships. Therefore, student workers make no demands at all regarding insurance.

for example, worked without insurance for four months by choice, since Ramadan was approaching and she was not sure that she could manage both. After the end of Ramadan, she returned to work after having taken an entire month of unpaid leave. It was after her return that she was insured. This is a common strategy for women who spend the month of Ramadan on unpaid leave. However, unpaid leave in fact means a total break from the job, which is an advantage for the *Company* as the workers are employed only for a short term before starting again, which ultimately means lower severance pay, if it is paid at all.²⁰⁵

4.4.4. Nonunion Workers

There is no union at the *Greenhouse*, and the women told me they had never even heard of any attempt to organize. It must be underlined that none of the women were comfortable talking about the issue of unions and were very afraid of saying anything out loud. In spite of their shared problems, such as delayed payments, overtime, mobbing, uninsured employment, shuttles or suspicious paperwork, there are very rare examples of collective action against the conditions there.

No one speaks up. No one ever says anything like that. Whatever they say goes. No one ever says, ‘We want this, we want that. Gülcan

²⁰⁵ The majority of the women state that the severance pay is never given to the workers. When they leave the job, they are required to sign a paper via which they accept that they have received all outstanding benefits. After signing such a document, it is not possible to claim their rights. The *Company* also has another trick to avoid giving the workers their severance pays: it continuously registers and unregisters the workers, resulting in shorter working periods and automatically less severance pays. Once Servet pointed out to me a woman in the neighborhood while I was staying at her house. She said that the woman had worked at the *Greenhouse* for seven years and received no severance pay after she left. Or Gülizar said, “Even if I received 1000 TL after seven years, I think that would be ok for me!”.

The working regime reinforces lack of self-organization among the *Greenhouse* labor force. Workers generally work either on their own or with a partner. While the majority of them are at the top of the harvest carts on their own, the rest are employed in twos for cleaning and infestation. A small number of men deal with loading the harvested products onto the trucks to deliver them to the packaging department before export. The only times that the workers get together are during breaks, other than this they spend the entire working day separate from each other. Such a working regime seems to prevent workers from collective thinking and action.²⁰⁶ For example, the example could explain how ignorant and uninformed the workers are about each other: The workers from one greenhouse unit once visited the Human Resources Unit to ask if it would be possible to change some of the working conditions. Even such a rare case was unknown to most of the workers that I talked to, who were very surprised and even shocked when I told them the case. The only collective action that I heard of was in relation to the shuttle service. I was told that once the shuttle was so crowded that nobody got off the shuttle, even after arriving at the *Greenhouse*. They waited on the bus until the HR officer came and saw the crowd inside.

In this sense, a basic thing such as the seats at the shuttles, can be another example of the workers' lack of knowledge about each other. Each worker has her own seat in the shuttle; therefore no one sits in another's place. I know that the same is true in all shuttles as I used a number of different shuttles during the fieldwork. However, I was once asked by a woman if this is the same in every shuttle, and she was completely unaware of how the others in different shuttles commuted to work.

²⁰⁶ On the other hand, such a system also prevents women from permanent surveillance, as happens in other cases with camera systems (Gündüz Hoşgör and Suzuki, 2016). The spatial organization of the units does not allow the management to watch the workers via cameras. Therefore, the engineers randomly walk through the rows to check on the women.

It was surprising for me that workers not only know very little about the others, but also the trust in each other for their interest and common good seems to have been eroded. Having limited information about each other seems not only to separate the workers but also weakens their bargaining power.

Sometimes they were late with the wages. Everyone complains but when it comes to actually doing something, you turn around and there's no one there. When you're talking, everyone wants it. Higher wages for example. There are other rights that aren't met, other problems, and we work there knowing this. I mean, lots of people speak about it, but you won't find anyone to make it happen. Yüksel

In addition to the isolating and oppressive working regime, the peasant-worker composition of the labor force also reinforces the lack of self-organization among the workers. As the women mostly come from various villages, the idea of the collective is primarily based on place of origin, rather than place of work. The feeling of “us” seems to be dominated by coming from the same village. This also makes the process of proletarianization a contested concept, and the women define “us” with reference to family and rural ties rather than being worker at the *Greenhouse*. For example, Gülcan complains about how not being insured means she will have to work longer before she can retire, and underlined that “they” could not raise the demand collectively. Later I understood that “they” refers to the women from the same village therefore naturally does not cover the whole workers of a unit:

It's a lot of time. If I'd had [social security] I'd have a year and a half left. It's our fault in a way. Maybe if we'd begged, maybe if we'd all tried together, it might have happened. [...] But no, we all said it separately. Anyway, we weren't all in the same greenhouse. We said to X. 'No, we can't,' he said, what could he say. But maybe if we'd begged and all that, maybe it would have happened but we didn't keep at it.

The use of the word “beg” also points to how dramatic the workers' perception is of their collective power. For this reason, it is not surprising that the image of the union is not composed of collective thinking and action. For some of the women,

it is perceived as a pioneering force that would defend the workers' rights in their place. Yet, they lack those people at the *Greenhouse*.

To conclude, collective bargaining at the *Greenhouse* is weak and almost nonexistent. This is highly similar to the cases mentioned by Riquelme (2005) and Bain (2010), in which they studied agricultural laborers in fields and packing houses for the export of fresh fruit from Chile to the Global North. They underline the temporary nature of the work, which increases when it comes to harvest time. According to Bain, "the temporary nature of employment is an obstacle to workers joining a union, since workers who are constantly exiting and entering the labor market fear being blacklisted" (2010: 350). Work at the *Greenhouse* also has a temporary character for the women. Women who either wish to re-enter the *Greenhouse* or get a new job are hesitant of being blacklisted. Hoşgör Gündüz and Suzuki (2016) also mention that examples of syndical struggles to change the working conditions in rural areas are particularly rare. On the other hand, workers of the agri-export sector in Murcia, Spain form a different case in which the largest unions in the sector (the CCOO and UGT) have played an important role, especially during the 1980s and 1990s. Strikes and protests demanding better contracts and wages were common. Yet the management responded to the unions' strategies by replacing union workers with docile ones and making participation in the unions more difficult, thus limiting the workers' negotiating power (Pedreño et. al. 2014: 208-210).

Setting aside the characteristics of the work as being seasonal and poorly paid, the political and economic power of the *Company* also discourages women from unionizing. It is clear that the *Company* has great influence in the region, and its enormous political and economic power make it impossible to fight against. It is therefore felt that the *Company* could easily carry out any kind of unfair act. In addition, the non-unionized workers at the *Greenhouse* can be seen as an

example of weak and dispersed social opposition in the agricultural sector.²⁰⁷ Not having any experience of unionization or collective bargaining seems to weaken women's ability to think and act collectively.

4.5. Coping Strategies: Consent and Resistance

We tried to slow down people who did too much. We'd say, 'Do less, do it slower, take a break.' Doing too many rows was bad for all of us. There's no praise for doing it, no one says, 'You did well,' there are no medals. They just say, 'Do more.' It's never enough. They never say, 'Let her rest a little. Seher

Being employed in such a work regime turns out to be a mental and physical endurance test in which women have to succeed if they want to keep their job. Coping with the regime is composed of diverse strategies developed by the women. As the regime is primarily based on the workers' performance, the strategies developed — through forms of consent and resistance — are generally ways to cope with the regime in the women's favor. While the strategies of consent refer to developing a work ethic in line with the performance system, being a good worker and getting along with the managers, the strategies of resistance are composed of developing a sense of humor and solidarity, as well as creative solutions against the endless push for speed.

The strategies of consent mainly refer to a work ethic through which the features of a good and decent worker at the *Greenhouse* are defined. Naturally, the notion of "good worker exists" with its opposite, i.e. "bad worker". A bad worker is considered to be someone who lacks good character, i.e. who is lazy, dishonest,

²⁰⁷ The general secretary of Çiftçi-Sen (Union of Farmers) says that the tobacco producers in the Bakırçay Basin have no tradition of organization and TEKEL is always considered as a guarantee. When rural workers start working in the mines, they enter an unknown area. They also do not know about unionization. They consider the union as an official institution of the state, and they do what the Union requires them to do. They cannot oppose anything. According to the general secretary, the lack of a tradition of unionization and the fact that the workers are not able to fully comprehend the process of which they are part play an important role in their present situation. <https://birartibir.org/ekoloji/164-mucadeleleri-birlestirme-stratejisi> (last visited 28.10.2018)

careless, irresponsible, undisciplined and slipshod: “This is a place with strict discipline, nothing is said to those who do their work, but some of them either don’t work well or don’t have the right character.” Apart from having manual skills, a good worker also has to have social skills that facilitate her working harmoniously in a crowded workplace. Women say that they spend much more time together in the units, compared to time spent at home. According to the women, after being warned once or twice, “aggressive or quarrelsome” women are fired.

The good workers also criticize the “bad” ones for being incompatible with the rules of the *Greenhouse*. For instance, a worker who, despite knowing that the break is only for 15 minutes and that there are a limited number of toilets and long queues,²⁰⁸ goes to the toilet at the last minute may be considered a bad worker. As might a worker who knows that the greenhouse work, by its nature, requires adroitness, yet still does it very slowly. Good workers are those who pay attention to and internalize the values of the *Company* and rules of the workplace. The women complain about the bad workers since they think that because of them, all the workers are exposed to the anger of the managers, regardless of whether or not they have made any mistakes at work. Being a bad worker also legitimizes mobbing. In this sense, bad workers “deserve” to be “pushed”, i.e. “motivated” by the engineers since they lack the ability to be a good worker who fulfills the tasks on her own. A good worker knows her job well, and is fast, disciplined and dexterous at the same time. She fulfills her duty

²⁰⁸ Both the number of the toilets provided to the workers and the basic hygiene rules at those spots are not satisfactory. Due to the few numbers of the toilets, women tell that they always have to wait in long ques. However, as two breaks out of three are only 15 minutes at the *Greenhouse*, women mostly skip their turn at the toilets and have to turn back to the work. That also means not being full as they wait for the toilets during the break: “You go to the toilet; you have to queue. Are you full [from breakfast]? Of course not. You eat what you can.” Some of the toilets are out of use because of the congested bowls. I also observed that those not being cleaned for couple of days made the ques naturally longer than the usual. Not running water is another hygiene problem, which becomes very critical during the summer times. I also saw that women kept using those toilets without water as they did not have any other choice.

at the *Greenhouse* with no need for any warnings. As a result, no engineer shouts at or humiliates her:

There are good workers and bad workers. Don't make mistakes and you're fine. Once he caught me talking on the phone and yelled 'That's not what we pay you for.' The guy's right; now I never talk, I don't even answer calls. Yonca

It is also easy to guess that the good workers who internalize the rules of the *Greenhouse* are not particularly welcomed by the others. Those who adopt the *Greenhouse*'s work ethic do not hesitate to warn the others at work, telling them how to use the scissors or not to forget the cleaning rules. This sometimes generates anger among the others and divides the workers. The good workers' work ethic includes an approval of the order and hierarchy at the *Greenhouse*. Some women say that they "understand" the managers who humiliate, shout and devalue the workers since they are required to keep order at the *Greenhouse*, i.e. they have to do their job. In particular, the fact that the engineers are also under the command of their superiors seems to in some ways make them equal to the workers in the eyes of the women:

She didn't put it in the solution, the boss fired her. He said, 'This place employs so many people. Are you happy to be responsible for everyone losing their job? Why didn't you use the solution?' And he's right too. [...] The engineers might [have to] shout sometimes, after all we answer to them, and they answer to people higher up. Semiha

In order to better understand the reasons behind the anger of the engineers, we need a brief overview of their socio-economic profile, their own working conditions and perceptions of the workers at the *Greenhouse*. First of all, it is important to mention that during the fieldwork I limited my research to couple of greenhouse units during the fieldwork, and I am therefore not familiar with all of the engineers employed at the *Greenhouse*. While there is only one male engineer, Akın, the four others, Nurhayat, Hatice, Güniz and Hande, are female. They are young, aged around 25, making a gap of one or two generations between them and the women. They are mostly graduates of the Faculty of

Agriculture in small-city universities. While four of them completed a four-year education program, only Hatice graduated from a two-year program. Except for Hatice, the other engineers come from urban cities such as Izmir or Muğla. Hatice's family migrated from rural Mardin, a city located in Southeast Anatolia. Her father was killed while working as a *korucu*²⁰⁹ and after this her mother — who only speaks Kurdish — had to leave the area with her six children. As Hatice told me, her life has been full of challenges and struggles against the poor conditions with which she was surrounded.

For the majority, the *Greenhouse* is their first job. However, even during my fieldwork, the engineers were frequently replaced as they left the job to seek better opportunities. Three of the engineers that I knew left the *Greenhouse*. The primary reason behind this is the difficult working conditions at the Greenhouse, despite the previously mentioned privileges afforded to the engineers. They also find their wages low. For example, when Nurhayat started working there in 2010, she received 600 TL, approximately equivalent to the minimum wage, which was 729 TL gross in the first half of the year, and 760 TL in the second half. This works out to 576 and 599 TL net respectively. Nurhayat told me that wages are better now, yet preferred not to give me the exact figure. From my conversations with other engineers, I estimate that their wages at the *Greenhouse* are still a little higher than the minimum wage. As such, we can see that their purchasing power is limited; four of them use the shuttle to commute to work and live in rented accommodation. While Güniz has a car she always leaves her car at the entrance, since only the head engineer's car is allowed near the gates of the greenhouse units. From the *Greenhouse* gates, the engineers walk the rest of the way to the units with the workers.

The engineers are critical not only the wages, but also of the working regime. For example, Akın complains of working continuously in a closed unit full of

²⁰⁹ Village guards recruited mainly from local people by the state in the war against the guerilla forces.

nitrogen. He says that the low level of oxygen is problematic, and as well as respiratory issues, he says it has changed the pH level of his skin, which he demonstrated by showing me his acne. The engineers also criticize the production process, with one saying, “They skimp on materials, what kind of Muslims are they? I don’t believe this production is profitable, half of it is from state grants. Everyone knows that.” He alludes that the source of the other half is not known.

Like the workers, the engineers also suffer from stress due to the rigid hierarchy at work. They are all responsible to the head engineer, and as such any mistakes may not be welcomed by their superiors. I did not come across any examples of “exiled engineers” at the *Greenhouse* during the fieldwork yet such cases were mentioned by the women. Some of the engineers try not to be as cruel as expected by the management. Akin, for example, played the role of go-between in the case of Bedia, who was suddenly fired one day. He tried to calm her calm down and spoke to the head engineer to try to solve the problem between them, but without success.

It is for this reason that Akin is one of the women’s favorite engineers, they love him because he uses the correct form of address when speaking to them and, at least for the most part, does not shout at or humiliate them he does not call them by their first names. Hatice, on the other hand, is the opposite and known as being the toughest engineer at the *Greenhouse*. According to the women, she is the one who shouts at and humiliates them the most. She has especially been tougher on those younger than her and the students. I know that Yağmur (a 19-year-old university student), who works at the *Greenhouse* as a *hasatçı* — mostly under the command of Hatice — during the summer season. The night I spent at her home, she kept saying, “Let’s sleep, I get so tired all day long, Ceren”. She lost 8 kilos in just two months.

Ironically, the engineers also compare their conditions with the workers. According to Akın, the workers of the *Greenhouse* who live in rural areas have better economic conditions than those living in urban areas, including himself. He says almost all of them have their own houses, and therefore very few of them have to pay rent, as he does. He believes that they also have other property, such as fields or cars: “They’re working here as they want more money. I wouldn’t work at all if I were them.” As an example, he points to Adem, who not only has a house and field in the village but is also in receipt of a retirement pension. Despite this, he continues working and recently even bought a new house in Buca, Izmir. Akın expresses his dislike for the working regime at the *Greenhouse*, saying that the competition in the workplace makes everybody double faced: “They smile to your face but rat on you behind your back. Everyone rats to Nizam [the head engineer].” Nevertheless, it is interesting that the position of proletarianized small producer in rural areas is considered more advantageous, compared than his own position as a white-collar employee at the *Greenhouse*. Even though the fields, olive groves or animals are unprofitable, it is still thought that they shelter these households from deep poverty, while the engineers, who lack such opportunities, are seen to be in a more fragile position.

To sum up, I believe that the lower wages, rigid hierarchy, difficult and unhealthy working conditions combined with feelings of stress, disappointment and insecurity could be seen as strong reasons behind the anger of the engineers towards the workers. To a certain extent, this is also the case for the head engineer. Privileged in many aspects, he is one among the people with the highest level of responsibility at the *Greenhouse* people. He is expected to reach the production rates and numbers mentioned in the production plans; he determines the doses for the chemicals used to fight pests or to feed the plants. Yet, ironically, even he has very little independence over his work there. Once, because of the high temperatures, the *Greenhouse* production did not proceed as expected. Production was started at an earlier stage in the year yet the summer heat unbalanced the bees and facilitated the reproduction of pests. When the head

engineer blamed the production plan for the loss of hundreds of plants, I was very surprised, since I had assumed, he was the person in charge of all the details of production at the *Greenhouse*. However, he told me that the production was planned by a consultant who provides this service not only to the *Greenhouse* but also to the other large-scale businesses.

When it comes to the perception of the workers, some of them appreciate the management as it employs those in a vulnerable situation, i.e. the disabled, the divorced or the poor.²¹⁰ As the women state, even those who do not work properly are allowed to continue their job at the *Greenhouse*. In this sense, they consider the *Company* as charitable and benevolent so much so that the most salient violations of the workers' rights are absolved.

It's a very charitable company. There's someone with a prosthetic leg, can't walk properly, and they give her work. They take care of people who are disadvantaged. [...] People were saying they don't give child support, they wanted to complain. But how is the boss to blame? How is he to know who has social security and who doesn't, who gets child support and who doesn't?

This viewpoint is also in accordance with the *Company's* discourse. It is frequently stated that in spite of not making much profit, the primary aim of the *Company* is to employ local people in need: "They provide people's bread and butter. They don't want to leave people in need in a difficult situation. X [the founder of the company] said, 'I came here to provide people with employment'." I encountered such expressions that underlined the benevolence of such companies as though their motivation was not driven by profit. Another export-oriented greenhouse company owner (Tomato-Land) once told me that they predominantly employ women for two reasons: They are good workers and it is their "*social responsibility*" since the women are "vulnerable". "The labor force is mostly made up of poor women and girls looking for extra income. Also,

²¹⁰ I should state that I did not see any disabled people working at the *Greenhouse* during my stay. On the other hand, women in vulnerable situations (poor, divorced, in debt, etc.) were numerous.

we employ those who have serious problems at home: alcoholic or unemployed husbands, family issues. Another common category is widows.” Likewise, according to the findings of Gündüz Hoşgör and Suzuki (2018a, 2018b), the female labor force at a sea-snail processing factory in the Western Black Sea Region is predominantly composed of widows living alone. The labor force preferred by the companies is particularly disadvantaged, trapped at home with limited job opportunities in the rural labor market. In other words, different strategies are applied to exploit the vulnerabilities of the respective work forces. As Pedreño et. al. argue, “The vulnerability of these segments of the labor force is related to their unequal position in the social structure, a position that depends not only on labor but primarily on gender (women) and citizenship (immigrants) inequalities” (2014: 201). When it comes to the women workers at one tortilla-producing hacienda, the managers point out that they liked hiring migrant workers with no family or fewer family ties from the interior (of Mexico) since “they are less likely to know their rights” and “they know less, so they complain less” (Muñoz, 2008: 100). Having been displaced from their lands in rural areas, the women have been obliged to move to the border regions to find work. They form the half of the workforce employed in tortilla production.

The strategies of resistance adopted by the women at the *Greenhouse* do not include direct challenge to the authorities, i.e. strikes or slowdowns, but are generally indirect ways to oppose the system. The managers are well aware of the fact that a permanent increase in performance is impossible, yet they still do not hesitate to push the workers to do so. At this point, the strategies of resistance lay the groundwork for reconciliation, that is between the fantasies of the managers and the physical and psychological capacities of the women, as Saadet says, “They always want more, but you can’t always do what they say.”

Not answering back and being silent when insulted or basically to pretend not to hear are the most common strategies adopted by the women. As described earlier, Bedia was fired during my fieldwork. Nizam, the head engineer shouted

at her “I gave you many opportunities, but it’s over. Go terminate your contract at HR!” The women told me that her biggest mistake was to answer back, since “There’s one thing he hates: Answering back, stubbornness.” Rather than keeping silent, she shouted back at him to defend herself. However, according to the women it is better to ignore his words and keep quiet, “Because only God knows why he is angry!” If you stay silent, say the women, he will eventually calm down. He will often even approach the worker in question to ask how things are going as though nothing had happened. Many of the women say they regularly pretend not to hear the insults and humiliations, otherwise, it would be impossible for them to continue working there. Although this strategy is discussed under the title of resistance, I am also aware of its submissive tone. It naturally does not mean women do not get upset during those moments; many times, they told me how they cried and felt humiliated and depressed after such incidents. One interviewee even told me that she was subject to very systematic verbal rebukes and constant bullying by the engineer: “I’d come to the greenhouse, I was dying [of exhaustion]. She’d say, ‘Can’t you cope with this, Elmas?’” After a while, the engineer appreciated her patient silence, otherwise she would have fired her. Yet it is also seen that the women do not internalize what is said to them and try to ignore as much as possible. The women of the hacienda mentioned above developed a similar strategy to cope with a hypersexualized workplace and the constant threat of losing their job: “The women [...] felt it necessary to tolerate managerial harassment and try not to show too many negative facial expressions for fear of losing their jobs”, even though “their faces appeared angry, upset, or simply annoyed” (Muñoz, 2008: 109). She adds that there are also women workers who constantly try to attract managerial attention with makeup, flirtatious games or body language in order to secure their jobs. These women feel forced to compete with each other through productivity performances or by playing flirtatious games. However, women also act in solidarity, and the women at the hacienda mention the importance of having a community of friends at work: “Here at least I have friends. The women have similar experiences and so we bond” (2008: 113).

However, it is also necessary to point out that such a strategy does not mean the total silence of the women, and there are exceptional cases to the mainstream code of conduct summarized above. Some women seem to “answer back” under certain conditions. Sabriye once told her friends out loud “I learned how to lie in this greenhouse!” during a break since she was forced to lie to the labor inspectors who had come to the *Greenhouse* to check the working conditions, saying that she was supplied with a security belt while working at the top of the greenhouse units. Even though what she said was heard by the engineers sitting close by, nobody said anything to her. Likewise, when she had a funeral, Elmas asked for leave. Although the funeral was far away, she was only granted one day off. Elmas cried and refused to accept the decision yet nothing changed; indeed, her reaction frustrated the engineer even more, and she ended up shouting at her, “Why are you crying? You are so ungrateful!” Elmas told me that she then said out loud that she was not grateful and was simply demanding her rights as a worker, and she was sure that the engineer heard her. Examples such as these show that women can sometimes raise their voices, yet this occurs only under exceptional circumstances in which they think they are safe enough. Even though very limited, the pride in the voices of women while talking to me should still be stressed. The women believe that challenging the ultimate authority of the managers is a very brave act at the *Greenhouse* given the conditions they are under.

Women also try to create a “collective speed”, in other words watching each other to match working speeds so that the slowest worker does not attract the attention, and wrath, of the managers. One interviewee says they warn each other with body gestures or eye contact at the end of the row if the managers are around. They think that if they all start the next row at the same time, nobody will be labeled “slow” or “fast”. This is even more common among women from the same village or who know each other well. For example, the women from Karcalı Village told me that they wait for each other and make eye contact in order to start the next row together. As a result, they all have a “normal”

speed.²¹¹

Slowing down the work speed is another strategy through which, the women protect the slower workers from the fast ones and also protect themselves. If a work finishes her rows quickly, the next day she is required to exceed her own limits. Therefore, not fulfilling her own potential prevents her from becoming exhausted. The strategy of “Never work too much, even if you are able to” advises women to work slowly but constantly, giving you the image of being a hard worker who never takes a break in the eyes of the managers.

Don't try to get lots done. Do 12 [rows] and that's it. Don't kill yourself, work slowly. Don't stop, but work slowly and steadily. Adile

Make it look like you're working. Make them say, 'She's never idle. She works well.' I worked myself into the ground, but now I've learned. We all get paid the same, no matter how hard we work. Servet

When necessary, women do not tell the truth as a strategy of resistance. This is generally seen when the managers are around to observe and evaluate their performances. Meliha says that once Nizam, the head engineer, was watching her with an unpleasant expression, and later asked the reason for her underperformance. She improvised and told him that she suffers from panic attacks, even though it had not been medically diagnosed. She said that when someone watches her while working, she gets terrified and panics, and this was enough to convince him on that occasion. Likewise, when the manager who wanted Bingül to start working as an *eleman*, she said to him that she suffered from acrophobia, an extreme fear of heights, even though this was not true, and that she could not, therefore, work on the harvest carts at such height. Bingül

²¹¹ Such a system bears similarity to one that is analyzed by Gündüz Hoşgör and Suzuki (2016). One of the two sea-snail processing factories studied employs rural women on a piece rate, i.e. based on the amount of sea-snails they clean. This not only creates competition among the women, but also makes them feel stressed. In the second factory, on the other hand, the women work collectively in groups and are paid at a daily rate. The authors say that the latter system protects vulnerable workers (the elderly, sick or unexperienced) and is considered to be a better way of working. The women were even able to bargain collectively for a raise in their wages.

believes that thinks that even though the position of *eleman* has a good reputation, such workers are forced to work more. Merve tells a similar story of bending the truth as a form of “resistance”:

Whatever [the engineer] says, don't get into a fight. Don't raise your voice. Don't lose control. Agree to the rules. And then go back to doing what you were doing. The engineer knows I smoke. If I say I'm going for cigarette she won't let me, so I say I need the toilet. She knows I'm smoking, but I get permission. Sometimes she smells my breath, so I even spray perfume in my mouth.

It is not always possible to see who is working in which row to evaluate her performance. When out of sight, the managers tend to ask the workers in adjacent rows the identity of those who are underperforming. In this case, women generally feign ignorance:

They always ask who came out of the row next to you, we never know. I say, 'I don't know, I didn't notice.' I mean, how can I tell them? I work with her every day, sit down with her to eat and drink. So no one ever knows who worked the next row. Nadide

Humor is a significant strategy developed by the workers to handle and challenge the conditions in which they work, and making fun of the managers offers some much-needed respite. As Devrim states, “It is difficult to work under stressful conditions. So people make fun of everything, like something the engineer or head engineer said. They keep repeating the sentence to each other. It somehow makes them happy and cheerful.” Similarly, losing weight because of the heat inside is another common joke among the women, who say they do not work for money, but just to keep fit. The *Greenhouse* is their diet, they say.

I also frequently came across several jokes, teasing and imitations that help the women get over the unpleasant memories of the verbal rebukes, mistreatment, humiliation, insults and shouting. The head engineer in particular is the first person for the women to joke about. His voice, way of talking, body gestures and facial expressions are imitated by the women as a form of stress relief. The

women particularly laugh at imitations of him shouting at the workers. Sometimes the women dare to make fun of him in front of the others. They told me that one day they were constantly warned to speed up; in the end Naciye could not stand it anymore and answered back: “What more can we do. Come put an engine on us!” Since all of the women working there found her response so funny, Nizam, the head engineer, could find nothing else to say among the laughter. Likewise, Elmas told me that she once replied to the engineer with the same words he had previously used to insult her. She used these words in a different context and order, yet everybody still understood that she was making fun of him. In addition, the women make fun of the engineers who still do not know who is assigned to which task in the unit. For example, when the engineer asks a *dolamacı* to do the work of *budamacı*, it is the cause of great amusement among the women.

It is, however, safe to say that such moments are relatively limited. Women looking for some entertainment have to invent other ways, as Halime and her friends did in the packaging department, where laughing, talking to each other and even chewing gum is strictly forbidden:

Time just doesn't pass. If you work next to someone you like, you don't notice the time passing. The engineer was always looking at us. How long can a person stay quiet? So, for example, my friend would say something funny and then we'd hide under the assembly line and laugh. We'd throw tomatoes at each other under the assembly line. Halime

Likewise, I listened to the story of a young woman who used to chew gum under the assembly line, again in the same department. This woman said that the noise in the packaging department makes you sleepy yet you are not supposed to move while working: “I chew gum. I bend down and blow bubbles [behind the assembly line] without letting them see.” This is one a popular story that women tell each other to create some fun within the boring working conditions at the *Greenhouse*.

It is clear that the labor regime at the *Greenhouse* creates competition, conflict and individualism. Therefore, the women say that they try hard to get in the managers' good books to leave the others behind. Even so, there is still a sense of solidarity, which is the final strategy developed among the women to deal with the performance-oriented regime. Such solidarity takes many forms; it can, for example, be seen in the moral support in the form of a warm welcome to a newcomer who is already terrified by the work atmosphere:

They'd say to me, 'Forget about [the insults]. Look, you're strong; hold on in there. Without that I couldn't bear it. I had some very hard times. Elmas

The first day I was really scared. It was a job I'd never done, didn't know how to do. I didn't think I'd be able to do it. I felt completely alone, but they were really welcoming. Ümmühan

Women reinforce their solidarity by helping each other to finish the assigned work when working next to each other (however, this is generally not the case so that the women do not talk to each other while working). Although "helping each other" is strictly forbidden, women do so in a hidden way. It is also common for one of the women to be assigned as a lookout while doing something forbidden at the unit. She watches the engineer and if s/he comes closer she warns the others who are helping or talking to each other at that moment.

We looked out for each other. We always helped each other. When one of us couldn't finish, we'd go and do her row. The engineer got mad if we helped. We weren't allowed to help. But sometimes it'd drive us crazy. We didn't listen to him. Otherwise the work wouldn't get done, how could it? Even in secret, even if it was forbidden, we'd help.

To conclude, whether it is consent- or resistance-based strategy, women try to cope with the work regime at the *Greenhouse*. Not having collective power to challenge the authorities also leads women to develop these strategies in question. As a result, women face the difficult conditions at the *Greenhouse* mostly through personal solutions, and occasionally as a group composed of close friends or women of the same village.

4.6. Conclusion

This chapter discussed the experience of working at the Greenhouse with specific reference to the gender labor regime, starting with the particular characteristics of the regime in which the performance system appears as a general principle. While this system controls and disciplines the women, it also creates rigid hierarchies where the working atmosphere is marked by divisions between workers and managers. With differing job definitions, *eleman* and *hasatçı* workers are also treated different by the management. Hard-working *hasatçı* women can be promoted to the more secure and stable position of *eleman*, whose conditions are more privileged in the eyes of the women. Likewise, being a fast or slow worker is another categorization made by the managers. Rigid hierarchies at work function as a tool to divide the workers, who are pitted against each other to fulfill the criteria of performance system. In this sense, one cannot neglect the issue of competition among the women at the *Greenhouse*.²¹²

In spite of the differences between the positions of *eleman* and *hasatçı* women, they are still subject to mobbing as a significant management strategy. It is safe to say that managerial control, crystalized in the authority of the engineers, head engineer and manager, has never shied away from enforcing the disciplinary policies. Mobbing at the *Greenhouse* comes in the form of shouting, humiliation, threats, verbal rebukes and mistreatment, and result in the devaluation of the women. In this sense, as well as feelings of stress, disappointment and frustration, the socio-economic profile of the engineers, who are active agents in

²¹² Competition at work could become more complex when differences of “race” and “age” become important parameters in the eyes of the managers. Even though what constitutes the racial differences at Hacienda BC are, according to Muñoz (2008), complicated by class status and education, the workplace is still racialized: lighter- and darker-skinned women are pitted against each other by the managers. While lighter-skinned and younger women get more attention, older and darker-skinned women are ignored. Like the performance system at the *Greenhouse*, this is also a divisive practice that results in the destruction of a common bond among the women workers.

the mobbing, and the working conditions in which they are under constant pressure from their superiors, could give clues to the reasons behind their anger.

Flexibility in diverse forms also characterizes work at the *Greenhouse* work. In some cases, women even use it for their personal benefit, but most of the time, it equates to job insecurity because dismissal at the *Greenhouse* could be quite unexpected and be carried out informally. The greenhouse production is a constant and continues throughout the year. Nevertheless, there are certain “high seasons” that require more workers than usual to be recruited for the heavier and extended working days. Not to interrupt the flow of the production, the *Greenhouse* has to guarantee the sustainability of the workforce. For this very reason, women using the flexibility for their own benefit equate to an “undesirable level of uncertainty” for the managers (Pedreño et. al, 2014). Women who have children are one example of this, according to the managers of the *Greenhouse*. This is another reason behind the diverse forms of mobbing to discipline and control the workforce. As such, the selection of women from socially vulnerable groups makes sense, since they wish to keep their jobs at the *Greenhouse* at all costs. As women need the *Greenhouse* work, they have to consent to the regime in question, through which “the costs of flexibility are passed on to the precarious workforce” (Dey de Prick & Termine, 2014: 350).

Although the working conditions cause stress and anxiety among the women, they still have coping strategies — i.e. consent and resistance strategies — through which they handle the regime in question. Competing for managerial attention, the women pit themselves against each other, resulting in the categorization of “good” and “bad” workers. However, solidarity also sprouts in the forms of applying a “collective speed” for the sake of slower workers, humor, or deliberate silence to protect another woman in the performance evaluation.

The neglected infrastructure also shapes the experience of women at the *Greenhouse*. The insufficient infrastructure for a decent working life is characterized by limited recreational areas, few water units, poor quality food and recently privatized shuttle service for some routes. As Caro and de la Cruz (2004) state, despite the legal obligation to provide basic sanitary services (e.g. potable water, toilets, lunch spaces) to workers, many workplaces do not do so. In this sense, the *Greenhouse* is no exception.

In accordance with that, it is not surprising that work safety is mostly ignored, often resulting in “accidents”. Precautions are not taken for those working at heights or in extreme heat. The same is true for the use of chemicals, and the intense use of pesticides and bleach at the *Greenhouse* has detrimental effects on the women’s health. There is no doubt that negligence of workplace safety creates occupational diseases in the form of acute and chronic health problems. However, the *Company* deal with work safety by forcing the workers to lie when labor inspectors visit and by keeping non-insured workers away from dangerous tasks at the *Greenhouse*.

The rights of women are also not respected at work. Breaks and leave, controlled by the ultimate authority of the engineers, are given arbitrarily and the women’s rights in this area are often violated. The issue of social security seems to have only recently been standardized, meaning that many women worked for such a long time without insurance.²¹³ However, there are still cases where the *Greenhouse* employs uninsured child labor, temporary workers or student workers. In addition, there is a unique payment system, in which workers are paid on the basis of a daily rate, behind the façade of minimum wage. According

²¹³ Similarly, the women dealing with cleaning and sorting the seafood at a processing factory in the Western Black Sea Region are employed without a contract and therefore not insured (Gündüz Hoşgör & Suzuki, 2016). However, workers from other departments, whom are mostly men, have contracts and social security.

to an unwritten rule, if a woman takes an additional day of leave for whatever reason the daily rate for five days is cut from her wage. The arbitrariness and violations that characterize the basic workers' rights at the *Greenhouse* seems to thrive on the lack of unionization of the workers.

To sum up, the working realities of the *Greenhouse* consists of adverse working conditions that could be summarized as “(...) flexibility of employment, (long) working hours, payment system (low-paid), limited formal specialization, feminization of work, devaluation of skills, gender segregation, high labor risks” (Pedreño et. al, 2014: 205).²¹⁴ In order to achieve such conditions, the *Greenhouse* workforce is gathered from socially vulnerable groups of women. The women there come from indebted, poor households in which they are

²¹⁴ In this sense, the gender labor regime of the *Greenhouse* sets a different example to that of the Bey Fide Greenhouse. Established in 2010, the Bey Fide Greenhouse in Beypazarı, Ankara had grown to 220 hectares by 2013. While lettuce, cauliflower, broccoli and cabbage are produced over the winter, during the spring-summer period various kinds of vegetables are produced. As stated on their website, the Bey Fide Greenhouse meets the needs of the Presidential Palace of Recep Tayyip Erdogan (for further information see <http://beyfide.com>, last visited 13.05.2019). Atasoy explains the labor-force segmentation in agriculture through which locals and migrants are employed under different labor regimes. While a paternalistic labor regime is in place for the Kurdish migrant workers, the “gendered labor regime” characterizes a more “public, state-approved form of human resource management,” that is also identified as a “public form of paternalism” (2017: 198). Atasoy mentions three main areas that differ from the paternalistic labor regime of the Kurdish migrants: (I) The greenhouses do not employ migrant workers but only locals, (II) the formal employment of the locals adds a “gender twist” to the horizontal trust and vertical paternalism in labor relations. As the Kurdish migrants are paid as a family laboring unit, the employment of local labor is gendered, in which (III) the local workers are seen as individual wage laborers. According to Atasoy, these workers are formally employed with social security and paid according to wage schemes approved by the government (2017: 198). She further argues that this system applies to workers and owners alike. On the basis of her interviews, it was stated that there is a “beautiful work environment” with good infrastructure (modern toilets, lavatories, a changing room, nice kitchen and dining room, as well as a small mosque). The food and tea are good and free of charge. The shuttle collects the workers and drop them off at their homes, no one is subjected to the “whimsical demands of a middleman as always happens in open-field work.” When the workers get sick, they are taken to the hospital without the sick days being deducted from their wages. The interviewee even said, “What else could we ask for?” The working conditions are pro-labor to the extent that “if the greenhouses get too hot and stifling, the workers can have a rest in the dining room” (2017: 204-205). The only criticism comes from the cook and is related to the low wages. In other words, it seems that, in the narratives of the workers, the work environment is idealized without criticism. However, one of the interviewees who had been working there for four years, stated that she has only had social security for two years. Why she worked two years without social security is not explained, but raises questions regarding the formality of the employment.

usually the primary income earners. That shows similarity to other examples of agro-export businesses in which the workforce is composed of politically and socially vulnerable groups of migrants, women or locals (Pedreño et. al, 2014, Dey de Prick and Termine, 2014, Appendini, 2002 in Razavi). Various authors argue that workers in the Global South are hired to work in agro-export businesses on a part-time, seasonal, temporary, contract basis where wages and benefits are relatively low. It is also mentioned that flexible forms of workforce go hand in hand with an increase in women's participation in the labor force as "employers turn to women to satisfy their need for large numbers of low-cost, disciplined and so-called unskilled employees (Bain, 2010: 343). The findings of two studies from Turkey also reveal a similar dominance of women in such fields. The workers of the sea-snail processing factory in the Western Black Sea Region are mainly women (Gündüz Hoşgör and Suzuki, 2016, 2017, 2018a and 2018b). In addition, 50 of 70 workers at the Bey Fide *Greenhouse* — where they grow, package and transport produce to Central Anatolia — are women (Atasoy, 2017).

Employment in non-traditional agricultural exports industries, such as flowers, horticulture, livestock (chickens) and fish/seafood, is also globally on the rise, and the workforce here too is predominantly composed of women. For example, most of the workers who pack "French" green beans for export at the packing house located at Ouagadougou International Airport in Burkina Faso are young women (Freidberg, 2004). The same is true for the tomato agro-industry of Senegal, where female employment has been on rise since 1999. Of the women there, 90% had never previously worked outside the household farm before (Dey de Pryck & Termine, 2014). The same pattern can also be seen in the South African fruit industry, Kenyan flower industry and Zambian vegetable industry, where workers are mostly women who work on a temporary and casual basis (Barrientos, 2007; Deere, 2005, 2009; Dolan and Sorby, 2003; Elson, 1999; Jarvis and Vera-Toscano, 2004; Standing, 1999). Dolan (2005) argues that there are 50,000 wage workers in the Kenyan fresh produce industry, the majority of

whom are women. According to Pedreño et al. (2014), by 2001, 75% of all the workers at a packing house in Murcia, Spain were women; 60% of them were aged between 21-40 and all of them were local. The authors underline the replacement of local women with immigrant women since the beginning of the decade, as a result of rising immigration. The immigrant women come from Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe. In Baja California, Mexico, Hacienda BC employs a disproportionate number of rural women in their tortilla factory. Of the 140 workers, 72% are women and only 28% men (Muñoz, 2008). Similarly, in Chile, rural women participate in wage labor to produce kiwi fruit, apples and table grapes that are exported to markets in the Global North (Bee, 2000).

To conclude, the common characteristic of the globalized production of non-traditional agricultural products for export seems to be the recruitment of large numbers of women. The various reasons behind that bring me to the next chapter, which will explore the feminization of the work in the case of the *Greenhouse*.

CHAPTER 5

FEMINIZATION OF WORK: “THE *GREENHOUSE* AS A WOMAN’S JOB”

It is interesting that even though that this specific type of agribusiness (i.e. large-scale and export-oriented greenhouses with non-traditional agricultural production) does not have a deep-rooted history in the Bakırçay Basin, greenhouse work has already been associated with women. In this chapter, I will interrogate why this perception has emerged with reference to the various reasons behind the feminization of work. While the main reason seems to be “woman’s nature”, which is associated with a set of certain skills, attitudes and tendencies, women also underline the various restrictions on their life in rural areas when it comes to dealing with gendered rural labor markets. In addition, work at the *Greenhouse* job with its low level of pay is not seen as suited to men who are considered the primary breadwinners both by men and women.

In addition to women’s own perception of themselves regarding such an association, I will also give place to the politics of the *Company* in the recruitment of female workers, as well as the perspectives of the male workers. To conclude, this part attempts to build up a complete picture of the patriarchal-capitalist construction of greenhouse work as a woman’s job.

5.1. Gender Division of Labor at the Greenhouse

It would be best to begin with an overview of with which tasks and positions are allocated to male or female workers, i.e. the gender division labor at the *Greenhouse*. This gender division of labor is also combined with horizontal and vertical job segregation for the women.

According to Dey de Prick and Termine, “Rural women continue to be disadvantaged by horizontal occupational segregation as they are clustered in fewer sectors and occupations than men in both agricultural and nonagricultural rural employment.” (2014: 348). In this sense, the women of the *Greenhouse* form a case in which almost all of the top managers are male, and the workers predominantly women. The permanent staff — generally males with an official contract — handles the managerial, supervisory, administrative and skilled technical work. Although it is a small cadre, there are also some women engineers in the units and administrative staff in the Human Resources Unit.²¹⁵ On the contrary, when it comes to the agricultural workers, the overwhelming majority is rural women, who have no opportunities to change position within the *Greenhouse*.²¹⁶

When it comes to vertical segregation, women are mainly confined to lower skilled, manual work within the occupational hierarchies at the *Greenhouse*. There are almost no career or promotional opportunities. As a result of the gender division of labor, the tasks assigned to women workers are different from those assigned to men. While women are responsible for deep cleaning of the units and other items (sweeping and mopping the floor of the units, cleaning uniforms, toilets, dishes, etc.) and dealing with the plants and produce (harvesting, weeding, placing and checking the drip canals, cutting the leaves, checking and controlling the number of tomatoes on each bunch, checking sprout development, preparing the perlite, selecting the high-quality products,

²¹⁵ I was told by the HR staff that the establishment of the department was based on the idea of workers telling their problems, complaints or requests to the staff there. It was thought that it would be easier for female workers to tell such feelings and thoughts to “female” staff. For this reason, all of the HR staff (2) during the fieldwork were women. Yet, the department rather functions as a tool to control and discipline the women.

²¹⁶ This can also be observed in Atasoy’s study (2017) conducted at a greenhouse business that produces seedlings. One of the machine operators argue that his work is a skilled one requiring technical knowledge. Yet anyone who meets the needs of the job can do it. However, gender division of labor is “more clearly demarcated among the greenhouse workers” (Atasoy, 2017: 200).

packaging for export, etc.), male workers are assigned duties such as loading the boxes of tomatoes onto the tractors and trucks, driving the vehicles, emptying the heavy garbage bags and operating the machines to disinfecting the plants. In this order of tasks, while men are assigned tasks requiring technical skills or more physical strength, women tend to have manual, repetitive and delicate tasks that need careful handling.

However, the segregation in question can be disrupted under certain conditions. Both women who were employed at the *Greenhouse* during the very first years of the *Company* as well as those who are currently working there say that the division of labor can differ according to the changing needs. For instance, when the harvest is not running to schedule, the head engineer assigns the men to the women's work in order to meet the planned time-scale. Similarly, during summer, the plants grow faster and the leaves and extra fruits on the plants need to be taken off to guarantee bunches of five tomatoes.²¹⁷ As the workload increases, men are also given the task of cutting off the leaves, working together with the women. Nonetheless, the head engineer uses this strategy as a last resort, since he is not at all happy with their efficiency. According to him, this is a "woman's job" and men do not fit its "nature". He complained that he had had to dismiss some of the male workers as they had damaged the bunches.

Women also say that, from time to time, they are assigned to men's work, even though it requires more physical strength than their usual tasks. I was told that they carry the heavy garbage bags out of the units or load the full boxes onto the trucks. Women are also sometimes assigned to work as *yatırmacı* (lifting tall plants and redirecting the direction of their growth by feeding the shoots through previously installed strings), which is known as male job. It is common to see a

²¹⁷ The number of tomatoes on each bunch is critical for the export of the products. Due to the increased standardization of agricultural production, each bunch must have five tomatoes, all of which should be as similar as possible in color, size and smell. The tomatoes that do not meet the criteria are sold on the national market.

female *yatırmacı* in the units working at the top of the harvest cart or complaining in the shuttle bus how hard her day has been, since she works all day as a *yatırmacı*: “I’m so tired. They made me do men’s work all day.”

Tasks requiring technical skills are also segregated on the basis of gender. For example, the task of infestation is primarily a “man’s job”. As men are seen as being good at using machines, during disinfestation they operate the heavy agriculture spray machines that they carry through the rows. The task of disinfestation is also sometimes assigned to women, but they are rarely given the spraying machines, instead using small buckets filled from plastic barrels in the middle of the units.

Another condition that disrupts the gender division of labor at the *Greenhouse* is the male labor shortage.²¹⁸ When there are not enough male workers to deal with the “men’s jobs”, there is a relatively more “neutral” division of labor.²¹⁹ Except for loading the trucks, the rest of the tasks seem to be evenly allocated. Some women were even surprised to hear about the gender division of labor from others, since they had been working in units where very few male workers are employed:

There aren’t many men in our place! That’s why the work isn’t separated. We all do those jobs. There are three men and twenty-five women working there. We take out the trash, carry sacks. They say, treat the men nicely otherwise you’ll be doing their work too! Bedihe

At this point, it is interesting to look back to the previous working regime. In the very first years of the *Greenhouse*, there used to be a different gender division of

²¹⁸ I will explain the reasons behind this shortage in the following pages, where the perception of the male workers towards the *Greenhouse* is analyzed.

²¹⁹ Deere (2005) also argues that although there has been a rooted gender division of labor in the Latin American rural labor market, a study of Nicaraguan cotton, coffee, and tobacco plantations found that occupational segregation by gender was disrupted under conditions of (male) labor shortage.

labor. Long-term workers state that the tasks were allocated differently, for instance, women were asked to carry the heavy sacks of perlite in to the units. Women also used to be employed as *yatırmacı*. In the eyes of the managers, women with a minimum level of physical strength were perfectly suited to working as a *yatırmacı*, something that is now considered a man's job.²²⁰ Yet, in spite of the relative flexibility of the gender division of labor under certain conditions, greenhouse work is first and foremost coded as a woman's job, the reasons for which will be explored in the following section.

5.2. Feminization of Greenhouse Work: “Woman's nature”, Restrictions, and Men as Breadwinners

The most common response to the question of why woman is predominantly employed at the *Greenhouse* is, “Because it is a woman's job.” Almost all of the women that I spoke to, from every ethnic-religious or age group, automatically give that response, as if it was completely natural. The women present a picture of “woman's nature” to explain why this is so. Yet, it is still important to mention that this has never been the only explanation the women give for the domination of the female workers at the *Greenhouse*. They also frequently point to other issues that are as important as woman's nature, i.e. the restricted position of rural women in labor markets, education or mobility, and the powerful ideology of men as breadwinners that devalues greenhouse work for men.

As such, this section attempts to investigate the idea of “nature” that lies behind this perception. I argue that the answer “Because it is a woman's job” can only be a starting point rather than a fixed and de facto answer to understand what constitutes, conditions and defines the process of feminization.

²²⁰ In the past, each working group in the units was composed of eight female workers, four of whom were responsible for both *dolama* and *yatırma*. Now, the number of the female workers in a working group is five and the task of *yatırma* is carried out by men.

5.2.1. “Woman’s nature” as an umbrella concept.

The feminization of work with reference to “woman’s nature” seems to be based on three main spheres: the characteristics of the *Greenhouse* work associated with woman’s nature, the similarity of the job to agricultural work, and finally reproductive tasks. When asked the reason behind the domination of women workers, most underline that the tasks at the *Greenhouse* match well with women’s “innate” capacity to do them. They acknowledge that greenhouse work is a woman’s job since the requirements of the tasks seems to be in accordance with the skills, attitudes and tendencies women “naturally” have. In addition, they underline the importance of women’s previous and current experiences in agricultural production and husbandry as well as their work at home. In this sense, they consider “woman’s nature” as an umbrella concept composed of a certain set of skills, attitudes and tendencies, as well as experiences.

Women say their experiences make them more suitable workers for the *Greenhouse*. When it comes to the woman’s nature associated with greenhouse work, I observed that women refer to their own privileged position, advantages and skills rather than deficiencies or limitations compared to men. It is also seen that “woman’s nature” protects women from being assigned to men’s work that they would rather not do. In this sense, it plays a tactical role that facilitates their working life at the *Greenhouse*.

5.2.1.1. “Woman’s nature” Crystallized in the Work at the *Greenhouse*.

Here we should start with looking at how “woman’s nature” works at the *Greenhouse*. Women say taking care of the plants requires careful handling, a gentle manner and being organized and clean. Women think that they have already those traits and are therefore more suitable to the tasks, which they define as women’s jobs. In this context, the notion of “skill” comes to the fore in the women’s narratives. The majority of them underline women’s nimble fingers

compared to men's. It is argued that women's hands, smaller in size, are more suited to picking the ripe tomatoes without damaging the fragile branches, or to trimming intertwined branches, checking the uniformity of the bunches of tomatoes and removing unnecessary leaves. However, I should mention that even if this may be valid for *some* of the women whose hands are smaller than *some* of the men's, I believe that attributing skills to women's small hands are fictitious, and a fantasy that the patriarchal-capitalist construction of greenhouse work as women's work thrives on. Women have the workers' hands: rough, physically strong, wounded (cut fingers, damaged nails etc.) and stained by the tomato plants. Therefore, it is not the biological difference of having smaller hands, but the gained, practiced and learned manual dexterity that made women more suited to greenhouse work. Otherwise, it would not be possible to explain the better performances of older workers compared to new ones.

However, the women say that it is not only the size of their hands that is more suited to the work, but particularly *the way* they use them. Women see themselves as "skillful" at work and believe that the tasks assigned to them suit them first and foremost, i.e. "scissors suit women's hands". According to the women, they are preferred for such tasks due to their mastery of the scissors, and they say it is hard for them to even imagine a man with a pair of scissors at the *Greenhouse*. Women are not sure that the men can hold scissors properly with their "rough hands", saying that women know the work at the *Greenhouse* the best. In their own words, "women know the science of it", i.e. they have a comprehensive knowledge of the work.

For this reason, women think they are fast, effective and practical. They are able to finish more rows in the units, compared to "idle" men. The men, on the other hand, are slow and inefficient in terms of performance. In addition, their inattentive attitudes cause unacceptable mistakes, such as forgetting to sterilize the scissors each time before touching the tomato plants. However, the women believe that they, as women, have a "natural" tendency towards cleaning and

therefore never make such mistakes. According to the women, when the men do the tasks usually assigned to women, the outcome is generally slapdash and superficial and as such their work needs to be double checked, which slows down the working schedule. Women's labor is not only distinguished by their higher speed, but also by being thorough and painstaking. In this sense, some of the women consider men's work to require nothing but physical strength, while the jobs the women do are even seen as involving an artistic touch.

Women can't lift thirty-kilo sacks. Men are strong. I did it and it left me breathless. There's women's work and then there's men's work — like being a porter. Bingül

The plants are delicate, fragile, frail. Women understand their language. The greenhouse is women's work. You do the cleaning, you do everything. You prepare the seedlings, the clips... There you have it... Halime

Women's perceptions of men's tasks in terms of the physical strength required is sometimes contradictory. Women who carry out male tasks are seen as individuals who are more self-confident, stronger and braver by other women. The positive values as such are ascribed to the tasks, since they are men's work. Correspondingly, some women tend to underestimate their own effort and physical challenges at work. Yet they only do so when asked to compare the physical strength required for the jobs carried out by women and men. For example, working as *yatirmacı* or loading the boxes are considered to be jobs that require more physical strength compared to women's tasks. For this reason, even if the women have to take on those tasks from time to time, they say that they do so carelessly, since they believe in their weaker capacities according to physical power and strength. In this sense, Selma says men carry out the difficult tasks at the *Greenhouse*, while women do "light, simple and easy" jobs. Another woman says that when she lifted 17 boxes of tomatoes, she did not pay attention since it was not "her business". However, even though men's jobs at the *Greenhouse* tend to be associated with physical strength, the women also think that their jobs are easy compared to mining, that another well-known man's job

in the region. The Soma Disaster seems to have created a hierarchy for men's jobs in the women's eyes:

Even the men's work [at the Greenhouse] isn't much for the men, it's easy work [compared to the mines]. In that mine they died like black sheep. The ones in the Greenhouse know the value of their lives. Elmas

At the same time, the majority of women accept the difficulty of their work at the *Greenhouse*. I was told that the male workers were once assigned to women's tasks for a whole day. At the end of the day they said, "Women's work is really hard. It turns out the women were right." According to my observations, women's tasks at the *Greenhouse* are equally as tiring and physically challenging as the men's tasks. Only very few women say that women do the same work as men at the *Greenhouse*, saying that the physical difficulty of the tasks assigned to both women and men is equal. In this way, they stress how vital their labor is to sustain production at the *Greenhouse*:

Men's work is seen as heavy work but it's not really, even we can do it. A strong woman can do it. Normally we do the heaviest work too. If the men load the products onto tractors, we collect them, load them onto trucks. I mean, it's actually women who do most of the work.

