



Mardin Evleri: Pandemi Döneminde Kadınların Gündelik Hayat Anlatıları ve Mekânın Yeniden Üretimi

Homes in Mardin: Women's Daily Life Narratives and Reproduction of Space in Pandemic Times

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Homes in Mardin:

Women's Daily Life Narratives and Reproduction of Space in Pandemic Times¹

Abstract

During the COVID-19 pandemic, as our daily lives and household practices underwent transformation, the societal gender roles underpinning these practices were significantly redefined. In this period of transition, where established practices evolved, and new practices found their way into our homes, these behaviors and modes of application, akin to the pre-pandemic era, varied according to the dynamics of each household throughout the pandemic. This study aims to comprehend how four women residing in diverse housing typologies in Mardin experienced their homes during the pandemic and to deliberate on the circumstances under which they reconstituted their daily lives. The socio-spatial character of Mardin, intertwined with its topography, is shaped by the everyday lifestyles of distinct religious and ethnic communities. Everyday life is likewise transformed by socio-spatial constructs. Presently, Mardin boasts an urban landscape where traditional and modern housing forms coexist, including traditional stone houses, vineyard houses, apartments, and gated communities. During the initial three-month period following the onset of the pandemic (between March 2020 and May 2020), in order to comprehend how daily life and the home were reconstituted, in-depth individual interviews were conducted via the Zoom platform with four women, each residing in different housing typologies and facing distinct household responsibilities and working conditions. The narratives of these individuals' daily lives were analyzed from the perspective of Lefebvre's theory of everyday life. While the everyday life production of women plays a vital role within the context of societal production worldwide, this study aims to shed light on how the pandemic affected this role. It endeavors to present an insight into the subjective, local, and universal conditions that influenced these women, drawing parallels among them.

Keywords: Covid-19 pandemic, everyday practices, women narratives, housing studies, Mardin.

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Öz

Covid-19 pandemisi süresince, gündelik hayatımız ve ev içi pratiklerimiz dönüşürken, bu pratiklerin sürdürülmesindeki toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri de büyük ölçüde yeniden tanımlandı. Eski pratiklerin dönüştüğü ve bazı yeni pratiklerin eve girdiği bu dönemde; bu pratikler ve uygulama biçimleri, pandemi öncesinde olduğu gibi, pandemi sürecinde de her hanenin dinamiklerine göre farklılık göstermiştir. Bu çalışma, Mardin’de farklı konut tipolojilerinde yaşayan dört kadının pandemi döneminde evi nasıl deneyimlediklerini anlamayı ve gündelik yaşamı hangi koşullarda ve nasıl yeniden ürettiklerini tartışmayı amaçlamıştır. Mardin’in sosyo-mekânsal karakteristiği, topografyasıyla birlikte farklı dini ve etnik toplumsallıkların gündelik yaşam biçimleri tarafından şekillendirilir. Gündelik yaşam da sosyo-mekânsal kurgu tarafından dönüştürülür. Bugün Mardin, geleneksel ve modern konut biçimlerinin; geleneksel taş evlerin, bağ evlerinin, apartmanların ve kapalı sitelerin bir arada olduğu bir kentsel peyzaja sahiptir. Pandemi başladıktan sonraki üç aylık dönemde (Mart 2020-Mayıs 2020 tarihleri arasında), gündelik hayatın ve evin nasıl yeniden üretildiğini anlamak için, her biri farklı bir konut tipolojisinde yaşayan, farklı ev içi sorumluluk ve çalışma koşullarına sahip dört kadınla Zoom platformu üzerinden bireysel derinlikli görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiş; öznelerin gündelik hayat anlatıları Lefebvre’nin gündelik hayat perspektifinden tartışılmıştır. Dünyanın her yerinde kadınların gündelik yaşam üretimleri toplumsal üretim bağlamında hayati bir role sahip olmakla birlikte bu çalışma, pandeminin bunu nasıl etkilediğine dair bir fikir sunmayı; onları etkileyen özne, yerel ve evrensel koşullar arasında paralellikler kurmayı amaçlamıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Covid-19 pandemisi, gündelik pratikler, kadın anlatıları, konut araştırmaları, Mardin.

