

Daily Life Practices of Syrian Immigrants: The Case of Mardin¹

Hasan ŞEN²

Davut Bulut UNAT³

Abstract

Research Paper

The subject of this study is the daily life practices of Syrian immigrants and, so to say, their stories of “holding on” to life. The study analyzes the aforementioned practices by referring to Michel de Certeau’s concepts of strategy and tactics, which focuses on the forms of micro-resistance displayed by immigrants’ in their daily lives. The geographic area of the the study is the province of Mardin and the samples are taken from the districts of Midyat, Center (Artuklu) and Kızıltepe. Qualitative research methods and discourse analysis were employed accordingly. Some of the data collected in this study were analyzed using themes such as Developing Dual Loyalty: Being Both a Muslim and a Syrian; Working Even If Not Rewarded for One’s Efforts; Keeping One’s Head Down and Obeying the Rules; Hiding One’s Identity; Trying to Learn Turkish; Turning the Arabic Language into an Advantage.

Key Words: Daily Life, M. de Certeau, Strategies and Tactics, Resistances, Syrian Immigrants in Turkey.

Suriyeli Göçmenlerin Gündelik Yaşam Pratikleri: Mardin Örneği

Öz

Araştırma Makalesi

Bu çalışmanın konusu, Suriyeli göçmenlerin günlük yaşam pratikleri ve başka bir tabirle hayata “tutunma” hikayeleridir. Çalışma göçmenlerin günlük yaşamlarında gösterdikleri hayata tutunma hikayelerini mikro-direnç biçimlerine odaklanan Michel de Certeau’nun strateji ve taktik kavramlarına değinerek analiz etmektedir. Çalışmanın alanı Mardin ilidir ve örnekleme Midyat, Merkez (Artuklu) ve Kızıltepe ilçeleridir. Çalışmada nitel araştırma yöntemleri ve buna bağlı olarak söylem analizi tekniği kullanılmıştır. Görüşmeler göçmenlerin yaşadıkları evlerde yapılmıştır. Toplanan veriler aşağıdaki temalar altında analiz edilmiştir: Çift Yönlü Sadakat Geliştirmek: Hem Müslüman Hem de Suriyeli Olmak, Karşılığını Almasalar Da Çalışmak, Etliye Sütlüye Karışmamak ve Kurallara Uymak, Kimliklerini Saklamak, Türkçe’yi Öğrenmeye Çalışmak, Arapça Dilini Avantaja Dönüştürmek.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Gündelik Hayat, M. de Certeau, Stratejiler ve Taktikler, Dirençler, Türkiye'deki Suriyeli Göçmenler

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2 Assoc. Prof., Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University, Faculty of Arts, Department of Sociology. senhasan@mu.edu.tr, <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-2111-2223>.

3 Sociologist, bulut.unat@gmail.com, <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-9011-8541>.

Introduction

Migration is almost as old as the history of humanity. People have migrated for economic, social and political reasons. Due to the civil war in Syria, millions of people have taken refuge in Turkey. The Syrian civil war and migration continue. There are approximately three and a half million Syrian refugees in Turkey.

The subject of Syrian refugees living in Turkey remains on the agenda for several reasons. The economic cost of migration is a particularly widely discussed issue. In addition, the related social and political problems caused by migration are examined. Various researches are being conducted on these subjects. There is a large literature on Syrian refugees. There are also studies on the daily lives of refugees⁴.

This study focuses on the problems faced by Syrian migrants. This article, which deals with the daily lives of Syrian migrants, aims to analyze their struggles to hold onto life. It examines the daily life practices that migrants use to overcome the problems they face in the economic, social and political spheres. In this context, it aims to examine the tactics and strategies employed by immigrants. According to Michel de Certeau, such tactics and strategies are the resistance mechanisms which are frequently used by immigrants. Migrants resist the difficult economic problems and social discrimination they face in various ways. One of the places where these resistance mechanisms are best seen is in the migrants' daily lives. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the story of Syrian migrants through and examination of their daily lives (Certeau, 2009).

Syrian refugees have many problems such as housing, language, education and income (Aktaş & Gülçür, 2016). Among the problems faced by Syrian migrants is the necessity of their working under difficult conditions and receiving low wages. Combined with this is the fact that just, because they are Syrians, they are excluded by the local people. We will focus on the "tactics" and "strategies" developed by the Syrians in the context of these problems: "Obeying the rules"; "Hiding their Syrian identities"; "Trying to learn the Turkish language" and "Building a dual identity."

In this study, which focuses on Syrian immigrants, theoretical and conceptual debates will be given first. In this context, the sociology of everyday life, in particular the discussions of Alfred Schütz and Michel de Certeau on this subject will be examined. The methodological model of the study will then be discussed. Finally, the analysis of the data will be included.

