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ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

GENDER AND FORCED MIGRATION: POST-ARAB SPRING WOMEN'S MIGRATION TO TURKEY

MASTER'S THESIS

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Department of Political Science and International Relations
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(Y1812.110035)

Department of Political Science and International Relations
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Thesis Advisor: Prof. Dr. Hatice Deniz YÜKSEKER TEKİN

February, 2021

DECLARATION

I hereby declare with respect that the study “Gender And Forced Mıgratıon: Post-Arab Sprıng Women's Mıgratıon To Turkey”, which I submitted as a Master thesis, is written without any assistance in violation of scientific ethics and traditions in all the processes from the Project phase to the conclusion of the thesis and that the works I have benefited are from those shown in the Bibliography. (.../.../20...)

LANA ALEMAM

To her, to whom I re-read the drafts literally hundreds of times, the woman who taught me that women were created to create, to be free, to read and to lead. To my mother, I owe a particular debt for teaching me that knowledge is the only good, and ignorance is the only evil.

FOREWORD

No words can ever express my fathomless gratitude to the DNA of this study, my fabulous family, to my father, who taught me through his incredibly profound love & encouragement that thirst for knowledge, eagerness for learning, and inquisitiveness could not be satisfied, and almost forced me to obstinately doubt what are thought to be hard, established facts.

To my hero, Sano, my little brother who was patient and caring, he, who has always listened carefully, believed in me and taught me that knowledge have nothing to do with age.

And of course, I wholeheartedly thank my advisor, Prof. Dr. Hatice Deniz Yükseker Tekin, who did not only advise me in my master's program, but also during my entire higher education journey. She bettered the quality of my thesis with her guidance and gave me the golden opportunity to work on this project with her, without herself; I would never have had the inspiration to conduct a research on migration on a gendered basis.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ASAM **:** Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Immigrants
BMMYK : Birleşmiş Milletler Mülteciler Yüksek Komiserliği
DGMM : The Directorate General of Migration Management (Turkey)
EU : European Union
LFIP : Law on Foreigners and International Protection
UN : United Nations
UNFPA : United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR : United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UN DESA : United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
WID **:** Women in Development

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GENDER AND FORCED MIGRATION: POST-ARAB SPRING WOMEN'S MIGRATION TO TURKEY

ABSTRACT

After a brief overview of the Arab Spring and the large wave of migration triggered by it, this thesis initially displays the needed concepts vital to nuance the misunderstood phenomenon of feminization of migration, firstly through exploring the validity of the "traditional narrative" of women's movements in the past through flashing a glance on the gender composition of global migratory movements. Secondly, by offering an inclusive review of a diverse body of literature written on gender and migration, it concludes that the scholarship on feminization of migration has drifted away from its initial purpose of fighting gender inequalities, which disrupted gender identity and created ambivalence for women. Thus, it calls for the need for feminization of migration research and points of views rather than just focusing on the feminization of migration.

A holistic overview is provided on the changing role of Turkey from a country of origin to a country of transit and destination especially following the1973 economic recession in Western Europe and the Middle East's long-term conflicts which have been ongoing since the First Gulf War. Then it sheds the light, particularly, on the presence of Syrian women in the influx of refugees/migrants to Turkey during the past decade.

The main objective of this thesis is to better the status of women refugees/migrants by analyzing the gender-specific barriers that face females seeking asylum in Turkey with the aim of understanding their situation in exile. It also displays the Istanbul convention as the foundation stone of combating gender-based violence against female refugees/migrants.

Keywords: *Migration, feminism, women's migration in the Middle East, women's empowerment, gender equality.*

TOPLUMSAL CİNSİYET VE ZORUNLU GÖÇ: ARAP BAHARI SONRASI TÜRKİYE'YE KADIN GÖÇÜ

ÖZET

Arap Baharı'na ve tetiklediği büyük göç dalgasına kısa bir bakıştan sonra, bu tez öncelikle göçün kadınlaşması olgusuna incelikli bir yaklaşım sunmak için hayati önem taşıyan gerekli kavramları ortaya koymaktadır. Öncelikle, küresel göçlerin bileşimine bir bakış atarak, kadınların hareketlilikleri hakkındaki "geleneksel anlatıların" geçerliliğini irdelemektedir. Daha sonra, göç ve kadınlar üzerine yazılmış geniş bir yelpazedeki araştırmaları inceleyerek, göçün kadınlaşması literatürünün başlangıçtaki toplumsal cinsiyet eşitsizlikleriyle savaşma amacından uzaklaştığı sonucuna varılmaktadır. Bu nedenle, göçün kadınlaşması üzerinde durulmasından ziyade, göç araştırmalarının ve bakış açılarının feminizasyonuna ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır.

Bu çalışmada Türkiye'nin, özellikle 1973'te Batı Avrupa'daki ekonomik gerileme ve Orta Doğu'daki Birinci Körfez Savaşı'ndan bu yana devam eden uzun vadeli çatışmaların ardından, göç veren bir ülkeden göç alan bir ülkeye dönüşümüne bütüncül bir bakış sunulmuştur. Ardından, özellikle son on yılda Türkiye'ye gelen mülteci/göçmen akınının parçası olan Suriyeli kadınların varlığına ışık tutulmaktadır.

Bu tezin temel amacı sürgündeki durumlarını anlamak amacıyla Türkiye'den sığınma hakkı isteyen kadınların karşılaştığı cinsiyet temelli engelleri inceleyerek kadın mülteci/göçmenlerin şartlarını kolaylaştırmaktır. Bu çalışmada aynı zamanda kadın mültecilere/göçmenlere yönelik cinsiyete dayalı şiddetle mücadelenin temeli olarak İstanbul Sözleşmesi'ne işaret edilmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: *Göç, feminizm, Orta Doğu'da kadın göçü, kadınların güçlendirilmesi, cinsiyet eşitliği.*

1. INTRODUCTION

International Migration has been always a complex phenomenon, and as more people are on the move than ever, migration has become more complex than ever, as a social, political and economic process and as a field of study. Tony Champion, a British geographer, argued, two decades ago, that the world will face more challenges with the growing number of migrants, and the hardest of which will be to draw fruitful interpretations of the mass data of migration (Champion, 1993). Meaning that the major barrier we are facing nowadays regarding migrants' influxes and the process of decision-making in terms of migration is not the lack of data, but rather how to employ this data, thus finding the key to ending international migrants' sufferings.

It is argued that the various theories of migration have long focused on states' security and neglected human rights—let alone women's rights—and the established loose global migration policies and laws were always too general or too fragmental; thus, Champion suggests that looking at migration through different lenses (gendered lenses in this thesis,) rather than analyzing it as a single phenomenon per se, would lead to better outcomes.

1.1 The Study's Objective

Against this background, this thesis uses gender as an analytical category challenging the negative stereotypes that victimize women and portray them as dependent spouses of breadwinners and passive actors in the international arena, taking up the experience of Syrian, Libyan, Yemeni, Egyptian and Sudanese women who forcefully left their conflict-torn countries of origin and headed towards Turkey to examine the interrelation of women/gender and migration and the impact of this nexus on them.

1.2 Background

Arab Spring:

Mohamed Bouazizi, a Tunisian young street vendor who tragically set himself on fire in December 2010, igniting a series of unprecedented revolutions throughout the Middle East and North Africa (MENA.) The splendor of the Tunisian uprising dawn that awoke with Bouazizi's self-immolation successfully ousted the corrupt regime and had a cascading effect on almost every infamous longstanding Arab dictator. Pro-democracy activists would gather in major city squares of Egypt, Libya, Jordan, Bahrain, Syria, Yemen, Sudan and Lebanon calling for wholesale political, social and economic reforms (Taylor, 2017).

By 2012 four Arab dictators have been overthrown, and many other governments including constitutional monarchies and authoritarian regimes were forced by revolts to make crucial reforms on certain levels. Almost a decade after its first spark, the flared up anti-regime protests deposed, came close to deposing, or ended the lives of dictators of Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Libya, Yemen and Sudan (Aljazeera, 2017). Reactionary forces, however, managed to reinstall dictators in the Arab world as these elements in Yemen, Libya and Egypt, headed to the nearest flea market and got new despots, far worse than their predecessors, to rule people of these countries (Gabon, 2018), and the Middle East was re-drowned in a miasma of pandemonium and civil unrest (Price, Rizzo, Marty and Meyer, 2017).

Today, Western and Arab academics seem to have lost hope in finding a sign of a wave of democracy that can successfully liberalize the Middle East (Sjoberg and Whooley, 2015), witnessing the continuous massacres, diseases, outside interventions, constant political chaos in Syria, Yemen, Libya and Egypt, scholars have prematurely announced the Arab Spring dead (Parker, 2019). Now although the region looks further than it has ever been from prosperous, democratized, peaceful and just (Gabon, 2018), it is undeniable that the Arab spring managed to shake the authoritarian regimes in the Middle East bringing many notable transformations to the region, and further transformations are yet to come (Bani-Salameh, 2018); because when closely comparing it to the

Western revolutions of 1848, we get a very different conclusion; seismic events throughout the history never bring about direct changes, and the fruits of the Arab Spring cannot be harvested yet. In war-torn countries, it is illogical to expect noticeable change in the next day or even the next year. Long-term, equal opportunities are what we look for. To achieve that, a holistic transformation in the mindset of policymakers is needed in order to witness actual signs of peace and security.

The history taught us through the great examples of the successful Glorious English, American and French revolutions that their first desired goals were not achieved directly (Parker, 2019).

Our common understanding of the French Revolution, for instance, is mostly centered on the narrative that liberalism was always meant for the West which woke up one day, called for democracy and claimed it the next day. We always speak of the impact of the revolution's values in paving the way for –what we know today as– the Western democracy, but what we usually omit is the revolution's share of violence and spilt blood (Parker, 2019). A long painful path through which a republic was established, inspiring violent periods of political turmoil during the Reign of Terror where 17.000 people were executed by guillotine and many more revolts died in prisons, finally installing Napoleon Bonaparte, another authoritarian (Popkin, 2019). Yet, the impact of the noble and flamboyant principles of liberty, eternity and fraternity overcame decades of tyranny and became an active source of inspiration and a powerful driver for further uprisings and, hopefully, modern democracies in the Middle East in long run.

In short, both the Western Revolutionary Wave along with the Arab Spring (Weyland, 2012) shall teach us that the fall of dictators does not mean democracy (Ebadi, 2012), and it is too early to declare the "death" of the uprisings in the Middle East which are not only about a group of revolts unleashing waves of violence against their governments like the case of the French Revolution, but rather, people desperate to live and counter-revolutionaries desperate to remain in power (Parker, 2019), it is a "multitude of different protests that combine labor and human rights, religious and societal

actors that run across the spectrum of class and gender" (Sjoberg and Whooley, 2015).

Moreover, whether the disappointing outcome of the Arab Spring for women and men, stands behind their migration, or the fact that Arab women did not really have any rights before its spark, and regardless of whether we are willing to perceive the Arab insurrections as a fruitful spring or frightful autumn, along with the considerable transformations that followed it, the Arab Sprig has, undoubtedly, triggered the biggest wave of migration of, both, women and men after that of the Second World War (Bani Salameh, 2018). Aiming at repressing the peaceful protests against their rule, the longstanding dictatorships of the MENA region resorted to the use of force, and the uprisings were mostly met by armed responses leading to one of the most large-scale humanitarian crises in the history of humankind (Schlein, 2020), which led millions of migrants to flee armed conflicts and civil wars that threatened their lives directly and/or indirectly as a result of the Arab dictators' deadly love of authority.

1.3 Migration on the Eve of the Arab Spring

The question regarding the nexus between anti-government protests in the MENA region and migration, as well as the impact of those uprisings on the movement of Arab populations towards safer countries was put on the table in the first year following the spark of the Arab Spring.

Naturally, and as a result of the bloody turn that protests that took in Libya, Syria, Egypt, following the 2013 coup d'état, which roared back authoritarianism to the country, and recently Yemen, waves of mass scale forced migration have taken place in these countries.

Moreover, a notable increase in the number of forcibly displaced people around the world specifically took place between 2012 and 2015, mainly driven by the Syrian conflict. Yet, armed conflicts in Yemen, Iraq, and South Sudan played a major role in this rise of numbers of the displaced people.

In its Global Trends: Forced Displacement report, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) stated in 2020 that the number of forcibly displaced people reached unprecedented 79.5 million as of the end of

2019. The world has not witnessed a higher total according to the UNHCR (UNHCR, 2020). Whereas at the end of 2018, 70.8 million were forcibly displaced, meaning that an increase of 8.8 million took place within a year. The UNHCR stated that this unprecedented increase was a result of massive displacements in 2019, particularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Sahel, Yemen and Syria. Additionally, refugees and migrants back in the 1990s were able to return home with an average of 1.5 million each year, which has fallen to approximately 385,000 over the past decade (UNHCR, 2020).

Figure 1.1 shows the top 5 countries of origin of which 68% of the forcibly displaced population worldwide, of which two countries of the MENA region exist (UNHCR, 2020).

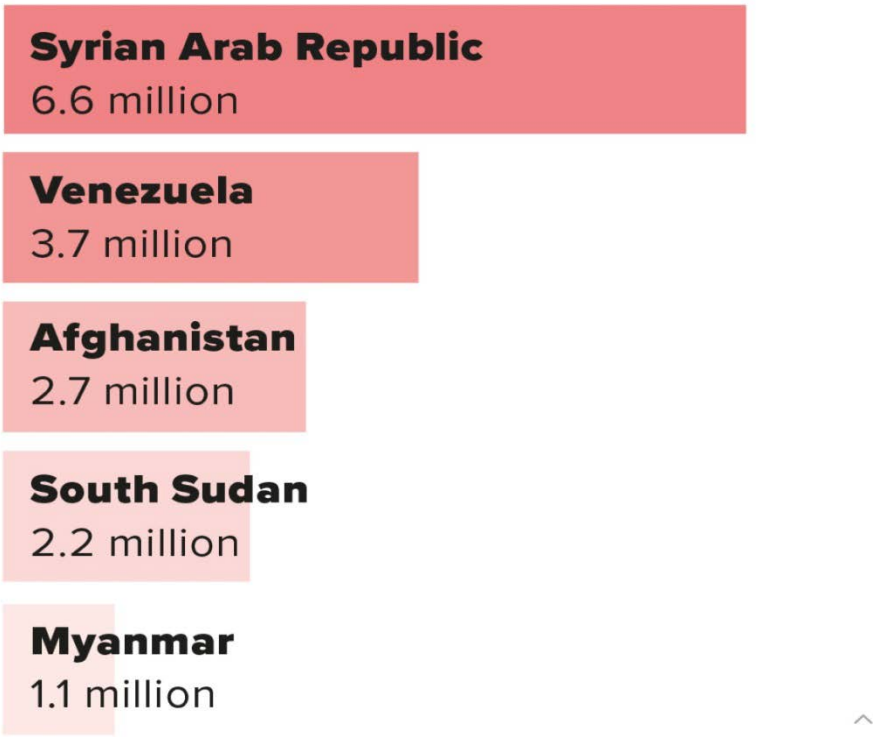

Figure 1.1: Top 5 migrant origin countries

Source: UNHCR, 2020

Another report by the UNHCR on International Migration in the Arab Region, issued in 2019, indicated that the Arab region has been witnessing an "unprecedented levels of international migration," and according to data generated by the agency, 20.2 million refugees fled their homes in the MENA

region, among which 8.7 million were under the UNHCR mandate back in 2017, meaning that two out of each five world refugees migrated from the Arab region (ESCWA, 2019); in addition to Syria becoming the country of the highest conflict-induced migration in the world, as one quarter of the world's 25.9 million refugees are Syrians (ILO, 2020).

