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By Ilkim Markoc[1]

Abstract

Women's poverty has long been a topic discussed in worldwide literature. However, no recent study has been conducted which examines the causes and outcomes of women's poverty in Turkey. The objective of this study is to reveal the obstacles young women in Istanbul's Bagcilar District face in seeking to develop urban lives due to poverty. Accordingly, there is a need to contextualize geographically and provide rationale for the case study area: Bagcilar was selected for the field study because it has one of the largest population of immigrants as well as one of the cheapest levels of rent in the city. Methodologically, one-to-one semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with 23 young women aged between 18 and 24. All interviewees have attained only low educational levels and all are employed in the textile sector. In-depth interviews were analyzed and interpreted, and themes and codes were generated accordingly. Themes were derived from most common statements and the most common ciphers in the statements created the codes. The paper reveals the 7 themes obtained from the case study: T1- Lack of education due to financial difficulties; T2- Being responsible for domestic chores and earning a living for the family; T3- Women's lack of freedom in spending the money they earn; T4- Patriarchal family structure; T5- Socialisation limited to relatives; T6- Living within the geographical borders of the neighbourhood; and T7- Active social media usage. This study determined that young women in Bagcilar have difficulty in physically participating in social activities. Poverty and patriarchal family structure were determined to be contributing factors. The unique contribution of this study to the literature is that it reveals how young women in a society with a high poverty rate and gender inequality actively participate in civil society through virtual platforms.

Keywords: Participation, Poverty, Young women, Patriarchal family structure, Istanbul

Introduction

Gender inequality is a complex phenomenon that can be seen in organizational structures, processes and practices (Stamarski & Hing, 2015). Gender inequality acknowledges that men and women are not equal and that gender affects an individual's living experience. These differences arise from distinctions in biology, psychology and cultural norms. Some of these types of distinctions are empirically grounded while others appear to be socially constructed. Studies show the different lived experience of genders across many domains including education, life expectancy, personality, interests, family life, careers and political affiliations.

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Gender inequality is a phenomenon discussed in the literature that demonstrates males and females are not equal in the context of rights and responsibilities (Stamarski & Hing, 2015). For this reason, the quality of life of males and females differs in biology, psychology and cultural norms (Vlassoff, 2007). These differences are socially built and can be observed in many domains, including education, life expectancy, personality, interests, family life, careers and political connections (Ellemers, 2018).

Poverty is a state in which one lacks essentials for a minimum standard of living. The term not only refers to the lack of possession of fundamental needs, but also encompasses deprivations in other areas such as education, health and life expectancy (Sanchez-Martinez & Davis, 2014). Despite the worldwide growth in income over the past 50 years, poverty remains the most crucial problem of our time. Within Turkey, unjust distributions of income, economic crisis and failed social policies aggravate the effects of poverty (UNDP, 2015).

Poverty of women worsens pre-existing levels of gender inequality. International studies show that more women live in poverty than men (Bradshaw et al., 2017; Chant, 2014; Chant & Katu, 2015; Chant, 2016; Hyejin & Kim, 2015; Malgesini & Babovic, 2018). Moreover, as Bradshaw et al. (2019) notes, poverty has, even within the same household, a more significant impact on women than men. Also, both gender and educational inequality are inversely correlated with a society's level of development (Kim et al., 2018). Gender inequality is experienced differently across different cultures (Kinias & Kim, 2012). Within less-developed regions[2] girls are compelled to work either outside their homes for meager wages or in their own homes for free from a relatively young age (ILO, 1996). Cinar (2020) further notes that in patriarchal families, girls submit to the wills of their fathers and brothers; the women after that submit to the will of their husbands when they marry. In societies with a patriarchal structure such as Turkey, honor is equated to men's control of females' bodies and sexualities. The measure of the woman's relationship with the opposite sex and the extent to which she protects her body from the opposite sex shows her level of honor (Hamzaoglu & Konuralp, 2019). However, defending their honor limits women's abilities to social participation (Gocmen, 2014).

Social participation is an important determinant for wellbeing (Nordbakke & Schwanen, 2014). The concept of social participation in this study entails social contact, contributing resources to society as well as receiving resources from society (Levasseur et al. 2010).