⁴ See. Deniz A.Ç. & Ekinci Y. & Hülür B. (2016) "Bizim Müstakbel Hep Harap Oldu" Suriyeli Sığınmacıların Gündelik Hayatı Antep-Kilis Çevresi, İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2016. Cengiz D. & Özgür M. & Yıldız S. (2018) Antakya'daki Suriyeli Mültecilerin Gündelik Yaşam Pratikleri, TÜCAUM 30. Yıl Uluslararası Coğrafya Sempozyumu, 3-6 Ekim 2018 Ankara. Aktaş E. & Gülçür İ. (2016) "Mezitli'de Suriyeli Göçmenlerin Sorunlarının Sosyo-Ekonomik Açından Analizi", 2nd International Congress on Applied Sciences: Migration, Poverty and Employment, UUBK 2016

1. Daily Life and Michel de Certeau's Concepts of Resistance in Daily Life: Strategy, Tactics, and Metis Practices

While interest in the analysis of daily life has increased recently, the sociology of daily life as a sub-discipline is relatively new within the history of sociology. The historical reasons for this will not be discussed in detail within this paper. However, we would like to state that the spirit of the foundations of mainstream sociology has been based on a dualist perspective which separates structure from agent, society from individual, or in other words, subject from object. Social construction was therefore perceived in such a way that the agent is determined by structure and the object by subject. As a result, grand theories were rather emphasized, especially positivistic views of science based on the assumption of universalistic and objective laws operating within the discipline of early sociology. Such an approach represented the positivistic view for quite a long time. Hence, Auguste Comte and Emile Durkheim laid significant emphasis on the society rather than the individual. According to Durkheim, society predates and determines the individual, while collective consciousness precedes individual consciousness (Durkheim, 1994: 27). Likewise, Comte stated that individual elements should be analyzed within the framework of their relationship to the society as a whole (Comte, 2001:35-40). Generalizing and wholistic methodologies were adopted due to the paradigm of a social science shaped predominantly by a generalizing and wholistic approach. Human actions were thus explained as being part of the whole, and explanations based on statistics were preferred. Actions compatible with the whole were considered to be explicable, while those incompatible were thought to be negligible. This paradigm was revised due to critics referring to hermeneutics and the emphasis on subject-subject relations which replaced the subject-object dualism. This particularity was then acknowledged as a non-negligible category, and the emphasis on daily life was increased due to the increasing emphasis on inter-subjectivity.

The sociology of daily life gives an important place to culture—an aspect which is neglected by great theories. Ben Highmore (2002:177) says: “If the project of everyday life studies is to go in search of the hidden and the ignored, then, this should apply to its theoretical resources as much as to the cultural practices it pursues.” In his work *Ordinary Lives, Studies in the Everyday* he (2011:52) also states:

“Daily life is one of the places where cultural life is best analyzed. The daily lives of the discounted and unaccounted constitute the subterranean ground of the ordinary. Their becoming-visible in literature, in political actions, in cultural forums, are the stakes that an aesthetic politics of everyday life will eventually rest on.”

Daily life is the place where human relations become most apparent and concrete in routines and where individuals construct social connections through cultural interactions (Schütz & Luckmann, 1973: 21). The sociology of daily life, established as a sub-discipline due to the influence of Alfred Schütz, was later developed by LeFebvre and Michel de Certeau. There are many theoretical

frameworks within the sociology of daily life, including those of functionalism, phenomenology, LeFebvre etc. However, in this study we will particularly refer to Michel de Certeau's theoretical framework and the relevant concepts developed by him.

According to Michel de Certeau, daily life is where "resistance," consisting of several strategies and tactics, develops against different forms of authority as well as the political system itself. Strategy is the "weighing of power relations" which emerge within the predominant life. Tactics are the "calculation" of the actions against the dominant (Certeau, 2009a: 53). Examples of tactics are: achievements, games and trickery, cheats peculiar to "hunters," traps, hocus-pocuses, polymorphic simulations, discoveries that are poetical, joyous or cheerful, as well as being challenging and performed by "the weak" against "the strong" (i.e., power holders, illness, violence or coercion) –these are all tactics. Similarly, according to Ferhat Kentel (2011:7), "tactics are the art of cunning used by the weak against the strong".

Certeau indicates that minorities, and especially immigrants, who are the subject of this study, transform the hegemonic system best through the employment of various strategies and tactics (Certeau, 2009a: 107-108). Certeau defines such transformations through the concept of "resistance" and emphasizes that resistance to the given is performed through not only violence or mass movements, but also by ordinary and routine actions in their daily life, thus developing new and refined forms of resistance. Certeau (2009a-b) argues that immigrants, refugees, asylees [asylum seekers], minorities, blacks, workers, women, the poor, homosexuals and ethnic groups (whom he terms majorities out of line) become visible and don't provide much to the hegemonic power observed in several fields, such as culture, politics, economy, religion and education through their resistance within their life practices. Thereby highlighting the importance of Certeau's concepts of strategy and tactics, such as "potential of the impotent, activity of the passive, production of the unproductive, escaping without quitting". De Certeau says:

"For instance, the ambiguity that subverted from within the Spanish colonizers' "success" in imposing their own culture on the indigenous Indians is well known. Submissive, and even consenting to their subjection, the Indians nevertheless often made of the rituals, representations, and laws imposed on them something quite different from what their conquerors had in mind; they subverted them not by rejecting or altering them, but by using them with respect to ends and references foreign to the system they had no choice but to accept. They were other within the very colonization that outwardly assimilated them; their use of the dominant social order deflected its power, which they lacked the means to challenge; they escaped it without leaving it. The strength of their difference lay in procedures of "consumption." To a lesser degree, a similar ambiguity creeps into our societies through the use made by the "common people" of the culture disseminated and imposed by the "elites" producing the language" (Certeau, 2009a:107-108).

