

## Tackling Gendered Aspects of Acculturation Through Turkish Migrant Women's Experiences in Europe

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University, Cracow

July, 2021



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## **Resumo**

Os padrões e experiências de género em investigação sobre migração e aculturação começaram recentemente a ganhar algum reconhecimento, designadamente com o desenvolvimento de teorias interseccionais e transnacionais / da diáspora. Seguindo os avanços na literatura, o presente estudo teve como objetivo abordar as experiências de género de aculturação através da readaptação de diferentes domínios sociais do RAEM (Modelo Extenso de Aculturação Relativa) para interpretar os dados provenientes de entrevistas qualitativas com mulheres migrantes turcas em diferentes contextos europeus. Os resultados sugerem abordagens alternativas de conceptualização da cultura e, consequentemente, da aculturação no caso das mulheres migrantes turcas, além de apresentarem potenciais especificidades de género que surgem na intersecção de diferentes posicionalidades em diferentes domínios sociais. São discutidas diferentes consequências da forma como os domínios sociais se articulam no desenvolvimento de estratégias de aculturação das mulheres e na incompatibilidade entre as suas estratégias ideais e reais, com potenciais indicações e implicações futuras.

Palavras-chave: género, migração, aculturação, mulheres migrantes

## **Abstract**

Gendered patterns and experiences in the migration and acculturation research have recently started to gain recognition with the developments of intersectional and transnational/diaspora theories. Following the advancements in the literature, current study aimed to tackle gendered experiences of acculturation through readapting different social domains of RAEM (Relative Acculturation Extended Model) in making sense of the data coming from qualitative interviews with Turkish migrant women across different European contexts. Findings suggest alternative lines in conceptualizing culture and thus, acculturation in the case of Turkish migrant women, in addition to conceptualizing potential gendered peculiarities that may surface at the intersection of different positionalities across different social domains. Different consequences of how social domains intertwine in shaping women's acculturation strategies and the mismatch between their ideal and real strategies are discussed, with potential future leads and implications.

Key Words: gender, migration, acculturation, migrant women

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

*We don't have to have roots. Some are birds, and some are trees. And we should not be questioning this. Let the trees be trees, but if you are a bird, just accept it. Don't look for roots. Be happy where ever you go.* (Participant 15, 49 years old, Austria)

Above quote comes from a single Turkish mom who has been living in Austria for almost a decade now. Her reflection upon being a migrant woman, having roots, and feelings of belonging involve so many nuances and contradictions within itself, especially when details of her context are considered. Accordingly, migrant women's experiences are mostly found at the intersection of various power dynamics, thus bringing the question of gendered aspects of acculturation process and its consequences on migrant women.

Gender and/or gendered experiences have been stressed in the ethnic and migration studies in recent years starting from the 1980s. The categorization and conceptualization shift from "women and ethnicity/migration" to "gender and migration" in the 1990s, enabled novel ways of addressing specific gender-based issues and experiences to be examined without addressing women solely in relation to the family or the household (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2005; Bilge & Denis, 2010; Bürkner, 2011). Such improvement allowed a broader overview of the intersectionality among women's gendered experiences and how they are shaped by their encounters with various social power relations consisting of the intersections between race, ethnicity, religion, age, able-bodiedness, socioeconomic status, migration status and sexualities.

In the field of acculturation psychology, the most notable and influential model has been the fourfold model for immigrants' acculturation processes, integration being the ultimate goal for the success and well-being of the immigrants in the host society (Berry, 1997; 1998; Berry & Sam, 1997). Accordingly, four acculturation strategies (integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization) are introduced in conceptualizing how migrants maintain their cultural heritage, while adapting to the home country's social and cultural context. Within this approach, it is assumed that all individuals go through the same psychological process when they're adapting to the host society, thus making a universalist assumption regarding acculturating identities and practices.

Accordingly, alternative perspectives have been emerging in the field, and criticizing the dominating account in the acculturation studies, arguing that their universalist assumption lies under the logical positivist paradigm, whereby a social phenomenon is treated in a similar manner to any natural phenomena (Chirkov, 2009). Under these circumstances, acculturation has been studied in a mode of explanation rather than a mode of understanding, resulting in an adoption of universalist perspective that claims laws apply to social phenomena and human behavior universally. In return, most acculturation studies in the literature have fallen short in terms of understanding and interpreting the unique and dynamic nature of acculturation as a social phenomenon by depicting it as a predictable and controllable process. Moreover, Rudmin's (2003) findings outlaid within the historical context of

acculturation literature indicate the insufficiency of the widespread fourfold model in grasping different types of acculturation processes.

Structuring the transnational landscape through conceptualizing different social domains that surround migrants' lives, is an important way in understanding migrants' sociocultural realities (Navas et al., 2005). By identifying social domains (religious beliefs and customs, ways of thinking, principles and values, social relations, family relations, work and politics and government) in which individual acculturation attitudes and strategies might differ, acculturation is understood as dialectic process (Navas et al., 2005). Within this line, RAEM distinguishes between acculturation attitudes and strategies, through which acculturation is understood as a complex and relative phenomenon taking place on two levels: ideal plane (attitudes, options that individual ideally prefers) and real plane (strategies, options that individual ends up adopting in reality).

While incorporating gender as an analytical category in understanding migratory patterns and acculturation processes, conceptualizing gender as it is a matter that relates only to the household and the private domain is problematic, and has led the migration literature to be gender-blind for too long (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2005; Hall, 2020). As such, lately, many postcolonial feminist researchers have studied the alternative ways through which gender, migration, culture and power are embedded in one another (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992; 2005, Bürkner, 2011; Herrera, 2013; Falicov, 2017; Hall, 2020). Such research body has offered intersectional perspectives in understanding the transgression of public and private domains, challenged gender norms and relations, negotiation and reconstitution of self (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992; 2005; Hall, 2020) and how these relate to the embodiment of new social practices and activities in the context of migration and acculturation (Cresswell, 2012).

Accordingly, in all of the OECD countries women are doing the majority of domestic work, with Turkish, Mexican and Indian women spending the most and women in Nordic countries spending the least time (Miranda, 2011). Although there are divergences across countries, how this pattern has sustained in relation to the global intensification of migrant women's labor, provides an overview of how the maintenance of gendered power dynamics is contextually and structurally bound, shaping migrant women's realities in different ways. Migrant women's changes in their social practices, such as domestic and care work, with regard to their new context becomes an important site in examining gendered aspects of different social domains, such as work and family, that play part in the acculturation process.

There have been a lot of attempts to explain the phenomenon of women majorly accounting for the domestic work worldwide, and unpaid domestic work have been conceptualized and operationalized in various ways, across various disciplines (Rania, 2008; Herrera, 2013; Jung & O'Brien, 2017). Pointing out how this labor distribution also depends on macro factors such as national parental leave policies, the gendered power dynamics within the private space becomes also a matter of how public spaces and institutions are gendered, due to the very simple fact that sustaining a household translates into the

maintenance of all of the social institutions that make a society function in a certain way (Davis & Greenstein, 2013).

Therefore, this study arises in the context of Turkish women's migration and acculturation to various European countries, seeking to entangle how gender is embedded within the social domains of life through examining acculturation experiences of Turkish migrant women. In doing so, the study will have a particular focus on the gendered values and practices of unpaid domestic and care work, through which how different social domains interact with one another is explored. The structure of the content will follow a thorough examination of the literature regarding gender, migration and acculturation, introducing the relevance and importance of these issues in understanding and exploring the research questions regarding Turkish women's acculturation processes in different social domains. After the introduction of the methodology, justification for the methodology as well as reflections as a researcher, the study presents the findings in five main domains women's gendered experiences of acculturation are situated in, by re-adapting the Relative Acculturation Extended Model (Navas et al., 2005) domains. Following the demonstration and discussion of findings, results are summarized with remarks for future leads.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### 2.1 Gender, Migration and Acculturation

Drawing on Bilge and Denis' (2010) work on intersectional perspectives on migrant women's experiences, it is vital to attend to specific needs and rights of migrant women, since they entail gender-specific aspects of various power relations ranging from race and religion to age and sexualities. The gender-specific stressors that influence migrant women's adjustment and adaptation to the host society have been studied in various contexts. A multiple qualitative case study by Yakushko and Morgan-Consoli (2013) in the US for instance, presented four subordinate themes that have appeared in their analysis of eight interviews with migrant women. Gendered Adaptation, Gendered Resilience, Gendered Violence and Gendered Discrimination as the prominent themes in women's narratives, pointed out how women's experiences are shaped heavily by their gendered encounters in the context of post-migration. In addition to this, other studies have suggested that migration and acculturation change gender roles and relations, and a coherent understanding of specific challenges women encounter and coping mechanisms they develop throughout this process is important to tackle, as it would help situating women's experiences of gender within the particular context of their migration and acculturation (Bilge & Denis, 2010; Grabe & Else-Quest, 2012; Bürkner, 2011; Loh & Klug, 2012).

In the way of identifying gender-specific aspects in a particular context with a particular group of migrant women, Bilge and Denis' (2010) approach which considers multiple positionalities women occupy within the existing power relations such as race, gender, age and sexualities, is valuable. Accordingly, transnational intersectionality is introduced in recognizing women's gendered experiences among these various spaces in the context of diaspora or transnationalism (Grabe & Else-Quest, 2012; Hall, 2020).

### 2.2 Intersectionality in Migration Studies

The concept of intersectionality was first introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw, to address the double burden Black women in the US face because of the positionalities they occupy as both being Black and woman (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Following this, intersectionality approach has been utilized mainly to identify the differences in social positionings in the axes of different power relations, rather than a search for finding commonalities among experiences (Lutz, 2010, Hall, 2020). However, both gender and migration studies have fallen short in terms of addressing migrant women's particular voices and positions in the transnational context, through which migrant women were situated in a public discourse of "otherness" that was decontextualized from the gendered aspects of migratory processes (Lutz, 2010). With the contribution of intersectionality in both fields, gender, as one's "socially acquired and performed identity", started to be regarded as an analytical category. That is, gender asymmetries in different domains of life are started to be understood as a product of the social structure rather than categories of biological sex (male, female) demonstrated through statistical variations (Lutz, 2010).

Bürkner's (2011) review on the latest works in intersectionality in migration studies, brings a wider look to the intersectionality research in the literature and proposes a fourfold framework of inequalities depending on their temporal variability, context dependency, dynamics of social inclusion/exclusion and qualitative empirical reconstruction. He argues what he calls "a partial solution in reuniting the social structure and agency", therefore tackling the different dimensions of a problem that a group or individual encounters. Thus, intersectionality is demonstrated as a perspective that explicitly embraces the significance of dynamic elements when tackling the levels of inequalities. Ranging from micro-level interaction to representation and social structure, these elements shape various levels of human actions or social events due to their social, historical and political boundedness. Considering the dynamic nature of different social positionings individuals hold in the wider society, conceptualizing culture and acculturation is of utmost importance (Chirkov, 2009; Creswell, 2009) in situating women's gendered experiences in the context of host societies (Bilge & Denis, 2010; Grabe & Else-Quest, 2012).

### **2.3 Reframing Acculturation**

Raising valuable points such as lack of culture in acculturation studies, Chirkov (2009) disputes a mode of understanding through interpretation when studying acculturation. Accordingly, instead of seeking universalist explanations to human action or social event, understanding identity as something that is interwoven within the political and historical boundaries, enables a particular and specific interpretation of acculturation as a social phenomenon that encompasses micro-level interactions, representations and social structure as discussed by Bürkner (2011).

Drawing on Chirkov's (2009) emphasis on the historically and contextually bounded understanding of each action or social event, as well as their dynamic particularities, Creswell (2009) mentions "intentional states" when discussing the acculturation process. Intentional states are described as an articulation of understanding of actions or events in life when people organize their understandings of life. Through this, Creswell (2009) argues the socioculturally constituted nature of intentional states, which implies how the emergence of social events and individual psychological processes are linked in a way that Bürkner's (2011) approach focuses on reuniting the social structure and agency. Thus, understanding individual processes in relation to how they are constituted and embedded within the existing social structure, allows more thorough ways of situating individual experience in the wider societal context from an intersectional lens.

Drawing on Chirkov (2009) and Creswell's (2009) noteworthy points, Bhatia's (2002) conceptualization of acculturation with regard to postcolonial and diasporic theories appears to be valuable in terms of the dialogical model that is employed in understanding diasporic identities and practices of Third World immigrants in First World countries. Bhatia (2002) makes use of several theorists in order to contextualize immigrant experiences, with regard to their particularities within the different historical and political trajectories that they are in.



Accordingly, Bhatia (2002) mentions how psychology has only recently started to pay attention to the developments in diasporic and postcolonial studies, which has resulted existing acculturation models to be insufficient in terms of grasping the impacts of political and historical issues such as colonization and imperialism. Drawing on Hermans and Kempen's dialogical model (1998), Bhatia (2002) pays attention to the encounters of inequalities and injustices against non-European immigrants, pointing out how these encounters as well as their impacts on individual processes are rather minimized in the existing acculturation models.

Furthermore, Bhatia and Ram's (2009) study on Indian American's acculturating identities within the aftermath of 9/11 in the US shows how a non-western immigrant who would formerly be recognized as "integrated" and therefore successful, according to the predominant fourfold acculturation model (Berry, 1997 & Berry and Sam, 1997), can experience multiple psychological positions of being assimilated, separated and marginalized at the same time. In turn, this demonstrates how one's acculturation is bounded by social and political processes that surround them, calling for the significance of conceptualizing acculturation as something that involves various contradictions and tensions in negotiating and constituting one's identity and practices. The narratives that Bhatia and Ram (2009) examine in their study, depict how acculturation as a social phenomenon operates through the interplay between social structure, historical trajectory, set of rules within a particular culture and one's agency. History and culture are treated as interwoven with one's identity rather than as predicting group variables in understanding acculturation.

Drawing on the literature on intersectionality in reuniting the social structure and agency (Bürkner, 2011), Bhatia's conceptualization of acculturation with respect to historical and contextual trajectories, gives an opportunity to understand the discursive appearance of transnational diasporas and consequent transnational experiences of acculturation, which cannot just be characterized by concrete national boundaries. Rather, as Bhatia and Ram (2001; 2009) discuss, understanding acculturation, as well as the formation of diasporic identities and practices in today's world, can be through recognizing social and historical aspects of immigration with respect to the changes in the individual voices and positions that take place. Accordingly, this enables a wider overview on how the issues of culture, race, gender and sexualities intersect with one another in the context of acculturation when people negotiate and reconstitute their identities and social practices (Bhatia, 2002; Bhatia & Ram 2001; 2009; Grabe & Else-Quest, 2012; Hall, 2020).

#### **2.4 RAEM (Relative Acculturation Extended Model)**

Understanding the shifts in one's positions and the ways individuals choose to express their voice should be contextualized in order make sense different psychological positions of acculturation strategies an individual might develop in different domains of life (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2003; 2004; Salo & Birman, 2015). Within this respect, the domains that are introduced in RAEM (Relative Acculturation

Extended Model) are valuable in terms of conceptualizing the different social domains of life (Navas et al., 2005) through which the complexity of migrant women’s experiences can be examined.