Moreover, Syrians were still the largest forcibly displaced population by the end of 2018, according to the UNCHR, with 13 million displaced people, including 6.6 million refugees and 140,000 asylum seekers. In addition to other large displaced populations of 4.2 million from South Sudan, 2.7 million from Sudan, 2.4 million from Iraq and 2.2 million Yemenis (UNHCR, 2019).

1.4 Why Turkey?

In the light of this recent influx of refugees, Turkey became the country to host the largest population of migrants in the world with 4.1 million needing safety from war, 3.6 million (90%) of which are Syrians according to the same UNHCR 2019 report. Lebanon and Jordan however, preceded Turkey in terms of share per population.

Straddling Asia and Europe, and being the only bridge that connects the Middle East and Europe, Turkey has been a safe destination and transit country for refugees, and it managed, over the course of time, to transform from a migrant-sending country, as it was historically well-known for being a country of emigration, to a country of destination, which places it at the heart of any migration study (Kirisci, 2003).

The exodus of large numbers of refugees originating from the MENA region, of a particular note Syrians to Turkey, had vastly affected the global context of migration policies, which wasn't favorable to this mass influx before, and in all likelihood isn't the best now.

Notably, as the recent refugee crisis sharply escalated, dragging attention to the migration policies worldwide, intensifying debates over migration and triggering the need for better policies that overcome barriers which are faced by refugees, principally in terms of protecting women migrant's rights, which is

according to the Council of Europe, a relatively “new strategic objective” on its agenda (ESCWA, 2019).

Additionally, most of the previous studies on the feminization of migration targeted classical migrant countries, such as the U.S and Canada. Yet, the changing migratory patterns and trends transformed Turkey, from a migrant-sending country into a net migrant-receiving country hosting the largest population of refugees/migrants in the world. Thus, Turkey is an important case study in analyzing the feminization of migration.

In sum, the following factors made Turkey the “second best choice” for migrants according to Toksoz et al.: 1- the country’s strategic geographic location between the East and the West made Turkey a destination and a transit country since the 1980’s; 2- Turkey’s geographical proximity to countries of instability and long-term conflicts; and 3- the EU’s imposed restrictive migration policies that do not respect the human and social rights of migrants, and that can be traced back to historical issues of religion and cultural identity (Lucy Williams et al, 2020).

1.5 Feminization of Migration

Initially, the role of women during every stage of displacement had been widely abandoned for long decades, and the experiences of women during their migration journey were rarely taken into consideration. Doreen Indra has shown back in 1987 that systematic neglect of gender has been taking place in every facet of refugees, and mass media materials have contributed to the common belief that refugees are men and only men. In fact, Indra has brought a remarkable example of that, in which a UNHCR poster depicts Einstein as a refugee, which reflects media’s identification of notable refugees with men in order to solicit sympathy for refugees (Indra, 1987). One can go even further beyond refugees’ scope, as the prevailing belief of an international migrant has been, until recently, a young male, seeking better economic opportunities away from his country (Houstoun et al., 1984).

In her Immigrant Women, Maxine Seller, argues that stories of women who migrated and achieved a lot in their diaspora, throughout the history, were, to a

far extent, neglected by historians, researchers, and scholars, while those of men who migrated at the same period of time managed to take the lion's share, as a result of the widespread negative stereotype that women migrant's experiences are thought to be less worthy of writing about (Seller, 1975).

For centuries, massive numbers of women took place in the flows of migrants worldwide, yet scholars still failed to notice their experiences and achievements which were, by all the means, hard to not notice (Houstoun et al., 1984), until feminist scholars managed to place women at the core of Migration Studies, resulting in one of the most seismic shifts in the history of the field.

Ironically enough, the pivotal role of women before, during and after displacement was only written about during the mid-twentieth century, when the term "feminization of migration" was brought, by feminist scholars, to the forefront of the study of migration, as Castels and Miller pointed out in their famous book, The Age of Migration (Castels and Miller, 2013).

Perhaps, women's presence in the recent flows of migration has not increased excessively in terms of proportion, but the growing size of the world's population definitely means that number of woman migrants is currently doubled when compared to that of the mid-twentieth century. Nevertheless, recognizing the significant role of women in the process of migration is not an outcome of the dramatic increase of the number of female migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, but because feminist scholars dragged the world's attention to the fact that women also migrate as independent individuals; they do not only migrate as dependent wives, sisters or mothers, they even contribute to various stages of migration when they simply decide to stay home and wait for their husbands, fathers and brothers who migrate.

Over and above that, women, and simply because of their gender, do not fit the standardized molds that patriarchal societies put to stereotype migrants, as a result, they face dual discrimination. On the one hand, they face discrimination based on their gender, and, on the other, they find themselves confronting racial discrimination, in the country of migration. And when considering these critical points, it is impossible to not put women's migration under the microscope, making it one of the most focal sensitive debates in the history of migration studies.

1.6 Research Question:

Despite the prominent role played by women in the development of the Arab Spring, several factors gathered before and during the past decade prompting a large wave of women's migration; violence, repression, a general shift towards extremism and honor crimes (Wilson Center, 2016). According to Albert Hirschman's "exit and voice," model, a classical key concept in studies of migration, there are four ways of protesting "expressing dissatisfaction", 1) exit; 2) voice; 3) loyalty; and 4) neglect. Hirschman's model conceives migration as an alternative way to protest, as in his model, "exit" represents migrating to another nation to express frustration rather than "voice" and to participate in changing the political landscape of one's nation (Hirschman, 1970). Based on Hirschman's model, the main contribution of this thesis is analyzing the status of Middle Eastern women migrants and refugees in their diaspora, exploring the obstacles and challenges facing them during their displacement journey.

Thusly, following the latest major direction of migratory movements after the Arab Spring, my thesis focuses on Middle Eastern women seeking asylum /migrating to Turkey –which offers a paradigmatic example for being a destination and transition country– within the framework of the hitherto existing literature on gender and migration. The goal of this thesis is to answer the question of, whether migration has raised both prospects and restrictions for women migrants through studying the intersections between gender and migration.

In order to answer that, this thesis examines the process of Middle Eastern women's migration following the Arab Spring, and explores both sides of the coin for them focusing on the example of Syrian women in Turkey, and whether forms of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers' mobility are similar or alike for both sexes and whether gender of women directed them to migrate to Turkey in the light of the Arab Spring, hypothesizing that the experience of Middle Eastern women's migration to Turkey is an accurate representation of the situation of women migrants globally, as they make a significant proportion of conflict-induced forced migration population, and asylum seekers (Dogutas, 2019).

We need to understand the impact of women's gender on their journey of displacement, as women are discriminated for gender norms and stereotypes which are imposed upon them within patriarchal societies (both sending and receiving.)

Middle Eastern women best explain my point precisely, for being in a continuous struggle for their rights, as they are insidiously stereotyped (inside and outside their countries of origin) as muted, passive victims and subservient objects who wear burqa and evermore isolated, therefore they flee their countries of origin in order to become freer in migration countries. Thus, while shedding the light on the status of Arab women migrants/refugees in Turkey, including the barriers and difficulties they encounter during their journey of displacement, a critical overview of the "traditional narrative" of women's presence in international migration's research will be provided, especially to enlighten the mistaken thoughts on women's migration that are considered as facts.

In other words, by focusing on the case of the post-Arab Spring migration of women to Turkey I seek to challenge the wrongful stereotypes and gender norms in this thesis. Because Middle Eastern women find themselves forced to deal with gender and racial discrimination imposed upon them during their displacement and in host societies as a result of those stereotypes. In fact, overcoming these false stereotypes requires an attempt to scratch the surface a little bit in order to clearly understand that such stereotypes have fallen behind.

Now, elucidating the, often misconstrued, understanding of the different aspects of Middle Eastern women's experiences during displacement. Or in other words, looking at their migration through gendered lenses can be a greater contribution to setting better policies and legislations that would serve for the prosperity of the country of origin and that of destination, as well as fulfilling migrant's rights (both women's and, by extension, men's,) rather than basing countries' migration policies, which seem to be uncertain to a far extent, on perceiving the concept of migration as a threat to states' sovereignty and regional security. Or as Heisler and Layton-Henry noted: both hosting and sending societies, tend to describe migrants as constituting a social and societal threat, and a challenge to

the core customs, values, traditions and national and cultural identities (Heisler and Layton-Henry, 1993).

Furthermore, I believe that recognizing the productive role of women both during and after migration is a vital factor in understanding the different facets of the process of displacement at all its stages from a feminist perspective. And that will, eventually, open our eyes to the restrictions, limitations and barriers represented in gender norms and stereotypes that female migrants do face during their journey, and, of course, will help us fill out voids in the world's migration policies.

Feminization of migration has been taking place for several reasons, the first of which is that more women migrate independently as individuals rather than "family dependents" joining or migrating with their husbands abroad. Secondly, shares of women and men taking place in flows of migrants worldwide have become significantly equivalent (Piper, 2005), Third, women became world's primary economic providers, as they moved 300.6 billion dollars; or half of 601.3 billion in global remittances according to the reports released to press by Western Union in 2016, meaning that women circulate money as much as men do "but at a greater percentage of their income as they earn lower wages" especially in host societies (Maymon, 2017).

States' legal practices towards refugees around the world lack gender sensitivity, particularly those regarding gender-based persecution and violence, mostly because there is not a clearly defined gender sensitive regulation that helps preventing sexual assaults and domestic abuse against women, both refugees and natives (Gullu, 2019). Against this background lays an inexorable interconnectedness between women's empowerment and the development of migration, not only as a field of study or a discourse but also as a social and political phenomenon, for on the one hand, it is completely bizarre to fulfill women's rights in one country without calling for the simplest rights of that country's women migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. And, on the other, setting better migration policies to fulfill migrants' rights without having gender equality and women's empowerment at the very center of migration studies is far-fetched. In addition to the fact that gender completely defines who migrates and where to, it influences the networks through which people migrate, the

opportunities and resources available at destination countries (IOM, 2020). In short, the development of a state is directly proportional to whether women (both migrants and citizens) of that country are given their rights or not. There is no civilization where women are not equal (Hekmat, 2020).

In other words, gender-related persecution against women refugees/migrants in a country cannot be brought to an end if native women of the given country constantly face gender-based violence. Meanwhile, we cannot call for a required level of women's freedom in a country without also addressing the needs of its women refugees. (Wilson Center, 2016). Jordan, for instance, is a case in point to clarify my central argument. 10 years into the Syrian conflict, and although the estimated number of Syrian refugees in Jordan is around 1.3 million (ACAPS, 2020), the country officially hosts 658.756 registered Syrian refugees (UNHCR, 2020) the majority of whom are children and women who overnight found themselves the heads and main providers for their households (UNHCR, 2014).

Jordan's policies to achieve gender equality were evidently inefficient before the spark of the Arab Spring. Jordanian women struggle, on a daily basis, with discriminatory laws rooted in their country's different aspects of social, political and economic life, depriving them of their simplest rights of participation in public and political life (Wilson Center, 2016). For example, one in four Jordanian women has been exposed to some form of violence or domestic abuse by her father, brother, husband and/or cousin (Oweis, Gharaibeh and Alhourani, 2009). Another study indicated that the estimated prevalence of spousal violence against pregnant women during their pregnancy has reached approximately 40.6% in Jordan (Okour and Badarneh, 2011). In addition to being the county with the highest rate of femicides and honor crimes committed by male community members in the world which, ironically, such killings are approved by the Jordanian patriarchal society under the excuse of "breaching the common norms (Gausman et al., 2020), Jordan is reported to have witnessed 11.000 similar cases of domestic violence in 2019 (Bulos, 2020).

Meanwhile, the mass influx of Syrian refugees, crossing Jordan's borders has put more pressure, overwhelming the already-fragile Jordanian system (Wilson Center, 2016), and particularly exposing women refugees from across the

Middle East to sexual and gender-based violence and early marriage (Gausman et al., 2020).

By contrast, the presence of refugee women in the influx of refugees, following the Arab Spring, to Turkey is one of the best-case studies that can explain the nexus between gender and migration, and the impact of gender on migration as a field of study. With the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, many legal reforms were enacted by the Turkish state to strengthen gender equality in political and civil rights. Turkish women were legally entitled with the right to elect and be elected. Moreover, during the 1980s a strong feminist movement advocated women's civil rights in the country and raised awareness of gender-based persecution against women. Turkey was also the very first country to sign and ratify the Istanbul Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence and Domestic Violence against Women, which was accompanied with major legislative reforms to combat violence against women (UN Women, 2020), and regarded as a strongly effective international tool to fight for the rights of women refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers in Turkey. Hence, Turkey when compared to Jordan provides more opportunities or "pull" factors for women refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers.

The chapters of this thesis reflect upon the interrelation between women's empowerment and migration, yet, in my opinion, it is pointless for any research to address the overrated question of whether migration is/was ultimately good/beneficial or bad for women, as it brings us back to the early emigration-immigration dichotomy that was used, in the first place, to describe a one-way journey from home to a new foreign world where it is mythically thought to be better by all the means (Harzig and Hoerder, 2009). The question is simply similar to asking whether politics is ultimately good! It gives nothing but a little use, and hence, the answer depends on the case itself, its background, and circumstances. But at the same time focusing on the characteristics of Middle Eastern women's migration to Turkey and their wealth of experience during their journey can be enough to help us set a proper framework to make a progress towards more equitable social norms, and support women and men migrant equally, fulfilling their rights and providing their needs, as well as

improving national political systems, international relations, and foreign policies.

Although it remains under-researched, the phenomenon of feminization of migration has increasingly become the area of interest of many scholars during the past 60 years. However the narratives of women living in receiving countries in migration literature always lead to two contrasting conclusions, women migrants either get portrayed as victims of migration in patriarchal hosting societies, or migration dramatically changes women's life into an ultimately perfect life in matriarchal hosting societies, and this, I believe, subjugates women to a new form of sexism, because when we pick either of the two outcomes (as if we have no other choice,) we neglect the other side of the story overlooking the human face of their experience, and we only stick to one conclusion that fits our expectations from women during their displacement.

Albeit new emphasis was brought by dozens of recent studies that look at migration through gendered eyes, and great efforts were made to include women, these studies were often fragmented. But what truly leads to better outcomes is propagating more realistic women migrant role models, that face vast forms of challenges and opportunities at the same time, in fact, only then a well-researched migration study can successfully not only influence policymakers and public opinions towards better integration, but also women's decisions regarding migration.

1.7 Methodology

The chapters of this thesis will attempt to answer the following questions in the light of the phenomenon of feminization of migration using a qualitative method. Do women migrant really suffer twice only for being women? And are they more likely to get exploited, abused, and victimized more than men? Do they really get persecuted because of the infamous stereotypes that portray women as victims? Or do they get persecuted when they find themselves without the protection of their husbands, fathers, sons and brothers? How do they struggle on their own in their exile against the multiple forms of oppression? And does their gender really define their expectations and destinations? Does migration give better potentials for women in hosting

societies? Do they become freer during displacement because they manage to make their own decisions that used to be taken for them by their male relatives? Do women tend to be more productive in their exile? Do they find more time for their paid and unpaid work during their displacement? Does migration play a role in altering patriarchy?

Attempting to answer the questions put on the table, I have conducted an inclusive review of the conflicting literature written on the phenomenon, which can be divided into two sections, the first of which is pioneering works which did not specifically address feminization of international migration but rather addressed conceptual issues crucial to understand gender issues in different fields. The second is a review to the literature which came as a product of feminist writings that were integrated into migration research.