Poverty directly or indirectly prevents individuals and families from participating in social activities (Offer, 2012). In general, social exclusion means that individuals or families are deprived of the ability to build social bonds within their society (Mood & Jonsson, 2016). Social exclusion affects women and children to a greater extent than men. Whereas men somehow manage to find ways to participate in social interactions (Stamarski & Son, 2015), women who are economically and socially disadvantaged lead more isolated lives. Poverty can be both a direct and indirect obstacle that prevents women's social participation, and women who cannot participate in social life struggle with poverty and are trapped in a vicious cycle (Dieckhoff & Gash, 2015).

The objective of the study is to establish the relationship between poverty and social lives among a small sample of migrant women working textile jobs that do not require qualifications. A

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[2] The term Less Developed Regions (LDRs) has been determined by means of development indicators, whereby the performance of each region is evaluated against the national average. Regional disparities in Turkey can be characterized in terms of: 1) demographic disparities, including migration and urbanization 2) economic disparities, including industrial and agricultural features, income and employment 3) disparities in infrastructure, including all public services (Balkir, 1995).

literature review was completed to reveal both causes and consequences of economic, social and political elements of poverty among women. The Bagcilar District of Istanbul was selected as the population of the case study because it is one of the poorest districts in Istanbul due to the high immigrant population, high population density, cheapest rental prices and the low levels of education amongst residents.

Methodologically, one-to-one, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted in April 2019 with 23 young women between the ages of 18 and 24 who resided in the Demirkapi Neighbourhood of Bagcilar District. As of August 2019 the interviewees were all primary school graduates, and were working for minimum wage in the textile sector. In-depth interviews were structured into three categories: (1) demographic information, (2) poverty and (3) participation in urban social life. Qualitative raw data collected in the field study was processed using the content analysis method. After that, the paper reveals the 7 themes obtained from the case study: T1- *Lack of education due to financial difficulties; T2- Being responsible for domestic chores and earning a living for the family; T3- Women's lack of freedom in spending the money they earn; T4- Patriarchal family structure; T5- Socialisation limited to relatives; T6- Living within the geographical borders of the neighbourhood and T7- Active social media usage.* In the results and discussion section, these themes have been analyzed within the literature. This study determined that the social participation of the young women participants was limited to home visits with trusted relatives, and their urban participation is low. This study concluded that many women who live under the pressure of poverty and gender inequality might demonstrate a high incidence of social media use as a means of liberation from their unsatisfactory living conditions. The young women mostly engaged with Instagram and shared photos and comments as a means to fulfill their desires to express themselves.

Materials and Methods
Poverty of Women

In some patriarchal cultures, such as Turkey, gender inequality aggravates the effects of poverty (Fisher & Naidoo, 2016). Gender dynamics and poverty are two separate forms of disadvantages faced by women (Marcella et al., 2016). Gender typing refers to a person identifying themselves as male or female according to the social or cultural definition of male or female (Athenstaedt et al., 2004). Gender-typed actors further worsen the effects of women's poverty (Bradshaw et al., 2019; Chant & Sweetman, 2012).

The most apparent reasons for women's susceptibility to poverty are (1) Responsibilities undertaken by women at home relating to reproductive tasks is very time consuming and women have fewer opportunities to generate incomes from their efforts than men; (2) Even when women are able to earn income, they have limited control over how it is spent and (3) Women are more inclined to base their decision-making with the aim to improve the well-being of others instead of themselves. These self-sacrificing attitudes are attributed to women's maternal virtues. In this manner, the meaning of being a woman is conceptualized. The woman, especially in the patriarchal family structure, is obliged to make this sacrifice. In these kinds of families, the primary duty of women is giving birth to the children who will continue their lineage and taking care of them. This situation is not just a distribution of tasks specific to the lower-income group. The woman is also responsible for the layout and cleanliness of the housing space and the household's overall health. The woman who joins the working life by transferring these responsibilities to other family

members (mother, mother-in-law, etc.) or who are receiving professional support is condemned in the society for not fulfilling this sacrifice ultimately (Chant, 2006, 2008, 2014, 2016).

Experimental studies have shown that the informalisation of the global labor market, which has been occurring at increasing speed since the 1980s, is a fundamental factor for the rising number of women who participate in the labor force (Roantree & Vira, 2018). According to Avolio and Di Laura's study (2017), women's participation in social life worldwide had improved by the 1980s, whereas men's social participation had worsened as many of the works traditionally undertaken by men began to be feminized.