How do women perceive the idea of "woman's nature" that is at work at the *Greenhouse* to allocate tasks? They generally do not see the division between women's and men's or the contradictions mentioned above as problematic.²²¹ As summarized above, women believe they are more suited to the tasks assigned to them, and endorse the gender-based division of tasks due to physical differences. Because of these differences, two interviewees thought that men should be paid

²²¹ That does not mean that they have found the organization of work at the Greenhouse is fair and just. They always talked about their complaints, critiques or wishes about the regulations, yet the gender-based allocation of work is not their priority among these. The topics like low wages, long working hours or irregular breaks and leaves primarily occupy their agenda. In addition, women come from the fields where are clearly demarcated according to gender. The others with experience in off-farm jobs also worked through such gendered differences (For example, cleaning, care or home-based work primarily for the women). These help to normalize the division of labor in question.

more than women, since the work they do at the *Greenhouse* is more difficult. Bedihe, on the other hand, believes the opposite is true: “We do more work, so we should get paid more.” As will be detailed in the following pages, almost all of the women say they do not receive a decent level of pay. In addition, many women mention that it would be fair to be paid on the basis of seniority at the workplace, instead of on the basis of gender. This was actually a former *Company* policy but has recently changed.

At the same time, some of the women think that such a gender division of labor works to their advantage as they are not responsible for fulfilling the physically exhausting tasks assigned to the men. In this sense, women define “woman’s nature” in a tactical way. For example, one young woman says that because of her sturdy and strong appearance, she is always assigned men’s work. She is not pleased about that, and says that the engineer always puts pressure on her for this reason.

There are some things we’re not strong enough for. They separated men and women, that’s good. The other day we were cutting and the men were loading it onto the trucks. Filiz also started to load the trucks. ‘Don’t,’ we said. Since the engineer would ask why we weren’t doing it too. And that’s what happened. The engineer said, ‘Do what Filiz is doing’. We said we couldn’t, it was too heavy. Elmas

When it comes to the perception of technical skills, women again seem to see the men as primarily responsible for technical tasks. Women say they cannot fix the machines when they are broken since they have no “experience”. It is therefore better men for the men with the machines, and for many women it is also a relief that they are not expected to do that. Beyond the “technical limitations” of women, some of them think that handling the spraying machines poses a risk to their fertility, and as such the task of infestation should be carried out by men.

To conclude, the association of greenhouse work with women seems to draw its strength from the nature attributed to women — defined by certain skills,

attitudes and tendencies women “innately” have. While defining “woman’s nature”, the women stress the advantages and skills that ensure manual dexterity, careful handling or an artistic touch, rather than having limited physical strength. However, their perception of physical seems to be contradictory, too. While the majority sees strength as a key marker for differentiating women from men — therefore endorsing the gender-based division of labor at the *Greenhouse* — a few women argue that they are also capable of carrying out the men’s tasks. Similarly, the women do not perceive themselves as incapable in terms of technology, yet are aware that the technical knowledge they have is extremely limited. Woman’s nature is also identified as being more hardworking, organized and responsible, which they believe is the one of the reasons behind the domination of women workers at the *Greenhouse*. In addition, as will be seen in the following sections, women refuse other attributed characteristics, i.e. being silent, passive, mild or humble, because they consider those to be the result of their difficult positions in the rural labor markets, rather than their so-called immutable woman’s nature.

5.2.1.2. Similarity to Agricultural Work.

The attributed similarity of the women’s tasks at the *Greenhouse* to their position in agricultural production seems to legitimize the feminization of work. The idea of women being more compatible to greenhouse work is based on certain similarities observed in gendered agricultural work with reference to woman’s nature. A rigid gender division of labor characterizes the agricultural activities in the region. While women working either as the owners or agricultural laborers in the fields, they generally plant the seeds, hoe and weed the soil, and finally harvest the produce.²²² Men, on the other hand, prepare the land for cultivation,

²²² What women are responsible for changes from one agricultural product to another. Due to the gender division of labor in agricultural production, some women’s labor has been mainly used for harvest, as well as for other activities such as hoeing or picking corn. Tomato, pepper and corn harvests are primarily based on women labor, as the cotton and tobacco harvest used to be in the past. The mechanization of agricultural activities has caused some of the women’s tasks to be

regularly irrigate and apply pesticides to it. While women's work has primarily been based on manual labor, it is more likely to be the men who deal with machines, such as tractors, irrigation systems or agricultural sprayers.²²³ Women's disrupted relation with technology has been quite significant in organizing the new gender division of labor. Gülsün says as wheat or corn production is men's work, their wives come to the *Greenhouse* to be employed. Such work is carried out by the men, since they are the ones who drive the tractors, not the women. She says that if the husbands worked at the *Greenhouse* too, they would have to cease agricultural production.²²⁴

In accordance with association of men with the machines in the fields, the men of the *Greenhouse* are also responsible for driving, spraying and disinfecting, as well as maintenance and repair work. Likewise, the jobs women do as agricultural activities are repetitive, manual and non-technical, similar to their

transferred to the men. For example, women would traditionally plant the cotton seeds, regularly hoe the field and harvest the product. However, cotton sowing and/or picking machines have already removed female agricultural laborers from the fields, when the landowners can afford to such machines. Now these tasks are carried out by men driving these machines.

According to the head of the Chamber of Agricultural Engineers in Izmir, breaking off the corn tassels, and weeding among the tomato, pepper and cotton (besides other vegetables) plants are known as "women's work". As such, the workload is divided on the basis of gender, and while women's labor is not considered as a "cost" by men because it is usually unpaid, men's labor is seen as more valuable. Men receive higher pay than women and there is a concept of a "woman's wage" and a "man's wage". When I asked where such a concept may come from, the head of the Chamber of Agricultural Engineers explained, "I suppose it is firstly based on the fact that the man is the one who will supply the bread for the house; that is his duty. Secondly men's work needs more power, seems more difficult, so it is paid more. But it is obvious that women work more, and we can see this if we look at gender in relation to aging in agriculture. There is almost a ten-year difference between the bodies of female and male workers of the same age group."

One of the women agricultural engineers employed in the General Directorate of Provincial Food, Agriculture and Livestock in Kınık expresses the unequal division of labor on the basis of gender as follows: "Men are only responsible for irrigation, so they just turn on the faucet. Yet all the rest is the women's responsibility!"

²²³ As a result, the effects of mechanization on rural women and men were different. While the men were provided with the technical skills and knowledge to deal with the new machines, women were excluded from those areas identified with the men's world (Gündüz Hoşgör, 2011).

²²⁴ In the same way, miners' wives are *Greenhouse* workers because only men work in the mines.

assigned tasks at the *Greenhouse*. Taking care of the plants is the primary duty of the women in agricultural production, as well as at the *Greenhouse*, since they are considered more talented in this area.

Because it's always women who work on plants, there are women in the greenhouses dealing with tomato. Men can't do it as well as women. And so [at the Greenhouse] everyone does the work they know. Selma

Think about agriculture, it's the same there. Women are more suited to agriculture. They told my son to put up supports, but menfolk can't do it. 'I'll do it,' he said and he broke the vine. 'Leave it, leave it!' said the engineer. Gülizar

The established gender division of labor in agriculture seems to be transferred to the *Greenhouse*, insomuch that male workers can refuse when assigned women's tasks: "Why should I pick tomatoes, am I a woman or something?" Likewise, a young woman once criticized the directions of the engineer with reference to the traditional gender roles at the *Greenhouse*. Halime says they made her carry the packages, throw the plants onto the trailer, lay the fiber, carry the empty crates and control the machinery. In the end, she said to herself, "Am I a man or a woman?"

Women appreciate their rural background that helps them deal with the assigned tasks. Most of the women say that those who have experience of agricultural production find the *Greenhouse* job familiar and easier than for those without such experience. They say the fields taught them not only how to deal with the plants, but also tough working conditions, such as harvesting in the open air in hot weather and under the pressure of the middlemen. For this very reason, they are undaunted by physical exhaustion.²²⁵ Nadide says they are never dread of the

²²⁵ Even though local people cope with the hard life in rural areas of Bakırçay Basin, there are still subtle divisions between the ethnic-religious groups, i.e. *millets*. It is interesting that certain labor patterns are associated with certain ethno-religious groups. For example, Sunni women (including the groups of *Manav*, *Yerli* and *Yörük*) say that Alevis (including the groups of *Çepni*, *Tahtacı* and *Türkmen*) have been more used to hardship, compared to themselves. The men of those groups are mostly miners, while the Sunni men, "the ones from the plains", are used to a more comfortable life and therefore do not go to the mines to work. For this very reason, the

Greenhouse work since they have been working in the fields since their very early childhood. In line with that, I have come across only one woman with urban origin during the fieldwork. She says she has never done the agricultural work before in her life till the Greenhouse. The job was quite difficult for her since she has no proper background. I was also told that there used to be many others, i.e. the wives/daughters of police officers or teachers who have no experience of agricultural production. They attempt to survive there yet most of them quit by the first day. However, some of the interviewees do not agree with the similarity of what they do at the Greenhouse to their position in the established gender division of labor at the fields. Those women say that the greenhouse production does not resemble agricultural production, at least the one they know. As a result of the new production techniques and different tomato plants²²⁶ that they are not familiar with, women say that they are always under command of the engineers who tell them what to do. They feel that they are not

Greenhouse work is much more associated with Alevi women than Sunni ones. It is believed that there are more Alevi women workers at the *Greenhouse* than Sunnis. Sunni women say the Alevis always act in solidarity with each other. Having continuously migrated from (mostly mountainous) villages, they settle next to each other in the peripheral neighborhoods of the towns. Yet they have the “best cars and houses”. This implies that Çepni people are richer even though they are from poor mountain villages.

The women of the various groups also mention other markers that draw the “boundaries” between these groups. These are mostly related to hygiene and cleanliness: “You stayed with them; you’ve seen for yourself. Their houses smell, they don’t care about cleaning. For example, after [sexual intercourse] they only wash the parts that got dirty. But actually, you have to wash everywhere. We ask them why they do it like that and they say ‘No other parts got dirty, why should we wash them?’” From time to time, Alevi women underline the discrimination they are exposed to in their work life. They even argue that in the past the *Company* did not like to Alevi people as workers: “They don’t like Alevis, they never used to hire us.” The discrimination they face may also come from other workers: “For example it happens here too. Ümmühan doesn’t really associate with us. And I don’t associate with the ones who don’t like me, the ones who don’t associate with me.” It can be also be seen in daily life between the groups in question. Gönül from Pınarköy once said that she would need a horse for her wedding ceremony. I told her I knew someone who could rent one to her and she asked about where he was from. When she realized it was a Yörük Village, she told me, “They don’t think much of us. They don’t do business with us. [...] Do you know what, there are different sects, we’re Çepnis, Alevis.” There are also further differences within each group itself. For instance, the Alevis of a Çepni group is different from that of a Tahtacı. Although these divisions are important in order to understand contemporary rural Turkey in a more comprehensive way, it is beyond the focus of this study.

²²⁶ Different tomato plants are used for greenhouse and field production.

agricultural producers anymore since they cannot make any decision over the product at the Greenhouse.²²⁷

Our work [farming] has nothing to do with the work there. [...] We can't be farmers; can't do it the way we know. They show you how to do everything. Like a laborer. You can't do the work on your own. Nadide

5.2.1.3. Similarity to Domestic Chores and Care Labor.

Another reason behind the feminization of work is the attributed similarity of women's tasks at the *Greenhouse* to domestic chores done by the women at home. Twice a year, all the plants are taken out of the units to start agricultural production from the beginning with young tomato seedlings. During those times, all the units are entirely cleaned. This task of deep cleaning — sweeping and mopping the floors, the rows and the baby greenhouse units — are highly associated with the cleaning done at homes by women. In addition, cleaning the uniforms, toilets and dishes, etc. are also other significant parts of the cleaning.

Women's tasks at the *Greenhouse* are re-categorized as an extension of the domestic chores at home. As women are “normally” responsible for those chores at home, the task of deep cleaning at the *Greenhouse* for women is the new normal. This also strengthens the gender division of labor at the *Greenhouse*, as in the case of the attributed similarity of women's position in agriculture to their tasks at the *Greenhouse*. Based on this, male workers refuse to do cleaning tasks by referring to the gender stereotype in question.

You can't make the men sweep. They'll say, 'Am I a woman or something?' They won't do it. But because the women do every job, because they can do everything [there are more of them]. Solmaz

²²⁷ How women perceive being workers and agricultural producers will be discussed in Chapter 7, Women and Rural Transformation.

There's more women's work in the Greenhouse. There are more women there. Cleaning work for example. Yonca

Women also indicate that dealing with the plants is like taking care of babies, and/or children. They state that just as a mother cannot leave her baby or child alone at home, the workers cannot stop taking care of the tomato plants, too. These responsibilities are similar to each other in the eyes of women, with both requiring close attention and monitoring. For this reason, the association affects the women's feelings. I observed that women can be compassionate towards the plants as they are while raising a child. Women also seem to be proud of the well-grown, strong and healthy plants, as they are with their grown-up children. I come across women showing me tomato plants that they cultivated in their subsistence gardens. Those plants are relatively small compared to those at the *Greenhouse*, which have been grown with strong chemical fertilizers and pesticides, and are even more loved by the women. Such feelings in question ensures less alienation for some women while working at the *Greenhouse*. Women also think that they have better social skills than men, which is why they should be the ones to take care of the plants.

Women are more polite; they know how to behave towards people. And that's how they are with plants too. When you're tying up a plant you don't pull it towards you, you go towards the plant. You have to hold it gently, make sure you don't damage the stalk or the bunch. Kevser

That brings me to another dynamic that links the women to greenhouse work in terms of domestic chores and care labor: Women's primary identification as housewives. Being involved in small production in rural areas is not generally counted as an occupation, especially when carried out by women. It is also related to the loss of stature of the peasantry in the eyes of rural women. Most of the women tend to devalue animal husbandry and agricultural production, and do not see them as an "occupation".²²⁸ They do not positively identify themselves

²²⁸ These occupations are not valued by the structural policies either. For example, Ertürk (1990) argues that rural women are marginalized as a result of the rural projects aimed at the

with those activities, even though they have been experts in these areas since their early childhood. When women are asked their occupation, they usually respond that they are housewives. They see themselves as unqualified and non-skilled individuals without any occupation, i.e. housewives who are responsible for cleaning and care. In other words, women, whose deep knowledge, intense labor and expertise in agricultural production and husbandry are both ignored by others and themselves, tend to be more easily identified with the cleaning tasks at the *Greenhouse* than men. This seems to be in accordance with the established patriarchal codes that see women responsible for the reproductive labor in the private sphere. It refers to women's "natural" tendency towards care labor and domestic chores. However, according to the women, the restrictions on their lives in rural areas regarding gendered labor markets is as significant as "woman's nature", when it comes to the reasons behind the feminization of work at the *Greenhouse*.

5.2.2. Restrictions on the Lives of Rural Women

Women of the women at the *Greenhouse* mention "the living conditions" that shape and limit their participation to work in the Bakırçay Basin. First and foremost, the lack of education and correspondingly occupational opportunities, are considered as the main reason for women to be stuck in greenhouse work. According to the women, they, as housewives, are uneducated, non-skilled and unqualified in the labor market, who have only very few opportunities to participate in working life.

The best wage a housewife can have is health insurance. You have no profession, no education, what can you do? Merve

modernization of agricultural production. Likewise, Gündüz Hoşgör (2011) mentions that in conjunction with the process of development, rural women are excluded from capitalist production and accumulation in Turkey. The patriarchal ideology also plays a significant role in this. Gündüz Hoşgör argues that rural women have been affected in different ways by the process of the development as they live in diverse rural areas and belong to different social classes.

A woman who's graduated [from university] wouldn't come here. In the Greenhouse it's mostly housewives. There's nothing else they can do, it's either the fields or here. Serpil

The restriction on mobility is another reason behind the domination of women at the *Greenhouse*. For women in rural areas, not only is it important for workplace to be close to where the women live, but there also must be shuttle buses to commute there. Unlike men, who are able to travel around to look for job alternatives, women must think twice about the issue of commuting. While public transportation is very limited and not in accordance with working hours, private means of transportation are costly and inappropriate for women to travel alone. As a result, even if there are some limited job opportunities in the towns, women cannot make access them as they should not travel so far from home. Returning from work late is also not something welcomed for women, meaning they also miss out on employment opportunities based on shift work.

The plastic plate factory on the outskirts of Kınık was going to take on thirty female workers. Three shifts, ten minutes from home. My husband didn't want it. 'A woman shouldn't be coming home at one in the morning,' he said. I would have liked to work there. There's no other work for women. Bedihe

Job opportunities for the women have been quite limited and many interviewees stated that they had no choice but to work at the *Greenhouse*.²²⁹ In addition to working in the fields or as cleaning ladies, the main options available to the women are to work in other greenhouses or at the tomato sauce or pickle factories. Some work as salespeople, while a very limited number of women are employed as welders at a recently opened heavy industrial enterprise that

²²⁹ Mexican rural women employed at the Hacienda BC suffer from similar circumstances that oblige them to work at the tortilla factory. Muñoz states that there are no/limited alternatives for women in the Baja California, and that the positions available in the electronic, garment and automotive "maquiladora" (modern sweatshops) are "booming yet unstable" (2008: 98). Women are also not sure if they will receive their paychecks on time.

produces wind power plants.²³⁰ In addition, there are three young women at the *Greenhouse* working to obtain a firearms license to be able to work as a security guard. However, except for the greenhouses, women are not employed in huge numbers in other workplaces. Only the tomato factory has many women workers but according to the women, its employment conditions are worse than at the *Greenhouse*, while the issue of insurance is problematic there too.

The women themselves may feel hesitant about participating in working life. Having migrated from villages to towns leads to new social obstacles which they have not previously experienced. Not knowing how to find a job, where to ask and/or how to apply in an unfamiliar social environment may make women's participation in paid work more difficult. Except for those who use informal means,²³¹ migrant women — such as Sabriye who migrated from a mountain

²³⁰ These jobs require technical knowledge and working night shifts, key markers of “men's jobs” in the region. One of the women says “There's welding work for women. It's so dusty. Their faces are just like the miners'. The black dust of the iron. The constant noise of the machines, no one can hear anyone else. Shift work. Always sitting down to work. It wasn't for me but the wages were good.” In this sense, one may argue that it has the potential to unsettle gender stereotypes in the rural labor markets. After quitting her job at the *Greenhouse*, Seher started working there as welder, and she told me there were 260 male workers and 40 female workers employed at the plant in 2016. The women were trained by KOSGEB (Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization of Turkey) and the Bergama Municipality. She added that night shifts could be changed for women workers as required. The women at this plant were mostly from villages, especially the villages of Zeytindağ and Yelpınar, Bergama, as well as migrant women who had settled in the city of Bergama. During the olive harvest, Seher also heard that women asked for leave to pick their olives.

²³¹ The variety of networks used to find work at the *Greenhouse* show us that women mostly make use of social and personal ties in the villages. In this sense, female networks, *dayıbaşı* (middleman) or the *Mukhtar* (headman) are the most common of these. The HRU says that having a relative already working at the *Greenhouse* is the most important way for women to be informed if the *Company* needs new workers.

Among the various networks mentioned above, the most significant one is the female networks. Elson (1999) argues that women's increasing labor-market participation can (although not necessarily) lead to expanding female membership in work-related networks. In the *Greenhouse* case, it seems that women's labor-market participation and membership in work-related networks seem to reinforce each other. Women always mention other woman who help, motivate or accompany them at the beginning. They also underline the fact that they help new workers to be recruited.

The “pioneers” of the *Greenhouse* work could be the young men, who are much more mobile compared to rural women in terms of looking for work. Village men who worked either in the

village in Periköy to Bergama — have difficulties, especially in the earlier stages of post-migration:

Most of the women from Bergama are at home. But better to work than be at home, what do you get out of sitting around at home. I was fed up. There was no work. I'd come from the village. I couldn't go to people and say I was looking for work. What work can we do when we come to the city?

When they talk about the limitations of rural labor markets, women frequently use similar expressions, such as that they felt “obliged to work at the *Greenhouse*” or else they would “have to stay at home” or “to be dependent on the temporary jobs at the fields and feel insecure”. As a result, greenhouse work is appreciated as an option for women, with greenhouses in general and the *Greenhouse* in particular forming significant employment hubs in the region. The HRU underlies how attractive the *Company* is, saying they receive at least

construction of the greenhouse units or for the fruit harvest became more informed about work at the *Greenhouse* job, thus paving the way for those that followed:

All the young men, eight or nine of them, were in the greenhouse. In the early 2000s. They heard that they needed women. We told the mukhtar, they were doing a mass hire. That's how we started. Kevser

It is also interesting to note that the well-known pattern that organizes agricultural work, i.e. the *middleman*, has also been applied to work in the greenhouses: “Sister Nezire was the middleman here. They needed workers. We heard about it, she said, ‘Come.’” (Hediye) Even though the workers are employed in a large-scale, modern agricultural company with the latest technology — completely unlike traditional small-scale production — we see that the traditional way of recruiting workers is still in use. This shows similarity to the Chilean case, in which 67% of growers find laborers through the *contratistas* (middlemen) (Bain, 2010).

In the research of Gündüz Hoşgör and Suzuki (2016, 2018b), *mukhtars* in the Western Black Sea Region act as middlemen to find village women to work in the factory where sea snails are processed for export. As the authors argue, *mukhtars* also run the minibuses that run between the villages and the factory.

In sum, it is safe to argue that the working networks of women in rural areas are mostly informal. This seems to correspond with the findings of Das (2006), who argues that women's social capital or networks in South Asia are grounded in communities, not in the market. Das states that it forms a significant entry obstacle to participate in paid work and reduces their bargaining power for fair wages, decent labor conditions, and safety nets. The Hacienda case shows that women who lack social networks more likely to hear about the job through advertisements in local newspapers and flyers: “Looking for women, stable work, well paid.” Family members are not welcomed to work together there as it is thought to lower productivity (Muñoz, 2008). While such community-based networks do not prevent women from participation in paid work at the *Greenhouse*, they are certainly disadvantageous in terms of obtaining fair wages, decent labor conditions and safety nets, such as unions.

three to four applications per day from local people who want to work there. Likewise, the mines in the region triggered a chain of migration from mountain villages. As mentioned earlier, men who had previously migrated to the area to work in the mines learned about the *Greenhouse* and invited the female members of their family to move to Kınık and work at the *Greenhouse*. There are three families within this study who followed the same path, from the village of Deliklitaş in Balıkesir to Kınık. One may also observe the migration to the *Greenhouse* from the plain villages of Bergama. For example, the sister of Hamiyet, who is from the village of Ramizler in Bergama, moved to Bergama after her sister with the desire to work there.

Other greenhouses in the area also form a destination for the rural women. In one of my visits to the village of Mavili, I learned that the women had already started working at another greenhouse. They were collected by a minibus rented by the company to take them to work. Ironically, the driver used to be a middleman²³² with whom I once went to an olive harvest together with the women workers. The minibus picks up 12 women from a few slope villages in Dikili. The women are employed at this greenhouse without insurance there. One of these workers is Ayşe, a 32-year-old mother of two, whom I know personally. She once she complained that all the money she made from tobacco as an unpaid family laborer was spent recklessly by her father. In addition to dealing with tobacco and olive production, she used to sell cosmetics, fashion products and accessories in the villages and was preparing to take the exams to become a civil servant. However, it seems she reorganized her plans for the future. I argue that working at the greenhouses is a rising trend among rural women of the region. The profile of Ayşe also shows how similar the worker profiles are to each other in different greenhouse businesses.

²³² Apart from the greenhouses, I came across also with other cases in which middlemen gathered workers from villages for other companies, such as the tomato paste factories. I observed that these workers were paid on a daily basis, as at the *Greenhouse*.

Another restriction seems to be the urgent need of cash in the households to which the women of the *Greenhouse* belong. Even though the economic welfare of the households varies due to land ownership, (dis)continuity of agricultural production and/or husbandry, other family members' income-earning activities, social safety nets, etc., it is safe to argue that the majority of the households are struggling. Here, I also want to recall the half-joking reaction of one man from the village of Mavili, when he heard that I would be working for a while at the *Greenhouse*: "Are you that poor?!?" Similarly, Elmas says the labor force at the *Greenhouse* is mostly composed of "people with problems, people in financial difficulties" and adds "Would I be here if I didn't have debts to pay? There are very few who are financially stable."²³³ Of the 33 participants, 19 women say that they are paying off debts, either in the form of cash loans or credit repayment.²³⁴ In addition, during the fieldwork, one of the young women was about to take out a loan. The remaining women who did not mention any debts during the interviews belong to households with at least one retired person, other family members who also work in income-generating activities and husbands working at the state mine. Furthermore, I also observed that those with no debts still need regular cash for the sake of the households. For instance, as Devrim's father is in debt, she covers her university expenses through her seasonal work at the *Greenhouse*, while Gülyüz and her two daughters send half of their three wages every month to Gülyüz's stockbreeder husband, who remained in the village, to buy gas and animal feed. Likewise, Kevser undertakes the responsibility of covering health expenses for her father who suffers from cancer.

²³³ It is actually her husband's debt yet they pay it together.

²³⁴ There are at least three households who are paying off double loans, while Halime, who has already paid off two loans taken out at the request of her family, refused to take out a third one. Others take out loans one after the other to sustain the household economy.

Finally, there are two women who regularly spend part of their wages on their son/brother who are in prison.²³⁵

In this context, when the husband is either unemployed or an irregular worker, what the women earn gains more significance. As shown earlier in the list of participants, the men of the households are not employed in well-paid, secure jobs. Other than the miners (retired or still working) at the state mines, most of the other men are employed under more precarious working conditions. They frequently face unemployment, and when they do work their wages are irregular and most of them are in debt. Given these conditions, women, whose regular income is a lifeline for these households, appear as strong agents.²³⁶ This brings me to the discussion of the breadwinner ideology.

5.2.3. Men as Breadwinners

The general acknowledgement of the position of men as the breadwinner also serves to strengthen the feminization of work at the *Greenhouse* work. Such an assumption implies higher wages for men than women and it is one of the main reasons for women to primarily be employed there: the wages are so low that men generally do not prefer to work there, as they are supposed to earn a “family income”. They believe that what the women earn is a complementary income to that provided by the men, even though in reality this is not the case for many of the households in this study. Due to the irregular and temporary nature of men’s employment, it is not always possible to know the exact amount of money they,

²³⁵ This is in line Karaman’s study (2017) that focuses on women workers employed in the grape export sector in Manisa, Western Anatolia. Karaman’s sample was composed of 385 rural (former) small-producer women (309 women from 10 different agribusinesses and 76 women from the TARIŞ Company). 44.4% of them say they use their wages to pay off their debts, while 27.3% of them spend it on basic needs and 11.2% on the needs of their children.

²³⁶ What the women think about earning money and how it affects their lives, relations and positions in the family will be discussed in the following chapter, where I analyze the multifaceted relation between empowerment and paid labor.

as “breadwinners”, bring to the household budget each month. Nevertheless, I can still argue that 12 women of 29²³⁷ earn more money than their husbands/fathers. As it is always the men of the households who have managed to retire and secure a pension, there are four men whose pension contributes more to the household budget than the women earnings.²³⁸ When it comes to those who earn more than women, it should be stated that only the mine workers (4) make double of the *Greenhouse* salary or more. Other drivers/workers of stone or limestone pits make only slightly more than the women: 1,700 TL.²³⁹ In addition, three men who earn more than the women of the household are employed irregularly, making their contribution to the household budget unstable. There is also one woman whose husband earns the same amount of money as she does. As for the women who are divorced, Güldeste says she did not ask for alimony to make the divorce quicker, while the money two other women receive from their ex-husbands is less than what they earn at the *Greenhouse*: Seher, who has two children, receives 500 TL, while Yüksel, who has three children, receives less than 1000 TL.

Even if the information above underlines the significance of the women’s employment for the households, we still see that the association of men as breadwinners position remains strong. The man, mostly the husband, is seen as

²³⁷ Three widows and one single woman are excluded from the total number (33) of participants here. Nevertheless, I was told that they used to make money irregularly. None of the men of their households received a pension, which would transfer to their daughters/wives after their death.

²³⁸ Ironically, the money these men make from their current employment (except from their pensions) is often less than the women’s salary. For example, the husband of Meliha earns 1000 TL, while his pension equals 1500 TL. The husband of Fadime receives a pension yet the money he makes from his construction business is irregular. Each month, Fadime gives 1000 TL of her 1300 TL salary from the *Greenhouse* work to him for household expenses.

²³⁹ In 2016, women received the minimum wage, which was 1300 TL. Yet as previously mentioned, behind the façade of the minimum wage, women are paid a daily rate. During the fieldwork I observed that the women regularly overworked without regular leave. That is why their wage was often higher than the minimum wage, especially during the high seasons for the *Greenhouse*.

the breadwinner even if he works irregularly or earns less than women. He is supposed to be the person responsible for taking care of the family. Accepting a “complementary contribution” to the household budget legitimizes the cheaper labor of women in the eyes of the women and the *Company*, as well as for the male members of the families. An engineer adds that the *Greenhouse* work is more suited to women since wages are low and no man would work for that amount of money. Likewise, Yüksel says:

It's not possible for a man to take care of the household, bring home the bread on his own with the minimum wage. If two people work, then maybe. If there wasn't rent to pay. But then if there are children...

Positive values are attributed to what the men do, and it is considered that their jobs are more difficult and require more physical strength. Accordingly, there used to be a small difference between the daily wages of women and men. I was told that this was only 1 TL²⁴⁰ per day (30 TL per month) yet this equaled an additional day's payment at the end of the month. The male workers of the *Greenhouse* used to receive that additional day's pay for the sole reason that they were men carrying out men's tasks. However, this practice has changed recently, the payments of men and women have been equalized. This has become one of the strongest reasons behind the association of the *Greenhouse* work with women: Not only do the men consider equal wages as a threat to their position as breadwinner, but they — and particularly the younger men — also find it humiliating to their social status. As men do not like to be paid the same amount of money as women at the *Greenhouse*, the jobs there are left to women.²⁴¹

²⁴⁰ In 2015, one US Dollar was equal to 2.73 Turkish Lira. 30 TL was equal to \$10.98. Last visited 21.06.2019, <http://www.tcmb.gov.tr/kurlar/201506/15062015.xml>

²⁴¹ This is not to say that the women receive a decent level of pay. Although women think that the men find the salaries too low to support a family, they also think that all the workers are poorly paid and that given their responsibilities and the tiring nature of the work at the *Greenhouse*, their salaries should be higher. Some also mention that they should be paid more when they are assigned to males' tasks. On this issue, Standing (1999) discusses the tendency of men's employment towards more flexible and informal work, and argues that while the labor

They pay the same. If they paid the men a bit more they'd stay too, but they won't stay for the same money. Güldeste

The men leave. They say, 'We get the same money as women! Bingül

The role of "woman's nature" in the feminization of work at the *Greenhouse* was previously mentioned. Similarly, women point out that the other side of the coin, i.e. "man's nature", is not suited to the job. This not only refers to the incompatibility of men to the requirements of the tasks, but also, and perhaps more importantly, to their "state of mind" in that they cannot stand being under orders at the *Greenhouse*. The women say that men are unable to put up with mobbing and therefore are not "silent", as they are.

Men can't cope [with the work] any more. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say there are no men left. The only man is the engineer. The workers are all women. Boy's brains just don't get it [don't understand the work]. Bingül

The profile of the male workers at the *Greenhouse* shows that they are mostly older men who come from villages and have limited education and no qualifications for any other job. Women think that the *Greenhouse* job is the last option for most of them, since it is not possible for them to be employed elsewhere. While the younger men see the *Greenhouse* work as temporary and seek better employment options in towns/cities (mostly in the factories of Aliğa, an industrial town in the district of Izmir or in the mines), the older men at the *Greenhouse* are either working there to complete the statutory requirements to allow them to retire, or to make some extra income to support their families as they are already in receipt of a pension.²⁴² The situation is described below by Akif, one of the young male workers:

patterns of women and men tend to be converged, it may point to a general weakness in the position of labor. This is also observed as a trend in non-NTAE industries (Appendini, 2002; Dolan & Sorby, 2003). The precarity of the labor force at the *Greenhouse* is no an exception.

²⁴² This also means that they are employed at the *Greenhouse* without insurance, since retirees already have social security.

The money isn't enough. If I could pay off my debts, I'd like to be my own boss. Our assembly team is breaking up. Everyone who finds a job leaves. X found a job in Aliaga, he's going to leave the Greenhouse. Greenhouse work is perfect for women, but for men that money's just not enough.

As a result, both men and women tend to consider work at the *Greenhouse* unsuitable for men (except for the most desperate) since it does not fit their position of breadwinner. For this reason, the work is not only undervalued but also easily dispensable in the eyes of men. This leads to the categorization and attribution of the work as “women's work” only. As the *Greenhouse* is not a primary option for the men, the work is “naturally” left to women, for whom the lower wages match to their so-called complementary role to the family budgets.

5.3. The *Company's* Position on the Feminization of Work

In this last section I will explore how the *Company* explains and makes use of the strong link between women workers and greenhouse work, with reference to the interviews made with the engineers, head engineer and the Human Resource Unit (HRU). The various answers given by members of the *Company* administration also define the type of labor force desired for employment at the *Greenhouse*.

First of all, the reasons stated by the administration for the employment of predominantly women should briefly be mentioned. According to them, the women's “small hands” are more suited to the tasks at the *Greenhouse*. While roughness and strength are attributed to the tasks of the males, women workers, with their small hands, are considered more suited to the tasks required gentleness, diligence and careful handling. The “innate” characteristics of the males do not fit with those tasks at all, and so men are needed only for tasks requiring physical strength, while the plants need a feminine touch. The head engineer even states that “small hands” is one of the most significant criteria the *Company* has when recruiting the workers.

Cultivation work is a delicate job. There's a preference for women because they are more attentive and their hands are smaller, and because they work harder. We can't get men to do these delicate jobs. Women are more suitable.

Having rural origins, being acquainted with agricultural work and coming from the villages are other reasons for the *Company* to recruit women at the *Greenhouse*. In the eyes of the administration, rural women are more resilient, experienced and skilled than their urban counterparts. For this reason, the *Company* says that the majority of the workers are women from the surrounding villages. While Bergama is main district in which the women live, due to the high number of villages; the districts of Kınık and Soma follow.²⁴³ The final district for recruiting workers is Dikili due to its vibrant tourism sector, and smaller number of villages, many of which are already depopulated. In this sense, it is clearly stated by the HRU that, "We are looking to employ village people."

So far, the *Company* and women themselves seem to agree on the reasons behind the feminization of work at the *Greenhouse*. The "nimble fingers" of women with a rural origin seem critical to recruitment. Yet, interestingly, when it comes to the importance of being "clean housewives", the administration thinks differently than the women do. On the basis of the interviews and my observations, the issue of cleaning tends to be considered as a sign of social difference by the *Company* administration. They differentiate rough cleaning from delicate cleaning and believe that the women lack the awareness and knowledge to understand the importance of sterilization for production at the *Greenhouse*. Although contagious diseases are the biggest threat, the workers may easily skip the rules of cleaning, thus endangering the hundreds of healthy plants in the units. In this sense, the administration is not in full agreement with the women: While they generally admit the similarity of work at the *Greenhouse*

²⁴³ The workers agree: "It's always people from the villages of Bergama, no locals. Always poor people like us. It's really hard work. They have no choice but to put up with it, to keep going. The ones that stay are the ones that have no choice." Bingül

to the cleaning done at home, it is clear that they do not think the women workers as housewives are “clean enough” for them.

You can't explain everything to the workers. They understand tomatoes, after all it's the same as on the land, in the fields. But they don't understand disinfection, microbes... Nizam, Head Engineer

Likewise, while women see their experience in the sphere of care labor as an advantage for the *Greenhouse* work, for the administration, the conditions that create such an experience are seen as quite disadvantageous in terms of hiring women. They admit that women are the primary care givers for children and for sick and elderly relatives, yet it also disrupts the work, when women are recalled by their “feminine duties”. Although most of the time the *Company* takes advantage of the flexibility of the female labor force, during peak seasons women workers who suddenly disappear due to the requirements of their duties at home are seen as inefficient, disruptive and undesirable and can be defined as a violation of the disciplinary codes. According to the HRU, “except for women's obligation of care”, there are no disadvantages to hiring women. In this sense, the employers of seafood processing factories in the Western Black Sea region have the same attitude toward the female labor force, whose primary responsibilities are domestic chores and agricultural work. For this reason, they are seen as temporary workers who work only in their spare time (Gündüz Hoşgör & Suzuki, 2016: 127).

As significant as the abovementioned reasons may be, there is another set of reasons behind the domination of women's employment at the *Greenhouse* according to the narratives of the administration: Being a “*silent and well-behaved*” labor force. All of the actors underline the importance of these characteristics of the female labor force, particularly compared to the men. They believe that women are not only more open to communication and willing to comply with the orders of the managers, but also that they better understand and realize the requirements of the tasks. Men are considered to be lacking in these

social skills and therefore not able to deal with others in the expected way. Interestingly, similar ideas are expressed by the managers of Hacienda BC in Baja California to explain the dominance of women workers there: “Women are more patient. They can stand around and do this work for hours. Men are impatient. They constantly have to do something different” (Muñoz, 2008: 101).

The engineers approve the gender division labor at work as well as the position of men as breadwinners, and say that this is why the dominance of women as *Greenhouse* workers is normal. Yet, perhaps more importantly, women do not confront, oppose or disagree with the authorities’ demands at work, something that they say is not true for men. According to them, control and discipline work on women more effectively than on men. The administration argues that they can “warn” the women when they make mistakes, but cannot do the same to the male workers. In this sense, the female labor force is seen to be more resistant to and able to overcome the practice of mobbing used to “motivate” under the performance system. As a result, the fact that such a labor force does not cause trouble for the *Company* even under precarious working conditions seems to be the most striking feature behind the desire to employ women.

Women work in a more disciplined, organized way. They don’t get into fights; they make sure not to. They’re respectful. They’re all villagers, not the kind who know very much. Maybe they were never taught, never went to school. So they do whatever you tell them. In that sense we have no problems. HRU

The women themselves, however, do not agree with that. They see the other side of the coin. In order to be able to tolerate the *Greenhouse* work without “overt” complaint or opposition, it is better for them not to answer back to the managers and keep their silence, which translates into the preferred features of the *Greenhouse*’s female labor force in the eyes of the *Company*: Being docile and obedient. It is considered that, compared to men, women are more silent, non-confrontational and passive. The women, though, think otherwise, and do not speak of such behavior as being a “natural” tendency. On the contrary, knowing

of the restrictions on their lives, women are quite aware that it is less likely for them to be able to find another job immediately in the case of a disagreement with the managers. Women say that they are afraid of making a complaint and think twice before raising their voice. In this sense, the women's "silence", is a forced outcome rather than an innate part of the so-called woman's nature at the *Greenhouse*.

One angry word and women cower and accept it. We can take anything. Men can't take being reprimanded. Could you say that to a man?! But we've always been trampled on. At home and at work we cower in a corner. That's how downtrodden we are. Sabriye

Say something to a man and he'll answer back. Women won't. Didn't you see how the engineer shouts at the women? 'Shut up! Don't answer back!' Answer back and they show you the door. Ümmühan

The women's silence does not mean a complete resignation to the orders of the managers. As mentioned in the section on resistance strategies, women make efforts to indirectly cope with the requirements of a performance system that endlessly demand more and more from them. They try to find a way not to exhaust themselves while still being a "good worker" in the eyes of the managers, and they try to do so without direct confrontation with the managers. In this sense, silence is a tactical issue rather than full subordination, and it primarily targets the performance system rather than the working conditions in general. However, this is an individual-based solution that at the same time shows the weakness of the collective power of the women workers. As a result, we see that the discourse of silence is constructed differently by each actor in this research. The managers characterize the female labor force as obedient and docile, concepts also used to construct and differentiate the idea of woman's nature, according to which women are more compliant to the "warnings" of the manager than men.²⁴⁴ However, even though it is hard for women to work in

²⁴⁴ I have not come across such a case. Being shouted at, humiliated or threatened is valid for the male workers too. I did not witness any confrontation between male workers and the engineers

such an environment of mobbing, they also use their silence to indirectly cope with these conditions. Furthermore, they do not embrace these characteristics as an innate part of woman's nature. However, as discussed previously, women also face many limitations in the gendered rural labor markets, which force them to carefully evaluate their living conditions in order to make the best life choice. In some cases, this may refer to stick to the *Greenhouse* job under the given conditions. Men, on the other hand, take advantage of their manhood in relation to mobility, better payment and diverse employment possibilities.

Meanwhile, the administration is very well aware of the women's labor profile that limits their working life. The HRU states that the women of the *Greenhouse* are not at all "qualified". On average the women have three to four children, and 30-35% of their husbands are unemployed. Women are mostly uneducated, and 60% of them are unable to properly read and write. The HRU gives the example of a simple letter of resignation of a few sentences, yet the women need to do at least five to six drafts to be able to write a correct one. At the same time, the HRU says that educated women cannot deal with work at the *Greenhouse*, while uneducated women are more suited to the job. In addition, the administration also points out the limited opportunities available to women who want to participate in working life. The HRU says that after the closing of a textile factory in Bergama, there has been a significant rise in applications from women as their employment options have become scarcer. Similarly, it was also stated that after the Soma Disaster, many miners decided to seek employment at the *Greenhouse*. In light of all this, the characteristics of the female labor force and the lack of other alternatives in rural labor markets become a vicious circle for women.

other than the complaints of the male workers during our conversations. I was also told that the head engineer once shouted at a middle-aged male worker in front of everybody because he brought the wrong bucket. The worker could not answer back since he needed the job. However, I also met a young man who was fired on the same day as he "argued" with the engineer, i.e. answered back.

The cheap labor of women is another reason behind the feminization of work at the *Greenhouse* for the *Company*. I was told many times by the head engineer that the primary cost item for the *Company* is the labor costs. He says the cost per unit in 2010 was 0.8-1 TL, and by 2016 this had increased to 1.2-1.5 TL. He stresses that the costs tend to increase due to the huge numbers of workers paid the minimum wage. This resembles the case of Chilean growers who see the labor cost forms the biggest part of their budget. As Bain says, “Squeezed within the global supply chain, one of the few spaces left for Chilean growers to reduce their costs is labor, since labor accounts for up to 70 percent of production costs. The pressure to meet the rigorous quality and delivery demands of retailers while reducing costs encourages producers to use flexible labor arrangements, including temporary, seasonal, and subcontracted labor” (2010: 362). Likewise, Pedreño et al. argue that “domestic devaluation policies” as a competitive strategy thrive not only on reduced salaries and labor costs, but also on a disciplined population for export-based production. Having created a vulnerable workforce segmented by gender, it re-creates the reserve army of labor which became a pre-requisite for “the control of wages and adjusting of the social organization of labor to the temporary discontinuities of agri-food production” (2014: 195). In this sense, the motivation of the *Greenhouse* to decrease the cost of labor seems to thrive on the “reserve army of labor” in the Bakırçay Basin, of which female labor forms a significant part.²⁴⁵ It is commonly accepted by the women of the *Greenhouse* that there are always “other women” waiting in line to be employed in the case of someone losing her job. This corresponds with the drastically decreasing number of unpaid family women laborers in rural Turkey and Western Anatolia. After withdrawing from small production, they are the

²⁴⁵ The concept primarily refers to “A pool of unemployed and partially employed labor (...) created and reproduced directly by the accumulation of capital itself. (...) The growth of the capital increases the demand for labor, but the mechanization substitutes machinery for workers and thus reduces the demand for labor.” As a result, the net demand for labor is shaped by these two dimensions (Bottomore et al., 2001: 474). This has later been re-interpreted by feminist scholars to analyze women’s labor. In the literature this may refer to local women who are forced to return home after the economic crises, or it may also imply migrant women’s labor or female labor from developing countries.

leading members of the reserve army for agribusinesses in the Basin. Likewise, Öztürk argues that today rural areas have become hubs for the reserve army of labor due to the deepening crisis: “(...) in spite of the coping mechanisms mentioned, an important part of the peasantry has joined the ranks of the reserve army of labor, a classical concept with a very real, modern expression — in Turkey, hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of people living in towns and villages below poverty and hunger thresholds.” (2012: 164).²⁴⁶

As a result, the administration sees several reasons to legitimize the feminization of the *Greenhouse* work: Women with nimble fingers are more suited to the requirements of the tasks, while their rural origins and familiarity with agricultural work are seen as advantageous. Even if the *Company* finds they are not familiar enough with hygiene rules, they still meet the needs. In addition, not aware of the fact that silence is tactically used by the women as a coping strategy, women workers are seen as completely docile and obedient in the imagination of the managers, traits that make them indispensable and desirable for the *Company*. In this sense, there is a similarity to the managerial construction of tortilla making as women’s work in the case studied by Muñoz, according to whom the economic conditions (limited job opportunities, weaker attachment to labor markets, etc.) “fit well with managers’ gendered notions that women are better suited for assembly line work. (...) work at Hacienda BC is constructed as women’s work. (...) Managers know about women’s vulnerable situation on the labor market and take advantage of it to assert their own power” (2008: 99). Likewise, the administration believes that among the limited choices available to the women, the *Greenhouse* is a perfect destination for them given the services provided by the *Company*. They know very well how “unqualified”

²⁴⁶ Öztürk (2012) also underlines that the remaining population in rural areas operates resistance strategies on an individual basis in a limited way, while those who move away and settle in the outskirts of towns and cities depend on pensions, “green cards” that provide access to basic health services, and fuel donations provided to agricultural producers by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. I will discuss the particular position of women within such a vulnerable rural population and how they experience the rural transformation in question in Chapter 7, Women and Rural Transformation.

these rural women are on the labor markets.²⁴⁷ Therefore not only do they view this as the reason for predominantly woman being employed at the *Greenhouse*, but they also believe that the women, in a way, are obliged to work there due to their lack of skills for better employment opportunities. At this point, the administration's discourse appears rather condescending towards women, as though the *Company* is only doing the women a favor by granting them a job.

In the end you are unskilled. This job should be a godsend for you. You should give the sweat of your brow; we should see you sweat. But the villagers from round here, it's like the minute you turn your back they stop working. But they have everything – they have social security; they're provided with meals. This greenhouse is a blessing for the locals. Nizam, Head Engineer

5.3.1. The Issue of Harassment

While the *Company* seems to take advantage of the reasons that lead to the feminization of work at the *Greenhouse*, the issue of harassment forms its Achilles' heel. The *Company* is obliged to maintain a good reputation to guarantee that women will have no qualms about working there in relation to codes of honor and purity. When asked whether women experience or hear of harassment at work, there are two kinds of answers: While the majority say they have never heard of any cases of harassment at the *Greenhouse*, the experiences of the youngsters, who say they have encountered such cases, differ from the mainstream narrative that ignores harassment at the workplace. One of the younger workers told me that once she and a group of other young women lodged a complaint against a male worker for his disturbing gaze at work. However, the majority states they are "like a family at work", and that there is therefore no possibility of such a thing happening. For this group, as the workers

²⁴⁷ Although women workers at the *Greenhouse* are considered by the managers as a homogenous, almost monolithic, unskilled mass that is therefore capable of carrying out each other's tasks, women generally (*eleman* women in particular) embrace their positions at the *Greenhouse* and do not think that they are just a worker in an amorphous crowd of workers.

are dominantly composed of women, the small numbers of men are not considered a “threat”.

One of our yatırmacı is a man. We’re like family, we see our friends there more than our own families. Our bosses look out for us too. Sabriye

While talking about harassment or “having an affair”, it is mostly the woman who is blamed, never the man. The woman is always seen as having “invited” the man. This is a view held by women from all age, ethnic and religious groups working at the *Greenhouse*. There was only one exception to this mainstream narrative that always blames the woman. One young woman, a university student and temporary worker at the *Greenhouse*, thinks that the “bad” personality of the man is the cause if harassment happens at the workplace. Regardless of whether or not harassment is experienced at the *Greenhouse*, the common point is that when such accusations are made the man is immediately fired and the woman protected. A few women told me that they trust the disciplinary reflexes of the *Company* on that issue, since they know some examples in which the men were dismissed. While firing the men involved in such cases and not the women seems to be in line with the objective of having a safe working environment for women, I also heard of another case in which the women got fired as a result of revealing an affair with another worker. When a couple who had met at the *Greenhouse* eloped, the head engineer preferred to fire the woman, while the man was allowed to remain in his position.

In this sense, it is safe to argue that harassment is a very delicate issue to which the *Company* has to pay attention. As the *Company* is very dependent on cheap female labor, the “honor” of the business cannot be risked, especially in the eyes of the workers and locals. Gülcan told me that the head engineer is very strict about “that issue”. He is well known for his distanced attitude towards women as he never asks them personal questions. The HRU underlines that if such a case occurs, they fire male workers for the sake of the *Company*’s reputation. They

also say they are very picky when it comes to the recruitment of male worker, and they prefer to hire married men than young and/or single candidates. The marital status of the candidates in particular is checked in order to ensure “safety” at the workplace. I believe that the managers know very well that if the *Company* could not guarantee conditions that make the workplace “safe” for women, no woman would even apply to the job. While women would not run the risk of earning a bad reputation, their husbands would never accept their wives being employed at such a place, either.

People on the outside say, ‘At the Greenhouse men drool over women, the girls talk to the men,’ but I never saw anything like that. God forbid! If there were any problems like that I wouldn’t work here, I’d leave. Those who come here are honorable people who come to work. There’s no point going to work if you leave with your head hung in shame. Serpil

To conclude, it is clear that protecting its positive image seems as a prerequisite for the *Company*. The *Company* always emphasizes the notion of family, which can be seen in the posters that hang in most of the units, saying, “We are the *GREENHOUSE* family!” The appreciation of the notion of family could also be observed when Kevser told the head engineer she had to leave the job since she would be getting married. In this case her resignation was not a problem for him since the reason behind it was to start a family; indeed, he even encouraged her, saying “Family first, then work”. Likewise, one of the engineers even warned two young women workers — “brotherly advice to people he loved as sisters” — about choosing the right people as friends at the *Greenhouse*. He was concerned that they should avoid associating with people who had a “bad name”. Based on these examples, the *Greenhouse* appears as a place where an emphasis on the family plays a significant role in regulating the work life. Furthermore, it also blurs the obligation that a workplace must follow the labor laws and that women must be employed on the basis of workers’ rights.

5.4. Conclusion

Work at the *Greenhouse* emerges as a “woman’s job” in which female workers have been predominantly employed from the establishment of the *Greenhouse* in the Bakırçay Basin. Having explored the reasons behind the association of greenhouse work with women, this chapter argues that the feminization of this work is a process of construction. Dominant patriarchal and capitalist codes that draw their strength from the ability to (re)regulate public and private life in rural areas play an important role in this construction. In addition, the agents — female and male workers and *Company* representatives — have actively participated in the construction of the feminization of the work on the basis of their own dynamics, motivation and/or criticisms. As Bain argues, “Social relations within the labor market do not merely evolve over time, nor do they simply reflect preexisting inequities and prejudices. Rather, they must be actively produced and reproduced” (2010: 25).

Women associate the gender division of labor with “woman’s nature”. Its attributed skills and attitudes are believed to be a good match to the tasks assigned to women at the *Greenhouse*. The allocation of tasks on the basis of gender can also be observed in the studies of Gündüz Hoşgör and Suzuki, looking at a sea snail processing factory in the Western Black Sea Region (2016, 2017, 2018a, 2018b) and Atasoy (2017), which focuses on a greenhouse in Central Anatolia where seedlings are produced. In the sea snail factory women are responsible for peeling, sorting, classifying, ranking, disinfecting and packaging the sea snails, while men deal with fishing, brokerage, transportation, factory ownership, management and control, as well as packaging, boiling, loading to deep freeze and unloading (Gündüz Hoşgör & Suzuki, 2016: 119). The authors argue that the gendered stereotypes are so strong that they legitimize the attribution of monotonous, repetitive, time consuming — i.e. “simple” — tasks as being suited to women’s “small fingers” (2016: 122).

When it comes to the *Bey Fide* greenhouse studied by Atasoy, we see a similar division of labor: “The lifting and carrying of bags of soils, seeds and fertilizer is men’s responsibility. Men operate the machines to lift and move these bags (...) They also move the seedling trays (...) And men are responsible for transporting the seedlings to customers.” The operators of other machines are also men, while women’s tasks cover “the general care, irrigation and on-site sorting, grading and packaging of seedlings, as well as overall cleaning” (2017: 200). Atasoy argues that there is a clear gendered division of labor among the workers. One group of women defines their job as spooning (*kaşıklama*): Women check the vials to see if there is an extra seedling there; if there is, they lift it out by dipping a stick-like tool into the soil. The extra seedling is then transplanted into an empty vial. This is such an important task to guarantee the standard quality in height and size of the seedlings. Spooning is less valued and lower paid compared to the more “technical” jobs of the men at *Bey Fide*. Although spooning as a woman’s job requires more “attention and dexterity”, it is still found to be “repetitive and monotonous” (Atasoy, 2017: 203).