Being a Syrian migrant woman who lives in Turkey, is another factor that helped me conduct my research because I, personally, have encountered various challenges during my 10-year journey of migration which enriched the wealth of my displacement experience giving me the advantage of observing first-hand pieces of evidence with naked eyes, in addition to the fact that being a woman migrant have profoundly shaped my own identity and life options in different ways. The thesis also draws upon available UN and UNHCR-generated reports on female migrants, generally around the world, and specifically Arab women forcefully migrating to Turkey, as well as data from the World Bank Gender Data Portal and some other documents and life stories of female migrants.

1.8 The Interconnectedness between Gender and Forced Migration

Feminist scholars of forced migration argue that gender, sexual orientation, and asylum are interrelated. At first, feminist scholars sought at portraying women and girls as a victimized social group and documented their experiences of different forms of gender-based persecution and sexual violence as an inevitable outcome that accompanies forced migration (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2014).

Initially, analyzing individualized gendered experiences and forms of gendered-based violence and discrimination facing those fleeing conflicts, and putting their experience of forced displacement within a gendered context

resulted in research that managed to influence seismic changes in the way the international community perceives and responds to gender-based persecution against women starting from the 1990s onwards. That, particularly, followed the mass "rape warfare" (Allen, 1996) of women during the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Rwanda which resulted in the recognition of "rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity" as crimes against humanity by the international community (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2014).

1.9 Why Is It Important to Point out the Intersections of Gender and Migration?

One's gender defines the risks vulnerabilities, needs, roles expectations, power dynamics and relationships associated with being a woman which has a great impact on all aspects of the process of migration. Moreover, identifying the neglected gender-sensitive talks, both, in literature and policy making discourses as a barrier, seems to be the first step towards improving the situation of refugees around the world, as it can possibly develop gender-disaggregated data collecting tools and filling the gaps left by gender-blind refugee/migration policies.

In fact, migration scholars have concluded five characteristics that shape today's flows of migrants, which led experts to refer to the current era as "The Age of Migration": 1-globalization; as the scope of the inflows of migrants has been expanded to impact greater number of countries; 2- acceleration, a greater number of people migrate today; 3- differentiation, countries that were established on the idea of diverse ethnic groups and cultures placing larger number of refugees/migrants in a melting pot of integration with citizens; 4-politicization; international relations, states' foreign affairs, states' national security policies and bilateral agreements are all being reshaped as a result of concerns brought about by international migration (Piper, 2005); and finally 5)feminization, as gender ratios of women and men present in migratory flows and researches became more equivalent (Castles and Miller, 1998).

Migrant vs. Immigrant: although the term 'immigrant' is more common in Migration Studies, I, in this thesis, constantly used the term "migrant" to refer

to anyone who crossed the borders of her/his own nation, country, state and/or region, temporarily/permanently, attempting to reach her/his point of destination. And I adapted the term “refugee”, although Syrians are not legally refugees in Turkey, due to practical reasons, to refer to Syrians sought a refuge in Turkey after 2011. Additionally, in order to describe a similar particular situation of someone fleeing conflicts in the MENA region following the spark of the Arab Spring, I used the terms “migrant”, “asylum seeker” and “refugee” interchangeably.

Note that I use the term “gender and migration” or “women and migration” in an interlacing way based on the strong interrelation between gender and women in a feminist context as feminist scholars replaced the term “women” or “females” with the term “gender” because feminist scholars such as Judith Butler argue that gender is perceived in social sciences as a social construction rather than a biological sex, and thus a shift towards “gender” as a reaction to the 1980s critiques of the then existing way of perceiving gender as “a binary variable measuring sex category”, thus enabled the shift from “women” to “gender” and therefore a more inclusive umbrella term determined by the conception of tasks, functions and roles and not merely narrow-scoped.

2. IS THE FEMINIZATION OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION A CONTEMPORARY PHENOMENON?

2.1 Brief History of Migration from a Feminist Perspective:

It is, in need, a must to provide a proper insight into the history of women's migration in order to understand the seismic shifts of human migration in general, and women's migration in particular. In this chapter, I lay out the historical developments of the integration of feminism into the theory of international migration, and gender's contribution to the various dimensions of migration, highlighting the key intersections between feminism and migration and the impact of these intersections on the field of Migration Studies, insofar as finding out whether a feminist approach in policymaking in terms of migration, fills the gaps and leads to better integration.

This chapter argues that women have been always on the move, and that their migration had been substantial regardless of the traditional narratives of migration scholars, while there was never a sudden outstanding change in the numbers of migrant women, but rather most shifts in the patterns of their migration were directional throughout the years.

"Home", a term used in early migration studies that reflects belonging, pertinence, roots, and protection, while the term "foreign" carries feelings of unease and alienation. But, in some cases, or relatively many, home might not only be an uninteresting place, but it can also turn to a tumulus, an unfair, unsafe, and unjust place (Harzig and Hoerder, 2009), while anywhere else in the world seems to be the promised land of hope.

Human migration is an omnipresent concept that is misconstrued for being recent, as the movement of people for vastly different reasons has been a feature of the existence of humans since the prehistoric ages. Whether in search for a decent life or fleeing conflicts, seeking safe harbors from dictators and wars, escaping famines and poverty, fleeing from religious conflicts and natural

disasters, individually or in groups, humans have been constantly striving for better opportunities in better places, sometimes through the deadliest routs.

Although international migration systems have been characterized as predominately male by scholars (Petersen, 1969), Christiane Harzig and Dirk Hoerder pointed out, in their short introduction to the history of migration, "What is Migration History?" that the common understanding of a "migrant" back in the 19th and mid-20th centuries was a young male dreaming of better opportunities in the west, "Go West, young man!" Furthermore, gender and race were not a category within the field of study according to the book, "Women were hardly mentioned," and all migrants thought to be "white" (Harzig and Hoerder, 2009). This wrongful common belief "overshadowed migration streams that were actually dominated by females" (Houstoun et al., 1984).

Traditionally, "migrants and their families" was a phrase meant to describe male migrants and their wives and children, meaning that women in migration were only wives and daughters of men migrants (Boyd and Grieco, 2003). And despite their near-absence as immigrants from migration studies, women have been present, for centuries, in the global flows of migrants who moved during colonization, industrialization, and urbanization (Donato and Gabaccia, 2016), but only for the recent decades can we properly achieve better observation of the reality.

2.2 Where Do We Begin?

Historically, women have accounted for about half of worldwide migrant and currently exceeded that. Harzig and Hoerder indicated that early human migration could be divided into three major waves (Harzig and Hoerder, 2009), in which both women and men were significantly present. First of which was the African-Eurasian migration that was proved by human's DNA and could be traced to before 60.000 BP. The second wave was mainly northeastern Africa's Red Sea coastal and Nile Valley's people migration to the Arabian Peninsula (Petraglia and Rose, 2010). As a result of the drop in sea-levels during the "ice age" between 130.000 and 20.000 BP, the third wave of migration occurred in which people moved to today's Southeast Asian islands, reaching to New Guinea and Australia's island cluster (Harzig and Hoerder, 2009).

Hence, one of the underlying premises of this thesis is that migrants were never universally predominantly males. Although their numbers and proportion varied depending on their sending and destination countries, women were present in the early migration of nomads, they also took a pivotal role in pre-modern Homo sapiens' migration, as they generated cultural change when women carried their traditions, knowledge, and skills with them to their destination.

Women also took a role in the early infamous transatlantic slave trade that occurred among the African regions and the Americas between the 16th and 19th centuries, as these slave trades were heavily female who were demanded by slave sellers and purchasers for their productive and reproductive roles to strengthen lineage political and economic powers (Robertson and Klein, 1997, Gabbacia, 2016)

Below is Figure 2 displaying the share of female slave migrants within global forced migrant populations sold and purchased by Region 1532-1864 prepared by Katharine Donato and Donna Gabaccia based on the “List of voyages” Database Transatlantic Slave Trade.

Sending (Exporting) Regions in Africa		Receiving (Importing) Regions	
Senegambia/Offshore	35.60%	Europe	40.50%
Sierra Leone	33.50%	North America	30.70%
Windward Coast	36.70%	Caribbean	35.30%
Gold Coast	33.90%	Spanish North America	35.30%
Bight of Benin	37.60%	Brazil	33.80%
Bight of Biafra/Guinea Islands	41.60%	Africa	32.20%
West Central Africa/St. Helena	32.60%	Other	40.10%
Southeast Africa/Indian Ocean Islands	26.50%		

Figure 2.1: Proportion of women among migrants exported and imported by regions

Source: Donato and Gabaccia, 2016

Figure 2.1, and contrary to the traditional narrative, displays that early forced migration between Africa and the Americas, was not male-predominant as women and girls were forced to migrate for their reproductive capacity, as women made more than 40% of the imported migrant populations in some regions.

The gender composition of the 19th century global migrant populations, onwards, grew more balanced, as migrants were mostly settler colonizers at times when colonies were largely expanding; in fact women began to migrate more than men especially in the late 19th century.

The late 1920s, nevertheless, brought about a series of changes that led to the feminization of migration, as migratory flows became more heterogeneous and diversified, especially with the increasing number of restrictions on male-dominated labor migration imposed by national laws in a global attempt towards more gender-balanced migration, increasing the proportion of women and migrants' families to make the larger share of the global migrants' population (Donato and Gabaccia, 2016).

Numbers of women migrants, mainly heading towards developed countries exceeded those of men at a certain point, especially North America in which numbers of female migrants outnumbered male migrants since 1930 (UN DESA, 2019).

This complexity required new developments in the theories of migration, while, at the same time, feminist theories, were a great contributor to better inclusion of the complex various aspects of migration and to the bringing of women into the studies of migration, but this time as integral independent characters conceptualized at an individual-level, rather than being only "families of male migrants or breadwinners" who would, later, follow their husbands, fathers and brothers (Nawyn, 2010).

Therefore, migration studies increasingly turned to gender-balanced analysis and the non-existent of women's role in migration studies began to be pushed back with the international migration theory becoming more "gender-sensitive", paying more attention to the experiences of both women and men migrant equally. Moreover, women migrant's gender became more than a biological difference, and an individual-level binary category defined at birth, but rather, a complete "social construction" (Boyd and Grieco, 2003), altering the canon that defined the negative stereotype of women in which they are thought to be passive actors who do little contribution to migration, and in fact, women turned to be primary economic providers.

2.3 Incorporating Women and Gender into Migration in a Theoretical Framework

Without providing clear theoretical underpinnings, it is impossible to understand the motives behind which women decide to throw themselves, sometimes along with their children, into trafficking channels and deadly roads, because it becomes hard to take into account the circumstances that determine the drivers, patterns and directions of women's migration at regional and sub-regional levels, in fact, that helps us understand not only what happens to women when forced to migrate, but also why it happens in a gendered context (Yuval-Davis and Anthias, 1997).

By the mid-20th century, and in contrast to the common belief that migration is a phenomenon restricted to males, or what Mary Beard, the British classicist, defines it as the traditional 'masculine' definition of power and leadership, a turning point in the gender and migration studies took place with the biggest transformations toward more gender-balance studies as the available data showed that out of every 100 migrants worldwide 47 are females, a parity ratio that lasted between the 1960s and 1990s.

Against this background, feminist-inspired migration studies on migration, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, were not only focused on questioning the presumed passivity of women migrants, and highlighting the unique experiences of women at all stages of the process of migration which had been excluded from historical narratives for centuries, through participant observation, oral histories methods, personal narratives, and consciousness-raising, but they also developed a holistic scholarly literature that treated women as more than passive actors in migration who do the cooking, cleaning and caring, or what Bridget Anderson calls them "the three C's (Krause, 1978).

The second feminist wave that took place in the 1960s and 1970s (Humm, 1992) coincided with a group of young enthusiastic women willing to become professional academic historians. The "bottom-up" approach, was, then, emphasized for the first time by these feminist scholars who attempted to focus on the experiences or perspectives of people who had been historically neglected in different social fields, including immigrants and women (Sinke,

2006). At this point, women migrants' experiences were to be mentioned, if any, in conference panels or chapters on the family and households in major works on migration.

The early efforts present in the 1970s-1980s were a shy attempt towards a multidisciplinary or even interdisciplinary field of migration studies, yet it had little to no impact on major migration studies (Donato, et al., 2006). In "Women, Work and Family," for instance, Joan Scott and Louise Tilly focused for the first time, in 1978, on the experiences of women migrants who internally migrate from the countryside to more industrialized urban societies in the United States and Europe (Gabaccia and Smith, 1986).

Although, North America was the region from which the pioneering works on women's migration originated, such as Unequal Sisters, published in the 1990 and turned to be one of the most widely used textbooks among other works on women migrants in the United States, many other early historian scholars interested in women/gender studies like Scott and Tilly, along with their students, contributed with their works on women who migrated from Latin America and Asia (Zavella, 1987; 2011) to the new understanding in the field of Migration Studies, that women migrant's experiences were worthy of mentioning, as much as those of men's.

The late 1980s and early 1990s, witnessed an increasing autonomous migration of women, and gender balance characterized many migrations worldwide, as women became the main economic providers, and at this point, researches targeting women migrants became increasingly international (Phizacklea, 1983).

Thusly, the increasing interest in gender as a dilemma that represents power relationships and shapes every aspect of the migration experience as, Joan Scott describes it (Sinke, 2006), along with the emergence of a new generation of feminist scholars, that took place in the early and mid-1990s, coupled with the will of migration historians to apply a gender perspective to the study of past migrations contributing to fruitful theoretical approaches to gender and migration studies.

Hence, the development of cross-disciplinary empirical and theoretical debates on women or gender and migration processes required more inclusive research

on global scales; it is no longer bunch of exclusive studies limited to a case or two migrating to the United States, or North America, but ideally, analyses of women's migration on the different local, regional and global levels.

For many, the 1990s came out as a seismic shift towards more gender-focused studies of migration, by then, gender-related issues were underlined in the agenda of several individual countries, such as Canada (1993), the United States (1995) and Australia (1996), following the first Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women report published by the UNHCR in 1991.

The Age of Migration eclipsed the first reflection on the phenomenon of feminization of migration, which traces its roots, according to Castles and Miller, to the pivotal role played by labor women in Japan, Europe and the Middle East. The phenomenon, they argue, "raises new issues both for policymakers and those who study the migratory process" (Kofman, 2014).

At the turn of the new millennium, studies on gender and migration became to a certain degree self-consciously interdisciplinary, and it became present in the disciplines of geography, sociology, history, and political science.

At this point, the main aim of gender and migration studies was centered on the impact of gender on the process of migration, scholars sought to find out whether gender, as a system of power relationships, is reshaped or transformed during transnationalism (Pessar and Mahler, 2003). And the feminization of labor migration managed to be seen as a "fact" of the new millennium's global migration scene (Piper, 2003).

Hania Zlotnik, the UN Director of Population Division, said that statistics of the first two years of the millennium showed that female migrants have been migrating almost as much as males. In fact, women form the larger proportion of the migrant population in developed countries, according to her (Zlotnik, 2005).

In contrast to the traditional studies, of the late 20th century, that focused on addressing the impact of gender on the decision of migration, through the method of comparing experiences of women migrants to those of men, scholars developed a further method of comparison in the first decade of the 21st century,

among the various hierarchies of nationality, class, race, and ethnicity of women migrants.