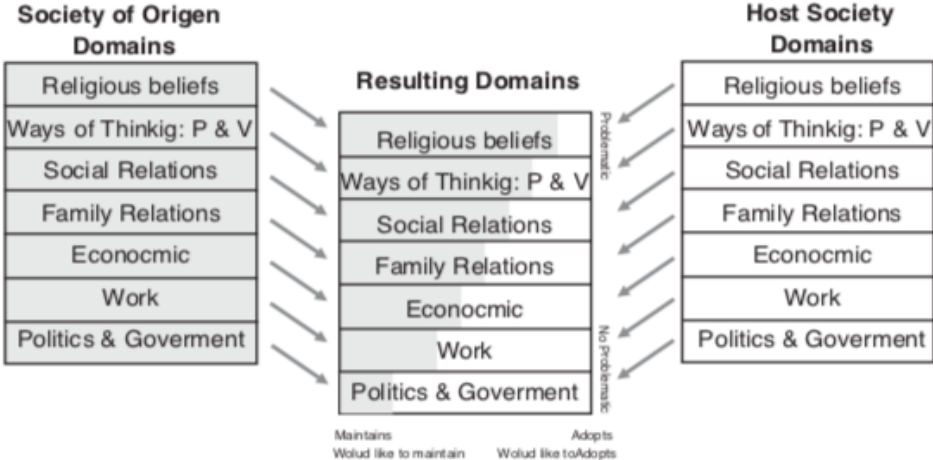


Figure 1.1 *The Social Domains in RAEM.*

Accordingly, RAEM (Navas et al. 2005) mentions seven different domains in understanding migrants’ acculturation strategies. The political and government system, work, economic, family domains and the ideological domain which is further divided into the subdomains of religious beliefs and customs and ways of thinking, principles and values. In turn, RAEM maintains a dialectic conceptualization of acculturation, where strategies adopted by migrants (as well as locals) depend on the negotiations they go through in the different social domains of life (Navas et al., 2007).

As one of the important contributions of RAEM’s conceptualization of acculturation compared to dominant fourfold model of acculturation (Berry 1997; 1998; Berry & Sam, 1997), RAEM consider acculturation on two levels: ideal and real. Accordingly, how ideal and real plans of acculturation strategies align in constituting different experiences of acculturation positions in different domains, and/or multiple psychological positions of acculturation in one or more domains, are among the distinctive features RAEM offers in distinguishing and making sense of acculturation attitudes and strategies. Within this prospect, acculturation is understood as a selective and relative process (Navas et al., 2007) that involves multiple mediations across different social encounters in the new context.

**2.5 Gendered Acculturation**

Exploring which ways and how migration and thus, acculturation itself is gendered requires regarding gender as an analytical category that is more than just a simple comparison of men and women (Bhatia & Ram, 2001; Herrera, 2013; Hall, 2020). In doing so, exploring how social domains of life are gendered, becomes a fruitful site in articulating the relationship between gender, migration and acculturation. In addition, how gendered categories, in terms of values, relations and practices people

hold, are often found to be challenged in the context of migration and acculturation (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2005; Herrera, 2013), making it a valuable site to articulate on the intersectional perspectives on migrant women's experiences.

Hondagneu-Sotelo (2005) presents an overview on gender and migration research by explaining it through three stages, last being the point of regarding gender as a constituent element of migration, therefore making migration gendered itself. In doing so, she frames this historical progress of migration and gender research under the social, economic and political paradigm it has built upon. In return, this allows a broader picture of how, for instance, worldwide corporate globalization has led to an intensification of Third World Women's labor, and thus how the research bodies started to recognize, acknowledge and study such shifts that have been shaped by the overcrossing paths of gender and migration.

The advancements in the migration and gender field through intersectionality approach allowed understanding gender in relation to other axes of power such as race, class, nationality or age, a shift in the literature characterized as a shift from gender mainstreaming to intersectionality (Herrera, 2013). Therefore, when exploring the shifts that occur in gender relations and practices in immigrant women's experiences, intersectionality approach appears to be important especially when situating women's voice and position (Bhatia, 2002) in the broader society in a way that doesn't oversimplify and minimize the particularity of their experience. Accordingly, the hierarchical structures in the society such as gendered power dynamics in different social domains can be tracked and addressed from migrant women's reflections upon their experiences.

## **2.6 How Does Migration Shape Migrant Women's Acculturation Process?**

Bhatia and Ram (2001) discusses the importance of regarding gender as an analytical category when understanding acculturation processes. In other words, how social issues such as colonialism and imperialism have different gendered repercussions matter in situating specific vulnerabilities, conflicts and tensions which migrant women's experiences may involve.

As Kwiatkowska (2010) illustrates, in the case of women coming from oppressive countries, or families, migration can become a powerful tool in women's empowerment and reclaiming agency. Making it on their own, being independent and alone, may influence the ways women perceive themselves, their social practices, as well as their gendered perceptions attached to those (Çakmak, 2010). Thus, the whole migration process and changes that accompany it, demonstrates how gendered power dynamics are negotiated within the different social domains. Accordingly, the exhausting literature regarding the unequal distribution of unpaid domestic work and its repercussions on women globally (Rania, 2008; Lachance-Grzela & Bouchard, 2010, Miranda, 2011), as well as how migration challenges existing gendered power dynamics both in the public and private domains (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992; Krummel, 2011; Yakushko & Morgan-Consoli, 2013), shows the importance of

understanding acculturating migrant women's experiences through observing the shifts in their paid and unpaid work practices.

Furthermore, different societal expectations from men and women both within (such as women expected to stay home, within the limits of the private sphere) and outside the household (such as men expected to find job and provide for the house) in the host country may also determine in which ways migrant women's social practices will be reshaped (Kwiatkowska, 2010). Differences in terms of gender roles and rigidity of existing gendered norms between women's previous and current cultural context may take part in how migrant women display different strategies in different social domains (Navas et al., 2005), in order to adapt to the new gendered paradigms within her context.

Accordingly, Espin's (1997) findings demonstrate how migration could end up in negative outcomes for migrant women, and mentions the "self-appointed guardians of morality and tradition" within migrant communities, who feel entitled to act responsible for migrant women's "moral conduct" within the migrant community. In other words, migration may end up further limiting migrant women's opportunities (by women's own migrant community in the host society, and/or perceived lack of support and discrimination received by the host society members), restricting the flexibility of their social practices and pushing them to develop new strategies to negotiate the ways they perform their social practices in different social domains (Espin, 1997; Yakushko & Espin, 2010; Özyurt Kılınç, 2014). Thus, how various contradictions and tensions form under different power axes such as race and gender are relevant to migrant women's experiences, in terms of how they make sense of their new cultural context and reorganize their identity and social practices (Espin, 1997).

## **2.7 The Connection Between Paid and Unpaid Work**

As Hondagneu-Sotelo (1992; 2005) suggests, in today's globalized world, migrant women's labor is one of the most undervalued and unrecognized form of labor, especially when it involves characteristics of unpaid domestic or care work which has been mostly associated as a gendered practice across various countries and communities. Although it has received several critiques in terms of epistemology and methodology, this global care chain, also described as feminization of migration mostly in the sociology literature (Herrera, 2013), continues to be a critical issue in diaspora studies focusing on women's experiences with respect to how gendered power relations take place in the transnational context.

Along this line, in her work demonstrating the connection between paid and unpaid work, Rania (2008) argued this interconnection through the characteristics of paid domestic work ranging from cooking to cleaning, which has also been one of the most undervalued and unrecognized paid job sectors that are heavily run by migrant women. Such connection reveals various aspects of not just migrant women who have been recruited in the paid domestic domain, but also in which ways paid and unpaid work are conceptualized, understood and practiced in the transnational context. Considering how the practice of unpaid work is directly related to various aspects of how an individual position themselves in paid work, examining migrant women's unpaid domestic work experiences offer a site to understand

how gendered power dynamics are negotiated in various different domains of life such as cultural norms and values, as well as family relations and social network (Rania, 2008).

Another important point to tackle when trying to examine the relationship between paid and unpaid work in migrant women's lives, comes from the very worldwide phenomenon, that women even in most gender-egalitarian countries - where women are as much as a part of the paid labor force - are doing the majority of the unpaid domestic work, including but not limited to daily household chores and child care (Miranda, 2011). Understanding how and in which ways this pattern is sustained in relation to the transnational context is significant, considering the importance of unpaid domestic work for not just the well-being of the members of the household, but also for the well-being of the whole society.

### 2.7.1 Incorporating Migrant Women's Work Practices in the Transnational Context

Examining migrant women's private and public sphere encounters in relation to their unpaid domestic work practices by no means imply an essentialist assumption on women's "natural" association with unpaid domestic work. Rather, the point is to recognize unpaid domestic work, as both a private matter that sustains various households mostly by women member(s) of the house (Lachance-Grzela & Bouchard, 2010; Miranda, 2011; Jung & O'Brien, 2017) and as a globalized chain that benefits from the cheap and informal labor of mostly migrant women from the global South (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2005; Herrera, 2013). By tackling how women's social practices are gendered with respect to their changing environments, identities and practices, changes that undergo in women's unpaid domestic work practices becomes a rich area to articulate on the acculturating migrant women's various negotiations within different contexts, thus making unpaid domestic work a matter of the public discourse as well (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2005).

Migrant women's changes in their domestic experiences becomes an important site for articulating gendered aspects of acculturation, considering the connection between unpaid and paid work in shaping acculturating migrant women's changing social practices or intentional states as put by Creswell (2009). Accordingly, unpaid domestic work and the gendered pattern that consists worldwide (Miranda, 2011), as well as the findings regarding the relationship between globalization and intensification of migrant women's labor (Herrera, 2013) demonstrate how unpaid domestic work is understood and practiced, transgress various social domains of life (for example economic, work and family) mentioned by Navas et al. (2005; 2007) in RAEM. Therefore, understanding women's changing experiences of unpaid domestic work in particular, while examining the changes in the interactions between different social domains in general, may provide an understanding regarding the connection between the social structure and individual realities. In other words, public matters become relevant within the household in terms of shaping migrant women's experiences, resulting in various transgressions between different social domains of their lives. In turn, understanding these transgressions that surround women's social practices in the host society, enables a conceptualization of how social structure and individual agency are linked to one another (Bürkner, 2011) in the context of migrant women's acculturation process.

## **2.8 Acculturating Turkish Women in Europe: A brief overview of the context**

Turkish diaspora constitutes one of the five biggest diasporas in the world today (Docquier & Lowell & Marfouk, 2008), which urges the importance of studying and understanding the diversity within the Turkish diasporic community in different contexts. A critical turning point that had strongly shaped the migratory patterns of Turkish people, can be traced back to the 1960s, where a lot of Western and Northern European countries recruited unskilled or semiskilled workers from Turkey to fill in their labor shortage after World War II (Aydın, 2016). Until the 1980s, Turkish immigration to these countries was characterized with labor recruitment purposes according to the agreements made between countries, followed by family reunification processes.

Following the labor migration, the political atmosphere in Turkey with the military coup in 1980, changed the face of the migratory flows into asylum seeking purposes of Turkish and Kurdish political refugees (Aydın, 2016), which underpinned the upcoming political instability and rising Islamic authoritarianism in Turkey in 2000s, transforming the demographic face of Turkish<sup>1</sup> migrants in Europe drastically (Türkmen, 2019).

### 2.8.1 Women in Turkey to Turkish Women's Migration to Europe

With the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, a more western and modern Turkish women image was portrayed by the secular reformation that aimed to abandon Ottoman heritages of sharia (Islamic sacred law). Following a series of gender reforms to abolish concepts such as forced marriage, polygamy as well as unequal civil rights for men and women, Turkish Republic created a modern and western woman image that mainly responded to the demands of a higher socioeconomic class, leaving women in more rural and remote regions of the country in a rather vulnerable position against the patriarchal structure that is embedded within the general cultural discourse of Turkey (Zeytinoglu & Bonnabeauis, 2015).

After the 1980s military coup, the feminist movement in Turkey started to recognize this portrayal as “state feminism”, which they argued, has created another form of patriarchal burden on women. Furthermore, feminists argued that, by creating an acceptable women category either as “mothers” or professionals in the area of domestic and care practices, state feminism has created another tool to subordinate women in the name of “modernity” (Durakbasa & Ilyasoglu, 2001).

Mostly characterized as highly hierarchical in terms of gender, age and social status distinctions, Turkish culture is identified as collectivistic as being high on interpersonal connectedness (Hofstede, 1980). Accordingly, Turkish households are generally are structured in a nuclear way, yet they are often functionally extended in the sense of displaying and receiving support and contact from one another

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<sup>1</sup> For the sake of fluent reading, the current study used Turkish and/or Turkishness to refer to people and women who have initially born, raised and socialized within Turkey, regardless of their racial, ethnic or religious differences. As such, the usage of Turkish migrant women refers to women who have emigrated from Turkey to Europe, thus including women belonging to minority groups (such as Kurdish or Circassian women) in the Turkish context who do not necessarily identify with the majority Turkish identity.

(Kandiyoti, 1974; Kagitcibasi, 2002). As such, there are various sociocultural factors that shape Turkish women's realities, such as having an urban or rural background. Although still having traditional roots in cultural values and practices, especially the educated urban young women are often found to display relative autonomy in their decisions regarding partner choice, marriage and career while still discussing these matters with the family. Furthermore, this is followed by shifts in the rigidness of gender norms and relations on taboo topics such as virginity and cohabitations without marriage (Sunar, 2005). Thus, as Kagitcibasi (1996) argues, Turkish culture presents features of a culture of relatedness. That is, modern urban Turkish youth tend to be emotionally, but not economically interdependent, what Kagitcibasi (1996) described as autonomous-relational self.

The already changing dynamics within the Turkish urban population signals the importance of tackling the cultural and familial discourse of different Turkish contexts in shaping Turkish migrant women's experiences across different European countries. As the Turkish urban modern youth do not have a role model in following a way of maintaining autonomous-related selves (Kagitcibasi, 1996) in the existing Turkish cultural discourse, what to take in defining point of reference for cultural background in younger Turkish migrant women's experiences of acculturation is questionable. Demonstrating drastic differences between traditional rural culture and urban culture, Sunar's (2005) review suggests the importance of considering women's particular cultural, familial and educational background when understanding their experiences in the context of migration.

Turkish women's entry to the migration literature mainly starts with the labor migration agreements signed between Turkey and Germany, Austria, the Netherlands and France, respectively during 1960s, which brought the family reunification processes that led a lot of Turkish women to migrate to reunite their families (Kadioğlu, 1997 & Aydın, 2016). By 1970s, Turkish migrant worker woman constituted the largest women migrant workforce in Europe (Kofman, 1999). Following the labor migration and family reunification processes of mostly migrants with rural/working class backgrounds, by the end of 1982, Turkish emigrant women constituted one third of the Turkish migrant community in Germany, in which the majority of the Turkish labor migrants live to this day (Kadioğlu, 1997).

However, especially after the 2000s, the autocratic conservative Erdoğan regime and the unstable political atmosphere in Turkey has led many people, men and women, to seek better education and job opportunities, as well as a stable social and political environment in Europe. Due to the complex migratory patterns along with the historical trajectory of migration from Turkey to Europe, the face of the Turkish migrant community has transformed drastically (Koser Akcapar & Yurdakul, 2009; Türkmen, 2017)

Within this line, it was recently found that, especially qualified and educated Turkish women are more likely to migrate than men, and Turkish migrant women are less likely to return to Turkey than Turkish migrant men (Elveren & Toksöz, 2017). Considering the complexity of Turkish migration to Europe, Turkish migrant women's particular reasons, motivations, struggles and general experiences with regard to migrating to different European countries are quite diverse, providing a rich area in

understanding how migrant women's experiences of acculturation can be situated within the gendered paradigms of different cultural contexts.