Ironically, in the past there was *another* gender division of labor at the *Greenhouse*. Women used to be employed for tasks that today are only carried out by men due to the need for physical strength.²⁴⁸ On the other hand, the current gender division of labor regards women and men as holding the responsibility for different tasks. Certain changes have been made to the allocation and definition of the tasks, yet the tools used to legitimize the feminization of work has remained the same: The gender division of labor. The feminization of work at the *Greenhouse* still tends to be explained on the basis of gender. Muñoz describes this as the “paradox of gender”, through which she explains how the same work of tortilla making at Hacienda CA in the USA and Hacienda BC in Mexico can be constructed respectively as men’s work and women’s work. While Hacienda CA is a capital-intensive business with high

²⁴⁸ This is not the case for the tasks required technical knowledge. Women were excluded from such tasks in the past, as they are today.

technology run by male workers, Hacienda BC is a labor-intensive one where cheap labor is important to keep costs down. In the former factory, men frequently deal with machines and heavy lifting, in contrast to the latter factory, which is based on women's manual labor. In addition, Hacienda CA has night shifts that are dominated by men and not preferred by women, since the "immigrant and undocumented" men successfully adopt themselves to the flexible conditions of the work (2008: 117-119). In light of these, we see two different constructions of womanhood: It is interesting that being female protects the women of Hacienda BC, where lax disciplinary policies do not problematize tardiness or absence. The managers underline that they are hesitant to be "rough" with women, since "the last thing" they want is for women "to get emotional during working hours" (2008: 102). However, it seems that similar conditions do not facilitate the women's situation at the *Greenhouse*. As mentioned, the women are easily fired according to strict disciplinary policies at the *Greenhouse*. The patriarchal attribution of "fragility and vulnerability" to the women by the "nature" does not apply there. It seems that, for once, the gender-neutral identity of worker outweighs the identity of woman.

The gender division of labor creates vertical and horizontal segregation that obliges women not only to work in certain positions at the *Greenhouse* but also to carry out tasks that are monotonous, manual and delicate that entail careful handling with their "nimble fingers". Yet behind the façade, the regime tends to have a certain level of flexibility according to the needs of the market, the interests of the *Company* or the change in the labor profile. Under these conditions, women may carry out men's tasks, or vice versa. In spite of the flexibility observed during the fieldwork, the immutable fact remains that women's work — whatever that work may be — is undervalued.

The *Greenhouse* case shows similarity to the organization and composition of labor force in packing plants in Chile. According to Bee (2000), there is a clear "gendered employment" concentrated in those workplaces. The characteristics

attributed to women, such as manual dexterity, make them a desired labor force in the eyes of the managers and/or owners of the packing plants. She also argues that the fields are a much less marked gendered labor market, compared to the plants. Likewise, Dolan and Sorby discuss the gender stereotypes of “feminine” traits that are at work in NTAE industries, through which the inequalities of the traditional gender division of labor are perpetuated. Women are usually employed in certain activities — i.e. processing, filtering seafood, packing, labeling, bar-coding produce — that require “women’s” conscientiousness and dexterity. Correspondingly, they also argue that men, who have different skills, largely monopolize managerial and skilled technical posts, while undertaking physically heavier work (2003). This working regime is conceptualized as a “two-tiered employment system” by Pearson (2007): While men are concentrated at the top and in permanent positions with higher wages, this is not the case for women who lack better employment opportunities. Likewise, Allen and Sachs argue that gender divisions of labor are features of food processing and manufacturing on a global scale. They underline the importance of women as “disadvantaged workers” in processing and packaging for the global commodity chains. In this sense, vegetable and fruit production are given as examples (2007: 7-8). The FAO draws attention to the same global pattern in which women workers are “(...) more concentrated in certain phases of activities of the supply chain (e.g. packaging, post-processing)” (FAO, 2011: 17). In sum, I argue that in the neoliberal transformation of the agri-food system, the gender division of labor again plays a key role. Here we see not only a basic transfer of a “traditional” gender division of labor recalled from the fields, but also a new form that updates itself according to the recent changes and needs in the agri-food system. While the new division of labor still re-constructs itself primarily on the basis of the essentialist divisions underlying “women’s and men’s nature”, those “natures” may contain multiple, contradictory and mutable meanings. Yet the gender division of labor is still the most basic premise in use in the patriarchal capitalist rural context.

This brings me to the diverse perceptions of the women regarding the gender division of labor on the basis of “nature”. This is defined more with reference to their privileged positions, advantages and skills, rather than limitations associated with the technical issues and/or physical strength regarding the tasks to which they are assigned. A small number of the women define their tasks as equally tiring as the men’s, while the majority agrees that there is a difference between men and women on the basis of physical strength. This is a situation with which the women are happy, since it leads to them being kept away from the men’s tasks (which many see as more tiring) on the basis of the division of labor at the *Greenhouse*. Beyond the tactical definition of nature, it is also striking to observe how the labor practices and experiences of the *Greenhouse* women is strongly related to how they define “woman’s nature”. As Harding (2014) argues, the way women construct their knowledge depends on what they have historically experienced, i.e. knowledge is socially situated. It draws its strength from women’s particular, historically specific and social locations.²⁴⁹ A good example of this is women’s limited knowledge on technical issues, while they have a wealth of knowledge about plants that comes from their experiences in the fields. In addition, given that there used to be another work regime based on a different gender division of labor at the *Greenhouse* and that there are still workers who carry out each other’s task, the immutable nature of the gender division of labor is weakened.

Feminization of work at the *Greenhouse* seems to be based on women’s capabilities in agricultural work. However, Bonanno and Cavancanti argue that feminization is legitimized by the claim that women are better suited to agricultural work, yet “In reality, the preference of women is related to their lower wages and weaker attachment to labor markets” (2014: xxxi). The reasons

²⁴⁹ What is as important as the social situatedness is “(...) the possibility to turn an oppressive feature of group’s conditions into a source of critical insight about how the dominant society thinks and is structured” (Harding, 2004: 7). According to her, this is political power of the feminist research to change.

stated by the authors behind the preference of women are observed in the *Greenhouse* case, too. Indeed, some of the women even mention the difference between the agricultural production at the *Greenhouse* and that in the fields. The relation between women and agriculture is also linked to tasks that have been carried out by women for “generations”. This is the case, for example, for Mexican women who are “traditionally” seen as the primary tortilla makers, which both naturalizes and legitimizes their participation in paid work at Hacienda BC to make tortillas for export. Even though women are not familiar with technology and factory assembly lines or have never made tortilla as a global commodity, they are still associated with the job with specific reference to their “long history” in tortilla making at home (Muñoz, 2008). The women at the *Greenhouse* can be considered as another example in this sense, having exercised specific agricultural tasks in rural areas for generations. Even though rural life in general and participation in the agricultural production in the fields in particular makes the women more skillful and also more resilient to the difficult working conditions in the greenhouse units, it is not easy to say that the similarity of the *Greenhouse* work to agriculture is the primary reason for women’s recruitment. As well as being a cheap labor force, women’s weaker attachments to the rural markets — which draw on strong attachments to the home and its gendered requirements — play a critical role in their recruitment.

In this sense, the *Greenhouse* work is considered an extension of the undervalued domestic chores and care labor carried out at home. The undervaluation of the tasks carried out by women in the workplace guarantees both lower wages being paid to the women as well as the perpetuation of the reproductive labor at home. In other words, the notion of “woman’s nature”, with specific reference to the feminine characteristics desired at work, is also based on its indispensable role in the sphere of reproduction. However, at the same, the latter seems to provide some advantages to women that facilitate the difficult working life at the *Greenhouse*. Women feel a sense of pride about the well-grown plants as they do

towards their children, or they feel compassionate to the plants while taking care of them.

Women, seen both as housewives and primary caregivers, are obliged to have secondary positions in the labor markets since they can be (re)called by their duties at home. While this double role of women is used to cheapen their labor force, it also strengthens the feminization of work for certain activities, such as greenhouse work in this case. This is conceptualized by the “dual employment strategy” of women (Dolan and Sorby, 2003; Jarvis and Vera-Toscano, 2004 in Bain, 2010), according to which women can and should easily adjust to the requirements of labor flexibilization introduced by firms. Such flexibilization is desirable and advantageous for women as it allows them to maintain their double role of workers and housewives. Such a strategy not only promotes the reinforcement of gender roles but also justifies the subordination of women in the workplace.

In this sense, the position of men as breadwinners also consolidates the perception of the *Greenhouse* work as a woman’s job since their cheap labor is compatible with their complementary economic support. Acar Savran (2016) details the historical background of the “male breadwinner ideology” that is attached to the spread of the cultural norms of Victorian aristocratic classes. Rather than being independent individuals, women were rather identified as “wife-mothers” who were expected to be dependent on their husbands. This ideology is, “a central component in the historical capitalism in Europe and North America since Victorian times” (Ewen, 1976 in Atasoy, 2107: 206). Atasoy argues that although the salaries of working-class men have never been high enough to look after the whole family, this ideology of male breadwinner has justified their higher wages compared to women, whose income is secondary and complementary to the family income provided by men.

In this sense, the research of Atasoy is also in accordance with the findings of the *Greenhouse*. The workers at the *Bey Fide* greenhouse refer to the gender division of labor at work, which also justifies the women's lower wages. The men argue that it would be unfair to be paid differently if they carried out the same tasks. This, however, is not the case and the responsibilities given to male and female workers are different, which naturalizes the wage differences. Certain jobs are also culturally more suitable to women since they are "intricate, fine work". It is woman's nature, i.e. "the God-given innate qualities of women" (2017: 208), that gives them strength, endurance and patience to deal with those jobs. We see almost the same arguments expressed by the *Greenhouse* administration in the narratives recorded at Bey Fide: "Spoonings is women's work. It is not appropriate for men. Men's hands are not suited for this kind of work. They have different tasks to do; they wouldn't waste their time spooning. Men are better suited for carrying and lifting things and transportation" (2017: 207). However, one female worker rejects these arguments, stating that women often do men's jobs, when there are no men around to do them. Nevertheless, the idea of the male breadwinner is reinforced by the gender division of labor and cheap women's labor.

In addition to the secondary position of women at work, the acknowledgement of the men as breadwinners seems to undervalue women's working lives. Even though their wages are vital and indispensable for many households that struggle with poverty, women's work is still only seen as a complementary income to the family wage. However, in reality this is not the case for many of the households in this research, and the regular income provided by the women is in fact critical for the economic survival of those households. That is why the long-term effects of women's strengthening position in the household economics holds the possibility to be transformative in relation to the strong association of men as breadwinners.

The cheap labor of women is another strong reason behind the predominance of female employees at the *Greenhouse*: Men do not prefer lower wages, carrying out women's tasks, or working under extreme forms of mobbing that require "silence" at work. Although rural labor markets have become more precarious for both genders, women in face additional difficulties. This brings me to the issue of restrictions on rural women's lives when it comes to their participation in paid work. Compared to the position of men in the rural labor markets, women are under the pressure of multiple constraints: Lack of education, restrictions on mobility, lack of/limited job opportunities. In light of the limited job opportunities in the labor market for "unqualified" rural women, the *Greenhouse*, which is not primarily preferred by men, has become an example of the feminization of work. I argue that the patriarchal-capitalist construction of the feminization of work at the *Greenhouse* draws its strength from these conditions and shapes the experience of the participation of rural women in paid work.

In this sense, the study of Pedreño, Gadea and de Castro, in which they analyze the feminization of agri-food work and its organization through an agri-export model in Murcia, Spain shows great similarity to the *Greenhouse* case. The authors state that the feminization of labor has three legs: "Lower pay", "tasks" and "social construction of labor". Women only "contribute" to the family income, and their employment is therefore characterized by "temporality, low salary, precarious working conditions, and political weakness". In this study they also concentrate on certain "tasks" that are known as women's jobs. Nevertheless, the jobs are still accepted as "desirable and convenient" and "good for them" because unqualified women are primarily seen as housewives with limited opportunities in the local labor markets. Yet the flexibility between their double roles helps to define "these poor and exploitative jobs that are locally available as 'good' for them." The flexible female labor force, which goes back and forth between the workplace and home, are also controlled by their "restricted physical mobility and the fulfillment of traditional gender roles"

(2014: 204-205). Likewise, the gender regime at Hacienda BC explains the feminization of work through the dynamics of the Baja California labor market. Women are the preferred labor force of state politics and employers. Gender division of labor is again at work here: While men work in higher-wage positions and have more independence and control over their working conditions, women are employed entirely in production, earn lower wages and compete for job stability (Muñoz, 2008). Gündüz Hoşgör and Suzuki (2017) also draw attention to the household to understand the elements of the feminization of work in seafood processing factories. Beside labor-intensive production by unskilled women workers, a substantial decline in agricultural production and limited employment opportunities for men, the feminization of work also consists of increasingly urbanized patterns of consumption in rural households.

When it comes to the *Company*'s "own reasons" to recruit women, we again see a reference to feminine traits as more compatible to the *Greenhouse* work. While men are excluded from most of the work in this scenario, women's previous experiences in the fields and at home make them desirable employees for the managers. The *Company* also takes advantage of the characteristics of the female labor force. Women are the leading members of the reserve labor army in rural areas, i.e. uneducated women with no work experience other than agriculture and husbandry who belong to households in economic difficulties. Due to the unemployed/irregularly employed husbands and the number of children to take care of, the *Company* knows that women are in need of this work. Besides the cheap labor of women, their so-called obedient and docile nature is also appreciated by the managers.

However, as mentioned previously, the silence discourse of women is constructed differently by the diverse agents in this research. The assignation of women as silent, non-confrontational and passive is the outcome of the gendered rural labor market for women, rather than their nature. They are well aware of their working lives, which are (re)shaped by restrictions. Being stuck in the

Greenhouse, their low-status makes them vulnerable to discrimination and abuse in the workplace (Barrientos, Dolan and Tallontire 2003). Furthermore, taking into account the women's resistance strategies, docility and obedience crystallized in the silence of the women never take the form of complete subordination at the workplace. Salzinger also argues that the "trope of productive femininity" has been one of the central components of transnational production to justify a gendered work environment. She opposes the idealization of women workers who are inherently "passive and obedient" and therefore a "productive workforce". Having conducted ethnographic fieldwork in various *maquiladora* jobs, she draws attention to diverse gender practices to refute the assumption that "docile productive female workers" come "made to order" (2003: 13).

While overall the reasons behind the feminization of the *Greenhouse* work are advantageous to the *Company*, the only weak point seems to be that the reputation of the business needs to be protected at all times. In order to take advantage of the local pool of labor, women should be assured of a safe work environment if they are to apply for work in the *Company* without any concern regarding honor and purity codes that are a significant aspect of rural life. It is therefore important to have a gender-neutral work environment at the *Greenhouse*, even if it is only in the narratives of the administration of the *Company* or of some of the women workers. The *Company* uses the family ideology, emphasizing that the *Greenhouse* is like a family, rather than a place in which workers and managers follow rigid hierarchies. When the dominant role of the family in Turkey is considered in exploiting and oppressing women, the *Company* may even be justified in such a comparison of its working atmosphere to the family. In this sense, what is defined as a gender regime by Muñoz sets an opposite example to that at the *Greenhouse*. At Hacienda BC, managers and supervisors sexually harass women on the shop floor, where the author observed that "(...) managers make sexual advances such as kissing, hugging, pinching bottoms, forcing women on dates, and rubbing up against them in exchange for

job stability. (They) routinely walking around the shop floor, where they would often stand behind the women, hug them, tickle them and kiss them on the cheek” (2008: 109). According to Muñoz, the managers feel quite confident in their behavior and showed a general lack of concern about a sexualized work regime in which women have to compete with each other for job stability, which is ensured by gaining the attention of managers through being sexually attractive.

Interestingly, while Hacienda BC and the *Greenhouse* share many common features — i.e. precarious working conditions, feminization of work, export-based production, lower wages, gender division of labor or the rural origins of the female workforce — they are opposites when it comes to the notion of sexuality at work. While the *Company* carefully attempts to construct an almost gender-neutral and “safe” working environment (which is widely acknowledged and appreciated by the majority of its women workers), the managers and supervisors at Hacienda BC seem to sexualize the women workers without hesitation. Muñoz (2008) refers to Salzinger (2003), who also found a similar “produced” sexuality in one of the factories she studied. Under the same sanitized uniforms, the women workers of the *Greenhouse* and Hacienda BC are exposed to different forms of treatment by the managers with the same motivation of making best use of the female workforce.

In sum, this chapter details the reasons behind the feminization of work at the *Greenhouse*. It is seen that gender inequalities play an important role in the process in question. Rooted deeply in the private spheres and traditional gender division of labor, gender inequalities are re-generated at the workplace through the patriarchal-capitalist construction of *Greenhouse* work within the neoliberal transformation of the agri-food system. Yet, as Weeks argues, “‘women’s work’ is not just an instance of women’s oppression and exploitation, it is also a site where alternatives can be constructed; women’s laboring practices are not only constraining, but also potentially enabling” (2014, 187-188). In this sense, the next chapter will look at the possibilities for disobedience and indocility with

reference to both reproductive labor and the empowerment of women. It will focus on the *Greenhouse* women in their own homes, taking into account women's laboring practices at home in order to evaluate the limitations and "potentials to enable" in their private lives. Furthermore, the way women organize their "feminine duties" and bargain with the male members of their households, what "work" means to women and whether it holds the potential to empowerment will be detailed from women's perspectives. This will complete the picture of "work" as a totality, composed of paid and non-paid activities, as well as the patterns of the emerging gender labor regime.



CHAPTER 6

REPRODUCTION, PERCEPTIONS OF WORK AND COMPLICATED EMPOWERMENT

In her case study, Bee (2000) argues that it is not easy to understand the experiences of women who are temporarily employed in the expanding grape export sector. A rather complicated set of relationships arises out of the interaction between diverse sites, such as the household, workplace or state, and as such she says that exploring (patterns of) women employment requires a nuanced understanding. In this sense, Suzuki and Gündüz Hoşgör and criticize conventional political approaches for their shortsightedness: “Young women’s empowerment in a local context invites us to question conventional political approaches that see an impact of globalization on rural societies or women’s wage work within the global production chain in terms of relations of domination and subordination. Local reality is more complex and hybrid” (2019: 556). The same is also true for this study. First and foremost, a nuanced understanding of women’s working experiences requires an analysis of the burden of reproductive labor²⁵⁰ as an indispensable part of such experiences. Only after that can we gain a complete understanding of the gender labor regime. This chapter further focuses on the (dis)empowering aspects of the *Greenhouse* experience for women. Defining the relation between paid work and empowerment as not direct, mechanic or unilinear, I rather attempt to understand it via the re-organization of reproductive labor, *Greenhouse* wages and the (dis)content of men. Furthermore, how women themselves perceive working

²⁵⁰ In this study, I analyze reproductive labor on the basis of domestic chores and care giving. However, I am aware that reproductive labor cannot be confined to these tasks alone, but also includes the social organization of life and the emotional labor of women for other family members. In this sense, it is not only related to the domestic sphere, but also affects the non-domestic sphere.

outside the home in general and *Greenhouse* work in particular are important in order to understand the limitations as well as potentials the *Greenhouse* work provides, when it comes to the complexity of empowerment.

The previous chapters followed women during the workday at the *Greenhouse* as a means of understanding their work experiences, and this chapter will now follow them in their homes, both before and after the working day, in an attempt to explore the conditions underlying their participation in paid work. This will be done by focusing in detail on how they re-organize the “feminine responsibilities” at home, i.e. the two significant dynamics of care labor and domestic chores. In addition, this chapter includes the patterns of negotiation with male members of the household, i.e. whether they are supported by and/or struggle with them. I will also concentrate on the question of how the women spend their wages and how the women themselves perceive paid work. Women tend to evaluate the notion of working in diverse forms, which varies from appreciation and contentment to obligation and discontent. In order to be able to better understand the women’s perceptions, the reasons, i.e. the gendered context, behind their participation in paid work will be detailed. Finally, the complex relation between paid work and empowerment will be discussed via the example of *Greenhouse* work.

6.1. Two Worlds Together: The Double Burden of Women

It is clear that domestic chores and care labor are primarily seen as women’s work. Furthermore, the lack of necessary facilities — provided neither by the *Company* nor the State — force women to shoulder the burden of reproductive labor. For this reason, women should re-organize such responsibilities before they are able to participate in working life. This is vital to the extent that women who are unable to do so are out of game. This section explores the various ways women find to re-organize their “feminine responsibilities” to enable them to be away from home. There will also be a discussion of whether or not the methods

found show (dis)continuity to the pre-*Greenhouse* period in women's working life.

6.1.1. Care Labor

She raises them herself. Her mother-in-law keeps an eye on the kids.

Table 6.1. Carer for the youngest child of the employed mother

	Rural Households	Urban Households
The woman herself	34.3	24.6
Husband	1.4	2.2
Her mother	9.1	19.0
Husband's mother	26.0	13.1
Other child/children (female)	10.4	5.1
Other child/children (male)	1.6	1.3
Other relatives or babysitter	8.1	4.6
Babysitter	3.0	7.3
Day-care, nursery or kindergarten	4.3	18.3

Source: Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies, 2014, p.183

As shown in the table above, women are seen as the primary caregivers, and in the majority of cases, when the mother starts working it is another woman who undertake the burden of care. According to the findings of the Institute of Population Studies (2014, quoted in FAO, 2018), it is first and foremost the woman herself who looks after her youngest child when employed. While the percentage of women in this category is 34.3%, the second most common carer

is again a woman, i.e. the husband's mother, at 26%. The percentage of husbands looking after the child is only 1.4%. These numbers are clearly different than their counterparts in the urban setting. The case for women of the *Greenhouse* is in line with these findings. Out of 25 women, 13 say that they did not work in outdoor jobs so that they could take care of their children and shoulder the burden of reproduction. In addition to their responsibilities as carers, two of these women also make knitted goods to earn "pocket money", and one is involved in tobacco production and small-scale husbandry. It generally takes at least a year before women start leaving their children in the care of others. A few of the women stated that they waited for their children to start kindergarten/primary school before entering employment. Twelve women say that after a while they either bring newborns/toddlers with them to work (7) or leave them to their own mother/mother-in-law (5).

It is clear that if the mother has no one to look after her children in the first years after birth, then she barely participates in working life.²⁵¹ However, when it comes to re-organizing care work in order to be able to work outside the home, it seems that working in the fields is more advantageous for women due to its flexible and irregular nature. While women state that they used to take their babies with them to the fields,²⁵² that is clearly not possible at workplaces such as the *Greenhouse*. For example, Bingül says that even though she experienced deep poverty in the past, she did not prefer off-farm work, since it would not have been possible for her to send her children to school or her husband to work.

²⁵¹ Among the participants, only Ümmühan had a babysitter. She used to pay 150 TL per month to a woman living in the same neighborhood to look after her four-year-old son. This situation lasted for a year. (For the first two years she took care of the baby, after which her mother looked after him for two years).

²⁵² This needs to be detailed further. Such conduct is welcomed if the mother in question is working as a family laborer in an owned/rented field. However, if she is a daily laborer in someone else's field, then it becomes difficult, since field owners do not like to employ women with children. While a single baby/toddler is tolerated, a mother of two has great difficulty finding a job as a daily laborer. If she does find work, she has to make sure she overperforms so as not to be seen as underperforming.

She was also responsible for the household chores. As soon as her son's wife joined the household, she was able to leave the home for the *Greenhouse*. The women agree that if a worker has a baby or small child, then it is most likely that she will be distanced from working life for a certain period of time. After mothers finish breastfeeding, they generally feel able to work until the time their child starts kindergarten or school, since the beginning of the child's schooling again requires the mother to stay at home. For example, Selma has (re)organized her working life according to her son's school: She left the *Greenhouse* when her son started kindergarten, and after he got used to the routine, she returned to work until he started primary school. While the lack of necessary facilities at work — i.e. nursing room, playground or kindergarten — already eliminate the option of public help, for the women of the *Greenhouse*, having children results in losing their job and not benefitting from basic workers' rights. As a result, none of the children come to work with their mothers.²⁵³ To have children takes women away from the *Greenhouse* work, which has the effect of making the working lives of newly married women in particular irregular.

Anyway, a mother with a baby can't work in the Greenhouse. If she does, the baby gets fed with formula, someone has to look after it. You can't work with a baby in this environment. Yüksel

When you fall pregnant you quit [the Greenhouse]. There's no maternity leave. Then you come back. Most probably you don't come back until they start school. Gülcan

It is for the abovementioned reasons that the majority of the working population at the *Greenhouse* is composed of women with older children, and only Saadet has a two-year-old daughter who is taken care of by her mother-in-law. In this sense, the organization of care labor is vital for women to participate in work. However, the replacement of mother with another woman cannot be not taken for granted, for a number of reasons: Other female relatives, i.e. mother-in-law,

²⁵³ The only exception is the daughter of Merve. She has a mental deficiency of which the head engineer is aware, and he tolerates her presence in the units from time to time.

sister, mother or sister-in-law, either have to work in the fields or are already occupied with taking care of other children, or sick, elderly or disabled relatives at home. I was also told that women may refuse to take care of others' children since they have already spent many years bringing up their own children. In such cases, it becomes impossible for the woman to leave home. As stated above, the fields seem to exclude women with newborns, babies and/or children less than the *Greenhouse*. It is not uncommon for mothers working in the fields as daily laborers to take their newborns, babies and/or children to work with them, but when they do so they also face many difficulties. Fields and/or olive groves are not proper places for small children. Women like to check on them frequently, yet are not allowed to do so according to the rules of the middleman. Women often cover their babies with blankets to protect them from the cold and leave them under the trees next to the fields, and they also tie them to trees to make sure they do not wander off while the mother working in the fields. Unsuitable conditions unfortunately make the children vulnerable to work accidents, such as the baby son of Bedihe who once fell off a tractor.

Disagreements among female members in the family is another reason for not getting any help. In the course of participation to work life, family relations become much more important. Women tell that the promises they are made from other women regarding care of their children are not always reliable. In some cases, women tell that those unreliable promises let them down and harden to go to work regularly. Transferring the burden of care labor from one woman to another is not always as expected. Therefore, it is safe to argue that organization of care labor is an area of conflict and contention. Greenhouse work requires re-organization, when such conflicts happen. For example, even though her mother-in-law says to Merve "I have full support to you, go and start working there at the Greenhouse. I will watch over the kids", she reduces her support from the beginning. While she was concerned more in the first year, it decreased in the next and was eventually only two weeks in the third year. Merve had to find other sources of help not to quit. Such cases sometimes result in leaving the

Greenhouse job for women, when they fail to organize it. Yüksel says she had to leave the Greenhouse job after two months since she could not organize the care of three kids. For this reason, she spent a year at home taking care of them and started again after. Not being supported as promised or being refused from the beginning may make women more ambitious, hardworking and proud as they do their best to fulfill the responsibilities of two worlds of work and home. It becomes a challenge in which they overwork and prove themselves.

The boy was just nine months old, completely helpless. My mother-in-law said 'I won't look after him!' That was it for me, I have my pride. They thought little of me, said I wouldn't be able to do it. You should have seen me, this one Meliha became like ten people. Come on, work, work. You'd have thought there was a motor pump in the field, I was so fast. The baby would be under the tree, I'd finish my row, then go and do the diaper, leave my son in the shade. Then back to the field. Meliha

Organization of care labor is also an area of solidarity. Regarding the experiences of the women's pre-*Greenhouse* period, it seems they developed several strategies to deal with the burden of care labor. Women say that they stayed either with the parents of their husbands or their own parents, sharing the same house or living next to each other. As a result, women with babies or small children could find the chance to go to the fields as daily laborers. Mothers-in-law also help with domestic chores, which may not only include the basic chores of cleaning and cooking, but also others such as bread making or watering the garden.²⁵⁴ Sometimes women rotate — i.e. go to work one after another — with

²⁵⁴ Nevertheless, with or without help, the responsibilities in the fields and at home are tiring for the women, and they frequently mention the heavy burden they are under. An unequal gender division labor is visible in the fields, too:

The men don't go to the fields alone. The women work a lot. Maybe one percent or something go to the fields alone, do their own work. My aunt's husband took her to the fields just so she could prepare food. He didn't want it prepared the night before. He wanted to eat it freshly cooked at the fields. That woman would prepare the entire meal from scratch there. Semiha

Additionally, women mention how this affects their breastmilk, which may decrease or even cease entirely due to exhaustion. The lack of ready to use products — i.e. diapers or formula —

one women going to work, while the other takes care of the children.²⁵⁵ Semiha did this for 15 years with her mother-in-law. When it comes to how women deal with burden of care while working at the *Greenhouse*, we see very similar patterns to those observed in their pre-*Greenhouse* experiences. Saadet leaves her two-year-old granddaughter with her mother-in-law takes while she is away at work. The women live next to each other and Saadet's in-laws mostly spend their days at her house.

There are other combinations in shouldering the care labor so that women can go to work at the *Greenhouse*. In a few cases, the father and mother-in-law or sister-in-law share the day's tasks. While lunch and sending the children to school are the father's responsibilities, the mother-in-law watches over them until that time. In one example, the grandparents look after their grandson the entire day since both of the parents work. The women in these situations underline that it would be impossible for them to work at the *Greenhouse* if their husband/father-in-law did not help them. However, I was never told about the involvement of fathers in care labor during the pre-*Greenhouse* period in the fields. In sum, whether it is work in the fields or at the *Greenhouse*, the most common way of organizing care is to call on the help of other female members of the family, mainly the

and of the purchasing power to buy them even when they are available, contribute to the hardship of care labor:

She breastfed for a year and a half but it wasn't enough. The baby wouldn't eat anything else. I couldn't get him used to formula because we couldn't buy it regularly. Wages were low, formula expensive. When I started on the fields, I stopped breastfeeding. Saadet

²⁵⁵ Children should also get along well with those who are responsible for them while the mother is away. There are two women who say that their children cannot stay without them, for this reason they postponed the idea of working. As long as care labor is the woman's responsibility, the unity of the mother and child turns out to be vicious circle that monotonously reproduces itself:

I raised my kid myself. Then I wanted to go back to work. My mother-in-law was going to look after him, but he wouldn't stay with her. Otherwise I was going to go and start work. When I wasn't there, he broke the windows in the house. He never stayed alone, I never left him. Sabriye

woman's mother-in-law and mother.²⁵⁶ In particular when the baby becomes a toddler, those women, as well as the worker's older children, are the core support team, while the mother is away at work. As women mostly leave home before their children wake up, they come to the house to wake the children up, give them breakfast and prepare them for school. This again necessitates living close to each other, as in the pre-*Greenhouse* experience. While there are three women supported by family members who live next to them, one woman had to leave the *Greenhouse* work due to lack of support.

Another pattern that continues in the *Greenhouse* period is the help of older siblings. Mother-workers also appeal to help of their older children, mostly girls. In this case, the young girls are obliged to act like grown-ups and shoulder some of the responsibilities of the mother. Some of the women say that if they did not have the support of a daughter who could help with the care work, there would again be no possibility for them to go to work. In these examples, mother and daughter split the work in two. In these situations, the children being looked after tend to be older than four or five. The oldest daughter of Yüksel took care of her two younger sisters for years, while her mother was at the *Greenhouse*. In addition, once they think their children are grown-up enough, many seem to leave them on their own as a solution to be away from home at the *Greenhouse*. The exact age at which children are deemed "grown-up enough" varies from mother to mother. The mothers give their children more responsibility day by day so that they get used to taking care of themselves. However, they still check on the children while they are at work to make sure everything is okay. The women try to do all they can to make things easier for their children before they

²⁵⁶ This may also lead to conflict, yet the women have no other choice. For example, Bütçeyra's mother-in-law lives with them in her very small house as she takes care of the baby. They do not get along well with each other, yet Bütçeyra is reliant on her help as she knows that without it, it would not be possible to go to the *Greenhouse*.

leave the house in the morning,²⁵⁷ and they generally wake up earlier than necessary so that they can make breakfast, prepare other meals and finish off any remaining housework.

[The alarm on] my phone was set for 5:30. In the morning I prepare two flasks of tea; one for me, one for my son. I prepare breakfast. at 6:20 I wake him up. I put on his socks, 'cause he won't wear them otherwise. I sit down to breakfast. I get on the shuttle bus without giving him his breakfast. Then at 8:00 I call my son from the Greenhouse. I tell him to go outside and turn the lights off. He gets scared on his own, so he sits there with all the lights on. Güldeste

I prefer to use word of “burden” for the requirements of care since they are assigned to women as a primary duty. However, care has a convoluted nature. It is composed not only compose of the obligations, requirements and responsibilities, but also of aspects of love and support. When not satisfied with the organization of care, women can feel worried and anxious, and therefore feel a constant need to check on their children while at the *Greenhouse*.²⁵⁸ The younger the child, the greater the mother's concern. It is for this reason that women sometimes stress that they would like to stay at home to look after the children (as well as sick and elderly relatives), if they were not obliged to earn money. The women also complain that they have difficulties in helping their

²⁵⁷ There are women whose children are also employed at the *Greenhouse*. These mothers mostly do the same for the grown-up children: Devrim says that she always wakes up only 10 minutes before they leave the home to catch the shuttle bus, since her mother has already got everything ready for her too.

²⁵⁸ For example, Bedia says that her two children started boarding school since she used to think of them all the time while working at the *Greenhouse*. Serpil was always worried about her children, and one day her son left the house without telling her and she did not hear from him all day long. He was with his friends wandering around. This was the last straw for her, and she resigned the next day, telling me, “I can't go on any ore, it's not working. They're not okay without me at home.” Once she told me that she would have liked to start work earlier but the children were a “problem” for her. Then she wanted to “give it a try” at the *Greenhouse*. Eventually it did not work for her and she resigned. As care labor is the responsibility of women alone, they cannot make long-term plans for their working life.

children complete their homework or study for exams. They state that, emotionally and economically, they are trapped between these two worlds.²⁵⁹

You have to save your leave days; in case something happens. Our company has no empathy. My kid got really messed up without me around. She ran away from home. I said, 'I'm going to quit.' Then Mr X called, and said 'I'll sort out your leave. We need you and you need us.' I was hesitant but also happy. Merve²⁶⁰

I never left him alone. At the greenhouse I always ask permission to call my baby boy. At first, I cried a lot, I really missed my son. You have to work, for the future, I had debts. I can't look after my son, we leave first thing in the morning and come back late at night. That makes me sad. Sabriye

In addition to their children, there are always other people for the women to take care of. Elderly family members left behind at home are another source of worry for the women when they are away at work. Nadide says that if she already had social security, she would not prefer to work at the *Greenhouse* since her mother is too old to be alone at home. She states that it is not an easy choice. Furthermore, it is not always young children or elderly relatives who need to be taken care of. For example, when the son of Gülbeniz started working at the mine, she left the *Greenhouse* so that she could look after him. Working in the mines is hard work, and as such he needed to eat well which Gülbeniz felt

²⁵⁹ The husband of Semiha got sick and died soon after. She once stated that she had to work after her loss. Yet this question still makes her think, "I sometimes wonder what I'd have done if my husband hadn't died but had been left bedridden. Would I have looked after him or come to work?"

²⁶⁰ Merve and her daughter set a special example. Şirin has a mental deficiency and her mother does all she can to overcome the difficulties she encounters. Merve has a deep concern for her daughter. For example, I spent the night before her daughter's birthday at their house. Merve prepared food, drinks and gifts all night long for a birthday party she had organized the following day at the *Greenhouse*. She also bought her new shoes and a dress. It was three in the morning when we went to bed, after cooking the big pot of *sarma* [meat and rice wrapped in grape leaves]. We then woke up two hours later to get ready for the shuttle service from Cinge, Soma. Merve was then fully of energy the entire day, as though she had not spent the entire night working at home.

required “mum’s care”.²⁶¹ Likewise, Deste left the *Greenhouse* for two months to take care of her sick father, before returning to work there.

6.1.2. Domestic Chores

Yesterday I came home, did the laundry, swept and cleaned the garden, cooked dinner, then I thought I’d have a bit of a rest. I mean I wouldn’t go to sleep at that time but at least give my body a bit of a rest. But I fell asleep. Merve

This section details how women handle the burden of domestic chores, which are again attributed to women in the traditional gender division of labor. These chores primarily include cleaning, cooking, taking care of the subsistence garden and animals, making bread, etc.²⁶² In a few cases, painting walls is also seen as the women's responsibility. Aside from the care of plants and animals, domestic chores, by nature, seem to be deferrable for the majority of women. As such, they seem to have a secondary status that comes after care labor in the hierarchy of tasks attributed to women. This flexibility offers a wider range of options for women to deal with such chores, compared to the re-organization of care labor.

The majority of the women say how hard it used to be to do these chores in the past because of the lack of appliances, i.e. washing machine, dishwasher or vacuum. They say they can now do it with ease, thanks to these appliances.²⁶³ In the past, such chores used to take a lot of time, since each was done manually.

²⁶¹ For a while Gülbeniz was satisfied with this, and she even cultivated tobacco to support the household income. However, this was not enough and later, she had to return to the *Greenhouse* as they were unable to pay back their loan.

²⁶² Toksöz defines it as “food management, housework, washing and ironing laundry, work in the garden and looking after animals, building and repairs, shopping and services, household management, childcare and helping an adult family member.” (2014: 103).

²⁶³ There is only one household where there is no washing machine therefore Deste has to clean the clothes still by her own hand.

As the chores usually came alongside other duties for the women, life was extremely difficult for them. This is why Servet says what she experienced in the past was not poverty but drudgery, with responsibilities for three children as well as animals, and tobacco production. However, while technology improves year after year, the same tasks are still attributed to women.

When it comes to the question of who fulfills the chores when woman go to work, answer is again either the woman herself or other women in charge, while the contribution of the men in the households remains relatively low. The time left to the women after they finish work, and before leaving for work in the morning, is extremely limited, and does not allow the women to complete all the housework duties assigned to them. The women therefore do only the minimum necessary, and use their days off for the majority of the household chores i.e., sweeping the floor, cleaning windows, washing carpet or cooking. Since women say that after a day at work, they have no time or energy left to deal with the chores.²⁶⁴ That is why, after a work day, the majority of women limit the housework they do to clearing the table and washing the dishes.

Even though they may only do a minimum of housework, it is still the women who do the chores. There are very few cases of women who never deal with chores after work. Women also undervalue themselves and make their labor invisible regarding domestic chores. Despite saying they do “almost nothing or less than usual”, we can see that the women still do most of the housework on a regular basis, yet they do not consider this to be worth mentioning. For example, Bedihe says she does not deal with housework in the morning before she leaves the home. Yet this is not the case:

²⁶⁴ This is observed in the mornings when the women ask after each other. They women often say, “The day draws in and we go to bed. Then the day dawns, we wake up and here we are again.” This has become a form of greeting for the women when they are on their way to the units to start the working day in the morning.

I get up at quarter to six, I don't do any work in the morning. I'm tired, don't have any energy. That's why I do the housework in the evenings. In the morning I put away the clean clothes and dishes, clean the toilet.

However, they sometimes have to do physically tiring jobs such as making bread, which requires them to wake up significantly earlier than usual. Putting away clothes, preparing some food for breakfast at work or for the others members of the household, watering the flowers/garden and taking care of the animals are other tasks carried out by the women in the morning.

I get up around five thirty. I make breakfast for the kids. I make the beds, water the flowers. Sometimes there's no bread, so I get up at four, I did it the other day, kneaded the dough and then the neighbor's son took it to the baker's here to bake it and brought it back. That's how it is, sometimes I get up early.
Gülizar

Waking up earlier than needed to do the chores is the case for most of the women at the *Greenhouse*. As was the case for care labor, the women do as much as they can before they leave the house to go to work. However, they also state that they change their attitudes and habits toward domestic chores. Some mention that they buy many products from the supermarkets in town, instead of making them themselves. This was a job that they used to do so not only for the whole family, but also for the guests they invited to their homes. Women say they used to serve special foods for their guests which would take a lot of time to make. Yet, after the *Greenhouse*, they generally invite less people to their homes, and accordingly they do not go and visit others.²⁶⁵

²⁶⁵ In this sense, what Adile says is quite interesting. Adile is a widow who has been working at the *Greenhouse* for three years. It is not her first job, and she worked in many different places before the *Greenhouse*. When talking about the domestic chores, she said that due to her working life she has forgotten how to have guests at her house. She associates the public space with men, while women are identified with the private space, i.e. home. She says that she is a widow who works outside of the home, therefore identifying herself with "manhood" instead of "womanhood". She sees having guests and serving them special food, etc. as a woman's job, and therefore says she feels distant from such tasks.

In addition, women spend their days off doing the chores at home. Instead of taking a rest, the majority states that their days off are even more tiring than their days at the *Greenhouse*. They generally spend the entire day deep cleaning their houses or take the opportunity to go to the local market. Multiple days off, such as three subsequent days off during religious holidays, tire them even more, since they are the ones who are expected to clean deep the house for the guests, prepare food and drinks, and show hospitality, as well as clean the house again after the guests have left.

When the women are unable to complete all the housework on their own, their primary supporters are again other women, i.e. daughter-in-law, mother, mother-in-law or sister. For example, besides taking care of her granddaughter, Saadet's mother-in-law does the domestic chores, since Saadet leaves home around five in the morning. She says "Thanks to her, I don't do anything, I just have a cup of tea and leave the house." Fadime's daughter always cooks for the family and cleans the house. Fadime appreciates her daughter's efforts while stressing that it would be really difficult for her to do all of these if her daughter did not. Fadime knows how tiring it is for her friends who work both at the *Greenhouse* and home. In addition, when the people who support the women cannot do so any longer, it is once again her responsibility. For example, Leyla says she does the chores when her mother gets sick. Expectations from the "daughter of house" in accordance with the traditional gender division of labor may sometimes prevent the young *Greenhouse* women from resting at home. Halime says her mother does "everything" while she is working, yet when they have guests, she, as the "daughter of house", is expected to serve them. Sometimes the supporter is caught between two people who need her help in care work and domestic chores.

When my mum was staying with me, she did the housework, cooked the food. Then when she went to my older sister's it was all down to me again. It's great if there's someone at home doing all this, but when you come home from work already tired and then have to cook and do the housework it tires you out even more. Selma

In some cases, the arrival of a new female to the family through marriage means the transfer of these tasks to her, and frees the older women in the household of domestic chores. The chores are transferred from the older generations of women to new ones. For example, Bingül works at the *Greenhouse* and lives together with her two daughters-in-law. She is very proud of the fact that they do not go to work, as she does. She says they are responsible for the chores at home and for the care of their children. Bingül does not cook, make bread or clean at home, she just deals with the subsistence garden, a task that she enjoys.

If there is no woman available to support the working women, then the male members of the household and the children step in, mainly to do the basic chores: They cook some dishes, set the table before the woman arrives home after work, or light the stove. In other words, the chores are not equally distributed to the male and female members of the family. Although the men do some tasks, this is usually for a temporary period and they do not view them as their jobs, and thus do not take the full responsibility of a certain task. Nevertheless, men seem to adjust themselves to domestic chores more easily than to care labor in the new gender division of labor. Women appreciate their temporary contributions, saying it is like lifesaving since they are so tired when they get home.

Finally, when there is no one available to support the women by sharing the burden in question, then the women shoulder this burden themselves. In this sense, women whose network is either unavailable or limited commonly ask the same question: “Who is going to help me? Everything is once again down to me alone.” Likewise, divorced women complain of having no one to ask for help, underlining that they are mostly alone with their children.

6.2. (Non) Consent of the Males

The whole of Cinge got in a flutter about it — ‘Serpil got a job!’ ‘Your husband works for the state,’ they said, ‘you’ve got a house, why [work]?’ I wanted to show them what happens when you work in the Greenhouse. When there’s piles and piles of food to eat, why should I make do with little? I did it ‘cause I wanted to stand on my own two feet. When you go to work people exaggerate, saying ‘This or that will happen...’ But nothing happens. Serpil

It is not enough for the women themselves to decide to start working outside the home; it also requires negotiation with the men of the household — generally their husbands and fathers, while sometimes, it is the woman’s son who needs to be convinced. There are two approaches observed regarding men’s attitudes towards women working outside the home. While the majority seems to be in content with the idea of women working,²⁶⁶ a few of them oppose it. As will be detailed, the content here is conditional; insurance gained through employment at the *Greenhouse* seems to convince men not to oppose their wives/daughters being away from the home. On the other hand, the actions of those who oppose the idea of working women include intimidation and even violence.

It is safe to say that in contemporary rural areas today, having social security is seen as a privileged status by households. Neoliberal re-structuring creates vulnerability, insecurity, poverty and stress for members of households who have difficulty sustaining their lives in rural areas. To have insurance not only guarantees solutions to possible health problems of the entire family, but also gives the women a little hope that at some point in the future they will be able to retire with a pension. The possibility of having a fixed income as wage and/or retirement pension is also vital to households. Under these conditions, the notion of insurance plays a significant role in breaking down the patriarchal barriers and

²⁶⁶ Women working outside the home seems to be cause for humor in a few rare cases. For instance, Meliha laughs while talking about starting the Greenhouse job: "I used to say, 'Have a good day at work' in the morning before he left the house. Now, he says the same to me when I leave very early in the morning!"

allowing women to participate in paid labor. It also erodes the men's position as breadwinner.

In this sense, I observed that men support women of the *Greenhouse* who are employed with social security. The father of Kevser supported her from the beginning, when he heard she would be working with insurance. After few months working with no insurance, her father told her that if thought she would be able to overcome the difficulties at work, then it would be beneficial for her to be registered for insurance. He said that even if she worked only one day with insurance payments, it would still be worth it. Likewise, the husband of Elmas told her that if the *Company* was not planning to insure her, then she should leave the job. Even those who oppose the idea of women working outside the home seem to be convinced by the social security payments provided at the *Greenhouse*. Merve's father only allows her to go to work at the *Greenhouse* for its insurance.

However, for the majority of women it is not always easy, and many struggle to be "allowed" to go to work. They may ultimately convince their husbands or fathers to accept the fact that they will be working outside home, they have to fight hard for this. Eager and determined to work, these women are exposed to the verbal and physical violence of the men and other members of their families. Their attitude is not only towards the *Greenhouse* job, but also for other non-agricultural jobs. They think that these jobs are "not secure". Women working with strangers in an anonymous work environment threatens their status at home. For example, it was not a problem when Semiha was working with her own family and relatives in tobacco production, as they never worked with daily laborers from outside the family.²⁶⁷ When it comes to "outside jobs", her father

²⁶⁷ Semiha says she always used to work in the fields of neighbors, relatives or acquaintances. She never found a job with the help of middleman so that there would be no gossip about her. Likewise, Serpil mentions how hard it is to be a woman in rural areas. She also used to go to the fields with her parents as a daily laborer, since she was not allowed to stay on her own at home. When they were on the fields, she and her sister had to be in front of their parents so that they

was the first to get angry. Her husband was sick at home and therefore unable to work. Yet her father used to say “He doesn’t go to work but sends his wife out to make money. I’ll really have it out with him.” After she lost her husband, it was her two sons who opposed their mother going to work, saying, “A mother of two cannot go to work!” She was unable to take on a job for a while, but in the end, she had no choice but to lie to her children and started working at the *Greenhouse*. However, one of them understood what she was doing: “He said, ‘Don’t you tell me you’ve been going to the Greenhouse.’ He didn’t want me to, ‘It’s outside, far away, there’s no bus, you have to get a ride from such and such. It’s not like working with family, you can’t do it in public,’ he said.” However, as time passed, they were convinced that it was safe to “allow” her to work. Similarly, Yonca says that in the beginning, her father did not allow her to go to work. She also adds that taking the *Greenhouse* job was the first time in her life that she had gone against her father’s wishes. Her mother convinced her father with the argument that the *Greenhouse* offered a *good* wage and insurance. Finally, it was when Ümmühan was suffering from depression following her miscarriage that her husband was finally convinced to let her go to work. Before this he would say he did not like the idea of his wife being away from the house.

In some cases, the men’s discontent at the idea of their wives/daughters working goes further. One day, Adile showed me a broken window in her house, telling me that it had been broken by her husband because he did not want her to go to work anymore. She was a cleaning lady in the primary school where she took her four-year-old child with her. Her husband had gone bankrupt at that time and she wanted to support him, but despite this, the idea of her working was not acceptable to him and she finally left the job. Like the husband of Adile, Merve’s husband was against the idea in so much that he broke windows in the house

could watch over them: “The girls don’t get left home alone. They marry early.” As her parents used to say, she was never left on her own and later married in an early age.

several times to scare his wife.²⁶⁸ Another of the women, Merve, was extremely determined to achieve her goals; she has no support from her family and a problematic marriage with a husband who never has regular work.

I was working the night shift at the tomato paste factory, no social security, they don't treat you like human beings. Then in the evening take care of the kids and family. I took the husband there too but he quit, he wanted me to quit too. He was a psycho. He punched me. Broke a window at home. He wanted me to need him, didn't want me to be able to stand on my own two feet. My family said, 'Your man isn't working, why are you working?' They made me quit. But I'd got it in my head I was going to work. The day I quit [the factory] I started looking for another job. I'm not going to ask anyone [for permission], I said. [...] I started work at a restaurant. Dishes, serving. Then the animal came and broke the window again. Why don't I give up? I didn't want to give in to him. I tried so hard to fight it. I don't want to have to ask anyone for money. Then I decided on the greenhouse. Then he'd turn my alarm off so I wouldn't wake up in the morning. He'd hang up on people who called in the morning. Merve

It is not only men, but also other women who are in unhappy about women who like to work. According to Serpil, it is viewed as strange, especially if the household is not drastically impoverished. Nobody understands that a woman may want to work just because she wishes to do so. In addition, when it is a mixed workplace, the presence of males is not welcomed. Finally, when women know that it is not possible to obtain the consent of males, then they hide the fact that they go to work at the *Greenhouse*. One of these women is Saadet, who has been working there for more than two years without the knowledge of her father. She takes advantage of living in another city, and if her parents call her when she is at the *Greenhouse*, she lies and tries to handle the situation. Erman, Kalaycıoğlu and Rittersberger-Tılıç (2002) argue that the husband's natal family more easily tolerates the disruption of the male breadwinner model compared to

²⁶⁸ I saw three houses with replaced window panes, since they had been broken by the men of the households during the fieldwork. While explaining transformation on patriarchy in village, Kandiyoti warns that women with a regular income can be seen as a threat by men working in irregular and seasonal jobs: "(...) it can lead to extreme examples of semi-parasitic dependency. While this dependency has the potential to provide women with more autonomy, it can, on the contrary, lead to stricter and more violent behavior towards them in an attempt to control them. Such defensive patriarchal behavior should not be compared to the traditional forms; however, these are the context in which men will most fiercely defend their ideologies of superiority" (2012: 66-67).

the woman's natal family. While the former tends to ignore the "failure" of their son, supporting the woman's participation in work, the latter blames the husband. As a result, rural migrant women are trapped between the two families, and at times keep their work life as a secret, in the case of Saadet.

6.3. Women's Wages

For the majority of these women this is the first time in their lives they have had a regular income. When the wages are put into their accounts, it is not the women but mostly their husbands, sons or fathers who draw the money, as they carry women's ATM cards. Or if the women withdraw the money themselves, they then hand it over to the men in question. One exception to this rule is the 90-year-old mother of Nadide, who takes Nadide's wages from her and manages the household budget. While men control wages, the majority of women is given "pocket money", usually 10 or 20 TL per day.²⁶⁹ While working at the *Greenhouse*, I also observed that the women generally carry small amounts of money with them to buy food from the market for breakfast, if they have not prepared it the night before. They may also spend this money on the simple clothes sold at cheap prices on the shuttle buses, or buy agricultural products sold by other women, such as like olive or lettuce. Otherwise than this, they do not spend any money during the regular working day; it is only on market day that they bring more money with them than usual so they can do the weekly shopping.

Almost all the women spend their wages primarily on the needs of the household, which they describe as their "contribution to family budget". This money is used for anything from shopping at the market to buying new furniture. It is also spent on religious events such as circumcision feasts or buying an animal for the ritual of sacrificial, as well as on the costs of children's education

²⁶⁹ Approximately \$3.42 and \$6.84 in 2016.

and debts. Women are very proud of new furniture, modern domestic appliances or the building of extra floors on the house as they primarily finance them. Besides ordinary consumption, I observed that women's wages are used for emergencies, such as financing family members' health problems and taking care of relatives in prison. For instance, Yonca regularly pays the lawyer's fee for her imprisoned brother, while Kevser pays for her father's doctor and hospital expenses. Students employed seasonally use their *Greenhouse* wages towards the cost of their education. Known as regular income earners, the women are also asked by other family members to take out loans. The ways in which women spend the money from the *Greenhouse* are similar to how they spent the money earned as daily laborer, revealing a continuation in the consumption patterns dominated by the needs of the household and family members. Some women say that they had "nothing" when they got married. Bit by bit, they used their daily payments (*yevmiye*) to furnish their houses, and women also say, that it was thanks to this money that they were able to afford to pay for marriage and/or engagement ceremonies for their children. The main difference between the two forms of income two is that the regular wage enables women to make long terms plans, such as applying for credit or asking for a further loan (since they can be trusted to pay it back). On the other hand, women say the money earned through daily payments was only spent for small necessities or pocket money. When it comes to saving patterns, very few women state that they can save money. Those who can generally buy "quarter gold" coins or gold bracelets, yet the vast majority are unable to do so. Merve is the only woman who has managed to save much more than the rest, saving 25,000 TL over three years, through seven different sources of income.²⁷⁰ The majority of the women say they "neither save nor die". In their own words, it is impossible to save, especially if the woman has children, or is paying rent or in debt.

²⁷⁰ As mentioned before, she sells mushrooms, olive and *gözleme* at the *Greenhouse* while also working as a laborer there. On her days off she works as cleaning lady. She also receives a share of the annual income from her family's olive groves.