The concept of *metis* is again used by de Certeau and helps to describe them. According to him, *metis* is “a type of intelligence embedded in a practice and where talents such as ‘intuition, acute mind, deception, know-how, attention, anticipation, various skills, broad experience’ complement each other” enables the aforementioned groups to develop various strategies and tactics (de Certeau, 2009a: 172-173). *Metis* makes it possible to use the language of the hegemonic to overcome the hegemonic.

Henri Lefebvre focuses on the sociology of everyday life and its relationship with the city and living space. LeFebvre (2013: 83-85) states that everyday life takes place in urban spaces. Urban spaces include distance, tension and contact. As will be shown in this study, Syrian immigrants face the conflicts of daily life in urban spaces.

2. The Methodology

This study is based on a master’s thesis which was supported by the Scientific Research Project Office between 2016-2017. In this study, qualitative methods and in-depth interview techniques were used to interview 19 subjects. The first contacts with Syrian migrants were made through acquaintances of the researcher and his friends and the relatives of the researcher. A snowball sampling technique was used in this study. The snowball sampling technique is based on the principle of reaching out to the other persons who are thought to be consulted from the source persons in the field where the research is conducted. Snowball sampling is a technique used in cases where the researcher does not know much about the size of the universe or there is no record of the universe (Kümbetoğlu, 2012: 99). In this study, interviews were conducted with immigrants living in their homes. Ten of the subjects were male and nine were female. We did fieldwork mainly based on participant observation in order to determine the appropriate type of interview for a given social context. In designing the methodological model of the study a “saturation point,” which is one of the important criteria used in determining the number of interviews in qualitative research, was taken into consideration. The interviews were cancelled when similar results and a saturation point were reached.

In Turkey, the province of Mardin was chosen as the field of study. The decision to conduct field research in Mardin was determined by considering the following factors.

Firstly, the province of Mardin is among the locations reserved for Syrian immigrants by the Republic of Turkey. Mardin is therefore suitable for understanding the field and reaching preliminary information about the subjects. Hence the statistical data belonging to AFAD⁵ (Afet ve Acil Durum Yönetimi Başkanlığı) sheds much light on the subject. As we said, about three and a half million Syrian refugees in Turkey are living in several places. Mardin is one of the places where Syrian immigrants live. Of the Syrian immigrants in Turkey, according to official figures,

⁵ Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency. Please see: https://www.afad.gov.tr/Dokuman/TR/60-2013123015491-syrian-refugeesin-turkey-2013_baski_30.12.2013_tr.pdf Date of access: 11.02.2015

about 36 percent were placed in 20 camps in 10 cities. One of these cities is Mardin. Currently, there are 87,553 Syrian migrants living in Mardin. This corresponds to 10.6 percent of the total Syrian migrants (<https://multeciler.org.tr/turkiyedeki-suriyeli-sayisi>, accessed 03.10.2019). For this reason, the city of Mardin was chosen for the study. Midyat, Center (Artuklu) and Kızıltepe are the districts where the study was conducted.

Secondly, Mardin has a camp where the Syrian immigrants are located intensely. Our analytical strategy in selecting Mardin is based on the assumption that the Syrian immigrants in other provinces are also subject to similar circumstances of domination.

And finally, Mardin's population is quite heterogeneous in its ethnic, religious and cultural dimensions. The Syrian immigrants' historical, cultural, religious and linguistic affinity, as well as kinship patterns within the local community would provide us more opportunities to compare and contrast several dimensions of the daily life of the immigrants.

The methodological (especially thematic) perspective of this study is based on Gaye Gökalp Yılmaz's book (2018), "Michel de Certeau'nun Gündelik Hayat Sosyolojisiyle Bir Analiz: Almanya'daki Türklerin Gündelik Hayat Pratikleri ve Taktikleri." In particular, de Certeau's tactic, strategy and metis concepts were applied to the field. In this study data were analyzed using these themes: Developing Dual Loyalty: Being Both a Muslim and a Syrian; Working Even If Not Rewarded for One's Efforts; Keeping One's Head Down and Obeying the Rules; Hiding One's Identity; Trying to Learn Turkish; and Turning the Arabic Language into an Advantage.

3. Data Analysis

Table 1.a. General Profile of the Interviewees

I	Gender	Age	Previous Occupation / Current Occupation	Language of the Interview	Location of the Interview
1	Female	36	House wife/House wife	Kurdish/Arabic	Center (Artuklu)
2	Male	25	Automotive electrics/ Automotive electrics	Kurdish/Arabic/Turkish	Midyat
3	Male	54	Trade/Unemployed	Arabic/Kurdish	Midyat
4	Female	20	House wife/House wife	Arabic	Midyat
5	Female	38	Accountant/Teacher	Arabic/Turkish	Center (Artuklu)
6	Female	21	Student/Manager	Arabic	Center (Artuklu)