Mahler exemplifies this with how women migrants from remote regions of El Salvador struggle harder than women migrants from urban areas to build and maintain transnational ties with the hosting society (Pessar and Mahler, 2001), and Mexican women, for instance, face tougher barriers while migrating to the United States with their children, yet, Polish women face much fewer barriers on their way to the United States along with their children.

I have to point out here that this does not mean that migration studies that only targeted male migrants or compared them to females (bivariate studies) were not valuable, as they represented, indeed, the first phase of the evolution of gender and migration theories; however, they are considered to be too limited to explain the reality of the situation of women migrants in today's world.

Also, gender analysis is no longer focused on studying families or households, but by then, the whole migration process became a gendered phenomenon; lives of women were undertaken, by migration scholars, across a wide variety of spatial scales, in the politics, welfare state policies, the governance of migration, in Marxism and Capitalism (Boyd and Grieco, 2003).

So far, most non-feminist migration scholars failed to consider social inequalities that female migrants face during their journey of displacement whereas, feminist scholars were capable of questioning masculinity and its privilege in migration research. Thus, successfully integrated critical social theory into the study of migration (Silvey, 2004), which contributed to bringing gender as a system of power relations, rather than an individual characteristic, within the process of migration under the spotlight.

In conclusion, attempting to fill the voids that were a result of years of migration studies exclusively focusing on male migrants, feminist scholars of women and migration developed throughout the years a more inclusive studies that evolved through several various stages of history, by arguing that the feminization of migration is an important facet of analyzing migration, thus, it is crucially important to adopt the idea that women and gender studies do affect

migration flows and shape the economic experiences of all migrants makinng feminist migration research critical to the larger field.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Feminization of migration

In pursuing answers to whether the flows of Middle Eastern women to Turkey represent an increment in the feminization of international migration, defining the ambiguous term is necessary in providing a more concrete understanding of the concept and seems to be, the first step towards providing answers. This section of the thesis tends to provide an overview of the existing literature written on the phenomenon.

Women migrants' independent experiences as active actors with socio-economic contributions were not recognized for ages, while males were ironically portrayed as the protagonists of any movement of populations until recently (Piper, 2005).

In *The Age of Migration*, Stephen Castles and Mark Miller were the first to define the feminization of migration as a global pattern (Castles and Miller, 2003). Although the phenomenon is declared to be a core dimension of the new age of migration (Donato and Gabaccia, 2016), a fragmented vast body of literature was written on feminization of migration. Yet a clear definition of the term was never specifically provided (Vause and Toma, 2015). Instead, it was, sometimes, outlined as a contemporary phenomenon, that emerged as a result of either a notable increase in the percentage of females migrating on their own (Castles and Miller, 1998; Boyd, 2006) based on the assumption that the proportion of international women migrants has been on the rise since 1960s (Zlotnik, 2005); and/or the increasing mobility of women for economic purposes (Piper, 2005; Verschuur, 2013).

By contrast, many works targeting the female face of migration argued that feminization of migration is neither contemporary nor a universal general phenomenon (Indra, 1987; Gabaccia, 1996; Donato et al., 2006, 2011; Schorver, 2013), because when displaying it as "universal male paradigm" women

migrants/refugees' experiences of persecution are overlooked (Greatbatch, 1989). Schrover argues, for instance, in her Feminization and Problematization of Migration, that women and men's migrations were already distinct before the 1970s, as authorities, in the mid-18th and early 19th centuries, restricted the mobility of women and in some cases, such as that of Spain, the movement of single females was forbidden by the Spanish state and church as women's rights of obtaining passports were denied, thus their movement (when unaccompanied by men) was restricted (Schrover, 2013).

Furthermore, Schrover's work was among other scholarly written research in which women, were argued, to have been always present in migratory flows and sometimes by a greater proportion than men, as they already made up approximately 47% of all international migrants before 1960 (INSTRAW, 2007). In the same article, Schrover pointed out that if the term feminization of migration accurately describes women's proportion equaling or exceeding that of men in migration streams, then the interwar period is the era of feminization of migration (Schrover, 2013). Now the reason behind her argument is the balanced gender ratios of migrants, before the Second World War, in most European countries. In which the economic depression of the 1930's triggered states' restrictions on men's migration but not on women.

Another good example to clarify Schrover's argument is North America, as the presence of female migrants has preceded that of males in migratory flows since 1930 (World Migrant Stock, 2005). The only difference is that women's participation in international migration flows was not been backed by data back then, and, in all likelihood, gender-sensitive data collection tools are still not the best nowadays.

- The conflicting literature written on the feminization of migration mostly neglects three points; the first of which is, that an increasing share of women crossing borders autonomously does not necessarily mean "an absolute increase" in the number of women migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers (Vause and Toma, 2015).
- Secondly, these works only feminize international migration when women migrate autonomously on their own, and not as wives, sisters,

and daughters to join their husbands abroad. What seems to be critical here is that females still go through different steps of the process of migration, they make the decision of "following their husbands", sometimes through desperate journeys across oceans, they face social and political constraints, and mostly enter labor market at destination (Oso Casas, 2004; Vause and Toma, 2015) and work across different economic sectors and hold various forms of migrants' statuses as permanent or guest workers, precarious and undocumented workers exploited under harsh conditions.

- Thirdly, migration is often driven by economic factors and it takes place in search for better economic opportunities, but people also move forcefully to escape political upheavals (Mehdi, 2004). This, in fact, explains why feminization of migration is often mistaken for feminization of labor.

Gender and migration scholarship has been focusing on feminization of migration in the global context; the overwhelming majority of it, however, is based on a single narrative to define what feminization is. The traditional narratives of Neoclassical, modernization theorists and structuralists were mainly concerned with purely economic push and pull factors (Brettell, 2008), and explained women's migration on the ground of economic comparisons of costs and benefits (De Haas, 2010). Traditional approaches, however, did not account for gender as a determinant of international migration.

In fact, the traditional narrative usually assumes that women did not migrate as much as men in the past; usually followed by an argument on a significant increase in the number of women migrating on their own, for long distances, occurring in the late 20th century, and a balanced gender composition of migratory flows in the 2000s-2010s. These are mostly the main ideas on which the traditional narrative is based, in order to prove that international migration is feminized. The narrative, then, moves to the increasing demand for migrant women's labor in the different sectors of domestic care and manufacturing in destination countries to give grounds for the "contemporary phenomenon" as they put it. Most of these studies were based on certain case studies of Asian

women migrants seeking better economic opportunities at destination countries (Oso Casas and Garson, 2005; Vause and Toma, 2015).

The literature based on this narrative perceives females' migration as a purely economic phenomenon in which women migrate from developing to developed countries for economic reasons such as interregional wage differentials (higher-wage regions attract more migrants), unemployment rates, land rents (Brettell, 2006; De Haas, 2010)

However, the traditional narrative was, to some extent, crucial when attempting to call the attention to women's presence in migratory movements back in the late 20th century and at the turn of 21st century. Yet, it seems to be quite outdated now, because the economic crisis in the 1970s required an economic analysis of international migration through gendered lens; this also resulted in a capitalist or a structuralist integration of women migrants into migration studies Karakilic, Korukmez and Soykan, 2019). It is noteworthy that Donato, Gabaccia, Holdaway, Manalansan and Pessar revolutionized the traditional narrative for the first time in 2006, and critically proved, by contrast to the traditional approach, that women, throughout the history, migrated as much as men

As mentioned above, academic literature on gender represented, for a long time, a neglected area in migration studies. Yet, literature produced from the 1980s onwards have made real changes in the role of gender/women across different sectors of social sciences, through focusing on certain geographic contexts limiting their scope to government-generated data in destination countries. Now regardless of gaps founded in early gender and migration studies, these studies managed to successfully call the attention to women and increased visibility of the role of women, and the issue of gender relations (Cortes, 2016).

Each study has contributed to a better understanding of international females' migration, each research was an improvement by all the means especially by calling attention to unique circumstances that women confront during displacement, at least by helping right the wrongs within old works associated with women's exclusion, focusing solely on men and generalizing their findings on all migrants, regardless of their gender (Lutz, 2010).

This chapter goes in two sections; the point of departure is a review of the pioneering works (not necessarily aiming to feminize migration) that addressed conceptual issues contributing to the understanding of gender issues. The second section reviews literature that is a result of feminist writings that were integrated into migration research and became the key to understand feminization of asylum today.

Among the pioneering works that marked an important shift in clarifying the position of women and in rectifying the omission of their role, is Ester Boserup's well-known Woman Role in Economic Development. The book argues that economic development has a negative impact on women, disadvantages them and reduces their socio-economic cultural status when compared to that of men. The Danish economist's book also reflects and challenges a dominant paradigm that women did not play a role in national and international economic development.

Boserup's ideas on gender and development made a benchmark in research and practice in the 1960s and early 1970s, which made her book a key reference in any gender study, of a particular note, for advocating gender equality and thus, inspiring a better inclusion of women/gender in different aspects not only theoretically or conceptually but also in the process of policy making in the fields of economies, politics as well as international migration.

Initially, the author argued that the emergence of capitalism within the developing countries did not equally benefit women and men. Instead, it accompanied inequalities, in addition to deepening the omission of women's contribution to the process of development. Now although the aim of the book was to highlight how "development policies and processes from colonial times onwards had been biased" against women, Boserup's cogent argument became a momentum for the attention to women on a boarder scale and resulted in a wide range of activities under the name of Women in Development (WID). The book also inspired an era of research and enquiry on gender issues.

Aimed at addressing the economic exclusion of women, the WID placed women at the heart of statistical data collection, several international agreements, and many conferences, hence, increasing their visibility in literature. The WID accompanied efforts of feminists that were focused on

analyzing women's role in the different aspects of societies, which reflected on how women were discriminated at different levels of the development process in the 1960s and 1970s.

In all likelihood, the strength of Boserup's text lies in her methodology, she provided data and hard evidence of women's contributions to development (Boserup, 2007), thus influenced their inclusion in the literature, including that written on migration.

The interesting fact about Boserup's book is that she did not, initially, conceptualize the complex processes of economic development, in Africa, Asia and Latin America, from a feminist perspective. But by providing a strong analysis of gender roles, order, and arrangement the book turned into a pioneer documentation of the unfair impact of capitalism and, the consequences of globalization on women.

What matters to be placed within the scope of this thesis, is that Boserup, and through her comparative study, took a major step towards the inclusion of women, who were not only excluded from migration studies, but from the field of International Relations as a whole, within which different perspectives encompass various issues, yet women were still invisible from international relations and regarded as insignificant actors in global politics (Halliday, 1994; DeLaet, 1999).

Moreover, Boserup was capable of addressing the often-overlooked role of women, or in other words "the invisibility of women," who were not invisible because they did not play crucial roles in the different fields of human livelihoods, as shown in the previous chapter, but because social research and studies were not feminized yet. She critically discovered a gender gap that we, 50 years later, are still fighting against.

Most importantly, Boserup's argument about the invisibility of women's contributions to rural life inspired subsequent debates on Women and Gender in Development (although she did not use the term "gender" back then), in which she, initially integrated the idea of gender to the different aspects of welfare state policies, especially towards migrants, as well as the global migration and even the capitalist system.

By the late 1980s and 1990s women became the subject of new migratory models that started to take place in gender studies (Pedraza, 1991; Zlotnik, 1993), and even were referred to as active drivers of development (Verschuur and Reysoo, 2005). Yet, women's migration was still interpreted based on economic grounds, in which economy and labor market formed the "bond" between women and migration back then, intensively shedding light on the rising number of women migrating independently to work in different economic sectors (Morokvasic, 1984; Gabaccia et al., 2006). Against this background, and challenging the traditional model, women started to be portrayed as the "new protagonists" of migratory processes in which they were mentioned as the head of their households whether remotely or when followed by their husbands, children and families (Vause, 2009; Razy and Baby Collin, 2011) as cited by (Cortes, 2016).

The overwhelming majority of works focused solely on migrants and neglected "those who stay" and sometimes did not take account for those who migrate later to join their relatives (were mostly women back then).

Later on, a new generation of gender-focused scholarship was born as a result of providing critiques of the early literature written on gender and migration. The new generation looked at different case studies, rather than government-generated data, through gendered lenses (Grasmuck and Pessar, 1991; Wolf, 1992; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Mahler, 1994). And at the turn of the new millennium, the feminization of migration became a "well-established fact" (Castles and Miller, 1998; Piper, 2003). Gender now became crucial in interpreting the phenomenon of international migration, not as a sole aspect in research on people's movement like economy, but rather a "central organizing principle" in analyzing international migratory flows and migrants' lives (Uzun, 2017).

The following phase was referred to by scholars as the "add women and stir", in which women were inserted "added" as a "variable" to understand migration. The approach examined the characteristics of women migrants were analyzed on economic grounds. Gender studies in the field of migration mainly (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2000, 2003; Kofman et al, 2000) were mostly based on statistical comparisons between women migrants and their male counterparts, using a

“binary variable of male versus female” to analyze the ratios of women and men migrants (Nawyn, 2010) based on which insights on gender and migration were formed.

At this point, however, the gap that was supposed to be filled in the existing literature was the methodology of measuring to which degree international migration is feminized. Some scholars considered women migrants travelling autonomously as the indicator that determines the feminization of migration (Oishi 2002, 2005; Piper 2010). These studies mostly focused on the global restructuring as the reason behind women’s migration from developing countries to rich countries. However, the strength of these scholarships seems to lie in their fragility. Because when comparing them to former studies limited to certain geographic areas, these studies covered a wider scope of ground, many gender studies scholars, like Oishi, for instance, attempted to treat so many materials with too little details. In other words, revolutionizing the traditional method of interpreting the female face of migration by widening the geographical scope of international females’ migration overcame the old school’s gaps, but left further questionings of the evidence provided for the conclusions.

In her Women in Motion, Oishi indicates that a combination of globalization, state policies and individuals’ autonomy have the biggest impact on females’ decision to migrate. In other words, women’s access to power, structural elements and cultural norms explains the variety in the rates of women migrants, in what Oishi calls an “integrative approach.”

“Men emigrated,” she stated “from almost all developing countries across the region, yet, most migrant women tended to originate in only few countries: the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Indonesia,” and the common drivers behind these women’s migration was unemployment, poverty and low wages (Oishi, 2005).

3.2 Feminization of Asylum, When Uncertainty Becomes the Norm

Throughout the years, literature has long feminized migration in many ways, and looked at the process through gendered lenses. When we search, however, for forced migration literature, only few discussions in this regard are found.

Needless to say, many studies perceived international female migration as a non-economic phenomenon. Such scholarships focused on other drivers behind women's migration such as political instability and systematic violence against human rights (Indra 1987; Coven, 1995; Boyd, 1999) as cited by (Nawyn, 2010).

The aim of this section of the thesis is to seek elaboration to the misconstrued understanding of the feminization of asylum, by focusing on the existing literature on gender and asylum. This section sheds special light on the situation of female migrants and refugees in Turkey, within the context of the literature that targets the female face of international migration. Particularly, it rectifies the unjustified common belief that women's migration must be solely advocated on economic bases, and rather calls for more attention to the understanding of women's empowerment and opening eyes to their sufferings not only by focusing on general structural obstacles on the macro level, but also taking individual experiences into consideration.

In long-term displacements, Bailey et al. argue that refugees and asylum seekers are stuck in a status of "permanent temporariness", in which they are only given the right to live (Hyndman and Glies, 2011; Karakilic, Korukmez, Soykan, 2019). Of a particular note, those who stay in transit countries or "waiting rooms", such as Turkey.

From 1970s onwards women refugees stood out of the shadow in research on international migration, yet, these researches limited women refugee's issues to traditional ones such as childcare and health, whereas gender roles and its impact on the displacement journey were still overlooked (Indra, 1989).