In less developed and developing countries, most women are employed either as subcontracted workers or in home-based work. There is a high level of exploitation in subcontracted employment models as women have to work in low-paying jobs for long hours and generally lack any legal security or union rights (Bonnet et al., 2019). Although men and women may have similar workloads, women are paid less than men. These differences between men and women are common in the informal sector (Raskin, 2006).

Women not only work outside the home, but also complete household chores and take on the responsibility of reducing expenses. Women make more significant efforts to make adjustments and counteract household poverty than their male counterparts (Cerrato & Cifre, 2018). The poverty experienced by women is the result of them being paid lower wages than men for the same jobs and having fewer opportunities to work in higher-wage jobs in occupations that are generally considered to be men's professions (Deere et al., 2012; Murphy, 2015).

Women's poverty has become conceptual and constitutes an obstacle to women's social life participation, especially in a patriarchal society. Female poverty and social inclusion difficulty can be considered as two concepts that cause each other. A woman who cannot participate in urban social life lives the effects of poverty deeper and feels the exclusion by not getting out of the poverty wheel that she is in.

Social Participation
Participation
"Participate" is a very commonly used verb in our daily lives; however, this term has a rather unclear meaning when used to describe people's social lives. The content and limits of participation may vary depending on the responses given to the questions of who will participate in what, where, when and how (Piškur et al., 2014).

Among these different types of participation, it can be said that total participation represents a form of democratic governance. Social participation is generally related to an individual's economic status and living space. An individual's initial social participation takes place when he or she starts interacting with other people that share the same living space. A living space can be identified as the environment where human affairs take place and can vary from urban spaces to private or virtual spaces. As one's intellectual capacity increases, his/her living space and communication network also expands. The living space of an individual living in a rural area is limited to family and relatives, whereas it is much more extensive for those living in urban spaces where intellectual capital is most excellent (Ferragina et al., 2013). Social participation takes place at household, community and urban scales. Advances in communication technologies in recent years have enabled social participation over virtual platforms on a global scale (Elhai et al., 2017).

Participation is an essential tool that can improve the living conditions of disadvantaged groups; however, non-functional and target driven participation has no social value (de Graaf et

al., 2015). An example of tokenism is seen in the participation of young women in daily urban life. The tokenism context is used here for situations where women are given some rights, but little or no opportunities to present their opinions. It is impossible to expect any social benefit from an environment in which individuals are only allowed the freedom of tokenistic participation (Percy-Smith, 2015).

In reality, since the poor are socially excluded and economically dependent, they are unable to exercise the equal rights and powers afforded to other people in terms of decisions made concerning social matters. Occurring along with social exclusion, the rise in social isolation and the weakening of social participation contributes to the severity of poverty (Ayllón & Gábos, 2017).

Genuine participation is not learned through given rights, but instead is learned by experiencing participation from an early age. Participation practices in formal education at school and other social organizations have an essential function in achieving social participation and gaining a democratic identity. In this case, the importance of education emerges and it is seen that some social barriers have disappeared with education. In patriarchal societies, these barriers to both education and participation are more pronounced for women. It can be said that tokenistic participation has no social value in the absence of a tool like real participation which improves people's living conditions.

Participation of Women

Gender discrimination refers to the unequal treatment of people who are equal or similar and is a problem that prevents women from social participation (Fontanella et al., 2020). Gender inequality in the field of education refers to individuals being deprived of educational essentials based on their gender (Lörz & Mühleck, 2019). Particularly in conservative societies, traditional gender roles encourage boys to study and have a profession whilst girls are encouraged to attend to household chores rather than going to school. Accordingly, men receive better education and are educated for extended periods of time compared to women (Caner et al., 2015).

There is a reliable and positive link between education and women's participation in the labor force. (Rocha & Latapí, 2016).Men in the family support the idea of women earning income by participating in the labor force; however, they neither modify their traditional attitudes and behaviors towards their wives' careers nor their approach to helping with household chores (Cerrato & Cifre, 2018). Furthermore, since men are still considered to be family heads in patriarchal family structures and have to earn a living for the family, women are the first to be dismissed from work during economic downturns (Liu et al., 2017). Today even women who have successful careers still face gender inequality (Kossek et al., 2017).

Discrimination against women in this arena includes restraining their ability to act freely and independently; requiring women to be mindful of how they dress, talk and behave and imposing other restrictions as to how they express themselves (Kingsnorth, 2013). Within such social situations, women are attributed to fundamental roles such as being a daughter, sister, spouse and/or mother. Women are expected to help more with household chores than their brothers do; to remain in the background behind the husband as the head of the family and to bear most of the responsibility for childcare (Mirza, 2017). Another issue related to gender inequality that women encounter in their daily lives is violence. Violence against women is somehow an accepted behavior equivalent to ignoring or denying the harm in patriarchal family structures (Malgesini & Babovic, 2018).