7	Male	27	Electrician/Electrician	Arabic/Turkish	Midyat
8	Male	35	PhD candidate (Art and design)/Municipal officer	Arabic/English	Midyat
9	Female	39	Primary school teacher/ Primary school teacher	Turkish/Arabic	Center (Artuklu)
10	Female	22	Student/Sales and marketing	Arabic	Midyat
11	Male	41	Deputy mayor-Engineer/Carpenter	Arabic	Center (Artuklu)
12	Male	39	Physics teacher/Primary school teacher	Arabic/English	Center (Artuklu)
13	Female	19	Housewife/Housewife	Arabic	Center (Artuklu)
14	Male	54	Garment industry/ Unemployed	Kurdish/Arabic	Center (Artuklu)
15	Female	55	Housewife/Housewife	Kurdish/Arabic	Center (Artuklu)
16	Male	29	Papier mache, Master carpenter/Master carpenter	Kurdish	Kızıltepe
17	Female	23	Dental technician/ Dental technician	Kurdish	Kızıltepe
18	Male	25	Arabic teacher/Teacher	Arabic/English	Center (Artuklu)
19	Male	25	Chemistry (Science) teacher/Teacher	Arabic	Center (Artuklu)

Table 1.b. General Profile of the Interviewees

I	Time since immigration	Educational status	Marital status	Faith	Native Language(s)	Origin in Syria
1	1 year and 2 months	Secondary school graduate	Married	Muslim	Kurdish/Arabic	Qamishli
2	3 years	Secondary school graduate	Single	Muslim	Kurdish/Arabic and Turkish	Qamishli

3	3 years	Illiterate	Married	Muslim	Kurdish/Arabic	Qamishli
4	3 years	Secondary school graduate	Married	Muslim	Kurdish/Arabic and Turkish	Idlib
5	2 years and 8 months	Bachelor's degree	Single	Muslim	Arabic/Kurdish, Turkish and English	Damascus
6	3 years	High school graduate	Single	Muslim	Arabic/Kurdish, English, Turkish	Aleppo
7	4 years	Secondary school graduate	Married	Muslim	Kurdish/Arabic, Turkish	Qamishli
8	3 years	PhD holder	Married	Muslim	Arabic/English, German, Italian	Damascus
9	1 year	Bachelor's degree	Married	Muslim	Arabic/Turkish, English	Damascus
10	3 years	High school graduate	Single	Muslim	Arabic	Al-Hasakah
11	2 years	Bachelor	Married	Muslim	Arabic/French	Damascus
12	1 year	Bachelor's degree	Divorced	Muslim	Arabic/English	Homs
13	5-6 months	Illiterate	Married	Muslim	Arabic	Damascus
14	3 years	High school graduate	Married	Muslim	Kurdish/Arabic	Al-Hasakah
15	3 years	Illiterate	Married	Muslim	Kurdish/Arabic	Amuda
16	4 years	High school graduate	Married	Muslim	Kurdish/Arabic	Al-Hasakah
17	2 years	High school graduate	Married	Muslim	Kurdish/Arabic	Al-Hasakah
18	2 years	Bachelor	Single	Muslim	Arabic/English, Turkish	Aleppo
19	2 years	Bachelor's degree	Single	Muslim	Arabic	Damascus

3.1. Age, Gender, Occupation

Of the interviewees, ten were male and nine were female. The age range was 19 to 55 among the women and 25 to 54 among the men. The average age of the women was 30.3, and of men was 35.4, with an overall average of 33. This data implies that

age and gender are the two “motivating” factors which determine Syrian immigrants decisions to migrate. Migration theories mostly assume that age is a significant factor and the age range here makes it possible for the immigrants to take their chance. It could be harder for them to move if they were older.

The Syrian immigrants’ educational levels seem to be relatively high regarding their professions and occupations before migrating. Most interviewees graduated from a secondary school, technical school, college or their equivalents. Their professions in Syria and occupations in Turkey also seem to correspond.

3.2. Syrian Immigrants’ Practices for Surviving: Strategies and Tactics in Daily Life

3.2.1. Developing Dual Loyalty: Being Both a Muslim and a Syrian

The Syrian immigrants try to establish a religious, cultural and historical kinship with the local community where they settle through kinship links and the common Islamic faith. The interviewees often made comments such as “*We have resembled the Turks.*”

(biz de Türk gibi olduk),

“You and we are almost the same anyway.”

(zaten biz ve siz aynıyız),

“We have relatives here.”

(bizim akrabalarımız burada), etc.

Such attitudes, seemingly fuelled by common historical and cultural backgrounds, could be regarded as a kind of strategy or tactic. Such comments function as a tool for easing the difficulties of being the other, abolishing the discrimination between you and us and indeed turning it into unity through the uniformity of you and us. Then cultural patterns such as “common fate,” “Relatives wouldn’t leave each other alone,” “All Muslims are brothers,” “Muslims wouldn’t turn their backs on each other,” and “He is not a believer whose stomach is full while his neighbor is hungry” come into play. Immigrants especially refer to the (Sunni) Islamic faith, which is the common ground for establishing a religious discursive commonness. The strategy of producing an identity known, recognized, and identifiable within the collective memory of the local community functions for mentally legitimizing their presence. A significant reason for the Syrian immigrants to settle down in Mardin –where an ethnically, religiously, and culturally heterogeneous population lives– is the historical, cultural, religious and linguistic affinity between them. Some of them even could find their kinsmen in Mardin. Such factors establish the methodological reason for conducting such research in Mardin.

Syrian immigrants, on the other hand, constantly criticize the Islamic practices and rituals in Turkey, arguing that some of them are unacceptable. This acts as a

strategy or tactic for the immigrants to claim to be representing the “true” Islam and demonstrating their superiority. Such claims strengthen their expectations of being acclaimed by the local community.