²Bu çalışma, 15. ESA 2021 (Avrupa Sosyoloji Derneği) tarafından 31 Ağustos-3 Eylül tarihleri arasında gerçekleştirilen - Sociological Knowledge for Alternative Future- kongresinde “Homes in Mardin: Women’s Reproduction of Daily Life in Pandemic Times” başlığıyla sözlü olarak sunulmuştur. Çalışmamın genel çerçevesini tartışma fırsatı verdikleri için ESA organizasyon komitesine bir kez daha teşekkür ederim. Değerli katkıları ve gösterdikleri sabır için görüşmecilere çok teşekkür ederim.

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INTRODUCTION: THE URBAN LANDSCAPE OF MARDİN

“The home is not the one tame place in a world of adventure;
it is the one wild place in a world of rules and set tasks.”

-G. K. Chesterton (Quoted in P. Garvey, 2011: 47)

Although the first thing that comes to mind about Mardin is an idyllic image consisting of traditional stone houses, many different housing typologies exist in Mardin side by side. The pandemic has triggered a worldwide discussion about the future of housing and how the relationship between public space and housing should change; however, it has not resonated equally in different settings.³ In addition to that, the current discussion is towards housing design addressing the conditions and regulations brought by the pandemic. This seems to be particularly difficult for cities where public facilities are not distributed equitably. Mardin is one of those cities as neither numerical data nor tangible reality is sufficient to explain the necessity of urbanization rules in Mardin (Serim, 2017). The rising demand for gated communities and country houses indicate a change in housing dynamics, addressing comfort levels due to environmental conditions; however, the question of how this will influence daily life is yet to be determined.⁴

This paper dwells on the daily life narratives of four women from Mardin living in different housing typologies (an apartment, a gated community, a traditional house, and a country house). The objective is to understand and anticipate the levels of change in domestic, societal, and urban settings from a Lefebvrian perspective.

Methodology

According to Byung-Chul Han, “Belief that life admits measurement and quantification governs the digital age as a whole. (...) But no insight into the self can result from data and numbers alone, no matter how exhaustive they are. Numbers do not *recount* anything about the self. Counting is not recounting. A sense of self derives from giving an *account*. It is not counting, but recounting that leads to self-discovery or self-knowledge” (Han, 2017: 60). While “quantitative data” (number-distance-percent triangle) became more prevalent during the pandemic, the importance of individuals’ narratives about their houses have also increased. These narratives can only be found in everyday life. The narrative is essential to build continuity. Domestic narratives are important to establish continuity of experience in this process. The diversity of knowledge, which is not limited to numbers, endeavors to understand the relations between individuals and places, homes, and also cities. A multidimensional evaluation of both the physical and non-physical qualities of the house is needed where the urban space is limited solely to the house. While the physical features of the house indicate the design process; non-physical features require an interdisciplinary aspect. In other words, a holistic approach is a combination of different aspects. Studies about home experiences using different parameters such as age groups, gender, identity, economic situations, etc. have increased

³ Some of that news:

Un Habitat, “Cities and Pandemics: Towards a More Just, Green and Healthy Future”, 2021.

BBC Future, “How do you build a city for a pandemic”, 27 April, 2020, Constable, H.

Roland Berger, “Why trust and autonomy are essential factors when working from home”, November 25, 2020, Geoff Poulton.

⁴It is based on the statements of Sibel who lives in Bakırkırı (Mardin's one of rural areas), and five families who moved to Altınşehir (Mardin's well-known gated community) during the pandemic.

In addition, some research and news of some national agencies have proved this opinion, one of these:

Gönen, T., Çetinkaya, E. (2021) “Covid-19 Salgınının Konut Tercihlerine Etkisi”, Kent ve Çevre Araştırmaları Dergisi, C:3, S:2.

“Kovid-19 döneminde müstakil evlere talep arttı”, 2020, 12 May.

throughout the pandemic process. In this sense, one of the most discussed parameters is gender roles and home relations.