As in other developing countries, gender roles in Turkey are defined mainly by the fact that it is a patriarchal society, and women's primary role is to take care of their families and homes. Most woman accepts her social position without questioning due to the socialization and education she has received, and she cannot benefit from the advantages that her work-life brings since her responsibilities have increased. Women's indifference to society and themselves creates a vicious cycle. The eegalitarian policies targeting women seem difficult to achieve under these conditions (Caner et al., 2016; Enneli & Enneli, 2017, Gecgin & Taskiran, 2018).

Method

The snowball sampling technique was used to target and select participants. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted face-to-face with 23 young women between the ages of 18 and 24 that resided in the Demirkapı neighborhood of Bagcilar District. The participants were all primary school dropouts or graduates who were working in the textile sector for minimum wages. One-to-one interviews were conducted in August 2019 at participants' places of residence. In-depth interviews were structured into three categories: (1) demographic information, (2) poverty and (3) participation in social activities. Qualitative raw data collected in the field study was processed using the content analysis method. This resulted in the emergence of a series of codes and themes. Processed field data were compared with existing literature, and specific conclusions were reached concerning the conditions of young women living in poverty in Istanbul and their low level of participation in urban social life.

Bagcilar District

Bagcilar is located on the European side of Istanbul (Figure 1). Bagcilar's population was low in the 1950s; however, since the start of squatter housing in the 1960s, it there has been a large number of migrants to the region. By the 1990s, the district was turned into a very large village, but lacked required planning and infrastructure. Bagcilar is one of the poorest districts of Istanbul due to its high migrant population rates, high population density and residents' low educational levels. Bagcilar has the lowest level of rent rates in Istanbul (Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey Data System, 2019).

Figure 1: Bagcilar's Location in Istanbul

Source: Google Earth, January 6, 2020.

Textile is a developed sector in Bagcilar. A total of 9.8% of the Istanbul textile sector containing with 399 enterprises, is located in Bagcilar. These enterprises employ unqualified workers, a majority of whom are poorly educated and live in the district. With 21641 people employed in the textile sector, Bagcilar is the largest of Istanbul's textile areas (10.67%) based on the number of people employed (ISO Report, 2014).

Results and Discussion

In-depth interviews were analyzed and interpreted. Then, themes and codes were generated accordingly. Themes were derived from most common statements, and the most common ciphers in the statements created the codes. Table 1 presents the themes and codes.

Table 1: Themes and Codes Generated from In-Depth Interviews

	Themes	Codes
T1	Lack of education due to financial difficulties	POVERTY
T2	Being responsible for domestic chores and earning a living for the family	POVERTY
T3	Women's lack of freedom in spending the money they earn	POVERTY
T4	Patriarchal family structure	PARTICIPATION
T5	Socialisation limited to relatives	PARTICIPATION
T6	Living within the geographical borders of the neighbourhood	PARTICIPATION
T7	Active social media usage	PARTICIPATION

T1- Lack of education due to financial difficulties
T2- Being responsible for domestic chores and earning a living for the family

All participants were born in cities located in the Eastern Anatolia and South-eastern Anatolia regions. This part of the country is relatively more south than other parts of the country and people who live there feel the pressure of terrorism. All interviewees had migrated to Bagcilar due to poverty and terror in general. All of the women were either primary school graduates or had dropped out of primary school. They were each assigned to specific positions in the production lines of the textile businesses for which they worked that reflected their low levels of education. All participants referred to their families' financial difficulties as the reason for not having pursued their education. An extended discussion of this situation can be found in the following sections. This study advocates Lörz and Mühleck's (2019) opinion on gender inequality and refers to individuals being deprived of educational essentials based on their gender.

As in Caner et al.'s (2015) statement, males in the family received a better education than women, which is linked with women's participation in the labor force. Also, as in Rocha and Latapi's (2016) suggestion, young women in Turkey have a low quality of social lives due to educational level and limited working positions. The young women in Bagcilar can work in low-paying, unqualified jobs in the textile sector due to their low education level, but they believed they could find higher status and better-paid jobs if they were well-educated. As with other family members, young women are also employed with the minimum wage due to their low education. The fact that some family members were either unemployed or worked irregular, informal and low-paid jobs without social security benefits perpetuates the difficulty of accessing material living conditions and facilitating a low of quality of life in a large family population environment. This study supports suggestions from Liu et al. (2017) suggestion that poverty passes from mother to child. Economic opportunities within their families were the primary reason why the young women started working at an early age, typically 13-18 years old.