There has been a growing literature in understanding the Turkish migrant community's acculturation process within the labor-receiving European countries. Accordingly, studies focusing on the development of gender values in acculturating Turkish adolescents in Belgium (Güngör & Bornstein, 2008) and attitudes towards multiculturalism in Turkish-Dutch and Dutch youth in the Netherlands (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2003; 2004), found that, integration appears to be the prevalent strategy adopted within the public sphere by immigrants. On the other hand, many participants adopted separation in the private domain in terms of maintaining their cultural customs and values, including gendered conceptions and familial dynamics (Yıldız, 2017).

Although demonstrating the importance of considering different social domains when understanding acculturation processes, studies in the existing literature mainly focus on labor migrants and their following generations in their sample (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2003; Güngör & Bornstein, 2008). Standing outside the portrayed characteristics of the majority population constituting the European Turkish population, educated and skilled Turkish women with urban backgrounds and their negotiations in different social domains are particularly fruitful in understanding transnational appearances of different power relations. Therefore, by tackling the experiences of educated and skilled Turkish migrant women with different backgrounds and stories, the current study aims to address a very neglected group in the literature (Erel, 2009; Krummel, 2011).

While exploring the experiences of migrant women, in terms of how changes in values and practices take place, it's important to take migration and thus acculturation as gendered processes through which various tensions and contradictions in migrant women's narratives can be tracked. In doing so, it is important to address the nuances that appear in Turkish migrant women's experiences who do not necessarily fit into the mainstream "Turkish" identity and culture neither in Turkey, nor in their host country. Accordingly, along with ethnic discrimination, many other factors such as women's residency status and employment were found to add on to their acculturative stress in Germany (Bromand et al., 2012; Aichberger et al., 2015). Examining in which ways educated and/or skilled migrant women's acculturation experiences are shaped by different sociocultural paradigms and mediations among different groups, gives space to tracking how gendered power dynamics are negotiated in the transnational context by migrant women (Krummel, 2011; Ehrkamp, 2013).

## **2.9 Research Questions**

The new cultural context can be a determinant in terms of influencing how women relate to domestic work and how their gendered perceptions are shaped regarding the change in their experience of different social domains. In line with this, understanding the changes in migrant women's unpaid domestic work practices, provide a rich area in examining how different social domains might be interrelated to one another in the transnational context. Considering how migrant women are in constant



negotiation with regard to both their homeland and host lands cultural discourses, different social domains often transgress in complex ways for migrant women. Accordingly, women's particular experiences of different social domains may give insights on the gendered paradigms of each context where Turkish migrant women's experiences are situated. Therefore, this study will explore the following questions:

- What are the gendered aspects of migration and acculturation in relation to migrant women's changing social practices?
- How are Turkish migrant women's acculturation experiences socio-culturally shaped in different social domains?
- How do women's understanding and practices of unpaid domestic and care work<sup>2</sup> change throughout their migratory process?
- What does this indicate in terms of gendered aspects of different social domains in migrant women's acculturation processes?

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<sup>2</sup> Unpaid domestic and care work are conceptualized as including all the non-remunerated household chores (laundry, washing the dishes, going to market etc.) as well as child and elderly care if applicable (Miranda, 2011).

## **Chapter 3: Methods**

### **3.1 Justification for Methodology**

To answer the research questions, this study adopts an exploratory qualitative approach as suggested by many scholars in understanding how different voices and positions take place in the transnational context (Rudmin, 2003; Chirkov, 2009). Accordingly, qualitative analysis considers both participants' and researcher's interpretations of the phenomenon that is at stake, which is often described as a dual interpretation process (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Among other qualitative approaches in the field of psychology, IPA (Interpretative Phenomenological Approach) is employed in the current research, whereby the researcher decodes the ways participants constitute their meaning making processes of the social phenomenon. Thus, IPA allows the researcher to understand the particular experiences of individuals regarding an object or a social event. In addition, it encourages the researcher to be involved in a series of interpretative activities to formulate a descriptive analysis of in which ways a particular social phenomenon is unique (Smith, 1999; 2004; Smith & Osborn, 2008; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014).

The semi-structured interview questions are utilized in a way that would help understanding various contradictions that might appear in women's narratives (Hermans & Kempen, 1992). In return, the study aimed to explore gendered facets of various different social domains of life in the acculturation process. Turkish migrant women's own narratives were regarded as their interpretation of their current environment. As phenomenological approach suggests, women's experiences of migration and acculturation with their specific particularities are tackled through being a part of the interview process itself as the researcher (Smith & Osborn, 2008). In doing so, the researcher tried to be an active listener and contributor during the interviews, utilized her body language where applicable and repeated or asked questions to make sure her active engagement is well-received by the participants.

Such qualitative design in the matters relating to women's gendered experiences is found to give space to women to freely talk about their stories in relation to the topic under discussion (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992; Bhatia & Ram, 2009; Yakushko & Morgan-Consoli, 2013; Kılınc, 2014; Yalçın, 2015; Deniz, 2017). Accordingly, the online interviews start with a brief introduction of the parties, the overview of the informed consent form, semi-structured interview questions and the demographic questionnaire at the end of the session. Informed consent is taken orally, and is written down in the transcriptions, except for 2 interviewees who chose to sign and send the form online instead of giving oral consent.

### **3.2 Ethical Considerations and Reflections as a Researcher**

As a Turkish migrant woman myself, studying in Europe, it was particularly interesting and challenging to listen, understand, analyze and interpret Turkish women's stories. Among the various contradictions and nuances in their narratives, I have sometimes found anecdotes from my own experience in their voices. Communicating in the same language, coming from the same country (although with various

regional and cultural differences), and being migrant women in Europe were among the things that facilitated establishing rapport, and avoiding miscommunication due to language and/or cultural barriers.

In finding the balance between “faking” relationships and establishing genuine rapport with participants it’s important to be aware of the ethical dilemmas that comes with professionalization, or the commercialization of rapport for the sake of feminist research (Duncombe & Jessop, 2014). Therefore, keeping in mind how establishment of sincerity becomes even more complicated and challenging when interactions happen via online tools, is an important ethical aspect of my study that I gave a lot of thought on along the way.

There are a couple of reasons that online interviews are more challenging in establishing rapport and digging deeper on issues that may be a sensitive or taboo topic. First of all, although having the potential for allowing a geographically diverse sample, online interviews allow much less interaction, and they are more prone to misunderstandings and distractions during communication (La Iacono et al., 2016). Because everything relies on a stable Internet connection from both sides - the researcher and the participant, sometimes it was challenging to arrange the interviews, which might have also discouraged participants from engaging on a deeper level with the interview questions. Secondly, discussing issues such as religion or sexuality is more difficult. Since these issues might touch upon uncomfortable feelings and thoughts for the participants, talking about these via online tools was not an appropriate option. Thus, to not to cross any ethical or personal boundaries and due to circumstantial boundaries of online communication, the interview questions didn’t directly aim to explore these issues with this methodology.

### **3.3 Sample**

The current study recruited 24 Turkish migrant women (M=36) across different European countries (5 Germany, 3 Austria, 3 the Netherlands, 3 Portugal, 2 France, 2 from Italy, 1 Switzerland, 1 UK, 1 Spain, 1 Lichtenstein, 1 Sweden, 1 Greece, 1 Switzerland), via *Göçmen Kadınlar* (Migrant Women) Facebook group that consists of thousands of Turkish women living abroad, or plan to live abroad, as well *Göçmen Kadınlar Portekiz’de* (Migrant Women in Portugal), which involves Turkish migrant women in Portugal (used mainly for informal interviews). The criteria for joining the study is to be a migrant from Turkey, living in a European country for more than a year, and identifying as woman. As such, participants are all university graduates with one exception, while a considerable number of them are married (nineteen out twenty-four).

Table 3.1

*Demographic Characteristics of Participants*

	Age	Marital Status	Education level	Occupation	Country of residence	of Residency status (if applicable)
1	46	Married	Masters	Test Manager	Germany	Blue card - for highly qualified immigrants
2	32	Married	High school	Nanny	France	Family Residency Permit - has to be renewed after 2 years
3	40	Married	Bachelors	Currently not working, but had worked in banking	Switzerland	Citizenship (Netherlands)
4	36	Married	Bachelors	Web Developer	Germany	Permanent residency
5	31	Married	Bachelors	Software Developer	UK	Ankara Agreement <sup>3</sup>
6	36	Married	Bachelors	Foreign Trade Specialist	Portugal	Citizenship
7	23	Single	Bachelors	Customer Service	Portugal	Expired student visa - trying to get work permit
8	24	Single	Masters	CRM Operations	Italy	Temporary student visa
9	34	Married	Masters	Food Engineer	Germany	Citizenship
10	38	Married	Phd	Lab Technician	Austria	Temporary residency permit

<sup>3</sup> Ankara Agreement is a specific binding agreement between various European countries and Turkey that facilitates people working in certain job domains in Turkey to migrate to those countries (Bourguignon, 1990).

11	35	Married	Masters	Translation Consulting	& Liechtenstein	Citizenship - left Turkish citizenship
12	31	Single	Masters	Patent Consultancy	Germany	Blue card
13	25	Single	Bachelors	Student	Italy	Temporary student visa
14	60	Married	High School	Housewife	The Netherlands	Permanent residency permit
15	49	Single	Bachelors	Hotel Manager	Austria	Family union temporary visa
16	30	Married	Masters	Research Assistant, Phd	Spain	Under a special visa for UK citizens and their spouses, as her husband is British
17	46	Married	Bachelors	Unemployed	France	Family union visa for 10 years
18	38	Married	Bachelors	Project Engineer - Automotive	Sweden	Citizenship (after 9 years)
19	38	Married	Bachelors	Banking	The Netherlands	Permanent residency permit (after 5 years)
20	49	Married	Bachelors	Export Support Specialist	Germany	Permanent residency permit
21	39	Married	Masters	Unemployed	The Netherlands	Temporary residency permit
22	44	Married	Bachelors	Unemployed	Greece	Temporary residency permit
23	50	Married	Masters	Owens an IT firm	Austria	Citizenship
24	42	Single	Bachelors	Journalist - Content Reviewer	Portugal	Temporary residency permit

### **3.4 Instruments and Procedures**

With the review of existing literature regarding migration, acculturation, gender, as well informal face-to-face interviews in Lisbon, Portugal with Turkish migrant women, the researcher composed the semi-structured interview questions, along with the demographic questionnaire. After various brainstorming sessions with project supervisors and colleagues, the researcher finalized the materials. Ethical application was made through ISCTE-IUL (Parecer nº 10/2021). Data collection started after the approval of ethical approval. After agreeing on participation by reading the informed consent form, semi-structured interviews are arranged and conducted via online tools (mainly Facebook Messenger and Skype) with the participants, except for one that took place in Lisbon, face to face as Covid-19 restrictions allowed this at that point. However, with the intensifying situation of the worldwide pandemic, the study turned its methodology towards online tools completely. Following an oral or written consent to participate in the study, interviews with 24 women took place, approximately lasting between 1-2 hours. At the end of the interviews, women were asked to fill out a brief demographic questionnaire, and were debriefed about the whole procedure shortly. All of the English versions of the aforementioned materials can be found in the Annex.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

As mentioned earlier, the analysis utilized IPA, which result in a series of interpretative activities concerning what would it be like to stand in the shoes of person in question to make sense of the data (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Accordingly, IPA utilizes a combination of phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography in examining participants' meaning making processes of a certain phenomenon. By focusing on how individual make sense of their environment, phenomenology, while attempting to understand individual's mindset, hermeneutics, IPA establishes an in-depth examination of each participants' account with the purpose of centering the particularity of experiences, rather than making general statements about them.

By utilizing the domains introduced in the RAEM (Navas et al., 2005), the current study attempts to tackle the gendered aspects of these domains, for the purpose of underpinning how social processes such as acculturation are gendered. The interviews are transcribed into Microsoft Word documents, and transported to Nvivo for further analysis. Starting with one case, the analysis gradually aimed to identify emergent sub themes within each RAEM domain. By following dual interpretation process, the researcher aimed to decode the ways participants make sense of their environment. Taking detailed notes in each participants' accounts resulted in clustering emergent themes under the potential RAEM domains.

Each woman's accounts were read multiple times in their own perspective, following the premises of idiographic approach in IPA, to see how the RAEM structure would best fit in exploring the existing data. Grouping the sub themes to understand the patterns among the collected data resulted in merging the two sub domains in the original ideological domain, as well as merging the original work and

economy domains. Therefore, the study re-structured and adapted the RAEM domains and formed new sub domains that reflect gendered facets of each domain. In turn, sub themes in each domain are grouped under five main social domains illustrated in Table 4.1: Cultural Norms, Values and Ways of Thinking, Family Relations, Social Relations and Social Activities, Work and Management of Economic Means, Politics and Power Relations. More detailed examples supporting the explanations of each identified domain and subdomain can be found in Annex C.

## Chapter 4: Findings

Table 4.1 demonstrates the final structure of re-adapted RAEM domains, through which this study aimed to tackle intersectional perspectives regarding migrant women's livelihoods in the host country. In doing so, five domains, their subdomains, and their respective frequencies are presented. As it can be seen from the frequencies of each subdomain, it becomes clear which subdomains represent more the private domain (one's own cultural values, customs and routines) at the individual level, and which ones represent the more macro level factors (politics and power relations) as suggested by Navas et al. (2005). Below, each domain and their relevant subdomains are briefly presented.

Table 4.1 *Readapted RAEM domains, subdomains and frequencies*

Social Domains	Sub-domains	Frequency <sup>4</sup> of unit analysis	Frequencies <sup>5</sup> of participants	
Cultural Norms, Values and Ways of Thinking		492	24	
	a. Bargaining with different cultural expectations as migrant women & mothers	309	24	
	(i) Within the Household	57	20	
	(ii) Outside the Household	94	24	
	b. Cultural identity and feelings of belonging	130	24	
	c. Religion and making sense of the world	15	10	
	d. Self-reflection and self-care	35	16	
	Family Relations		203	23
	a. Power dynamics within the family	106	23	
	b. Support from the extended family left behind	13	10	
c. Upbringing of children	67	14		

<sup>4</sup> Frequencies of unit of analysis indicate how many times respective domain or subdomain has been identified.

<sup>5</sup> Frequencies of participants indicate how many participants have mentioned the respective domain.



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	(i) Concern over children's well-being	7	6
	(ii) Differences in practice of raising children	11	8
Social Relations and Social Activities		262	24
	a. Interactions with within the own migrant community	48	14
	(i) Hindering factors	7	3
	(ii) Supportive factors	11	10
	b. Interactions within locals	123	22
	(i) Seemingly positive or subtle forms of prejudices	13	10
	(ii) Racialized femininities	5	4
	(iii) Feelings of trying to prove yourself	16	11
	(iv) Feelings of receiving support and empathy from locals	17	8
	c. Social activities and socializing practices	84	23
Work and Management of Economic Means		216	24
	a. Economic Independence	17	10
	b. Paid work	99	22
	(i) Migrant Women Entrepreneurship	4	3
	(ii) Gendered patterns in paid job sectors hindering or facilitating acculturation	12	10

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		(iii) Deskillization & flexibilization of migrant women's paid work	19	8
	c. Unpaid work		98	22
		(i) Deskillization & flexibilization: consequences on gendered power dynamics	12	4
		(ii) Gendered patterns in unpaid job sector hindering or facilitating acculturation	14	14
Politics and Power Relations	a. Xenophobia/ Racism		32	14
		(i) Discrimination over country of origin	9	7
	b. Gender-Based Discrimination & Violence		12	7
	c. Islamophobia		8	4
	d. Experiences of social institutions and policies		40	17
		(i) Observations from migrant women & mothers regarding educational institutions	12	7
	e. Residence and work permit		15	8
	f. Sociopolitical environment of Turkey		24	13

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#### **4.1 Domain 1: Cultural Norms, Values and Ways of Thinking.**

Being the predominant domain in terms of frequency, this domain mainly refers to the ideological domain in the original RAEM and concerns a wide range of values, norms and attitudes shaped under an individual's sociocultural world. This domain is further distinguished into four subdomains.