“Now look, this is a good question. Your understanding of Islam is the Islam of sufis, sheiks, and imams. It is related to the community. You read the Koran, but don’t understand it! You ask the imam, and accept what he tells you. The reference is neither to the law, nor to the religion nor to sharia, but you follow him anyway. He just made it up. We were like that about 25 or 30 years ago. We used to sacrifice 25 or 30 sheep in condolences and continue eating them for 3 or 4 days. Such customs are over now.”

(“Bak şimdi bu senin sorun çok güzel oldu. Sizin Müslümanlığınız, sofiler, şeyhler, imamlar Müslümanlıktır. Cemaate bağlıdır. Siz Kuran’ı okuyorsunuz ama anlamını bilmiyorsunuz?! Burada imama soruyorsun, o ne diyorsa tamam. Kanuna göre değil, ne şeriatı ne dine göredir ama sen gidiyorsunuz söylediğinin peşine. Kendi kendine uydurduğu bir şeydir. Şimdi bizden 25-30 yıl öncesi böyleydi. Bizde de Taziyelerde 25-30 koyun keserlerdi. 3-4 gün böyle yemek yediriyorlardı. O şeyler bizde bitti”). (Interviewee-18, male).

“These are all superstitions. You have many superstitions. For example, you have graves (i.e., turbas) where you visit. That’s not true. This is wrong.”

(“Biz söylüyoruz ki, hurafeler. Siz de çok var hurafeler. Melasa sizlerde mezarlar var. Gidip ziyaretler de bulunuyorsunuz (türbelere). Böyle şeyler yok. Bunlar yanlış”). (Interviewee-14, male).

“...You believe in magic. Superstitions. Cofee [coffee??] reading...”

(“...Sihirlere inanıyorsunuz. Hurafeler. Kahve falları...”). (Interviewee-15, female).

“Islam is Islam everywhere of course, but I saw an old man here, in Kızıltepe (the most crowded district of Mardin) who gets interest. I told him ‘You perform salaah, but also get interest!’ (the others laughed together). He said, ‘Deary, that’s quite another story!’ Allah tells us that it is wrong and a sin. But you pray to Allah! How could it be another story?! Is that the case in Islam!!!? How could one get interest if he afraid of Allah?”

(“Müslüman Müslüman her yerde Müslümanlıktır da, ama şimdi burada Kızıltepe’de (Mardin ilinin nüfusu en büyük ilçesi) bir yaşlı adamı gördüm, ona da söyledim faizle iş yapıyordu. Hem namaz kılıyorsun hem de faizle para veriyorsun,! (diğerleri güldüştü). Adam bana dedi:” oğlum o ayrı bu ayrı!”). Ulan Allah sana diyor haramdır günahdır. Sen Allaha ibadet ediyorsun!?! Nasıl böyle ayrı ayrı oluyor?! İslâmiyet’te böyle midir!!!? Allaktan korkuyorsa nasıl faiz veriyorsun!!!”). (Interviewee-16, male).

Syrian immigrants, while trying to establish a religious commonness with the local community, also emphasize the idea of “Being/remaining a Syrian” in order to develop a multiple or dual loyalty. An approach of “laying a bridge between well-defined fields, holding a dual cultural belonging and being loyal to more than one identity” in Ayşe Çağlar’s (2000: 136) words are adopted by the Syrian immigrants. These identities thus gain a kind of strategic significance as alternatives which are applicable and useable if needed. Syrians use the sense of trust built on “self-identity” as a shelter. Hence the preference of coming back to the self in identity is quite functional for the Syrian immigrants, themselves abroad away from home, in calling back their routines before migration, in feeling strong in a safe port and in hindering or wrecking any metaphor of otherization.

“I will remain a Syrian forever.” (“Ben hep Suriyeli kalacağım”)
(Interviewee-2, male).

“I am a Syrian in truth.” (“Vallah ben Suriyeliyim”) *(Interviewee-3, male).*

“I watch Syrian channels. I watch anything. All programmes. News, movies, series, etc.” (“Suriye kanallarını izliyorum. Her şeyi izliyorum. Tüm programları. Haber film dizi felan”) *(Interviewee-1, female).*

The Syrian migrants both embrace Turkish culture and identity and also emphasize their Syrian identity. Thus, they project the message that “we are not different from you.” They are trying to express the fact that they are culturally closer to people living in Turkey. On the other hand, they often emphasize that they are Syrian. In this way, they are psychologically empowered by remembering their ethnic origins. This is a common situation among immigrants. Indeed, the Turks who immigrated from Bulgaria to Turkey in 1989 also exhibit the same behavior (Şen, 2004: 42). This behavior is used by immigrants as a strategy and tactic. Differentiation on the ground of practices, i.e., the status of a “majority out of line” is made through their cooking, domestic life, eating, etc. Immigrants adopt similar tactics in various countries. Hence Gaye Gökalp indicates that Turks living in Germany try to sustain the conditions of their lives before migration through reading Turkish newspapers and watching Turkish TV programmes (Gökalp Yılmaz, 2013: 70).