Some research has revealed that the workload on women increased during the pandemic process.⁵ It must be noted that this study rejects the traditional gender division of labor claiming that “women become the homemakers responsible for providing a comfortable living environment” (Kennett and Chan, 2011: 5). However, it gives importance to women's creative perspective thus transforming and reproducing everyday life. Which features of the space have become more important during the pandemic? How has the change in daily practices transformed the space? To analyze these two important questions and investigate even more about domestic life, in-depth individual interviews were conducted with the interviewees via Zoom.

The interviews were held in May 2020 and lasted between 45-60 minutes. In order not to limit the interviewees, semi-structured questions were asked, and the interviews were recorded with the consent of the interviewees. Prior to the interviews, the framework of the study was summarized and a consent form was obtained. Some visuals of their homes and daily lives were shared by the interviewees. There were some “common topics” that came forth among these narratives. The first being the meaning of home has changed. For some individuals, the home is no longer the same as it was before the pandemic. Secondly, the rhythm of daily life and therefore, the rhythm of domestic life has changed. And finally, this change in space has manifested itself in various ways. In this study, cross-referencing aims to integrate the findings of this study with the theory.

Theoretical Framework

For the purpose of this study, we will consider the home to be continually evolving and thus we are transforming too. It highlights our ability to control the things we can and cannot change in ordinary and extraordinary situations (such as the pandemic). Space, more specifically the house, dictates its own grammar to the inhabitants who live in it (Kurt, 2021: 27). On the other hand, the flexibility of this “grammar” and how sentences are formed with it, mean a lot to the inhabitants. The home is a kind of “playground” that has meaning beyond its form and that goes hand in hand with our daily life practices, our relationships with objects, and our stories. The formation of housing and urban life includes “practices” that are interrelated in terms of their “physical” qualities. The rigid framework and difficulty of movement in urban life also appear in housing design and vice versa. On the other hand, restrictions on our actions in everyday urban life do not apply at home for the majority of people. The home is a space of constant change, a place of “action”. Domestic practices and actions of inhabitants transform a house, which is an inert object at first, into “a home” and at the same time into a “habitat”. Thus, the inhabitant intervenes in the dwelling levels as Lefebvre says (2015: 84).

In this sense, the theoretical approach of Henri Lefebvre about space and everyday life is critical and still applies. According to Lefebvre (2014: 25), “The concept of space connects mental and cultural, as well as social and historical. It creates a complex process”. In this study, the production of space means it is utilized as the space is perceived, changed, and developed by the inhabitants. “All 'subjects' are situated in a space in which they must either recognize themselves or lose themselves, a space which they may both enjoy and modify” (Lefebvre, 1991: 35). There is a permeable relationship between concepts; the rhythm of daily life produces (domestic) space, and the “produced” space imposes a specific rhythm on the inhabitants. Also, the meaning is reflective of the continuous production of everyday life. “From the analytical standpoint, the spatial practice

⁵DİKA, 2020. In the pandemic report of DİKA, the national development agency indicated that women in Mardin are more affected than men in this process.

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of a society is revealed through the deciphering of its space” (Lefebvre, 1991: 38). The deciphering of the home is also important to understand urban, social, and cultural change.

WOMEN'S DOMESTIC NARRATIVES: THE MEANING OF THE HOME

“Spontaneously, each of us has our preferences, references, frequencies; each must appreciate rhythms by referring them to oneself, one's heart or breathing, but also to one's hours of work, of rest, of working and of sleep” (Lefebvre, 2014: 10).

While the rhythm of daily life has changed, the meaning of the home has become one of the most critical topics of everyday life discussions. Stuart Hall (1997: 3) stated that:

“In part, we give things meaning by how we represent them – the words we use about them, the stories we tell about them, the images of them we produce, the emotions we associate with them, the ways we classify and conceptualize them, the values we place on them. It is our use of a pile of bricks and mortar which makes it a 'house'; and what we feel, think or say about it that makes a 'house' a 'home'”.

