

>>> NEWSLETTER <<<

**FOOD, HOMEMAKING AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION
FOR SYRIAN WOMEN IN TÜRKİYE**

October 2022 - June 2023



TÜBİTAK 1001- Project 122K209

**LAUNCH OF
THE
PROJECT**

October 2022

>>> **WHAT WE DO?**

Our project aims at understanding migrant homemaking activities, how food practices change and are involved in integration for Syrian women in Istanbul, Antep, and Hatay. The project is expected to concretely improve social cohesion among Syrians and locals in Türkiye.

LEARN MORE <<<

With an interdisciplinary team of experts who have studied Syrian migration for several years, we conduct an extensive ethnographic study including in-depth interviews, participant observation, and mental maps. You may learn more about the research questions, our team members, events, and other details on our website.

**VISIT OUR
WEBSITE**<https://foodandmigration.ozyegin.edu.tr/en>

NEWS & EVENTS

How we work

The project team get together in weekly meetings to plan the organizational details of the project. Team members decide on issues including but not limited to project roles, timeline, fieldwork plans, ownership of data, dissemination objectives, and future collaborations. For now, we have in our team 14 people including researchers, advisors, experts, and assistants.

➤➤➤ FIELDWORK IN ISTANBUL

During December 2022-June 2023, we conducted in-depth and face-to-face interviews with 20 Syrian women in Istanbul. On some occasions, we were invited to houses where we cooked Syrian food together and enjoyed beautiful conversations with our gracious hosts. We listened to Syrian women's memories, painful and joyous moments after they were forced to migrate from Syria due to war. We also witnessed how powerful they are in struggling to keep their families together to care and cook for them. Once more we realized how strong a tie people build with food, cultural identity and place attachment, which is deeply shaken by forced displacement.

➤➤➤ FOOD, SYRIAN WOMEN & HOME-MAKING

Syrian refugee women in Türkiye with limited resources face significant challenges in maintaining both, food security and their cultural food practices. In the context of economic precarity and political uncertainty in Türkiye, Syrian women are coping to maintain their belonging to their culture, and food security for their families. Women's burden and responsibilities increase a lot after the migration as they struggle to provide the nutrition of the family at a cheaper price yet keeping the same taste & style, adapting to new migration culture simultaneously.

“We don't know how to calculate it [...] Of course, I get annoyed, especially when you want to calculate the rent of your house, electricity and water, and finally food has become luxuries... It is not a main thing.. Like in Syria.. It was the main thing, you saw the houses and we were all settled, now our last focus is eating... One now eats anything, whether it is healthy or not”
Farah, from Aleppo

➤➤➤ UPCOMING FIELDWORK PLANS

The team started conducting interviews and making observations in Antep, doing 2 interviews with two Syrian housewives. As Hatay is one of the most devastated cities by the terrible earthquake disaster in February 6, 2023, the fieldwork plans regarding the are remain unclear. However, our team members in the south region of Türkiye already contacted three internally displaced Syrian women migrating from Hatay to Adana after the quake. In the coming months, we will continue our fieldwork in all three cities (Istanbul, Antep, and Hatay) to reach more Syrian women.



TRAINING & CONFERENCES

➤➤➤ METHODOLOGY TRAINING SERIES-1 ETHNOGRAPHY TRAINING

On January 20, 2023, we held our first online event titled "Ethnographic Research Training" by our project coordinator Asst. Prof. Susan Beth Rottmann. The training brought together team members and was followed by a fruitful discussion on doing ethnography with Syrian refugees in Türkiye, including field-driven experiences of participant observation in migration research.

➤➤➤ WORKSHOP ON "EXPLORING VULNERABILITY(IES) AND RESILIENCE

Susan B. Rottmann (Özyeğin University) and her colleague Maria Kanal (Jagiellonian University of Krakow) presented their paper titled "Everyday agency and coping: Rethinking refugee women's actions in the cultural context" at the workshop titled "Exploring Vulnerability(ies) and Resilience: Learning from Populations on the Move" held by Istanbul Policy Center, Sabancı University-Stiftung Mercator Initiative during May 5-6, 2023 in Karaköy-İstanbul.