4.1.1 Bargaining with different social expectations as migrant women & mothers. Specifically referring to how women reconstitute and negotiate different societal expectations both inside and outside the

household in the context of acculturation, this subdomain is the most frequent domain among all other subdomains, being mentioned by all participants.

(i) Within the Household. Being mentioned less than outside the household experiences, this category refers to women's various negotiations within the household in the context of their acculturation. By "within" the household, the researcher conceptualized this category as constituting women's particular experiences in the boundaries of the private sphere, mainly the conflicts with partners and/or family members, or the distribution and negotiation of domestic and care work.

(ii) Outside the Household. Referring to a wide range of contexts such as work or social relations, this category aims to cluster women's negotiations outside the household. Being mentioned more than the within household experiences, this category includes how women will negotiate their identities, values and practices in different social encounters such as interactions with locals, or experiences of social institutions.

4.1.2 Cultural identity and feelings of belonging. This subdomain conceptualizes how women relate to and position themselves in terms of cultural identity and feelings of belonging to her new context. It is the second most mentioned sub-domain within this domain, and is identified in all women's accounts.

4.1.3 Religion and making sense of the world. Being one of the least mentioned sub-domains, this subdomain mainly refers to how women relate to their religious heritage and religion in general.

4.1.4 Self-reflection and self-care. Appearing as an important mechanism that migrant women turn into in the context of acculturation, self-reflection and self-care narratives were mentioned by 16 women.

*I learned to heal myself, I am a bipolar patient, and I have refused my condition for years. I lived on the edge of suicide. Back in Turkey, I had money and I was going to the doctor. When I came here and felt helpless, I learned to turn into myself. By confronting and accepting my issues, my mind turned into mechanic mindset. If this is the problem, what are the steps for solution? What are the alternative steps? Take all the support you can get, from friends, relatives, the government, even hiking in the forest. I learned that I can solve my problems with a more mechanic mindset (Participant 15, 49 years old, Austria).*

## **4.2 Domain 2: Family Relations.**

This domain includes both the family left behind, and family in the new context if there applicable. Therefore, family relations refer mainly but not necessarily, to migrant women's experiences of positioning themselves within the family.

4.2.1 Power dynamics within the family. Being identified in almost all participant's accounts with one exception, power dynamics within the family is the most appearing theme within the domain of family relations. By family, both the family in the home land and host land are referred.

*I always had fears with my mother and my older brother, because I just started living with my boyfriend recently in Germany. And I was intimidated to tell them. I told them a bit after we moved in together, and I left a softening period in between to say things like I'm staying over at his house tonight. And as a matter of fact, it was like this in the beginning. I just told them a bit late. And then I realized that their attitude towards me has changed completely, and they have this mindset of "be safe and you can do whatever you want". My mom is already an open-minded woman but my older brother is a jealous man raised within the Turkish culture. So, I thought it was going to be difficult, but it wasn't! I transformed, and they're also transforming too! (Participant 12, 31 years old, Germany)*

4.2.2 Support from the extended family left behind. Specifically appearing in migrant mother's accounts in terms of extended family being a support mechanism in child care, this sub domain is identified in ten of the participants' narratives. It also includes received support from the extended family left behind in other topics such as economic support.

*When being a migrant woman gets together with being a mother, there are always new responsibilities. There's the dilemma of being a mother in the Turkish culture as opposed to being a mother in the local culture. There are implicit differences, and for example I don't have the luxury to call my mom to leave my son for a couple of hours. (Participant 11, 35 years old, Lichtenstein)*

4.2.3 Upbringing of children.

*Of course, my husband's mother takes care of him sometimes, but I have to tell my schedule to her one week beforehand. So, you need to plan, there isn't much flexibility. So, I started to give more from myself as a consequence of being both a migrant woman and a mother. Of course, this is a personal choice, and I am sure there are other women who do it another way and do it better. But for me to feel good in terms of how I take care of my child, I need to make more compromises from myself, hoping that this is a temporary period in life... (Participant 11, 35 years old, Lichtenstein)*

(i) Concern over children's well-being. Mostly arising in the context of migrant women being worried about their children due to the perceived downwards mobility ladder in educational institutions, this category represents migrant mother's concerns over perceived systemic discriminations against their children or being discriminated against themselves in front of their own children.

(ii) Differences in practices of raising children. This category represents discrepancies women express in practices of raising children due to various factors such as cultural, generational or religious differences between them, their parents and/or their partner.

*My domestic work practices especially changed a lot after I got married, because I was living alone before. Back then, I used to clean every edge of the house, and I was constantly doing laundry and changing the sheets. When I got married, I realized that this is not actually very necessary. It's enough to vacuum the house once a week. When my son was first born, I was cleaning the house floor with detergent like crazy. Cultural differences... My husband (who is German) said that if I keep doing this, he will get allergies, and that I should let him walk normally. Seriously, Germans can put a baby on the road while the baby is at the crawling stage. So that he or she can experience the sand or the asphalt. And then they put their hand in their mouth... If a Turkish mom would see this, she would have a heart attack... (Participant 9, 34 years old, Germany)*

### **4.3 Domain 3: Social Relations and Social Activities.**

Concerning one's social network and environment, this domain also includes newly developed and/or changed social practices in the new context.

4.3.1 Interactions within the own migrant community. This sub-domain was identified to conceptualize migrant women's experiences regarding their interactions within the Turkish migrant community in their respective host country. It is identified in 14 women's accounts, distinguishing into hindering or supportive outcomes for women.

(i) Hindering factors for women. Being mentioned by 3 participants, the frequency of hindering factors within the interactions among the own migrant community is rather low, compared to the supportive factors.

*The only time I remember being harassed was in a bar, by a Turkish man! I was wearing something sexy, and I was in a small group, talking with friends. When he came, he was a bit drunk. He tried to hit on me. I said no and told him that I am not interested. He turned to me and said, "you dress like this, open your everywhere, but you don't give it to anyone!" I was shocked, because I hadn't had such an experience since I left Turkey, it has been like 20 years. The owner of the bar was a friend of mine, so I went to him to tell the situation, and he kicked him out of the bar. This was the only incident I remember, and it was by a Turkish man! That's why I strongly believe it's easier to be a woman here than in Turkey. (Participant 23, 50 years old, Austria)*

(ii) Supportive factors for women. Being identified in 10 women's accounts, solidarity within the migrant community and between the women within the migrant community are mainly discovered and clustered into this category. Digital forms of solidarity and their further positive implications will be discussed in relation to Turkish migrant women's acculturative process.

*For example, I had a good relationship with METU (Middle East Technical University) Graduates Association in London, and I looked for a similar association in Geneva when I first came here. I can say that I used their help a lot. I even found my job in*

*London with the help of them. There was this group emails being forwarded to members about job opportunities in banking sector, and I answered one of them to apply for the position. This was one of the biggest supports I felt (Participant 3, 40 years old, Switzerland).*

4.3.2 Interactions within locals. Appearing more frequently compared to interactions within the migrant community, this subdomain further distinguishes into four categories that group migrant women's particular experiences.

(i) Seemingly positive or subtle forms of prejudices. Being mentioned by 10 participants, microaggressions and their repercussions on migrant women's acculturative process are conceptualized within this category.

*I'm a conference translator, and speaking Turkish fluently and accurately is very important to me. So, I try to teach this to my son as well. So, whenever people watch us from outside and hear us speaking, they ask: "which language are you speaking?". When I tell them that it's Turkish, they tell me "but it doesn't sound like Turkish". And they say this in a way that I should be happy about this, like it's a compliment. It might sound positive inside but what if I sounded "Turkish"? It makes me uncomfortable to feel like this (Participant 11, 35 years old, Lichtenstein)*

(ii) Racialized femininities. Referring to the experiences of marginalization at the intersection of race and/or religion and gender, racialized femininities is the least mentioned category within this subdomain.

*I never heard that their (migrant men) personal choices such as their decision to migrate is being questioned, they are free to follow their personal choices. But I have been asked these harassing questions multiple times: "You came here because you were not comfortable in Turkey, no?" or "Were they forcing you to wear the hijab there?" I don't think they are being subjected to these questions like us, so I believe they might be a bit more comfortable than migrant women. (Participant 9, 34 years old, Germany)*

(iii) Feelings of trying to prove yourself. This category mainly refers to the feelings towards locals that stem from an attempt or urge to validate one's identity and distinguish from the mainstream image of "Turkishness" in Europe.

*There's a very big divergence (between me and the main part of the Turkish population). There are some people, even Europeans who might appear as conservative, which really surprised me in the beginning. When you encounter them, you feel the need to prove to them that you are from a different profile than that other type of Turkish people. Because if you don't establish this, it can be a totally different relationship. (Participant 19, 38 years old, the Netherlands)*

(iv) Feelings of receiving support and empathy from locals. Being the most mentioned category within this sub-domain, positive feelings towards social encounters with locals are conceptualized.

*The reason I feel very good about everyone I have met here is that they have more ideas about Turkish politics than Turkish people living in Turkey. And this makes them empathetic. They have a dictatorship history. So, they're able to empathize with people who are currently going through dictatorship. And you feel understood, even though it's hurtful to talk about it, you feel glad.* (Participant 24, 42 years old, Portugal)

4.3.3 Social activities and socializing practices. This sub-domain refers to a wide range of social practices, activities and hobbies, as well as migrant women's changing perceptions and practices of socializing and establishing their social network.

*In Turkey I was a woman who often traveled, had a social environment, was politically engaged and taking initiative when necessary. It is like this also here. For example, when I was in Athens, if the workers did a demonstration, I went to support them. There was pride, there was woman's day... Nothing changed in terms of these. I maintained the way I exist in this life also in Greece. I went and found the feminists, socialists, Rum people (Greeks who used to live in Turkey). If I found a social network here, I found it thanks to the way I maintain my life. Probably my positive experience regarding socializing with locals here also partly comes from me being Kurdish* (Participant 22, 44 years old, Greece).

#### **4.4 Domain 4: Work and Management of Economic Means.**

As a combination of Work and Economy domains in the original RAEM, this domain involves women's experiences of unpaid and paid work, as well as their experiences regarding being economically dependent or independent.

4.4.1 Economic Independence. Being mentioned 17 times, this subdomain refers to migrant women's perceptions, negotiations and ideals in terms of being economically independent.

*Being economically independent is a really important for women, especially if you are a migrant. This is really about how you live, how you look at life. For example, I say to myself always that if something were to happen to our relationship, even if I am 60 years old, I would manage my own way. Hypothetically, if this marriage ended, I would go back to my country, find a job and work. And knowing this, knowing that I am self-sufficient, makes me feel in peace* (Participant 22, 44 years old, Greece)

4.4.2 Paid work. Appearing in all participants' accounts with 2 exceptions, this sub-domain distinguishes further into three identified patterns which are constituted by migrant women's perceptions and experiences of paid work.

(i) Migrant Women Entrepreneurship. Being mentioned 4 times in total, making it the least frequent category within this subdomain, this category is mainly constituted by migrant women's initiatives and/or dreams of building a platform where they can use their existing skills as both a mean to adapt to the new context, as well as to make money out of it.

*I took some courses and tried to improve my job-related skills. I already have some hobbies, such as handcraft. And especially in these corona times where you miss your loved ones who are far away, you start putting more of your time in these. I try to encourage myself to display my work and sell it online. I haven't put enough effort yet, I know that I need to improve my photography to take good pictures, but still, I gave it a start. At least a hobby can become sort of an economic means this way. If it wasn't for corona, I was planning to open a counter on the weekends, because we have enough time here to do these things. We are already lonely.* (Participant 5, 31 years old, the UK)

(ii) Gendered patterns in paid job sectors hindering or facilitating acculturation. Refers to the identified gendered patterns in paid job sectors that may hinder or facilitate acculturation. It has been mentioned 14 times in total by 10 participants.

*Maybe what I am about to say will surprise you, but even though women are more comfortable in general, due to my special situation regarding the sector that I am working in, I worked in places with more women in Turkey. Here, they don't really prefer women in this field. So, I feel a bit alone as a woman at work here. I work in the automotive sector, and I used to work in the same sector in Turkey. There used to be more women in the sector in Turkey.* (Participant 1, 46 years old, Germany)

(iii) De-skillization & flexibilization of migrant women's paid work. As the most frequent category within this sub-domain, it is constituted by women's experiences and/or perceptions of deskilling and flexibilization of their work due to migration.

*Flexibility... I decided to become a conference translator when I was 11 years old. And I focused on this goal in all of my educational life. My bachelor degree, my master degree is in this field. And this was my dream job. I found my dream job, and I was so happy. Then I moved here. My language combination was English-Turkish here, and it was impossible for me to continue the conferences with this language combination. I decided to add German to my language combination. But this also created one of the turning points in my life, and I took the decision of whether to become a translator, or a migrant... And I gave up on my job, I migrated. I'm unhappy right now because I lost my job. I'm trying to find alternatives. I have added German to my combination. I started to do community translations in German-Turkish, but it is not the same as conferences, I don't enjoy it as much... At the same time, I work as a German teacher, but that's not enough either. Long story short, I'm still in the search for finding a job here that will satisfy me.* (Participant 11, 35 years old, Lichtenstein)



4.4.3 Unpaid Work. Being mentioned by all participants except 2 women, unpaid work conceptualizes migrant women's perceptions and experiences towards unpaid work practices (mainly domestic and care work).

(i) De-skillization & flexibilization: consequences in the household. This category is identified directly in relation to women's deskilling and flexibilization experiences in the paid work subdomain. As such, this category involves women's various negotiations in the household, which stem from women's perception of being overlooked, de-skilled and even unemployed.

*... Therefore, when I am at home, I feel like I have to integrate household chores to my life somehow. And the main argument that we have with my husband is that he talks about "helping" me. For example, he thinks that if he empties the washing machine, that's helping me. And we start to fight over this. No, you are not helping me! And he replies, "okay, I'm supporting you", but no, these are all wrong words to use. If this is a household chore, we have to do it together. You helping or supporting me, means that these are primarily my responsibility, which is not true. (Participant 11, 35 years old, Lichtenstein)*

(ii) Gendered patterns in unpaid job sector hindering or facilitating acculturation

*We have this dream with my husband... When I start to work, he will quit his work, be in charge of the household chores. But I cannot trust him. If he will not do it as I do, I will be doing two jobs then. And I do not have the possibility to have a cleaning lady like in Turkey, it is expensive here. Everyone has their job. Because I don't work right now, having to do all this housework does not bother me. This is really my job right now. Because there is no one else to do these. If I was making my own money, I could find someone to help me. So, because I am not economically independent, I am supporting my family this way (Participant 21, 39 years old, Netherlands)*

#### **4.5 Domain 5: Politics and Power Relations.**

Being the least mentioned domain in terms of frequencies, this domain refers to the perceived political configuration of social order and positioning in social hierarchies in migrant women's acculturation experiences, and has been identified almost all participants accounts (twenty-three out of twenty-four). The sub-domains usually overlap with one another. The implications for intersectionality research will be discussed further.