Except from divorced women and widows, there are some women who consider the family budget as a pool in which diverse incomes are saved together. They say there is no separation of “my money” and “your money”, as they see family as a unit. These women are generally middle age and/or married. Women whose husbands willingly give them money every time they ask talk about them with pride. Bingül says her husband “doesn’t begrudge [us] money. Not the daughters-in-law, not me. I take from [my] wage and buy what I need and give the rest to him. Even if I ask for 1000 TL, he gives me it. He’s not at all stingy.” Women do not seem to problematize the men’s control over their money. At the same time, Gülcan says she understands those who hide money from their husbands, even though she herself does not do so as her husband is not “one of the bad ones spending money on gambling and alcohol”. The case of middle-aged women seems to be in line with those in the study of Suzuki and Gündüz Hoşgör. While they enjoy socialization at work like the younger women, they still spend their earnings mostly on household needs, while “the work did not seem to empower them much within the households” (2019: 550-551).

However, the fact that their wages are managed by the men does not mean that women do not know how it is spent. Even though it is always in the hands of the males of the household and women never know the full details of the budget, they still know regular expenses, such as repayment instalments or bills. Considering the levels of indebtedness and poverty in these households, the *Greenhouse* wages are primarily spent on household needs, rather than personal ones. However, the same economic conditions impact women and men differently, which is why men are identified as “costly”, while women see themselves as “inexpensive, problem-free” due to their very limited consumption. Although they experienced the same economic deprivation, men can still spend money on cigarettes, alcoholic drinks or drinking tea in local coffee houses. Rural men take advantage of their mobility to socialize in public, which is also costly. When it comes to women, they barely spend money on their personal needs, such as going to hairdresser or participating in women’s

gatherings known as “*gün*”.²⁷¹ Fadime says she gives 1000 TL out of 1300 TL to her husband, and keeps 150 TL to spend on *gün* and 150 TL for her personal needs. Saadet and her husband both work at the *Greenhouse*; Saadet says her wages cover the household needs, while the rest is his “pin money” as he smokes a pack of cigarettes every day.

At the same time, there seems to be another tendency among younger and unmarried women, who say they use their wages to buy things for themselves: a smart phone, new clothes or other consumption goods for personal use. These women are also able to put aside part of their wages for their future plans, such as education or marriage. However, this does not mean that their parents do not demand a part of their wages, and these women always give a certain amount of money to their family. In these families, parents tend to have greater control over the wages of their daughters than of their sons. In this sense, there is a difference between daughters and sons, when it comes to their “contributions” to the family budget. What young women earn is associated more with “household money” by their parents, while the young men are freer to spend the money as they wish. For example, Halime says that in the beginning, her mother never used to leave her any money from the wages she earned at the *Greenhouse*. Her brother, on the other hand, furnished the upper floor of the house with his own money as he planned to live there after getting married. Likewise, Yonca’s parents built a new house next to theirs for her brother to live in with his new family, yet he is currently in prison now and taken care of using the money she earns at the *Greenhouse* money, money that is also spent to pay into her father’s pension fund. In addition, the majority of divorced women enjoys a separate budget. Seher and Güldeste have their own budget, managing the *Greenhouse* money as they like — for example Güldeste pays into a personal pension plan every month. Yüksel, on the other hand, still suffers from her ex-husband’s economic

²⁷¹ *Gün*, meaning “day” is a social gathering organized only for women. The participants are made up of close neighbors, relatives and/or friends, who generally meet in each other’s homes.

interference and her wages automatically repay her husband's bank debt. She receives only the remaining 200 TL (of a total 1300 TL) as pocket money.

In sum, the *Greenhouse* money seems to be used for diverse purposes within the household economics. As regular income, it is indispensable given the economic deprivation of the households in question. However, women seem to gain less benefit from this budget than men due to gendered consumption patterns. Kay (2006) argues that women experience secondary poverty, i.e. higher poverty than other members of the households, due to the gendered domestic power relations. They generally receive only pocket money, while the rest of the household income is controlled by men under the name of family budget. However, as mentioned earlier, a different tendency seems to emerge among unmarried and young women because of their relatively separated economic budget and consumption patterns.

6.4. Perceptions of Work and Potentials for Change

I want to see the kids achieve something. They belittle my daughter, call her stupid. They say, 'She doesn't understand, she can't do it.' Even my own family. I want her to have a profession, I don't want her to have to need to do certain things like her mother, I want her to have confidence. I will never give up the struggle. For them, I won't give up. Merve

What do women think about working in general, and *Greenhouse* work in particular? This section attempts to explore the women's perceptions as well as the reasons behind them. Women's perceptions towards the *Greenhouse* work include sharp critiques on restrictive and coercive practices at work. Examining what work means to these women further reveals the possible niches, i.e. potentials for change, that it creates in women's lives. These niches reveal themselves through the ways in which the women use the work to bring greater freedom to their personal lives.

6.4.1. Idea of Work, Reality of the Greenhouse

Women predominantly appreciate and approve of the idea of working. Even though they offer sharp critiques about the *Greenhouse* work, they are still happy to have a job. I believe that the reason for this attitude should be considered within the women's own reasons for participate in paid labor,²⁷² which shed light on the gendered context in which rural women participate in paid labor. It is only then that we can gain a complete understanding of what the idea of work means in the lives of the women of the *Greenhouse*.

The dominant reason for women to participate in paid work seems to be economic obligation, since the households to which the women belong are in economic deprivation and highly indebted. Therefore, an urgent need for cash marks these women's participation in the labor force. As mentioned previously, women are the regular income earners of the household, unlike men who are often unemployed or work irregularly. Women repay credit/load installments and/or pay for the household living expenses. The women's wages women are further used to take care of family members who are sick or in prison. The women workers of the *Greenhouse* pay lawyer's fees for prisoners, doctor's fees and their father/father-in-law's insurance payments. In sum, their crucial role in household economics cannot be denied.

Social security is another reason behind women's desire to work. This is so important that women leave their current job to find another one with insurance. This is especially the case for those with prior experience of off-farm jobs, as agricultural work is always without insurance. Women's desire for and insistence on insurance are striking. A similar attitude is expressed by one woman after the other: "Even if it's not a lot, as long as it's regular" or "It is not important how

²⁷² Women generally have more than one reason. For example, the urgent need for cash goes hand in hand with other reasons summarized above. Yet they are categorized here for the sake of the analysis.

much money you make, what matters is the insurance.”²⁷³ They also say that this is the difference between them and previous generations of rural women. Some of them say they started working at the *Greenhouse* and left as they were not insured. Hamiyet left the workplace after seven years as she could no longer wait to be insured. Similarly, Merve resigned from a glassware shop and a restaurant for the same reason.

I kept saying ‘I want insurance.’ My child and me, we were both without insurance. Okay, so you might meet your daily needs, but you wonder what would happen if you had an accident, or when you get old. I realized the importance of insurance once I had children. People before us didn’t see the benefit, they don’t know, but we’ve seen the benefit of having insurance.
Ümmühan

According to women, it is a pity that all those years spent in (difficult) employment passed without insurance. Therefore, for women who worked for many years as unpaid family laborers, insistence on insurance also means staking claim to their own labor. For example, Deste has been working for approximately 45 years, yet it is only recently that she has been insured through the *Greenhouse*. Likewise, Gülcan was registered for social security after 30 years of work. Such women regret that so many years passed without insurance. Besides this, the women say that having insurance provides “self-confidence”, as it strengthens them in their personal and public lives. A formal job with insurance is also an important step on their way to retirement. Even though they find the work hard, the possibility of receiving a pension is still important to women. Only a very small numbers of women at the *Greenhouse* are close to being able to retire. This, however, is the main motivation for these women to go to work; they all dream of leaving the *Greenhouse* once they can retire. There are

²⁷³ During the fieldwork, a relative of Gülizar was involved in a traffic accident. He had no social security and was sent away from the ER and told he was fine. When his pain continued, he went to another hospital, where it was found that he had a broken bone. They asked for 7000 TL for the operation. This has made the family very pessimistic, and while telling the story of what happened, Gülizar said, “Better to have insurance than property.” To my ears, this sounded like a *Greenhouse* worker’s motto.

even some who make plans to restructure their debt using their *Greenhouse* wages to enable them to retire.

Women attribute significance to formal employment insomuch that they tend to ignore pre-*Greenhouse* working experiences. When asked about their work biographies, most of the women told me that they had never worked before in their lives. Knowing that they used to work in the fields as early as from childhood, I further asked about their experiences in agricultural work and husbandry. I then realized that the women did not accept such works as “jobs”, since they are not waged or insured: “[Those before the *Greenhouse*] weren’t really work.” When the women are asked whether or not they had worked before, they understand that the question refers to waged jobs with insurance. As a result, they did not mention any experience. In her job interview, Semiha was asked whether she had any prior work experience. When she said no, the manager was surprised and asked again: “Haven’t you ever worked in the fields!?” To which she replied that she had but that “It doesn’t count.” He laughed and said “Yes it does.”

Another reason for the women to participate in the labor force is for the new social ties they gain through the *Greenhouse* work, which offers an alternative network to that composed of relatives and neighbors. This brings us to another issue that marks the lives of rural women: Limited mobility. Being confined to certain places and networks, what women experience at the *Greenhouse* is highly different. Many women say it is “the first time” they find themselves “out” (of the home) and “in society”. In this sense, “society” consists of unfamiliar people and relationships at the workplace, far from home. While it refers to strangers in the beginning, over the course of time a familiarity is developed. While working in an anonymous place with strangers is a completely new experience for many of the women, it can lead to problems in the beginning. Women say they feel anxious, excited and hesitant. Some remember crying a lot. This is also why they underline the issue of friendship at work and define it as encouraging and

motivating. Some even state that without the support of friends at work, it would not be possible for them to continue at the *Greenhouse*.

It was the first time for me going out of the house and you go into such a different environment! Suddenly I had this big new family. We all come from different places, we'd sit down to eat at the same table, we shared our water, everything we had. I didn't even see such warmth from my family. X is a very close friend of mine; we share the same fate. We're in the same job, have the same problems. Whenever I cried, she would always be by my side, trying to console me. She gave me a lot of moral support from the very beginning. Yüksel

Women say they spend the whole day together and see other women more than their own family members, which is why some of them prefer to identify the social atmosphere at work as family or home.²⁷⁴ Nadide says she cannot stop thinking about her friends at the *Greenhouse* while she is not working, while Halime says that she would never consider resigning until the moment her friends leave the *Greenhouse*, even though she has problems with the management. Büteyra — who finds herself in a neighborhood surrounded by unfamiliar family and neighbors after a marriage of which her family do not approve — says her friends at work is her biggest source of motivation. The women underline that they are able to stand the *Greenhouse* work through the help of friendship that brings joy and friendly conversation. In this sense, sitting at the same table, where they share food, cups of tea, and stories of their lives, means a lot to the women. Halime says eating alone was so hard and depressing after her friends left the *Greenhouse*. According to the Human Resources Unit (HRU), the *Greenhouse* work offers women a chance to socialize; they then get close to and help each other, even making plans to spend their days off together. The HRU says this is an opportunity they do not have in the villages due to the limited social life there: “You could never see so many people in the village.”

²⁷⁴ As mentioned previously, it does not only consist of positive features. While women support each other in solidarity, they are also rivalling under performance system. In this sense, gossip is one of the main complaints expressed by women.

Not only does working in “society” enlarge the women’s worlds, it also helps them to overcome personal troubles, an aspect that is indicated by the women as a reason to go to work. Those troubles include miscarriage, depression or bereavement. Women with such experiences state that “being home all day long was not helping”. Leaving the house to go to work occupies their minds and eventually helps to overcome those troubles. In this sense, participation in working life, particularly the *Greenhouse* work becomes a significant tool with which the women make themselves better.

If I hadn’t started work, maybe I’d be dead now. I gave myself to my work. I can’t take it but I try to keep going. [The doctor] said, ‘Rather than take this medication, devote yourself to work. Bingül

The Greenhouse gives me peace. You need to escape from your worries at home even from yourself. Especially when I’m feeling down, I work so hard that I do row after row. Any grudges, hatred, anger, I get rid of them through work. Because you can’t cry, you can’t explain yourself. I’m so glad I have a job; I don’t know what I’d have done otherwise. Merve

It is not only personal troubles, but the experience of the Soma Disaster that seems to have influenced the women’s decisions about work. Saadet decided to start work at the *Greenhouse* after her husband Akif survived the Soma Disaster. He had been working in the mine to repay their debts, even though Saadet did not want him to do so. After the disaster, Akif’s personality changed, and he became very withdrawn, sometimes crying at the dinner table, since he remembered how he used to eat with the friends he lost in the disaster. Thanks to Saadet’s support, he recovered but also became more aggressive, swearing constantly to release his anger. This is why Saadet started working at the *Greenhouse*: To support Akif both emotionally and economically. Serpil also says that after the Soma Disaster, she felt quite insecure. Her husband worked in the mines, while she took care of children at home. After the disaster she decided that she needed to find her own way to survive.

[I wanted to work] to learn about life. Anything can happen to you. I have to learn to work in case, god forbid, anything should happen to my husband. So I can look after my kids. Otherwise I don't have money problems. But you also get a group of friends, make connections.

Women, particularly young women, stress the importance of earning their own money in order not to depend on another person, specifically the husband. The women say they feel stronger and self-confident when they have money in their pockets. When this is the case, they do not need to ask their husbands for just a small amount of money to go to the market. The women also state that it feels good to be able to meet the needs of their household or children. For older women live alone or with older member of family, this means being self-reliant and not asking for anyone else for help. In some cases, earning their own money is seen as proof of the women's determination to succeed and to prove their own worth to others. For example, Bedihe's husband is unable to hold down a job. The last time he was fired, Bedihe blamed him for his aggressive personality, to which he answered back, "It's not easy to work under somebody's orders." It was after this that she decided to go to work at the *Greenhouse* to prove him that this was indeed something that was "doable". Out of six young women who are either single or engaged, only one told me that she is not planning to work if she gets married. The rest underline how important it is to make a living, "especially for a woman". The young daughter of Gülyüz says that regardless of whether or not she gets married, she is planning to work outside the home. Likewise, Kevser says, "I always say I'm glad I worked. I don't want to rely on any man, not even my husband. Any reasonable person would think this way."

Make a living becomes more critical when it comes to women who are widowed, divorced or have a bad relationship with their husbands. For them, the *Greenhouse* work means a lot as it helps to re-create life for them and their children. The stories of how they started work at the *Greenhouse* reveal the extremely difficult living conditions they left behind. These women were exposed to physical, economic and sexual violence; they told me stories of rapes,

being shot, and suicide attempts.²⁷⁵ Güldeste stayed for a while in a women's shelter. Work at the *Greenhouse*, therefore, helped women in desperate circumstances to hold onto life. With the *Greenhouse* money, Yüksel was able to leave her family home and rent a place for her and her children. Güldeste was able to leave the village, taking one of her sons with her, file a divorce suit and rent an apartment, Seher takes care of her two children thanks to the *Greenhouse* work. Working at the *Greenhouse* has helped make Merve is more determined when it comes to rejecting her husband's never-ending desire for intercourse, even though he threatens her. One way or another, the *Greenhouse* work has offered the women opportunities to make a better life for themselves.

(After her husband broke her ribs) I was bedridden for five months, I got better. I said I'd go to work; you can't always ask your parents for money. They don't have much anyway. Nizam, the head engineer said come and start tomorrow. That's how I started; it's been six years. Two months later I told my sister to find a house, and we did. With my wages I bought carpets, a bed, pots and pans, tea pot and glasses and so on. I got custody of my son, he started staying with me. Güldeste

When I learned about my daughter's mental retardation, I felt hopeless, I had no job, I was depressed, on medication. My husband was unemployed. People came to the house asking for debts to be repaid. I couldn't sleep. I asked why no one was helping. I was like a ghost. The kids were really suffering. He wants me to do my wifely duties but he brings no money home. (...) I made a decision, decided not to pay off my husband's debts. I'd go to work and earn money for the kids. I'd have insurance, even if the money wasn't great. Merve

Women also compare working life with being housewife. Working seems to be preferable to staying at home, which is considered boring, repetitive and even depressing and isolating. The women say that each day in the house is the same as the next, occupied with guests and cleaning the house in an idle way. The women undervalue their own reproductive labor in the home, even feeling useless because they were doing "nothing". There are some who regret not

²⁷⁵ The ex-husband of Yüksel forbade her to use birth control pills; she cannot remember how many times she had an abortion. He was so jealous that she barely knew her next-door neighbors. He was violent and would regularly beat her. Their marriage lasted for 18 years. Despite being divorce, he still causes the same problems for her.

having started their working lives earlier. The women say that life is more varied at the *Greenhouse*, where they have responsibilities on the basis of job definitions. As hardworking women, they like to go to work and get tired. Even though many faced difficulties in the beginning, they are now accustomed to the work and are happy to go there. In addition, the *Greenhouse* work is appreciated by women as saving them from village life where there is almost nothing left to do for these young women. Compared to their former lives shaped by difficult work, the women think that they have now found a place where they can work in a way that greatly contributes to them as individuals. This issue will be detailed in the next section.

As a result, women are mostly in favor of the idea of working. Many say, “I’m so glad I’m working!” Yet, this does not mean that working life at the *Greenhouse* is free from criticism. According to the women, working conditions there are poor, the infrastructure is not worker-oriented, workers’ rights are given arbitrarily, and wages are far from satisfactory. Furthermore, they consider the intense use of chemical to be risky. In particular, the way they are treated at work is seen as humiliating. Some equate the *Greenhouse* with the mines, saying, ““First the mine, second the *Greenhouse*. You barely earn enough to put bread on the table. This isn’t work.”²⁷⁶ Women describe the *Greenhouse* as “a prison where they voluntarily work as slaves” or as “a place under siege”. They think they are “treated like dogs” and not seen as human beings. As soon as they have passed the *Greenhouse* gates to start work in the morning, they say they “lose their freedom”. Zahide says that it is for this reason that she likes working in the kitchen in isolation; this at least provides her with the opportunity to take fresh air without having to ask for permission, even if it is only for a minute.

Confined to the greenhouse units, what the women do is always the same. For this reason, when asked to speak about an ordinary workday at the *Greenhouse*, a

²⁷⁶ Women generally refer not only to the *Greenhouse* in particular but also to other greenhouse businesses in the Bakırçay Basin, where it is said that working conditions are similar.

few women refused to do so since, as Adile says, there is nothing to talk about: “What is there to say about the workday? It’s like they took a day and made a photocopy of it. We keep reliving the same day.” This aspect of the job makes working at the *Greenhouse* difficult; the women say they wait for end of the day but time never passes. The days are all alike without even the tiniest of differences. Repetitive and tough physical work at the *Greenhouse* make Leyla feels like “a robot” in such as “passive job” under the orders of a superior. This also affects the rest of her day. When at home, she always does the same things: Taking a shower and having dinner. Then she goes to sleep very early, rarely going out with her friends. She therefore feels as though she has the life of an “alarm clock”. The women say the *Greenhouse* work does not allow them to have a proper social life. They hardly take leave and most of the time they have only two days off in a month. When they are home, they tend to go to bed very early.²⁷⁷ According to the women, it is not only “humanity they forget” at the *Greenhouse*, but also “motherhood”. Bedihe complains about how much her children miss her. During a meeting with her son’s primary-school teacher she even forgot which grade her son was in. She feels extremely sad about this, saying, “You can’t be a mother to your child, you leave him in bed in the morning. As a working woman you can’t give your full attention at home.”

As a result, it is not surprising that the women say that they seek other employment opportunities that would allow them to leave the *Greenhouse*. While some women again look for off-farm jobs, there are a few who are waiting to pay off the last installment of their loans before going back to the fields. These women even convince their sisters/sisters-in-law not to work at the *Greenhouse* for the reasons mentioned above. Bingül says, “One victim at the Greenhouse is enough!” That does not mean that the women of the *Greenhouse* are not fond of

²⁷⁷ Sometimes even a simple visit seems extremely tiring for the women: “I get so tired. The other day I went to visit my mum and as I was leaving, she told me to come again soon. ‘I can’t, mum’ I said, ‘I can’t come to visit, and I can’t have you to visit either. I’m exhausted, I just can’t.’” Semiha

working. They have a clear desire to participate in paid work, yet they demand decent conditions to do so, according to their criticisms of the *Greenhouse*. However, the extent to which the rural labor markets can meet the needs of women is questionable. When the gendered context in which the women of the *Greenhouse* participate in paid work is taken into consideration, Elson's observation becomes more critical. Elson states that such a demand for decent work must be seen as "a transformatory employment policy; that is, a policy which helps to change peoples' perceptions of what is possible, beneficial, and fair, fosters cooperative action; and strengthening women's bargaining power in the workplace, the home, and the marketplace" (1999: 622). This brings me to the discussion of "alternatives" for women's lives provided through the *Greenhouse* work.

6.4.2. Potentials to Change, Reverse and Transform

*Are they working only because they are very poor and have to?*²⁷⁸

Gendered proletarianization is not only a contradictory but also a complex process, which is why the *Greenhouse* work provides women with certain potentials to make changes in their lives under given conditions. This starts with earning money. Becoming a wage earner offers women a certain level of empowerment, even though their control over the money they earn is limited and indirect. The differences in the consumption patterns of women and men were discussed in the previous pages, yet the pocket money left to women still gives them a budget of their own. The women say that not having to ask for money for "little things" makes them feel better about themselves and boosts their self-esteem. Bedihe says the *Greenhouse* work has made her husband, who is either unemployed or irregularly employed, more accountable, and he now gives information to her about how much he spends, something he never did before.

²⁷⁸ Appendini, 2002: 104

Similarly, Merve decided to no longer pay her irregularly employed husband's debts, thanks to the money from the *Greenhouse*.

The situation of young and unmarried women could be seen as one step further in this process. The cases of Halime and Yonca show us that working may trigger a positive change on those women's status in the households. Halime says that at the beginning of her employment, her mother would take all of her wages to meet the household needs. Thanks to her wage, their house was almost completely tiled, whitewashed and re-furnished. Her parents have also benefited from her social security for eight years. She finished paying off the loan taken out upon her father's request. Later, she was able to keep part of her wages for herself to put towards a dowry, or to buy clothes and a smartphone. When her father asked her to take out another loan to buy a tractor, it was the last straw: "No! I said 'There's no more for you. I've done so much for you.'" She points out that her brother, who also earns a wage, keeps his money to himself rather than spending it on the household. Likewise, Yonca says her wage takes care of her imprisoned brother, as well as paying the lawyer's fee and her father's debt to enable him to retire. Her parents seem to appreciate her more as their son has disappointed them. Yonca's status in the household seems to be different than that of a "regular" daughter. In return, her father told me that he will put her name on the title deeds of the house they live in, when she finishes paying off his retirement debt.

Regular wages are so important that women may develop tactics to protect them from either their parents or (ex) husbands. For example, Yüksel lies to her ex-husband about how much she earns as he forces her to give a part of it. The HRU tells me of a similar example: Once a young worker came to the office asking the HR officer to give incorrect information about her wage when her mother called her, as she wanted to spend part of her wages rather than giving them to her mother, as she was expected to do. The officer refused to lie, but advised the worker to arrange a fake conversation with someone who identified herself as

being from the HRU. In sum, even though these examples show that being in paid labor does not mean that the women have ultimate control over their finances, it still raises their bargaining power, especially when dealing with male authority.

Bee (2000) argues that women are beginning to develop bargaining power, as different forms of employment bring about contrasting ideas regarding suitable gender roles and relations. For instance, I observed that days off were used by women to gain a chance to relax and gain some freedom within their private lives. As discussed previously, due to domestic chores, the women stated that they found their days off more tiring than a workday. Nevertheless, women sometimes misinform their family members and leave home very early in the morning as if going to work at the *Greenhouse*. This might be to go on a date with a boyfriend, or to meet up with friends.²⁷⁹ Yüksel pretends she is working on her days off to misinform her ex-husband, who continually harasses her. She then goes to Izmir to spend the day with her daughter who lives there.²⁸⁰ Gülistan also does the same to escape from the agricultural work she would otherwise be supposed to do in her parents' fields. She prefers not to take leave as she finds fieldwork more tiring. She was therefore only off work for the elections and the religious holiday. Gülistan adds that there are always chores at home waiting for her. Even if this were not the case, she would again be asked to go to the fields to help to her family, who is involved in tomato production. Gülistan states that she therefore prefers going to the *Greenhouse* than staying at home.

²⁷⁹ Meeting a boyfriend is the case not only for single and young women at the *Greenhouse* and middle-aged women, mostly widowed and divorced, also go on dates with men. In this sense, Facebook is a new platform for the women to meet new people.

²⁸⁰ This is a vital tactic for Yüksel, who is exposed to various forms of violence at the hands of her ex-husband. She told me that as well as regularly beating her, he once raped her. He still takes her wages and stalks her: "Particularly when I've taken leave, I don't want to be at home. Because he'll show up. I didn't want to announce my days of leave so that I wouldn't see him. He thinks I have two days of leave when I actually have four. I get up early in the morning as if I'm going to work, then I go to see X, or I go to Izmir and spend the whole day out visiting. This thing happened... So I don't want to see him."

There are still some women who enjoy their days off without having to lie. For example, Gülcan and Hamiyet use their annual leave for the Ramadan feast. Gülistan and Yonca, best friends at the *Greenhouse* who spend all their time together, ask for the same day off since they live in different villages and this is the only chance they have to see each other outside work: “We can’t leave the village, can’t even visit relatives without permission.” In this sense, the *Greenhouse* gives the women a chance to form an alternative social network and, accordingly, mobility. The women may be able to see each other in public spheres, such as town streets, rather than being confined only to the private sphere, i.e. the home. To conclude, it is safe to say that days off carry potentials for women to overcome certain limitations in their lives. Women seem to be finding a third way out of the *Greenhouse* and the home. Socialization at work also holds potentials for women to have new affairs, relationships or meet with others. This is why one woman said the *Greenhouse* is like “Dallas”, i.e. a complicated and dynamic place in terms of social relations.²⁸¹ Even though the mainstream narratives — supported by the *Company* to protect its reputation — make this invisible, it is safe to say that the *Greenhouse* is not free from such emotions or relations between women and men. As mentioned before, the gates of the *Greenhouse* in particular are an important meeting point for the workers when they get on and off the shuttles.

In addition to the benefits that the *Greenhouse* work provides to the women — as in the examples of wages, days off and alternative social ties — there are others that are crystallized in women’s changing self-perceptions. Women say

²⁸¹ The *Greenhouse* is not a place that is free from relationships and/or romantic interactions for women. I know of several cases in which women had a relationship at the workplace, whether hidden or not. There are also cases that resulted in couples eloping, which is why one young woman told me that the *Greenhouse* is like “Dallas”, with its complex relations between women and men from various places and of different ages. In particular, the gates where workers scan their ID cards at the beginning and end of the working day, could be considered as a meeting point for workers who are romantically involved. Waiting at the gates for the shuttles seems to provide workers with a little time to send and receive messages, to see each other or to make further plans to meet.

they feel stronger, more self-confident, determined, useful and independent. They like what they do at work and are proud of themselves. Women state that, as housewives²⁸² who have never worked in “society” before, they have a profession there. They say they could now work in any greenhouse as they have learned the job. They believe they have proved themselves and this increases their sense of self-worth. For instance, women boastfully share with me the photos they have taken of the tomatoes, saying how beautiful they are. How and in what ways such feelings will affect the lives of women are not easy to explore as they are long-term outcomes. However, what is clear is that this increase in self-confidence gives the women the strength to make future plans. These plans primarily include the future of their children. In this sense, the benefits of the *Greenhouse* work seem to be transferred to the younger generations.

Positive changes on self-perceptions are also the case for young/single and divorced women. For example, Sabriye says, “There are lots of divorced women [at the *Greenhouse*]. Before they’d either have to put up with their husbands or go work for a daily wage with their parents. Now they earn their living.”²⁸³ The *Greenhouse* helps women to create a new life both for themselves and their children. Likewise, Leyla says that after starting work at the *Greenhouse* she has

²⁸² On the contrary, Bee (2000) argues that women workers who employed in grape production for export see an increase in their self-esteem yet their role as a worker is still secondary to their role within the domestic sphere. “Temporaries” do not have a clear “work identity” based on their temporary employment. In this sense, the *Greenhouse*, with more long term employment, could be the reason behind women feeling as though they have a “profession”.

²⁸³ One of these is Yüksel: “I [tried to] kill myself three times, it would have happened again. You can’t find any solution, you have no one, no moral or financial support, sometimes it’s the end of the line, it was like that. Then I started to work. The *Greenhouse* wasn’t a choice for me. Once I started work, I left the house. The first year was difficult, then I found my feet. The more I worked, the more I made friends, the more I spoke to trustworthy people, the more I gained self-confidence. Now there are lots of things I could do if I wanted to. If I sat down and worked for it, I could pass the university entrance exam, I know I could. ‘My god,’ I say, ‘how did I put up with it for all those years.’ Now there’s no way. Because the place I’ve got to now, we sit down to a meal and fill our stomachs, I go and wash the dishes, and then I sleep so soundly. That animal isn’t in my house. If I’m down I’ll go to my room and cry and sleep, but you can’t do that in your mother’s house.” Her narrative explains the vital ties between work, self-esteem, empowerment, resistance and a place of one’s own.

greater ambitions for herself, one of which she has already realized by buying herself a car. Kevser speaks of “their difference” as young women compared to the previous generations of women: “Before us, women mostly relied on their husbands for money. Greenhouse work is good for women. For example, imagine that her husband works too...” The daughter of Gülyüz states that, regardless of whether or not she gets married, she plans to work. These young women hanker for a life that does not resemble those experienced by previous generations of women.²⁸⁴

6.5. Complexity of Empowerment: Achievements and Limitations

Now there are lots of things I could do if I wanted to. Yüksel

The achievements and limitations mentioned throughout this chapter do not provide a clear understanding about the issue of empowerment. Limitations should not overshadow the fact that empowerment is a complexity in which spheres of women’s lives are under change in different ways. Therefore, empowerment should be elaborately analyzed in order not to undervalue the experiences of women that are gained through hard work, sacrifices and great burdens.

The "feminine responsibilities" attributed to women by the traditional gender division of labor, are composed of care labor and domestic chores. The re-organization of these responsibilities plays a significant role in understanding the participation of women in paid labor in rural areas. The burden of care labor and

²⁸⁴ There is also the risk of conflict, clashes and even violence as they are still surrounded with gendered restrictions. In accordance with that, Merve says, “I only have one life, I want to live it. They don’t let you, don’t give you permission, they don’t understand.” In this sense, Kandiyoti (2012) sees patriarchy as a system that is both protective and oppressive for women who also have their own sources of power and independency. Yet the patriarchal bargaining depends on the mutuality of (historically constructed) expectations. When social changes turn those expectations on their head the limits of bargaining are challenged. There is no particular data focusing on rural women and violence, yet it is safe to say that women become targets in times of social transformation and crises, such as we can clearly see in rural transformation today.

domestic chores are barriers to women when they wish to work outside the home, and the reorganization of care work is clearly more important for the women than the reorganization of domestic chores. Responsibilities in the field of care labor are not as flexible as those of domestic chores, and therefore not so easy to pass on to another party or to leave undone. Care work, by nature, is not postponable, and therefore it can be formulated in a much more limited way than domestic tasks. As such, many women simply cannot participate in working life until their children are old enough. Those who do work while their children are still young do so under poor conditions. The women wish to take their children to work, yet there are no facilities to help working mothers look after their children at the workplace.²⁸⁵ In many cases this results in women being kept away from working life for a long time. It even implies that women are “punished” for having children: As well as losing their job at the *Greenhouse*, they cannot take advantage of benefits, such as maternity leave. Furthermore, they lose their ongoing insurance as they are no longer employed.

It is primarily the woman herself who carries the burden of reproductive labor. For example, in rural households with children under six years old, women belonging to nuclear and extended families spend 07.56 and 06.17 hours respectively on household work and house care, while this figure stands at 05.31 and 04.47 hours in women from nuclear and extended families with children

²⁸⁵ Although there are different requirements according to Law 6331, the *Company* denies its own responsibility: Law 6331 and the Regulation on Working Conditions for Women Who Are Pregnant or Breast Feeding, Breast-Feeding Rooms and Childcare Facilities state that businesses with more than 150 female workers are obliged to provide childcare facilities for children aged 0-6, including breast-feeding rooms for workers who are breast feeding. The regulations state that these facilities must be separate from the working space, but located no further than 250 meters away or, should the facilities be further than this distance, the company is obliged to provide transport (<https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2012/06/20120630-1.htm>, last visited page 27.09.2019).

Ensuring the employer’s compliance is the duty of the state, yet checks are rarely carried out. Turkey is not the only case in this sense; leaving women alone in the rural labor markets seems to be a common characteristic in other NTAE countries. For example, in Chile, both in past and today, the state is slow to recognize the importance of women’s labor. Even though they are a highly-visible part of the labor force in the fruit export economy, no child-care is provided, but is mediated through the pre-existing social systems of agricultural communities (Bee, 2000).

under six years old (Toksöz, 2014: 109). Women appeal to various strategies to be able to work. First and foremost, they re-organize their responsibilities with the “help” of other female members of the household from the nuclear and extended family. The majority of women transfer the burden to their mother, mother-in-law, sister or sister-in-law. Having a daughter-in-law or older daughter at home is also vital to women. For this reason, they may prefer to live next door to each other. When no such opportunity is available, it is observed that the males are involved but in a limited way. However, I never encountered a husband or father who took the full responsibility of either care labor or domestic chores on his own without any support from a female member of the family. In this sense, a study carried out among Colombian flower workers in the early 1980s gives an idea about the persistence of patriarchal codes at home: “husbands/partners participated in meal preparation in only 4 per cent of households, in cleaning in only 1.3 per cent, and in childcare in 7 per cent” (Meier, 1999 in Deere, 2005: 39).

However, the transfer of the burden to other females is not taken for granted. Dynamics of solidarity and conflict characterize the re-organization of tasks among women, particularly for care labor. Women supported by other women participate in working life with more advantages than others who lack such a possibility. When there is conflict between the different parties, women have to re-organize the care labor to be able to continue working. If they are not successful, they have to leave the job. When it comes to the re-organization of domestic chores, it seems women either do less housework than they used to, or deal with the such tasks before leaving home to go to the *Greenhouse*. They themselves make their own labor invisible, saying they do very limited housework when they go home. Even though they say they do less work at home, they still cover most of the tasks. When asked about how they spend an ordinary day at home before and after the workday at the *Greenhouse*, they give details about never ending tasks such as cleaning, cooking, tidying up, etc. Women themselves seem to undermine and undervalue the efforts they make to

complete the tasks of two worlds. Even if chores occupy their days off, they are still seen as the women's job. They also appeal to other solutions, such as not inviting guests as often as they used to, buying processed foods for the consumption of the family/guests or calling on the help of other members of the family to share the burden of domestic chores.

Participation in paid labor does not seem to create a more egalitarian division of labor at home for women of the *Greenhouse*. For example, in the narratives of the majority of the women, the male members of the household take on a very limited responsibility of both care labor and domestic chores in the women's working lives both prior to and at the *Greenhouse*. It is safe to say that this prevents women from job security and long-term employment. They are always under the threat of being recalled by "feminine responsibilities" that may result in them losing their job. This seems to fit with the organization of gendered labor markets. Squeezed between the two worlds of home and work, women are confined to the jobs that are flexible enough so that they can go between the two. For instance, Maertens (2010) says that women workers in tomato-growing work on average one to two months less than men due to their household responsibilities rather than discrimination. As in the case of the *Greenhouse* women, Garcia Dungo (2007) argues that domestic chores remain undone as income is more important for the female fruit workers employed in the export-oriented Chilean agribusiness. Nevertheless, the work still brings re-negotiation with males at home.

In sum, reproduction and its re-organization in the case of the *Greenhouse* women has gendered patterns. The gender division of labor deepens when women's status changes from unpaid family laborer to paid laborer.²⁸⁶ The latter is more restrictive and allows women fewer options for the re-organization of

²⁸⁶ This is naturally not the only reason. The decline of the extended family and accordingly decreasing support to women for care also has an impact on the deepening gender division of labor.

care labor. Fieldwork is relatively flexible when it comes to presence of babies/children at workplace with their mothers, while the *Greenhouse*, as an example of a off-farm job, is not. On the issue of women's participation rates in rural and urban areas in Turkey, Toksöz says having children is more likely to prevent urban women from participation in the workforce. The percentage of employed women aged 25-49 with children is 22.1 in urban areas, while this figure is 38.6 in rural areas. The figure for women of this age group without children is 36.8% for urban women and 49.8% for rural women. The participation rate increases in rural areas regardless of woman having children or not. Nevertheless, the highest rate belongs to women from households without children in rural areas (2014: 34). Likewise, Jarvis and Vera-Toscano argue that labor force participation among Chilean temporary agricultural workers is gender specific. According to data from a randomly selected group of 599 individuals from 54 table-grape packing sheds, "Marriage reduced labor force participation for females, but does not affect male participation. This result could suggest that women face a social-cultural bias against work and/or that married women have a higher reservation wage because of household responsibilities. Female labor participation (but again not that of male) declines as the number of the worker's children aged 0-5 years increases. The negative effect of the presence of small children on female labor force participation is considerably reduced if there is another adult female living in the household, which suggests that childcare is gender specific and points to the importance of the availability of (household) childcare to female labor force participation" (2004: 15). Armstrong and Armstrong (1990) also say that women's paid labor tends to be undervalued and viewed as secondary compared to that of men. This is mainly because women's labor is linked to their domestic responsibilities.

The overburden of women is conceptualized in the literature as a "dual employment strategy" (Dolan and Sorby 2003, Jarvis and Vera-Toscano 2004), "double and/or multiple burdened" (Garcia Dungo, 2007), "double shift" (my translation, Toksöz, 2014) and "dual employment" or even "triple burden"

(Barndt, 2002). These studies point to women's intensifying work burden both "inside" and "outside" the home. As participation of women in paid labor goes hand in hand with an unequal distribution of the burden of reproduction, it is natural that women find working life exhausting, since the traditional gender division of labor does not appear to be changing. In this sense, only those women who are able to re-assign the domestic chores and care work to other women during their absence, can go to work. All of this also shows the robustness of patriarchal codes in rural areas. As Dey de Pryck and Termine (2014) state, poor rural women are particularly disadvantaged in this regard. Their role as primary caregivers undermines their participation in waged labor. When they do work, they are obliged to find flexible work close to home. Social restrictions on women's travel and their interaction with men, reinforce the obstacles women are faced with regarding entering the workforce.

A successful re-organization of care labor and domestic chores is not enough for women to be away from the home, they also need the approval of the male member(s) of their household. It seems that the idea of women working outside the home in a workplace other than the fields is not always immediately welcomed. Male family members object to women working with strangers in an unknown workplace. While the majority accepts it after a while, women still have to struggle with the men of their family, social pressure or discrimination by other female members of their extended family/community (such as neighbors or friends)²⁸⁷ to overcome the barriers that keep them away from work. Yet the social security provided by the employer plays a key role in obtaining the consent of males as it also covers other family members in case of health problems. Beside a regular income, the potential to receive a retirement pension also convinces the men to give their consent.

²⁸⁷ Gündüz Hoşgör and Suzuki (2015) state that rural women workers perceive the bad smell in the seafood factory as a negative marker by that diminishes their charm and thus possibility of marriage. Likewise, the *Greenhouse* is the source of rumors due to its potentiality for new affairs, flirting or dating for women. Unlike for the seafood company, not everyone holds negative opinions about the *Greenhouse*, but some women are aware of its potentially bad reputation.

It seems that crises of reproduction generated when women enter paid labor is solved through a negotiation with the men on the basis of regular wages with insurance. Ironically, we also see that economic deprivation and insecurity ultimately break down men's unwillingness, forcing them to acknowledge the benefits of women's work. That, in the long run, will have the possibility to transform the ideology of the male breadwinner. Likewise, Pedreño et. al assert that although conditions are precarious for women in rural labor markets in Murcia, "The social composition of labor is changing due to the progressive influx of young and immigrant women. This presence generates pressure to end women's traditional jobs and roles and the understanding of women's work as "help" to the family. Emerging is a more individualized and professionalized view of women that coexists with technological and organizational changes" (2014: 24). This seems to be in line with the findings of Barrientos (2007), who says that despite the problems, many women prefer to work since the wages bring them more independence and influence within their households, and they can still handle their domestic responsibilities. Appendini says that it is especially girls who "gained the freedom to dispose of their time and part of their income", as a result of wage work (2002: 100).

Standing (1999) argues that flexible and part-time work patterns for women are not intrinsically bad, if the surrounding conditions are appropriate. Yet, this is hardly the case for the women of the *Greenhouse*. One cannot argue that surrounding conditions are satisfactory and supportive enough for women, when their overburden in reproduction is considered. In spite of this, the women of the *Greenhouse* still want to continue working there. The women are not only motivated by the advantages of the *Greenhouse* work, they also use it as a mechanism to cope with difficulties experienced at home or social trauma such as that of the Soma Disaster. The fact that working at the *Greenhouse* brings an improvement in the lives of the women is perhaps telling of how difficult life is for these women in rural area. In this sense, the *Greenhouse* work is remedial for women.

This brings me to other “potentials” the *Greenhouse* work has to bring changes to the women’s lives. In this sense, how women perceive the *Greenhouse* job in particular and working life in general leads to a discussion of various reasons behind the participation in paid labor at the *Greenhouse*. First and foremost, for all of the women earning money is an empowering experience. They say they feel more self-confident and a greater sense of pride. Although they do not have the ultimate authority over the money they earn, it still gives them a greater sense of independence. Young and unmarried women seem to keep money for their own needs and plans to a greater extent than middle-aged and married women. To a limited extent, this erodes the authority over the women of their family in general, and their father in particular. This is in accordance with the findings of Suzuki and Gündüz Hoşgör, who say that young women escape from “rural gender marginality to economic, affective and cultural integration through rural wage work” (2019: 549). Young women in particular seem to take advantage of wage work for “money, authority and peer group socialization” (2019: 555), as in the case of young *Greenhouse* women, and the authors thus choose to call rural women from mountain villages participating in paid work under precarious conditions “weak winners, powerful losers” (2019: 542).

In line with this, women “use” the *Greenhouse* work to liberate their private lives, which are still organized by a traditional gender division of labor. Despite the difficulties mentioned, the majority of women find the *Greenhouse* work to be “advantageous” to them. They eventually find the chance to be “out in public” and to have a social network of their own. Especially young and middle-aged women who are originally from isolated mountain villages or living in closed communities in peripheral neighborhoods of towns seem to appreciate the social atmosphere at work. Despite a certain level of conflict, disagreement and competition among the women, the majority still underlines the fact that female friendship and solidarity give them the strength to cope with the difficulties they experience both at home and work. Working outside the home has been preferred mostly by young and middle-aged women due to its fixed working hours, unlike

household chores that dominate the whole day. That is in accordance with the findings of Gündüz Hoşgör and Suzuki, who found that while rural women workers undervalue the job at seafood factory “because of the smell, dirtiness, irregularity and lack of social security”, it still has advantages for them by providing them with an “unassuming autonomy and determination” through which they find the chance to escape from traditional responsibilities (2015: 192). Moreover, working outside the home makes it possible for women to escape not only from domestic chores, care labor and agricultural work to some extent but also from various forms of violence at the hands of (ex)husbands, fathers and other male members of the extended family. For instance, some women take advantage of days off by pretending to be at work but actually spending the day as she wishes outside the home. Socialization also means meeting with others, offering the possibility of a new romantic encounter or relationship in an anonymous crowd at the workplace.

We cannot immediately jump to the conclusion that women’s participation in paid labor brings about empowerment. In other words, “It is not the participation in the labor market but also how this participation is culturally constructed and how it is individually perceived by the women that matter in women’s empowerment” (Erman, Kalaycıoğlu and Rittersberger-Tılıç, 2002: 396). Likewise, it is neither a linear nor a unidirectional process. While women’s participation in paid work ultimately increases women’s workload, it predominantly creates “gender asymmetries in production and reproduction” (Elson, 1999). When we take into consideration the precarity of work experiences at the *Greenhouse*, it becomes hard to talk about women being empowered at work. Yet at the same time, measuring the impact of the change on women’s lives only through the non-distribution of domestic and care work and the poor working conditions seems to ignore other dynamics that may have the potential for empowering women. While the ways in which the women deal with the overburden requires further attention, the literature in this field that questions the nature of the process provides rather “gray conclusions” in which

one may find clues to autonomy and subordination in a rather mixed and vague form. While work may offer the potential for empowerment, there is no doubt that the “double work burden” of women complicates their lives (Salzinger, 2003, Muñoz, 2008, Bee, 2000, Suzuki and Gündüz Hoşgör, 2019). Kay points to the devastating effects of SAPs on the peasantry, which leads to increased poverty in rural areas. While this intensifies women’s work, the shift to non-traditional agricultural exports has increased the possibilities for temporary employment, especially for women. Kay points out that although the participation of rural women in the labor market is far higher today than in the past, the extent to which this has improved the women’s well-being and their position of women within the household remains a topic of further investigation as the evidence is mixed.

So far, women’s working life has been defined and discussed as a two-fold process in which they are exposed to oppression and exploitation, as well as finding their ways within this to re-draw the gendered borders on their lives. However, the context framing this process is as significant as the case itself. In other words, under what conditions and motivations they chose to make the shift from the working life of a small producer is crucial to place the *Greenhouse* work. This context addresses the rural change in the Bakırçay Basin from the women’s perspectives. As such, the following chapter focuses on the attitudes and opinions of women towards the rural change and its prospects for their future. This will provide us not only with details about the pre-*Greenhouse* lives of women occupied with traditional rural activities, but also the women’s comparison of the dis/advantages of field work and *Greenhouse* work.

CHAPTER 7

WOMEN AND RURAL TRANSFORMATION

Do you know the one about the farmhand?’ ‘No,’ I say. ‘The farmhand has a dream, he would say, I’ll do it next year. The next year would come around and the farmhand would say, I’ll do it next year. Then again the next year, the same thing, ‘I’ll make my dream come true next year. Gülbeniz

People go [from the field to the greenhouse] to make money. Work in the village doesn’t earn you money. There’s nothing there for us. But there too [in the city] it’s the same. Solmaz

This chapter aims to understand women’s attitudes towards the radical rural transformation in the Bakırçay Basin, especially after the 2000s, that they themselves have experienced, by detailing their specific relations to agricultural production and husbandry. These relations are composed of three variations: (I) those totally detached from such activities, (II) those who maintain a limited relation to such activities and finally (III) those who continue to work as small-scale producers and stockbreeders. First, however, I will present figures showing landownership or the number of animals owned by the households.

It is also significant to look at how women compare and contrast the two worlds of working in the fields and the *Greenhouse*. The advantages and the disadvantages stressed by the women highlight the changes in the rural area that they have experienced. This chapter also examines the future prospects for the women, which are crystallized in the question of whether small-scale production will survive and continue to be an income generating tool for future generations. Not only do the women’s answers give us an insight into the drastic change that has occurred in rural areas from the women’s perspectives, they also provide a deeper understanding of the *Greenhouse* work as a life choice.

7.1. Women's Relation to Agricultural Production and Husbandry

The relation to small-scale agricultural production and husbandry varies among the participants. As shown in the tables below, 14 of the 33 women are land/animal owners. This does not necessarily mean that the woman in question holds the title for the land or animal, but she is counted as an owner if her family or her husband is the official owner. In addition, I come across cases in which the woman has no title deeds yet she has received assurances that she will be given them in the near future. In such cases, I checked whether or not she receives any benefit from the land/animal. If she does, then I define her as an owner, too. For example, the father of Merve promised her that would be given nine decares of olive grove. As his word is as certain as having a title, she is already seen as the real owner of that land by other members of the family. She does not currently deal with production, yet she receives her share when the olives are sold. She made the necessary payments to her brother, who deals with the production and harvest. Likewise, Kevser's father shared the animals into three among his children before he passed away. Now the older brother holds the title for the animals and Kevser believes that she will get her share in the future.

In this sense, I need to underline that it is not easy to clearly understand the status of ownership. Beyond having a title deed, it is a rather complicated issue shaped by the specific relations, dynamics, conflict and solidarity between the members of both nuclear and extended families, as well as the patriarchal codes regulating heritage. The story of Saadet could be good example of this: Saadet and her husband made a deal with her father-in-law, who promised to give his 12 decares of land to them. In return, he demanded they pay off his remaining social security payments so that he could retire with a pension. While Saadet paid some of this money (8000 TL) from her *Greenhouse* wage, her husband took out a

bank loan (15,000 TL).²⁸⁸ Even though the father-in-law is now retired, they still do not hold the title as they have not finished paying the total amount. There are also other cases in which even if women are legally entitled to their share, it is not given to them according to the traditions of inheritance. This is valid for the Çepni group, which does not allow women to receive their share of an inheritance, which meant that Meliha and Gülizar, for example, were excluded from the inheritance when their fathers passed away.

Of the landowners, women generally own olive groves, while a smaller number have fields. The largest field owned is less than 40 decares of land, while the largest olive grove can contain 300 olive trees. The smallest plot of land measures 5 decares. The fields are generally composed of several small plots. Out of 14 women, only three have land on the plains that provide opportunity for irrigated production. The others own mountainous land, which is generally used for the production of animal feed or for olive groves.²⁸⁹ A similar level of small-scale production can also be seen in husbandry. For example, the biggest herd consists of approximately 100 goat, 70-80 sheep and 15 calves. Besides the categories of landowners and landless, there is another in-between category, that of tenant farmers, an important characteristic of agricultural production in rural Turkey. There are 14 women who mentioned that they used to be tenant farmers, regardless of whether or not they own land. Either with their parents or their own families, women overwhelmingly seem to work as unpaid family laborers on rented fields. Very few women mention having been registered for social

²⁸⁸ In 2016, 15,000 TL was approximately equal to \$5120, while 8000 TL was equal to \$2730. <http://www.tcmb.gov.tr/kurlar/201606/15062016.xml>, last visited 27.06.2019,

²⁸⁹ Some of the landless women have parents who still reside in mountain villages on their own land. Women undervalue those lands even though they were once life-saving sources of subsistence production or for growing other products to sell or feed the animals. They frequently categorize the land as “unproductive”, saying, “They have land in our village in Kütahya but it is out of the way and idle so not worth anything at all.” This ties in with the way in which capitalist agriculture defines and categorizes land on the basis of productivity.

security when they worked in this way. In general, working in tobacco production was the only way for women to receive health insurance.²⁹⁰

Of the participants, 19 women do not own any land or animals. Of those, there is only one woman of urban origin who has never dealt with agricultural production and husbandry, while the rest were involved in such activities in different forms — e.g. working their parents' fields or on their own/rented fields as unpaid family laborers, or working as daily laborers. Six women said they had to give up agricultural production/husbandry because they could not cope with the rising costs. The total number of landless women includes households that were recently dispossessed: Four women say they had to sell their land — three due to rising expenses, one due to a dispute with other villagers. Four women lost their share of the land as they were unable to receive it through inheritance, making them landless that made them landless as they could not get it from the heritage — two of those are Çepni, while the land in question for the other two women was a small plot that was to be shared by three families. Three of the women were dispossessed since their parents sold their land and migrated to the peripheries of the towns of Kınık and Bergama. Separation from the family land via marriage and migration is another pattern resulting in women becoming landless. There are two women from mountain villages and one woman from a plain village who migrated to the Bakırçay Basin when they married, leaving the family land behind. A further six women belong to families who have been landless for at least two generations.

²⁹⁰ This was through a system known as *tütün koçanı* (tobacco insurance). The *koçan*, is a permit booklet given to producers by TEKEL. Tobacco farming is carried out under state control, with heavy fines in place. The compulsory insurance premium was deducted from the cultivator's payment, since nobody would make insurance payments of their own accord. At first, the insurance partially covered losses caused by natural disasters, but more recently has become a full agricultural insurance policy. The insurance also covered workers as a tool of production, making it a form of partial health insurance. However, it did not contribute in any way to a pension scheme.

When households are dispossessed, they tend to come into a lump-sum of money. If they invest this in the right place, it can guarantee long-term financial comfort. For example, the families of Solmaz²⁹¹ and Nurgün bought houses after all their animals and fields were sold, and they mention how important it is for them not to have to pay rent. However, this is not the case for Gülsün, who invested whole money in opening a shop to sell *börek*.²⁹² However, the investment did not work and when their son had an accident, they went bankrupt and had to mortgage their house. In sum, when small-scale producers sell their land/animals, it does not give them a lifelong security, as the conditions underlying the rural labor markets are not favorable. How the women with or without land/animal define their position when it comes to agricultural production and husbandry are analyzed in the three categories: Detached, Limited, or Ongoing. In the following sections I will also give some details about the household economics using examples considered representative of the majority of households in this study.

Table. 7.1. The Relation of Women to Agricultural Production and Husbandry

Land/Animal Ownership	Detached	Limited	Ongoing	Total
Landowners	6	7	1	14
Landless	18	1		19

²⁹¹ For instance, when they sold 150 animals, they gained 55,000 TL, which bought and furnished, in 2014, the house they currently live in on the outskirts of Kınık.

²⁹² Traditional pastry.