3.2.2. Working Even If Not Rewarded for One’s Efforts

Syrian immigrants maintain their lives under bad conditions and mostly with their own means. They usually work longer hours and at lower wages. One of the driving factors for this is the discrimination against immigrants. While paying the cost of being “the other” with the inconsistency between their jobs and wages, they adopt the strategy and tactics of regarding desperation as the remedy in order to “live” since they have nothing else to do.

“Everything has disturbed us. For example, I would plan to work on a construction job, and the boss offers me 20 Liras. I would ask why, and he

would answer that I am a Syrian! Then I would say OK, I am a Syrian, but don't I still have to pay the rent for my house?! When we go to a construction site, the Turks are paid 2000. Then I demand 2000 too, but they say they would pay no more than 500 since I am a Syrian, and I will have no wage if I refuse to work...”

“Ben bir yerde çalışacağım mesela inşaatta. Bana 20 Tl veriyor. Diyorum neden 20 TL. adam diyor oğlum sen Suriyelisin! Ben de adama diyorum ee oğlum tamam Suriyeliyim ama benden kira isteniyor.?! Mesela işe gidiyoruz inşaatta. Türkler 2 milyara (eski para ile) yapıyor. Ben de ona diyorum 2 milyar. Bana diyorlar ee kardeşim sen Suriyelisin 500 lira! Gel çalış, çalışmazsan para yok...” (Interviewee-16, male).

“I wanted to work in a laboratory, but they lied to me. There was no laboratory at all. They told me that I will be a labourer. I was told to do cleaning and anything anyone told to me to do! He offered me 700 Liras. He didn't pay more than that.”

“Ben çalıştım geldim dedim laboratuvarda çalışayım bana yalan söylediler baktım burada laboratuvar yok. Burada işçi gibi çalışacaksın yanımda. Temizlik işlerinde çalışacaksın her işi yapacaksın dedi bana! Bana 700 TL verdi. Emeğimizin karşılığını daha fazla vermiyor” (Interviewee-19, male).

“I sometimes go to a coffeehouse. Some there say that “they” have ruined the country (then I realize, they are talking about Syrians). He talks as if his country was great before us!”

“2-3 saatliğine kahveye gidiyorum. Diyorlar memleketi bozdular (duyuyor, Suriyeliler için). Sanki memleketi neydi de geldim bozdum!” (Interviewee-14, male).

“Syrians work a lot, but are paid very little. Syrians agree on this, but Turks don't. Turks get angry and ask “Why is it the Syrians who get the jobs!” Syrians work a lot, they do a good job, but get low wages. That means that there are no jobs left for Turks.”

“Suriyeliler çok çalışıyor, az veriyorlar. Suriyeliler bunu kabul ediyorlar ama Türk kabul etmiyor. Türk sinirleniyor. Niye Suriyeliler çalışıyorlar! Diyorlar. Suriyeliler çok çalışıyor çok iyi iş yapıyorlar ucuz ama Türklere iş kalmıyor.” (Interviewee-5, female).

“Some dialogues disturb me. For example, I work in an industrial estate and many there say that Syrians have ruined it, since they work for cheap. I give no answer, but move away and show no reaction even when I hear them.”

“Kuşuşmalar rahatsız ediyor. Mesela ben sanayide çalışıyorum bizim orada diyorlar çoğu konuşuyor, Suriyeliler işi bozdular ucuz çalışıyorlar. Ben

duyuyorum ama ben bir şey demiyorum uzaklaşıyorum tepki de vermiyorum”
(Interviewee-7, male).

Long hours of working, very low wages, no opportunity to save money, and a precarious existence due to uninsured employment means that their life standards remain at a minimum level. Being immigrants results in the exploitation of their labors. They experience a daily life where this exploitation shows its cruel face in the most explicit and cold ways as a class conflict. Historically common identities disentangle or are forgotten at this point. For example, the emotional integrity and ideals established by the Syrians on the basis of Islamic faith (i.e., religious fellowship) disentangle in front of practical realities such as economic interests or work. Syrian immigrants employ various strategies and tactics under such circumstances. Biting the bullet, carrying their crosses and using the sound of silence are the leading ones of these. That last tactic is to be preferred, as it is an outcome of the fact that they are exposed to exploitation and accusation of causing the unemployment of the members of the local community at the same time.

3.2.3. Strategy of Keeping One’s Head Down and Obeying the Rules

Syrian immigrants aim to prevent potential prejudice through obeying the rules as a strategy or tactic. Such behavior is preferred arguably in order to avoid problems and potential legal tensions. This is because such problems make their identities more visible and illuminate their disadvantageous status.

“There is no case that I didn’t obey the rules. I would obey any rule in Turkey.”

(“Kurallara uymadığım olmadı. Ne yasaksa Türkiye’de ben uymaya çalışıyorum”). (Interviewee-5, female).

“I have obeyed all the rules I have learned. The only exception is that I spoke too loudly on a telephone call while on a public bus.” (“Öğrendiğim tüm kurallara uydum. Bir tek otobüste sesli, telefonla ile konuştum...”). (Interviewee-2, male).

Immigrants try to prevent the already bad conditions from becoming even worse, often through trying to be non-confrontational and sometimes avoiding any actions at all. Avoiding any action as a kind of action is adopted as a tactic. They apply these tactics by not going out of the house, by not disturbing their neighbors in any way, and satisfying the demands of their bosses. Syrians whom we consider to perform silent and even invisible forms of resistance usually prefer murmuring and grumbling as a strategy and tactic rather than telling. They seldom adopt passive resistance as follows:

“I don’t do what the boss says if I don’t agree. I wouldn’t obey even if ordered by the manager.”