Tuba lives in Old Mardin with her husband and son. According to her, it is always essential "to convert the house into a place with a soul". It took time to convince her husband, as he thought that an apartment was physically more comfortable to live in than a traditional house. On the other hand, living in a place with a terrace, a courtyard, and an iwan, and in harmony with the landscape is reflective of her childhood home:

In Isparta, the balcony of my childhood home faced a mountain. My mother had turned the balcony into a living space for us. We were always there, except when the winter was very harsh. Although the house was small, the perceived integration of the balcony with the outside had a profound effect on me. (Tuba, 38 y., research asst.).

As an individual who always has a high awareness of the home, Tuba stated that the lockdown did not change this. She described her home as follows: “The moment I step inside its high-walled courtyard, I feel like I'm in my castle. I'm where I belong”. These statements enable us to remember Bachelard's home definitions. Home is more of a state of pneuma than a landscape (Bachelard, 2008: 119). “The home, which shines with the care shown, seems to us as if it was rebuilt from the inside and reproduced from the inside” (p.115). Lefebvre's conceptualization of space as a dialectical process of social production; is also related to Bachelard's phenomenological analysis of *lived* space (Arslan Avar, 2009).

Figure 1: A Mesopotamian view from Tuba's home in Old Mardin



Reference: (Tuba, 2020)

According to Bahar, who lives in an apartment in Yenişehir with her family (husband and child) and loves adapting the space using furniture, this relationship has been reduced to a “functional” dimension because of the pandemic. As the outside became more “unpredictable” and the feeling of “survival” strengthened, the meaning of the home decreased. According to her, the emotional value of the home was also related to the fact that there was no distance between the object/space and her:

I started using the kitchen only as a kitchen. It used to be a place where I spent time and chatted with my friends. With the pandemic, preparing meals has become a thing in itself. I spent half my day there. The functionality of the kitchen suppressed all other practices. (Bahar, 34 y., teaching asst.).

The relationship with the furniture and objects changes the house into a home and transcends the domestic topography to a higher level. In the case where the home is reduced to solely functionality, the meaning is also reduced. Lefebvre (1991: 52) refers to this as “that amounts to abstraction wielding awesome reductionistic force vis-a-vis 'lived' experience”. On the contrary, utilization of the space can also have the negative impact of transforming abstract areas into mere concrete spaces. Thus the space “is alive: it speaks. It has an affective kernel or center: Ego, bed, bedroom, dwelling, house; or: square, church, graveyard. It embraces the loci of passion, of action, and of lived situations, and thus immediately implies time” (Lefebvre, 1991: 42). The meaning is also directly associated with the socialization of domestic life. As the woman's domestic life takes on a routine revolving around household chores, the consumption of the space increases. Consumption of space weakens the meaning of domestic life and also infiltrates the narrative of daily life.

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Figure 2: *The living room and kitchen of Bahar's home in Yenişehir*



Reference: (Bahar, 2020)

Medya is single and lives with her parents. For health reasons, more attention had to be paid to proximity to her family during the pandemic and thus she temporarily moved to another house. While she was sharing the home with her family, she developed friendships with some of her neighbors in the apartment building.

I spoke to my friend about the house issues on many occasions. The lockdown was a tedious process for many of my friends, but not for me. Sometimes I even forgot about the pandemic because we are living in a gated community. I could do sports every morning, and I met with my neighbors whenever I wanted. (Medya, 32 y., architect).

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Figure 3: *Medya's home: A view from the kitchen's balcony and a photo from the balcony to the kitchen*



Reference: (Author, 2021)

Sibel, a university student, stated that she lived in a country house in Bakırkırı due to the pandemic. This is a place where she shared the house with her family and her uncle's family, where they would eat together and share the housework. The meaning of this house was "unity". Belonging is also related to togetherness, socializing, and sharing the same table.

The graduation project was very stressful although being with my extended family made me happy. I could unwind whilst surrounded by my cousins, uncle, sisters, and parents. Sometimes because of poor internet connection, I had to return to the city center. However, I endeavored to find

solutions to remain with them. For example, identifying the spot with the strongest connectivity and accessing the internet from there. (Sibel, 21 y., student).