7.1.1. Detached from Agricultural Production and Husbandry

We don't have fields, an olive grove or a garden. We don't raise livestock. We go to Elmadere [her and her husband's village] just to visit. Bedihe

The first category, “detached”, means that the woman in question does not deal with small-scale agricultural production or husbandry, even though one of those used to be the main source of income for her and her family in the past. We can see that most of the women (24/33) fall under this category. There are also two women (one with land and one without) who left agricultural production due to the deaths of the men of the family (father and husband). For example, when her father passed away, the older brother of Nadide took his position as landowner, but after a while he moved to Izmir to begin a new life. Nadide and her mother were left behind and could not maintain the tobacco and cotton production since they needed “someone to take care of the pesticide or fertilizers.” That again verifies the vulnerability of family agriculture that cannot be sustained with the absence of a member, while also pointing to the gender division of labor in which men are associated with the market for selling and buying, i.e. the public sphere. The women also recall the tiring working days of tobacco production or how early they used to wake up to go to the olive groves for the harvest from the distant mountainous villages. Gülsün even says how much she appreciated the sale of the family tobacco fields since she was always “exhausted” during the time they cultivated tobacco.

Almost half of the landowners (6) define themselves as totally detached from agriculture and/or husbandry. These women with land/animals say that even though their family continues with agricultural production or husbandry, they themselves are no longer involved. For example, Halime's father owns 20 decares of land on which he grows cotton, corn and melon. She used to work in the fields in the past yet has not done so for eight years. Likewise, Yonca says she used to help her father in taking care of the animals while also going to the

field/forest as a daily laborer. Now, she only goes to work at the Greenhouse.²⁹³ Gülyüz sends the wages earned by herself and her two daughters to her husband in order to make the husbandry at home sustainable. According to those detached from small-scale husbandry (5), the loss of common pastures and the rising prices of animal feed as well as the low profit in return made them become distanced from small-scale husbandry. Another reason is the reluctance of the younger generation to continue with such activities.

Animals grow thin without pasture. They need to eat green pasture to grow fat. But when you use the pastures, you get a 200-300 lira fine. Our pasture has become a pine forest. When the ban came in, we lost the pasture. When it came to feed and hay, we didn't have enough money. So we sold the sheep, we couldn't cover the costs. You look after animals like people. You go up to the mountains there's the forester, you go to the plains, there's the watchman. Where can you take your animals? Solmaz

Interestingly, the detachment of the women from those activities does not necessarily mean that the family as a whole is detached. This reveals that today continuing small-scale agricultural production and husbandry becomes very difficult without the support of regular cash provided by one of the family members. In this research, we can see that in this regard it is the women who come to the fore rather than younger men. For example, Gülyüz and her two daughters migrated from a mountain village in Balıkesir; each month, her husband, who is a shepherd, comes to their house in Kınık to take half of their earnings (1950 TL). This money is then used to cover the expenses of gas, animal feed and the ordinary needs of the house in Balıkesir. The family in the village owns 70-80 sheep, four cows and a tractor. Although they had to sell some of their land, they still have 30 decares left, divided over three plots. A

²⁹³ Yonca's father has 50 goats; he sells the newborn kids and goat cheese. This year he sold 50 kilos of cheese and made 750 TL. The family also has a small inherited land (in several plots) where they cultivate wheat and clover for the goats and for themselves. Owning pastures for their goats helps them greatly. The family has also a subsistence garden for their own needs, again inherited. Her mother is a daily laborer, as is her father whenever he finds the time. The family also has a small income from of walnut, cherry and chestnut trees on the village commons.

piece of that land is a subsistence garden, while the rest is used to grow animal feed. As Gülyüz says, in the past they used to sell all of the wheat, yet now they need it both for feeding the animals and for their own use to make flour. It is striking that small-producer households that used to be family businesses have a strong tendency to become geographically split on the basis of the availability of wage labor. Women are the ones whose regular incomes sustain agricultural production and husbandry, even in faraway villages.

The other three (of the six land/animal owners) are even more distanced from such activities: While one only gets the rent for her field, the other two both receive their share of the harvest at their olive groves and fruit garden. The advantages and disadvantages seem to be closely assessed by the families and the women themselves. For example, for the three cases mentioned above, the regular wages of the women of the *Greenhouse* are a vital support to sustain those activities. We see the replacement of women's labor from the category of unpaid family laborer to wage laborer. Even though the significance of the women's labor for the household economics never changes, we see important differences in the form it takes.

The majority of the detached category is composed of women without land/animals. It is safe to say that except for the women of urban origin and the two daily laborers, the rest of the participants in this study (21 women) are former tobacco producers with no/limited land from mountain villages.²⁹⁴ The

²⁹⁴ The family of Gülizar could be a good example to highlight the conditions underlying small-scale tobacco production. One day, Gülizar took me to their tobacco field in Kınık. Living there are three families, composed of 11 people: Gülizar's parents-in-law, her two brothers-in-law along with their wives and children. While her parents-in-law, two sisters-in-law, one brother-in-law and children work in the fields; the other brother-in-law is a miner. Her grandfather is retired yet still works as a middleman. This means that the household budget is supported by two regular incomes, besides what the grandfather earns as a middleman. Women also go to the fields as daily laborers after the harvest. Regarding tobacco, they told me that they rented the field for 7000 TL and have to employ daily laborers. As a result, they earned 30,000 TL. at the end of the harvest — the total cost is 20,000 TL while the total income from tobacco is 50,000 TL. These are the conditions in which a landless family can maintain tobacco production. They are not pleased at all and tell me they are not sure if they will continue next year.

story of tobacco has an important place in the rural literature of Turkey (Aydın, 2010; Gürel, 2014; Öztürk, 2012; Aysu, 2013). Besides studies that focus on the elimination of tobacco production through the neoliberal restructuring of the agri-food system in Turkey, there are also others that analyze the intense use of women's labor in the production (Öztürk & Akduran, 2011; Keskin & Yaman, 2013). The role women's labor plays is critical insomuch that the withdrawal of women's labor may result in a total change of the production design. Merve's father found her to be such a skilled worker when it came to the production of tobacco, that he even bought a tobacco transplanter with the hopes of increasing the scale of production. However, she preferred to marry instead of continuing in the family business. Her father eventually gave up and the year she got married he decided to turn to olive production. In this sense, the findings of this research seem to be in line with the structural changes mentioned by the other local actors, i.e. the former mayor of Bergama Municipality, the Chamber of Agricultural Engineers in Izmir, the spokesperson of the Bergama Environment Platform and several other agricultural engineers from the Dikili and Kınık Agricultural Districts.

Tobacco, tobacco, tobacco. These were small families of 2-3 people. They used to cultivate tobacco on small lands but because the quality was high, they would sell and live on it. Now it is over. It is the common destiny of mountain villages; the small-scale family cultivation has vanished. The people are helpless. Spokesperson of the Bergama Environment Platform

The most striking change is in tobacco. The end [of the industry] had many impacts. Quotas were introduced, people couldn't plant it, now they say to plant it but it doesn't happen. Now, the middlemen from former tobacco villages in

That is in total contrast to the income tobacco producers once had. They always compare it with the price of *rakı* (a traditional alcohol drink flavored with anise) or gold; it is also said that the purchasing power of the producers was rather high: "Now four tons wouldn't buy you a motorbike. You used to get two tons, with one ton you'd pay off your debts, with the other ton you'd buy yourself a tractor. This was 15-20 years ago." Gülizar

the mountains pile their women into minibuses and work as middlemen in other sectors.²⁹⁵ Former Mayor of the Municipality of Bergama

The reasons mentioned by women for the detachment from those activities are the urgent need for cash, an inability to overcome the rising expenses of production and the endless and exhausting burden of work.²⁹⁶ This is also the case for tenant farmers without their own land. As Semiha says, “In tobacco, you either need your own field, or your own workers. You need support from somewhere. We didn’t have it, so we always worked for others. You work like a dog, plowing the fields, you work yourself to the bone. It’s heavy work. You work at night in the cold, get little sleep, if you brought workers you have to get up at three in the morning. Almost everyone has given up working in tobacco now.” Beyond that, having considered the levels of debt of the households, not making money from agricultural production or animals/animal products seems to be the first and foremost reason for these women and the households they belong becoming distanced and even detached from these activities in rural areas. Those without land also have similar complaints. They say it is even harder for them since the rent for the field is a significant cost item. As mentioned earlier, women, are less likely than men to be landowners in the rural areas. This also makes the sustainability of these activities more difficult as it separates women from the land.

²⁹⁵ The middleman gathers women from the villages to be employed in the greenhouses or the tomato paste factories.

²⁹⁶ The tables in Chapter 3, Methodology, that show the prices per kilo of maize, cotton, tobacco and tomato verify the women’s narratives. In order to escape the high share of costs, households tend to use family labor for production, yet some family members are unwilling to do so due to the low prices for the products, insecure future of the sector and the heavy physical work. The women, as former tobacco producers employed at the *Greenhouse*, verify this general picture.

7.1.2. Limited relation with Agricultural Production or Husbandry

The category of “limited relation” refers to the women who deal with agricultural production or husbandry as an economic activity in a very limited way. There are eight women in this category, only one of whom has no land/animals. Adile, for example, has an olive grove with 60 olive trees that are harvested by other members of her family, after which she receives a share. Adile says that she occasionally helps with the harvest, but that this is very limited. Similarly, Deste has seven decares of land on the plains on which wheat and barley are produced. As these products are not labor intensive, production mostly requires a man to drive the tractor (the driver was paid 250 TL at the last harvest). At the end they share the harvested product (14 bags of flour) between three families. While the wheat is for household use, the chaff (50 bales, each sold for 20 TL, making 1,000 TL profit) is sold at the market. Likewise, Serpil, the only of the women in this category with no land/animals, works in the olive harvest of the olive grove belonging to her father-in-law. She does not receive any payment in return but only olive oil and olive for household use.

In total, six of the eight women in this category deals with olive production, while only one, Kevser, helps her family to take care of the animals. However, none of the women takes full responsibility for the harvest, other necessary tasks of olive production or the husbandry. They state that they sometimes take advantage of their off days to help with the harvest. To substitute the women’s labor needed, the households hire laborers for the days of the harvest. For example, Gülcan used to work during the entire harvest, yet now she says it is the *Greenhouse* that is her “priority”. That is why a worker is hired in addition to the other family members who work in the harvest, although she still spends some of her days offs to help. The ties connecting women to agriculture/husbandry not only seem to be weak, they are also no longer as indispensable as they used to be.

I argue that this category also refers to a kind of detachment of women from these activities. Having considered that these women used to be active producers and daily laborers in the past, their limited relation to agriculture and husbandry implies a relative distance in the re-positioning of women's labor. All of the women mention the privileged conditions of the past underlying the production in rural areas. This generally dates back to the period before the late 1990s/early 2000s, after which times became more difficult for producers, especially for those dealing with tobacco and cotton. I frequently heard the women saying that even a small piece of land was once capable of providing enough of an income for a family to meet its needs. Yüksel says that as a tobacco-producing family of five, in 1991 their ten decares of land was enough to meet their needs, and she does not remember any other source of income. Likewise, the small-scale stockbreeder Gülcan says that from 1990-1998 they used to make enough money from their 11 cows, six sheep and several goats to take care of her family of five. The subsistence garden and the olive groves also helped with this. The women frequently say how easy it was for them to afford the costs of weddings or circumcision ceremonies or to buy a tractor in those times. Men also compare the prices of *rakı* or gold to explain how valuable agricultural products used to be. However, later, what I come across was examples of tobacco production in which the producers have to pay at least the half of the money they earn to cover the expenses during the production.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁷ The family of Kevser cultivated tobacco for the last time in 2009 on seven decares of land. Without their own field and equipment for the mechanized harvest, they earned 10,000 TL, half of which was payments for fertilizer, pesticide, gas and rent. That is why she was complaining about rising expenses. Between 1998-2001, Nurgün also cultivated tobacco for the last time. In the end she gave up because she was even losing money. Likewise, Solmaz says the last time they produced tobacco was in 2014 on ten decares of rented land; they earned 15,000 TL in total, 12,000 TL of which was spent on the costs of production. She adds, "There's only a few of us, the rent for the land, 30 TL for the worker... Now I earn 3000 TL in three months." Semiha followed the strategy of carrying out production in the name of another producer with land to deal with the quota system. However, she says that after a while even that strategy did not work. They eventually decided to give up production in the 2000s. The lack of labor force within the family for tobacco production is another reason behind the separation from such activities. In 2013, Servet's family had to stop producing tobacco when her children refused to cultivate it any more. Selma tells a similar story: "There was no one to make it? Then it is not possible to keep it." She and her three sisters have now migrated to Bergama and none of them deals with

There are certain strategies developed by households to maintain, even if in a limited way, their relation to these activities. In some cases, they rent their fields to others, thus avoiding being involved in unprofitable production. Making changes to the production design is another strategy of the producers to continue production. In the case of tobacco producers, I mostly see the adoption of olive production after the elimination of tobacco.²⁹⁸ The land in mountain villages does not provide many opportunities, while the producers on the plain have more options. There, the change is characterized by a move from labor-intensive products to capital intensive ones, with corn/maize being the most common product I came across during the fieldwork. In an exception to this mainstream tendency, I also observed that there has been a revival of cotton production, since the premium payment for cotton is considered as a guarantee for producers, even though they cannot make enough money at the end of the year. Likewise, in spite of its costly production, there has also been a tendency towards tomato growing. However, it is seen that the producers prefer to produce tomatoes for paste instead of edible ones.²⁹⁹

Shrinking the scale of the production also plays a significant role. I observed families who no longer produced on the same scale as they used to or who no longer produce at all. Households who are concomitantly involved in agriculture and stockbreeding may eliminate husbandry, or households may prefer to keep what they produce for their own needs instead of selling the product, and/or use the product to cover another cost instead of using it for their own needs. In this

agriculture anymore. When the family labor is transferred to other income-generating activities, then tobacco production becomes a double burden. Bedihe's husband finally decided to stop cultivating as he was exhausted from work in the tobacco fields and at the mine.

²⁹⁸ Small-scale producers have this ability to shift from one product/economic activity to another, as in the case of Korkutlar Village. As the village *muhktar* told me, when tobacco was not so profitable, the households decided to concentrate more on husbandry.

²⁹⁹ The changes in production design are compatible with the tables in Chapter 2, Methodology. The tables indicate that there has been a move away from tobacco, cotton and olive production.

sense, I came across producers trading milk in return for animal feed as they were not able to pay the price in cash. I was also told that some households keep the milk for their own needs, unlike in the past when they used to sell it. Gülcan says the cheese, milk, yoghurt, soap, olives and olive oil used at home are from their own resources, i.e. not bought. In this sense, small-scale production and husbandry could take the form of subsistence production, when necessary.

The issue of subsistence may also take diverse forms. Four of the seven women in this category say they have a subsistence garden, yet not all of them are capable of providing enough food. I also observed that the women may discard subsistence production when the need for a regular income becomes more urgent. For example, Semiha used to have a cow while working at the *Greenhouse*. However, after a while, she asked her son to sell it, since it was so difficult for her to take care of. Although owning a cow provided many benefits for her budget, it seems that the *Greenhouse* income outweighed those benefits. However, I see that the lack of subsistence production has a negative effect on the household budget. Now devoid of the means of subsistence, the women frequently mention the advantages once they had. Nadide says she now has to buy olive and olive oil due to the loss of their trees. Similarly, the aging population living in the villages shapes the form of subsistence. Sabriye's father-in-law used to take care of numerous sheep for his own use in the village, and would send some of the cheese he made to Sabriye. However, after he passed away, Sabriye had to start buying cheese for the household. In this sense, the indirect relation to subsistence production seems to be under threat of the aging population living in rural areas.

Similar to those women who are detached from these activities, the women in this category also point to a change in the use of labor from unpaid family laborers to waged labor. The regular wages brought home by these women seem to be more critical for the households than their unpaid labor in agriculture or husbandry. It should also be mentioned that in most cases, it is not only the

income of the woman that supports the household budget, but there are also other sources of regular income to make the activities in question sustainable. The dynamics of the household budget of Kevser's family can be an example in which small-scale husbandry is sustained by the support of two regular incomes, subsistence production and family labor when necessary. Since leaving tobacco production in 2009 due to rising costs and the quota system, the products from their olive grove (approximately 150 trees previously planted between the tobacco plants) and their subsistence garden meet the needs of the household. Kevser and her sister go to work at the *Greenhouse*, while their mother is a daily laborer, so the older brother takes care of the animals. They use family labor for the olive harvest and exchange milk for animal feed due to a lack of the necessary cash.

Finally, the *Company* seems to take the advantage of this category of women, because it is thought that a limited relation to rural activities provides women with a minimum source of income other than the wage of the *Greenhouse*. The head engineer told me that the labor force at the *Greenhouse* is characterized by its ongoing attachment to agricultural production. The worker's families either deal with tomato and/or okra or tobacco production. He says they do so on the basis of contract farming which "guarantees" a certain level of income for those households. As a result, he believes that, "everybody lives in economic comfort". However, he does not question the conditions that underline women's distance from agricultural production and husbandry to be able to continue working at the *Greenhouse*.

7.1.3. Ongoing Relation with Agricultural Production and Husbandry

The only example among the participants who still maintains an ongoing relation with small-scale agricultural production and husbandry is Ümmühan. She said to me, "You should see it. We do both jobs at once." For this reason, I will detail the particular dynamics of her household economics to explore how she manages

to maintain both. Ümmühan lives alongside her parents-in-law in two different houses built on three decares of land in a village. That land includes a subsistence garden and olive grove (20 trees used for subsistence production) and her small field where she produces lettuce to sell (including at the *Greenhouse*). Her husband is a worker in a stone pit, while her father-in-law is retired but still deals with cotton production. Her mother-in-law, who is also known as a healer in the local villages, deals with household chores and takes care of her grandson, while the other three adults are involved in income-generating activities for the sake of household budget. They have fields and animals, and while they have 14 decares of land for their own use, they rent out four decares. They prefer to cultivate cotton due to its increased subsidies, and corn (used for the needs of the animals) due to its low production costs. She says that even though the cotton is not productive enough to cover the expenses, the subsidy still helps them to sustain production. Her father-in-law also has 17 cattle and six sheep.

When it comes to the total income and patterns of household consumption in Ümmühan's family, we see that there are four different sources of regular income providing cash to the family budget. While two of these are wages, there is also a retirement pension and rent; these regular incomes make up a total of almost 5000 TL, according to Ümmühan. However, this is not enough for a balanced budget, since the household is in debt. While part of the pension and the sales of the milk (1.9 TL per liter) cover the cost of animal feed, they also regularly sell animals (five animals varying from 3,000 TL to 1,000TL) to buy annual chaff (the common pastures are not in use). In order to pay off the installments of the three different bank loans (30,000 TL, 5,000 TL and 10,000 TL), they use the money from cotton production (approximately 16,000 TL). The budget is also supported by the daily payments earned by the mother- father-in-law when they go to work in the fields or in the olive harvest. The house they live in has no infrastructure, and therefore they only pay for electricity, which

came to 518 TL the previous month. Ümmühan says that in order to manage such a complicated budget, they “try to balance the expense and the income”.

In this sense, Ümmühan always underlines the risky nature of production. It is possible to make money in this business but it is more likely that money will be lost. She gives the example of the tomatoes she produced last year. The outcome was not good enough: While she earned 3,750 TL, the cost of the production was more than that: 5,000 TL.³⁰⁰ The loss was re-paid with money from the *Greenhouse*. This is why she gives an example of peanuts, grown in the Kozak villages located in the Bakırçay Basin, as a “costless product”. She admires agricultural production that is “costless”, secure and profitable.

If the *Greenhouse* work and the burden of reproduction after a working day are considered as two levels of women’s labor, in the case of Ümmühan it is safe to say that continuing agricultural production and husbandry forms a third level. I observed this during the day and night I spent with her during the fieldwork: After returning home from the *Greenhouse*, she and her husband milk and feed the animals, then she goes to her own field to weed, water and cut some lettuce to sell, and after dinner, they apply the pesticides. Interestingly, Ümmühan says that she actually “rests” while dealing with these tasks. She thinks that she would feel much more tired if she lived in the town in an apartment dealing with nothing but household chores: “Everybody says, ‘Isn’t it exhausting?’ But working with the animals gives me a chance to rest, it does me good. I like the village. They say, ‘There are houses in Poyracık [a neighborhood in Kınık], why don’t you live there?’ But what would I do there? Come home from work, eat, sleep.”

³⁰⁰ The calculation is as follows: on five decares of land, they produced five tons of table tomatoes and 10 ton of tomatoes for paste. They paid 2000 TL for the seedlings and 1000 TL for fertilizers and pesticides. 2000 TL was also paid to the daily laborers. The price for the table tomatoes was 0.35 TL per kilo, while it was 0.20 TL for the tomatoes for sauce.

What does the case of Ümmühan tell us about rural transformation in the Bakırçay Basin? It seems that owning land on the plain with the opportunity of irrigated production makes these households luckier than those in mountain villages. As for the cases of women with a limited relation to these activities, the woman in this category is also in need of a regular income for a sustainable production. According to my observations, it is quite exceptional to continue with small-scale production without the regular support of cash in the Bakırçay Basin.³⁰¹ Even if supported by cash, the household budget is still fragile as the household are in debt. Changes in the production design to more “costless products” (such as corn and olive) is a strategy developed to transfer family labor, and particularly women’s labor, into paid labor. While this deepens capitalist relations in rural areas, the role played by women’s labor as unpaid family laborers for subsistence production and reproduction is still crucial for this category to survive. However, I argue that the first tendency seems to be predominate over latter in the long run, as will be seen in the following sections where future prospects are discussed.

7.2. Comparison: Worker vs. Peasant, Greenhouse vs. Field

In the past the women would bow down to everything. My father beat my mother, for example. But do women of today bow down to this? Everyone wants a regular wage, insurance, security, a future. But let’s say some disaster hits olive farming. The younger generation is waking up. The women of the past might go work in fields for a daily wage. The men might go down the mines.

³⁰¹ There are also “survivors” from other villages. For example, the parents of Hamiyet still live in Rahmanlar Village (a plain village in the district of Bergama) together with their son and his family. This is a household that actively participates in agricultural production and husbandry. However, similar conditions are also valid for them. They have 30 decares of land, and also produce on another 30 decares of rented land. She says they have never sold any plots of land, on the contrary they recently bought some new plots. However, they changed their production design from cotton to tomato and corn. The corn is only produced for animal feed. They have also a small grocery in the village, while the son works at the municipality as a truck driver. When he is not at work, he goes to the fields. Women take care of the animals as well as working in the fields. In addition, Bediye says there are also advantaged mountain villages where migration is quite limited, such as Arpaseki Village (Kınık). The reason behind is the mine close to the village. She believes that these miner-villagers are well paid, receiving approximately 2,500 TL. She says those who continue with tobacco production have their own land and equipment for mechanized harvest. Those are the people who continue to reside in the villages.

The product's ready, it's sold, then the men spend all the takings. The youngsters aren't so naïve. Everyone's woken up. You can't go to work [at a daily rate in the fields] because of the rains, but you need the money, so what do you do? Merve

This section begins with the question, “What would you be doing, if you were not employed at the *Greenhouse*?” The women’s answers to this question reveal their perceptions about being a worker at the *Greenhouse* and producer-laborer in the fields. It is clear that none of these options available to the women is totally appreciated by them. On the contrary, they stress the advantages and disadvantages of each.³⁰² The women also have varying opinions on which form of work is more convenient, why and under which. The majority of the women state that they would be going to the fields to work if there were no greenhouses around as an employment option. A couple of the women said that before starting to work at the *Greenhouse* they had actually applied to other jobs —, e.g. as a dishwasher at a restaurant, school janitor, insurer or salesperson —yet were rejected. One young woman said she would do “student work” (waitressing), if she did not work at the *Greenhouse*. The women also say that there is no third option for them, in which they do not work at all. Women mention that either working in the fields or being employed at the *Greenhouse* is an obligation for them rather than a pure desire to work.³⁰³ Yet working the fields still seems to have a secondary place after the *Greenhouse* work in the eyes of the women.

It seems that there are more disadvantages than advantages when it comes to working in the fields for women. The main disadvantage is the insecure nature of the work. It is a short-term job, that comes to an end once the harvest is over, after which they need to find another job. As the work follows the cycles of

³⁰² I need to say that women sometimes differently define the advantages and disadvantages of these two separate types of work. For example, while some sees working in an enclosed area at the *Greenhouse* as an advantage, others do not see so.

³⁰³ In this sense, women who are widow, divorced or in debt particularly stress that they need to work. For example, Yüksel says, “I have no choice. I can’t go back to my parents; I have no future there. I have no choice but to work, if I quit my job, I’d go hungry.”

nature, so does the labor force. The women remember that winters were the hardest as there was no opportunity to work in the fields and they would be almost at the end of their savings. Besides, the non-insured state of field work with no social security is another disadvantage for the women. Many say they either used to work without insurance or make the insurance payments on their own, which was an economic burden for them. I was told that this was the strategy of some of the women who used to leave the *Greenhouse* work during the summer season, as the daily payment in the fields is higher. However, after insurance was introduced, women began to value the stability of the *Greenhouse* work over the higher daily payments in the fields.³⁰⁴ In sum, the insecure, non-insured, and irregular nature of small-scale production and husbandry makes it not preferable to women.

Look, I worked as a farmer [unpaid family laborer] for so many years but I don't have any security. [My husband] always did the insurance in his name. Back then we didn't know, we were too young. And anyway, it's not like he'd have taken me to the bank if I'd asked him to. The women are stuck inside, work, work, work. Semiha

In this framework, many women mention that they have a past as an unpaid family laborer, cultivating their own or rented fields. They state that they were exploited in those times, since the older family members used to control and allocate the money earned at the end of the year. While the women were never separately paid, they say their husbands did not receive their share either. Likewise, two young women who used to “help” their families in their own

³⁰⁴ The daily payment for female agricultural laborers working in fields in the Bakırçay Basin was 35 TL in 2015, while it rose to 45 TL in 2016. However, the daily payments of the women at the *Greenhouse* were approximately 30 TL in 2015 and 2016. In this sense, Gönül (19-year-old, village-based, Çepni seasonal worker) tells me that the engineer of the unit asked her if she could gather more people from her village to work at the *Greenhouse*. However, she said people were not willing to do so; instead they prefer to go to the okra harvest since it has fewer working hours and is better paid. While these workers start at 5 a.m. and are done by 1 p.m., the *Greenhouse* work starts at 7 a.m. and finishes at 5 p.m. Besides, the daily payment for okra is 35 TL, while it is 30 TL at the *Greenhouse*. Likewise, Servet asks “The daily wage is 45 TL in the fields, have you ever wondered why we are only paid 31-32 TL here?” to underline that it they receive a lower wage compared to the fields.

business also complained about not being paid for all the time they spent in the greenhouse and tobacco fields belonging to their uncle. We see that the notion of family could successfully cover the economic relation between employee and employer through the means of respect, authority, help, love and control.

For six years we grew cotton and tobacco with my father-in-law. There was a lot of us, five of us working but they didn't give us what we were owed. My father-in-law took the money, saying he needed it to pay for a wedding, said he had other expenses. So the money just disappeared. They're traditional people. Do you think I'm brave enough to stand up to them? You can't say it to traditional people. Especially when they show no mercy to their own children?
Gülsün

I wasn't earning any money at my uncle's; I went there to help. I was with them and we were also working. I knew the tobacco work well, because I'd been going since I was small. I'd sit and rest whenever I wanted to. My uncle never shouted at me to 'Get back to work!' or 'Stop talking!' That's the problem we have here. After all, it's not your own work. But then here... well, I earn money, you see. Devrim

The ongoing mechanization of agricultural production has negative effects on the work opportunities for women, who say, "It isn't the way it used to be in the fields." They stress the variety of work available before production was mechanized, as is the case for cotton, corn, tobacco and recently olive production. According to the common narrative of the women, it is clear that there used to be an indispensable need for a labor force, which in turn made the women's labor force vital too. Many women say that they used to follow the cycles of the cotton and olive harvests, which come one after the other, and they had no risk of being unemployed. While the mechanization of agricultural production eliminates the necessity of the labor force, it limits women's work to the specific tasks that are not yet not mechanized or to olive groves/fields whose owners cannot afford the costs of mechanization.³⁰⁵ The elimination of tobacco

³⁰⁵ In accordance with the fact that the Western Anatolia is one of the most mechanized agricultural regions in Turkey, there are machines for planting and harvesting used in the production of tobacco, cotton, corn and cotton that I came across during my fieldwork. That is why women say tobacco used to be a fairly labor-intensive product or that women no longer go to work picking cotton in the fields

as one of the prominent agricultural products of the Bakırçay Basin has also had a great impact in the decline in the need for labor. Landowners no longer deal with laborers; as Zahide says, “The people are gone now.” This was also the case for forest work (tree planting, hoeing etc.) for which women are employed on a daily basis through İŞKUR.³⁰⁶

As there’s no job market here [other than the greenhouse] people either go into cotton or corn. Because there’s no tobacco any more. There are only greenhouses. Whether they want to or not they go to the greenhouses. There’s social security. The fields aren’t the way they used to be either; before, people used to work here, now the machines have arrived. They don’t bother with people. Selma

The other disadvantages related to the working conditions in the fields include working long hours in the open air, monotonous, repetitive work, the risk of insect stings/animal bites, the non-hygienic nature of work in the fields and the pressure of the middleman to finish the daily workload. The final disadvantage of work in the fields mentioned by the women is the sexual harassment they face from the middleman and other male daily laborers. One young single woman says that when employed through a middleman, they work in the fields with an

all day long. For those producers who are able to afford them, machines seem to be replacing agricultural laborers. The other side of the coin tells another story, however: Women who belong to households that own olive groves greatly appreciate the olive harvest machine, since it makes their tasks easier and quicker. Otherwise, women have to pick the olives scattered on the ground one by one without straightening up. Women call the machine an “electric Hoover” since it functions like a household vacuum cleaner, sucking the olives from the ground. The only condition for the machine to work properly is that the ground should be “clean”, i.e. without weeds. This requires chemicals needlessly applied to trees since those weeds have no impact on the olive production. On the other hand, the chemicals used are carcinogenic and detrimental to human health (Nicolopoulou et al., 2016).

³⁰⁶ İŞKUR (Turkish Employment Agency) is an institution under the Ministry of Work, Family and Social Services that aims to match labor force supply and demand. Güldeste tells that in the past the mountain villagers in particular were selected to work for two reasons. The first was to offer support to peasants who would otherwise be unemployed if they were not taken to the forest work. In this sense, “people from Bergama” had more advantages because they could easily find work. The second reason was to protect the forests from the unemployed and poor peasants who would try to maximize their means of subsistence in the forest in ways that would eventually damage the ecology. She concludes that she and other women from mountain villages worked a lot in the forests, yet such work is no longer available.

anonymous crowd: “You never know what you are going to face there, as it’s only the middleman who knows which field he’s gathering the workers for.” The young woman says this is especially true when she goes to the corn fields, since it is a rather tall plant that hides the laborers from each other during the harvest. The laborers hardly see each other and therefore if a woman is harassed, it cannot easily be seen by the others. As such, the fields are a threatening place for women.

Before proceeding to the advantages, it is important to stress that the abovementioned disadvantages, go hand in hand with the loss of stature of the peasantry. I came across many examples of women undervaluing the peasantry, i.e. small-scale agricultural production and husbandry, for being not a “profession” like wage labor. This is perhaps part of the reason that the women’s narratives may rank being a waged worker over being a peasant. However, I argue that this is not an essentialist definition in itself, but rather a construction based on the women’s experiences. As such, it should be evaluated within the context of women’s relations to small-scale agricultural production and husbandry. The following section, which covers women’s interpretation of the future of small-scale production and the new generations under rural transformation, will also complete the big picture of the notion of the loss of stature.

When it comes to the advantages of field work, first and foremost it is being one’s own boss as a small-scale agricultural producer and stockbreeder regardless of whether or not the women have their own fields. Women look back on the “good old days” with a certain sense of nostalgia, and in comparison, the women frequently stress how hard it is to work under the command of another person, which they say creates stress, anxiety and exhaustion. In this sense, the fields are places where there was no mobbing, insults or shouting. Women say the middleman also pushes them to work harder and faster, yet never in the way that it happens in the *Greenhouse*. The women also say that there is always a

chance to change the field or middleman if she is unhappy. Finally, working in an open and fresh air is defined by the women as another advantage of working in the fields.

In accordance with that, women underline “the right to rest”, as an advantage of working in the fields.³⁰⁷ This refers to taking a proper rest during the workday, after the months of intense work during the harvest and also includes the right to rest while sick. Women say they used to do so without being stressed, irritated or on alert as they were the decision makers in their own business. The emotions that result from the intense mobbing they feel at the *Greenhouse* are tiring for women therefore when talking about the advantages of the fields the women often recall positive feelings related to working in the fields, including a working atmosphere free from stress a.

In the fields you can go to the toilet without asking for permission. You work in the fresh air. You can stand up and rest. [In the Greenhouse] you're always being watched by the engineer. Everything you do... There's psychological pressure. The work in the fields is tiring too but you're not following orders.
Bingöl

The advantages and disadvantages of the *Greenhouse* are naturally described on the basis of women's perception of the fields, and vice versa.³⁰⁸ According to the

³⁰⁷ Women certainly get more tired at the *Greenhouse* compared to the winter times passed with no work in the fields. Nevertheless, after several interviews, I realized that it was not true that women would spend the entire winter resting, since they would always deal with “*little things*”: “Before, in our own work, we could rest. After the tobacco, the cotton [harvest] we'd rest for 3-4 months. [...] But in winter you don't sit around doing nothing. We'd do handcrafts, knit slippers, do embroidery and sell it. I knitted so many slippers. I'd earn enough to do the food shopping from it.” Nadide

³⁰⁸ Women with experience of off-farm jobs before the *Greenhouse* make another comparison. This is why Hamiyet finds the heat as not “that unbearable” since she worked for a long time in a place producing dough: “I'm used to it. The heat of the *Greenhouse* didn't bother me too much. There, even your armpits were baked, the heat of the stove on our faces...” Likewise Gülizar and Servet compare *Bedir* (the tomato paste factory) with the *Greenhouse*, stating that the former is worse than the latter.

women, the most significant advantage of the *Greenhouse* is the regular monthly payment taken that means women have the chance to receive a certain amount of money at once. They compare this to the daily payments they used to take as daily laborers in the fields.³⁰⁹ said the women say that earning a small amount of money each day limited their consumption, and therefore they prefer a monthly wage. A few women specifically stated that the regular payments from the *Greenhouse* helps them to re-pay their debts in a systematic way. As they are able to pay back the debts, they can take out further loans when necessary. We see that the wage of the *Greenhouse* is used as a strategy to deal with the short- and long-term indebtedness of the households.³¹⁰

In this sense, the stable and continuous nature of the *Greenhouse* work is affirmed by the women. “The fieldwork does not last for 12 months as the *Greenhouse* does” is a common sentence uttered by the women. Some even underline the fact that they could make more than their regular monthly wage, if they spend their days off working at the *Greenhouse*. As mentioned previously, they have “the right” to work on their days off, and can therefore receive more than minimum wage at the end of the month. However, even though the women put this forward as an advantage of the *Greenhouse* work, this is definitely open

³⁰⁹ There is even an expression among the locals to describe how easily spent the daily payment is: “Like a hole in your pocket.”

³¹⁰ However, women also complain about the high cost of living, even though they are regularly paid. They remember the times when the daily payment used to cover many cost items in their household budget. This was also true when they used to deal with small-scale agricultural production and husbandry. They recall that the money earned once a year was enough for them. Nadide says “We harvested the crops once a year, my dad got paid in one go. Now you get it every day, but it’s still not enough. Now there’s always inflation on everything. Back then there wasn’t inflation like this.” This is also the case the daily payments women used to receive: “*It’s new* [the money not being enough]. Look, 12 years ago we’d work on a daily wage for a week, and with our earnings we’d have spending money and also invest in a small piece of gold. In the past, people with land would work in tobacco and also raise animals. When the work was done, they’d go to work for a daily wage. Back then it was enough. Okay, so you didn’t eat very well, couldn’t go wherever you wanted, but it was enough. You could live on it in the village. Milk, cheese. Now it’s not enough. Today, if you want to buy a pair of shoes, how much is it? Five TL. If you go to the greengrocer, the market, how much? Fifty TL. People who can’t earn a living from farming, who don’t have land are all in the mines. The miners’ wives go to work, if they’ve got young kids, they’re in the fields, if not they’re in the *Greenhouse*.” Meliha

to discussion. I believe that rather than being an advantage per se, it instead highlights the economic deprivation of the households to which the women belong and their urgent need for cash. It also implies that the women are underpaid as the wage does not meet their needs.

The insurance provided by the *Company* is seen as another advantage by the women as they, almost without exception, have worked their whole lives without social security regardless of whether they worked in their own/rented fields or someone else's as daily laborers. Now covered by the insurance, the women feel not only safe themselves but also a sense of relief for their families. Many women say that if they were not provided insurance at the *Greenhouse*, they would not continue working there. The increasing importance of insurance is also related to the unprofitability of small-scale production that has become much more insecure compared to past. The women even give a fairly specific time — the early 2000s — that marks the beginning of their search for a job with insurance.

In the past you planted tobacco, tomatoes, cotton, you had animals too. There was lots of money in it. No one worried about social security. It's not like that now. If I work for ten years with social security, maybe I'll retire with a monthly pension. Bedihe

Women say it is also good for them to work in a closed area. Since they know what it can be like to work in the open air (struggling with heat, rain, cold, mud, etc.), they mostly appreciate the indoor space in which they work. Such conditions in the fields can prevent women from going to work during the winter, whereas they like the *Greenhouse* as a sheltered spot that provides year-round work. For example, Yonca says it is good for her to not even see the rain outside while working inside in the *Greenhouse*. Besides, the nature of the tasks at the *Greenhouse* is considered less exhausting compared to the tasks in the fields. Women say it would not be possible to work for the entire year in the *Greenhouse* if the work were as tiring as in the fields. According to the women,

working in the fields is physically demanding and tiring, and depends on their physical strength, while the *Greenhouse* work is more easily done with the help of the machines there, in particular the harvest cars. The final advantage mentioned by the women is that the *Greenhouse* is a safe place for women to be employed. The women predominantly appreciate the female-friendly environment of the workplace, as it provides them employment without the hesitation of a bad reputation regarding honor codes.

Of all the jobs I've done, this is the most civilized. There are certain rules. In the fields you don't know whose hand's in whose pocket. Men and women work together. Say you're a widow. Go to the fields and everyone's after you, wondering what they can get. In the Greenhouse everyone has a position. I've been there three years and I've never heard of a case of harassment. Adile

When it comes to the disadvantages, the working conditions come to the fore. Previously defined as an advantage, working in a closed area is also seen by the women as a disadvantage, and in the heat, the *Greenhouse* can become unbearable for women. Those with respiratory diseases suffer much more. In contrast to those who defined the *Greenhouse* tasks as easy compared to the fields, some of the women find the *Greenhouse* work to be more delicate than the fieldwork, requiring endless care and attention.

In terms of disadvantages, however, women cite mobbing and the stress arising from the performance system. This is related to “the notion of the boss”, which is something they learned at the *Greenhouse*. Elmas tells about her experience on her first day: “We didn't know what a boss was. Had we ever seen a boss before? They said, ‘Look, this is the boss,’ my friends there showed me.” This also highlights the practices of rigid hierarchy as a result of the authority and superiority of the managers/engineers. According to the women, being under command is associated with being a worker. This means not being able to choose

the assigned tasks, co-workers, or unit in which they work.³¹¹ The women say they are not decision makers at all, since they are obliged to do as they are told. For instance, Gülsün says that while working in the fields she did not lift heavy bags since it was another person's task. She now hesitates to go to work at the *Greenhouse* since she could be assigned any task, even those for which the physical effort would be damaging to her back, on which she underwent an operation. While some says the women do other tasks willingly, some tasks — especially the deep cleaning in the summer — are not preferred by many women. The stress as an outcome of the rigid hierarchy and control can be found “*more tiring*” for some of the women at the *Greenhouse* than the exhausting physical work in the fields.

The fields are simple, there's no stress. There's no boss, no engineer. It's not as tiring. The Greenhouse is really stressful. They're always reprimanding you. Even if you've done nothing wrong. It's mentally tiring, your brain stops working. Bedihe

The stress of the Greenhouse finishes you off mentally. You're mentally tired, not physically. Meliha

I believe that this comparison also draws its strength from the separation between “manual work/following orders” and “independent work”. Each of which has different working conditions to which the women need to adapt. Yet it becomes clear that, for the women of the *Greenhouse*, despite all the complaints, criticisms and discontent, the *Greenhouse* work is still seen as more advantageous than working in the fields, an area that they seem to be leaving behind. I observed that the women's lives as former peasants and current workers tend to become even more starkly separate from each other. Furthermore, the comparison of the two should not only be understood with

³¹¹ Güldeste says it is discouraging as “they are used to be independent”: “You don't have the right to choose the work. When they say, ‘Do it’ you do it. If they tell you you're staying with this engineer you stay. In the fields, if there's someone you don't get on with you go to another field. Where ever you go to you get your daily wage. Independent work doesn't feel like you're following orders, because you work day by day. [at the *Greenhouse* you follow orders] because it's regular.”

reference to a simple calculation of profit and loss, since it is much more than that for the women. It includes the difficult living conditions that characterize their previous lives, when they were dealing with small-scale agricultural production and/or husbandry in the villages. When they recall those days, they talk about how remote villages are in cases of emergency, the limited social life and the lack of education options for their children. Divorced and widowed women say that life in the village was not an easy and comfortable one due to the social pressure. However, they mostly recall the heavy work burden that included the care of children, elderly and sick, as well as animals, the household chores, and also the production of (women's) labor-intensive agricultural products. What the woman gains in the end seems to be the position of the unpaid family laborer or daily laborer in unsecure employment with no social security. Women generally mention the permanent toil and struggle of their pre-*Greenhouse* lives. In this sense, Nurgün's words could be an example that generally fits the majority:

Okay, I love the produce [animals], but it's one thing looking after them when you have money, another thing entirely when you're poor. The places we went to collect straw were always steep and rocky. (...) I don't want to live in the village either. I stayed in the village for 12 years. If I'd stayed there maybe I'd have died. In the city, factory work is clean, then you go home. In the village it's not like that, [you have to] take straw to the animals, there's so much work. I lost three children because of that straw [she miscarried triplets]. The animals are always there, you sleep out on the slopes. There's always work, they need taking care of, give them water, give them hay. I couldn't just sit at home. And my mother-in-law was with me too, she was very old.

The heavy burden of the gender division of labor in village life makes women responsible not only for care work and domestic chores, but also for a significant part of the production for the market and for subsistence. In spite of their central role, women are not visible as unpaid family laborers and are mostly devoid of social rights, including social security or pensions. While the money they earn is seen as the household's money, their participation in decision making is limited in the patriarchal hierarchy of the small-producer family. The narratives of the women of the *Greenhouse* verify the findings of other studies on the

disadvantaged status of rural women (Ecevit, 1994, Öztürk & Akduran, 2011; Keskin & Yaman, 2013).

This also reveals another face of the change that has occurred in rural areas. The squeezing of the small peasantry in the course of the neoliberal transformation in rural Turkey has been predominantly analyzed on the basis of the erosion of this social group (Gürel, 2014), while at the center, the household still remains as a non-gendered unit. Such an approach ignores the inequality of intra-household relations and accordingly the gender division of labor within the household. In line with this, it is often ignored that the shift from that life holds the possibility for women to enter another life in which they feel less tired and overwhelmed and more empowered and stronger. I observe that the women appreciate this shift since it frees them from the burden of the difficult village life and production, even though it is the outcome of structural dynamics they did not shape. In order to gain a better understanding of their negative view of their previous lives, it is necessary to take a closer look at the living conditions in the villages.³¹² It seems that the social decline of the villages is as important in forming this attitude as the economic deprivation of small-scale production. Decreasing populations, the lack of young people/children, migration patterns, or the fact that young couples do not wish to build new houses in the villages could give an idea about the new forms of the villages as places of solitude³¹³ that socially confine women.

³¹² That is not only composed of negative features. Women also recall that life with positive feelings, like Elmas: “It makes me sad. There’ll be no one left in the villages. But that’s our homeland. But there’s no work. I don’t know what the solution is. But there’s this water there, it’s incredibly sweet.” Yet, it is still very clear to women where to live and work.

³¹³ The villages in question are composed of those located in Bergama, Dikili and Kınık as well as those left behind by women from other district/regions when they migrated to the peripheries of the towns. Out of 24 villages, there is no village that has seen an increase in population. While there are 20 mountain and slope villages in this study, there are also four plain villages (two in Bergama, two in Kınık). The women also come from mountain villages in the districts of Uşak, Manisa, Kütahya and Balıkesir, as mentioned in Chapter 2, Methodology.

In terms of population change, there are two patterns: While the plain villages lost a part of their population, the majority of the mountain villages have experienced a radical depopulation. In other words, there are no villages in this study that experienced an increase in population. For example, after years of low-profit cotton production resulting in land sales, the effects of mechanization that removes the need for family labor, and migration to Izmir, the population of Yenikent, Bergama, has now become stable. The village has a small number of young people working in mechanized cotton production. Many more young people seek education or employment opportunities outside the village. Likewise, the village of Dünderlı, Kınık, maintains its population through the replacement of the local population with Kurdish migrants. As the young people left the village to receive an education or for work, the older villagers stay behind. When they eventually pass away, their children sell the houses and lands to Kurdish families. This is the village in which the family of Gülistan (a *Greenhouse* worker), as well as her six uncles and their families settled after migrating from Mardin.³¹⁴

Mountain villages in different districts are under such rapid change that it is thought that no one will remain living in them within one or two generations.³¹⁵

³¹⁴ Land sales are limited yet it is always an option when the need for cash arrives. However, I believe that rate of the sales may increase as the older generation passes away. I have seen many dilapidated houses in the villages after their owners deceased. Their children, who already live in towns, either sell the houses or leave them empty. The lands on the plains are more valuable than those in the mountains. For instance, in 2016 land on the plains was valued at \$6850 per decare in Yelpınar (Bergama) and \$8219 in the village of Çay (Kınık); for mountain villages the value was lower, at \$684 per decare in the village of Kuyuca (Manisa). In the case of Kuyuca, Fadime says land sale has been ongoing for some time, even though it is a remote village. The buyers are of urban origin and buy large amounts of land at once (e.g. 200-300 decares). The villagers call such people *dönümcüler*, in reference to the large number of *dönüm* — a measurement of area approximately equivalent to an acre — that they buy.

³¹⁵ On the contrary, there are six mountain villages have not experienced such a drastic population decrease. Their inhabitants do not want to migrate due to the increasing costs of living in the peripheries. Instead they maximize their subsistence production and take the advantage of the commons (chestnut, walnut trees, etc.) to generate cash. Others diversify their incomes since the villages are located next to the mines. It is safe to argue that the population of the villages in

Hediye from Kütahya, Dereköy says “There are 15 households at most. The land has no value. The youngsters have all gone away. To find jobs with social security. Nobody grows anything in the village. Everyone’s old. You can’t find a single young person. They only come when the old people get sick. They don’t even go to the village after they’re dead. The villages will be empty.” That is the same for the other mountain villages of the provinces of Uşak, Manisa, Kütahya and Balıkesir. Fadime says that there are two young people left in her village (Pınarbaşı, Manisa) where only old people in receipt of pensions now live. Similarly, Elmas says there is only one young man left in her village (Sarkatlar, Kütahya), but even he works elsewhere, not in the village. When it comes to the mountain villages of Izmir, a similar case can be seen. Even though the village of Marlıca is just 15 kilometers from Bergama, there are only 28 households and a total population of 60. The youngest person living in the is 50-years-old and, according to the *mukhtar*, there are no new couples/youngsters planning to stay in the village.

The conditions summarized above reveal the villages as places that are deprived of social life. This also affects the marriage decisions of the young generation. I met three women who were “the last single girl” in their villages³¹⁶: “Everyone left. When we were small, people started to go to Izmir in droves. For social

question either live in poor conditions or replace the income from tobacco production and husbandry with the money they earn at the mines.

However, it is also said that when production starts in the mines, these villages will not be suitable places to live due to the pollution, since they are located in close proximity to the mines. Zahide from the village of Elmadere says, “[There are] 110 households. In the Soma mine area. Most of the population goes down the mine. All the young [men] are in the mine now. Most of the village land was bought by the mine. There’s no tobacco, no animals. Everyone buys their vegetables, their yoghurt from the market. Those that sold their land in the village buy houses in Kınık. In a few years there’ll be no village left. Once the coal starts to come out it won’t stop. Look at the village of Eynez [*in Soma*] for example. The only people left are old people who didn’t sell their land.” Besides, finding another source of income does not necessarily imply decent working conditions. Eleven men from Elmadere lost their lives in the Soma Disaster.

³¹⁶ While one of them already migrated from the mountain village of Kütahya to Cinge, Soma, the other 2 still used to live in the villages. After the fieldwork is done, one got married and settled down in Bergama.

security. ‘Why should we stay in the village,’ they said. It was only me who stayed, the girls in the village back then, they all got married and moved away.” There has therefore been a radical break with the past. While for older generations, marriage mean to settle down and have a family in the village, women no longer want to do so, preferring instead to move away from “village life”. A woman says that “When asked permission to marry your daughter, you must say no to tobacco and cotton!” While some are planning to leave the village when they get married; others prefer to wait for their children to reach school age, as there is no elementary school in the villages. There are also those who plan to stay in the village as they cannot afford life in the towns. Under such conditions, it is clear that leaving village through marriage has become a strategy for young women to leave (Gündüz Hoşgör & Suzuki, 2016; Onaran, 1996).

The women say that life in a depopulated village means being surrounded by an aging population, and complain about not being able to socialize with others their own age. The only option for them in their free time is to spend it with the elders. In this sense, the vivid social life in the towns become more attractive to them. The distance of villages to town centers, especially when roads are blocked due to snowstorms, makes the women even feel more isolated. Furthermore, the lack of basic services increases their reluctance to stay. While the lack of health centers is a source of worry during the winter, the closure of schools seems to accelerate further long-term depopulation. Even though it is possible to rent a car in the case of an emergency, it is generally not favored by poor households since it is highly expensive for them.³¹⁷

Nevertheless, even though they express their dislike of and distance from the life described above, the majority of the women also say they would consider returning to the life of small production in villages, if it provided economic comfort. The deprivation characterizing their economic activities seems to lead

³¹⁷ For instance, in 2016it would cost around 150-200 TL (\$55) from the village of Sınırada to Bergama, a distance of 45 kilometers.

to women being more reserved. This brings me to the next section where I will discuss what women think about the future of small-scale production in the Bakırçay Basin, as well as their wishes for their children. These will be the final two issues to be analyzed to form a complete understanding of the women's perspectives on rural transformation.

7.3. Future Prospects

This sub-section discusses two related issues regarding the rural transformation experienced by the women of the *Greenhouse*. While the first of these examines women's future prospects for small-scale agricultural production and husbandry in the Bakırçay Basin, the second focuses on their thoughts, concerns and wishes for the future generations, with specific reference to the rural activities in question. This second issue also helps us to understand in which direction the pendulum swings between the categories of the peasantry and the working class for young people in rural areas.

7.3.1. Small-Scale Production

I find it striking that among the many women who migrated to the peripheries of the towns, there was only one woman who wished to return to her village in the future. This woman is Fadime, from a mountain village in the district of Gördes, Manisa. She plans to return there after receiving her share of the family land as her inheritance. She and her retired husband have built a house there and plan to take advantage of the walnut trees on the inherited land. Saadet, another of the *Greenhouse* women, and her husband Akif have invested their savings in a land and tractor. However, Saadet does not want to stay in the village of Tortular, since she thinks it is not a suitable place to raise her daughter. Instead, she wants to move to Bergama. Her husband agrees:

Farming is really hard for us now. There's this thing called social security. [The money from] the animal's milk goes to buy feed. You have to have lots of animals to make any money, it's not possible with just one or two. And if I say, 'I'll plant tobacco or wheat', I'm the only person here. How could I do it? Akif

This perception is closely related to the economic decline of the activities in question. The women underline that it is now impossible to make a decent living as a small-scale producer.³¹⁸ One should have a certain amount of land, as well as the necessary equipment and labor force to do so. Many women said that if they had those, they would prefer to continue working in agricultural production and husbandry, since “your own business is always the best”. Even though what they primarily demand is a fair price for their product, they generally have little hope that this will happen. Serpil says she is not keen to work in olive production since it is not her land she is supposed to harvest, and it is her father-in-law who keeps all the money. Gülizar expresses a similar opinion:

If you have the means, your own work is the best. But if you don't have land or animals it's not possible. Look, my brother in law gave 7000 TL in land rent. And there are other expenses, too. We don't have fields. I would have liked to, I still would like to [have my own work] but you see how it is, under plastic, under orders. Here in the heat all day, it's not easy. If it's your own work you get to sit, there you don't get to sit. Even if you die.

While this is the case for landless women, those with land/animals set higher standards when asked what would they need to keep the production. Answers the women frequently give include an increase in the sale price and subsidies, as well as a guarantee from public authorities to buy the product, and discounts on the gas used during the production. Otherwise, they do not seem keen to return to production. As they are quite pessimistic about the future of small-scale agriculture, women are either indirectly related to the production (by renting out their land), or leave their lands uncultivated. Some also keep the land to sell one

³¹⁸ Women define “profit” according to their own standards. For example, Bingül says 40-50 thousand TL is a high income. This figure works out at approximately 3,750 TL (\$1,200) per month, almost three times higher than the minimum wage in 2016. Similarly, the wages in the mines were always given as examples of a good of income during my fieldwork. These wages vary from 2,000-3,000 TL (\$684-\$1,027).

day so they can retire, organize their children's wedding or repay their debts in one go. Finally, another group of women say that even if the activities become more profitable, they and their children would not be interested in returning to village life or agricultural production and husbandry, from which they now feel distant. This will be detailed in the following section.