(“Patron dediğinde güzel değilse aklıma yatmıyorsa yapmıyorum. (karşı çıkmış) daha önce düşünüyorum müdür bile olsa yapmam”). (Interviewee-9, female).

However, they could grumble and object the injustice when they get sick of it:

“I did a job for a man 3 months ago for 500 Liras. I visited him several times, and he always said that he has no money, truly. I went to him at a wedding and said that I had had enough, that it has been 3 months! It’s not much money, only 500 Liras! Man alive! You could have collected this much money by saving only 1 Lira per day! I put a knife on his throat and threatened him that I would cut his throat if he refused to pay it. And I would actually do that.”

“3 aydır bir adamın işini bitirmişim 500 TL’ye. Ne kadar onun yanına gittim, diyor abe yoktur vallah bende. Düğün günü gittim adamın yanına, dedim abe yeter bu 3 ay yeter! 500 TL’dir sanki nedir! Yavv günde 1 lira atmış olsaydın benim paramı toplayacaktın! Gittim bıçağı boğazına dayadım, paramı şimdi verdin verdin vermezsen seni şimdi keserim! Vallahi boğazladım.” (Interviewee-16, male).

3.2.4. Hiding One’s Identity

Syrian immigrants prefer not to share information about their identities and show their ID cards, since this would more often than not cause trouble for them.

“I went to a hospital. I showed my ID card and the officer told me to go to the end of the queue. I refused this and told him that I would leave.”

“Hastaneye gittim. Kimliği verdim mi onlara, kimliğimi verdiğimin karşısında ki kişi dedi git sona (kuyruğun sonuna). Dedim ne sona gideceğim. Ver kimliğimi gideceğim.” (Interviewee-17, female).

Immigrants prefer to hide their identities since they know that the medical staff and especially doctors adopt a negative attitude towards them when they learn that they are Syrian. Lefebvre (2013) says that everyday life is the place where most conflicts appear. Conflict occurs in urban spaces. As can be seen here, tensions and sometimes conflicts may occur between the Syrian migrants and the Turkish people. In such a situation, the migrants adopt leaving the space as a tactic and strategy. When they cannot overcome the problem, they prefer to move away from it. This is because conflict is very disadvantageous for Syrians migrants.

3.2.5. Trying to Learn Turkish, Turning the Arabic Language into an Advantage

Using language is the shortcut to involve a routine and maintain it in the daily life. It is the space where daily relationships with others are built (Schutz, 1967: 123). Syrian immigrants use learning Turkish as a strategic tool for building social and cultural relationships with the local community for the following reasons:

“I would like to learn Turkish for my job. It is difficult for me since they don't understand neither English nor Arabic. They speak Turkish in Gaziantep, so I am forced to find a translator.”

(İşim için öğrenmek isterim. Çünkü, tabii ki biriyle işim için konuşurken zorlanıyorum ne İngilizce biliyor ya da Arapça. Gaziantep'teyken Türkçe konuşuyorlardı ben mecbur tercüman getiriyordum). (Interviewee-8, male).

“I want it so much, I just want to know everything. It's all for my job. I am a nurse and I will be able to work as nurse if I could just learn Turkish. (Researcher: Did you ever try to learn Turkish?) A course was taught by a teacher, but I couldn't attend. Others started to study using the computer and learned it. Yeah, I envy them for this. They got better jobs.”

(“Hem de nasıl istiyorum, her şeyi bilmek istiyorum. İşlerim yolunda gitsin diye. Ben aynı zamanda hemşireyim Türkçe bilseydim hemşirelik de yapardım. (Araştırmacı: Türkçe öğrenme gibi bir niyetiniz oldu mu?) Öğretmenler için kurs verdiler ama ben gidemedim. Diğerleri bilgisayarda çalışmaya başladılar. Ve öğrendiler. Evet, imreniyorum. Onların işleri daha iyi oldu.” (Interviewee-9, female).

Immigrants know that learning the spoken language of the country in which they migrate will give them an advantage. For this reason, they want to learn Turkish in order to sustain their daily lives. But the more important reason the Syrians want to learn Turkish in Turkey is to find a job. This is a very important strategy and tactic for them. Because when they speak Turkish, they hope that they will be more likely to be adopted by the Turkish people or think that they will be less culturally excluded.

“...I will use Turkish everywhere. I would like to specialize in physics, but in the Turkish language! Taking a Turkish language course is very expensive...”

(“...Her yerde Türkçe'yi kullanacağım. Ben fizikte uzmanlaşmak istiyorum. Ama Türkçe dilinde! Gittim kursa çok pahalı...”). (Interviewee-12, male).

“Yeah, it would be much better if we learn Turkish. I could teach in a classroom if I only learn Turkish. A 5-6 month long course would be enough. All Syrians would attend if the state were to offer such courses, but there is no such course yet...”

(“Evet evet Türkçe bilsek daha iyi olacak, eğer Türkçe bilseydim dershanede öğretmen olurudum. 5-6 ay kurslar olsa olur. Devlet kurs açsa tüm Suriyeliler gidecek ama böyle bir kurs yok...”). (Interviewee-19, male).