Figure 4: *The iwan photo of Sibel's home in Bakırkırı*



Reference: (Sibel, 2020)

Although there is no clear distinction between urban and rural, Mardin reflects local spatial practices. In addition to this, gated community life also differs from the urban life of a metropolis. A gated community in Mardin is symbolized by uniformity and height rather than its practices. “The architecture of the private residence is susceptible to two distinct modes of existence. Either it results from a plan imposed upon the architectural work, whether monument or building, in which case the architect obeys the urbanist and, through him, the influence of political authority and the lenders, who hold a controlling influence” (Lefebvre, 2014: 140). This construction practice is the representation of political-economic dynamics, which is called the “designed” space, as Lefebvre criticized (2014). This study points out that the pandemic has accelerated the rural homogenization process as domestic life transforms from city to rural life, the meaning shifts from social relations to “chosen” social relations. The contradictory topography of social relations is related to domestic life's contradictory topography. As David Clapham indicates, “the meaning of housing to individual households cannot be taken for granted or encapsulated in simple generalisations” (Clapham, 2005: 18). The meaning of house is one of the most important concepts in the reproduction of the home.

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Figure 5: *A rurban (rural-urban) view from Mardin, Yenişehir*



Reference: (Author, 2019)

The new rhythm of everyday life

The mainstay of the idea that “while the house becomes progressively public, the city becomes increasingly domesticated” (Alcocer and Martella, 2020) is the constant development of technology and communication networks in daily life. During the pandemic, while the digital publicity of the house increased, the physical boundary between the house and the public became concrete. This duality is also the dynamic that produces everyday life. As Lefebvre indicates: “Human existence is both natural and historical, biological and social, physiological and cultural (this does not exclude, but covers, potential or actual conflicts between these elements and aspects)” (2010: 100). However, it is thought that to combine this dichotomy, establishing a permeable relationship between home and public life is also important. As Zukin, Kasinitz, and Chen (2016: 1) pointed out: “Whether we're walking, shopping, taking our clothes to the dry cleaner, or getting a bite to eat, these are the spaces where we experience everyday diversity.” In an urban system, where these practices are balanced with well-distributed urban green spaces, there is the potential for home-public permeability even in the event of a pandemic.

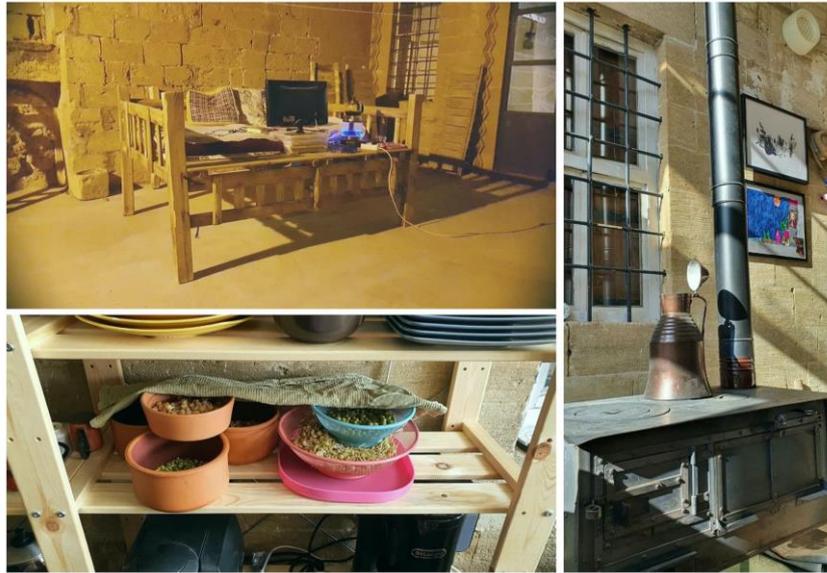
However, while this permeability can usually be achieved in Old Mardin, it is challenging in Yenişehir (the new town). As a result of the fact that the house has become the 'only' place for some practices usually performed outside, current debates regarding daily life have become more topical. “It is the site of those activities that people do not tell others about, perhaps because they are private because they do not think that they are worth mentioning, or because they feel too painful to recount” (Pink et. al., 2017: 1). During the pandemic, many people told others about cleaning, cooking, and ordinary activities carried out in the home. It is thought that this new awareness of mundane daily activities also contributes to Lefebvrian's "lived" space theory with the ability to reflect practical knowledge of the city in the future.