In this regard, it is required to find a clear distinction, between people on the move for economic reasons, and people stuck in limbo because they are simply forced to (Karakilic, Korukmez, Soykan, 2019). This explains the UNHCR's definition of a refugee as someone who is in a "long lasting state of limbo" that can last for years as long as the instability in their country of origin is ongoing (Karakilic, Korukmez and Soykan, 2019).

Gender: A Key Dimension of the Refugee Experience is one of the early pioneering scholarships that focused on gender in asylum and refugee studies.

In her work, Indra indicated: while refugees receive the biggest share of attention, the world has failed women refugees repeatedly; this, specifically, appears beginning with the international definition of a refugee; as shown above, under the Geneva Convention. In which nationality, race and religion convictions are among the oppressions that recall considering someone a refugee, whereas sex and gender oppressions were completely neglected (Indra, 1987).

Indra goes further and exemplifies her point with a man fleeing persecution for maintaining a minority religion in Iran and considered as a legal refugee for fitting the definition, while, at the same time, a woman who deviated from misogynous sexual mores and appropriate gender roles, cannot be considered as a refugee for not fitting the definition. Perhaps Indra's example here omits that these biases and divisions are not only limited to women vs. men but also women vs. women. For example, on 11th January 2019, Rahaf Mohammed, a Saudi teenager was granted refugee status by the UNHCR for being persecuted and abused by her family for renouncing Islam. Whereas many Syrian women and children were systematically raped in the Ba'ath regime's detention centers according to testimonies broadcasted by "France 2" as cited by YeniŞafak (2017), yet they still go through fatal journeys seeking a refuge, and when/if they reach it they find themselves stuck in a status of limbo in Turkey, especially those in camps in which their lives might not be in a great danger but they are stuck in a an arduous endless dilemma that limits their access to labor market and thus make them dependent on external aid that is not necessarily stably provided. That also restricts their access to essential needs and fundamental rights and restricts their freedom of movement and locks them in camps (Karakilic, Korukmez and Soykan, 2019). Another example that is in point to clarify Indra's point is, that scholars have long showed that when it comes to gender-related persecution authorities mostly fail to consider women as political activists as they are assumed to be less qualified to be granted refugee status (Crawley 1997; Spijkerboer 1994; Freedman 2015) as cited by (Coskun and Eski, 2020)

Furthermore, women's access to/integration into labor market is not necessarily a sign of gender equality and of women's enjoyment of their full rights, both at

home and in countries of destination. Syria for example, is, again, a case in point to clarify this as Nour Abu-Assab has indicated in her contribution to a book entitled: *A Gendered Approach to the Syrian Refugee Crisis,* in which she discussed that the Syrian regime on the one hand encourages women's participation in the different aspects of public life and on the other sidelines and marginalizes Sunni women (Abu Assab in Freedman, Kivilcim and Baklacioglu, 2017). In other words, the Ba'ath regime pushes against gender inequalities and secures job opportunities for females as teachers or nurses in governmental institutions, for instance, yet those opportunities were often limited to Alawite women, which created a status of division among women in Syria. According to Abu-Assab, state feminism has already existed in pre-war Syria, the regime, however, seeks to eliminate gender inequalities on the one hand, and commits massacres and atrocities to cover up other types of discriminations including the Alawi-Sunni division, on the other. In conclusion, although gender and migration scholarship have reflected the impact of women migrants' economic integration on their status during displacement, analyzing women's migration on economic grounds is never enough to fight against gender inequalities, binaries, molds and stereotypes that strengthen the societal ideas and actions against women refugees and migrants. Instead, economic factors must be, purely, perceived as macro-structures in a system of gender relations in which migrants interact with each other and, with other different macro-structures such as personal skills and levels of education (GAR, 2020).

Qualitative data drawn from refugee camps of Yayladagi, Nizip Islahiye, Oncupinar and Elbeyli evidenced that measuring physical violence against women in refugee camps is farfetched as women would testify for other women's rape incidents and prefer to deny going through the experience themselves for being unaware of the solutions (Barin, 2015) as cited by (Karakilic, Korukmez and Soykan, 2019).

One can go even further. Both Syrian women and men, seeking asylum in Turkey, do not fit the definition of the convention and they still do not enjoy full rights granted to international refugees under the Geneva Convention.

3.3 Challenges and Issues Facing Feminization of Migration/Asylum Research

50 years after the first "spark" of the inclusion of women, most of the research on gender and migration focuses on women as active agents in international migration on economic grounds which does not fully account for the multidimensionality of women's migration. International migration became feminized and women became the protagonists of the publications on gender and migration either when women were thought to be migrating on their own in larger numbers relative to men, or when found to have better access to labor market in the country of destination, or in some cases when women send their families at home more remittances than men. This, however, contributed to placing women migrants and refugees amid a dilemma of two counterfactual extremes. Beautiful Victims and Sacrificing Heroines, for instance, is in point to clarify this perfectly. Helen Schwenken argues that the perceptions on women migrants display women as either a "sacrificing heroine" or a "beautiful victim" and there is no in-between. The former is a woman who transmits more money and social and monetary remittances in relative to her male counterpart. And the latter is a woman who is trafficked in sex work/prostitution. Ironically enough, these narratives stereotype women as victims manipulated and exploited by men which leads to a distortion of the real image of migration and, in fact, deprives women of agency in their displacement (Shwenken, 2008).

Over and above that, the major problem that faces scholarships on gender and migration is the limited reliable data available on women (Zlotnik 1993, 1995; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2003). This comes as a result of the lack of a proper gender-sensitive system that registers migrants (legal and illegal), refugees and asylum seekers on a continuous basis. Also, government-generated data on migrants' flows and refugees' influxes which are often collected in countries of origin does not necessarily provide reliable information on international migration. Such data, often, show gender composition or sex ratios of migrants' flows, but it does not necessarily reflect the socio-demographic situation of migrants/refugees/asylum seekers residing in destination country (Vause, 2009) as cited by (Cortes, 2016).

The available data does not provide information on what sort of journeys women migrants/refugees take or, for instance, whether they seek shorter routes

compared to those taken by men. Schrover provided an example of gender-blind data collecting methods, in which a European man migrates to the U.S, returning to his country after a while, getting married and returning back to the U.S along with his wife. In this case, Schrover points out that the man was mentioned twice in the data, while his wife appeared once as a female. In this case, imprecise statistics contribute to iniquitous studies.

Thusly, feminization of migration should not be about sex ratios or gender composition of migrants' flows. Because in *The Age of Migration* Castles and Miller brought up the term "feminization of migration" as a result of analyzing gender composition of migratory flows to the U.S which is according to them a useful "paradigmatic example" of an immigrant's country, this however does not accurately reflect the gendered variations in migration flows across regions, as some countries are major hubs of gender-specific migration, which has not changed in the past decades.

Additionally, studies that limit their concentration to shifts in gender rations and are based on data generated in destination countries, neglect illegal migrants as well as women migrants who make up 30 or 40 per cent of the total number of refugees in other parts of the world, which means, in this regard, that gender-blind policies do not affect women unless they make up the major category of migrants.

Over and above that, most gender and migration scholars fall in the "Cherry Picking" trap when aiming at proving the contemporaneousness of feminization of migration, as they perceive the increasing rate of women migrating on their own, as an indicator of the feminization of migration. The overwhelming majority of the literature written on gender and migration provides examples of countries in which women make up the majority of the migrants. By contrast, available data collected in different countries show that, in some cases, men constitute the majority of migrants' influxes. Schrover cited cases such as migrations to Saudi Arabia and Bangladesh as well as Nepal which were male predominant (Schrover, 2013), whereas the Philippines is a major sending country of women migrants. Additionally, geographical mobility does not necessarily mean a decision taken autonomously by a woman even if she is migrating on her own, Castellanos, for example, says that the decision to

migrate is in many cases a family decision that intends to increase the income (Castellanos, 2005 as cited by Marinucci, 2007).

While on the other side of the coin, women do not need to be the migrants themselves to drag attention to the female face of migration. Mostly because even when women are left behind as their spouses migrate, gender roles change at home and gender equality is achieved better, especially when women become heads of their households and the decision makers as they gain greater control and authority at home (Fleury, 2016).

Moreover, women travel to take advantage of the opportunities of work, but they also travel as spouses, students and as victims of various forms of abuse. Accordingly, scholarships on gender and migration are divided into four distinguished school of thoughts. The first of which, looks at women migrants and refugees as "families" and accompaniers limiting their migration to reunification purposes. The second solely justifies women's migration on economic grounds through the different aspects of classic economic theory and neglects women's forced migration (Vause, 2009). The third does take the different statuses of women migrants into consideration, including those who were forced to migrate but places their experiences within the frame of new economic theories and focuses on gender segregation of migrants within the economic sector. Or/and limits its scope to women who are victims of gender-based violence. Finally, the fourth solely focuses on women who migrate alone and neglects those who are left behind, thus literature on women who stay is relatively scarce.

In fact, no matter how further attention gender receives in literature it is never commensurate. Namely, the early efforts of gender and migration scholars had improved women's conditions and facilitated their access to services and resources. Yet, these works did not manage to change the structure of inequalities in gender relations and roles. While feminist scholars were aiming at explaining the meaning of gender that simply displays the different masculine and feminine behaviors, they encountered resistance and, even, hostility (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Cranford, 2006; 2018). As Goetz stated it, Boserup's WID had managed to bring women into projects and provided them with resources, but it had not influenced women's social and economic power

relative to men's (Gotez, 1997). And while feminist scholars were aiming at empowering women, new challenges and obstacles came up, this time not only to women but also to men.

The critical point, however, is that the majority of the literature written on gender and migration display men as offenders and women as victims, which is on the first hand unfair to men as it generalize cases on no justified means. And on the second, it treats women as special cases, which also contributes to deepening their sufferings, and thus, imposing worse restriction on women in the name of "protecting" them. This dilemma can be mostly seen in the literature written on female refugees/migrants in Turkey, of a particular note, that targeting Syrians. Today, women stay in Turkey holding different forms of statuses; many are refugees living under the 'temporary protection', illegal, undocumented or asylum seekers, they often encounter trafficking or different forms of exploitations, but they are also spouses of Turkish citizens and/or workers, residence permits, tourist visas and business visas holders.

4. WOMEN AND FORCED MIGRATION TO TURKEY

Worldwide women refugees, migrants and asylum seekers, have been present in Turkey since the late 1980s, it is estimated that women, today, make up the majority of migrants in Turkey, as 53% of all migrants in Turkey are females according to the IOM. Moreover, women, like it is the case worldwide, have been always present in migration flows into Turkey (Williams, Coskun and Kaska, 2020).

Most of the earlier research targeting women migrants/refugees residing in Turkey were focused on females' migration from former Soviet Union or Eastern Europe and were solely concerned with their working conditions and economic barriers. In the 2000s, however, the Turkish forced migration literature limited its scope to Iranians, Afghanis, and Iraqis. And with the arrival of Syrian refugees to Turkey, the majority of gender studies in the Turkish literature are primarily focused on single case studies within a single province in which women live under certain conditions.

Afghan female refugees, for instance, have been living as International Protection applicants in the country and makeup 20% of 172.000 Afghan refugees (Hekmat, 2020) who fled their country following the NATO's Operation Mountain Thrust led by the United States in Afghanistan in 2006, which caused the largest wave of violence taking place in the country displacing millions of Afghans, hundreds of thousands of whom constituting the second largest population of refugees and asylum seekers after Syrians (MMC, 2020).

Although Turkey has been characterized by being a country of immigration, the country has experienced other different mass migrations during the past century, when 50,000 Greek Muslims were expelled to Turkey following the 1923 population exchange agreement with Greece and 340,000 ethnic Turks sent by Bulgaria back in 1989 as a result of political pressure that took place in Bulgaria (Toksoz& Ulutas, 2012). Likewise, the Balkans, the Caucasus and

Central Asia were the main senders of a 1.4 million refugees to Turkey in the 1990's (Icduygu, 2015).

But a critical turning point in the history of the country was marked following the Arab Spring making Turkey the country hosting, the world's largest number of refugees for the seventh year in a row (ILO, 2020), and the largest community of displaced Syrians (Col et al., 2020), which make 63.4% of all Syrian refugees in the world (UNHCR, 2020), as "the number of people forcibly displaced across the world due to conflict, violence and persecution hit record levels" (UNHCR, 2020). According to the latest figures published, in 2020, by the Turkish Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM), Turkey hosts more than 4.6 million foreign nationals within its territory, among whom 3.591.892 are Syrians granted temporary protection status. The majority of Syrian refugees reside outside camps, particularly spread across various neighboring cities and metropolises, and other 62,653 live in seven Temporary Accommodation Centers (TACs). In addition, to 56.417 foreign national beneficiaries of protection seeking international protection in the country located nearby the Syrian border.

Large numbers of regular and irregular migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, mainly from torn-war countries in the regions of the Middle East, Afghanistan, The Islamic Republic of Iran (following the Islamic revolution), Somalia and beyond, have been increasingly on the move to Turkey. The IOM's latest reports show that Iraqis, Syrians, Egyptians, and Libyans constitute the largest groups of residence permit holders in Turkey in 2020 (IOM, 2020).

As for irregular migration, traditionally, the origin countries of irregular migrants in Turkey were mainly the former Soviet Union republics/Eastern Bloc countries including Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Russia, Georgia, Ukraine, Armenia, Bulgaria, Romania, and Moldova (Toksoz and Ulutas, 2012), as Turkey extended asylum to include individuals fleeing communist persecution in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union during the Cold War (Kiricsi, 1996). This however changed throughout the years as by 2019, there were 454.662 irregular migrants of different nationalities in Turkey, most of whom entered Turkish territory through Iraq and Syria's borders, resided in/transited through Turkey hoping to cross the Aegean Sea to Europe. While

another 62.368, irregular migrants and 1.649 migrant smugglers have been apprehended in 2020 within the Turkish territory (IOM, 2020).

At the heart of the chaos women are forcibly displaced from their homes in the Middle East, with a high-record number of women migrating on their own, and in some cases not only fleeing civil unrests but gender-related persecution both in private and public spheres, furthermore, their gender became the main driver behind their migration, the Association of Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights reported, in a statement submitted to the OHCHR, that gender discrimination and bias against different "categories of women" in the Middle East, such as widows and single mothers form an important "driving force to immigration" (OHCHR, 2019). Thus, gender was their motive to migrate and influenced their reasons for migration and where to.

And since I have laid out in the previous chapters the importance of gender in migration studies, in addition to the significant numbers of women present in all flows of migrants to Turkey, particularly the recent Syrian refugee crisis, which re-dragged the world's attention to the struggle of women refugees in general and Syrian migrant women, in particular, who made, according to a report issued by the UNHCR in 2019, half of the Syrian refugees residing in Turkey; I will be focusing in this chapter on the case of Middle Eastern women migrant residing in Turkey in order to clarify the nexus between gender and migration in an academic context, far from perceiving women as economic actors.

4.1 Turkey: from a Country of Emigration to a Country of Migration

For long decades Turkey has, traditionally, been a country of emigration (a migrant-sending country); it would send large numbers of nationals seeking better economic opportunities, particularly in Western European countries, in which Turkish nationals constituted the largest non-EEC (European Economic Community) immigrant population in Western Europe (LOC, 2016), especially in the light of the series of bilateral agreements signed, in October 1961, between Turkey and West Germany, followed by bilateral pacts with Austria (1964), France (1966), Sweden (1967) and Australia (1967), facilitating the road for massive numbers of Turkish labor-emigrants, under the term "guest workers" attempting to cover the labor shortage in Western European

countries and to boost both the West German and Turkish economies (Sirkeci, 2002). This however, became a large settlement of Turkish nationals in West Germany, who later on, were joined by their families (Toksoz and Ulutas, 2012).