Immigrants in Mardin are at a relative advantage, since both Arabic and Kurdish are the main spoken languages there; yet their own language includes a rather strong accent. This is not good for them because it reveals that they are immigrants. However, the phonetics of their native Arabic tongue sometimes leads the local community to initiate a demand for the reading and teaching of the Koran from

Arabic speakers and this would turn the disadvantage into advantage, both strategically and tactically.

Conclusion

Daily life is, to an extent, built on the continuity of a routine. This continuity constantly reminds the Syrian immigrants that they are currently in a state of migrating. They encounter the status of being an immigrant in many ways daily, and in many relationships. Syrian immigrants develop various strategies and tactics in order to survive and attain better life standards in such a context. They are aware of their strengths as well as their weaknesses as they strive to feature and improve the former and set aside the latter.

This study focuses on the resistance practices and tactics developed or employed by Syrian immigrants against the dominant power in the context of the sociology of migration and daily life. The resistance and tactics of Syrian immigrants were analyzed using the concepts of Michel de Certeau.

The main categories of this study are analyzed within the framework of this approach, by focusing on the resistance of the ordinary individual against the dominant elements of power through the observation of all kinds of daily life practices. The assumption we begin with is that Syrian immigrants are subject to superior relations in their daily life. Following this context, these migrants develop resistance and tactics in order to survive. From this point of view, the behavioral practices of Syrian immigrants in daily life are discussed in this study.

Beginning with what many deem as the core of daily life, religion, we often observe two communities which, although sharing a common belief, show two different sets of thinking in practice. For example, when one interviewee said, “We are Muslims like you but your clothes are not suitable for religious purposes,” we observe a sense of belonging, but at the same time also an indication of exclusion. Syrian immigrants are trying to build a partnership upon the axis of Islam. On the one hand, immigrants are trying to build a sense of belonging in a comparative framework which resonates with the religious practices of people in Turkey. They also emphasize their resemblance to the locals living in their communities. On the other hand, they claim to have a more accurate understanding of Islam by stating that Islam as it is lived in Turkey is mispracticed and full of superstitions. Furthermore, they see it as a shortcoming when people try to understand the religion (Islam) through a religious leader (Imam) instead of trying to read the religious texts (the Quran) directly. Thus, at least in this aspect, they give themselves a positive stake. In this way, they resist the current conditions of domination using a religious aspect to their advantage.

Studying the case of Mardin, it is observed that Syrian immigrants have fled together in either mass migrations, individually, with families, or in small groups utilizing cyclical migrations. Syrian immigrants came from settlements such as Amur, Qamishli, or Hasaka, which are all very close to the border of the province of

Mardin. It should also be noted that most Syrian immigrants have entered Turkey without any proper legal paperwork.

An important point that stands out from our data is that Syrian immigrants do have the opportunity to survive by working. It is observed from our data collected that Syrian immigrants earn very little income compared to the nature of their work, which often takes place in difficult conditions. Long working hours, very low wages, the lack of an opportunity for the accumulation of money in the future, and numerous insecurities are the main reasons which contribute to subpar living conditions in many Syrian immigrant communities. These are also factors which lead to Syrian immigrants developing and employing coping techniques in direct resistance to their living environment. All the interviewees complained about their work in one way or another, but they all choose to endure and remain working in those conditions due to the lack of alternatives; and, without work, there would be no income to feed their families. As can be observed from the data collected from the interviews, Syrian immigrants are subjected to intensive labor exploitations.

Another clue to the development of tactics lie in the nature of the push factors that causes the immigration of many Syrians. Some of these push factors include war, uncertainty about their future, the instability in Syria, etc. The historical, social, religious and cultural characteristics of Mardin province, right across the border, act as strong pull factors for Syrian immigrants. In Mardin, the need for labor within its growing markets makes it easier for Syrians to find jobs through the usage of social networks, similarities in culture, beliefs, and the languages spoken by the local people. However, it is also a common practice that when a Syrian man or woman is recognized (often by their accent), his or her wage would be cut by half. We have observed that Syrian immigrants were well aware of the context of their situation, and thus develop new behavior practices, such as just accepting lower wages, tolerating maltreatment at work by other workers and choosing to make no noise but only grumble to themselves. Syrian immigrants resist this situation through working hard to maintain their existence so that they can survive by expressing their necessity and developing new, innumerable and creative tactics in this process.

An important piece of information to be noted is that the ethnic origin, mother tongue and religious beliefs of Syrians share similarities with those in Mardin. Arabic and Kurdish are the two languages most commonly spoken in Mardin. When establishing social relationships, immigrants experience both the advantages and disadvantages of the spoken language. It was seen that they developed tactics according to the nature of their issues. The most important consequence of this is that the wealth of actions or tactics developed and implemented by immigrants have increased their overall survival rate within the social sphere.

Another important note of discussion is why Mardin is preferred by many immigrants to be their migrating destination. By taking a look at the map, it's quickly apparent that the answer is geographical proximity. The proximity between

settlements shortens the duration of migration. The desire to complete the process of migration in the shortest period was a recurring observation in the study.

It is seen in the study that the strategies, tactics and resistance that Syrians have built and developed through their daily lives and social relations are determinant variables derived from the legal status attributed to immigrants in Turkey and the geographical, economic, social, historical and religious characteristics of Mardin.

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