The home is now the epicentre of production where new forms of work, knowledge, and socialization are realized. The new daily rhythm has affected Tuba's domestic life in three privileged ways. Firstly, she has embraced the opportunity to incorporate previously postponed academic aspirations into her daily life. This can be directly correlated to the spatial/emotional comfort provided by the home. Working spaces were created in different areas of the house (iwan, study

room, and bedroom) according to light, temperature, and air circulation; spatial reproduction was facilitated by the arrangement of the furniture. Secondly, access to sporting activities were impacted. The terrace became a place where brisk sports and walking were done on a daily basis. Within the domestic domain, physical activities emerged as a priority. Whereby previously breakfast and dinner were basic functional necessities, they have been transformed into a collaborative activity spanning several hours. Functionality in the kitchen became more important as its usage significantly increased. Spatial arrangements in the kitchen were addressed with the purchase of a table and new shelves. Laundry also became a daily activity. According to Tuba, this increase is a direct result of the 'time differentiation' achieved by changing clothes more frequently.

As I had no alternative, I made my doctoral application to put my life in order. As a result, I received acceptance from three professors. I had online conversations with my friends with whom I had not spoken to for a long time. We had some difficulties at home because of Mustafa's education. He was pleased to be at home, but we felt compelled to make a programme to avoid problems the following year. (Tuba, 38 y., research asst.).

Figure 6: *Some photos from Tuba's home. The terrace, larder, and wood stove are indicative of the seasonal daily practices in Old Mardin*



Reference: (Tuba, 2020)

According to Sibel, being in the country house positively affected her productivity. During the pandemic, family unity provided greater motivation when compared to the physical aspects of the house, where there was no internet connection or separate study area. Domestic practices such as cooking, eating, washing dishes, showering, etc., were carried out in accordance with established rural practices of the countryside, such as meals being cooked in a wood fire oven and bread being made in a tandoor. Dishes were washed when there was running water and there were no indoor sinks. The absence of a conventional bathroom required them to follow more traditional bathing practices.

Today, rural daily life is a life dominated by a traditional gender-based division of labor. Whilst women were doing daily routine household chores, men attended to maintenance and repair work around the house. Everyday life was, in a way, reflective of the previous domesticity to which they were accustomed. Furniture such as the oven, table, and bed were moved to the house from

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their former permanent residence. Even though a bathroom was built outside and water was utilized from a storage pool, it was not a physically suitable place for the residents to stay for a prolonged period. Living in a house constructed to accommodate traditional rural practices resulted in conflict with today's spatial habits. Some spaces, which were previously used as barns were converted into extra living areas and were extended to include additional rooms.

We arranged a road for vehicles by widening the footpath. Our neighbors also began to make way for their vineyards. As spring water was utilized and in order to prevent waste, large pipes were installed. When water was in plentiful supply, we would swim in the pool in front of the house. Due to the threat of drought, we were unable to swim this year. We planted a vegetable garden where we grew tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, cucumbers, etc. These activities are typical of many other country houses in this area. (Sibel, 21 y., student).

In contrast, these human practices seem to be contradictory to rural animal inhabitants:

In the past, scorpions were rarely seen however as soon as restoration work began, they could be more readily observed. Perhaps this was due to the disturbance of their habitat. When the house repair started, the scorpions began to come out; I guess we changed their places too. A higher number of bees and ants are also present. When water levels were limited, they could become aggressive and attack when we were outdoors on the terrace. (Sibel, 21 y., student).

Figure 7: *The wood fire oven and tandoor indicate the daily life practices of rural life*



Reference: (Sibel, 2021)

“Space includes social relations” (Lefebvre, 2014: 57). Lefebvre (2014) emphasizes the distinction between familial relations and social relations. On the other hand, there has been an accelerated transformation of the historical division of labor typically found in rural communities to practices regularly found in an urban setting. What is advantageous to humans is detrimental to the countryside.