Regardless of whether or not they own land/animals or whether or not they reside in the village, the women agree on the fact that small-scale production does not have a bright future. They recall the long queues of cotton producers waiting for their turn at the gate of TARIŞ (unions of cooperatives in Western Anatolia) to sell their product. Now there is no one left doing business with it, as the cooperative itself is defunct. The father of Halime remembers that he used to go to the point of sale at midnight so he wouldn't have to wait too long. During the daytime, there could be 200-300 trailers in the queue. Nadide says that the plain of Kınık is a darker place now, while it was previously lit up by the headlights of tractors on their ways to on plain after another. The majority say the plains were crowded, especially during harvest times. In line with the women's memories of the women, the former mayor of the Bergama Municipality indicates that there is now a smaller number of small-scale producers in Bergama compared to the past. Accordingly, the agricultural engineers of the District Directorate of Agriculture in Dikili and Kınık state that the number of registered farmers in the system has decreased in the last decades. For example, in the year 2000, the number of registered producers in Dikili was 2,000, but by 2014 this figure had fallen to 1400. One of the agricultural engineers was not optimistic about the future of the small-scale producers:

Every day things get worse for small businesses. In ten years, there'll only be 150 farmers, and they'll all be large-scale farmers. I tell the villagers; these are the good days. It's going to get worse. Farming will earn money, not farmers. Their kids all work in shops in Dikili from one summer to the next. They use middlemen to get work in the greenhouses. I say they're rehearsing for the future. That's what it'll be like in the future. They'll be laborers.

Fahrettin — large-scale producer from Kınık and owner of 600 decares of land as well as two gas stations and an agricultural equipment store — says that it is almost impossible to make a living from small-scale production in agriculture and husbandry. While the indebtedness of the producers on the Kınık plain deepens, there are more land mortgaged to the banks of Denizbank, Şekerbank, TEB and Anadolu Bankası. According to Fahrettin, there is a tendency towards land sale that may result in the consolidation in Kınık in the hands of one company in the long run. Sadık, the *mukhtar* of Yayakent, Kınık, says, “They cut open the farmer’s stomach, and pulled out a debt receipt,” adding that the previous year (2014) the banks sold many fields taken from their owners who were unable to repay their mortgages. Accordingly, Çiftçi, head of the Chamber of Agricultural Engineers in Izmir says small producer are in trouble with the banks. According to his observations, they either repay a very limited part of their debt or use the money to repay debt of a loans, with this latter being the dominant tendency recently. He asserted that by 2014, this would no longer be possible, which is why he believed that it was the right time for lands to be passed into other hands.³¹⁹

The *Company* is one of the most important buyers of land in Bergama and Dikili, a fact about which the manager of the *Greenhouse* seemed to be very proud during a discussion of their annual growth in terms of land area. When I first visited him in his office, I was quite surprised by the huge map on the wall of the lands of the *Greenhouse* and its surroundings based on a satellite image. The land bought by the *Company* were marked on the map, and not only the land of

³¹⁹ Yahya, the *mukhtar* of the village of Korkutlar, Yahya makes the same point. He sees a difference in terms of the economic power of the peasant to pay off his/her debts. He says debt is a prerequisite for every peasant to survive, yet in the past, s/he was capable of paying the high interest of the loans. Even though the interest rates on loans are no longer so high, they are unable to pay them back. He adds that even the no-interest loans from ZIRAAT Bank cannot be paid back. Halim, a shepherd from the village of Korkutlar says his indebtedness is a vicious circle: “We’re always in debt, we can never pay off the full amount, it’s a never-ending circle.”

the *Greenhouse*, but also other land bought for the *Company*'s future plans.³²⁰ The total amount of land owned by the *Company* is unknown, as its website is not up-to-date. Yet, one can follow their rising land ownership for both expanding greenhouse units and new investments through interviews given to various magazine.³²¹ As mentioned in Chapter 1, there are now other large-scale sub-companies operated under the *Company*, with a focus on poultry, fruit production, traditional food production and online sales, as well as stockbreeding. While these are all currently operational, the *Company* also has plans under way for a boutique thermal hotel for agritourism. The *Company* has announced that the land has been bought and construction permits have been obtained.

The women of the *Greenhouse* and other locals point to a significant path of change that co-exists with the elimination of small-scale production in the Bakırçay Basin: Strengthening agribusiness. They believe that the latter has become more powerful as small-scale producers have lost their significance both economically and socially. For example, Ismail, the former mukhtar of the

³²⁰ During the course of this study, some of the plans were realized. In an interview, the manager stated that by 2014 the *Company* had bought more than 10,000 decares of land. A year later, he greeted me by saying "We've grown 20% since the last time we saw each other. We are the biggest [in terms of size] in Turkey and third-biggest in the world." National statistics also highlight the expanding sector of greenhouse production: Turkey is the second country after Spain in Europe when it comes to the total area of land used for greenhouse production. The ranking of cities in Turkey according to level of greenhouse production is as follows: Antalya (47%), Mersin (20%), Adana (12%) and Muğla (8%). Regarding the total area of land used for this purpose, Izmir is the fifth city, with 15,726 decares. In the last ten years, the size of holdings has increased from 2 decares to 4 decares for family businesses, and 27 decares for modern greenhouse units (<https://www.tarimorman.gov.tr/Konular/Bitkisel-Uretim/Tarla-Ve-Bahce-Bitkileri/Ortu-Alti-Yetistircilik>, last visited 15.09.2019).

³²¹ For the privacy of my informants, I will not expose the names of the magazines. However, according to interviews published in diverse magazines, it was more than 1,000 decares of land for closed greenhouse production by 2018. Their overall turnover in 2017 was 40 million US dollars. That makes the *Greenhouse* the largest business of its kind in the Middle East, Balkans, Turkey and Europe, in which the heating system is based only on geothermal resources. According to the *Company*'s official web page, the area is 600 decares of land with 20 million dollars of export value, as well as 10,000 decares of land for the agricultural production complex and 65,000 trees for fruit export.

village of Sadıklar (64-year-old, male) associates the decline of the peasantry with the process of supermarketization. He still lives in the village yet his two daughters have moved to Bergama to work — one as a cleaning lady, the other as a salesperson. According to him, the small producer and “people of agribusiness” are two extremes. Without hesitation, he blames the state for not helping for changing sides: subsidies are cut off/inefficient, prices are not regulated and therefore small producers today are “poor” and exploited by the big actors like “slaves”.

You know those supermarkets they have in the city? Well, all that has come here. This state is going to finish off small producers. They used to chase after us for fresh cheese, now they buy whatever they find in the supermarkets. Production has stopped, it's hard for us to do our work. I'm telling you, as long as there are greenhouses, the small-scale shepherd or farmer is finished.

More than the *Greenhouse*,³²² for the women and others dealing with small-scale husbandry we can see that the concept of the agribusiness is exemplified by the *Stockbreeder*.³²³ According to information given to me by the manager in 2015, this company again has over 1,000 decares of land with approximately 5,000 animals. According to interviews published in magazines, the company's milk-production capacity was 55 tons per day in 2016. The company's website says that in order to use green energy they will invest in a wind energy plant and biogas production facility in the near future. It is safe to say that large-scale production with massive numbers of animals has affected the small stockbreeders in the area. It is said that the *Stockbreeder* has constantly bought lands to produce the large amount of chaff needed. They make the producers cultivate silage corn and clover on those lands. They also buy other producers'

³²² The reason it is the *Stockbreeder* rather than the *Greenhouse* that is primarily viewed this way is that the *Greenhouse* is an export-oriented business whose products do not compete with the local agricultural producers in the Bakırçay Basin. However, the manager told me that this is part of their future plans, since the domestic markets are too valuable to be ignored.

³²³ The real name of the company will not be given due to security reasons.

corn, chaff, etc. Once this has all been bought up in bulk, then there is nothing left for the small stockbreeder.

When husbandry ends here, all the feed fields will go to the Stockbreeder. For example, they came and bought that silage field out back. The field's owner handed it over and left, rather than selling them off one by one he sold them all at once, he preferred to sell to them.³²⁴

Women think that it will probably be large-scale investors dealing with agricultural production and husbandry in the future, since the small producer does not have the power to compete, particularly when the problems of production are taken into consideration. The elimination of the small-scale producer is also seen by the women and others as a victory of “rich” over “poor”. That is why the women use the term “holding companies” run by the rich to identify the other side. They find it interesting that white collar professionals such as lawyers or doctors deal with large-scale husbandry, an activity that was once the “job of poor people” who would struggle to make a living out of one or two animals. Having rented out his land, Adem, a worker at the *Greenhouse* for 13 years, says that there is an “Enormous gap between the small- and large-scale producers!” and that the future will play out in favor of the latter. Sabriye says that today, those who cultivate tomatoes or sunflowers do so on extensive lands, and those with just one or two animals and a small plot of land are about to be wiped out. While everybody in her village used to have one or two animals, now there are only two animal-owning households left. However, the size of these households' herds has risen to 25. As will be discussed in the next section, the women believe that they are the last generation to deal with small-scale production. When they pass away, the production itself will end, unlike the large-scale investments which can continue production regardless of the loss of the people in charge, as was the case, when the founder of the *Greenhouse*

³²⁴ Accordingly, the price of chaff increases, which becomes a drain on their budget. Furthermore, it is not only chaff, but also milk that becomes problematic. They believe it will not be possible for them to sell their milk from a small number of animals against the *Stockbreeder* producing tons of milk per day.

passed away. In this sense, the following conversation between Yahya, the mukhtar of the village of Korkutlar, and the manager of the *Greenhouse* is striking:

Half joking, I said to Arda, ‘The rich play around with the bread of the poor. How many animals do they [the Stockbreeder] have?’ ‘Not at all, why do you say that?’ he said. ‘Look, after I’m gone, after we’re gone, there’ll be no one left doing this job, but over there is it like that? The same system continues. There was Hüseyin, he died. Hasan went, Ahmet arrived. But it continues.

In sum, the women argue that “the age of the small” is coming to an end in the Bakırçay Basin, and they are almost “out of the game”. They blame the politics for being “unrealistic to their lives” in rural areas. The new normal of the near future in rural areas will be composed of large herds in big numbers, expansive lands owned by holding companies run by educated, well-off urbanites. For this reason, the rural market is referred to as the “market of the prophets”, meaning that it excludes the ordinary masses, i.e. small producers. Although the women criticize large-scale production in terms of production techniques, heavy use of chemicals and/or unfair share of subsidies, they nevertheless see the tendency towards the elimination of small as inevitable. They say that rural areas close to the peripheries would be the places for further investments, as in the case of the *Stockbreeder*.

When it comes to how the *Company* interprets the change, we can see that they agree with the women of the *Greenhouse* and other villagers from the Bakırçay Basin. The manager tells me there has been “a break” regarding the last two generations dealing with small-scale agricultural production and husbandry in the Bakırçay Basin. He argues that traditional ways of production have already begun to be replaced by new and modern ones. The *Greenhouse* is one of the best examples of this: “There’s not many [small producers] left. Farming is over.

The time of Ahmet Agha or Mehmet Agha is over.”³²⁵ He is also proud of the high quality of the *Stockbreeder*, compared to those involved in small-scale husbandry whose products, he says, are not hygienic, while the producers take advantage of the label “village milk” to overprice their product. He also criticizes traditional agricultural production, saying that overusing the land results in a sharp decrease in the level of organic matter. In this sense, he believes that large-scale investments are the only and best alternative to raise standards and reach the highest efficiency rates. It is unsurprising that these views are echoed by the head engineer, who underlines how depleted the lands have become in rural Turkey because of misuse by small producers.³²⁶ He says it has become difficult to survive as a small producer in the contemporary rural context and advises to those with medium-size lands to consolidate the plots and update their business

³²⁵ He adds, “Do you know the ‘Land Protection Law’? Because *there won’t be any small producers left soon.*” As stated in the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock report Structural Changes and Reforms on Turkish Agriculture 2003-2016, “Legal arrangements are carried out in order to prevent the fragmentation of agricultural lands. Within this scope, ‘Indivisible Parcel Size’ was determined. It was hindered the fragmentation of special product lands and marginal agricultural lands to less than 2 hectares, cultivated agricultural lands to less than 0,5 hectare and the greenhouse agricultural lands to less than 0,3 hectare. The sale of agricultural parcel shares of which size is under Indivisible Parcel Size was obstructed. (...) In the last 3 years; total of 4.2 million agricultural parcels were transferred to the heirs without division and 651 thousand hectares of agricultural land is prevented from fragmentation by sale. While 450 thousand hectares of land in total had been consolidated in Turkey between 1961 and 2002, in 41 years, 5 million ha land was consolidated between 2003 and 2016 in 14 years. It is planned to achieve the land consolidation on 14 million ha. (https://www.tarimorman.gov.tr/SGB/TARYAT/Belgeler/Faaliyet%20Kitapları/ENG_TURKIYE_GENELI.pdf, 2016: 32-33, last visited 02.08.2019). I was told examples of villagers who could not obtain their share of land because it was not large enough to divide, and so, as a last resort, it is expropriated. Nebile says that with this law, “The rich get richer, the poor get lost and forced out. The poor don’t have the power to buy *[land]*.” While the average agricultural land parcel in Turkey is 60 decares, in Izmir, the average size is significantly lower: According to Chamber of Agricultural Engineers in Izmir it is 14 decares; while the Izmir Commodity Exchange puts it at 37 decares. The head of the Chamber of Agricultural Engineers argues that because it is lower than the national average, the effects of the law will be more detrimental on the lands of the Izmir region (Interview with Ferdan Çiftçi, 2014).

³²⁶ Ironically, all the criticism he made is quite true from an ecological point of view. Intense and uncontrolled use of chemicals by small producers, overuse of water resources, depleted lands that never lie fallow, or unplanned production have devastating effects on nature. However, what he proposes as an alternative is far from environmentally friendly: a large-scale agribusiness established on fertile lands, computerized production based on pesticides and artificial fertilizers, and, perhaps the most detrimental, agricultural products that travel huge distances. All these features make greenhouse production unsustainable, too.

with the latest technology to make higher profits. He thinks greenhouse (preferably landless) production is the best of all the options. In this sense, he only pays attention to the unfairly allocated state subsidies for new investments in rural areas. For those with small amounts of land, he suggests income diversification to sustain agricultural production. The best small producers could do, he believes, is to simply keep what they already have for themselves, but saving money or expanding their business is out of the question for them.

To conclude, it is safe to say that both sides are aware of the fact that the Bakırçay Basin has been on the cusp of a change characterized by the separation and gradual elimination of small-scale producers from production, and income diversification of the masses resulting in proletarianization, alongside the economic and social decline of village life, while agribusinesses have come to the fore in a way that cannot be ignored. In this sense, women's desires for their children and the children's own choices (not) to sustain production will complete the picture of this change, as discussed in the next section.

7.3.2. Future Generations

It is clear that there is a world of difference between the childhoods of the women in this study and those of their children. I detailed the childhood of the women in Chapter 2, Methodology, as part of their working biographies. The women were involved in income-generating activities at very early ages as “child laborers”. Unlike the women of the *Greenhouse*, I see there is a different pattern for the new generation of children regarding the age at which they start their working life. These children have never been forced/encouraged to make a living with their parents in the fields. The women aware that it is an overwhelming experience for a child, and therefore feel that not asking their children to work is a good thing. According to their parents, the children of today are “not accustomed to work in the fields”, “don't have the ability to deal with such hard work” and “do not even know where our olive groves are located.”

For example, Bingül says her children are “late beginners to life” unlike her, since “We didn’t make our kids work [like they did to us].” Likewise, Merve says she did not want them to work at early age as she did. If they would like to work one day in the future, she wants them to pick “lighter work”, rather than “tough field work”. While Bediye is afraid of the possibility her child being exploited in the fields, Sabriye says her son is a “child of the computer” who has never seen a field in his life. Women generally remember their childhood spent doing hard work as they were obliged to “help” their families in the fields and take care of the animals. A small number of the women’s children were taken to the fields at an early age. One of these is Yağmur, a young university student and daughter of Gülizar, who says she took her to the fields in order to accustom her to hard work, as a guarantee in case she is not a successful student: “Right, maybe she won’t study, she needs to get used to it, so I took her at the age of six. To cotton, tobacco work, drying tomatoes.”

Below I outline the kind of jobs the children/siblings of the women of the *Greenhouse* deal with. Even though the legal working age, this is often not observed in rural areas, as demonstrated previously in the working biographies of women who used to work as child laborers. For this reason, I added to the list those who are under 18- if they worked previously or are currently working. However, it is important to mention that this is the minority of the children, while the majority continues their education without working in the fields. Therefore, I do not include on the list babies, toddlers and small children.

There are 13 girls (daughters/sisters) and 21 boys (sons/brothers) of the women who are currently employed or who work seasonally/daily. The ages of those range from 12 to 39. The youngest is a 12-year-old boy who works as a baker’s apprentice, while the oldest is again male who is a shepherd supported by his mother and two sister’s wages to sustain husbandry in the village. Out of 34, only four deal with agricultural production and husbandry, and all of those are male. One is a 15-year-old boy who goes to the fields only in summer to make

pocket money, while the other two are the aforementioned 39-year-old shepherd and a 28-year-old tractor driver. Finally, the 31-year-old brother of Kevser deals with husbandry (those dealing with husbandry as a second job are not counted under this category). The tractor driver is the only one of these involved in such activities without the support of the income of other family members. It is seen that there has been a radical break from the mainstream economic activities that characterize the rural areas when it comes to the younger generations. I also observe that even if the younger generation deals with such activities in the beginning, the shift to off-farm jobs has also been another pattern for them in the rural labor market. This, however, is more valid for men than for women. For instance, Semiha has two sons who started working as child laborers in the tobacco fields. While the older shifted from the fields to apprenticeships (first at a barber's shop and then at a butcher's), he also worked in the constructions to initiate his insurance payments. He is now a butcher at the municipality's slaughterhouse. Semiha's younger son first worked at a gas station, before moving to the limestone pit as a worker with social security. They both live in Kınık with their own families.

The women of the younger generation work in the service sector: As salespeople at an optician's, wedding store, grocery, office supply store and dress shop. Furthermore, there are six who work at the *Greenhouse*, and just one daily laborer. Additionally, one woman is an accountant, while another is doing an internship as an engineer. Finally, one of the young women works at the tomato paste factory. It seems more than the half of the females in question deal with agricultural production yet this involvement in agriculture as workers at the *Greenhouse* paints a very different picture from the childhood of the participants in this study. Regarding the males, the service sector does not dominate their employment patterns as in the case of the females: Out of 21, four deal with husbandry and agricultural production. The rest are predominantly employed as laborers: While four are miners, there are three drivers, two workers at the *Greenhouse* and Forestry Operation Directorate, and one butcher. In addition,

there are two construction workers who work irregularly and three apprentices at a bakery, grocery and carpenter's workshop. Finally, there is only one intern at a vocational school who previously worked in the fields and tomato paste factory for a few days. There are also three males (driver, worker and one with an unknown occupation) who are currently in prison.

The working pattern of the younger generations in the rural labor market, i.e. the shift from small-scale agricultural production and husbandry to off-farm jobs seems to be related to several dynamics. As mentioned, there are only four young people who continue those activities. While one of them does so to make pocket money, there are only three males who deal with such activities in a similar way as their parents did. When it comes to why, the women of the *Greenhouse* rank the lack of land/animals as the main reason. Without these, they say it is impossible for them to lead their children into production. Interestingly, this was not the case for the previous generation, most of whom used to cultivate on rented fields or work as daily laborers, yet nonetheless made a living. However, as mentioned previously, rising costs exceed profit for many products, which makes it increasingly difficult to sustain the activities as small-scale producers. The insecure, risky, low-profit but overwhelming nature of production seem to turn the small producer households with limited or no land/animals into working-class households in rural areas.³²⁷ While Semiha spent her life tobacco production, her sons and their wives all are shift workers employed in shifts.

If we had fields, I'd have encouraged the kids. But we have no land. So I never told them to learn how to work the land. Now my daughter-in-law is a nurse,

³²⁷ This increases when it comes to mountain villages. Steep and uneven plots of land make it impossible to use machines, resulting in production based only on labor force. Because of these characteristics, the women from those villages are more determined than others in their preferences for next generation: "[Children] shouldn't go into farming. I'm sick of farming. Better that they have a job here, a shop. I wouldn't want them to go to the village. There's no planting, no land to farm. There's no one in the village to give you advice, let alone money. You buy straw, you buy feed, it's hard to take it to the village. It costs a lot. If it was in the lowlands maybe they could do it, but our village is so far away. If there was flat land, maybe you could rent. [But] there isn't any water in our village. Raising animals is hard in winter." Güldeste

she works shifts, they never see each other at home, even lighting the wood burner is a problem. Who's going to light it? Semiha

When the lack of land is combined with the lack of adequate equipment, i.e. tractor, harvesting or planting machines, the costs of production rise even further. According to the women of the *Greenhouse*, lack of experience is another reason behind the tendency among the younger generation towards off-farm jobs. These two reasons form a vicious circle: as young people become distanced from these activities, their lack of experience deepens. In turn, the more they lack in experience, the more distanced they feel from such activities. Another reason the younger generation is unwilling to work in such areas is the lack of insurance. In addition, women say their children live in a “different age” characterized by certain patterns of consumption and an insignificance of subsistence farming.³²⁸ “Money relations” become much more critical in organizing contemporary rural life. In addition, women say young people do not like village life and do not see the villages as places to live. In this sense, what the son of Elmas says when taken to the village by his mother is critical: “There’s 20 people in the village at most. Everyone left. No youngsters. I took our son to the village in the summer. After three days he said to me, ‘Let’s go, no one could stay here.’” As a result, neither women nor their children/younger siblings primarily continue with small-scale production. Women predominantly say they prefer their children “to be waged workers with social security” rather than undertaking agricultural production.

In light of all this, I see two paths the parents want their children to follow to make a secure and decent living: If s/he is young enough, their advice is to have an education and obtain a diploma, if not, then they guide them towards off-farm

³²⁸ They give the examples from their childhood of buying clothes once a year or exchanging different types of food without using money: “In the past we’d roast chickpeas. Or we’d take an egg to the store and exchange it for nuts. Now look at my son, for example. Just so no one says he doesn’t have money. Every single day I ask, ‘Don’t you have your spending money?’ Because if not... Now it’s necessary, you see. Without money he can’t even get on the bus and go to school.” Hediye

jobs. The list of those with higher education is given in Chapter 2, Methodology. In addition to those I came across at the *Greenhouse*, I saw many others at the participants' homes who continue their compulsory education with future plans for further education. Women find the high school diploma/two-year university degree useful for finding a decent off-farm job, which is why they encourage their children to get at least one of those. It is also important to mention that women are well aware of the fact that their children will not have radical mobility, even if they obtain their diploma. That is why they tell me they have "reasonable" dreams; they see their children as ordinary civil servants, teachers or small retailers in the future: "They shouldn't be farmers. Fine, they don't have to be a doctor or a prosecutor but they could be civil servants on some small level." These are seen as better options for young people when compared to being a peasant. In the eyes of Halime, a teacher friend in Kars "*saved her life*"; if she did not have a diploma, she would now have had to work in the fields. Similarly, Meliha says that as long as her sons continue their education, they can also work in the fields; if they do not, then "the earth will make them rot" and force them to work in the mines. Finally, the encouragement towards education is an investment for these households, as in the long run it guarantees stable wages and social security for all. For some women, the education of their daughters is especially important regarding the reasons summarized in section 5.2.2 on Restrictions on the Lives of Rural Women. These women see education as a tool to improve the living conditions of their daughters' lives, a tool of which they themselves were deliberately deprived.

I want them to study. Particularly my daughter. Not become farmers. I wanted to but they didn't send me to school. 'Girls don't study,' they said. But it's easier for an educated woman to find work, to stand on her own two feet. For men it's different, they find work anywhere. For girls it's not the same. Look, there are lots who get married and are then abandoned, lots who are beaten, their husbands don't look after them. Serpil

The second path is for the women to encourage their children to take on off-farm work. The most common answer to the question "What are the future prospects

for your children?” is that they hope their children will find a stable, waged job with a social security. They believe this is best the amount of money coming in each month is certain. In this sense, even though there are some cases in which women wish for their children to be involved in both farm and off-farm work, they see the former as a side income, while the main income is always associated with off-farm work. Servet believes it is a good thing that her sons work in the mines, and that it would be even better if their wives were involved in tobacco production to make some “extra” money. Finally, Sabriye says her son can choose to be a veterinarian if he plans to live in the village in the future. However, she does not want him to return to the village as a daily laborer, as she once was. Halime says she would not want to be involved in cotton production in the future.

I'd never think of planting cotton. As a woman, how can you make sure it's looked after right. If I could do my own work it would be better but you need [the money]. I can't wait [to inherit] the fields. If the land is valuable, I'll rent it out. I won't plant them myself, by this age I've planted all I'll ever plant. My dad said he was going to sell the ones next door and use the money to retire and pay for a wedding for me. I'll sell them and use some of the money to buy a house. Maybe I'll put some aside for my children.

One of the most striking findings in this research is the loss of stature of the peasantry in the eyes of both the women of the *Greenhouse* and the following generation. Although the conditions of the rural labor market are poor, the peasantry has lost its stature to an unprecedented extent. It faces grave difficulties not only in continuing petty commodity production as an economic category, but also in reproducing itself as a social form of life. The younger generations in particular seem to have become distanced from the idea of living the life of a “peasant” in the village. In the perceptions of the young people and their parents, the small producer in the village is associated with the dirty, insecure and hard work, in contrast to the waged laborer in the periphery of towns (or again in the village but with future plans to move) which is seen as clean, secure and less tiring. The former is found too risky for young people who

are just starting out in life: Servet says tobacco production is not something you can trust as it is a “short-term trade”, while Selma says it is like a “gamble, depending only on luck”. Having not seen farming as an “occupation”, the younger generation feels unwilling to be involved in it. It is said that the younger generation today has lost the ties that attached them to the peasantry. The peasantry is seen inferior to waged work, in the way that the peasants once used to look down on shepherds. Now, it is the peasants who are disregarded by the young people. The daughter of Gülyüz says:

I never thought of getting married and settling in the village to raise animals or farm the land. There are no girls left in our village who say that, who want to stay there. For example, they only return to the village when they retire.

As stated previously, the loss of the peasantry in the eyes of the women affects their decisions related to marriage. While the social decline of the villages is a significant factor in this, it is also the reason for young people to decide not to live in the villages. There is an aging population left in “ruined” villages that deal with limited husbandry/agricultural production. Metin says that when he was a child in the 1970s, there were 53 children in the school. Now, however, there are only a handful of children now living in the village of Korkutlar. They are the last households dealing with husbandry yet they too are considering moving to Dikili, as others did. The women say there is nothing left in the villages to motivate the young generation to return. Even if they support their children’s decision not to deal with production in the villages, their vision of the future for the villages is bleak.

They won’t come back. They never stay in the village. They go off to work. Old people do animal farming. Do they see farming as more... Don’t they want to do it anymore? It’s because it doesn’t make money. There are empty houses that are falling down, no one comes. Houses that aren’t lived in get old. Then they crumble and disappear too. Gülcan

Solmaz’s story about their migration in 2015 from the village of Taştepe to Kınık is the only exceptional narrative in the mainstream approval of the tendency of

the younger generation towards waged work. She says that her family's migration was not driven by a desire for "freedom", but instead it was the impossibility of making a living from husbandry that "*forced*" them to move. Now, she says, they are not as "happy" as they used to be in the village. According to Solmaz, the small peasantry is trapped between the village and the peripheries of the town since nowhere offers them decent conditions.

7.4. Conclusion

Rural households in Turkey involved in small production, with or without their own land and animals, areas have been in a crisis, especially accelerated after the 2000s. This crisis threatens them not only as an economic category but also as a social category crystallized in the decoupling from production and the loss of stature of the peasantry. Migration and proletarianization seem to be two significant outcomes. In this research, that overlaps with the greenhouse businesses that are spreading across the Bakırçay Basin, while female peasant-workers participate massively in paid labor either from the villages or the peripheries of the towns to which they recently migrated. This is in accordance to the literature focusing on the growth of agribusiness and the increasing participation of women to paid labor (Raworth, 2004; Tallontire et al., 2005; Bain, 2010; Gündüz Hoşgör & Suzuki, 2016, 2017, 2018a, 2018b; Deere, 2005; Bonanno & Cavancanti, 2014; Mannon et al., 2012; Baas et al., 2008).

The women explain the reasons behind the economic crisis in small-scale production as follows: Costs exceeding the income, lack of land and equipment³²⁹, inefficient rural politics that do not match "the realities of life",

³²⁹ When the household owns agricultural land/animals, it is generally the male who is the named owner. In this research, women in such a position are quite rare. Kocabıçak (2018) concentrates on the reasons exclude women from ownership in rural areas, and says that the Turkish Civil Code (1926-2001) discriminates against women for patriarchal motivations. She argues that the exclusion of women from land ownership leads to men, with the help of the gender division of labor, appropriating the products produced by women. Land ownership has been dominated for

and the risky and insecure nature of production and sales. They also mention the lack of the necessary labor force when their children do not want to deal with agricultural production and husbandry. The income generated from these activities is no longer the primary income of the households, but on the contrary, is seen as an addition to the household members' regular wages. However, unlike for men, for women as unpaid family laborers, such activities represent employment devoid of basic worker's rights, whether they own the land/animals or not. Under such conditions, it is safe to say that the women of the *Greenhouse*, in spite of dealing with small-scale agricultural production and husbandry for almost their entire life, tend to become distanced and even decoupled entirely from the rural activities in question. The categories defined at the beginning of the chapter reveal that while there is only one woman who continues with agricultural production and husbandry while working at the *Greenhouse*, the main trend is for women to have only "a limited relation" to such activities or to be entirely and "detached" from agricultural production and husbandry, being involved instead in off-farm jobs.

Ways of carrying out agriculture and husbandry have changed accordingly. Avoiding labor intensive and crops with lower subsidies, renting out land to avoid the risks of the production, exchanging milk with fodder, and guaranteeing a regular source of income to support production are the main strategies observed within the households. Olive production, for example, is considered as one of the best options, since it is both less labor-intensive and cost saving for household use. Giving up production is another growing trend among (former) producers, which is in line with the decrease in the total area of cultivated land in the Izmir region; this fell from 215,989 hectares in 2004 to 176,212 hectares in 2018.³³⁰ In addition, subsistence gardening is quite common for households to

long years by men, therefore women's right to access farmland, other forms of property ownership and/or technologies and commercial activities are still limited.

³³⁰ <https://biruni.tuik.gov.tr/ilgosterge/?locale=tr>, last visited 12.11.2019.

meet their needs. In light of this, it is not surprising that there are more women working at the *Greenhouse* originally from rural Bergama and Kınık, where the crisis of small production was experienced in a more intense way (the labor market in Dikili still absorbs newcomers from a few under-populated villages through employment in the tourism sector³³¹). As a result, women think that they are about to be “out of the game” as small producers, as the competitiveness of such activities is highly questionable, especially compared to agribusinesses that produce on a much larger scale, are experts in marketing and distribution, and also receive much higher subsidies than small producers.

When it comes to the social decline of the villages, the aging populations and subsequent lack of young people/children create desolate places in which women feel socially excluded. Five of the eight women in villages indicate that they would like to move to the peripheries of the towns (one of them did so through marriage during the fieldwork), but wait to get married or for the next stage in their children’s education in order to move. In this sense, Sirman (2001) defines marriage as a mechanism that reproduces the household, production relations and the human component, as well as the unit that forms society. In accordance with this, changing marriage patterns directly affect the capabilities of villages to reproduce themselves as a social category. Women’s life choices, in other words, under which conditions and why they prefer a particular path, mean more than simply “marriage decisions”; they become a primary condition to understand the rural change that is shaped by gender dynamics. One may claim that women’s marriage decisions have the possibility to free them from village life and empower them; yet the experiences in their new lives needs to be taken into account in order to obtain a complete picture.

³³¹ Keyder and Yenal say that tourism has been an important source of off-farm jobs for the rural population of the regions of Western and South Anatolia. According to the authors, the availability of off-farm jobs is the reason that the population of those areas has not shown such a sharp decline. Kurdish populations who had to migrate and settle in those areas also raises the population (2011, 2013). However, I observe the opposite in the villages of Dikili; although the town provides employment opportunities in tourism, this does not result in households still living in the villages. Six villages (out of 25 in total) were already depopulated and aging.

It is clear that women from mountain villages have more difficult conditions than those who live on the plains. The distance to town centers, lack of schools or primary health care centers discourages women to continue living there. However, the cost of the town/city life also frightens these households, as they still rely on subsistence resources.³³² The participants who do not want to live in towns are middle-aged women. Only one of them continues production in the village, while the other two are either in a limited relation or detached from such activities. While the former says it is better to stay in the village since it is next to the *Greenhouse*, the latter says she does not like urban life, which she finds depressing. These findings are compatible with those presented by Suzuki and Gündüz Hoşgör, who argue that “the dimension of social exclusion varies with gender and age” (2019: 540). While young women take advantage of paid work, middle-aged women seem to be in “enduring rural gender marginality” as they withdraw from agricultural production yet do not participate in wage work in the mountain villages of Dikmen, in the Western Black Sea Region in Turkey. The authors say that even though the minority works, middle-aged women are not as empowered by employment as unmarried women, due to “their marital status, the related life circumstances and the lack of education” (2019: 550-551).

In sum, it is safe to say that the loss of stature of the peasantry in eyes of the rural youth is very common. The young women do not see a future for themselves in rural life based on small production, but also do not see this as a future prospect for their children. The change described above in the Bakırçay Basin triggers migration and proletarianization. According to the results of TURKSTAT’s Population Censuses (1927–2000) and Address-Based Population

³³² Saadet is an example as a young woman and a mother of a little girl from mountain village who desire to move in the future: “[*Jokingly*] What was the point of spending so much on a house in this tiny village? If the house had been in Bergama... [*In the village*] Those who die, die, those who leave, leave, those who stay, stay. Now we’ll come here for weddings and [*religious*] holidays. [...] Here we just manage to make ends meet. We don’t pay for rent, cheese, milk. But in Bergama you have to pay rent. So how will there be enough money. There’s ten kids (in the village), once they start school they have to go. Everyone who gets married goes to Bergama. There’s barely five households nowadays in the village. They’re all over 40 or 45. Look at where we work, where we eat. There’s nowhere for the children to play. They miss out on everything. There’s no health center, no school. There’s no school bus, nothing.”

Registration System (2007- 2018), the decrease in the female population living in villages and towns is 8.2%, while it is 7.6% for men. In this case, besides migration from mountain/plain villages to the peripheries of towns in the Bakırçay Basin, we also observe migration between regions. There are ten women who are originally from different regions of the country: Ordu, Kütahya, Balıkesir, Manisa, Uşak, Muş and Nevşehir. Out of these ten women, only one of them, who was born in Tokat, has an urban background, the rest have a rural background from mountain villages. The villages they left behind³³³ generally deal with tobacco production and small-scale husbandry, as well as subsistence agriculture,. Likewise, two of the women used to be tobacco producers in the village of Keklikli (Eşme, Uşak). Women and their families migrate to the Bakırçay Basin to seek employment possibilities in the Soma mines, the construction sector, greenhouses³³⁴ or fields with higher daily payments. In this sense, it is safe to argue that the contemporary characteristics of rural Turkey, such as public support to agribusiness, increasing input costs, “riskier” agricultural production and marketing as well as loss of commons challenge the existence of small producers. The barren and infertile land of mountain villages makes them even more vulnerable. In this case, especially mountain villages in this study set an example of the drastic results of the change. They have become villages whose young generations plan to move to towns and refuse to live the life of a peasant. As a result, the villagers think that “their villages are going to end when we die.” We see that villages become a place for the elderly, poor and weak (Öztürk, 2012; Tekeli, 2008). In line with that, Gür (2016) gives the example of the villages of Yunt Mountain. There, the population has decreased as a result of the elimination of tobacco. Young people are unwilling to keep production, while migration to cities is much more attractive. Gür says the migration of ex-tobacco-producers is more intense than the migration of 1960s from rural areas to urban areas (2016: 132).

³³³ Such as the village of Sarkatlar (Simav, Kütahya), the village of Dereardı, the village of Arlandı (Balıkesir) or the village of Kospınar (Bigadiç, Çanakkale).

³³⁴ For example, there are three other families living in Yenimahalle, Kınık from the village of Deliklitaş, Balıkesir, where one of the interviewees, Gülyüz, is originally from. They migrated to work in the *Greenhouse* and the mines.

The women of the *Greenhouse*, as an example of the category of peasant-workers, still have ties to their villages, whether or not they still live there. Besides, they have knowledge of agricultural production and husbandry, while some still own land/animals. Therefore the category one that is blurred between rural ties, ownership, peasant knowledge and participation to off-farm jobs. Yet, under the transformative effect of the change in rural areas, the pendulum currently swings towards off-farm jobs for small producers. This is in line with the tendency towards proletarianization that is observed not only in the women of the *Greenhouse* but also in their children/younger members in their families. As explored earlier, the future prospects of young people and women for their children do not primarily include small-scale production. On the contrary, off-farm jobs with regular income and social security are prioritized. As small-scale producers are unable to survive economically, the peasantry loses its stature even more in the eyes of the younger generations who intend to leave the villages and/or not return. Furthermore, as the villages become more desolate, they are increasingly less able to satisfy the needs of young people. In this sense, the situation we see today is a vicious circle for the masses in rural areas. The new tendencies introduced by rural transformation, as well as the new experiences of women at the *Greenhouse* indicate the devaluation of the peasant identity. Özügürü (2011) defines this as a “cultural rift” in which the meanings attributed to peasant work and wage labor have been reversed in the eyes of the rural youth. According to Özügürü, while wage labor used to be seen as “drudgery”, it now stands for a secure and sustainable source of income. This too implies a loss of stature of the peasantry and the erosion of the identity of the small producer. Likewise, another dichotomy separating peasant from worker, i.e. being one’s own boss versus working under the command of someone else, also seems to be undermined via a greater appreciation of off-farm work.

When it comes to the patterns of proletarianization in rural areas, we see that there are two issues underlying the process: Deruralization and dispossession. Keyder and Yenal (2012, 2013) argue that “temporary proletarianization” has

become a permanent characteristic of rural areas. They say that it does not lead to the de-ruralization of temporarily employed (seasonally or for longer periods) semi-proletarians. Furthermore, the coastal villages of Western and South Anatolia use wages as an additional income to their diversified agricultural production adopted according to the needs of globalization. Ertürk (1998) conceptualizes this as a “non-permanent exodus from rural areas”. In the case of the *Greenhouse*, I observe that women and rural youth tend to seek more permanent off-farm jobs, rather than temporary ones. In addition, the majority of them have plans and desires to leave the rural areas for a life in the peripheries of towns, regardless of whether they live in mountain or plain villages. It is safe to say that mountain villages have already emptied, while those on the plains have lost their attraction as a place to live for the rural youth. Furthermore, the money made from agriculture is no longer the primary income. Therefore, I believe that even though some of the women still live in villages, they stay there unwillingly and their living conditions are fragile, meaning that they could easily end up moving to the peripheries of the towns. This view is supported not only by the women of the *Greenhouse* but also by other young women from diverse villages of Dikili, Bergama and Kınık with whom I found the chance to talk during the fieldwork.

Regarding dispossession, Gürel (2014) states that it is misleading to equate rural transformation in Turkey with the total elimination of small-scale production. One should problematize the diverse strategies small-scale producers adopt as a response to the change, since the increasingly difficult conditions of small production do not automatically end up with dispossession and elimination of the producers. Yıldırım (2015) says there is no linear and mechanical process from the peasantry to the working class.³³⁵ In this sense, while dispossession is one of

³³⁵ Yıldırım (2015) argues that discussions on the transformation from peasant to worker have been theoretically grounded in the analysis of the early phases of capitalism. As such, the same framework is replicated when defining the roots of the formation of the working class in late capitalized countries such as Turkey. Therefore, processes such as mechanization and dispossession are considered to lead to direct and radical transformation, as occurred in early

the outcomes of rural transformation, it is not always the only one, as seen in this study.

Keyder and Yenal see dispossession as problematic, since it leads to ill-pay, a decrease in the standards of labor power, shrinking local markets and finally rising costs for reproduction (2012, 2013). They equate it with radical rural breakdown: “The lower wages that would have resulted from dispossession would also have curtailed the national developmentalist trajectory that Turkey successfully pursued until the neo-liberal turn, and would likely have precluded the transition to global competitiveness during the last two decades” (2011: 61). On the contrary, petty commodity producers have, unexpectedly, survived and even accumulated land and technology in Turkey. Keyder and Yenal refer to Arrighi, Aschoff and Scully (2010), who say that the model of the peasantry in South Africa has become fully dispossessed from the means of production, especially from the land. However, unlike the model of South Africa, what rural Turkey has experienced is closer to the model of East Asia, which creates a particular labor force still attached to the land that therefore keeps its rural relations. This is why the path is defined as a “more sustainable proletarianization” (2013: 164) crystallized in the wages of semi-proletarians.³³⁶

However, an understanding of “not being dispossessed” as a form of protection for the small peasantry appears to be problematic. The Latin American case, in which the peasantry seeks off-farm sources of income as “responses to their survival crises” could serve as an example. Kay (2006) points to two outcomes:

capitalist economies. Such a perspective tends to ignore the particularities of the processes of transformation.

³³⁶ Their analysis, however, does not primarily problematize the conditions underlying the employment of semi-proletarians in rural labor markets, and this present study, as well as others, have observed a lack of decent conditions in these markets (Özügür, 2011; Güler, 2014; Gündüz Hoşgör & Suzuki, 2016). Özügür (2013) says working conditions for village-based proletarians still resemble those in the *Grapes of Wrath*. In this sense, to underline the availability of off-farm jobs for small producers who desperately need a decent income reflects only a part of reality in the changing contemporary rural areas, as it excludes the precarious nature and conditions of those jobs.

de-agrarianization and semi-proletarianization. Similar to the case of rural Turkey, an increasing proportion of Latin American peasant households base their economics on wages. He says the peasantry has been caught in a permanent trap: “(...) their access to off-farm sources of income —generally seasonal labor— enables them to cling to the land, thereby blocking their full proletarianization” (2006: 472). Rural capitalists take advantage of the elimination of small peasants and their transformation into cheap labor. Kay (2006) argues that to be semi-proletarian is the only option left to small peasants if they wish to retain access to land as a guarantee of survival, because they cannot find sufficiently secure employment as wage workers either in rural or urban sector.

The case of the *Greenhouse* is another example of the lack of secure employment. The *Company* also considers women’s ongoing ties to rural activities as a guarantee that they will work at the *Greenhouse* despite the unfavorable conditions (for the women who continue with agricultural production/husbandry in either an ongoing or limited way). Having another source of income supports the minimum wage received from the *Greenhouse*, and in the eyes of the head engineer, this therefore prevents them from economic deprivation. This bears similarities to the case studied by Güler (2014) in which the owner of the ceramic factory insists that the plans for the mass housing for the workers must include a garden for subsistence production. As a result, he would be sure that the costs of reproduction were not a burden to the factory wage but to the family’s labor, especially that of women who are seen as primarily responsible for such tasks. I argue that not being dispossessed does not essentially protect semi-proletarians from poor working conditions in rural labor markets. Such protection would rather come from potential success in organizing as a collective labor force to oppose the conditions they experience in factories, greenhouses or other businesses in which they are employed as workers. Naturally a small piece of land and/or few numbers of animal soften and even postpone the detrimental outcomes of the process of semi-proletarianization, yet

this can only be a short-term solution in rural Turkey, which is experiencing a crisis of small-scale production. In addition, what characterizes rural labor markets for workers today are low wages, decreased standards of labor power, limited opportunities of employment — especially for women — and increased cost of reproduction — again shouldered by women.

However, discussions on “semi-proletarian”, “village-based proletariat” or “semi-worker/peasant” are made without reference to the gender dynamic, or an analysis of its specific role in such processes. That is also observed in the idealization of the small-producer household as non-gendered unit. These two categories (semi-proletarian/small-producer household) do not problematize how the burden of the two worlds of peasant-workers are allocated on a gender basis, and at the same time the achievements of the women are ignored or not taken into consideration. However, I argue that rural transformation is a gendered process, while women have other stories to tell in the process of proletarianization. They have taken different path(s) than men in the rural labor markets, not only on their way to waged labor but also within it.

Unlike men, women, as unpaid family laborers in their previous working life, were mostly devoid of social rights, including social security or retirement pension. It is here that “greenhouse work” appears as a desired option for the majority, with its regular wage and insurance. These two aspects appear to give women a sense of security and visibility, something they did not have in their work in their villages. For this very reason, as stated before, despite being employed in the fields since their childhood, their working life, according to the women themselves, starts with the *Greenhouse* due to its formal nature. However, for women, the choice to work in the *Greenhouse* goes beyond a simple comparison of the two forms of work. Life in the village means a heavy burden of work based on the gender division of labor, which they believe is an indispensable part of being a peasant. Aydın (2002) draws special attention to women’s labor, saying the maximization of the use of women’s labor is a

significant survival strategy adopted by small producers in Turkey. In such cases, women carry the majority of the burden of production and reproduction in the household. The women of the *Greenhouse* also prefer to avoid such exhausting work, and do so in spite of the disadvantages they experience at the *Greenhouse*. For instance, stress has become a significant pattern of their new working life, and while their previous working life was not free from power relations, hierarchies or a gender division of labor, mobbing and the strict performance system are still new and negative experiences for the women regarding their work at the *Greenhouse*.

How women of the Greenhouse compare and contrast agricultural work with paid work resembles the case study of Bee (2000) in which she focuses on women's work in traditional and agro-export production in the villages of Chacarillas and El Tome in northern Chile. Here, the women's narratives reveal clear differences between work on the family land and that of the grape sector. While working in domestic agriculture is perceived as negative but necessary for the maintenance of the household, women think that paid work in the grape sector is an enjoyable and liberating experience, but at the same brings with it long working hours, repetitive work and exposure to chemicals. Rural Chile has also undergone a rapid change that has seen domestic agriculture become "hard, sacrificial, risky [and] having problems of profitability" in the eyes of women as small-scale producers. On the other hand, emerging employment possibilities in the grape sector allow them to make decisions about how to spend their wages and also provides them with the chance to escape the domestic routine. Even though the conditions are "beautiful" and food is provided, the work is still difficult. Other problems include the precarious conditions of the packing plants, which are the only significant source of waged employment in the valley, the lack of opportunity for career progression, and health concerns. Additionally, women find earning a wage to be a positive aspect of their work, yet they feel they were more autonomous in their former village life where they owned their own fields and did not work for a boss. While women from Chacarillas are

dispossessed small-scale producers, who are currently employed as laborers, those in El Tome still have lands, as well as being employed. The village of Chacarillas experienced the loss of community land and the penetration of agro-export businesses that changed labor systems, with marginalized small-scale farmers and the local population becoming reliant on unstable and temporary wage labor. What happens in the village of El Tome is not quite as clear. Bee says the identity of *campesina* (peasant) is superior to the identity of worker only if women spend most of their working time on their own fields. The community, however, is under rapid change, and while the two villages have different patterns of dispossession for the time being, the tendency towards paid work in the grape sector is also becoming more dominant for the village of El Tome.

ILO data indicate that women are overrepresented in vulnerable employment, i.e. “the sum of own-account workers and unpaid family workers”, in rural areas. Such workers typically have informal work arrangements where they lack adequate social protection and social dialogue mechanisms and receive low pay (in Dey de Pryck & Termine, 2014). However, the women of the *Greenhouse* and other cases (Suzuki & Gündüz Hoşgör, 2019; Gündüz Hoşgör & Suzuki, 2018b, 2018a, 2016) show that the shift does not mean a transition to a decent working life for women. The women’s workforce is not characterized by decent working conditions when they participate in paid labor in the rural labor market as a response to crises of small-scale production. There are gender differences in rural employment in traditional agriculture and modern agribusinesses. Muñoz argues that globalization has increased the proletarianization of indigenous and rural peoples in Mexico, especially after NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), which is why “This shift from subsistence agriculture to wage labor caused internal and external migration, the deterioration of culture, erosion of the countryside and the super-exploitation of workers” (2008: 22). It is clear that either in the form of unpaid family labor or paid labor, the conditions of working life for women are far from decent, as we see in the case of the women of the *Greenhouse*. Nevertheless, as explained in the previous chapters, women have

their own reasons and evaluations, shaped by the gender dynamic, to leave behind their previous lives in favor of this new one.

To conclude, there has been a radical change on use of women's labor in the small-scale producer households studied in this research. Family labor has shifted to waged labor, while other members of the family find alternative ways to compensate for the "lost" labor. Women's regular income has become more vital than their unpaid family labor for households in economic deprivation and thus income from the *Greenhouse* work takes precedence over income from rural activities. This is different from the case studied by Gündüz Hoşgör and Suzuki (2016), in which the (temporary) women workers at the seafood factory do not go to work when they are occupied at home or in the fields. Furthermore, women of the *Greenhouse* prefer to avoid the heavy burden of agricultural production and husbandry. They distance themselves from the village life that is in social decline. Finally, the women feel self-confident about their choices under particular conditions introduced by rural transformation: Even though the *Greenhouse* is not the perfect place to be employed, they are planning to continue there and are not interested in returning to their places of origin, i.e. the villages, to live and produce. Aware of the advantages and disadvantages, they still use the *Greenhouse* work as a tool to empower themselves and change their lives.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

8.1. Rural Turkey in Transformation: The Case of the Bakırçay Basin

The neoliberal re-structuring of rural Turkey has had drastic consequences on its dominant social category, i.e. the masses of small producers. For many households in rural areas, the contemporary conditions of agricultural production and husbandry is characterized by the commodification of input costs, the loss of the commons, the destructive effects of the free market on price regulation and subsidies, the end of the alliance between the state and small producers to the benefit of large-scale agribusiness, dysfunctional unions and sale cooperatives, the limited capabilities of small producers for sales and marketing, the lack of unionization among the masses, and neoliberal reforms, programs and laws. The process as such weakens small producers' ties to agricultural production and husbandry; in some cases, the process is even more radical, and producers are decoupled from production and eventually eliminated altogether, i.e. tobacco or sugar beet producers. This also forces them to find other sources of income outside traditional rural activities in order to survive. This change goes hand in hand with the complex and ambiguous category of peasant-worker and the process of proletarianization.

The ways of practicing agriculture and husbandry have undergone rapid change in the Bakırçay Basin, Western Anatolia: Giving up labor intensive and less subsidized crops, renting land to a second party to secure against the risks of production and marketing, exchanging milk with fodder, guaranteeing a regular source of income to support production, and shrinking the scale of the production are the main strategies adopted by small producers to cope with the change. One

of the main changes in terms of production design has been mainly from traditional agricultural products to fresh fruits and vegetables. Two famous regional products, tobacco and cotton have mostly replaced with crops such as tomato and maize. Tobacco production has been almost entirely eliminated, while cotton production has fallen dramatically. The tobacco-producing mountain villages have experienced this process more keenly, as land there is not suited to changes in the production design. This is not the case for lowland villages, where producers have started cultivating maize, tomatoes, peppers or sunflower on irrigated lands. However, these crops too are still at high risk from the free market dynamics. Even though some of the risks in sale and marketing are reduced for those who do contract farming, the contracts are still buyer oriented and do not protect producers' rights in an equal manner. When it comes to small-scale husbandry, losing the commons, high prices of artificial fodder and the constant introduction of imported products makes it even more difficult for them to maintain production. Maybe the most important point to note is that there almost none of the small-producer households observed in this research (both the households of the participants and others) continue production without the support of another source of income, whether or not they own their land and equipment. This income, which is used to support agricultural production and husbandry, can be a retirement pension, wage from a off-farm job, or home care support for disabled or elderly family members.

All of this results in the depopulating and aging rural population of the Bakırçay Basin. According to the Sustainable Local Development Strategy for the Bakırçay and Gediz Basins,³³⁷ the rural population in Bergama, Kınık and Dikili has severely decreased from 2000 to 2013. The percentage of the total population living in rural areas declined from 51.03% to 29.91% in Bergama, from 59.09% to 31.13% in Kınık and from 58.32% to 31.55% in Dikili. Likewise, the share of agriculture in employment is predicted to decrease from 69% in 2000 to 54% in

³³⁷ A strategy-based report covering a wide range of topics prepared in 2014 by the Municipality of İzmir in collaboration with Dokuz Eylül University.

2023 in Bergama, from 80% to 69% for Kınık, and from 64% to 47.5% for Dikili (2014: 58-61). Mountain and slope villages in particular become a shelter for the poor, weak and elderly (Öztürk, 2013; Tekeli, 2008, 2016), while lowland villages are no longer as attractive as they once were. Moreover, contrary to the argument put forward by Keyder and Yenal (2013), having no experience of migration and dispossession does not protect peasant-workers from ill-pay or precarious working conditions in the rural labor markets. In this context, peasant-workers are “impoverished without dispossession” (İslamoğlu, 2006). Yet when we consider the women in this research who have recent experiences of dispossession and/or migration, we can see that dispossession and migration remain a strong tendency for such households if. In sum, it is clear that, more than ever, the category of the small producer has the strongest tendency towards erosion under the neoliberal restructuring of global agri-food relations in Turkey. This is also observed in the Bakırçay Basin where the category has existed for centuries.

In line with this, what we actually see is the in-depth reproduction of a pattern of diversified peasant-worker practices in the Bakırçay Basin. Alternative ways to generate income are absolutely not a new phenomenon, when we consider the historical roots of such practices in rural Turkey. Western Anatolia in particular is known for its early integration to global capitalism as well as its alternative forms of employment in areas including tourism, small trade, energy and agricultural work. Alternative income generation has always been a strategy pursued by small-producer households, yet today we witness two significant differences: Firstly, the pendulum that swings between being a peasant and a worker tends to point more strongly to the latter category more than ever. As agriculture and husbandry are not considered as a primary way to make a living, the tendency for it to be replaced with waged labor becomes stronger and deeper.