4.5.1 Xenophobia & Racism. This subdomain refers to the instances of perceived racism and/or xenophobia by migrant women, and is the most frequent sub-domain within the domain of Politics and Power Relations, being mentioned by fourteen participants out of twenty-four.

(i) Discrimination over country of origin. This category refers specifically to the perceived prejudice, discrimination and/or violence towards Turkish migrant women, due to their country of origin. It has been identified among four women's accounts.

*One time I ran into this woman when I was walking my dog. She came to me and asked if the dog was mine or not. When I confirmed, she asked me if I am sure that I am not a pet sitter. And I said, no. Then she looked at me and said, “but it is a very expensive dog, how can it be yours?” I understood her concern as it is very common here to steal dogs. Then she asked me where am I from. When I said I am from Turkey, she started to say “They usually don’t like animals in your country. How come you have one now?”. She didn’t want to let me go, and I am sure if I didn’t keep calm to answer her she was going to call the police. (Participant 2, 32 years old, France)*

4.5.2 Gender Based Discrimination & Violence. This sub-domain refers to women’s experiences of feeling discriminated against due to being a woman in their context. It has appeared in seven women’s accounts out of twenty-four.

*Especially after my son was born, I have been subjected to discrimination a lot. My husband is German, and interestingly, my son looks mostly like him. Ginger head, blue eyes, very European. When he was a baby and we got into the bus together, obviously I was speaking in Turkish with him, because I wanted him to learn Turkish as well. I have received warnings multiple times by old ladies, “What if your employer heard how you talk to the child? He is going to be stupid, don’t talk to him like that!” Mostly I did not answer because I was with my son, but every time I went home crying. I think this happened to me both because I am a woman and a migrant. (Participant 9, 34 years old, Germany)*

4.5.3 Islamophobia. Mainly referring to women’s perceptions and experiences of facing negative prejudices and being discriminated against, due to being Muslim (or due to being considered to be Muslim because of the Turkish background). It is identified among four women’s accounts.

*There is the huge Islamophobia, but French people do not see it as Islamophobia. They think of this as normal. Especially when I was looking into citizenship applications, there are questions like “Were you shocked by the terrorist attacks?” What am I supposed to say to this? No, I enjoyed them a lot? There have been so many terrorist attacks in Turkey, we are already wounded on this. Why would I like to see that in another country? (Participant 2, 32 years old, France)*

4.5.4 Experiences of social institutions and policies. This sub-domain, being mentioned by seventeen women out of twenty-four, mainly involves general experiences regarding social institutions and policies, such as experiences in immigration offices, police or the hospital, as well as perceptions towards policies such as maternal leave policies.

(i) Observations from migrant women & mothers regarding educational institutions. Referring to a specific aspect in the experience of migrant women and mothers, this category includes women’s observations and perceptions towards educational institutions.

*A girl says “Dirty Turks” to a friend of my son. The families met, and they also met with the administration to discuss this issue. The Turkish family whose son was offended, wanted an apology. But then there was corona, and the whole process was kind of forgotten. Anyway, the way education works here depends on the suggestions of teachers, who refer the families to appropriate high school options that fit to their child’s skills and interest the best. And generally, because they know that Turkish families don’t know the language, or the parents don’t necessarily follow their children’s school, they refer rather low-level educational options to Turkish children. They give suggestions like this. This is a bleeding wound here. The parents need to follow their children really well. (Participant 21, 39 years old, the Netherlands)*

4.5.5 Residence and work permit. Mainly refers to women’s experiences and negotiations surrounding bureaucratic limitations of residence and work permits, and has been identified in eight accounts out of twenty-four.

*I have experienced something regarding domestic violence. But I didn’t report it to the police, because I was intimidated by my husband. There’s an association here for cases like this, so I asked for their help. They even had Turkish-speaking consultants. I saw a Turkish consultant there, but we couldn’t intervene with some stuff due to bureaucratic boundaries, because I didn’t have a permanent residency permit back then, which was limiting under those conditions... (Participant 4, 36 years old, Germany)*

4.5.6 Sociopolitical environment of Turkey. The worsening situation of Turkish sociopolitical context, being the second most frequent sub-domain within this domain, has been identified as both a trigger for emigration from Turkey and a motivation to not to return to Turkey. It has appeared in thirteen participant’s narratives out of twenty-four.

*I am happy. Of course, I miss my family back in Turkey, but I am happy to be in Germany as a woman. Especially considering how the situation in Turkey is unfolding, I am very happy to be in a place where I don’t have to constantly check my back while walking on the street, or where I can go and defend my rights any time here. (Participant 9, 34 years old, Germany)*

## Chapter 5: Discussion

The current study attempted to tackle Turkish migrant women's acculturation experiences in different European contexts. In doing so, the study adopted a qualitative approach in examining women's various acculturation strategies and their consequences in different social domains of life, according to the readapted version of RAEM (Navas et al., 2005). The findings of the study suggest a re-conceptualization of acculturation where the intersection of various structural paradigms such as race and gender can be incorporated in making sense of different social hierarchies. In doing so, what the (mis)match between women's ideal and real planes of acculturation strategies represent in terms of the contextual boundaries are discussed in relation to the findings. Following, alternative ways of conceptualizing culture and acculturation are suggested, with the premises of RAEM structure in explaining how multiple positionings of acculturation strategies are possible in different social domains. Lastly, by discussing how different domains and subdomains relate to one another, the study attempted to tackle the ways gendered paradigms are constituted and maintained in the transnational context.

### 5.1 (Mis)Match Between the Ideal and Real Plans: Stories from Migrant Women

Coming back to the first research question on how women's acculturation experiences are socio-culturally shaped in different social domains, as the results suggest, although there is not always clear indication in women's narratives regarding the "ideal" as opposed to the real acculturation strategies, the appearing themes in each sub domain and how they align in shaping women's strategies is noteworthy. By discussing different examples of how the (mis)match between different acculturation strategies are determined in a certain domain (Navas et al., 2005), this subsection articulates on how the (mis)match of acculturation strategies give insights regarding the contextual boundaries of particular domains and sub domains.

In the case of Participant 11 for instance, who is a migrant mother expressing difficulties towards having to give up her social and family relations back in Turkey to be with her family in Lichtenstein, her case relates to different domains such as Work - both paid and unpaid - cultural norms, values and ways of thinking as well as family dynamics. There is clear mismatch between the ideal and real planes in the case of her acculturation strategies in different domains. More specifically, she prefers the support of the extended family, yet in reality she does not have access to it due to migration. She does not consider going back and raising her children in Turkey due to the complicatedness of Turkey's sociopolitical context. Although not clearly indicating it, she talks about her life in İstanbul as the "ideal" by remembering it positively, but she also mentions how her husband, coming from Lichtenstein, would not be able "survive" in Turkey in general. Thus, being an important determinant in shaping her real strategy, as opposed to her ideal one, the Turkish sociopolitical context appears to shape the mismatch between her ideal and real plans. Demonstrating how Politics can be influential in determining the mismatch between migrant women's acculturation strategies, this mismatch consequently extends to other domains in various ways.

One of the most emergent themes in the Family Relations domain, the possibility of receiving help and support from the extended family in child care as a migrant woman becomes more challenging in the context of migration, especially for single mothers, or mothers who do not feel well-supported by their spouses. Therefore, migration might hinder women's acculturative process in terms of taking away an important support mechanism for women that might have been more likely to be available to them in the home country (Naidu, 2013; Gilmartin & Migge, 2016). The importance of this support may vary depending on various factors such as spouses' involvement in child care, existing gendered power dynamics in understanding and practicing child care, general existing preconceptions in the new context regarding gender roles and relations, as well as women's own preconceptions of gendered encounters through various mediations between her home and host country cultures. Regardless, in the context of being alone in a different cultural context, losing the possibility of receiving support from the extended family in the case of child care, appears to negatively influence women's well-being, consequently hindering the acculturative process.

Accordingly, in the family relations domain, Participant 11 expresses that she has adopted the cultural components of Lichtenstein which is closer to the mainstream Turkish discourse in terms of associating women as being in charge of domestic and care work. Although she indicates preferring a strategy closer to "marginalization", she has to "integrate" to her existing conditions in reality. In return, this results in direct influence over her practice of unpaid and paid work, as well as how she relates to and practices cultural norms, values and ways of thinking. Putting additional burden on her unpaid work because she has to take care of her son with little support, as well as the migratory conditions that does not allow her to adopt a work opportunity that she is equipped with, participant 11's case demonstrate how the domains of potential contextual constraints in the domains of work, family and cultural values, which may overlap in hindering women's acculturative process. Furthermore, her case illustrates the mismatch of acculturation strategies on different planes as a consequence of these contextual constraints which are embedded in the social, political and cultural fabric of her environments.

Similarly, Participant 10 expresses concerns regarding having children in the context of migration is important, especially her observations regarding the downwards mobility ladder for children of migrant descendants. Directly being in relation with the perceived hierarchical structure and double standards within the educational institutions in the politics and power relations domain, migrant mothers' concern regarding the quality of education their children receive is noteworthy. Considering the literature indicating this downwards mobility ladder (Pásztor, 2010; Crul, 2013; Bingöl & Özdemir, 2014) and negative prejudices (Schiff, 2014) for children of migrant descendants, being mother in the context of migration appears to create additional stress on migrant women over being concerned for their child's well-being in the face of unequal power relations that may surface in social institutions such as schools.

In the case of this pattern that seems to persist across different cases mainly in some Western European countries (Crul, 2013; Bingöl & Özdemir, 2014; Schnell & Crul, 2014), it's viable to say that

there's a mismatch between women's preferred strategy, as opposed to what they actually end up doing in the domain of experiences of educational institutions. Although the literature is rich in terms of demonstrating this educational downwards mobility ladder and its individual and group consequences (Pásztor, 2010; Crul, 2013; Schnell & Crul, 2014), the studies mainly focus on second generation migrant children's experiences. Yet there is not much focus on Turkish families and children of Turkish descendants who do not hold a guest worker background. Therefore, migrant mothers' observations regarding educational institutions, which have been identified in the contexts of the Netherlands, Switzerland and Austria in the current study, signal the importance of recognizing migrants and migrant women as heterogeneous groups.

Therefore, women's adopted strategy regarding this experience in reality stays within the boundaries of the *other*, or "marginalization" and "separation", while migrant women try to push their way into a strategy to become more "integrated" and to make themselves and their children less the *other*. Demonstrating the importance of contextual boundaries, as well as gendered paradigms in the transnational context, the (mis)match between migrant women's ideal and real strategies in different social domains become indicators of how social structures are linked to individual realities (Bürkner, 2011). In turn, understanding the (mis)match between ideal and real planes regarding migrant women's acculturation process, sheds light to the particular contextual boundaries of specific social domains and their gendered consequences on migrant women.

## 5.2 Alternative Approaches in Conceptualizing Culture and Acculturation: Changing the Point of Reference

Even though this study did not aim to shed light to such conceptualization in detail, formulation of women's acculturation strategies can be tackled in a way that would reformulate the particularity of their experiences. As such, another line to follow in making sense of women's narratives would be to consider the point of reference where women's cultural background is situated in. In line with the literature, most of the women in the current study's sample, for instance, indicated the gendered inequality and rising Islamic authoritarianism in Turkey as one of the main triggers of their decision to migrate and not return, while expressing feelings of alienation towards the social, cultural and political discourse of Turkey (Elveren & Toksöz, 2017). Therefore, one could not possibly argue women's level of belongingness to the Turkish cultural identity and practices, unless the study that is at stake aims to specifically address and conceptualize this aspect of acculturative process in migrant women. Accordingly, understanding and conceptualizing home country's culture, is understood from the participant's particular point of reference, their own familial background, educational level and socioeconomic status. Within this line, one could argue this strategy that was previously conceptualized as "x" can be reformulated as "y", allowing space for contradictions that stem from women's different positionings in the transnational context.

In the case of Participant 23, for instance, she mentions being verbally assaulted by a Turkish man in Austria, which she indicated was the first and last time she had ever got assaulted in Austria. Her experience extends to various domains, yet the most evident one appears to be in the social network domain, mainly concerning women's own migrant community within the host country. Expressing being harassed and insulted by a Turkish man in a bar while she was having fun with friends years ago, she emphasizes how this is the one and only time she got harassed by a man in Austria in this way. Her experience is important in terms of demonstrating the importance and influence of one's own migrant community within the new country's context. Although in different ways, there were other women indicating different negative experiences with Turkish men in their new context, which has constituted the "hindering factors" for women in the sub-domain of Interactions with Own Migrant Community.

This is not to say that gender norms and Turkish culture is globally oppressive or backwards. Rather, the point is to demonstrate the particular experiences of Turkish women when being confronted with certain cultural codes, as well as reproduction and negotiation of those codes in the transnational context (Çakmak, 2010; Ehrkamp, 2013; Hall, 2020). As such, it's important to recognize in which ways Turkish men's racialized masculinities take part in explaining this pattern of them appearing to be "moral guardians" who feel entitled to think and behave this way towards Turkish migrant women.

From the Participant 23's narrative, it becomes evident that her experience strongly extends to the cultural norms, values and ways of thinking domain as well. Participant 23, a woman who strongly detests Turkish masculinity culture and rather embraces and promotes gender egalitarian European discourse, indicates how she has always felt this way due to the way she was raised, even before coming to Austria. Coming from an open-minded family in İstanbul, she mentions how the patriarchal cultural structure in Turkey was a strong factor in her decision to migrate to Austria. Therefore, her adopted strategy matches her ideal strategy, and it seems like this perceived match was one of the important determinants for her to migrate from Turkey and settle in a European country. Being practically convenient because of her educational background (coming from the Austrian High School in İstanbul), her adopted strategies in the domains of social network and cultural norms, values and ways of thinking, appear to be situated among integration and assimilation strategies. However, to be able to choose one strategy that fits best to her situation, it is important to consider the point of reference, as she indicates feeling detested the gendered hierarchy in Turkish culture as an important motivation for her to migrate in the first place. Therefore, a different conceptualization of culture and cultural background of women with regard to specific gendered paradigms, may reformulate the way migrant women's real and ideal acculturation strategies are recognized and conceptualized.

5.3 Interrelatedness of Different Social Domains in Explaining Gendered Experiences of Acculturation  
As Navas et al. (2005) argues, the domains which migrant women's acculturation strategies are situated in, are interrelated to one another. Therefore, change in one domain, brings potential changes to other domains. Before discussing the how different social domains relate to one another in the case of Turkish

migrant women, it is important to understand the different levels of domains. In doing so, Cultural Norms, Values and Ways of Thinking for instance, represent one's more inner experience of certain cultural customs and routines. Migrants usually tend to preserve their host country heritage in this domain, as it is recognized as one's private sphere, thus becoming a zone for private action (Berry & Sam, 1997). Although it is possible to find Cultural Norms, Values and Ways of Thinking extending to every domain in terms of being embedded in one's cultural practices in every aspect of their life, domains of Family Relations and Social Relations are especially found to be included as one of the "hard core" of the culture of origin.

In line with this, experiences of Work and Management of Economic Means and Politics and Power Relations, constitute a rather peripheral aspect of country of origin (Navas et al., 2005), and it is often found that migrants tend to incorporate host country's cultural components more easily in making sense of these domains, as these domains mainly constitute zones of public action. Below, the intersection of different social domains in determining the gendered and contextual paradigms that shaping Turkish migrant women's experiences are discussed, in relation to the existing findings in the literature and potential leads.