> I am 20 years old. We moved to Istanbul from Bitlis (an Eastern Anatolian city) when I was 6. I started primary school, but did not like going to school. My grades were not pleasant, either. I first started working in a hair salon, but I did not like that either. Now I am working in textile, and I am paid minimum wage (T.K., 20 years old).

The leading cause of household poverty was identified as the heads of households, generally uneducated, not liking work or being unable to find suitable jobs. Although young women wanted to continue their education, they could not because the parents failed to take responsibility for providing sufficient support for the family. Y.G. mentioned this situation as:

> I wish I could go to school, but my family said that this was not possible (Y.G., 19 years old).

As Cerrato and Cifre (2018) pointed, these circumstances led the women to take on responsibilities both in and outside the home at very early ages. However, even women working outside the home have to fulfill their domestic responsibilities. The condemnation of men who do housework in the patriarchal society reinforces this situation and increases women's workload at home. This study's results regarding women's obligation to manage both their work-life and also fulfilling domestic responsibilities align with findings reported in much of the available literature (Cerrato & Cifre, 2018; Mirza, 2017).

> There are five children in our family, and my father is sick so my mother stays at home to take care of him. One of my brothers is married and he cannot support us much financially. My other brother and I are working and taking care of both our parents and our two siblings (G.G., 23).
> I had to drop out of school in grade 7 due to financial opportunities. For a while, I took care of my siblings, and afterward, with the help of an acquaintance, I started working in the textile shop in my neighborhood (Z.O., 23 years old).

Due to the lack of birth control awareness, women in the household frequently conceive. Since abortion is forbidden in Islamic beliefs, a woman who becomes pregnant does not have an abortion even if she does not have a caring condition and still gives birth in these challenging conditions. For these reasons, the household population is high.

> In general, we have large families (K.G., 20 years old).

The large household population and the poverty-environment causes poor living standards for the people. Moreover, the government has not developed inclusive policies for the unqualified labour force and low wages. These findings support Deere et al. (2012) and Murphy's (2015) statements about low wages for unskilled women labour.

According to Islamic belief, difficult living conditions are associated with destiny. A bad event is seen as the threshold of the person. Most of the young women attributed their poverty to fate and accept the situation. They expressed the belief that they could only dream of reaching prosperity if they married someone who was well off.

> I would wish for a house by the sea if we had the means; nevertheless, our neighborhood is charming (C.O., 20 years old).

> I don't think I will be working in a textile shop 'til I die. If fate so decrees, I will marry someone and look after my children (C.T., 20 years old).

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> One day, I will get married; therefore, I am preparing my trousseau (Y.G., 19 years old).

> I think my family will approve the person I will marry (C.O., 20 years old).

Due to the patriarchal family structure, conservative mindset in Turkey and young women's wishes to get marry as soon as possible, this research presents different findings than the literature suggests about European poverty (Ayllón & Gábos, 2017; Dieckhoff & Gash, 2015). Young women in Europe are not looking for ways out of poverty through marriage. Unfortunately, the prevailing opinion is that both financial well-being and getting rid of the male-dominated family order can be possible by entering another man's protection. This situation stems from the widespread opinion in the Middle East society. Both because of the Islamic belief and as a symbol of patriarchy, the duty of providing the household's economic livelihood is attributed to the man. The man has to ensure the welfare of his household. Under the influence of this endemic view, women expect not to work, do what their husbands want them to do, obey and be owned in return.

T3- Women's lack of freedom in spending the money they earn
T4- Patriarchal family structure

The patriarchal family structure is prevalent in Turkey. The case study determined that the poverty experienced by young women was much more severe than that of the men in their households because of the dominant culture. Conservatism, gender inequality and their impacts on women's poverty are evident in patriarchal family structures. As Enneli and Enneli (2017) revealed in their study, according to the respondents, men and young boys were at the top of the household hierarchy, followed by women in patriarchal families.