Secondly, though in not large numbers,³³⁸ it is now rural women who are called on to participate in waged labor.³³⁹ The decrease in the number of unpaid family laborers, a group of which women form the majority, has been striking in rural Turkey. In line with the erosion, decoupling and even elimination of small-producer households, rural women have drifted away from agriculture and husbandry to a huge extent. This overlaps with the emergence and proliferation of agribusinesses in the form of greenhouses in the Bakırçay Basin. These are large-scale, export-oriented units whose labor force is predominantly composed of women from villages or the peripheral neighborhoods in the towns of Bergama, Dikili and Kınık to which they recently migrated.

In this context, this study looks for the patterns of the gender labor regime that has emerged as a result of the global neoliberal re-structuring of agri-food relations and local answers given to the process in the case of peasant-worker women employed at one of those agribusinesses, the *Greenhouse*. What are the experiences, practices, thoughts, evaluations and future prospects of women

³³⁸ Looking at the changes between 2004 and 2013, we can see that the number of women who are not economically active decreases in urban areas, while it increases in rural areas. Likewise, the number of women out of the labor force increases from 4.5 million in 2004 to 5.7 million in 2013. This shows that shows agricultural production does not provide sufficient employment for the growing population (Toksöz, 2014: 29). The service sector has become the dominant sector for women's labor. According to 2018 data on economic activity by years and gender, there are 540,000 women employed in the agriculture, industry and service sectors in Izmir. This is broken down into 60,000 women in agriculture, 116,000 in industry and 364,000 in the service sector. These figures are compatible with national and regional data for women. Out of a total of 9,018,000 women working in these sectors in Turkey, 2,353,000 work in agriculture, 1,444,000 in industry and 5,220,000 in the service sector. In Western Anatolia, out of 1,386,000, there are 382,000 women in the agricultural sector. This figure stands at 249,000 in the industrial sector and 755,000 in the service sector. (TURKSTAT Labor Force Statistics, http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreTablo.do?alt_id=1007 last visited 30.09.2019).

³³⁹ This seems to be in line with global trends. Due to the effects of structural agricultural policies, one of the most significant changes is the increasing “multi- or pluri-activity” of peasant farm households in Latin America (Deere, 2005; Kay, 2006). They cover an increasing variety of farm work as well as non-agricultural rural activities such as handicrafts, workshops, commerce and tourism. Rural women have increasingly been drawn into the wage labor market, although often in a precarious manner and for low wages. This shift to wage labor may result in temporary or long-term migrations to other rural/urban areas or to other countries (Kay, 2006; Appendini, 2002; Bee, 1999, 2000; Kabeer & Van Anh, 2002; Barndt, 2002; Dey de Pryck & Termine, 2014).

whose labor has been a constitutive dynamic in rural transformation? What do these tell us further about rural areas in an age of crisis, when it is rural women who participate in paid labor? What are the conditions preceding participation in paid labor and the experiences of decoupling from production and what are the patterns of proletarianization and their complicated results for women? In order to have a better understanding of the gendered rural transformation, this thesis argues that the category and process in question need to be elaborately disaggregated and analyzed on the basis of gender, because neither the category of peasant-worker nor the process of proletarianization are gender neutral.

8.2. Theoretical Framework and Methodology

This thesis is based on a socialist-feminist perspective to understand the relocation of peasant-worker women's labor(s). It sees women's work as a whole, consisting of paid and unpaid labor. It also investigates the possibilities for empowerment through which women change, transform and liberate their lives. In this sense, the "gender labor regime" on the basis of the gender division of labor and "women's perspectives" are two concepts selected to grasp the gendered rural transformation as well as the women's own experiences within it. The former helps to explore the peasant-worker women's working experiences and practices as a whole, when their status has changed from unpaid family laborer to waged laborer. This includes not only their emerging role in the rural labor market as paid labor but also takes into consideration reproductive work. The latter gives priority to the women's agency, i.e. the ability of rural women to construct, improve and implement their own life strategies: "(...) It sees the change they experience not simply a deficit but also as a resource. The rural women are not seen as passive and powerless victims of the change in question

but as subjects who construct their very own strategies by drawing on a variety of resources” (Kay, 2014: 465).³⁴⁰

Feminist methodology is followed in this research, and is prioritized over other methodological approaches as it considers the experiences of women as a source of knowledge. It refers not only to an epistemological break from traditional social sciences but also implies a political potential both for the researcher and researched to understand and change the world. In this sense, qualitative research techniques, i.e. in-depth interviews and participant observation, are employed in an ethnographic way. After the selection of the *Greenhouse* and its peasant-worker women for the case study, fieldwork lasting over two years was conducted in several villages of the Bakırçay Basin and the districts of Bergama, Dikili and Kınık. The fieldwork also included working at the *Greenhouse* for a period of two months. While in-depth interviews were carried out with 33 women of the *Greenhouse*, I also conducted informal interviews with male members of the households, and had meetings with diverse actors, such as *muhktars*, agricultural engineers employed at the Directorate of Agriculture in Bergama, Dikili and Kınık, the head of the Chamber of Agriculture in Izmir, mayor and deputy mayor of the Bergama Municipality, spokesperson of the Bergama Environment platform, and also the human resources unit, engineers and managers at the *Greenhouse*. I also participated in social and cultural events in the villages and towns. Visits to the field continued after the fieldwork was over. The research techniques employed in this study opened the door to a deeper understanding of the “experience(s) of women” which have not been primarily studied within more macro perspectives.

³⁴⁰ This study also sees the limitations of the concept of women’s perspectives. As Weeks (2014) argues, a notion of “gendered subjectivity” necessarily assumes a conception of the “social formation within which it is constructed and maintained”. Otherwise, as Weeks states, it is faced with the subject whose capacities for self-creation and self-transformation are overestimated.

My initial research motivation was to understand the survival strategies of small producers and the changing role of women labor within these strategies. I was expecting to find small-producer households still involved in agricultural production and husbandry though under difficult conditions. In this sense, I selected for my focus the Bakırçay Basin located in Western Anatolia, since it is a well-established region for agricultural production and husbandry, known for its regional products, such as Bakırçay cotton or tobacco. In addition, it has been one of the significant centers for the export of other diverse products, such as olive oil, figs and grapes. However, the pilot study carried out in the area had a transformative effect in my research, as it made me reconsider the focus of the study. I observed mountain and slope villages that had been almost entirely depopulated, as well as lowland villages that were becoming less attractive for the rural youth, especially women. I found households less attached to production, and frequently heard mention of the *Greenhouse* as a new hub to work for rural women. The *Greenhouse* is one of the sub-companies of a very powerful agglomeration with diverse interests in energy, insurance and construction. Besides year-round greenhouse production, it has other large-scale investments on the area, such as agri-tourism, poultry, stockbreeding and export-based fruit production. It sustains its production through the misuse of fertile land, geothermal energy and underground water, that are both privatized and rented long-term. This also harms the ecological balance in the area. A significant characteristic regarding the labor force at the *Greenhouse* is the abundance of female workers. In this sense, the practices of the *Greenhouse* and the *Company* in the Bakırçay Basin is reminiscent of a modern Enclosure Movement.

This led me to a new focus for the research, problematizing rural women's participation in paid labor in an agribusiness, while re-questioning their relation to small-scale agricultural production and husbandry. Therefore, on the basis of the neoliberal re-structuring of the rural Bakırçay Basin, this study explores the

patterns of the emerging gender labor regime for peasant-worker women employed at the *Greenhouse*.

8.3. The Gender Labor Regime and Women's Working Experiences

The search for the patterns of gender labor regime involves an investigation of the experiences of women in small production, at work, and at home. As well as exploring how they combine and negotiate these three spheres, and the terms and conditions underlying rural women's paid labor I look at the different strategies that women adopt to cope them. This study also investigates the reasons behind the domination of women as workers and accordingly the strong association of *Greenhouse* work with women's labor. Another research question of this study is how the women deal with reproduction work when their status changes from unpaid family laborer to waged worker. In addition, this thesis gives place to women's perceptions of work in general and of the *Greenhouse* work in particular to be able to grasp what participation in paid labor means to them. This helps to investigate the possibilities employment offers for empowerment. Finally, it also attempts to understand how women evaluate rural transformation in the Bakırçay Basin with specific reference to their future prospects in small-scale production as well as those of the younger generation.

The investigation into peasant-worker women's working experiences starts with looking at the conditions in the *Greenhouse*. The work regime is primarily based on a performance system through which the women's labor force is controlled and disciplined. According to this system, the women are required to take care of a certain number of plants each day. Their working performances are recorded and evaluated daily. In addition to the rigid hierarchy between white collar employees and women workers, *eleman* workers are defined and treated in a more privileged way than *hasatçı* workers. Differences between "fast/good" and "slow/bad" workers are also vital to the regime, pitting the workers against each other. Furthermore, mobbing is a common experience that is crystallized in the

devaluation of the women through shouting, humiliation, threats, verbal rebukes and mistreatment, all of which results in stress and anxiety. Another characteristic of the regime is flexibility, and a wide range of issues at the *Greenhouse* — from recruitment and dismissal policies to uncertain probation periods and ambiguous job definitions — are flexible. In line with this, the women work there with no job security.³⁴¹

While the plants, products and technological equipment are prioritized, infrastructure, even for the basic needs of workers, is clearly neglected, such as insufficient recreational areas and water units, poor quality meals and poor conditions of the shuttle service. In addition to frequently ignored work safety, women are not protected while working at heights from the top of the carts, from high heat, intense use of chemical use or aggressive bees. Workers' rights are exposed to arbitrariness and fraud, revealed in the "original" payment system, regulation of breaks and leave, the issue of insurance, and nonunionized workers. These all characterize the gender labor regime at work for the peasant-worker women.³⁴²

Women adopt strategies to cope with the conditions at work on the basis of consent and resistance. While the resistance-based strategies mostly target the performance system, via an attempt to ease its harsh criteria that constantly force women to work more quickly; the consent-based strategies include developing a work ethic and practices that are in harmony with the values and rules of the

³⁴¹ By 2013, 38.8% of rural women worked part time. This was four times higher than for the years 2004-2009. Although this is mostly due to the seasonality of agriculture, it still gives an idea about the increasing domination of flexibility for women as a characteristic of gendered rural labor markets (Toksöz, 2014).

³⁴² Sustainability of the labor force for the sake of profit seems to be the primary reason behind the rigidity and repressiveness of the work regime at the *Greenhouse*. It aims at a continuous flow of production and therefore attempts to guarantee sustainability of the workforce. On this point, mobbing is an important instrument to keep the women's labor force in discipline and order. Since women with an "undesirable level of uncertainty" (Pedreño et al., 2014) are easily recalled back home by reproduction work.

Greenhouse. These strategies create a work atmosphere that consist of both solidarity and competition among the women. However, the strategies of consent and resistance tend to be individual solutions to the problems at work. Even though I observed a few rare examples of collective movements and/or strategies during my fieldwork, these were by no means a form of class-based opposition. The undefeated political and economic power of the *Company* in the eyes of the women also weakens their position as an unorganized labor force. In this sense, the deliberate integration of more vulnerable groups to the labor force at the *Greenhouse* definitely contributes to the silence of the workers. I also argue that the Human Resource Unit has an appeasing and disciplining function in the creation of this silence. As the Bakırçay Basin has a history of resistance (for example the area saw one of the first ecological opposition movements against the gold mine established by the Eurogold company in Bergama, as well as one of the strongest producer-based cooperatives, TARİŞ, established in rural Turkey), further research on rural labor under neoliberal restructuring will show whether or not the silence of the worker masses will emerge as a characteristic of the new rurality.

All of the issues mentioned above are compatible with various global examples in which a specific gender labor regime goes hand in hand with women's labor force in large-scale and non-traditional agricultural export-based businesses. The workforce is created from politically and socially vulnerable groups of migrants, women or locals (Freidberg, 2004; Dolan, 2005; Barrientos, 2007; Pedreño et al., 2014; Dey de Prick & Termine, 2014; Appendini, 2002). This is also the case for the *Greenhouse*, where the women belong to highly indebted (former) small-producer households, of which the male members are mainly irregular workers and/or unemployed. Moreover, the association of work at the *Greenhouse* with women's labor is strong that women form the majority of the workforce there. Understanding the reasons behind this brings us the issue of feminization of work. The concept of "woman's nature", with a set of attributed skills, attitudes and tendencies, combined with various restrictions on women's lives regarding

the participation in paid work in rural labor markets, and the ideology of male breadwinner are the primary reasons.

The gender division of labor at the *Greenhouse* regulates the allocation of different tasks and positions to women and men. In the past, there used to be another division of labor at the *Greenhouse*, in which women shouldered most of the tasks that are today known as “men’s work”. Furthermore, under the shortage of male labor shortage or for the sake of the work schedule, the gender division of labor can change at the *Greenhouse*, with the women expected to do tasks usually attributed to men when necessary. The same is not true for the men, however, who embrace the gender labor regime so strongly that they can refuse to carry out “women’s tasks” if asked to do so. The regime also brings horizontal and vertical job segregation for women. While the former means the women are stuck in fewer and certain sectors and occupations, the latter determines the nature of work carried out by women as lower skilled and manual work. This is also observed in other studies conducted on women’s employment in large-scale companies in rural Turkey (Gündüz Hoşgör and Suzuki, 2016, 2017, 2018a, 2018b; Atasoy, 2017). This is again compatible with global examples. Sachs and Allen (2007) stress that women are in the lower echelons of employment in the food processing sector: Women make up 75% of workers in the grading and sorting of agricultural product yet they earn only three-quarters of what men earn in the USA. Additionally, employers tend to prefer female workers for the “seasonal, part-time and flexible” sector of vegetable and fruit production. Women “tend to dominate low level, high intensity jobs, while men dominate supervisor or driver jobs” (Sachs and Allen, 2007: 7). Sachs and Allen conclude that global commodity chains take advantage of women as disadvantaged workers in processing and packing houses on the basis of the gender division of labor.

What do women think of this association of the *Greenhouse* work with women’s labor? And how do they themselves define “woman’s nature”? It can be seen that

the women mostly approve of the *Greenhouse* work being related to certain attributed skills, attitudes and tendencies. However, this is not a total acceptance of an immutable woman's nature: Instead they pick some of the "advantageous" characteristics and internalize them, while others are seen as a result of the conditions that surround women. Women think that they are, by nature, better workers than men; thanks to innate manual dexterity, careful handling and an artistic touch, they have "nimble fingers". However, being docile, mild-mannered, silent and passive are not primarily described as a part of their nature, but rather a result of their squeezed position in the rural labor market which leaves them almost no room for alternative employment. In this sense, the women define woman's nature tactically and are well aware of other dynamics in the process of feminization of work at the *Greenhouse*.

Besides woman's nature crystallized in the *Greenhouse* work, feminization of work draws its strength from two other spheres: Its attributed similarity to agricultural work, domestic chores and care labor. Women's work in the fields resembles the work they do taking care of the plants at the *Greenhouse*. While the fields provide experience for women in their work at the *Greenhouse*, some say it is not the kind of agricultural production they are familiar with and therefore their previous experience is of no help. Similarly, their work is re-categorized as an extension of the domestic chores at home, a viewpoint that holds that female workers are better at cleaning since they are also "housewives". Ironically, however, they are not found to be "hygienic" enough by the head engineer. The resemblance of *Greenhouse* work to care labor sometimes makes women feel compassionate towards and proud of well-grown, strong and healthy plants, as they feel about their children. In sum, gendered fields and homes legitimize the deep association of the *Greenhouse* with women and accordingly the feminization of work, even though they do not entirely match the requirements at work.

Women mention that restrictions on their lives reduces their employment alternatives. Women's mobility of women is limited, so they cannot go far from home to work. They cannot apply to night shift since women arriving home late is not welcomed. There are therefore few job opportunities for women in rural areas. Finally, the households that women belong are in urgent need of cash; they are highly indebted and many fathers/husbands are either irregular income earners or unemployed. This is also where, ironically, we see the role of the ideology of the male breadwinner. Even though this does not reflect the reality of life, in which many households primarily depend on the women's earnings, it is again used to explain the feminization of the *Greenhouse* work. The fact that women's money is seen as a "contribution" to the family budget legitimizes the low wages they receive. Women's involvement in the labor market tends to be underestimated, ignored, invisible, and seen as supplementary to the predominantly male head of household (Bee, 2000). However, I argue that women as breadwinners hold the possibility to weaken and transform the male breadwinner ideology in the long run.

The *Greenhouse* management says rural women with small hands and feminine nature are preferred for recruitment.³⁴³ However, women workers are also appreciated as sources of "cheap labor". Labor costs are the primary cost item for the *Company*. Pedreño et al. (2014) and Bain (2010) see this as a competition strategy of agribusiness to decrease the cost of labor and accordingly maximize profit. The *Greenhouse* also takes advantage of the "reserve army of labor" in the Bakırçay Basin, the majority of which consists of women. The management also appreciates women's silence, patience and harmony. However, this discourse of silence is constructed differently by the women and the management. The women underline structural factors as obstacles to their working lives, while their resistance strategies to cope with the performance system also calls into

³⁴³ Similar characteristics are mentioned by Dey de Pryck and Termine (2014) regarding the tomato agro-industry in Senegal, where women are predominantly employed, 90% of whom have no experience in off-farm jobs.

question their so-called docility and passivity. Salzinger (2003) opposes the idealization of women workers as innately passive and obedient as an employer fantasy. This seems similar to what Appendini (2002) observes among women workers employed in cut-flower greenhouses. Women are aware of the gender bias, both at work and at home, and although they appear to accept the discourse, they also contest it. However, this bias is fully reinforced by the employers; within the nursery and the packing houses, jobs are sex-typed, and demand for workers favors women for a process that relies on unskilled, routine and basic labor (Appendini, 2002: 106). Similarly, Muñoz (2008) says that women workers in the tortilla sector appreciate the attribution of the job as women's work, saying that they are finally being paid for an activity they have been doing at home for years with no payment.

In sum, the feminization of work is based, in this case, on a patriarchal-capitalist construction. The most basic premise of the patriarchal capitalist rural system, i.e. the gender division of labor, goes hand in hand with essentialist divisions underlying "woman's and man's nature". Yet those "natures" may contain multiple, contradictory and mutable meanings. In other words, it is not a basic transfer of a "traditional" gender division of labor from the field and home; it also updates itself to the changing needs of agri-food relations in rural Turkey, crystallized in the *Greenhouse*. Barrientos, Dolan and Tallontire argue that labor market regulations, standards and norms tend to reinforce the gender division of labor because they "reflect the gendered nature of labor markets and economic activity" (2003: 1515).

All of this is in line with Elson's (1999) definition of labor markets as gendered institutions that conceal contributions of reproductive work. Therefore, women's labor experiences require an understanding of another sphere: The home. As such, within the fieldwork the women of the *Greenhouse* were followed to their home after their shifts to understand their burden of reproduction and how they (re)organize it. The *Greenhouse* shirks its duty in relation to the provision of

kindergarten services, even though this is legally compulsory due to the high number of female workers employed. The lack of such facilities at work forces the women to solve the problem on their own. This primarily means the woman herself or other women in charge — generally the mother-in-law, sister-in-law, woman's mother or older daughter — taking the responsibility for reproduction. Even though limited, husbands are involved in care labor and domestic chores but always in a certain combination with one of the women mentioned above. Regarding care labor, this study shows that its (re)organization through a second party has never been taken for granted. It is rather a site where solidarity and conflict take place. Conflict is clearly to the disadvantage of women and forces them to re-organize care labor, take a break and even leave the *Greenhouse* work entirely. It prevents them from having job security and/or long-term employment as they have to wait for their children to grow up. For this reason, the gender division of labor deepens at the *Greenhouse* since it is more restrictive and allows the women fewer options for the re-organization of care labor. Work in the fields is relatively more flexible, when it comes to the presence of babies/children at the workplace with their mothers, compared to the *Greenhouse*, as an example of off-farm job.

When it comes to domestic chores, women deal with them in a more flexible way. Since such tasks are, by nature, deferrable, they seem to take secondary status after care labor in the hierarchy of the tasks attributed to women. That flexibility provides a wide range of options, compared to the limitations on the re-organization of care labor. While other women in charge primarily fulfill domestic chores, male members at home sometimes take on part of this burden, mostly dealing with the basic tasks. However, women still appreciate even this limited “help” with household chores, saying it is lifesaving when they come back home after a long day at work. Women say they do the chores less than they usually would, but I still observed that they wake up earlier, overwork and/or spend their days off doing the chores. They also buy ready-to-use products instead of preparing them at home. In sum, women seem to shoulder the

burden of both worlds at the same time, due to the robustness of patriarchal codes regarding “dual responsibilities”.

Toksöz (2014) underlines that the work burden of women, especially of those living in poor households, disproportionately increases during times of crisis. When family members become unemployed and income decreases, the unpaid labor of women diversifies and also intensifies. It replaces goods and services that can no longer be afforded. Women also make up for public deductions in health and education, taking care of children, the sick and the elderly (Seguino, 2009; Antonopoulos & Memiş, 2009 in Toksöz, 2014: 98). Likewise, Aydın describes the maximization of the use of rural women labor as a significant survival strategy of small producers. It is vital for the reproduction of the small-producer household (2002: 200-203). Gürer (2014) argues that the category of peasant-worker is in an in-between position, leading to the costs of reproduction being shouldered by the household and, more precisely, rural women. In this sense, the overburden of work in question is discussed under diverse conceptualizations in literature, such as “dual employment strategy” (Dolan & Sorby, 2003, Jarvis & Vera-Toscana, 2004), “double and/or multiple burdened” (Garcia Dongo, 2007), “double shift” (my translation, Toksöz, 2014) and “dual employment” and even “triple burden” (Barndt, 2002). As Diane Elson (1995), Pamela Sparr (1994), and other authors have pointed out, structural adjustment programs implicitly rely on unpaid labor, mostly women’s, to alleviate the adverse effects of these policies (in Beneria et al., 2000: xiii). Likewise, structural adjustment policies in Turkey and other programs, reforms, laws and models with neoliberal intentions, as well as the maximization of women labor as a strategy of small-producer households seem to verify this situation.

The robustness of patriarchal codes is again at play when it comes to the idea of women working outside the home.³⁴⁴ While the majority of the household males reconcile with the idea after a while, those who initially oppose it seem to be convinced by the fact that it comes with a regular income and social security payments, besides the potential for a retirement pension. Ironically, economic deprivation and insecurity forces men to face and acknowledge the benefits of women's work under the devastating effects of rural transformation. That, in the long run, will have the possibility to weaken men's role as the primary breadwinner, even though women's control over their wages is indirect and limited. They mostly receive pocket money, while the rest remains in the hands of the males of the household, i.e. the father or husband, who control the "family budget".³⁴⁵ However, women are still aware of the main expenses of the household. Furthermore, the way in which the women spend money differs from men. The majority of the women spend money on the needs of house and household members, while men can spend it on personal needs. However, another tendency emerges among younger and single women, who buy items for themselves, such as a smartphone, new clothes or other consumption goods for personal use. They may also save part of their wages for future plans, such as education or marriage.

³⁴⁴ Robustness of the patriarchal codes can be found in diverse forms of violence. From economic violence (the appropriation of and control over women's money) to physical violence (which may occur when women insist on their own life choices, such as working at the *Greenhouse* or "neglect" the so-called feminine responsibilities at home) and symbolic violence (humiliation and undervaluation of women's practices and thoughts) are observed in this study. In this sense, the stories of violence seem to be a part of women's experiences, regardless of whether they are a wage laborer at the *Greenhouse* and/or unpaid family laborer in the villages.

³⁴⁵ Even though this occurs in an urban context, similar comments are made by rural migrant women regarding their money-earning activities (Erman, Kalaycıoğlu & Rittersberger Tılıç, 2002). These women who live in the shanty towns of big cities of Turkey say that they only take a small amount as pocket money out of what they earn, while identifying their money-earning activities as a contribution to the family budget. However, they also employ "subtle strategies" through which they misinform their husbands in order to keep some money and spend it on their children's and own needs, as a way of coping with the authority of the males (2002: 400-404).

Women generally appreciate and approve of the idea of working. In spite of criticisms towards *Greenhouse* work, they seem happy to have a job. Their feelings, however, are complicated — a mix of appreciation, gladness, obligation and discontent. The gendered context — i.e. women's reasons to participate in paid work — is important to understand the women's own perceptions. Economic obligation when faced with the urgent need for cash and social security are the primary reasons for women to go to work, while overcoming personal troubles and collective traumas form other motivations. A regular income means a lot to these women, especially to those who are divorced or widowed, or who do not have a good relationship with their husbands, as the *Greenhouse* work offers them ways of building a better life for themselves. At the same time, the realities of the *Greenhouse* overshadow the women's positive ideas about work. Women find the work repetitive and boring, while also mentioning the unbearable treatment they are subjected to. They describe the *Greenhouse* as being like a prison where they work as slaves, and the work leaves no room to socialize or spend time with their children or friends. In sum, it is safe to say that women desire to be part of working life but wish for decent work.

When it comes to the potentials the *Greenhouse* work provides women to change, reverse and transform their lives, the women mention the economic and social gains. Having cash, even if only in the form of pocket money makes women feel stronger and boosts their self-esteem. As mentioned previously, in some cases, their work may generate a humble separate budget in which young women in particular become more independent and less vulnerable to the authority of their fathers. Women who are divorced or widowed feel empowered as they have money not only to rebuild their lives but also to take care of their children. Gönüllü also stresses the empowering, although indirect, effects of wage labor on the second generation of rural women living in Avanos, Central Anatolia (2014: 170). The liberating change, especially on young women, is in line with the findings of Suzuki and Gündüz Hoşgör (2019) regarding wage-

earning rural women from mountain villages in the Black Sea Region. Women of the *Greenhouse* also use work to bring greater ease and freedom to their social lives. They use days off to meet with (boy) friends or to visit the towns. Women pretend to be working on their days off to escape from an interfering ex-husband or to avoid heavy work on the family land that she would otherwise be expected to deal with. It is not only their days off, but the workplace itself that provides the women with an opportunity to emotionally expand their worlds. Women draw attention to the fact that the possibility of building an alternative social network and being outside home “in society” is an advantage for them. Besides friendships, which are greatly appreciated by the women, the *Greenhouse* — often described as “Dallas”— offers potential for women to embark on new relationships, or to flirt or meet with others.³⁴⁶ Similarly, Güler argues that besides re-shaping the local market, the participation of young women in paid labor changes the social life and gender codes in the town of Çan in Western Anatolia (2014: 69).

This is why this study does not see a linear, automatic and/or mechanic relation between women’s empowerment and their participation in paid labor. The complex nature of empowerment in the process of gendered proletarianization for peasant-worker women at the *Greenhouse* rather reveals itself in mixed forms of achievements and limitations. Not being involve in “collective action” that would allow them to make structural and cultural changes, what the women of the *Greenhouse* have experienced through work has been rather the “seeds of their empowerment” (Erman, Kalaycıoğlu & Rittersberger-Tılıç, 2002: 407). Although preexisting gender norms and unequal gender relations — i.e. a deepening gender division of labor or overwork — may reinforce a short-cut analysis based solely on domination and subordination and can also miss

³⁴⁶ That is the *Greenhouse*’s Achilles’ heel. In order not to lose the potential of the female labor force, the *Greenhouse* is obliged to protect its reputation as a “safe workplace” for rural women to work. That is reproduced through the family ideology with the motto, “We are like a family working together”, yet the *Greenhouse*, often referred to as “Dallas”, is definitely much more than that for the women who work there.

women's experiences and accordingly undervalue them. Razavi criticizes such an approach that assumes women are only "exposed to" structural adjustment policies or neo-liberal rural politics. She underlines the importance of women's agency, and argues that "(...) liberalization and globalization are not top-down processes manipulating women as passive pawns, but also that women are resisting: women are thus both heavily affected *and* fighting back" (2012: 4).

It is safe to argue that a new gender labor regime composed of paid and non-paid labor has emerged for peasant-worker women employed in the *Greenhouse*. Moreover, what underlines the shift from the small producer's working life to that of the worker at the *Greenhouse* is complementary in understanding the regime. It also tells about the rural change in the Bakırçay Basin from the women's perspectives based on their thoughts, experiences, evaluations and future prospects. Having detailed the pre-*Greenhouse* life of women occupied with traditional rural activities, this study gives place to how women compare work in the fields with the *Greenhouse* work.

In this sense, women are grouped under three categories describing their relations to agricultural production and husbandry: (I) those who are totally detached from production, (II) those who are in a limited relation to production and finally (III) those who continue to be small-scale producers and/or stockbreeders. While 14 of the 33 women own land/animals, it is usually not the women themselves who are the official titleholders. The land in question is mostly olive groves; a small number of women have land in the lowlands, compared to a larger number of women whose land is in the mountains. Production in the olive groves and fields, as well as stockbreeding is (and used to be), without exception, small in scale. 14 women say they used to be tenant farmers. Regardless of whether they own land/animals or are (or were) tenant farmers, the women used to work as unpaid family laborers and daily laborers. Moreover, the group of women without land/animals consists of those who have

been without such property for generations³⁴⁷ as well as recently dispossessed households. There are also women who lost their share of property due to the ethnic heritage codes of the Çepni group, due to the small size of the inheritable land that makes it not suitable for division, or due to migration and marriage. In sum, out of the 33 female participants from the Greenhouse, 24 women are detached from agricultural production and husbandry, while eight women maintain a limited relation to agricultural production and husbandry. Only one has an ongoing and active relation with such production. This verifies the view that detachment from agricultural production and husbandry is the dominant pattern and tendency for the women of the *Greenhouse*, whether or not they own animals/land.

The data above shows that there has been a radical shift in the Bakırçay Basin, which was once famous for its regional, and profitable, products, i.e. the Bakırçay tobacco and cotton. However, the women now underline the urgent need for cash, indebtedness of the households, lack of profitability from agricultural products or animals/animal products, and accordingly the inability to deal with the rising expenses of production. All of these factors make women distanced and detached from production. The complaints of those without land/animals are similar. The rent they have to pay to produce is an extra burden to the household economy that is no longer affordable.

The women, therefore, seem to prefer to remain in a limited relation to such activities, while prioritizing the *Greenhouse* work. This relation includes temporary and irregular help in the olive harvest, taking care of animals or spending days off on the fields. Women's role in this category is relatively secondary and indirect. Having considered that these women used to be active producers and daily laborers in the past, their limited relation to agriculture and

³⁴⁷ This also includes women who belong to households that were previously dispossessed and/or migrated to the Bakırçay Basin from other districts in Western Anatolia. The majority of them come from mountain villages.

husbandry implies a kind of detachment. Finally, there is only one woman who, while working at the *Greenhouse*, continues production on her own lowland and irrigated fields and has a small herd of animals. However, her household economics is rather complicated one, with four different sources of regular income generating cash: Two of these are wages, while the rest is retirement pension and rent. Here it is again not possible to sustain production without the support of other sources of money, since this is also a highly indebted household. In sum, the only case involved in agriculture and husbandry is by no means an example of thriving production.

The abovementioned categories show us that women have become distanced from small-scale production and turned to off-farm jobs. But what do the women themselves think about that shift? How they compare being a worker at the *Greenhouse* and a peasant in the fields? The answers to these questions are significant. The women consider the latter form of work as more disadvantageous to them, due to the insecure, instable and temporary nature of the work, daily payments and/or lack of social security. They have also negative experiences in which they were exploited and oppressed by older male members of their extended families. The mechanization of certain tasks previously attributed to women has also shrunk the variety of work options in the fields. As well as sexual harassment by the middleman and other male daily laborers, women say that working long hours in the open air, dealing with the same, monotonous, repetitive work, being at risk of insect stings/animal bites, the non-hygienic nature of working in the fields, and the pressure of the middleman to finish work on time are other disadvantages of such work. On the other hand, the advantages include the “right to rest” (taking a proper rest during the workday as well as after the busy months of the harvest, or while sick), the stress-free working atmosphere, not being under someone else’s command, and working outside in the fresh air.

Regular monthly payments, social security, the stable, regular and secure nature

of the work, working in an enclosed area that protects them from the elements., and the fact that it is a “safe place for women” are the advantages that women put forward for working at the *Greenhouse*. They value the regular payment as it allows them to take out additional loans, which is not possible when they are in receipt of daily payments. They also appreciate the *Greenhouse* as it provides them the opportunity to them to work on their days off and thus generate more cash, since they are paid a daily rate contrary to the appearance of the minimum wage. In sum, the *Greenhouse* work gives women a sense of security and visibility that is something they do not have in their work in traditional rural activities. However, it is not free from disadvantageous, crystallized in mobbing and stress, together with the performance system, the notion of the boss and working under somebody’s command, and the intense use of chemicals in an enclosed area.

The devaluation of working in the fields and of the peasantry points to a cultural rift (Özuğurlu, 2011). Özuğurlu argues that the meanings attributed to peasant work and wage labor have been reversed in the eyes of the rural youth. While the latter used to be seen as “drudgery”, it now stands for a secure and sustainable source of income. This also implies the loss of stature of the peasantry and a corrosion of the small-producer identity.³⁴⁸ The ways in which this identity tends to be evaluated by women and men again indicates a need to avoid a gender-neutral description of small-producer households in rural areas. As verified by the findings in this study, young women and men do not wish to stay in their villages after marriage or to raise their children. However, the experiences of women differ from those of men. The women complain of the heavy burden of work based on the gender division of labor. They are responsible for a significant part of production for the market, as well as reproduction at home and

³⁴⁸ Tekeli says agricultural production and stockbreeding should regain their dignity and stature as a strategy, while implementing development politics to improve agricultural production in rural Izmir. He states that in a study on work life and dignity of occupations in Turkey, out of 126 occupations, farming is ranked 53rd, while agricultural labor and gardening are respectively ranked 104th and 114th (Sunar et al., 2015 in Tekeli, 2017: 188).

subsistence production for the household needs. They say “In the village, the shift never ends!” Recently, aging and depopulated villages add another parameter to the big picture. Like the women of mountain villages of Dikmen in the Western Black Sea Region (Suzuki & Gündüz Hoşgör, 2019), women of the *Greenhouse* feel socially excluded in isolated villages.

In this context, two final issues are analyzed in order to gain a deeper understanding of women’s perspectives on rural transformation: Women’s future prospects for small-scale production and accordingly their desires for the younger generations with specific reference to agricultural production and husbandry. Women think that it is almost impossible to make a living solely from small-scale production in rural areas. As once active producers of cotton, olive and tobacco, they all agree that it does not have a promising future. This view is shared by several other actors, such as the agricultural engineers employed at the District Directorate of Agriculture in Dikili and Kınık, a large-scale producer from Kınık, and the head of the Chamber of Agricultural Engineers in Izmir. Like the women, these actors stress the difficulties for small producers to deal with free market dynamics, indebtedness and rising costs. According to the women, the erosion of small production goes hand in hand with the strengthening of agribusiness in the Bakırçay Basin. They presume that in the near future it will probably be large-scale investors who deal with rural activities since the small producers do not have the power to compete. According to the women, the *Greenhouse*, as well as another large-scale business involved in animal husbandry, named as the *Stockbreeder*, are the “pioneers” in this area. The companies make large-scale investments with subsidies and high profitability, and are important buyers of land. In sum, the women believe that “the age of the small” is about to come to end in the Bakırçay Basin, and that they are almost “out of the game”. Ironically, this opinion is also shared by the *Greenhouse* management, which sees the *Greenhouse* as an example of the future of rural Turkey. The manager says he has observed “a deepening break from production” among the rural population in the Bakırçay Basin, especially

for the last two generations. In this sense, traditional forms of agricultural production and husbandry “naturally” vanish. Finally, the households that have survived struggle to co-exist with the new, large-scale agribusinesses equipped with modern technology, with little hope for a bright future.

That brings me to a brief summary of the tendencies of the younger generation. What are the future prospects of women both in terms of their desires for themselves as young women and for their children and young siblings? What are the working patterns for young people in the rural labor market? While the women of the *Greenhouse* used to be child laborers who worked in olive groves, tobacco harvests or animal care, this is not the case for their children. There are very few children with experience of work in the fields or animal care compared to their mothers. Out of 35 young people (13 daughters/sisters and 21 sons/brothers) only four (all male) deal with agricultural production and husbandry. This points to a drastic shift from traditional rural activities among the younger generations. Even if they are involved in such activities at the very beginning of their working lives, they soon move to off-farm jobs. This has also been another pattern for them in the rural labor market. However, the second step seems to be different for young women and men. While women tend to move into the service sector, men take on diverse forms of employment in the energy, construction and small trade sectors as laborers, drivers or traders. The reasons that make small-scale production problematic and unsustainable naturally effect the women’s perceptions on the future prospects of such activities for the next generation.

In this context, women encourage their children follow one of two paths to earn a secure and decent living: If s/he is young enough, the women’s advice is to have an education and obtain a diploma. If not, then they guide them towards off-farm jobs. Women state that the conditions are not inviting for the younger generation to return to agricultural production and husbandry, and as such they motivate them to improve their living conditions outside small-scale production, through

off-farm jobs or education. The women also underline that this is even more important for their sisters and/or daughters, since women in rural areas face many restrictions in work life compared to men and they therefore have to find ways to be more qualified.

8.4. Concluding Remarks

This study plans to make a contribution to the literature that sees a relation between women's waged labor and the globalized agri-food system, while criticizing the gender-neutral conceptualization of the peasant-worker category, small-producer households and patterns of proletarianization. In line with this, women's experiences on the basis of their own perspectives are considered as a constitutive dynamic and response to the grand narrative of rural transformation.

There are also limitations: (I) A further analysis of the global commodity chains through which the *Greenhouse* products reach the consumers in far-away countries would give a more complementary understanding about the critical role women's labor from the Bakırçay Basin plays in neoliberal re-structured agri-food relations and would highlight the nexuses that connect this case to the global system of capitalism and patriarchy. (II) Analyzing differentiations between diverse ethnic-religious groups to which peasant-worker women belong would provide deeper ethnographic and sociological data that would be significant to better understand women's laboring practices and experiences, the strategies they adopt to cope with the gender labor regime, and their perceptions of work and their future prospects. (III) A focus on different generations of women would help to understand the inter-generational (dis)continuities regarding the use of rural women's labor in the three spheres of off-farm jobs, home and the fields. (IV) Finally, a comparison of this case with others conducted in different contexts (such as landholding structure, rural area/region, labor or agricultural product) would also serve to strengthen the study, too.

Provinces such as Bursa or Balıkesir (integrated to global capitalism earlier than other parts/regions in Anatolia) could be significant cases for further research.

Small-producer households in the Bakırçay Basin have undergone a deep crisis that threatens these households not only as economic categories but also as social categories, as seen in their decoupling from agricultural production and husbandry, the loss of stature of the peasantry, migration and proletarianization. This overlaps with the large-scale greenhouse businesses that are spreading across the Bakırçay Basin, and in which women peasant-workers (either from villages or the peripheries of the towns to which they have recently migrated) are participating in the paid labor. Through the *Greenhouse*, women's labor from the Bakırçay Basin has become a part of the global capitalist and patriarchal market that results in the feminization of the *Greenhouse* work.

In this context, this thesis looks for the patterns of the emerging gender labor regime under which peasant-worker women are employed in an agribusiness called the *Greenhouse*, and the process of proletarianization through their working experiences and practices. It argues that the category of peasant-worker and the process of proletarianization, in which rural women's labor is re-positioned from unpaid family laborer to waged labor, is a gendered process. The gender division of labor, though in different form but still with reference to essentialist categories of woman and man, has been the basis of patriarchal and capitalist rural labor markets.

Working conditions at the *Greenhouse* are precarious, and it is predominantly women who shoulder a "double burden" to (re)organize reproduction work, while the maximization of the use of women's paid and unpaid labor has been a vital tool to absorb the adverse effects of the ongoing neoliberal re-structuring. Women are also capable of creating niches to enable them to handle the *Greenhouse* work, as well as to change and transform their lives, reflected in complex practices of empowerment. They seem to do be determined to continue

to do so, as they plan to keep their distance from their previous life, which was characterized by a heavy burden of work in non-profitable small-scale production along with a sense of social exclusion in aging and depopulated villages. It is for these reasons that women appear as agents of the change they have been through in the rural areas. They struggle, as well as negotiate with, the manager and engineers at work, their husbands and fathers at home and members of extended families, neighbors or villagers to improve their living conditions. Therefore, what the gender labor regime will bring to women of the Bakırçay Basin employed at the *Greenhouse* in the long run needs further investigation and analysis.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL

Name: Zeynep Ceren Eren
Date of Birth: 27.05.1982
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EDUCATION

- 2019 Ph.D.**
Department of Sociology, Middle East Technical University,
(Thesis Title: *Gendered Rural Transformation and Peasant-Workers: The Case of the Women of the Greenhouse, Western Anatolia, Turkey*. Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Ayşe Gündüz Hoşgör. Co-Adviser: Helga Rittersberger-Tılıç.)
- 2018-2019 Visiting Student Researcher**
Department of Sociology, Goethe University, Supervisor: Prof. Kira Kosnick.
- 2014-2015 Visiting Student Researcher**
Department of Sociology, University of California, Berkeley,
Supervisor: Prof. Laura Enriquez.

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Cultural Encounters, Roskilde University, Supervisor: Prof. Klaus Schulte.

2008 M.Sc.

Media and Cultural Studies Middle East Technical University.
(Thesis Title: *Imagining and Positioning Gypsiness: A Case Study of Gypsy/Roma Izmir, Tepecik*. Thesis Supervisor: Prof. Helga Rittersberger Tılıç)

2005 B.Sc.,

Department of Sociology, Middle East Technical University.

FIELDS OF INTEREST

Gender Studies, Agri-food Relations, Rural Transformation, Migration, Woman Labor, Identity and Ethnography.

EMPLOYMENT

Current Post-Doc Researcher in Kadir Has University and The LSE Center for Women, Peace and Security, Istanbul.

12.2016-02.2017 Sociologist in the Development Foundation of Turkey (Türkiye Kalkınma Vakfı — <http://www.tkv-dft.org.tr>)

05.2016-11.2016 Researcher in the project *Borders Drawn by Mine: Human Right Abuses of Mine-Wounded Individuals in Mersin and Adana, Turkey from a Gendered Perspective*.

04.2016-07.2016 Assistant Team Leader in the research and assessment conducted by Doctors Without Borders (*Médecins Sans Frontières*)

2011-2016 Research and Teaching Assistant in the Department of Sociology, Middle East Technical University.

12.2009-10.2010 Researcher in the project called “Towards a Deeper Understanding of Rural Europe” (www.ruraleurope.info)

PUBLICATIONS

Eren, Zeynep Ceren. 2021. Forthcoming Article. *Gendered Agribusiness, Feminization of Work and the Seeds of Empowerment: The Case of Women of the Greenhouse, West Anatolia, Turkey* in *Female Voices from Worksite*. (ed) Walker, Marquita. Lexington Books.

Eren, Zeynep Ceren. 2020. Forthcoming Article. “Amargi Dergi” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasal Düşünce, Feminizm*, Cilt 10. İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul.

Eren, Zeynep Ceren and Işık, Ruşen, 2017. Centre for Women’s Studies, 6th International Conference of Gender Studies, “Heavy Burden of Being Refugee, Mother, Women and Teacher: A Case Study of Syrian Teachers from Community School, Basmane, Izmir”, in the conference book of ‘Gender, Conflict, War and Peace’, Eastern Mediterranean University, Center for Women’s Studies, Famagusta, Cyprus.

Eren, Zeynep Ceren. April, 2017. “Köylülüğün İtibar Kaybı: Bakırçay Havzası Dağ Köylerinden Kadınların Anlatıları ve Kırsal Dönüşüm” (Peasantry’s Loss of Stature: Narratives of Women from the Mountain Villages of Bakırçay Basin in times of Rural Transformation), in special issue of ‘Tarım Sorunu Yeniden’ (The Agrarian Question Revisited), the Journal *Praksis*.

LANGUAGES

English: Advanced

Spanish: Elementary

Turkish: Native

APPENDIX B: TÜRKÇE ÖZET / TURKISH SUMMARY

İzmir ve Çanakkale'yi birbirine bağlayan otobanda kuzeye doğru seyredildiğinde Bergama ve Kınık sapağı görülür. O sapağı arkanızda bırakıp ilerlediğinizde Dikili 'çatısına' (kavşağına) varırsınız. İlçeler kavşakların hemen ilerisinde uzanır. Bu iki nokta arasında öncesinde tarlalar, zeytinlikler, yazlık evler ve otellerle şekillenen kırsal resim bir anlığına değişir. Bembeyaz bir deniz gibi birbiri ardına uzanan seralar gözünüze çarpar; hatta bölgeye aşinalığınız varsa sayılarının çokluğu sizi hayrete bile düşürebilir. Çünkü yakın zamana kadar orada ve bu kadar çok sayıda olmadıklarını bilirsiniz. Bir hayalet kasaba gibi ıssızdır sera denizi, dışarıda kimse gözükmmez. Plastik duvarlar, kaç kişinin, hangi şartlar altında, ne kadar çalıştığını gizler. Fakat olur da iş çıkışına denk gelinirse, uzun bir mesainin ardından ağzına kadar dolu iş servisleriyle yakın köylerdeki ve ilçelerin kenar mahallelerindeki evlerine dönen yüzlerce kadın görülebilir. Küçük üreticilik bugün hala Türkiye kırsalının baskın kategorisi, kadınlarsa bu aile işletmelerinde çoğunlukla ücretsiz aile işçisi olarak çalışırken, seralarda mesai saatlerinin bitimini bekleyen bu kadınlar, sosyolojik bir merak uyandırır. Kadın sera işçileri bize toplumsal cinsiyet perspektifi ile yaklaşılacak kırsal dönüşüm sürecine dair bize ne anlatabilir? Çalışma, bahsi geçen olgunun yerel bir vaka oluşturduğunu ve onun vasıtasıyla kapitalizm ve patriyarkanın büyük anlatılarının ete kemiğe büründüğünü iddia ediyor. Bu vesileyle, kadınların çalışma deneyim ve pratiklerine odaklanıyor.

Kapitalist tarım-gıda ilişkileri küresel ölçekte neoliberal değer ve kurallar temelinde yeniden yapılıyor. Bu sürecin Türkiye kırsalında baskın kategori olan küçük üreticiler üzerinde dramatik sonuçları olmaktadır. Girdi maliyetlerinin artması, müştereklerin kaybı, serbest piyasa kurallarının fiyat düzenlemeleri ve üretime verilen destekler üzerindeki yıkıcı etkisi, devlet ve küçük üretici arasındaki ittifakın büyük ölçekli işletmeler lehine bozulması, birlik ve tarım satış kooperatiflerinin işlevsizleşmesi, bunlara mukabil küçük

reticilerin rn satıř ve pazarlama konularındaki sınırlı kabiliyetleri, kırsaldaki kitlelerin rgtsz yapısı ve neoliberal reform, program ve kanunlar bugn kırsalda birok hane iin tarımsal retim ve hayvancılık yapmanın kořullarını belirliyor. Yeniden yapılanma, řaşırtıcı olmayan bir řekilde, kk reticilerin tarımsal retim ve hayvancılıkla olan baęlarını zayıflatmaktadır. Bu, ttn ya da řeker pancarı reticilerinde yařandığı gibi, bazen tasfiye olarak retimden kopmaların gzlemlendiğı ok daha radikal durumlara yol amaktadır. Dięer yandan reticiler, hayatta kalmak iin geleneksel kırsal ekonomik aktiviteler dıřında gelir getirici kaynaklar bulmaya zorlanmaktadırlar. Bu deęiřim, kompleks ve muęlak bir kategori olan kyl-iřiler ve proleterleřme sreci ile de el ele gitmektedir.

Yukarıda tarif edilen byk resimle uyum ierisinde, Bakıray Havzası, Batı Anadolu'da da tarımsal retim ve hayvancılık yapma yolları ve biimleri radikal bir deęiřim ierisindedir: daha az desteklenen ve emek-yoęun tarımsal rnlerden uzaklařma, topraęını dięer reticilere satarak tarımsal retim ve pazarlamanın tařıdığı risklerden kendini korumaya alıřma, pazarda satmak iin rettiğini takas iin kullanma (rneęin hayvan yemini rettiğı st ile deęiřtirme), tarımsal retime devam ettirebilmek iin dzenli bir gelir sahibi olma ya da daha az retim yapmak kk reticilerin bařvurduęu bařlıca yollardan sayılabilir. retim desenindeki deęiřim, emek-yoęun geleneksel rnlerden taze meyve ve sebze retimine doęrudur. Bakıray Havzası'nda blgenin iki nemli geleneksel rn, ttn ve pamuk, yerini byk lde domates, mısır ve dięerlerine bırakmıř gzkmektedir. Ttn retimini neredeyse tasfiye olurken, pamuk retiminde kayda deęer dřřler yařanmaktadır. retim deseninde yařanan deęiřimi ttn reticisi daę kyleri topraklarının kıra olması sebebiyle ok daha sert bir biimde tecrbe ederken, aynı řey ova kyleri iin geerli olmamıřtır. Bilhassa verimli ve sulu tarım yapabilen ova kyleri mısır, domates, biber ve/veya ay ieęi gibi rnlere ynelmiřlerdir. Szleřmeli tarım yapan bu kyler iin retim, satıř ve pazarlamaya dair riskler bir lde azalsa da kontratlar hala alıcı odaklı imzalanmakta ve ncelikle reticilerin temel haklarını eřit derece ve

aynı şekilde alıcıyı koruduğu gibi korumamaktadır. Küçük hayvancılıkla geçinen üreticiler için de benzer durumlar söz konusudur: müştereklerin kaybı, suni yemin artan masrafı, devamlı ithal ürünlerin piyasaya sürülmesi bu üreticilerin üretime devam etme koşullarını zorlaştırmaktadır. Belki de en önemlisi, bu araştırmada tarım ve/veya hayvancılığı toprak/hayvan/tarımsal araç ve gereç sahibi olsa da olmasa da bir başka gelir kaynağı olmadan sürdüren bir küçük üretici hanenin gözlemlenememiş olmasıdır. Bu farklı gelir kaynağı emekli maaşı, tarım-dışı bir işten kazanılan aylık ya da evde hasta bakım aylığı olabilir. Hepsi de birincil geliri oluşturmaktadır ve tarım ve hayvancılığı – eğer sürdürülüyorsa desteklemek için kullanılmaktadır.

Süreç, kendini Havza'nın azalan ve yaşlanan nüfusunda da kendini göstermektedir. Gediz – Bakırçay Havzası Sürdürülebilir Kalkınma Stratejisi'nde (2015) belirtildiği gibi, Bergama, Kınık ve Dikili'deki kırsal nüfus 2000 ve 2013 yılları arasında hatırı sayılır ölçüde azalmıştır. Kırsal nüfusun toplam nüfusa oranı Bergama'da %51,03'ten %29,91'e düşerken, Dikili ve Kınık'ta %58,32'ten %31,55'e ve %59,09'dan %31,13'e düşmüştür. Tarımın istihdam içindeki payı Bergama, Kınık ve Dikili için 2000 yılında %69, %80 ve %64'tür. Benzer şekilde, tarımın istihdam içindeki payına dair 2023 yılı için yapılan öngörüler, bu oranların düşeceğini ileri sürmektedir: sırasıyla Bergama, Kınık ve Dikili için tahminler şöyledir: %54, %69 ve %47,5 (2015: 58-61). Bilhassa dağ ve yamaç köyleri yoksul, zayıf ve yaşlılar için bir "sığınak" haline gelirken (Öztürk, 2013, Tekeli, 2008, 2016), ova köylerinin eskisi kadar çekici olmadığı da ileri sürülebilir. Bununla beraber, Keyder ve Yenal'ın (2011, 2013) iddia ettiğinin aksine, göç ve/veya mülksüzleşme olgularını tecrübe etmemek de köylü-işçileri kırsal emek piyasalarında kötü çalışma koşullarından ve düşük ücretlerden korumamaktadır. Bir başka deyişle, köylü-işçiler daha çok "mülksüzleşmeden fakirleşmektedir" (İslamoğlu, 2006). Fakat, bu çalışmada karşımıza çıkan yakın zamanda mülksüzleşmiş ve/veya göç etmiş kadınlar dikkate alındığında, mülksüzleşme ve göçün, bilhassa dağ köylüsü haneler için olası senaryo olmayı sürdürdüğü kabul edilebilir.

Bu çerçeve ile uyum içerisinde, Bakırçay Havzası, Batı Anadolu Bölgesi'nde köylü-işçilerin farklılaşmış pratiklerinin derinleşerek kendini yeniden ürettiği görülmektedir. Gelir elde etmek için alternatif yollara başvurmak, hele ki Batı Anadolu gibi tarihsel olarak küresel kapitalizme göreceli olarak erken eklemlenmiş, kırsal alanda pazar ilişkilerini geliştirmiş bir coğrafyada yeni bir olgu değildir. Alternatif gelir elde etmek küçük üreticilerin çoğunlukla başvurduğu bir stratejidir fakat bugün Havza'da yaşananları farklılaştıran iki önemli ayrım vardır: Bunlardan birincisi köylülük ve işçilik arasında gidip gelen sarkacın çok daha kararlı bir şekilde işçiliği göstermesidir. Tarım ve hayvancılıktan elde edilen gelir birincil gelir olmaktan uzaklaştıkça, onu maaşlı bir iş ile ikame etmeye olan eğilim güçlenmektedir. Bunlardan ikincisiyse, yüksek oranlarda olmasa da bu defa, kırsalda ücretli iş gücüne katılan kadınların varlığıdır. Çoğunluğunu kadınların oluşturduğu ücretsiz aile emekçisi kategorisindeki radikal erime ve buna paralel olarak çözölen ve tasfiye olan küçük üreticilik içerisinde kadınlar da kitlesel olarak tarım ve hayvancılıktan kopmaktadır. Bu süreç, Bakırçay Havzası'nda tarım şirketlerinin seralar biçiminde ortaya çıkması ve çoğalması ile de çakışmaktadır. Şirketler, genellikle büyük- ve orta-ölçekli, ihracat-odaklı işletmelerdir; işgücünün büyük kısmını civar köy ve ilçelerin çeper mahallelerinden gelen kadınlar oluşturmaktadır.