The 1973 economic recession that hit Western Europe ended the recruitment of Turkish labor migrants and limited the flow of Turkish labor migrants to Europe yet coincided with the rise of the Middle East as an economic powerhouse which shifted the direction of Turkish migrant workers and attracted significant numbers of them to many Middle Eastern oil-rich countries such as Libya, Saudi Arabia and Iraq (Seccombe and Lawless, 1986), yet, it rarely involved entire families and reunifications.

The long-term conflicts that have been ongoing in the Middle East, and particularly, Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait starting the First Gulf war in August 1990, reduced the Turkish migration to the Middle East. These conflicts also made momentous changes in the region's migration patterns and structures, turning the Middle East into a major scene of forced migration and dispossession as the phenomenon of mass displacement has become one of the defining characteristics of the Middle East (Yenilmez, 2017).

These violent mass forced migrations have had the greatest impact on the region's demographic and socioeconomic trends worldwide, constantly changing the points of origin, transit and destination over the course of time. Neighboring two of the most conflicting countries in the Middle East, Turkey slowly became a country of destination for many seeking refuges from wars taking place in Syria and Iraq, as well as former Soviet Bloc states. Turkey, also, transformed into a country of transit to the EU member countries, mostly for irregular migrants fleeing turmoil and wars in Asia, especially Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and Bangladesh (Kirisci¸ 2007).

The Republic of Turkey was established as a homogenous state centered on the notion of nationalism and Turkish identity, the founders of the republic aimed at conserving its monolith ideal Turkishness (Aunina, 2018) and restricted the country's migration policies to persons who are willing to claim "Turkish descent and Culture," or to ethnic Turks (Alakel, 2013), from the Balkans and Central Asia (non-Turkish, predominately, Muslims who are open to

assimilation into Turkish society) (Makovsky, 2019). Yet, the structural reforms aimed at an outward-oriented growth, radically, changed Turkey's former policies, opening the country to liberal economic policies in the 1980s (Sahin, 2020) which achieved, to some extent, a balanced equation between freedom of migrants' movement and security concerns (Hekmat, 2020) and ended the cliché of Turkey being a migrant-sending or labor-exporting country.

4.2 Turkey Stepping Towards Better Integration

It is argued that Turkish refugee policy is rooted in two major sources, firstly, the initial law regarding immigration in Turkey, Law No. 2510 on Settlement which was adopted back in 1934 allowing, in theory, individuals of only "Turkish descent and culture," to seek asylum or acquire refugee status and to settle in Turkey. In practice, however, Turks from the Balkans, such as Albanians, Bosnians, Pomaks, Tatars and Circassians were the majority of individuals granted with refugee status in the country (Kirisci, 2001).

Secondly, Turkey's role in drafting the 1951 Geneva Convention, which was implemented by Turkish authorities with, limited state's obligations to refugees fleeing unrests in Europe (LOC, 2016), and the 1994 Regulation on Asylum, comes as the last legal source for the Turkish refugee policies, which was centered on the Turkish government's recognition of non-European refugees and asylum seekers (Refworld, 1994). This section of the thesis shows the transformation of the Turkish asylum and immigration policies throughout the past three decades, especially with the increasing instability in Middle East that led to massive influx of refugees and asylum seekers from Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria requiring further reforms in the country's national asylum system. It, furthermore, explores Turkey's response to refugees and asylum seekers in 2011 which contrasts, to some extent, with the early approach of the Republic of Turkey since its establishment.

4.3 The Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees:

- The Geneva Convention defines the term “Refugee” in Section A and Paragraph 1 as the following: for the purpose of the present Convention, the term “refugee” shall apply to any person who;
- (2) As a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.
- Section B, Paragraph 1 and the subparagraphs (a) and (b) of Article 1 gives the option to states to sign the Convention restricting their obligations towards refugees falling under the terms of: 1-a geographic (geographical location of their countries of origin) and 2-time (time of arrival) limitations (Simsek and Corabatir, 2016):
- B (1) for the purposes of this Convention, the words “events occurring before 1 January 1951” in Article 1, section A, shall be understood to mean either:
- 1-“Events occurring in Europe before 1 January 1951”; or

2-“Events occurring in Europe or elsewhere before 1 January 1951”, and each Contracting State shall make a declaration at the time of signature, ratification or accession, specifying which of these meanings it applies for the purpose of its obligations under this Convention.

Eleven years after its approval by the UN General Assembly, the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees, was approved by Turkey in August 1961 under Law No. 359 originally defining who is a refugee, imposing refugees’ rights and obligations; and the main determinant of Turkey’s international obligations regarding the rights of refugees and asylum seekers (Kivilcim, 2016).

Turkey, however, signed the convention retaining geographic and time limitations (Kiricsi, 1996), yet was restricted to pre-1951refugees and does not apply to future refugees (Foca, 2011). Initially, Turkey, like other original drafters and signatories of the convention, was allowed to choose whether to apply the convention to all refugees or restrict it to European refugees; but "Turkey opted for the latter" maintaining both geographic and time limitation (Makovsky, 2019).

By the late 1960's, the "time limitation" imposed by the 1951 Geneva convention was lifted when Turkey signed the key treaty of 1967 Additional Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees which, at the same time, strengthened Turkey's adhere to the geographic limitation of Geneva convention (Makovsky, 2019), consequently, applying the convention limitedly to refugees seeking asylum in Turkey as a result of the "events occurring in Europe" (Kiricsi, 1996).

By 1996 Turkey was among a small group of "persistent objectors" that maintained the geographic limitation of the convention, with no exact reasons mentioned by the authorities, except for the country's geographical proximity to conflict-torn counties, such as Palestine whose conflict with Israel triggered massive influxes of refugees, in addition to the Hindus violence against Muslims after the partition of India and Pakistan into two independent countries (Kirisci, 2001).

At that time, the UNHCR cooperated with Turkey to improve the Turkish implementation of Geneva Convention as the country was not bound by any obligations with regards to refugees and asylum seekers from anywhere but Europe, and that cooperation was aimed at filling the voids in the level of protection and status determination of refugees, migrants and asylum seekers, yet that did not provide for their required protection from refoulement by Turkish authorities (Kirisci, 2001). But from 1997 onwards and in compliance with international standards, Turkey began to build a more effective national asylum system (Kirisci, 2001), and undertook further institutional and legislative reforms, subsequently, with the beginning of the Syrian conflict in 2011 that triggered Turkey's need for broader adaption and more specific temporary protection laws (Turkish Heritage, 2017). In fact, the Turkish

government was eager to refer to Syrian refugees/migrants as “guests” until it became clear that they are no “temporary guests”. In October 2011, Syrians became formally under temporary protection and the usage of “guests” as a term began to decrease in the formal and informal contexts (Kirisci, 2014). Today, the Turkish government interchangeably uses the terms “guest” and “refugees”, even though, from a legal perspective, Syrians are neither “refugees” nor “guests” in Turkey (Simsek and Corabatir, 2016), as it conflicts with the Turkish government’s implementation of the Geneva Convention (Abohalaka, 2018).

The Syrian regime’s chemical weapon attack on Eastern Ghouta in 2013 raised international talks about a possibility of military action against Syria, which triggered a noticeable increase in the movement of Syrians towards neighboring countries, including Turkey (Human Rights Watch, 2013). This unexpected increase in the refugee population required different policies as Syrians were no longer “temporary guests” (Mazlumder, 2014).

In 2014 the country’s asylum Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP), entered into force, establishing the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) as the main migration policies and strategies maker, setting out the pillars of Turkey’s national asylum system such as determining the status and protection of asylum seekers (EU, 2020), as well as providing refugees and asylum seekers with the right to free health and education under the Temporary Protection Regulation (TPR) issued in October 2014, which is just similar to those provided under the Geneva Convention, yet the Geneva Convention, for instance, grants refugees with the right to work, and facilitates the process of employing refugees (UNHCR, 2020), while Turkey by its national law does not provide Syrian refugees with legal work permits (Gullu, 2019).

In April 2013, Turkey’s first ever asylum law, the Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP), was endorsed by the Parliament and entered into force on 11 April 2014. The Law sets out the main pillars of Turkey’s national asylum system and established DGMM as the main entity in charge of policymaking and proceedings for all foreigners in Turkey. Turkey also established a special legal system for Syrians seeking refuge within the Turkish

territory granting them with the right to temporary protection under the regulation of Temporary Protection Act (UNHCR, 2020). The regulation, originally, consists of 11 sections that include 63 articles, besides a temporary provision applying to any Syrian who arrived in the Turkish territory fleeing war and conflict after 28/4/2011(Maat for Peace, 2019). Article No.4 of the non-refoulement states that no one within the scope of Law No.6458 shall be returned to a place in which she/he may be exposed to inhuman or degrading punishment, torture or threat (Refworld, 2016).

Figure 4.1 shows the distribution of Syrian refugees under Temporary Protection within the past decade designed by the Directorate General of Migration Management of Turkey (DGMM, 2020).

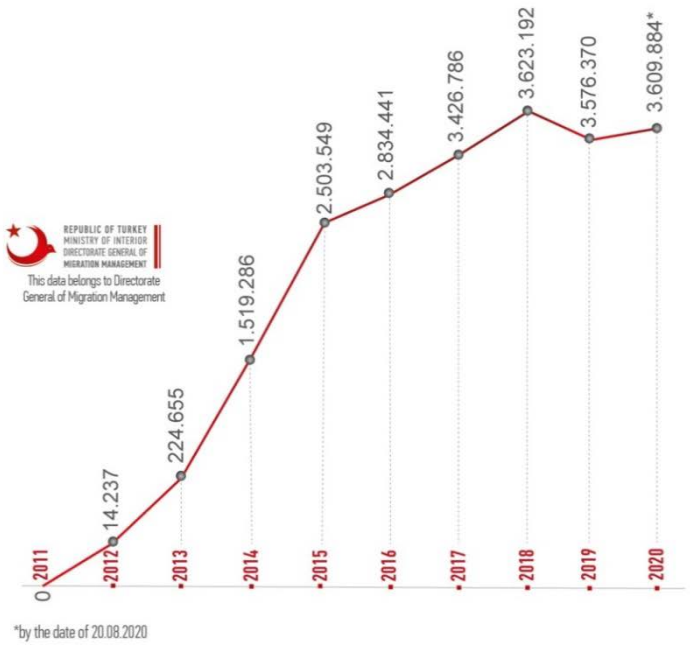

Figure 4.1: Number of Syrian refugees under TP (distributed by year)

Source: DGMM, 2020

By the date of 20/08/2020, Figure 3 shows a significant increase in number of Syrian refugees under TP. Section No.11 of the Regulation contains a number of articles that apply the provisions of the Family Protection and Violence Against Women Law No. 6284 of 2012 that takes measures and procedures with the victims of violence among those seeking refuge/asylum within the Turkish

territory, in addition to taking the necessary measures in the relevant legislation against those involved in trafficking of foreign persons (UNHCR, 2020).

Article No. 3 includes the status of women, unaccompanied children, disabled persons, old age, pregnant women single mothers with child, single fathers with child, persons who have been subjected to torture and sexual assault and/or other forms of violence 'Psychological, physical, or sexual abuse'. In addition to the public services provided under these regulations, those categories benefit from all the services and benefits provided for Turkish citizens according to Turkish laws. Finally, on 22/11/2014, a Protection Regulation was found setting out the rights and obligations for those granted temporary protection in Turkey (Maat for Peace, 2019).

Article No. 16 of the Turkish Constitution provides that “The fundamental rights and freedoms in respect to aliens may be restricted by law compatible with international law” (Judiciary of Turkey, 2020). And to discuss whether this restriction is internationally legal in compliance with the Geneva Convention, under which Article No. 1 of the Temporary Protection Regulation (TPR) should be discussed. Article No. 1 of TPR prevents Syrian refugees, regardless of their gender, age and situation, from becoming international protection applicants, with absolutely no evaluation of whether they faced any form of gender-based violence under the 1951 Geneva Convention (Kivilcim, 2016).

4.4 The Istanbul Convention

First opened for signatures, on 11/5/2011, in Istanbul, the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence the (Istanbul Convention), promoting the protection of women against domestic abuse. It is the first international convention to provide a legally binding definition of gender-based violence (Council of Europe, 2019) and of the concept of gender as a social construction rather than two different biological sexes (Gullu, 2019).

Aimed at prosecuting violence-accused offenders, the most far-reaching international treaty in its field, the Istanbul Convention is the first legally-binding instrument in Europe ensuring that women, regardless of their race,

should enjoy the same level of protection (Maat for Peace, 2019). The convention also prevents different forms of violations of human rights and argues that certain roles and behaviors is regarded in some cases as a contributor to the social acceptance of violence against women (Gullu, 2019). Over and above that, article number 4 on “non-discrimination principle and relevance to migrant and refugee women” makes clear that: “The implementation of the provisions of this convention by the Parties, in particular measures to protect the rights of victims, shall be secure without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race color, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, state of health, disability, marital status, migrant or refugee status, or other status.” Article 60 on “gender-based asylum claims” and article 61 on “non-refoulement” were particularly meant to protect the rights of women refugees and asylum seekers.

Article 60 of the Istanbul Convention

1. Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that gender-based violence against women may be recognized as a form of persecution within the meaning of Article 1, A (2), of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and as a form of serious harm giving rise to complementary/ subsidiary protection.

2. Parties shall ensure that a gender-sensitive interpretation is given to each of the Convention grounds and that where it is established that the persecution feared is for one or more of these grounds, applicants shall be granted refugee status according to the applicable relevant instruments.

3. Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to develop gender-sensitive reception procedures and support services for asylum seekers as well as gender guidelines and gender-sensitive asylum procedures, including refugee status determination and application for international protection.

Article 61 of the Istanbul Convention

1. Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to respect the principle of non-refoulement in accordance with existing obligations under international law.

2. Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that victims of violence against women who are in need of protection, regardless of their status or residence shall not be returned under any circumstances to any country where their life would be at risk or where they might be subjected to torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Since Syrian women refugees and migrants are “guests” who are stuck in a precarious situation under no legal protection in Turkey, applying the Istanbul convention represents the foundation stone of preventing the different forms of discrimination and violations against women migrants/refugees in Turkey. Laws are successfully established through the Istanbul Convention only full the implementation of Articles 60 and 61 stands between women refugees and their acquiring their rights. To sum up, gender-blind migration policies constitute serious gaps in protecting women migrants and refugees, and to avoid these gaps it is highly important to fully implement Istanbul Convention which leads to a consistent gender-sensitive approach that guarantees women with equal rights and safer environment.

4.5 The Via Dolorosa

Gender-blind asylum law and immigration policies around the world have always failed to address the socially constructed difference between women and men, especially in terms of why and how they experience gender-persecution which eventually leads to a widespread non-recognition of gender-based violence against women refugees (Council of Europe, 2019). “Refugee”, a gender-blind term, for example, that is in point to clarify the failure of states in taking gender into consideration both in legal and study field discourses (Gullu, 2019).

In fact, Turkey was the first country to sign and ratify the Istanbul Convention in 2012, yet the question of whether the convention is fully implemented in Turkey could lead us to realize the situation of women refugees, migrants and asylum seekers in the Turkish host community.