As Caner et al. (2015) states, gender roles in Turkey are primarily defined by the fact that it is a patriarchal society, and women's primary role is to take care of their families and homes. Kingsnorth's (2013) assertion, discrimination against women, includes restraining them from acting freely and independently, requiring women to be mindful of how they dress, talk and behave, and imposing other restrictions as to how they express themselves.

> I wear a headscarf, and I think I look better this way. I feel comfortable when I wear long and loose-fitting clothes (P.D., 20 years old).

> I started wearing a headscarf when I started working. I feel comfortable this way (S.E., 18 years old).

Also, it is a unique contribution of this study to the literature that households respect the young women working in the textile sector more than they respect those who do not work outside of the home. In this context, it can be said that working women in patriarchal family structures are in stronger positions than non-working women. Concerning decisions within their households about purchases, participants reported that women who earn money have more rights to speak than women who do not. The young women described this system:

> Since my mother was also working, my grandmother was taking care of my siblings. When she passed away, I started taking care of my siblings and dropped out of school in grade 8. Right now, my siblings are going to school, so I have fewer

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> chores to do at home. I am working and, at the same time, entering exams to finish high school (E.D., 22 years old).

> To be honest, I enjoy working and sewing in the textile shop, more than taking care of my siblings at home. Because there I get to spend time with my peers and take pleasure in creating something (C.O., 20 years old).

As Malgesini and Babovic (2018) mentioned in their study, violence against women is an accepted behavior in patriarchal family structures. In this environment, women generally justify violence or ignore its effects. This is again a pattern passed down from generation to generation. In Turkey's case, many young women had been exposed to physical violence. More than half of the participants stated that they had frequently fought with their fathers and brothers. Many had suffered verbal and physical violence. Verbal violence and insult are also seen as a way to restrain women. The men in the house intimidate women with this method and continue their hegemony. Participants mentioned that recently married close relatives had been subjected to violence committed by their husbands. The respondents provided their opinions on domestic violence:

> My father is a very strict person; that's why in general I talk with my brothers when I need permission for something (O.G., 18 years old).

Since women do not have economic freedom, they are obliged to continue their lives in this environment of abuse.

> My sister's husband abuses her; he does not do anything good for his family. But my father and brother do not want her to get a divorce (C.T., 20 years old).

The main reasons for the women's poverty were identified by the respondents as 1) low education levels; 2) men's reluctance to work outside the home; 3) men's irresponsible spending habits; 4) the lower wages paid to women concerning the same jobs compared to men; 5) the perception that women's primary responsibility is managing household chores; and 6) the fact that women have to spend the money they earn for household expenses. Bonnet et al. (2019) mentioned that in less developed and developing countries, women have to work in low-paying jobs for long hours and generally lack any legal security or union rights; however, all respondents have social security in the sample of this study. All of the interviewees were highly satisfied to be employed in a job with insurance. I.M. expressed,

> I am paid minimum wage. I do not work on weekends, which is a good thing. I have social security (I.M., 18 years old).

Young women first entered the workshop as unskilled workers and then gained skills by learning sewing. They see this as a self-improvement and are satisfied with this production skill. The young women expressed their satisfaction:

> I work in a textile shop. At first, I was in the packaging section, and later I learned how to sew. I enjoy doing this work more (C.D., 21 years old).

I am happy that I gained the skill of sewing myself in this workshop (T.K., 20 years old).

The women participating in this research expressed their willingness to continue their education if they have opportunities to do so. This situation can be seen as an expression that they are aware of the lack of education as the reason for their harsh living conditions. The young women interviewed in this study expressed their opinions concerning these issues:

Since my sister and I started working at an early age; we want our younger sister to get an education (G.G., 23 years old).

If I had the chance to go to school, maybe I would have been able to work in a well-paid job and even buy myself a house. That house would be along the coastline of Istanbul (C.O., 20 years old).

Considering that I currently work in a textile shop, what I wish being one of those who design these products (K.K., 18 years old).

Most women had found the individual enterprise for which they worked through acquaintances and had accepted the jobs only after having been approved by the men in their families. Because men in the family do not allow their women relatives to work with someone they do not know or trust due to honor issues.

My father knows the owner of my workplace very well (K.G., 20 years old).

The young women are voiceless over how their wages were subsequently spent; most of their incomes were used for family expenses.

I take some allowance out of the money I earn and give the rest to my father. My father spends the money for the expenses of the house. My brother is about to get married, so we have many expenses. And during this period, I support my family for the expenses of the house (T.K., 20 years old).