Cultural Norms, Values and Ways of Thinking extends to all the other domains and subdomains by constituting one's "inner" experience of the acculturation process and cultural shifts in terms of negotiating gendered norms, values and behaviors appear in the new context (Navas et al., 2005). As such, Turkish migrant women's experiences of this domain come with various nuances and contradictions, as the sample is composed of middle to highly skilled and educated Turkish women, who do not necessarily fit into the mainstream "Turkish" image, resulting in a discrepancy in their cultural identity and feelings of belonging (Türkmen, 2017). As Participant 1, an engineer woman in the automotive sector in Germany indicates, migrant women find ways to highlight their identity as not being part of the mainstream "Turkish" image, which is mostly constituted by the characteristics of coming from less educated and more rural backgrounds of Turkish labor migrants. Therefore, most women's indication of not necessarily identifying with "Turkish" or the "host country" identity, appears to reflect the discrepancy that Turkish women perceive in their social encounters with the locals.

However, this discrepancy appears to operate differently depending on the context. As such, subtle forms of prejudices such as not looking, or sounding Turkish might have different outcomes for migrant women in terms of match between preferred and real acculturation strategies. For instance, whereas in the context of Liechtenstein, under participant 11's conditions, being described as "not looking" or "sounding" Turkish is a seemingly positive prejudice that might make migrant women uncomfortable and hinder their acculturation process, in another context, such as Portugal, a similar rhetoric might result in a totally different form of experience for a Turkish migrant woman.

Indicating the importance of contextual paradigms, historical trajectories as well as individual differences (Bhatia & Ram, 2001; 2009), these two women's cases present in which ways a prejudice towards a certain group, individual, nationality or ethnicity is constituted, practiced and received by the



recipient. In the case of Participant 11, she chooses to adopt an integration strategy when being faced with subtle forms of prejudices that make her uncomfortable. Thus, she expresses negative feelings towards this over-generalization that she encounters in her daily social relations, yet she keeps speaking Turkish with her son in the supermarket. Even though she keeps going to the supermarket, participating in social relations while knowing the risks that she can be indirectly judged and feel uncomfortable, she maintains her linguistic heritage and further aims to transport it to her son. Therefore, her strategy within this domain can be conceptualized as integration, as she does not stop interacting with locals and she keeps answering them while being annoyed, yet she is clear and insistent about wanting to maintain her linguistic heritage (Berry & Sam, 1997). However, her experience of integration demonstrates how integration does not necessarily indicate positive acculturation processes or enhanced well-being for migrant women, supporting Bhatia and Ram's (2001; 2009) findings in contextualizing acculturating identities.

On the other hand, in the case of Participant 24, although indicating receiving similar comments in the line of "You don't look Turkish", she perceives these prejudices in a much more positive way, and feel supported by the locals when confronted with such comments. Her being alone, single, being Turkish in Portugal, where Turkish population is rather low compared to Lichtenstein, her social circle and established social and work network are probably important factors that take part in shaping her positive experience in Portugal. Therefore, her ideal and real strategies indicate a match constituted by integration strategy, especially in the domains of social relations and cultural norms, values and ways of thinking. By having a positive impact on other domains such as Social Relations and Social Activities, the difference in terms of perceiving these kinds of comments among women's experiences, is mainly determined by contextual paradigms of migrant women's environment.

Although religion, religious affiliation and faith were not mentioned as much compared to the other sub domains in the Cultural Norms, Values and Ways of Thinking domain, Participant 16, who is a 30 years old woman, married and living in Spain as a Phd candidate, expresses how religion and faith became ways of understanding and making sense of her new context. She indicates the differences she has been through in terms of religious affiliation and faith, within the migratory process. Expressing feelings of loneliness and having more time to self-reflect due to migration, she mentions how her faith has grown and that she has channeled her attention to spirituality and religion to mediate between the struggles of being a migrant woman. Although one could potentially categorize her strategy in this domain as "separation" as she does not adopt the religious affiliation of the host country and presumably gets more attached to her home country's religious values (Berry & Sam, 1997), the way she positions her relationship with religion and spirituality is noteworthy. Particularly, the way she understands and practices religion and spirituality differ from the mainstream Turkish discourse, and she mentions how this as one of the reasons that she started to feel more faith: she has the freedom to believe and practice whatever belief, in which ever way she wants, unlike her experience regarding the Turkish societal context. Giving her a space to freely introspect, question and reflect on her processes and values, while

being away from the rigid religious discourse of Turkey on purpose, contribute to the match between real and ideal strategies, through which Participant 16's acculturative process is facilitated within this domain.

Because she does not maintain her home country's religious heritage, nor she attempts to adopt host country's religious heritage, her strategy within this domain could be placed as marginalization (Berry & Sam, 1997). In her context and under her conditions, this strategy influences her well-being positively by facilitating her acculturation process, further contributing her in establishing new social activities and socializing practices such as watching movies and reading books about different religions, thus directly having an impact on Social Relations and Social Activities domain. Her strategy can be rooted back to her cultural background in Turkey, as she indicates being raised in a Circassian culture that tried to avoid "assimilating" into Turkish culture. Therefore, being born and raised in a minority context within Turkey, appear to underpin her strategy of marginalization in the context of Spain as she mentions her background as one of the main reasons for her to not feel like she belongs in her new context. Being constituted by the interrelatedness of different domains such as Cultural Norms, Values and Ways of Thinking and Social Activities and Socializing Practices, Participant 16's experience shed light to how one's cultural background might be influential in shaping their acculturation strategies and their outcomes.

Mainly being constituted by how Turkish migrant women situate themselves and bargain with the changing familial dynamics both in the homeland and the hostland, Family Relations domain is composed of three main patterns that potentially extend to other domains as well. As such, changes in the familial dynamics that allow women have more freedom in terms of their social life, appear to be an important element for migrant women to experience migration positively. Accordingly, this finding confirms the existing literature in terms of migration providing economic and social independence, thus, lowering the chances of women wanting to return back to their country of origin (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Messner, 1994; Elveren & Toksöz, 2017).

However, it is important take into consideration the different circumstances that influence women's acculturation strategies, and consequently their acculturative process. For instance, in the case Participant 11, who has expressed concerns over her occupational future in the host country, the negotiation of family dynamics between her and her husband, appear to be a conflictual issue that prevents her from proceeding as she wishes with her job. Indicating a drastic change in her domestic work experiences between Turkey and Lichtenstein, she mentions not being married and not being a mother as important determinants of this change. Therefore, the changes in her familial dynamics, also result in conflicting situations among her and her partner when it comes to bargaining of household chores and taking care of their child, extending to the Cultural Norms, Values and Ways of Thinking Domain. Consequently, these changes result from mainly how her practice of Work (both Paid and

Unpaid) domain has changed, presenting an example of how different domains relate to one another in shaping women's experiences of migration in general. As such, Participant 11 expresses a discrepancy between her ideal and real strategies, mostly in the domains of Work, Family Relations and Cultural Norms, Values and Ways of Thinking, which directly influence one another in the case of Participant 11.

Confirming the findings of Kagitcibasi (1996, 2002) in terms of emotional but not economic interdependency among Turkish families with urban backgrounds, not having the extended family as a support mechanism when taking care of the child in the host country appears as an important stressor for migrant women with urban backgrounds. Whether this stressor is mediated by spouse's involvement and cultural differences in child rearing practices is not clear, especially in the case of Turkish women married to local and/or European men in the host country context. In line with the previous literature, most migrant mothers expressed not being able to "get out of" the mother role, which would have been possible if they were raising their child in their home country (Naidu, 2013; Gilmartin & Migge, 2016).

However, in some cases, women also indicated being happy for raising their children outside of Turkey, both due to the sociopolitical environment in Turkey, as well as due to perceived cultural and generational conflicts in raising children between women and their extended families. Accordingly, although indicating potential perceived conflicts in child raising and motherhood, conflicts between family left behind are found to be diminished and/or positively transformed in the transnational context for most migrant women in the sample in reality. Therefore, women's experiences of motherhood depend on the available support systems mainly from the extended family left behind, yet this does not complete the whole picture. Although seeking their support, migrant women often indicated perceived potential conflicts in terms of their extended family getting too much involved with the way they raise their child and live their life. Consequently, Turkish women's acculturation attitudes and strategies regarding child raising in the transnational context are found to be contradicting, confirming the ambiguity stemming from hybrid cultural identities of autonomous related selves (Kagitcibasi, 1996; 2002) in the European context.

Finally, women participants in intercultural relationships, appear to identify cultural differences in raising children which sometimes result in conflicts among partners, challenging the power dynamics within the family. Mostly being related to the Cultural Norms, Values and Ways of Thinking, how gendered power dynamics will be negotiated between couples coming from different cultural backgrounds, depend partly on the power dynamics between couples in different domains, such as Work and Management of Economic Means. As such, women who do not posit economic independence and have the burden of domestic and care work heavily on them, appear have more negative experiences in terms of their well-being and feelings of belonging in the host country. Furthermore, women usually described their economic dependency as a bargaining source in explaining why they are accounting for

the majority of the unpaid work in the household. In line with the literature (Inowlocki, 2016), this power structure is found to be further amplified when the husband is the positing both the economic means and permanent residence/citizenship in a European country.

Social Relations and Social Activities domain is mainly conceptualized across three sub-domains, interactions within the own migrant community, interactions with locals and social activities and socializing practices. As such, these three sub-domains are strongly related to one another, shaping women's experiences of socializing with different groups.

For instance, two migrant women indicated being harassed by a Turkish man in the host context. Although their experiences and understanding of the incidents differ on many levels, both have mentioned these incidents as a source of stress, which almost resulted in return to the home country in the case of Participant 7 who has come to Portugal to study and make money in the first place. Indicating how one's own migrant community can be both an advantage and a disadvantage, Participant 7 indicates how she was able to overcome this issue with the support of the Turkish community in Portugal. Therefore, how women's experiences are situated among the Turkish migrant community in their respective country matters. As such, communication and socialization through digital tools such as Facebook migrant groups are referred many times by migrant women as an important support mechanism that they have appreciate a lot in the context of migration.

For Participant 23 who is a retired mother in the IT sector in Austria, she expresses strong detest towards the Turkish masculinity culture. Furthermore, she indicates purposefully avoiding the Turkish community in the host country, both due to being harassed by a Turkish man for what she was wearing that night and because she tries to avoid the Turkish gendered discourses which she has never identified with. Thus, for Participant 23, what she has been through in the host country, in addition to her particular educational and cultural background as coming from an urban modern family in Turkey, become strong motivational factors for her to stay in the host country and not to go back to Turkey. Relating to the Politics and Power Relations domain in terms of Turkish sociopolitical and cultural discourse being a motivation for Participant 23 to avoid going back to Turkey, her experience demonstrates the peculiar consequences of how different domains are intertwined in shaping women's acculturation strategies under different circumstances.

However, support from the own migrant community, as well as locals is also emphasized, surpassing the hindering the aspects in terms of frequencies. Thus, especially in the migratory context, Turkish migrant groups establish their own network which appears mostly as supportive factors for migrant women. In addition, Turkish migrant women and their woman to woman groups (both national and international, mainly on digital platforms, such as the one this study has used), are especially expressed as an important socialization mechanism by migrant women.

In line with this, women often expressed moving along a tendency towards individualism, mostly indicating the time that they have due to migration and its consequent loneliness as triggers. Mentioning the changing feelings towards this shift in valuing individuality and boundaries, women generally expressed either neutral or positive feelings towards having the time to self-reflect on themselves. In return, they expressed how this enabled recognizing and respecting individual boundaries even when it is family, indicating a big change from the Turkish cultural discourse. However, women's social practices in the family and social relations domains show no clear indication towards individualism or collectivism, therefore, partly confirming the findings of culture of relatedness (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1996; 2002). In which ways urban Turkish migrant women maintain the autonomous-related self in different European contexts is still ambiguous. While some indicate adopting and encouraging certain characteristics of the host country in these domains, how local family members and friends relate to one another was often described as "insincere", demonstrating the urge to maintain the emotional interconnectedness in the transnational context. Thus, as the current findings suggest, Turkish migrant women's bargaining in different gendered paradigms of especially Social and Family Relations domains, constitute an important determinant in shaping their acculturation experiences.

Moving on to the experiences in the Work domain, constituting presumably the less hard-core spheres of life (Navas et al., 2005), the persisting patterns are identified mainly in the Paid and Unpaid Work domains, as formulated before. Accordingly, how unpaid and paid work experiences of women extend to various domains and subdomains, is understood while keeping in mind how unpaid and paid work lies along a continuum, and have profound influences on women's lives in general (Rania, 2008). In line with the literature (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2002; Sunar, 2005), the findings further illustrate how gendered patterns in paid and unpaid work domains, may facilitate or hinder Turkish women's acculturative process, depending on women's particular experiences in the host society.

For instance, indicating a particular gendered pattern in her particular occupational setting, Participant 1 expresses feelings of being alone at the office, due to the gendered nature of her job in the automotive sector. In her case, what she does for living appears to be directly linked to other domains and subdomains of her life, such as her unpaid work practices, as well as her familial relationships. Presenting a case that stands outside the Turkish mainstream gendered understanding of the household, her experience in terms of how her paid work has direct influence over other domains of her life is noteworthy. Due to the fact that she participates in a highly male-dominated occupational setting, her understanding and practice of unpaid work, as well as familial dynamics, become an outlier among the mainstream gendered discourse surrounding unpaid domestic and care work.

Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the gendered structure in the paid work domain has the potential to directly influence migrant women's experiences in other social domains, such as familial dynamics and unpaid work practices. In addition to pointing out the importance of interrelatedness of

the domains with one another, Participant 1's experience is noteworthy in reflecting how gendered structures are evident in different domains, shaping migrant women's experiences in different ways.

On another end, women employed in different job domains in the sample, which are not necessarily in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) field, face challenges of deskilling and flexibilization of their work, which may have drastic impacts on other domains that surround migrant women's lives. In line with the literature demonstrating lower employment rates (Holland & de Valk, 2017) and/or higher inactivity (Demireva, 2011) levels of Turkish migrant women in different European contexts compared to local women, educated and skilled Turkish migrant women's experiences of deskilling and flexible employment entail various contradictions.

As such, although not being mentioned frequently compared to the other sub domains in this domain, women who indicated experiences of deskilling and flexibilization of their labor due to migration expressed how they bargain their ways to make economic means from different social activities and hobbies, such as handcraft or cooking. In line with the literature demonstrating different examples of migrant women entrepreneurship (Kavuş, 2019), experiences in this regard are expressed often in a positive way by Turkish migrant women in the sample. Accordingly, how women attempt to negotiate their economic independence is noteworthy in terms of demonstrating how social activities and managing economic means and paid work activities may overlap in positively influencing acculturative process.

In another example of deskilling experiences, participant 11, who is a married migrant woman in Lichtenstein, formerly worked as conference translator in Turkey, mentions the flexibilization of her work experiences, resulting in the flexibilization of her unpaid work experiences as well. Consequently, this results in changes in her unpaid work practices with an increased responsibility on her shoulders, as well as increased conflicts between her husband and her. In addition to illustrating how different social domains are gendered and interrelated, her experience also exemplifies how migrant women in intercultural relationships will negotiate the gendered power dynamics within the household. Creating changes in terms of the family dynamics domain as well, the gendered pattern surrounding migrant women's paid work experiences is important to acknowledge, to better understand how different domains are gendered and related to one another.