“Even the powerful myth of nature is being transformed into a mere fiction, a negative utopia: nature is now seen as merely the raw material out of which the productive forces of a variety of social systems have forged their particular spaces. True, nature is resistant and infinite in its depth, but it has been defeated, and now waits only for its ultimate voidance and destruction” (Lefebvre, 1991: 31).

The “limited” possibilities of the gated community determined Medya's spatial experience. She spent more time with her family and neighbors in the garden, ate with her friends in the gazebo, rode a bicycle, and took many walks. As someone who worked remotely and held meetings with engineers when required online sessions were held during this process. According to Medya, many people have realized that they can “work productively from home”. For her, the most critical change in daily life was the shift in the method of socialization to incorporate family and neighbors.

My father is a very sociable person. Since he could not leave the house during the pandemic, he wanted to meet this need through us. He started posing questions he did not previously ask, like “Why aren't you having dinner with us?” The importance of sharing meal times over a prolonged period became evident. Since my mother is a very homely person and spends most of her time with my sister and her children, not much changed in her life because my sister and her family were also in our gated community. We ate meals together either at their home or ours. We were also joined by our aunt as we didn't want her to feel isolated in her home. (Medya, 32 y., architect).

Figure 8: *Some photos from the gated community*



Reference: (Author, 2021)

The second change was the residents' activities in the garden and discussions on spatial suggestions. The gated community called 'Decor City' consists of three blocks each having nineteen floors with four apartments on each floor. Residents started to spend more time in communal areas with their families and neighbors even though they didn't do so before the pandemic. On the other hand, the gated community is both homogenizing and economically comparable. Due to the fact that this is a centrally managed facility, rules and regulations were implemented by an appointed complex manager. For example, when the managing executive proposed the re-opening of the gym, even though Medya opposed the idea, she was informed that if the majority agreed public areas such as pools, saunas, and Turkish baths would remain idle, as residents continued to have intense discussions about their maintenance. Monetary equivalence was not enough for gated community life, and it is necessary to provide conditions of sociocultural similarity. Similarities and discourse are generally inherent within community life. “In powerful detail and many persuasive arguments, people are explained how to live, what and why to choose, how to use their time and space to “live well” and make the most of opportunities” (Lefebvre, 2010: 33).

For Bahar, the change of daily life resulted in the dominance of domestic practices. Routine activities such as preparing meals, cleaning, sanitizing grocery products, and washing dishes became chores that took up almost the entire day. Her husband took joint responsibility for the housework with her; this attitude being one of the most positive aspects of the situation. According to Matrix authors, “even when others contribute to this work, the primary responsibility remains with women. (...) Within traditional nuclear families there is no real privacy for women” (1984: 2).

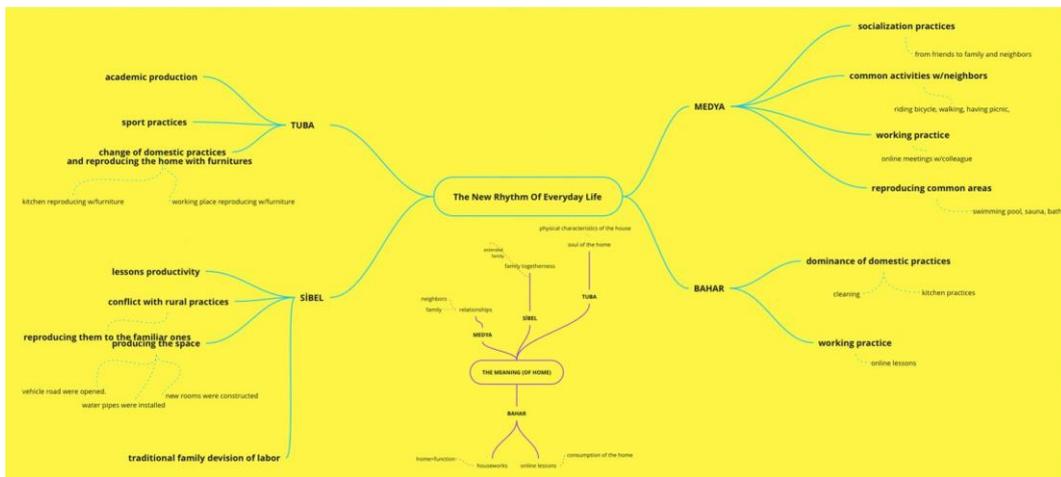
Before the pandemic, a housekeeper came once a week to clean the house. Cleaning was not a time-consuming task as we were all outside during the week. With the pandemic, we were all at home, and I found myself constantly cleaning and cooking. Kadir was also involved in housework, but my workload increased a lot compared to the past. (Bahar, 34 y., teaching asst.).