All of the participants believed that living costs in Istanbul is high so they choose to rest at home during their off days. The young women expressed their opinions of their working conditions:

I think living costs in Istanbul are very high; however, living in our neighborhood is more affordable (I.M., 18 years old).

I rest during my off days. Otherwise, if I decide to go out, I would have to spend much money (Z.O., 23 years old).

T5- Socialisation limited to relatives

Although unmarried young women were working and contributing to their family incomes, the men in the family still perceived them as burdens whose honor needed protection. Although the study's participants' wages contributed to their families' budgets, the patriarchal family

structure prevented them from visiting physical spaces outside of their homes and workplaces without informing and receiving permission from the men of their households.

> My brother does not allow me to go anywhere alone other than the textile shop. I have been living in Istanbul since I was born, but I hardly go outside our neighborhood. I may visit our close relatives. On the other hand, traveling too much requires much money (R.G., 24 years old).

> I enjoy sitting on the terrace of our home during the summer. We have visitors coming by. But in winter I get bored staying all the time indoors (K.K., 18 years old).

It is considered improper in Turkish society for young women to befriend people other than trusted relatives. In fact, despite being long-settled residents of Istanbul, the women had not even had the opportunity to explore and experience the city. This was because young women cannot go outside of their neighbourhoods unless accompanied by a man from their family. Many families think that women should marry someone from their immediate circle.

> My family does not allow me to go outside except visiting a few of our relatives at their homes. It is not pleasant to walk on the streets looking around. I know how my family feels about this (K.G., 20 years old).

> I use Whatsapp to communicate with kiths and kins. However, my brother always wants to see who I am talking with and does not allow me to talk with strangers. I would not want anyone in our neighbouhood to speak ill of me (Y.G., 19 years old).

> I feel much more comfortable when we spend time with women only (E.K., 20 years old).

> Henna nights are the times we have the most fun. It is very comfortable with only girls around (B.K., 18 years old).

> This weekend, my sister is going to have an engagement ceremony. We have been preparing for this event. I am really excited. It is a happy day for our family. It will be fun for me too (I.M., 18 years old).

According to Avolio and Di Laura's study (2017), women's participation in social life worldwide had improved by the 1980s, but case study findings show a contradiction. In the 2000s, it was seen that women had barriers to participate in urban life. Ferragina et al. (2013) pointed out that intellectual capital is most significant in urban spaces, the living space of an individual is much more extensive, but in this study, the living space of young women is limited to homes, relatives' homes and limited parts of the neighborhood.This means that women's poverty and preclusion from participating in urban life still continues in Turkey in 2020s.

T6- Living within the geographical borders of the neighbourhood

Since the socialization of women outside the household is believed to pose a risk to women's honor, their participation in other avenues of social interaction is totally forbidden.

> In the wintertime, my brother picks me up from work and takes me home (K.K., 18 years old).

> I do not visit my relatives at home if there is a man there who is my age (Z.O., 23 years old).

All of the participants reported that they were deprived of participating in social and cultural activities. In general, their socialization is limited and only occurs under the guidance and supervision of male household members.

> I don't have to leave the neighborhood at all in my daily life (I.M., 18 years old).

> My mother's closest friend is my aunt. She is married to a relative of my father. We are very close to them (E.M., 24 years old).

> I don't have any friends from school years (Y.M., 24 years old).

T7- Active social media usage
The literature review identified poverty among women at the community and household levels (Bradshaw et al., 2017; Corsi et al., 2016). These concerns were identified in the case study. Women experienced the effects of poverty at the household level in the forms of violence and pressure; they experienced it on a community scale based on a conservative lifestyle and they experienced it on a social scale with regards to the problems they face with social participation. The young women cannot physically participate in social activities due to poverty and views about the roles of different genders in households.

> Our family did not allow us to take the tram and go to the coastline (C.O., 20 years old).

> I am inquisitive about Yıldız Park in Istanbul (B.K., 18 years old).

This study determined that the social participation of the young women participants was limited to home visits with trusted relatives. Although all of the interviewees spent significant parts of their lives in Istanbul, they did not know the city. They reported taking all kinds of available opportunities to build their understanding of the city, one of which is social media.

> I follow the whole world on Instagram (E.K., 20 years old).