Mostly because, the refugee crisis around the world and particularly in Turkey, challenges women and girls in the first place, for deepening gender-blind

refugee policies, and exposing women refugees to vulnerable situations in which they find themselves unable to seek legal protection due to the fact that they are labeled as “guests” in Turkey after spending almost a decade within its territory and that they are stuck in Turkey under the downpour without the umbrella of international protection (Kivilcim, 2016). Thusly, “temporary protection” became a permanent status of limbo. This section explores and outlines several examples of different barriers faced by women originating from conflict-torn countries in the MENA region and seeking refuge in Turkey, especially through shedding light on the Istanbul Convention which, I believe, when fully implemented, can be an effective tool in placing gender equality at the center of immigration policies, both, in Turkey and abroad; particularly with Turkey’s recent talks about its withdrawal from the Istanbul convention (Amnesty International, 2020).

“There is a bitter irony” said Anna Blus, “to the fact that the Turkish authorities are considering withdrawing from a Convention bearing the name of its most iconic city” especially with the increasing rates of gender-based violence against women and girls during the COVID-19 lockdown, as women were unable to access safety and support services (Amnesty International, 2020).

Despite the fact that Turkey was the first country to sign the convention, the government has not fully committed to address gender-based violence against women due to lack of political will in the country, in addition to the weak enforcement tools of the treaty (Gullu, 2019). And that leaves serious protection gaps for Arab women and girls residing in Turkey, who become consequently prone to exposure obstacles and challenges and precarious situations (Ozturk, Serin and Altinoz 2019).

In many cases, refugees/migrants do not necessarily face violence, and may, in fact, benefit from migration in one way or another (Maat for Peace, 2019). Women and girls, however, are more likely to be exposed to violence and harsh conditions, as well as encountering several forms of traumatic events as they migrate along with their children for long distances and dangerous roads that threaten their lives during their journey (Maat for Peace, 2019). Women are, indeed, more likely to face violence and obstacles in accessing services during

the process of migration (Castles, 2016), especially in its very early stages where women refugees live in a state of insecurity and instability and lack familiarity with the new country, many of whom reside in camps dependently on foreign aid with strict restrictions imposed on their movement (Maat for Peace, 2019).

Generally, the context of dual disadvantage faced by refugee/migrant/asylum seeker women suggests that foreign women suffer twice in the receiving country (Boyd, 1984). During their displacement, women face the gendered norms they were born with along with those imposed upon them through migration and in the host community (Butler, 2015).

Particularly, life patterns and opportunities for women are not only identified by their sexual identity as women, but also according to their status as migrants/refugees/asylum-seekers, whether alone or with their children, their education level and social class. These factors play an important role in shaping the different aspects of women's displacement (Williams, Coskun and Koksa, 2020).

Furthermore, women migrants are discriminated for being economically inferior to the host community, at the same time their suffering is worse than that encountered by foreign men for belonging to two disadvantaged groups. Meaning that, gender differences among migrants are more apparent than differences among the native-born population (Schuler and Stanfors, 2009).

Some studies went beyond the traditional "dual discrimination" theory and rather suggested that women face "threefold oppression" in the destination countries, 1- for being new comers; 2- for taking inferior jobs and lesser remuneration; and finally 3- being members of poor families (Caroli, 1988).

By August 2020, 3.609.884 Syrian refugees were registered in Turkey, women and girls make 46.16% with a total of 1.666.416 female refugees compared to 1.943.468 male refugees.

Figure 4.2 shows the gender composition of registered Syrian refugees in Turkey designed by the Directorate General of Migration Management of Turkey (DGMM, 2020).

DISTRIBUTION BY AGE AND GENDER OF REGISTERED SYRIAN REFUGEES RECORDED BY TAKING BIOMETRIC DATA

AGE	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
TOTAL	1.943.468	1.666.416	3.609.884
0-4	255.288	246.290	501.578
5-9	282.343	259.162	541.505
10-14	203.147	183.715	386.862
15-18	141.499	118.134	259.633
19-24	285.473	212.188	497.661
25-29	202.279	147.316	349.595
30-34	158.603	115.488	274.091
35-39	118.667	96.577	215.244
40-44	84.483	75.441	159.924
45-49	60.237	56.941	117.178
50-54	49.579	48.697	98.276
55-59	37.788	37.891	75.679
60-64	28.361	29.212	57.573
65-69	20.291	20.693	40.984
70-74	7.722	8.696	16.418
75-79	3.782	4.658	8.440
80-84	2.182	2.901	5.083
85-89	1.076	1.505	2.581
90+	668	911	1.579

*by the date of 20.08.2020

Figure 4.2: Distribution of Syrian refugees by gender

Source: DGMM, 2020

4.6 Barriers and Obstacles Challenging Women Refugees/Migrants in Turkey

Although employment is generally precarious for men and women in Turkey, migrant/refugee women-dominated sectors are more likely to be the most precarious forms of labor in terms of labor security (Şenses, 2020). Statistics show that Syrian refugee women, especially those in camps and villages, are shockingly vulnerable to sexual harassments by aid workers, employers and house owners (Maat for Peace, 2019), let alone early marriages, abuse and prostitution (Enab Baladi, 2018, 2020).

According to comprehensive needs assessment of Syrian women refugees in Turkey undertaken by the UN Women and Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Immigrants (ASAM), based on structured in-depth

interviews with 1291 Syrian women and girls, access to housing, employment opportunities and language are the most challenging barriers and obstacles standing in the way of Middle Eastern women in Turkey (UN Women, 2018).

1- Language (official language of the host country): although Turkey has experienced mass migration movements ever since its establishment. And as mentioned above, migrants of these movements were mostly Turkish consanguine populations, thus language and culture were shared among migrants and those in the host community, which facilitated the process of integration (Abohalaka, 2018).

However, the case of Middle Eastern migrants is, apparently, pretty different. In other words, the past migrants' influxes experienced by Turkey did not really prepare it to deal with a refugee crisis like that of Syria. On the one because the latest influx is way much greater in numbers, and on the other, the traditions, beliefs, language and religious background is quite dissimilar, requiring the Turkish government to take rigorous approaches different from those taken in the past.

A research conducted, in 2017, on challenges and obstacles for Syrian women refugees in Turkey surveyed 341 interviewees, 70% of the female population sample said that they did not learn Turkish language. 36% claimed that they cannot leave their kids at home and thus cannot attend Turkish language courses; 18% reported that learning Turkish will not be very helpful for their families; 15% found that the procedures of registration were too complex to follow; and 11.8% stated that their male family members did not allowed them to attend language courses (Ozturk, Serin and Altinoz, 2019).

Another report published by a nonprofit organization in Turkey stated that one of every four Syrian women refugees has no Turkish friends and their main social interaction in Turkey is with other Syrian refugees, and 79.7% of the surveyed women said that it is due to the language barrier which prevents them from integrating into social life (Daily Sabah, 2019). Thusly, building social networks outside is impossible for them (Rohwerder, 2018).

Language barrier also explains why Syrian women are unaware of various support services: 68% do not know about free legal counseling; 63% about

home care, 59% about psychosocial support and 57% about childcare services (Yucel et al., 2018).

70% of Syrian women are incapable of speaking Turkish language, in spite of the state-supported free language courses; in fact, language is regarded to be one of the major barriers in the way of Syrian women's access to services and rights (UN Women, 2018). Health services, for example, are provided freely for Syrian refugees, yet language remains an obstacle in their access to them (Abohalaka, 2018).

2- Employment opportunities: it is well documented that women migrants/refugees' economic integration into labor market is more problematic than that of men (Pekin, 1981). Syrian face significant challenges in accessing labor market, firstly due to the lack of legal work permits, which force women to engage in informal sector, and become vulnerable to exploitative conditions (Herwig, 2017; Rohwerder, 2018). In other words, working in the informal sector and/or without legal work permits remains the only option for women refugees/asylum seekers in Turkey as neither the Turkish government nor the UNHCR in Turkey provide legal sustainable socio-economic support for them. However, it is noteworthy that there are some conditions under which employers can provide legal work permits for those under temporary protection, yet they are mostly keen to not do it; in fact, they prefer to hire low-waged asylum seekers without legal work permits (Coskun and Eski, 2020).

A statistical report published, in 2016, by the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency in Turkey (AFAD), stated that 87% of Syrian women in Turkey are jobless, among whom, 56% are housewives (Ozturk, Serin and Altinoz, 2019), and only 15% of the surveyed women work in income-generating jobs (UN Women, 2018). Another report published by Association for Migration Research, GAR, in July 2020, showed that Syrian women solely spend their wages on the daily needs of their households, as most of them work under unstable precarious conditions in temporary and low-paid jobs that mostly fail to guarantee women safer future (GAR, 2020). Likewise, according to the findings of the Demographic and Health Survey (TDHS) carried out by Hacettepe University in Turkey, about 82% of 2000 surveyed women had not

been employed within the 12 months preceding the survey or have never been employed at all. While only 8% of married women were employed during the year preceding the survey, whereas 89% of their husbands were employed (TDHS, 2018).

Over and above that, weak linguistic skills, sexual harassment, lack of professional training as well as workforce exploitation (Mazlumder, 2014), in addition to lack of childcare, as 74% of the surveyed women by the UN do not know where to seek assistance for their children (UN Women, 2018), are the major causes of Syrian women's unemployment in Turkey (Rohwerder, 2018). Moreover, the percentage of employed women is only 7% among women aged 30 to 44 according to AFAD's report (Ozturk, Serin and Altinoz, 2019).

And despite international aid, the NGOs and UN's efforts to support Syrian women, about 23.7% of Syrian refugees under temporary protection live below poverty (World Bank, 2017). Furthermore, Syrian women refugees face dual discrimination in the working environment (Duran, 2018). On the one hand, they are frequently asked to not reveal their nationality as they do not only face verbal abuses but also direct instances of mobbing while working (GAR, 2020). And on the other hand, they face discrimination based on their gender, in the first place, as female employment is generally low (FAO, 2017), especially in southern Turkish regions, where it is harder for women to obtain access to labor market when compared to men, thus, women work in sectors where gendered roles are preserved (Coskun, 2018) as cited by (Şenses, 2020), as their training opportunities are mainly revolved around sewing and hairdressing and based on their race (Rohwerder, 2018). Despite that, compared to their home country, Syrian women seem to be more active in Turkey (Ozturk, Serin and Altinoz, 2019).

According to the same report published by GAR, a majority of the interviewed Syrian women expressed their contentment for witnessing a positive change taking place in gender relations as they associated the departure from pre-migration norms and gender-relations system with crossing physical boundaries to Turkey which empowered them and contributed to their resilience (GAR, 2020).

Family responsibilities are, however, another significant burdensome for women refugees and migrants (Dumon, 1981), as they find themselves forced to make further efforts to fulfill their domestic chores in addition to their paid work creating a heavier emotional burden on women. A majority of the interviewees in GAR's report said that while finding themselves forced to work to provide their families' daily needs, they "fail to fulfill motherhood duties" as they cannot achieve a healthy balance between their "traditional role" as mothers and wives, and their role as breadwinners (Gar, 2020).

3- Gender-based violence: taking into consideration the correlation between poverty and crime rates, Syrian women and children find themselves helpless when facing violence, crimes and sexual harassments and abuse, they may not be able to issue a complaint for fear of deportation or the like (Şenses, 2020). Women refugees and migrants struggle sometimes against sexual assaults and gender-based violence, against cruelty and brutality. Border and coastguards, smugglers, police, state officials, translators and social workers (Freedman 2015, 2016) as cited by (Coskun and Eski, 2020). About 73% of Syrian women refugees surveyed by the UN do not know where to seek assistance related to violence or harassment (UN Women, 2018). Turkey's BMMYK stated, in 2017, a list of barriers faced by women during their displacement (on their way and after they make to the destination country), that includes: Physical and sexual assaults, sexual exploitation, forced prostitution, gender-based abuse and sexual assaults by gangs during crossing borders (Dogutas, 2019). A 2017 report published DGMM-generated data, showed that 1,809 sexual assault cases were reported within the past nine years, 186 of which were concerned refugee women (DGMM, 2017). Another report on human trafficking by DGMM shows that about three out of each identified four trafficked persons in Turkey between 2005 and 2017 were migrant women and girls who were trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation. The identity, of the offenders, however, or the outcomes of the state's investigations and trials were not revealed.

Although Turkish law criminalize child marriages and sexual exploitation, Data collected, in 2018, through the Demographic and Health Survey on children in

Turkey have shown that 9.2% of Syrian women aged 20-24 were married by the age of 15; and 13.4% aged 15-19 were married at the age of 15 (ECPAT, 2020). Needless to say, gender-based violence was, pretty much, one of the reasons for migration, only in the Middle Eastern women's case; women are denied both, their equal standing with men, and their human rights as that to simply live.

4- Racism: public images lie among the top constrains imposed on refugees, and most importantly, public images always fail to differentiate between women and men refugees (Edelman, 1977). It is argued that racism, xenophobia and discrimination are closely interlinked with financial crises and economic situations (Simsek and Corabatir, 2016). Many reports and scholarly articles state that public opinion in Turkey towards Syrians has become negative (Saracoglu and Belanger, 2019). The idea of "us vs. them" controls most aspects of public discourses in Turkey, where it is a common belief among Turkish citizens that Syrian refugees have resulted in increasing rent prices and decreasing wages in the labor market. Arab migrants, in general, and Syrian refugees, in particular, are accused of creating social tension by not being modern, as they are "culturally different" (Simsek and Corabatir, 2016). Furthermore, Arab migrants have been recently put within security terms. They became associated, in the public discourse, with crime and internal security as they, mostly; make an "imagined" threat for Turkish society. An ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Izmir by Saracoglu and Belanger showed that xenophobic attitudes against Syrians refugees appear in three different forms: 1- loss of economic gains; 2, loss of urban space; and 3-loss of national cohesion (Saracoglu and Belanger, 2019). On top of that, rumours have spread around Turkey, throughout the past years, especially in cities where Syrians are concentrated, accusing Syrians of being looked after with the taxes they pay, stealing jobs, and labeling them with beggars or criminals.

5- Access to housing: it is reported that Syrian women find themselves obliged to move frequently due to high rents. Women refugees are also subjected to different forms of exploitation by landlords including sexual harassments and violence on the grounds of their gender and nationality

and are threatened with eviction (Freedman, Kivilcim and Baklacioglu, 2017). This negatively contributes to the reduction of women's ability to build social relations with their neighbors and limits women's opportunity for social cohesion and the integration with the host society. The TDHS showed that 3% percent of Syrian women own a house alone and/or jointly with someone else, while 2% own land/estate/field alone and/or jointly with someone (TDHS, 2018).