Considering how the type of paid work influences the way gendered dynamics are negotiated in the household, it is significant to conceptualize paid and unpaid work as a continuum (Rania, 2008). In doing so, the characteristics of the paid work women do, or the skills they have, are found to not being recognized and acknowledged in the host country if they do not entail the characteristics of masculine or male-dominated jobs such as in the experiences of two women participants who are engineers in the automotive sector in Germany and Sweden. Consequently, these two women's experiences of household

in terms of negotiation of gendered power dynamics and distribution of unpaid domestic work appeared as outliers among the general sample. As such, both women indicated very gender-neutral perceptions and experiences in making sense of the world.

In addition to this gendered aspect of paid work, it is also important to recognize racialized and commercialized aspect of unpaid work, which operates mainly through migrant women's overlooked labor and efforts (Rania, 2008; Kilkey et al., 2010; Lutz, 2010). Although the current study did not aim to recruit migrant women participants specifically working paid work domains such as cleaning and/or caring, acknowledging this global pattern facilitates pinpointing how middle to high class Turkish migrant women's understanding and practice of unpaid work has changed in relation to their paid work experiences.

As such, Turkish women coming from backgrounds of full-time paid work life and white-collar jobs (constituting most of the sample) in Turkey, indicate how their unpaid domestic work practices have been challenged drastically with migration. In line with the literature in terms of illustrating how the perception and practice of recruiting migrant or local women domestic workers informally in the households (Yazgan et al., 2017), Turkish migrant women usually mentioned various shifts in family dynamics in terms of negotiation of gendered power dynamics regarding the distribution of the household chores, as well as child care when applicable. Therefore, although most migrant women indicate a pattern towards self, self-care and individualism, all of the participants except two, expressed how their experiences of unpaid domestic work has either remained the same or intensified after migration. The intensification of this pattern usually appeared for women migrating for their husband's work and/or their family, along with the risks and experiences of deskilling and flexibilization of women's paid work.

While this study focused on migrant women's particular gendered experiences, having an intersectional lens provides a broader understanding in situating how different contextual paradigms take part in shaping migrant women's realities (McCall, 2005; Hall, 2020). The global care chain, or feminization of migration, does not only have an impact on migrant women who are the main subjects of the phenomenon, who are concentrated in the caring and cleaning paid jobs in wealthier countries (Rania, 2008; Kilkey et al., 2010; Herrera, 2013). Rather, the way this phenomenon is understood and tackled is important in tracking the consequences of this phenomenon on different groups and individuals. Therefore, while this global care chain is reflected upon unskilled Turkish migrant women who are increasingly becoming more concentrated around the cleaning and care sectors of paid job markets in (Ünlütürk Ulutaş, 2013), deskilling and flexibilization of skilled and educated Turkish women's work in various European countries, suggest the importance of understanding the different levels of an issue that is being questioned.

Being constituted by the maintenance of social order as well as intersection various power axes in the wider society (Navas et al., 2005), Politics and Power Relations mainly involve the more macro level determinants of women's well-being, which may surface on different levels of social encounters such as institutional ones. As such, how migrant women's experiences lie at the intersection of mainly gender, race and religion as systems of power, indicate the importance of tackling acculturation as a contextual phenomenon that has gendered repercussions.

For instance, Participant 4, who expresses having faced domestic violence at home, mentions not officially complaining about the situation due to the fear of complicating the residency process for her in Germany. Thus, she keeps living with her husband to not to risk the chance establish a permanent approval to live in Germany. Because her residency depends on family union, she expresses the limitations of her situation which do not necessarily result in a discrepancy between her ideal and real strategies. Rather, her experience illustrates an example of how the (mis)match between different acculturation strategies, although depending on personal stories and factors, is heavily bounded by contextual paradigms. Thus, a woman's non-European position which requires her to have a residence permit to live in Germany, extends to different domains of her life such as Family Relations (mainly between the perpetrator husband and her), as well as Unpaid Work and Economic Independence subdomains.

Mentioning to have an intern salary which is not enough to sustain herself at the moment, she indicates how her economic dependency influences the power dynamics and the way unpaid work is negotiated within the household by her. Thus, she negotiates her economic dependency in return for mainly providing for the unpaid domestic work in the household, through which, she aims to stay long enough in Germany to get a permanent residence without her husband. As such, her contextual boundaries of being a non-European migrant woman, create various obstacles on different levels, hindering women's acculturative process in different domains and negatively influencing their well-being. Confirming the literature in terms of Turkish women having the feelings of being more obliged with the private sphere to be considered and feel "good" as women and mothers (Sunar, 2005), how the transnational appearance of this pattern might become a further vulnerability source in the case of non-European migrant women is illustrated by the findings. Accordingly, constraints of residence and work permits, feelings of not being wanted due to your racial/cultural/religious background and risks of deskilling appear to contribute in shaping how migrant women may use unpaid domestic work in negotiating economic dependency and consequently, residency.

Confirming the findings of Bromand et al. (2012) and Aichberger et al. (2015) in terms of residence and employment status being predictors of acculturative stress, the current conceptualization of social domains and their interrelatedness indicate how this stress is embedded as a part of the non-European identity in different social domains, thus, surfacing in different forms and levels in shaping how



women's ideal and real acculturation strategies will align. Therefore, rather than taking issues of residence and employment status as predictor variables, the current study incorporates these as interwoven with one's cultural identity and practices. Consequently, these issues faced by non-European migrants intersect with different power hierarchies such as gender in the case of migrant women.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

An important finding of the study offers a critical understanding in approaching different acculturation strategies in the case Turkish migrant women. As migrant women's narratives reflect, different backgrounds, stories and social positionings (both in homeland and hostland), may have drastic influences in the way migrant women adopt acculturation strategies within the boundaries of their new context. Therefore, under which conditions different strategies of integration, separation, assimilation and marginalization are formed, practiced and experienced, have different consequences on different levels for migrant women's livelihoods in the host country.

In line with this, the findings suggest that, the point of reference can be questioned when making sense of women's cultural background and practices, which may not necessarily indicate an acculturation strategy that can be solely categorized as one position. Rather, Turkish migrant women's experiences suggest how acculturation strategies, may also take the form of a continuum, where the shifts within different strategies occur on different levels across time and space.

Furthermore, the study found that how the ideal and real plans match or mismatch in the case of Turkish migrant women, depends heavily on their various negotiations in different social domains, yet, are determined by structural constraints. More specifically, bureaucratic concerns and residence status requirements faced by non-Europeans, risks of deskilling and unemployment as a consequence of migration, gendered and racialized Turkishness in some European contexts, may accompany and shape the challenging changes in the in one's social relations, family dynamics, work environment, as well their cultural norms, values and ways of thinking. Therefore, how women's ideal and real strategies align within their particular contextual boundaries appear to be an important determinant for the well-being in the host society in terms of negotiating gendered power dynamics in different social domains.

Lastly, offering a conceptual framework in situating experiences, the study attempts to tackle the interrelatedness of different domains through women's narratives. In turn, how different domains and subdomains are linked to one another, provide valuable insights in terms of the how gendered power dynamics are negotiated in different social domains in the case of Turkish migrant women. By taking a gender as an analytical category, the study found how the interrelatedness of different domains demonstrate different power hierarchies where Turkish women's gendered experiences of acculturation are situated in. In doing so, the study attempted to understand migrant women's changing perceptions and practices of unpaid domestic and care work, in relation to identified global patterns and cultural discourses that surround unpaid domestic and care work, gender and migration.

### 6.1 Limitations

Despite the contributions of the current study and the findings, having to use online tools could be considered as one of the limitations. Accordingly, online interviews make it more difficult to establish rapport and thus, ensure reliability. Although being Turkish, communicating in the same language and coming from the same country have potentially facilitated data collection and interpretation, these might

also have played as limiting factors in hindering professionalism, and thus, threatening the reliability of the data. Additionally, the drawbacks of qualitative data and methodology are applicable to this research. There is no interrater reliability examination which present another threat to the overall accuracy of the findings and identified domains. Further quantitative data from larger groups, including Turkish migrant men and specific age groups, and mixed methodologies are required to ensure representativeness in the cross-cultural context.

## 6.2 Implications and Future Leads

The current study is not only important for reframing acculturation with an intersectional lens, but it also demonstrates when non-European migrant women's particular experiences are examined with a qualitative approach, complexities and contradictions that cannot be fit into sole and standardized categories. Rather, pointing out how gendered power dynamics can be evident on different levels on various social domains, the findings of the study has important implications in terms of tackling gendered and racialized experiences of acculturation. In turn, Turkish women's specific migration and acculturation experiences are critically examined, while giving space to appearing contradictions, and potential alternative perspectives in understanding their particularities. Considering the dominating account in the literature in terms of conceptualizing migrant women's experiences through quantification, the current research offers a qualitative empirical reconfiguration of the issue (Bürkner, 2011), by taking an intersectional stance in making sense of Turkish migrant women's narratives.

In line with this, the findings and their implications of the current study offer fruitful lines of research that can be followed in the field. Accordingly, future research could potentially focus on: (I) how transnational solidarity bonds (among diasporic communities and among migrant women within diasporic communities) are formed in the case of acculturating (women) emigrants from Turkey in Europe, (II) how (Turkish) migrant women in particular settings (such as a specific gendered occupational settings, women in machinery sectors or women in care work jobs) across different cultural contexts reconstitute their diasporic identities, (III) in which ways migrant and local women form communication and support mechanisms and its implications for transnational feminist research, (IV) how and through which ways specific national, regional and local levels of policies may hinder and/or facilitate migrant women's acculturative process and (V) how the current sociopolitical composition of Turkey takes part in Turkish women's acculturative process in relation to their level of political engagement in the host country.

Another line of research would be to adopt a more emic lens, through which certain social and cultural practices within the process of acculturation can be tackled on a deeper level. In doing so, potential research ideas could include an examination of certain subgroups (different ethnic/religious communities, LGBTQ+ immigrants, migrant women in STEM or political refugees) within the Turkish community in different cultural contexts. Lastly, how Turkish women's understanding and practice of sexuality is shaped within the acculturative process would be a fruitful line of research in terms of

situating how a taboo discourse has been reconstituted in the case of acculturating Turkish emigrant women living in different European countries. Although it should be noted that, adopting an emic lens in the case of the last two examples, would probably require different qualitative methodology such as observational studies, case studies and/or focus groups, as well as mixed methodology to better grasp the cross-cultural realities.

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## Annexes

### Annex A. Informed Consent Form

#### INFORMED CONSENT

The present study arises in the context of a master's dissertation that is underway at **Iscite - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa**, . This study concerns to explore gendered experiences of migration and acculturation in Turkish women living in different European countries.

The study is carried out by Nazli Yagmur Erdogan (yagmurrerdogmus@gmail.com), who can be contacted if you have any questions or comments.

Your participation in the study, which will be highly valued, as it will contribute to the advancement of knowledge in this field of science, consists of answering to 10-15 interview questions regarding Turkish migrant women's migration and adaptation processes in different cultural contexts. There are no significant expected risks associated with participation in the study.

Participation in the study is strictly **voluntary**: you can freely choose to participate or not to participate. If you choose to participate, you can stop your participation at any time without having to provide any justification. In addition to being voluntary, participation is also anonymous and confidential. The data are intended merely for statistical processing and no answer will be analyzed or reported individually. You will never be asked to identify yourself at any time during the study.

I declare that I have understood the objectives of what was proposed and explained to me by the researcher, that I have been given the opportunity to ask all the questions about the present study, and for all of them, to have received an enlightening answer, and **I accept** participate in it.

\_\_\_\_\_ (location), \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Annex B. Interview Questions



### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

#### Part 1

- How are you experiencing X country so far?
  1. How is it to be a Turkish woman in X country?
- How do you think being a woman is different than being a man when you are a migrant? And in X country in particular?
- Have you had any experiences where you felt discriminated against because you are a woman and/or a migrant (by whom, in where, how did you feel, how did you react)?
- Have you had any experiences where you felt you were being treated violently because you are a woman and/or a migrant (by whom, in where, who were you with, how did you feel, how did you react)?
- Would you describe some strengths and resources that you've developed to deal with obstacles because you are both a migrant and a woman?
- How would you describe the quality of support you have received (from other members of the community, associations/organizations of civil society, public/official entities, other relevant authorities, other women etc.)?

#### Part 2

- How do you think it would be different migrating alone instead of migrating with your family? (*or vice versa depending on who she migrated with*)
- What does family mean to you and how would you situate yourself within your family?
- How do you think your role as a woman and/or a mother changed and how did this affect your relationship with other family members?
- How would you describe the changes that happened in your daily customs in your household?
  1. How would you describe the distribution of housework in the house (washing the dishes, cooking, laundry, childcare etc.)?
  2. How did it change over the course of migration and settlement? How would you describe this change (negative, positive)?
  3. How would you describe the ideal distribution of housework?
- How would you describe the differences in the way you and your family members think and behave? To what extent do you think it was affected by your migration journey?
  1. How have the problems/conflicts that you experience among family members changed? To what extent do you think that this is regarding the experiences you go through as a migrant woman/migrant family?
  2. In which ways do you think your workload in the household influences your well-being?
- Besides the logistical issues such as housing and employment, how do you think you can be supported better as a migrant woman?