The workshop provided discussions to move beyond a binary conceptualization of vulnerability and resilience by discussing how vulnerability, agency, and resilience are interrelated or co-produced by multiple factors, actors, practices, policies, and laws.

➤➤➤ FOOD, MIGRATION & BELONGING

As the team made progress in field research listening to various stories of Syrian refugee women in Türkiye, we started contemplating on our field notes and findings to make meaning of our raw initial data, engaging with literature and previous research. To this end, we held a two-session team meeting whereby all members shared their comments, questions, and ideas about the data obtained so far. In addition, professor Rottmann made an elaborate presentation on "Food, Migration, and Belonging" on May 30 & June 6, 2023. The presentation focused on how to understand key concepts in the anthropology of food, migration, and belonging. The Q&A session was followed by a further discussion on foodways for Syrian migrants in Türkiye

"The housewife must always have alternatives, especially when she wants to be a housekeeper. By the way, I already told you that I don't eat ready-made food [from restaurants]. The first thing is to save [money]; the second thing is that when I do something for my daughter or for my children, I make them at home. I know how to do it"
Intisar, from Aleppo

➤➤➤ SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

On April 14, 2023, team members in Istanbul and their families gathered in the Süleymaniye Mosque's yard and had a pot-luck iftar dinner. In the upcoming months, we will plan more social activities to bring together all team members from Istanbul, Antep, Adana, and Hatay.



UPCOMING ACADEMIC EVENTS



July 2023 - January 2024

IMISCOE 20TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

July 3-6, 2023



UNEQUAL HOME-MAKING PRACTICES AMONG SYRIAN REFUGEE WOMEN

Asst. Prof Susan B. Rottmann, Phd Researcher Zeynep Yılmaz Hava, and MA Researcher Nour Zanjer will join the 20th IMISCOE Annual Conference on 3-6 July, 2023. The researchers will make an online presentation of their paper "Unequal home-making practices among Syrian refugees in Türkiye in a context of economic uncertainty". The research aims to discuss how unequal economic conditions impact style of cooking and eating practices after migration.

IDENTITY, SEPARATION, AND BELONGING IN THE MIDDLE EAST



As the OzU Food and Migration project team, we will hold a panel session on "Foodways, Home-making, and Mobility" in the Middle East, at the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (IUAES) Conference in collaboration with the Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes (I.F.E.A) in Istanbul, Türkiye on September 6-8, 2023. The conference will host academicians working in migration studies from around the world.

IUAES CONFERENCE

September 6-8, 2023

METHODOLOGY TRAINING SERIES-2

October 2023



HOW TO UNDERSTAND "MENTAL MAPS"

Dr. Pınar Sezginalp Özçetin, one of our key researchers from Özyeğin University, will give a training on understanding mental maps and how to collect data through mental maps in an ethnographic research.

Example of a mental map from a Syrian woman in Istanbul



CODING STRATEGIES IN NVIVO



Our team member PhD Researcher Zeynep Yılmaz Hava from Istanbul Medeniyet University Sociology department will give a training on coding strategies in NVivo software program.

METHODOLOGY TRAINING SERIES-3

November 2023



FIELDWORK CHART



October 2022- July 2023

	Interviews	Mental Maps	Participant Observation (hours)
Istanbul	20	9	50
Gaziantep	17	7	25
Hatay	3	-	10

This qualitative project relies on ethnographic fieldwork in homes, including 150 hours of participant observation (50h per city), 60 life history interviews (20 per city) and 30 mental maps (10 per city).

CONTACT US

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>>> PROJECT WEBSITE

<https://foodandmigration.ozyegin.edu.tr/en>

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