Bu çalışma, küresel tarım-gıda ilişkilerinin neoliberal yeniden yapılanma süreci ve Türkiye kırsalındaki izdüşümü çerçevesinde, ortaya çıkan toplumsal cinsiyet emek rejiminin bir sera işletmesinde ücretli işgücüne katılan köylü-işçi kadınlar için ne tür örüntüler barındırdığını soruyor. Kadınların kırsal dönüşümün kurucu bir ögesi olduğu kabulünden yola çıkarak, kadınların deneyimleri, patikleri, düşünce ve değerlendirmeleri, gelecek tahayyüllerinin bir kriz içerisinde olan kırsal hayat hakkında ne anlattığına odaklanırken, İlkaracan ve Tunalı'nın (2010) "yapısal kırılma" olarak tarif ettikleri, çoğunluğunu kadınların oluşturduğu ücretsiz aile işçisi kategorisindeki muazzam düşüşü temel alıyor. Böylelikle ücretli iş gücüne dahil olmadan önce kadınların sahip olduğu çalışma koşulları ve üretimden kopma deneyimlerini (analizin köylü tarafı) ve

proleterleşme örüntüleri ve bunun karmaşık sonuçlarını (analizin işçi tarafı) sorgulamaya çalışıyor. Kırsal dönüşümü daha iyi anlayabilmek için, bu tez köylü-işçi kategorisinin ve proleterleşme sürecinin toplumsal cinsiyet temelinde ayrıştırılmasının ve analiz edilmesinin gerekliliğini savunurken ne bu kategorinin ne de proleterleşme sürecin kendisinin toplumsal cinsiyetten azade olmadığını ileri sürüyor.

Tam da bu yüzden, araştırmada kapitalizm ve patriyarka üzerine yaptığı eleştiriler temelinde sosyalist feminist bir perspektif tercih edilmiştir. Ücretli emeğin ayrıcalıklı konumlandırılışına karşı çıkan sosyalist feminizm, kadınların ücretsiz/karşılıksız olarak görülen yeniden üretici emeğinin farklı formlarının altını çizer. Kadınların çalışmasını, onların ücretli ve ücretsiz emeklerinin bir bütünü olarak görür; böylece toplumsal cinsiyet temelli iş bölümüne araştırma ve analizde öncelik verir (Hartsock 1983, Peterson 2005, Weeks 2011). Kadınların çalışma deneyimi ve pratiklerini sadece sömürü ve tahakküm alanları olarak tarif etmez, direniş, mücadele ve değişime fırsat veren potansiyelleri ve güçlenmeyi de dikkate alır. Potansiyeller aynı zamanda kadınların özne pozisyonlarının da altını çizer (Heckman 2014, Donovan, 2014). Bu çerçevede, iki temel kavram etrafında bulgular tartışılmıştır: “toplumsal cinsiyet emek rejimi” ve “kadın bakış açısı”. İlki kadınların toplumsal cinsiyet temelli iş bölümü üzerinden şekillenen çalışma deneyimi ve pratiklerini bir bütün olarak anlamaya yardımcı olur; ücretli ve ücretsiz emeği beraber tartışır. Toplumsal cinsiyet emek rejimi bu çalışmada üç ayağa dayandırılmıştır: kadınların küçük üretim içerisindeki emekleri, seradaki ücretli emekleri ve ev içi yeniden üretici emekleri. İkinci kavramsa kadınların hayatlarını dönüştürmek, geliştirmek ve değiştirmek için uygulamaya koydukları stratejiler çerçevesinde onların özne pozisyonunu vurgular.

Tez çalışmasında feminist metodoloji benimsenmiştir. Feminist metodoloji, diğer seçeneklere kıyasla kadın deneyimini anlamlı bir başlangıç noktası ve bir bilgi kaynağı olarak görür. Söz konusu olan geleneksel/ana akım sosyal bilim yaklaşımlarından sadece epistemolojik bir kopuş değildir; feminist metodoloji

anlamayı ve deęiřtirmeyi amalayan bir politik ihtimali de ima eder; bu hem arařtırmacıyı hem de arařtırılanı ierir. Literatürde, feminist metodolojinin üzerinde uzlařılan tek bir tanımı yoktur, fakat yine de Pini'nin (2003) beř prensibi yol gsterici olarak grlmektedir: “toplumsal cinsiyete odaklanma”, “kadın deneyimine nem verme”, “zne ve nesne arasında ngrlen ayırımın reddi”, “glenmeye yapılan vurgu” ve “politik deęiřim ve kurtuluřa yapılan vurgu”. Bu prensiplerin her birinin sorunlu olduęunu kabulle, feminist metodoloji genellenemeyen sbjektif doęası sebebiyle kadın deneyimini bir bilgi kaynaęı olduęunu kabul etmeyen ana akım sosyal bilim yaklařımlarına meydan okur. Bylelikle kendilerini deęerden azade ve nesnel gsteren yaklařımların erkek egemen (androcentric) nyargılarını ifřa eder. Bunlara ek olarak, feminist metodoloji anlama ve analiz etme abası ihtiyaı ierisinde olduęu toplumsal cinsiyete tabi iktidar iliřkilerine meydan okuyarak, politik bir deęiřim talebinde bulunur. Bu baęlamda, Raghuram, Madge ve Skelton (1998) feminist bir arařtırmanın iki nemli sorusu olduęunu sylerler: arařtırmacının, arařtırma ierisinde kendi konumunu sorunsallařtırıp sorunsallařtırmadıęı ve arařtırmanın kadınların hayatlarını grnr kılıp kılmadıęı.

Bu erevede derinlemesine mlakat ve katılımcı gzlem temelinde nitel arařtırma teknikleri kullanılmıřtır. *Sera* ve orada alıřan kyl-iři kadınların vaka alıřması olarak seilmesinin ardından, Bakıray Havzası kırsalı ve Bergama, Dikili ve Kınık ilelerinde iki yıldan fazla sren bir alan alıřması yapılmıřtır. Alan alıřması *Sera*'da iki aya yakın alıřmak suretiyle retim faaliyetine katılmayı da iermiřtir. Derinlemesine grřlen kadın sayısı 33'tr. Bunun yanı sıra kadınların mensubu olduęu hanelerin erkek yeleriyle de enformel grřmeler yapılmıřtır. Bergama, Dikili ve Kınık Tarım İle Mdrlkleri'nde alıřan ziraat mhendisleri, İzmir Ziraat Odası, İzmir Ziraat Mhendisleri Odası bařkanı, Bergama Belediyesi (eski) bařkanı ve bařkan yardımcısı, Bergama evre Platformu dnem szcs gibi aktrlere ek olarak, *Sera* İnsan Kaynakları Birimi, *Sera*'da alıřan mhendisler ve bir yneticiyle de mlakatlar yapılmıřtır. Ky ve ilelerde dzenlenen sosyal ve kltrel

etkinliklere de davetleri üzerine katıldım. Alana yaptığım ziyaretler alan çalışması bittikten sonra da devam etti. Bu bağlamda bu çalışma alanda kesintisiz bir şekilde sürekli bulunmayışım sebebiyle saf bir etnografya olmasa da *Sera*'da çalışma hayatına katılmak, geceleri kadınların evinde geçirmek, özel hayatlarına dahil olmak ya da düğün, köy hayrı, sünnet gibi etkinliklerde bir araya gelmek çalışmaya etnografik öğeler katmıştır ve verileri zenginleştirmiştir. Sonuç olarak, araştırmada kullandığım metotların bana kadınların çalışma deneyimleri ve pratiklerini anlamakta önemli fırsatlar sunduğunu düşünüyorum.

Toplumsal Cinsiyet Emek Rejimi ve Kadınların Çalışma Deneyimleri

Toplumsal cinsiyet emek rejimi örüntülerinin incelenmesi kadınların *Sera*'da, küçük ölçekli tarımsal üretim ve hayvancılıkta ve son olarak da evdeki çalışmalarına dayanmaktadır. Kadınların birbirinden farklı bu üç alanı nasıl bir araya getirdiği ve uzlaştırdığı sorusunun yanı sıra, kadınların *Sera* örneğinde ücretli iş gücü içerisindeki çalışma koşullarının nasıl olduğu ve kadınların bu koşullar ile nasıl başa çıktıkları da sorgulanmıştır. Tez çalışması, aynı zamanda *Sera*'daki işgücünün neden çoğunu kadınların oluşturduğu ve bununla ilişkili olarak da *Sera* işi ve kadın emeği arasında kurulan güçlü özdeşliğin arkasındaki nedenlere odaklanmaktadır. Kadınların statüleri ücretsiz aile işçisinden ücretli işçiye dönüştüğünde, bunun ev işleri ve bakım emeğini nasıl etkilediği de bu araştırmanın sorularından biridir.

Kadınların genel olarak çalışma hayatını, özel olaraksa *Sera* işini nasıl algıladıkları, kadınlar için ücretli emeğe dahil olmanın ne anlam ifade ettiğinin anlaşılması bakımından önemlidir. Bu, aynı zamanda güçlenme olanaklarını keşfetmek için de elzem gözükmektedir. Son olarak, bu çalışmada kadınların Bakırçay Havzası'nda yaşanan kırsal dönüşüm sürecini nasıl değerlendikleri, küçük üreticilik ve genç kuşaklara dair gelecek tahayyülleri temelinde anlaşılmaya çalışılmıştır.

Sera'daki çalışma rejimi toplumsal cinsiyet emek rejiminin ilk ayağını oluşturmaktadır. Bu rejim, öncelikli olarak bir performans sistemine dayanır. Kadınların her gün belirli sayıda bitkiyle ilgilenmesi beklenir, performansları sera mühendisleri tarafından kayıt altına alınır ve değerlendirilir. *Eleman* veya *Hasatçı* olarak çalışan kadınlar arasındaki ayrım kadar, işçi kadınlar ve mühendisler arasındaki ayrımlar da Sera'daki çalışma rejimini karakterize eder. Yavaş/kötü çalışan işçiler ile hızlı/iyi çalışan diğerleri karşısında her zaman işini kaybetme tehlikesiyle yüz yüzedir. Sera'daki çalışma rejimi işçiler arasında yarattığı keskin hiyerarşiler yoluyla da iş gücünü böler, kadınları birbiriyle rekabet halinde çalışmaya teşvik eder. Performans sistemi kadın iş gücünü kontrol altına almak ve disipline etmek açısından işlevseldir ve mobbing, bu anlamda iş verenin (onun uzantıları olan baş mühendis ve altındaki mühendislerin) elindeki en önemli güçlerden biridir. Mobbing, kırsal emek araştırmalarında henüz fazla çalışılmamış bir konu olmakla beraber, Sera'daki çalışma rejiminin önemli özelliklerindendir; bağırma, aşağılama, tehdit, kötü söz ve/veya davranış kadınların anlatılarında önemli yer tutmaktadır ve saha çalışması boyunca da yer yer gözlemlenmiştir. Kadınlar, bunun kendilerinde stres, endişe ve paniğe yol açtığını anlatmışlardır. Esneklik çalışma rejiminin bir diğer özelliğidir; farklı biçimlerde gerçekleşen esneklik kadınlar için iş güvenliğini ortadan kaldırıyor gibi gözükmektedir. Sera'da gözlemlenen üç farklı formda esneklik karşımıza çıkmaktadır: (1) süresi kesin olmayan deneme süresi (2) iş tanımlarının net olmaması (3) işe alım ve işten çıkarmalardaki keyfi tutum ve davranışlar. Bunlara ek olarak, üretimde kullanılan en ileri teknolojiye, tohum, bitki ve gereçlere rağmen, işçilere sunulan altyapının oldukça yetersiz olduğu görülmektedir. Dinlenme alanlarının azlığı, su kaynaklarına erişimin kısıtlılığı, yemekhane yemeklerinin düşük kalitesi, servislerin kalabalık olması kadınlar tarafından dile getirilmektedir. Çalışma rejimi, işçi sağlığını önememekte, ilaçlamalarda kadınlar kimyasallardan etkilenmekte, çalışma saatleri sera işçisi için zorunlu olan sık sık temiz hava alma kuralını çiğnemektedir. Yükselen arabaların üzerinde bitkilerle uğraşan kadınları sabitleyen emniyet kemerleri yoktur. Bu ve buna benzer uygulamalar kadınların

iş güvenliğini ihlal etmekte, aynı zamanda sağlıkları üzerinde de ciddi sonuçlara yol açma ihtimali barındırmaktadır. Kadınların temel çalışan hakları da işverenin keyfi ve kötüye kullanma pratikleriyle de ihlal edilmektedir. Kadınlar, asgari ücretli statüsünde çalışıyor gibi gözükse de aslında yevmiye usulü ücretlendirilmektedir. Hesaplarına asgari ücret yatırılan kadınlar çalıştıkları günler hesaplandıktan sonra elden ya para vermekte ya da para almaktadırlar. *Sera*'nın ilk yıllarında işçiler sigortalanmazken, sonraki yıllarda civarda açılan yeni sera işletmelerinin çalışanlarına bu imkânı sunmaları sonucunda artan rekabet *Sera*'yı da işçileri düzenli sigortalatmaya yöneltmiştir. Fakat kadınların, bilhassa kıdemli işçilerin anlatıları başta uzun süreler işçilerin sigortasız çalıştırıldıklarını göstermektedir. Benzer bir durum, izinler için de geçerlidir, kadınlar *Sera* kurulduktan yıllar sonra “nispeten” daha düzenli izne kavuşmuşlardır.

Sera'daki çalışma rejimi ne kadar sert olsa da kadınların bunlara karşı, onay ve direniş temelinde geliştirdiği birtakım stratejiler mevcuttur. Fakat kadınlar *Sera*'da örgütlü bir işgücü oluşturmadıkları için, bunlar genelde bireysel/küçük gruplar halinde uygulamaya konulan, çalışma rejimini bir bütün olarak eleştirmeyen, performans sisteminin kadınları sürekli daha hızlı, daha eli çabuk olmaya zorlayan kriterleri ile başa çıkmada kullanılan stratejilerdir. Bu stratejiler *Sera*'da kadınlar arasında dayanışma ve rekabet örüntüleri de yaratmaktadır. Onay temelindeki stratejiler, *Sera*'da sunulan değer ve pratiklere uygun bir çalışma etiği geliştirmek ve “iyi” bir işçi olmayı kapsarken, bu aynı zamanda tersini de yaratmaktadır. Böylelikle hızlı, eli çabuk, uyumlu, sessiz işçiler iyi işçi olurken, yavaş, verimsiz çalışanlar kötü işçi olarak tarif edilmektedir. Bu aynı zamanda mevcut mobbingi de meşrulaştırmaktadır çünkü kötü işçiler işçilikleri sebebiyle uyarıları hak etmektedir. Direniş temelli stratejilerse ortak bir hız yakalayarak yavaş işçileri koruma, yetersiz performansı yüzünden sera mühendisi tarafından belirlenmeye çalışılan işçiyi ifşa etmeme, yasak olmasına rağmen birbirine yardım etme, mizaha başvurma olarak sıralanabilir.

Geleneksel tarımsal üretim yapmayan ihracat odaklı ve büyük ölçekli işletmelerde spesifik bir toplumsal cinsiyet emek çalışma rejimi ve kadın işgücü bir araya gelmektedir. İşgücü kadınlar, göçmenler ya da yerel nüfus gibi politik ve sosyal olarak halihazırda kırılgan olan gruplardan yaratılmaktadır (Freidberg 2004, Dolan 2005, Barrientos 2007, Pedreño et. al 2014, Dey de Prick and Termine 2014, Appendini 2002). Bu, *Sera* için de geçerlidir. *Sera*'da çalışan kadın işçiler, hayli borçlu (eski) küçük üretici hanelere mensuptur; hanenin erkek üyeleriye genellikle düzensiz bir istihdam içerisindeyler ya da işsizdirler. Fakat bunun da ötesinde, '*Sera işi*'yle kadın emeği arasında kurulan özdeşlik o kadar kuvvetlidir ki, kadınlar *Sera*'da çalışan işçilerin ezici çoğunluğunu oluşturmaktadır. Neden böyle olduğu, çalışmanın kadınsılaşması (feminization of work) kavramını ön plana çıkarmaktadır. Belirli yetenek, tutum ve eğilimlerle tarif edilen "kadın doğası", kadınların ücretli iş gücüne katılımını etkileyen hayat şartlarındaki kısıtlamalar ve "ekmek getiren erkek ideolojisi" için kadınsılaşması olgusunun arkasındaki temel nedenler gibi görünmektedir.

"Kadın doğası" toplumsal cinsiyete dayalı iş bölümü çerçevesinde şekillenmektedir. *Sera*'daki çalışma rejimi de bu ayrım üzerine kurulmuştur. Kadınlar ve erkekler farklı iş tanımlarına sahiptir; bunlar katı bir biçimde birbirinden ayrılmıştır. Bu iş bölümü, her ne kadar kendini değişmez ve sabit gibi gösterse de daha kıdemli kadın işçiler eskiden bugün erkek işi olarak bilinen işlerin eskiden kadınlar tarafından yapıldığını anlatmışlardır. Erkek işçilerin azlığında/yokluğunda ya da iş takvimi sıkıştığında kadınlar ve erkekler birbirinin yerine geçirilmekte ve birbirlerine ait işleri yapmaktadırlar. Kadınlar tarafından kadın doğası ile ilişkilendirilen *Sera işi*, kendini üç alan üzerinden inşa etmektedir: (I) kadınların *Sera işinin* gerektirdiği özellik ve yeteneklere sahip oldukları düşünülmektedir. (II) *Sera işinin* kadınların yaptığı tarımsal üretime benzerliği öne sürülmektedir. (III) *Sera işinin* en temel kalemlerinden biri olan temizlik işinin kadınların ev kadını olarak yaptıkları işlere yakınlık gösterdiği ileri sürülmektedir.

Kadınlar “maharetli parmaklara”, doğuştan bir el çabukluğu ve becerisine, artistik bir dokunuşa sahip olduklarını düşünmektedirler, bu yüzden *Sera* işinin kadın işi olduğu önermesine çoklukla katılırlar. Fakat, azınlık da olsa, toplumsal cinsiyete dayalı iş bölümünü doğru bulmayan, kadınların erkek işleri de yapabileceğini ya da kadınların da *Sera*’da erkekler kadar yorulduğunu düşünen (eskiden uygulanan erkek ve kadın maaşının yanlışlığına değinen ve eşit ücret talebi olan) kadınların varlığından bahsetmek de gerekmektedir. Bunlara ek olarak, kadınlar kadın doğasını taktiksel bir şekilde tanımlamaktadırlar. Kadınların özü itibari fiziksel olarak güçsüz olduklarının ön kabulü, erkeklere atfedilen daha ağır iş yükünden kadınları korumaktadır. Fakat “yumuşaklık, uyumluluk, sessizlik, pasiflik gibi” kadın doğasını tanımlayan diğer özelliklere gelindiğinde, kadınların “kadın doğasını” değil, onları zorlayan ve neredeyse *Sera* işine hapseden hayat koşullarına referans verdiğini görürüz. Salzinger (2003) de aynı şekilde kadın işçilerin doğuştan pasif ve uyumlu olarak idealleştirilmesinin bir işveren fantezisi olduğunu söyler. Kadınlar eğitimsizliklerini, kırsal alanda hareket sınırlılıklarını, kadınlar için farklı iş seçenekleri olmayışını işaret ederken, *Sera* işinin neden kadın işi olarak görüldüğüne dair yapısal koşullara dikkat çekerler. Bütün bunlar kadınların ucuz emeği ve bunun zeminin sağlayan “ev geçindiren erkek ideolojisi” ile güçlenmektedir. Erkeklerin kazandıkları paranın aile parası olması gerektiğini ileri süren bu yaklaşım, her ne kadar *Sera* örneğinde geçerli olmasa da (33 kadından 12 tanesi eşinden/babasından daha çok para kazanırken, 33 erkekten 17 tanesinin geliri düzensizdir) *Sera* işinin kadınsılaşmasında da önemli rol oynamaktadır. Bu iş, ucuz yevmiyesi, kadın işçilerin sayısının fazlalığı, erkeklerin çok daha geniş bir coğrafyada daha yüksek ücretlerde iş arayabilmeleri/bulmaları gibi nedenlerle bir nevi kadınlara terk edilmiş gibi gözükmektedir.

Sera işinde ezici çoğunlukla kadınların işçi olarak istihdam edilmesini ise, *Sera* yönetimi hem benzer hem farklı sebeplerle açıklamaktadır. Bilhassa “köylü, küçük elli, tarla işi bilen” kadınların işe alındığını söyleyen İnsan Kaynakları

Birimi ve yönetim, aynı zamanda kadın iş gücünün daha “disiplinli, yumuşak başlı, tartışmaya girmeyen ve kolay yönetilebilir” olmasının kendileri için bir avantaj olduğunu belirtmektedir. (İnsan Kaynakları Birimi tek dezavantajın kadınların annelik, yaşlı bakımı gibi sebeplerle evden geri çağrılmaları olduğunu söylemiştir.) Kadınların, erkeklere göre ucuz emeği de kadınların iş gücü olarak tercih edilmesinde önemli faktörlerdendir. Bakırçay Havzası’ndaki kırsal dönüşüm sebebiyle yedek işsizler ordusunun önemli bir kısmını kadın işgücü oluşturmaktadırlar. İşten çıkarılan bir kadın işçinin yeri, sırada bekleyen diğerleriyle rahatlıkla doldurulabilmektedir. Bu, diğer küresel örneklerde de gözlemlenmektedir. Pedreño ed, (2014) ve Bain (2010) kadınların ucuz emeğinin tarım şirketleri için küresel düzlemde ellerini güçlendiren bir rekabet stratejisi olduğunu söyler. *Sera* yönetimi, kadınların yaygın borçluluğunu da avantaja çeviriyor gibi gözükmemektedir; koşullar ne olursa olsun kadınlar düzenli gelir elde etme imkanını elden kaçırmak istememektedirler. Kadınların ve *Sera* yönetiminin bakış açısından *Sera*’daki ücretli kadın işçi istihdamı örneği, kırsal emek piyasalarının toplumsal cinsiyet dinamikleri ile şekillendiğini, bu dinamiklerin yarattığı eşitsizlik ve hiyerarşiler üzerinde yükseldiğini göstermektedir.

Özetle, bu çalışma *Sera* işinin kadınsılaşması olgusunun, patriyarkal ve kapitalist bir inşa olduğunu ileri sürmektedir. Patriyarkal ve kapitalist sistemin temeli olan toplumsal cinsiyete bağlı iş bölümü, *Sera* örneğinde görüldüğü gibi “kadın ve erkek doğasının” altını çizen özcü ayrımlarla el ele gitmektedir. Fakat söz konusu doğalar birden fazla, çelişkili ve/veya değişken anlamlar içerebilmektedirler. Bir başka deyişle, işin kadınsılaşmasında, tarla ve evdeki geleneksel toplumsal cinsiyete bağlı iş bölümü basitçe seraya aktarılmamıştır; kendini Türkiye kırsalında hüküm süren tarım-gıda ilişkilerinin değişen ihtiyaçlarına göre yenilemiştir. Benzer şekilde, Barrientos, Dolan ve Tallontire (2003) emek piyasasını ilgilendiren düzenlemelerin, standartların ve normların toplumsal cinsiyete bağlı iş bölümünü güçlendirme eğilimi gösterdiklerini, çünkü bunların “emek piyasası ve ekonomik pratiklerin toplumsal cinsiyetlendirilmiş

doğasını yansıttığını” söylerler (2003: 1515). Bu, Elson’ın (1999) emek piyasalarını toplumsal cinsiyetlendirilmiş ve böylece de yeniden üretici emeğin katkılarını gizleyen kurumlar olarak tarif etmesiyle örtüşür. Tam da bu sebeple, kadınların çalışma deneyim ve pratiklerinin analizi ücretli, “görünen” emeğin dışında bir diğer alanın daha hesaba katılmasını gerektirmektedir. ev. *Sera* işçisi kadınların evdeki yeniden üretime dair iş yükünü ve bu iş yükünün nasıl (yeniden) organize ettiklerini anlayabilmek için, çalışma kadınların evlerine odaklanmıştır.

Kadınların yeniden üretim yükü, öncelikli olarak *Sera*’nın hukuki olarak sorumluluklarını yerine getirmeyerek (6331 sayılı kanun), iş yerinde kreş açmamasıyla ilintilidir. Bu, kadınları kendi çözümlerini bulmaya itmiştir. Bu çalışmada, kadınların yeniden üretimde onlara atfedilen iş yükü iki temel alanda ele alınmıştır: (I) bakım emeği (II) ev işleri. Ertelenemez doğası sebebiyle, çocuk, hasta ve/veya yaşlı bakımı kadınları ev işlerinin yeniden örgütlenmesine göre daha fazla zorlamaktadır. Hacettepe Üniversite Nüfus Etütleri Merkezi’nin verileri (2014) ile uyumlu bir şekilde kadınların serada çalışmaya başladıkları için arkalarında bıraktıkları (çoğunlukla çocuklar) diğer aile bireylerinin bakımı genellikle bir başka kadın tarafından yapılmaktadır. Bu kadın, işe giden kadının annesi, kayınvalidesi ya da kız kardeşi/görümcesidir. Bazı durumlarda kadının en büyük kız çocuğu bu işi devralmaktadır. Sınırlı da olsa, çalışan kadınların kocalarının da bakım emeğinin yükünü paylaştıkları ama aynı zamanda bunun hep bir kadın üyenin varlığıyla beraber gerçekleştiği gözlemlenmiştir. Bakım emeğinin yeniden örgütlenmesi, kadınların ücretli iş gücüne katılımının önündeki en büyük engel olarak gözükmemektedir; ancak ve ancak bunu garantiye alanlar çalışma hayatına katılabilmektedirler. Ayrıca, bakım emeğinin yükünün bir kadından diğerine aktarılmasının her zaman kesin gözüyle bakılmaması gerektiği, bunun kadınlar arasında bir dayanışma ve çatışma alanı olduğu da belirtilmelidir.

Ev işlerine gelindiğinde, kadınların *Sera*'da çalışmaya başlamaları ile birlikte, ev işlerinin yeniden örgütlenmesinde daha esnek davranabildikleri görülmüştür. Bu esneklik kadınlara çeşitli yollar sunmaktadır. İşlerin bir diğer kadına devri, bu alanda da görülmektedir; bu kadınların yokluğunda erkekler en temel ve basit işleri yapmaktadırlar. İşlerin çoğu ve ağır olanları gene kadınlar tarafından üstlenilse de erkeklerin bu sınırlı katkıları kadınlar tarafından büyük bir takdir görmektedir. İşten eve dönen kadınlar, ağır mesai üzerine hazırlanmış bir akşam yemeğinin, makarna bile olsa hayat kurtarıcı olduğunu söylemektedirler. Fakat diğer yandan, kadınlar bu işlerin yeniden örgütlenmesinde farklı stratejiler izlemektedirler: işleri daha az ve baştan sağma yapma, sabahları erken kalkarak yarım kalan işleri tamamlama ya da önceden kendilerinin hazırladıkları belli gıdaları parayla dışarıdan alma bu stratejiler arasında sayılabilir. Her halükârda kadınlar, kendilerine atfedilen “kadın işlerini” yapmak, yapacak birilerini bulmak ve/veya onların yokluğunda işleri yeniden örgütlemek zorunda kalıyor gözükmektedirler. Toksöz (2014) kriz zamanlarında, bilhassa yoksul hanelere mensup kadınların iş yükünde büyük bir artış yaşandığına dikkat çeker. Bu çalışmada da rastlandığı gibi, ailenin erkek üyelerinin de işsiz ya da düzensiz çalışan olduğu durumlarda, kadınların ücretsiz emeği hem çeşitlenmekte hem de yoğunlaşmaktadır. Artık parayla satın alınamayan mal ve hizmetler, kadınların omzuna iş yükü olarak binmektedir. Benzer şekilde Aydın (2002) kadın emeği kullanımının ençoklaştırılmasının kırsalda küçük üretici hanelerde bir hayatta kalma stratejisi olduğunun altını çizmektedir. Bu, literatürde de tanımlandığı gibi, kadınların “çifte iş stratejisi” (Dolan ve Sorby 2003, Jarvis ve Vera-Toscana 2004), “çifte mesaisi” (Toksöz, 2014) ya da “ikili ve/veya çoklu yükü” (Garcia Dungo, 2007) ya da “üçlü yük” (Barndt, 2002) ile örtüşmekte, aynı zamanda kırsalda yeniden üretim emeğini kadına atfeden patriyarkal kodların dayanıklılığını göstermektedir.

Bu çalışmada, şimdiye kadar tanımlanan ve analiz edilen *Sera* işçisi kadınların ücretli ve ücretsiz çalışma pratikleri ve deneyimlerinin yanı sıra, kadınların ücretli ve ücretsiz emeğinden ortaya çıkan toplumsal cinsiyet rejimi örüntülerinin

kadınlar için taşıdığı güçlenme ihtimallerine de yer verilmiştir. Kısaca özetlemek gerekirse, kadınların genel olarak çalışma algısı (ev-dışı ücretli işte), özel olarak *Sera*'da çalışma algısı olumludur. Elbette *Sera*'ya dair ağır eleştirileri mevcuttur: yaptıkları işin onları pasifize ettiğini, aynı şeyi tekrarlayıp durduklarını ve işçilere insan gibi davranılmadığını söylemektedirler. Fakat çalışmayı ve *Sera* işini, sınırlı da olsa kazandıkları para üzerindeki kontrollerini ve “kendi parasına sahip olmayı” onları güçlendirici, kendilerine güvenlerini arttırıcı, gelecek planları yapabilmelerini sağlayan, kişisel ve toplumsal sorun/travmalardan kaçabilmelerine yardımcı olan bir şey olarak görmüşlerdir. *Sera* vesilesiyle değişen hayatlar kadınların boşanmayı olanaklı kılmasına, sosyal güvenceye sahip olmasına, (ev içindeki erkek otoritesine karşı) kısmi bir söz hakkına erişmelerine yardımcı olmaktadır. (Bir başka deyişle kadınlar çalışmayı istemektedir fakat insan onuruna yakışan bir istihdam arzulamaktadırlar.) *Sera* işinin kadınların kendi hayatlarını değiştirmek ve dönüştürmek için taşıdığı “potansiyeller” göz önüne alındığında, yukarıda belirtilenlere ek olarak, izin günlerinin kadınlar tarafından farklı sebeplerle kullanıldığı, her ne kadar çoğunluk bunu ev işi ile geçirse de bazı kadınların bugünü kendilerine sakladıkları, çalışıyormuş gibi görünerek farklı programlar yaptıkları gözlemlenmiştir. Bu vesileyle kendilerini takip eden eski eşten kaçan ya da arkadaşlarıyla buluşan kadınlar da vardır. Kadınlar sıklıkla ilk defa *Sera* işi vesilesiyle “toplum” içine çıktıklarını, içine doğdukları ve evlenerek genişlettikleri toplumsal ağların dışında bunlara alternatif, yeni bir “çevre” edindiklerini söylemektedirler. Bu ağlardaki kadın dayanışması ve dostluk, sera işçisi kadınların hayatında çok şey ifade etmekte; iş yerinde ve özel hayatlarında yaşadıkları zorluklarla başa çıkmada birbirlerine yaptıkları yardımın önemli payı olduğunu belirtmektedirler. Bakırçay Havzası'nda sera işçisi kadınlar örneğinde, kadın proleterleşmesinin en önemli özgünlüklerinden birini de bu özetlenenler oluşturmaktadır. Bu özgünlük, Türkiye kırsalının farklı bölgelerinde yapılan çalışmalarda da gözlemlenmiştir (Güler, 2014; Suzuki ve Gündüz Hoşgör, 2019).

Tam da bu noktada, kadınların ücretli iş gücüne dahil olması ve güçlenme arasındaki ilişkinin bu çalışmada nasıl kavramsallaştırıldığından bahsetmek gerekmektedir. İkisi arasındaki ilişkinin çizgisel, doğrudan ve/veya mekanik olmadığı iddia edilmektedir. Bir başka deyişle, ücretli iş gücüne katılımın kadınlar için tamamen güçlenme ile sonuçlandığı savunulmamaktadır; sera işçisi kadınlar örneğinde de görüldüğü üzere, varılan nokta daha ziyade kazanımlar ve kısıtlılıklardan oluşan katmanlı, karmaşık ve çelişkili bir güçlenme potansiyeline işaret etmektedir. Toplumsal cinsiyet ile yoğrulmuş proleterleşme süreci, kadınların tecrübe ettiği güçlenme formunun kadınların kendi hayatlarında mümkün kıldıkları bir takım özgürleşme nişlerinden oluşmasına neden olmuş gözükmektedir. Bu, yapısal değişiklikler yapabilecek kuvvette bir kolektif eyleme biçimi değildir; Sera işçisi kadınların güçlenme pratikleri bu sebeple Erman, Kalaycıoğlu ve Rittersberger-Tılıç'ın (2002: 407) tarif ettiği “güçlenme tohumlarını” çağrıştırmaktadır. Fakat diğer yandan, toplumsal cinsiyet emek rejiminin örüntüleri her ne kadar toplumsal cinsiyete bağlı iş bölümünün derinleşmesini, kadınların iş yükünün artmasını ve/veya prekar çalışma koşullarına tekabül etse de kadınların ücretli iş gücüne katılımlarını sadece ve sadece tahakküm ve mağduriyet ikiliğinde görmek, onların aşırı çalışma ve bedellerle şekillenen iş deneyimlerini es geçmek ve değersizleştirmek anlamına gelebilir. Razavi de benzer şekilde kadınları Yapısal Uyum Politikaları'na sadece maruz kalanlar olarak tarif etmenin sakıncalarına dikkat çeker ve kadınların fail konumlarının altını çizer: “liberalleşme ve küreselleşme kadınları pasif kuklalar olarak manipüle eden yukarıdan aşağı süreçler değildir; kadınlar aynı zamanda direniş gösterirler: kadınlar hem söz konusu süreçlerden derinlemesine etkilenirler hem de bunlarla mücadele ederek cevap verirler” (2012: 4).

Sera işçisi kadınların, ücretli emeğe dahil olmalarıyla tecrübe ettikleri toplumsal cinsiyet emek rejiminin ortaya çıkan örüntüleri, *Sera* ve eve ek olarak, kadınların tarımsal üretim ve hayvancılıktaki rolleriyle de şekillenmektedir. Küçük üreticiliğe dayanan çalışma hayatının, büyük ölçekli ve ihracat odaklı bir serada işçiliğe dönüşümünün söz konusu örüntüleri anlamada büyük öneme sahip

olduğu açıktır. Bu, aynı zamanda kırsal dönüşüm sürecinin bizatihi öznesi olan kadınların bu süreçteki deneyimleri, değerlendirmeleri ve öngörülerine de yer vermeyi gerektirmektedir. Kadınların küçük ölçekli tarımsal üretim ve hayvancılıkla olan ilişkileri üç kategori altında toplanmıştır: (I) tarımsal üretim ve hayvancılıktan tamamen kopmuş olanlar (II) sınırlı bir ilişki sürdürenler ve (III) tarımsal üretim ve hayvancılığa devam edenler. 33 kadın içerisinde, 24 kadın bu pratiklerden tamamen kopmuştur; 8 tanesi sınırlı bir ilişki içerisinde devam ettirmektedir ve sadece 1 tane kadın küçük ölçekli tarımsal üretim ve hayvancılığa devam etmektedir.

Veriler önceleri tütün ve pamuk gibi bölgesel ve karlı tarımsal ve hayvansal ürünleriyle ünlü Bakırçay Havzası'nda radikal bir değişim yaşandığını anlatmaktadır. Kadınlar, bunun arkasında yatan nedenler sorulduğunda, mensup oldukları hanelerin içinde bulunduğu acil nakit ihtiyacının, borçluluğun, küçük ölçekli tarım ve hayvancılıktan para kazanamamanın ve haliyle üretimin artan masraflarını karşılamada yaşanan zorluklardan bahsetmişlerdir. Bunların sonucu olarak kadınlar, giderek güçlenen bir şekilde üretimle aralarına mesafe koymakta ve üretimden kopmaktadır. Bu noktada toprak ve hayvan sahibi olanlarla, olmayanların benzer şikayetlerde bulunduğu görülmektedir. İkinci grup, birinci gruptan farklı olarak icar (tarla kirası) yükü ile de boğuşmaktadır. Her iki gruptan kadınlar, artık küçük üretimin ekonomik olmadığının ısrarla altını çizmişlerdir.

Sınırlı bir ilişkide olanları kapsayan kategori ise -kadınların *Sera* işinden önce aktif üreticiler olduğu düşünüldüğünde- kopuşu bir başka formda temsil ediyor gibi gözükmektedir. Zira bu kategori altında birleşen kadınların ilişkileri oldukça dolaylı ve sınırlıdır. Kadınlar zaman zaman ikincil, geçici ve düzensiz bir şekilde hanede sürdürülen üretime yardım etmektedirler. Bu bazen, izin gününde hasada yardım etmek ya da mesai dönüşü hayvanları yemlemek olmaktadır. En nihayetinde, sadece bir kadın, kendi ve ailesinni diğer üyelerine ait tarla ve hayvanlarla üretime devam etmektedir. Fakat, bu hane bile sadece küçük

üreticilikle geçinmemektedir, Ümmühan ve eşinin işçilik maaşları dışında, eve giren emeklilik maaşı ve kira geliri vardır. Bu düzenli nakit akışları üretimin devam edebilmesinde büyük önem sahibidir.

Bu çerçevede, küçük üreticilikten tarım-dışı işlere doğru bir kopuş olduğu açıktır. Kadınların bu süreci nasıl tecrübe ettikleri ve konu ile ilgili akıl yürüttükleri *Sera* işi ve tarla/bahçe işi karşılaştırmalarında somutlaşmaktadır. Tarla işi ve köylülük kadınların anlatılarında daha dezavantajlı olarak tarif edilmektedir. Bunlar şöyle sıralanabilir: tarla/bahçe işinin güvencesiz, devamlı olmayan ve geçici doğası, gündelik ödeme biçimi ve sosyal güvencenin yokluğu. Kadınlar ayrıca kendilerinden büyük erkek aile üyelerinin baskılarına maruz kaldıklarını belirtmişlerdir; kadınların ücretsiz aile işçisi konumu da ellerini zayıflatmaktadır. Tarımsal üretimin mekanizasyonu da kadınlar (ve erkekler) için tarla/bahçe işlerinin çeşitliliğini azaltmıştır. Kadınlar dayıbaşları ve diğer erkek işçilerin tacizlerinin yanı sıra, uzun saatler boyunca açık alanda çalışmanın, hep aynı tekdüze, monoton ve tekrarlayan bir iş yapmanın, hayvan ısırması/böcek sokması tehlikesine açık olmanın, tarla/bahçe işinin hijyenik olmayan koşullarının ve en nihayetinde kadınların işi bitirmeleri için dayıbaşı tarafından sürekli yapılan baskının bu işteki dezavantajlar olduğunu söylemişlerdir. Diğer taraftan, kadınların kendi deyişiyle “dinlenme hakkı” (iş sırasında olduğu kadar, hasat sonrasında belli bir dönem dinlenmeyi içerecek şekilde), stressiz bir çalışma ortamı olması ve sürekli emir altında olmama tarla/bahçe işlerinin ve küçük köylülüğün kadınların gözünde avantajlı kısımlarını oluşturmaktadır.

Sera işiyse düzenli aylık ödemeleri, sosyal güvencesi, yıl boyu, düzenli ve güvenceli bir istihdam sunması, kapalı alanda çalıştırarak kadınları iklim ve böcek/hayvanlardan koruması, kadınlar için “uygun” (ahlaki kodlarla uyum içinde) bir adres olması kadınlar tarafından avantajlar olarak tanımlanmıştır. Kadınlar düzenli gelirin kendilerini borç almada elverişli kıldığını, borçlarını ödeyebildikleri için tekrar rahatlıkla isteyebildiklerini belirtmişlerdir. *Sera*’da izin kullanmadan çalışabilme “fırsatına” da sahip olduklarını söylemişlerdir.

Sonuç olarak, bunların bazılarının ne kadar avantaj olduğu oldukça problemli olsa da *Sera* işi kadınlara daha önceden tarla/bahçe işlerinde ve/veya hayvansal üretimde sahip olmadıkları bir güvence ve görünürlük veriyor gibi gözükmektedir. Bunu teslim etmekle beraber, kadınlar *Sera*'da onları zorlayan mobbing, stres, performans sistemi, sürekli emir altında çalışma, “amir” mefhumu, kimyasala maruz kalma gibi dezavantajlardan da bahsetmişlerdir. Fakat köylülüğün, köy işlerinin ve küçük ölçekli üretimin kadınlar tarafından elverişsiz görüldüğü açıktır.

Bu değersizleştirme, Özügurlu'nun (2011) saptadığı “kültürel yarılmaya” işaret etmektedir. Özügurlu köylülüğe ve işçiliğe atfedilen anlamların kırsal alanda yaşayan gençliğin gözünde birbirinin yerine geçtiğini söyler. İşçilik eskiden angarya ile eş tutulurken bugün güvenceli ve sürdürebilir bir gelir kaynağı olarak görülmektedir. Bu köylülüğün itibar kaybını ve küçük üretici kimliğinin aşınmasını da beraberinde getirmektedir. Bu kimliğin kadınlar ve erkekler tarafından nasıl tarif edildiğinin cevabı ise, küçük üretici hanenin toplumsal cinsiyetten azade tanımlanmasından kaçınılması gerektiğini bize tekrar göstermektedir. Bilhassa genç kadın ve erkekler her ne kadar artık evlenip köye yerleşmek istemeseler de kadınların bu kararının arkasındaki sebeplerin köy hayatında cereyan eden toplumsal cinsiyete bağlı iş yükünün eşitsiz paylaşımı olduğu görülmektedir. Küçük üreticilikten para kazanılmamasının başat bir neden olmasının yanı sıra, ilçelere göç etme isteği kadınlar için kâr zarar hesabının ötesine geçmektedir. Kadınlar köy hayatında üretimin önemli bir bölümünde, yeniden üretimin tamamında yer alırlar. Bunlara ek olarak hane halkının tüketimi için geçimlik bahçeler de kadınların sorumluluğundadır. Kadınlar bunu “Köy yerinde mesai hiç bitmiyor!” şeklinde ifade etmişlerdir. Yakın zamanda köylerin boşalmasıyla nüfusun yaşlanması, köyün ıssızlaşması, kadınların yaşıtı gençlerle bir araya gelememelerinden yakınmalarına ve canlı bir sosyal/kültürel hayatı arzu ettiklerini ifade etmelerine yol açmıştır. Suzuki ve Gündüz Hoşgör'ün (2019) Batı Karadeniz dağ köylerinden genç kadınlarla

yaptıkları çalışmada da vurguladıkları gibi, özellikle dağ köylerinde yaşayan sera işçisi kadınlar da sosyal bir dışlanmışlık ve izolasyon içinde kalmışlardır.

Bu bağlamda, kadınların küçük üreticiliğin ve genç kuşakların geleceği ile ilgili değerlendirmeleri de kırsal dönüşüm sürecini anlamada bir önem kazanmaktadır. Kadınların tamamı, “köylünün/küçük üreticinin devrinin kapandığını”, artık “bu işlere büyüklerin girdiğini” ifade etmektedir. Sadece küçük üreticilikten elde edilen parayla artık bir hanenin geçinemeyeceği konusunda gene hemfikirdirler. Bir zamanın tütün, pamuk ve zeytin üreticisi olarak kadınlar, küçük üreticilikte artık bir gelecek görememektedirler. Bu İlçe Tarım Müdürlüklerinde çalışan ziraat mühendisleri, köy muhtarları, hanelerin erkek üyeleri, mülakat yapılan büyük ölçekli üretim yapan bir çiftçi, İzmir Ziraat Mühendisleri Odası eski başkanı gibi görüşülen diğer bölgesel aktörler tarafından da paylaşılmaktadır. Bu çözülme havzada büyük işletmelerin görülmesiyle el ele gitmektedir. Belki de bu yüzden kadınlar yakın gelecekte üretimde büyük ölçekli işletmelerin daha fazla rol oynayacağını söylemektedirler; bu değerlendirmenin ete kemiğe büründüğü işletmeler de aynı şirkete ait olan *Sera* ve *Besici*’dir. Kadınların gözünde bu işletmeler, aldıkları tarımsal destekler, yüksek karlılık oranları ve toprak satın almadaki öncü rolleri ile kırsalın geleceğini temsil etmektedirler. *Sera* yönetimi de bu konuda kadınlarla aynı fikirde gözükmektedir. *Sera* yöneticisi bunu “Artık Ahmet Ağa Mehmet Ağa devri bitti!” diyerek ifade etmiştir. Bakırçay Havzası’ndaki kırsal nüfusta bilhassa son iki kuşaktır “köylülükten” giderek derinleşen bir kopma gözlemlediğini eklemiştir. Son olarak, kadınlar bu süreçte hayatta kalmayı başarabilen hanelerin kırsalda yeni, büyük ölçekli, ihracat odaklı tarım işletmeleri ile bir arada var olmaya çalışacağını fakat bundan da pek umutlu olmadıklarını düşündüklerini söylemişlerdir.

Sonuç Yerine

Bu çalışma kadınların ücretli emeği ile küreselleşmiş tarım-gıda sistemi arasında bir ilişki gören literatüre katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Aynı zamanda

toplumsal cinsiyetten azade kavramsallaştırılan köylü işçi kategorisini, küçük üretici haneyi ve işçileşme örüntülerini eleştirmektedir. Paralel olarak, kadınların bakış açısından kendi deneyimlerinin kırsal dönüşüm sürecinde bizatihi kurucu bir öge olduğunu savunmaktadır. Kadınların deneyimi aynı zamanda kırsal dönüşüm sürecinin failer üstü meta anlatısına bir cevap niteliği de taşımaktadır.

Çalışmanın sınırlılıkları elbette ki mevcuttur. Bunlar kısaca şöyle özetlenebilir: (I) küresel meta zincirlerini de içeren bir analiz bize *Sera* ürünlerinin hangi yollarla uzak ülkelerde tüketici ile buluştuğuna dair bir bilgi verebilirdi. Bu, *Sera* örneğinde kadın emeğinin tarım-gıda ilişkilerinin neoliberal yeniden yapılanmasında oynadığı kritik role dair daha derinlemesine bir bakış açısı sağlardı. (II) Kadınların mensup olduğu etnik-dini grupların farklılıkların daha incelikli bir şekilde araştırılması sadece daha zengin etnografik ve sosyolojik verinin çalışmaya katılmasını değil kadınların bu ayrımlar ve farklılıklar temelinde toplumsal cinsiyet emek rejimi içerisinde ne tür baş etme stratejileri ürettiğini, gelecek tahayyüllerine sahip olduklarını daha iyi anlayabilmemizi sağlayabilirdi. Aynı şekilde kadınların çalışma pratikleri ve deneyimleri ve etnik-dini gruplar arasındaki ilişki de daha derinlikli incelenme gerektirmektedir. (III) *Sera* işçisi kadınları kendilerinden önceki kuşakla (ve eğer mümkünse bir sonraki kuşakla) çalışma pratikleri ve deneyimleri üzerinden karşılaştıran bir bakış açısı kuşaklararası süreklilikler/kırılmalara ve benzerlik/farklılıklara odaklanarak bize kırsalda kadın emeğinin toplumsal cinsiyet emek rejimlerine dair daha tamamlayıcı bir bakış açısı kazandırabilirdi. (IV) Son olarak, *Sera* örneğini başka bağlamlarda çalışılmış diğer örneklerle toprak sahipliği, kırsal bölge, emek kullanımı ya da tarımsal ürün üzerinden karşılaştırmak da araştırmayı zenginleştirebilirdi. Bursa ya da Balıkesir gibi küresel kapitalizme görece erken eklemlenmiş olan bölgelerin Bakırçay Havzası ile karşılaştırılması çalışmanın evrenini genişletebilirdi. Daha ileriki çalışmaların bu eksiklikleri kapatarak yeni bulgularla kırsal dönüşüm ve kadın emeği araştırmalarını zenginleştireceğini umut etmekteyim.

Çalışmanın dar bir özetini vermek gerekirse, şunu belirtmek yanlış olmayacaktır; bugün Bakırçay Havzası'nın küçük üreticileri derin bir krizin içinden geçmektedirler. Kriz onları sadece ekonomik bir kategori olarak çözmekle kalmamaktadır; kendilerini toplumsal bir kategori olarak yeniden üretebilmelerini de neredeyse imkânsız hale getirmektedir. Bu iki çözülme hali, çalışmada tarımsal üretim ve hayvancılıktan kopma ve/veya onlara mesafe alma, köylülüğün itibar kaybı, göç ve işçileşme olgularında göstermektedir. Havzada sera formunda açılan ve yaygınlaşan tarım şirketlerinin de bu süreç ile eş zamanlı ortaya çıktığı görülmektedir. Bir diğer yandan kadınlar, köylerinden veya göç ettikleri ilçelerin çeperlerinden seralarda ücretli iş gücüne yüksek sayılarda katılmaktadırlar. Sera vasıtasıyla, Bakırçay Havzası'ndan kadınların emeği, küresel kapitalist ve patriyarkal piyasaların bir parçası haline gelmektedir. Bu, *Sera* işinin kadınsılaşması olgusunu da beraberinde getirmektedir.

Bu bağlamda, bu tez daha önceden ücretsiz aile işçisi olarak çalışan tütün, pamuk ve zeytin üreticisi köylü kadınların *Sera* olarak adlandırılan bir tarım şirketinde ücretli emeğe dahil olmalarıyla beraber ortaya çıkan toplumsal cinsiyet emek rejiminin örüntülerini incelemektedir. Bunu, kadınların çalışma pratikleri ve deneyimleri üzerinden yapmaktadır. Çalışma, köylü işçi kategorisinin ve kadınlar için ücretsiz aile işçisinden ücretli emeğe dahil olmaya tekabül eden değişimi içeren proleterleşmenin toplumsal cinsiyet dinamiği tarafından şekillendirilmiş bir süreç olduğunu ileri sürmektedir. Bu bağlamda, toplumsal cinsiyete bağlı iş bölümü de önem kazanmaktadır. Bu iş bölümü, her ne kadar toplumsal cinsiyet emek rejiminin güncel gereksinimleri içerisinde farklı formlar alsada halen kadın ve erkeğe dair özcü kategorilere referans vermekte ve kapitalist ve patriyarkal kırsal emek piyasalarının temelini oluşturmaktadır.

Sera'da çalışma koşulları hayli kötüdür ve yeniden üretim emeğinin örgütlenmesinin getirdiği yük çoğunlukla ve öncelikle kadınların omzundadır. Görünen o ki, kadınların ücretli ve ücretsiz emeğinin kullanımının ençoklaştırılması süregiden neoliberal yeniden yapılanma sürecinin yıkıcı

etkilerinin hafifletilmesi için de elzemdir; sera işçisi kadınlar buna bir örnek oluşturmaktadırlar. Fakat bunlara rağmen, kadınlar hem *Sera* işiyle baş edebilmek hem de kendi hayatlarında değişim ve dönüşümü gerçekleştirmek için nişler yaratma konusunda mahirdir. Tam bir güçlenme ve özgürleşme olmasa bile, kadınlar kazanımların ve sınırlılıkların birbirinin içine geçtiği, karmaşık güçlenme pratikleri sergilemektedir. Kadınlar köyde küçük üretici olarak yaşadıkları hayata sağlam bir kararlılıkla mesafe almak istemektedirler. Bu hayat onlar için ekonomik zorluklar, yoksullukla hemhal olduğu kadar, eşitsiz ve ağır iş yükü, yaşlı bir nüfusun ev sahipliğini yaptığı, akranlarını bulmakta zorlandıkları, haliyle sosyal bir dışlanma ve ıssızlık ile de tanımlanmaktadır. Tam da bu sebeplerle kadınlar, içinden geçtikleri değişimin, bir başka deyişle neoliberal yeniden yapılanmanın kırsal alanlara olan nüfuzunun, aynı zamanda failleri haline de gelmektedirler. Kadınlar iş yerinde yönetici ve mühendislerle, evlerinde kocaları, babaları ve geniş/çekirdek ailenin diğer üyeleri ile, mahallelerinde/köylerinde komşuları ve/veya köylüleri ile kendi hayat koşullarını daha iyi kılmak için bir mücadele ve uzlaşma içindedirler. Bu yüzden, ortaya çıkan toplumsal cinsiyet emek rejiminin Bakırçay Havzası'ndan kadınlara uzun vadede ne getireceği ancak daha ileri araştırma ve analizler ile aydınlanacak gibi gözükmektedir.

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TEZİN ADI / TITLE OF THE THESIS (İngilizce / English) : GENDERED RURAL TRANSFORMATION AND PEASANT-WORKERS: THE CASE OF THE WOMEN OF THE GREENHOUSE, WESTERN ANATOLIA, TURKEY.....

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