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However, online courses were amongst the primary practices that transformed the domestic experience. Bahar and her son had to take their lessons in a space where the internet connection was strong at that particular moment in time, such as the kitchen, study room, and Ömer's room. As Martella mentioned in her article, too, “the kitchen is turning into an individual workplace, the bathroom into a new social media office, and the living room into an urban phenomenon” (Martella and Enia, 2020: 3) with new contemporary media. However, the pandemic also made it more evident in cities where this process would not normally have been typical. The situation means that the digitalization process will continue to develop at an accelerated rate. As Figure 9 points out, the meaning of the home changed for Bahar due to housework and online lessons. On the other hand, the meaning of the home for Sibel, Medya, and Tuba changed positively.

Figure 9, shows two titles of articles that demonstrate the new rhythm of everyday life and the meaning of the home. Each title points out important keywords relating to the daily life narratives of the interviewees.

Figure 9: *The illustration shows important keywords of the article related to the narratives of daily life*



Reference: (Author, 2021; this graphic was created by the author)

Conclusions

The house is a dynamic “system” that its inhabitants constantly reproduce in terms of physical, social, and daily narratives. The pandemic also imposed its meaning on this process; the house has become a “place” that was shaped, changed, expressed, shared, compromised, and was opened to the public in various ways. Although this “new opening” of the house was digital, it points to a different domestic digitality than before. This “digital domesticity” has had various short and long-term consequences for those who experienced it. Short-term effects can be deemed to incorporate the reorganizing of the digital and spatial infrastructure of the house resulting in the alteration of domestic routines compared to pre-pandemic times. Outside practices have been adopted with the spatiality of the house or have evolved into an activity where, for example, individuals may take part in sports online or may view a concert virtually. On the contrary, working practice was one of the “new domestic” practices with both short-term and long-term consequences. While the short-term result transformed the current space, it is a different discussion topic as to how this will produce spatialities in the long term.

In this study, the experience of the pandemic process (March 2020-May 2020) was investigated through the daily domestic narratives of four women living in four different housing typologies in Mardin. Some physical features of their places came to the fore in this period. Physical and visual connections with the outside were emphasized with a focus on specific features of the spatial experience such as light, air, and green space. Domestic flexibility is another feature that will allow variations beyond the physical comfort of the working space. Although the transformation in which bodily rhythm is prioritized can be achieved with the furniture landscape, the house must now be built on this flexible ground. Conversely, it is one of the strong possibilities that this new working practice will “produce and reproduce” the house on its own in the following years.

The gated communities were in demand during the pandemic because they included common areas supported by specialized green areas and sports fields, rather than having qualified spatial opportunities. Today, there is a need for the inside-outside relationship to be more physically permeable than before. It is essential to establish a safe housing approach in the urban community to encourage interaction instead of hiding inside our houses. Although gated communities seem to meet this need as a system, it is a problematic approach in terms of social relations. Another problem aroused in the transformation of housing in the countryside. During the pandemic, the evolution of the countryside may have moved to another dimension for many cities around the world. The new gated communities in the countryside offer greater affinity to nature whilst also resembling those in urban areas. The provision of public facilities must be favored when updating the existing system. What is mentioned is not a physical reproduction but an approach that needs to be investigated holistically. In this study, without generalization, individual experience and the investigation of spatial and social relations have taken priority. The experience of the individual is also entangled within the network of social relations.

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