6- Gender Roles: there are conflicting narratives regarding the traditional gender roles and power dynamics within Syrian families. A report published by the UNHCR based on fieldwork shows that the traditional gender roles of Syrian families were disrupted by the wave of migration following the Arab Spring. Women's roles, according to the report, have changed overnight from "mothers, sisters and daughters" to the heads of their families. Syrian women refugees according to the report head 145,000 Syrian refugee households (UNHCR, 2014). While another survey by the IOM showed that 32% of the surveyed households were headed by women (IOM, 2017)

On the other side of the coin, many scholars works claim that Syrian women have been always the heads of their households. Michelle Lokot, for instance, wrote, in a research entitled "Syrian refugees: thinking beyond gender stereotypes" that Syrian women were already responsible for their families and no sudden seismic shifts took place in the power dynamics following Syrians' displacement, as she exemplifies her point by their movement to the Gulf before 2011 seeking seasonal work in Gulf states as a matter of sustaining economic stability, meaning that no turning points in the traditional household duties and gender roles took place after the Syrian displacement (Lokot, 2018). Arab women, particularly in rural societies and countryside carried out most domestic work, conduct major activities such as the farming tasks, food gathering and production, fetching of clean and safe drinking water (especially after the spread of cholera and other diseases in Yemen) (Al-Ali, 2002) as well as fuel and heat resources, harvesting, and crop transport and storage (Toth, 2005). Moreover, given that women are paid two-thirds the wages men are paid in Egyptian countryside for instance (Hansen, 1986), women are preferred to men

when looking for employees in rural areas (Sandu, Toth and Tudor 2017). Now it is, certainly, hard for women to migrate, on their own, with their kids, mostly for being widows or single mothers, or in some cases they get separated from their families on the way by smugglers or official authorities, which forces women to do “mothering” and “fathering” at the same time and become the head of the household and the breadwinners (Dogutas, 2019). That, however, does not necessarily mean to simply stereotype Middle Eastern women migrants as passive actors, referring to the displacement as the reason of disrupting the traditional family life and changing gender roles (Lokot, 2018). Yet, the main obstacle when females head households remain that women are less able to work, as mentioned above, due to cultural, practical and sometimes legal restrictions.

Despite the significant challenges for migrant and/or refugee women, gender-specific point of view was not really taken into consideration during the process of policymaking, both, in Turkey and Europe, which forms another obstacle that stands as the base for discrimination against women refugees (Duran, 2018).

In conclusion, the intersection of women’s lower-class position with their status of being irregular migrants produces “hyper-precarity” (Lewis et al. 2015) as cited by (Şenses, 2020). Thus, when migrating, women do not only cross-national boundaries, but also professional, psychological, and symbolic ones (Arizpe, 2014). Non-camp women refugees find themselves forced to cross integration boundaries that are becoming increasingly relevant, politically, and economically in today’s world. These boundaries isolate women refugees as they weaken the process of integration and make it harder. In addition, not only host community imposes restrictions on women and girls, but also their male family members who prevent them from leaving their houses or having any social interaction that can be a “threat to the family’s honour” as women are perceived as “the carriers of family’s honour” (Rohwerder, 2019).

Over and above that, the above-mentioned barriers encountered by Syrian women refugees and migrants in Turkey represent a chain of interrelated obstacles, of which one results in the other. As scholars have long argued that the feminization of migration parallels two more issues encountered by women

in exile: the feminization of work and the feminization of poverty (UNFPA, 2006).

In other words, being completely foreign to the language of the host country results in lack of access to services and unemployment; and unemployment results in poverty, whereas being trapped in poverty and economic pressures results in racism, exploitation, human trafficking, forced prostitution and early marriages. The situation of women refugees and migrants in Turkey reminds me of the difference between seeing and observing. The world directs its eyes towards women refugees yet does not really notice the gender-blind policies that deepen these women's sufferings.

All in all, the main key challenge facing us today is to bring women into positions where they change world's social point of view on women migrants and their refugeehood through introducing their experiences of displacement as Indra has put it in 1987. And to do so concrete steps must be taken, rather than separate discussions, mostly because, at this point, obstacles are defined and laws are already established, yet the inefficiency of infrastructure and the lack of political will prevent them from being implemented (Mazlumder, 2014).

In fact, Turkey has, formally, taken further steps towards the prevention of women's trafficking, especially after signing the Palermo Protocol and adopting its definition of human trafficking. Turkey, however, made no reference to sexual exploitation or prostitution in its definition of human trafficking although that was a part of the Palermo Protocol's definition (Coskun, 2020).

Gender was never taken into consideration during the process of making refugee and asylum policy leading to serious protection gaps for women refugees and migrants in Turkey (Gullu, 2019). It is extremely crucial to make a gender-sensitive interpretation of the existing immigration and refugee policies to provide women refugees with their simplest rights of safety and well-being, and that can be assured through a fully implementation of the Istanbul convention rather than withdrawing from it (Amnesty International, 2020). Because without strict government's efforts that assure women refugees' rights are protected, these women are left at the mercy of international organizations, donors and charities (Hyndman and Glies, 2011).

4.7 Turning a Blind Eye to Women's Sufferings

Notwithstanding the fact that we live in the age of globalization, which became ingrained in every field including that of migration, and in spite of the technological advances that completely altered the way our world operates, the symbolic and real lifting of the restrictions imposed on the movement of people through reducing the distance and saving time and effort, migration routes are still fatal, and it is more dangerous to migrate nowadays than ever (Beneria, Deere and Kabeer, 2012).

Ironically enough, the more technologically developed the world gets, the tighter become migration policies, the harder it becomes for migrants to reach their destination country. Such new security measures to prevent refugee flows or irregular migration are being taken. States build border walls and construct cross-border barriers under the excuse of securing national sovereignty.

And as it naturally goes, women fall in the double disadvantaged group; they continue to be mostly the ones who lose their lives during the deadly journeys towards their destinations. On the one hand, they are victims of inhuman rigid migration policies; and on the other, gender-blind policies have the most negative effect on them (Boserup, 1970).

Although many measures are being taken to fight women's trafficking, sometimes by organizations purely dealing with economic issues, such as the World Bank which proposed anti-trafficking measures in their recommendations for better gender-related policies (Schwenken, 2007). Yet, states continue to put gender-blind migration policies, turning a blind eye to women's suffering in particular. Therefore, the omnipresent gendered gaze in patriarchal societies still face women migrants literally everywhere, on the streets, by institutions and representatives of the state and civil society (Williams, Coskun and Kaska, 2020).

We all remember the most heartbreaking photo of Alan Kurdi reported in 2015, the three-year-old Syrian boy who drowned, along with his mother and 3,600 other refugees, in the Mediterranean as the options available for his family narrowed to either throw themselves along with their kids in an inflatable boat in the deadliest route knowing that it might cost them their lives or stay at home

under the aerial bombings. I believe that, like many others, Alan's heartbreaking death is a consequence of what states call "strengthening national security", in other words, the increasingly restrictive security measures taken by states worldwide to stop refugee flows and prevent irregular migration, and the development of new migration policies that make it almost impossible for migrants to reach their destination countries, the construction barriers both material and immaterial barriers, which can be exemplified by the rise of xenophobia within public opinions, especially Europe, in which national populist parties and media managed to portray migrants as a threat to national values and social cohesion and a contributor to the rise of crime rates, let alone, gender-blind policies that contrast with EU policies which are thought to have eliminated inequalities between men and women (Bach, 2009).

Lack of gender-disaggregated data can be, in fact, another form of systematic obstacles challenging women refugees' assessment in Turkey, which can be traced to the stereotype of women as passive companions (Duran, 2018). Essentially, the existing gaps in sex-disaggregated data and statistics on migration, at national and international levels, take place when defining the purpose of migration and the gender-based occupational patterns among migrants (UNFPA at al., 2013).

On the other side of the coin, it seems that not only immigration policies lack gender sensitivity, but also data collection tools. This, in fact, can be a key answer to the question of what makes the presence of women and girls among migrants/refugees overlooked for so long? The answer lies in data-collecting methods and tools. Needless to say, the scarcity of gender categories under which relative numbers of female and male migrants are collected and organized is thought to be one of the main reasons behind the overlooked presence of females in international migratory flows over the years (Donato and Gabaccia, 2016).

Reports show that women and children are also the ones who are mostly invisible in the available data collected on the deaths of migrants, and the exploitation they face, especially sex workers; furthermore, the extent of their vulnerability is not clearly defined due to limited data collection and lack of legal protection (Gullu, 2019). Ironically the more developed the methods

within data on migrants' deaths is collected the more invisible women become in this data, as an evident lack of reliable sex-disaggregated data stands behind the invisibility of women migrant deaths, the majority of which take place in the sea, particularly, during the latest influx of Syrian refugees towards the EU, nevertheless, sex of the bodies and remains of migrants is rarely reported by those managing the bodies.

Missing Migrants, the IOM's project that was launched in 2014, began to collect information and data disaggregation by gender, and recorded, in 2017, the death of 1,234 women, the majority of whom died while crossing the Mediterranean. This number, however, makes up less than five percent of the total data collected on migrants' deaths during the same period by the project (IOM, 2017). According to the IOM, only 31 percent of the incidents reported on migrants' death included information on the sex of those who died or went missing.

To conclude, gender is not only important in determining patterns, routes and social aspects of migration, but it is also a pivotal determinant of the experience of trauma one goes through when crossing borders, losing family members, being exposed to sever physical and psychological violence and resettled or locked up in camps which disrupts their former lifestyle. Thus, in order to by-pass the neglected role of gender in the process of policy making, every step of the process of migration must be looked at through gendered lens.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The pages of this thesis look at women's diasporic journey from the Middle East to Turkey following the Arab Spring through an alternative gendered lens that puts literature more centrally in studying the status of women in their displacement. Aiming at finding new methodological perspectives, a critical review of the "traditional narrative" of women's presence in international migration's research was provided, especially to enlighten the dark thoughts on women's migration that are considered as facts.

Owing to the fact that, our vision of the status of these women is pivotal in marrying the materialistic process of making policies to theoretical views of scholars, as it is argued that noticeable gaps exist between government migration policies and actual outcomes on the ground.

These gaps are a result of generalization trap, which is a product of perceiving migrants and refugees as a homogeneous group of humans migrating for the same reasons, facing the same challenges, taking the same routes and ending up with the same outcomes.

At some point before the late 1960s, migration literature was drowned in a swamp of negligence, and the integration of feminist interpretations resulted in a more comprehensive scholarship that reshaped the global view of women migrants. Today, scholarships on feminization of migration seem to be drifting away from its initial purpose of fighting gender inequalities, thus a critical overview of today's gender and migration literature is crucial to restore the original goal of feminization of migration, perhaps something similar to Stacey and Thome's interpretation which contributed to the maturation of our understanding of the original purpose of "empowerment" and eliminating inequalities. Their thinking called for "gendered" analyses instead of woman-centered vision (Stacey and Thome, 1985).

The thesis suggests that it is impossible to eliminate gender-based persecution against women refugees/migrants in a country without providing native women of the given country with their rights.

The findings of the thesis demonstrate that numbers of women migrants, refugees and asylum seekers have not changed dramatically over the past decades, but rather the direction of their mobility, which can be, in many cases, dependent on the status of women residing in countries of destination.

This thesis concludes that similar to the interrelation between feminization of labor, feminization of poverty and the feminization of migration, that challenges facing women seeking asylum in Turkey form a chain of interconnected obstacles, of which one results in the other. Against this point, the lack of linguistic skills results in lack of access to different services and unemployment that results in poverty which leads to exploitation, racism and otherization, sexism and discrimination based on gender and the status of being a migrant/refugee.

By the same token, gender was never taken into consideration during the process of drafting refugee policies in Turkey which requires a core gender-sensitive approach that counts for the experiences of Syrian women refugees. Likewise, and in order to fill the serious protection gaps for females seeking asylum in Turkey, the Istanbul Convention must be fully implemented as it provides the necessary laws to prevent gender-based violence, as this thesis suggests that the failure in applying the existing laws is the major obstacle facing women in their exile.

It is also found that women are not always trafficked and used in their exile, but to some extent, women migrants/refugees often find in employment opportunities a path to overcome pre-migration's traditional cultural beliefs, gender norms and stereotypes, even when these opportunities fail to guarantee women refugees with a safer future. Middle Eastern women, who were not only forced to migrate in order to survive political persecution, conflicts, poverty or combination of all, but also to escape a slipshod traditional system of gender relations and sex roles, have achieved, in one way or another, a degree of autonomy and self-esteem as breadwinners in their families. In this case,

migration created an environment of more equitable social norms and better authority for women.

Given the various quantitative and qualitative definitions of the phenomenon of feminization of migration, the traditional narrative of the phenomenon provided by scholars does not apply to Middle Eastern women residing in Turkey, neither does the "Penelope" model of the woman who waits for her "breadwinner" husband.

International migration is too complex to be feminized by solely concentrating on labor market, remittances, percentage of female migrants. And the influxes of Middle Eastern women forced to migrate as a result of the turmoil erupted by the Arab Spring provides an excellent case to prove that feminization of migration is not a monolithic universal phenomenon. As Middle Eastern women's migration was less of an autonomous act of great numbers of women migrating on their own for economic reasons, than a method to survive and revolt as mentioned above in Hirschman's model, not only against Arab dictatorships, but also to protest inequalities between women and women, before those between women and men.

Nevertheless, the problem lies in our understanding/perspective of policies, the hierarchy of power relations, and the social construction of gender. A change of our academic/everyday understanding of gender is required to break the false popularized molds that are being reflected through media, inaccurate research, and the traditional narratives victimizing women and producing a false standardized understanding of gender roles. In addition to a holistic evolution of the policy making process, political decisions, the mass media direction and the way it portrays women in general, and women refugees of a particular notes. This can only happen, as Indra stated 30 years ago, through calling inadequate emphasis on lack of women-specific data and issues in the migration field; and a deeper incorporation of the gender lens into refugee studies. As well as a better understanding of distinctions between women who are forced to migrate from war-torn countries and women migrating voluntarily remain blurry to a far extent (Indra, 1987).

In 2013 the data published by the UN, showed that women made up approximately 47% of the total number of international migrants in 1967, whereas in 2013 about 49% were women. Meaning that feminization of migration is not homogeneous and cannot be observed as a single case applied to the different regions of the world. In other words, explaining feminization of migration through displaying the proportion of women within the migrants' flows is a lost cause (Cortes, 2016).

Because feminization of migration/asylum is a change of gender relations rather than a change in gender ratios. As studies have showed that one region can send large numbers of men migrants while another sends larger numbers of women. A large body of literature has proved that men are still the majority of most of the influxes of refugees and migrants in many countries of origin such as Morocco, Egypt, Mexico, Bolivia, and India. While in many other countries of origin such as the Dominican Republic, Philippines, and Indonesia the overwhelming majority of migrants are women. Thus, most of the studies that attempt to measure the degree to which the stock of migrants is feminized, basing their argument on gender composition of migrants' flows, made a de facto selection to prove that women constitute the majority of migrants (Cortes, 2016).

Feminization of migration researchp has to overcome the ironic dualistic narratives of women vs. men, those who stay vs. those who migrate, those who migrate on their own vs. those who migrate as family members. Feminization of migration does not need to be about victimizing women in patriarchal society as Nikola Paunović (2017) has stated, but rather about gender mainstreaming, which is what we, truly, lack today. Rather than stereotyping women as "vulnerable" and men as "dangerous," because, mostly, victimizing women backfires to worse inequalities not only against women but also men. Namely, humanitarian aid provided by national and international organizations mainly targets women and more often neglect men no matter to what extent men are exposed to violence (Hilhorst, 2016 as cited by Karakilic, Korukmez and Soykan, 2019).

Therefore, it is easier and more beneficial to feminize the way we analyze influxes of refugees and migratory movements with the aim of achieving gender mainstreaming in the process of policymaking.

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RESUME

Personal Information

Name-Surname: Lana Alemam

Place and Date of Birth: Damascus, Syria 22/04/1996

E-mail: lanaa.alemam@gmail.com

Education:

Bachelor: 2018, Istanbul Aydin University, Political Science and International Relations
Master: 2021, Istanbul Aydin University, Political Science and International Relations

Publications:

Alemam, L. (2020). Feminization of Migration: Is it a Double-Edged Sword? *United International Journal for Research & Technology*, *02*(01), 49–51. Retrieved from https://uijrt.com/articles/v2/i1/UIJRTV2I10009.pdf

Language Skills

Arabic	French	English	Turkish
Excellent	Good	Excellent	Good