## Annex C. Explanation of Social Domains with Examples

Social Domains	Sub-domains	Examples
Cultural Norms, Values and Ways of Thinking	a. Bargaining with different cultural expectations as migrant women & mothers	(i) Within the Household  For instance, I have some Turkish friends here, they still make sure that their husbands have everything ready for dinner when he comes back home from work. So, there are Turkish people still living like this. I guess I'm living more the Austrian way. (Participant 23, 50 years old, Austria)
		(ii) Outside the Household  ...In terms of food, I am more into Turkish cuisine, whereas my husband is more international. I learned from him, he learned from me. My son grew up learning how to cook, and he started cooking when he was 14 years old. (Participant 23, 50 years old, Austria)
	b. Cultural identity and feelings of belonging	The life you leave behind in Turkey and the life you find here as a Turkish migrant is very different. I have been in environments here with people saying "You are wearing shorts. This is a sin!" Probably these people constitute 80 percent of the Turkish migrants here. So, it is not like migrating to a European country but rather migrating to 30 years before version of a rural region in the east of Turkey from İstanbul or İzmir in my case. (Participant 15, 49 years old, Austria).
		I came to Austria when I was 20 years old, in the year of 1990. I graduated from the Austrian high school in İstanbul. I come from an atypical Turkish family, open-minded, modern, not your classical type of Turkish family. So, I feel Austrian at this point. Or maybe not Austrian, neither Turkish nor Austrian. I live in Europe, and I'm from Vienna. That's it. (Participant 23, 50 years old, Austria)

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c. Religion and making sense of the world	<p>Of course, religion has a big impact in life, I can say this. Greece is not a secular country, religion is still very influential. But Christianity had its reforms and everything, so it's nothing compared Muslim countries. I mean, Greece is not secular on paper for instance, but gay marriages are legal. As you know, Turkey is so called secular, on paper. So, as a woman, I really felt comfortable here, I think this is one of the most important things (Participant 22, 44 years old, Greece).</p>	
d. Self-reflection and self-care	<p>I learned to heal myself, I am a bipolar patient, and I have refused my condition for years. I lived on the edge of suicide. Back in Turkey, I had money and I was going to the doctor. When I came here and felt helpless, I learned to turn into myself. By confronting and accepting my issues, my mind turned into mechanic mindset. If this is the problem, what are the steps for solution? What are the alternative steps? Take all the support you can get, from friends, relatives, the government, even hiking in the forest. I learned that I can solve my problems with a more mechanic mindset (Participant 15, 49 years old, Austria).</p>	
Family Relations	a. Power dynamics within the family	<p>I always had fears with my mother and my older brother, because I just started living with my boyfriend recently in Germany. And I was intimidated to tell them. I told them a bit after we moved in together, and I left a softening period in between to say things like I'm staying over at his house tonight. And as a matter of fact, it was like this in the beginning. I just told them a bit late. And then I realized that their attitude towards me has changed completely, and they have this mindset of "be safe and you can do whatever you want". My mom is already an open-minded woman but my older brother is a jealous man raised within the Turkish culture. So, I thought it was going to be difficult, but it wasn't! I transformed, and they're transforming too! (Participant 12, 31 years old, Germany)</p>
	b. Support from the extended family left behind	<p>When being a migrant woman gets together with being a mother, there are always new responsibilities. There's the dilemma of being a mother in the Turkish culture as opposed to being a mother in the local culture. There are implicit differences, and</p>

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for example I don't have the luxury to call my mom to leave my son for a couple of hours. Of course, my husband's mother takes care of him sometimes, but I have to tell my schedule to her one week beforehand. So, you need to plan, there isn't much flexibility. So, I started to give more from myself as a consequence of being both a migrant woman and a mother. Of course, this is a personal choice, and I am sure there are other women who do it another way and do it better. But for me to feel good in terms of how I take care of my child, I need to make more compromises from myself, hoping that this is a temporary period in life... (Participant 11, 35 years old, Lichtenstein)

c. Upbringing of children

(i) Concern over children's well-being

Of course, I like having children. I'm not complaining. But I should admit that it's a very limiting role. Because you become much worried about the world, the future. Things that you wouldn't normally care about, such as what they say about migrants in general, you start to care about, because you don't want your child to get hurt! The other day they told them in the school that they can also choose easy jobs such as hairdresser. Of course, one can become a hairdresser, why not? But when someone in the school specifically says, "you are like this", and "you would fit better to this job", you feel sad and kind of offended. Because this is a very different way of telling this. They perceive migrant children as deserving of those kinds of service sector jobs, or at least they try to direct their attention in that way. When you hear this, you get the dilemma of whether every job is good and should be respected vs my child shouldn't be discriminated against in the school. (Participant 10, 38 years old, Austria)

(ii) Differences in practice of raising children

My domestic work practices especially changed a lot after I got married, because I was living alone before. Back then, I used to clean every edge of the house, and I was constantly doing laundry and changing the sheets. When I got married, I realized that this is not actually very necessary. It's enough to vacuum the house once a week. When my son was first born, I was cleaning

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Social Relations  
and Social  
Activities

a. Interactions  
with within the  
own migrant  
community

(i) Hindering  
factors

the house floor with detergent like crazy. Cultural differences... My husband (who is German) said that if I keep doing this, he will get allergies, and that I should let him walk normally. Seriously, Germans can put a baby on the road while the baby is at the crawling stage. So that he or she can experience the sand or the asphalt. And then they put their hand in their mouth... If a Turkish mom would see this, she would have a heart attack... (Participant 9, 34 years old, Germany)

The only time I remember being harassed was in a bar, by a Turkish man! I was wearing something sexy, and I was in a small group, talking with friends. When he came, he was a bit drunk. He tried to hit on me. I said no and told him that I am not interested. He turned to me and said, "you dress like this, open your everywhere, but you don't give it to anyone!" I was shocked, because I hadn't had such an experience since I left Turkey, it has been like 20 years. The owner of the bar was a friend of mine, so I went to him to tell the situation, and he kicked him out of the bar. This was the only incident I remember, and it was by a Turkish man! That's why I strongly believe it's easier to be a woman here than in Turkey. (Participant 23, 50 years old, Austria)

(ii) Supportive  
factors

Near my old house, a woman owned a *kebab* shop, and she was always inviting me over to have tea, or giving me *dürüm* to eat at home. We also have a migrant women Facebook group, like a subgroup of the big migrant women group, which is for Turkish migrant women in France. Whenever I asked a question there I got answers and support. Likewise, there is also this other group consisting of different groups of migrant women, and I have felt supported there too. Of course, these are mostly psychological support systems. (Participant 2, 32 years old, France)

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b. Interactions  
within locals

(i) Seemingly  
positive or subtle  
forms of  
prejudices

For example, this is something that I started to experience after having a child here. When I'm speaking Turkish with my child in the supermarket or a store, I keep speaking Turkish. But I'm aware that the Turkish that I'm speaking is a bit different than the Turkish that is spoken here. People who came from rural parts of Anatolia... I'm trying to choose politically correct words to explain, please don't get me wrong, in no way I'm trying to undermine their experience, I'm well aware of their conditions. But I'm a conference translator, and speaking Turkish fluently and accurately is very important to me. So, I try to teach this to my son as well. So, whenever people watch us from outside and hear us speaking, they ask: "which language are you speaking?". When I tell them that it's Turkish, they tell me "but it doesn't sound like Turkish". And they say this in a way that I should be happy about this, like it's a compliment. It might sound positive inside but what if I sounded "Turkish"? It makes me uncomfortable to feel like this (Participant 11, 35 years old, Lichtenstein)

(ii) Racialized  
femininities

When I compare my experience to my migrant men friends, I realized that they are much more comfortable in finding jobs. Or this is just my biased observation, I don't know. But for example, I never heard that their personal choices such as their decision to migrate is being questioned, they are free to follow their personal choices. But I have been asked these harassing questions multiple times: "You came here because you were not comfortable in Turkey, no?" or "Were they forcing you to wear the hijab there?" I don't think they are being subjected to these questions like us, so I believe they might be a bit more comfortable than migrant women. (Participant 9, 34 years old, Germany)

(iii) Feelings of  
trying to prove  
yourself

I can say for the Netherlands that the main part of the Turkish population is different from my profile. This includes education, as well as political views. So, what I mean is not assimilating so that I will lose my identity for the sake of integration, but rather to become a part of your context somehow, and that's it. There's a very big divergence

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	<p>(between me and the main part of the Turkish population). There are some people, even Europeans who might appear as conservative, which really surprised me in the beginning. When you encounter them, you feel the need to prove to them that you are from a different profile than that other type of Turkish people. Because if you don't establish this, it can be a totally different relationship. (Participant 19, 38 years old, the Netherlands)</p>
<p>(iv) Feelings of receiving support and empathy from locals</p>	<p>The reason I feel very good about everyone I have met here is that they have more ideas about Turkish politics than Turkish people living in Turkey. And this makes them empathetic. They have a dictatorship history. So, they're able to empathize with people who are currently going through dictatorship. And you feel understood, even though it's hurtful to talk about it, you feel glad. (Participant 24, 42 years old, Portugal)</p>
<p>c. Social activities and socializing practices</p>	<p>In Turkey I was a woman who traveled, had a social environment, politically engaged and taking initiative when necessary. It is like this also here. For example, when I was in Athens, if the workers did a demonstration, I went to support them. There was pride, there was woman's day... Nothing changed in terms of these. I maintained the way I exist in this life also in Greece. I went and found the feminist, socialists, Greeks (who used to live in Turkey). If I found a social network here, I found it thanks to the way I maintain my life (Participant 22, 44 years old, Greece).</p>
<p>Work and Management of Economic Means</p>	
<p>a. Economic Independence</p>	<p>Being economically independent is a really important for women, especially if you are a migrant. This is really about how you live, how you look at life. For example, I say to myself always that if something were to happen to our relationship, even if I am 60 years old, I would manage my own way. Hypothetically, if this marriage ended, I would go back to my country, find a job and work. And knowing this, knowing that I am self-sufficient, makes me feel in peace (Participant 22, 44 years old, Greece)</p>
<p>b. Paid work</p>	

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(i) Migrant  
Women  
Entrepreneurship

I took some courses and tried to improve my job-related skills. I already have some hobbies, such as handcraft. And especially in these corona times where you miss your loved ones who are far away, you start putting more of your time in these. I try to encourage myself to display my work and sell it online. I haven't put enough effort yet, I know that I need to improve my photography to take good pictures, but still, I gave it a start. At least a hobby can become sort of an economic means this way. If it wasn't for corona, I was planning to open a counter on the weekends, because we have enough time here to do these things. We are already lonely. (Participant 5, 31 years old, the UK)

(ii) Gendered  
patterns in paid  
job sectors  
hindering or  
facilitating  
acculturation

Maybe what I am about to say will surprise you, but even though women are more comfortable in general, due to my special situation regarding the sector that I am working in, I worked in places with more women in Turkey. Here, they don't really prefer women in this field. So, I feel a bit alone as a woman at work here. I work in the automotive sector, and I used to work in the same sector in Turkey. There used to be more women in the sector in Turkey. (Participant 1, 46 years old, Germany)

(iii) Deskillization  
& flexibilization  
of migrant  
women's paid  
work

Flexibility... I decided to become a conference translator when I was 11 years old. And I focused on this goal in all of my educational life. My bachelor degree, my master degree is in this field. And this was my dream job. I found my dream job, and I was so happy. Then I moved here. My language combination was English-Turkish here, and it was impossible for me to continue the conferences with this language combination. I decided to add German to my language combination. But this also created one of the turning points in my life, and I took the decision of whether to become a translator, or a migrant... And I gave up on my job, I migrated. I'm unhappy right now because I lost my job. I'm trying to find alternatives. I have added German to my combination. I started to do community translations in German-Turkish, but it is not the same as conferences, I don't enjoy it as much... At the same time, I work as a German teacher, but that's not

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	c. Unpaid work	<p>enough either. Long story short, I'm still in the search for finding a job here that will satisfy me. (Participant 11, 35 years old, Lichtenstein)</p>
	(i) Deskillization & flexibilization: consequences on gendered power dynamics	<p>... Therefore, when I am at home, I feel like I have to integrate household chores to my life somehow. And the main argument that we have with my husband is that he talks about "helping" me. For example, he thinks that if he empties the washing machine, that's helping me. And we start to fight over this. No, you are not helping me! And he replies, "okay, I'm supporting you", but no, these are all wrong words to use. If this is a household chore, we have to do it together. You helping or supporting me, means that these are primarily my responsibility, which is not true. (Participant 11, 35 years old, Lichtenstein)</p>
	(ii) Gendered patterns in unpaid job sector hindering or facilitating acculturation	<p>No one expects you to do housework because you are a woman here. That gender discrepancy does not exist here, at least to me. Before, when I was working, I was hiring a woman to clean the house... So, I don't really have any obsession regarding the cleanliness and organization of the house, but I like a bit of structure of course. But for instance, I remember going back to Turkey after being married for 2 years, and my mother's neighbor asked me when I was going home from work to cook dinner... When I told her that we go with my husband and sometimes he does the dinner, and sometimes I do, she was very surprised that my husband didn't expect me to prepare dinner for him every night. Incredible. The kitchen is there, anyone who wants food can go and cook. The expectations from women are crazy in Turkey. (Participant 23, 50 years old, Austria)</p>
Politics and Power Relations	a. Xenophobia/Racism	(i) Discrimination over country of origin
		<p>When I first started working, I applied to a British Council branch here, because I used to work in British Council in Turkey. They gave me a temporary position, although I used to be in a manager position in Turkey,</p>

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because that was the only availability at that moment... I realized almost all of the employees there were immigrants, and the HR was giving us information in a biased way that is misleading. And when I told them how to do this job because I used to do it in Turkey, they told me that “but that was in Turkey, there is a lot of fraud going on there and we cannot trust you” (Participant 2, 32 years old, France)

b. Gender-Based Discrimination & Violence

I have recently changed jobs and have seen this a lot. If you become one of the last two people who are left for final evaluation and if you are competing with a man, they always go with men, even if they are less qualified than you. And every time they chose a man over me, they told me that I have not finished my family planning, and that I have a child. (Participant 9, 34 years old, Germany)

c. Islamophobia

And here’s of course the situation of rejecting you from the CV. They look at your name, the nationality, and whether you graduated from a French school or not. A friend of mine, her mother is French and her father is Lebanese, had to change her surname to her mother’s to find a job here. (Participant 2, 32 years old, France)

d. Experiences of social institutions and policies

(i) Observations from migrant women & mothers regarding educational institutions

My son started going to primary school here. For example, they did not meet me or call me to update me about his situation or what we are supposed to do to integrate him to the educational system here, as he does not speak French. He is a migrant. But I had this feeling that they especially use this language barrier disadvantage of migrant children. For example, they were supposed bring vegetables to the class the other day, and my son did not understand, so he was the only one who did not bring it. I mean, they do not explicitly discriminate you on your migrant identity maybe, but they do not really put the effort to make you be a part of the context either. And then this goes like a vicious cycle, further distancing migrant children from school and academic world. I have heard this from others too (Participant 3, 40 years old, Switzerland)

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e. Residence  
and work  
permit

I can say that I have been disappointed a lot about my work. I am the only employee coming outside of Europe, and they are not aware that I have more responsibilities to accomplish to keep that job. I mean the work is really nice, my first day was beautiful, I have seen an organizational identity that I have never encountered in Turkey before, and I admired that. But they were not aware that I was a migrant. I did not have anyone to talk to when I had difficulties. I was trying to deal with all the paperwork for my work permit here, and there was not much support from the company. And now that I think, if I screwed up anything with the paperwork, I would have to go back to Turkey, and leave the job! It would have been catastrophic. So yes, I did not feel very supported and understood. They don't understand that your conditions are different as a non-European. (Participant 12, 31 years old, Germany)

f.  
Sociopolitical  
environment  
of Turkey

...Of course, I miss the jazz festivals in Turkey, my friends... But the current government gradually destroyed us. They do not want to give space to intellectual activities anymore. First, they were just ignoring us, but then they started murder us (referring to Değer Deniz, Nuh Köklü and Hrant Dink murders in Turkey's recent history under the current government)... (Participant 24, 42 years old, Portugal).

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#### **Annex D. Covid-19 Related Experiences**

Mentioned by seven participants nine times in total, Covid-19 experiences mainly were reflected upon in relation to the domains of intensified domestic work, enhanced self-reflection and self-care, differences in social relations/socializing practices and concern over family left behind. However, as not being very relevant to the central theme of research questions and findings and because of the space limitations, this data was not included.

## Annex E. Demographic Questionnaire



### Demographic Questionnaire

- Age:
- Marital status:
- Educational background:
- Occupation in home country:
- Currently working or are planning to work?
- Current location/accommodation:
- Family members in home country:
- Family members in host country:
- Migratory status:
- Reason for migration:
- Why X country?



## **Annex F. Debriefing Form**

### DEBRIEFING/EXPLANATION OF THE RESEARCH

Thank you for having participated in this study. As indicated at the onset of your participation, the study is about experiences of migrant women and aims to understand the specific challenges and opportunities migrant women encounter in the host society context. More specifically, the study has tried to understand your experiences as a migrant from a gender perspective.

We remind you that the following contact details can be used for any questions that you may have, comments that you wish to share, or to indicate your interest in receiving information about the main outcomes and conclusions of the study: [Nazli Yagmur Erdogmus, [yagmurrerdogmus@gmail.com](mailto:yagmurrerdogmus@gmail.com)].

Once again, thank you for your participation.