Under these constraints, the participants found ways to experience the world through the Internet, which they accessed through their smartphones. Those women who were not pleased with the roles attributed to them by their families, community and society engaged with social media as a means to fulfill their need to express themselves. Thus, although these women did not physically know

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the city in which they lived and worked, they were aware of many global-scale issues. Elhai et al. (2017) mentioned that advances in communication technologies in recent years had enabled social participation over virtual platforms on a global scale. This study, in which Istanbul data is discussed, is in line with Elhai et al.'s findings.

> I see the whole world through social media. (K.K., 18 years old)

> I follow celebrities on Instagram. Of course, they have a different life (E.M., 24 years old)

Women use social media platforms to communicate with an outer world which they cannot physically participate in. This phenomenon was marked amongst the study's participants. Social media played an essential role in the lives of young women; they described themselves as being attached to their smartphones.

> My highest cost is my smartphone expenses (S.K., 18 years old).

The women mostly engaged with Instagram and shared photos and comments as a means to fulfill their desires.

> I love taking photos. Then I post them on Instagram. But I don't post photos of myself; I post photos of flowers, trees, nature and animals (S.Y., 18 years old).

For young women, doing something different and sharing it with more people is in demand as a vital self-realization step. Women use hashtags to announce their posts to more people. These hashtags, which are related to the interests of the young women, range from housework (#titizkadinlar, #evisi, #temizlikfikirleri) and domesticity to handcrafting (#benimhobim, #elisidunyasi, #emekcikadinlar) and fashion (#salmodasi, #hijabfashion, #hijabstyle). Besides, young women aim to expand their networks by using hashtags (#tesetturgiyim, #hijab, #hijabers, #hijabtutorial, #hijaberscommunity), expressing that they are veiled and wearing hijab.

Since the male households controlled the social media activities of some of the women, they were sometimes obliged to set up anonymous profiles to interact with the world. These accounts were generally hidden from the men of their households and made these women feel free. Almost all of the women reported being active social media users.

Conclusion

This study, conducted with young, poor women working in the textile sector in Istanbul, found that the belief that poverty was fate was common among participants. Poverty shows parallelism with the conservative tendencies of family structures in Turkey. Many individuals perceive poverty as fate and resign themselves to accepting his/her situation. The young women who were interviewed in this study were not aware of the exact causes and consequences of poverty. They expressed the belief that they could only dream of reaching prosperity if they married someone who was well off.

Despite the decline in Turkish gender inequality that began in the 2000s, women's positions in households, communities and society has not changed. The young women who participated in

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this study live under the oppression of their patriarchal families, as well as under the widespread verbal and physical violence against women of all ages by men.

As in other developing countries, gender roles in Turkey are primarily defined by the fact that it is a patriarchal society, and women's primary role is to take care of their families and homes. The woman accepts her social position without questioning due to the socialization and education she has received, and she cannot benefit from the advantages that her work-life brings since her responsibilities have increased. Due to the patriarchal family structure and conservative mindset in Turkey, this research presents different findings than the research exploring and describing European poverty.

This study concluded that many women who live under the pressure of poverty and gender inequality might demonstrate a high incidence of social media use as a means of liberation from their unsatisfactory living conditions. This is the original contribution to the furtherance of academic knowledge made by this paper.

Women's indifference to society and themselves creates a vicious cycle; it seems complicated for egalitarian policies targeting women to be fruitful. Also, the women pointed out that if they had a chance, they would continue their education to get better positions in their professional lives . Many poor women lacking sufficient educational attainment due to poverty could improve their status by enrolling in courses launched by local administrations. Although social policies developed by centralized administration or vocational courses launched by local administrations such as college preparatory subjects, textile design, tailoring and entrepreneurship may help mitigate poverty to some extent, women suffer the most from poverty due to the social roles attributed to them. Local governments, in collaboration with the Ministry of Family and Social Policies, can assist women in getting social support to combat the patriarchal society dynamics and prevent a radical solution.

Women's awareness is essential to get out of this vicious cycle of poverty and low level of social participation. Social media can provide young women with increased awareness of some vital issues regarding women that they may have otherwise not been aware of had they not accessed social media content. For this reason, it should be seen as an easy and effective start for the Ministry of Family and Social Policies to raise women's awareness of specific issues by working with some social media agencies. While the whole world is being digitalized, education and learning have also taken a different dimension in the virtual environment. It is a very accessible possibility for women to acquire different skills and vocational training through distance learning. However, the awareness of women and their families of issues impacting them directly should be reinforced by deep-rooted state policies and subesquently announced and circulated via social media.

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