Capital Accumulation and Labor in post-1980 Büyükada: The Case of the Migrant Community from Van-Erciş

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Declaration of Originality

The intellectual content of this thesis, which has been written by me and for which I take full responsibility, is my own, original work, and it has not been previously or concurrently submitted elsewhere for any other examination or degree of higher education. The sources of all paraphrased and quoted materials, concepts, and ideas are fully cited, and the admissible contributions and assistance of others with respect to the conception of the work as well as to linguistic expression are explicitly acknowledged herein.

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Abstract

Capital Accumulation and Labor in Post-1980 Büyükada: The Case of Migrant Community from Van-Erciş

Helin Su Kotan, Master's Candidate at the Atatürk Institute
for Modern Turkish History at Boğaziçi University, 2024

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Focusing on the narratives of a migrant community from Van-Erciş in Büyükada who migrated to the island in the 1980s and since then successfully transitioned to self-employment, this thesis emphasizes the role of self-employment as a strategy to overcome labor market discrimination within migrant communities. It also assesses the influence of family dynamics on entrepreneurial activities. Drawing upon migrant self-employment literature, notably the concepts of 'necessity entrepreneurship' and 'embedded market approach', the thesis seeks to comprehend the entrepreneurial processes of Van-Erciş migrants. Four main areas of literature are utilized in this study: research on the Princes' Islands, studies on rural to urban migration since 1980, research on Kurdish labor, and studies on migrant self-employment. The fieldwork for this thesis included 21 in-depth, face-to-face interviews and participant observation conducted in Büyükada between April 2022 and January 2023. The objective is to enrich the literature by investigating the ethnic context of working-class entrepreneurship in Turkey, particularly focusing on the transition from informal labor to entrepreneurship.

40661 words

Özet

1980 Sonrası Büyükada'da Sermaye Birikimi ve Emek: Van-Ercişli Göçmenler Örneği

Helin Su Kotan, Yüksek Lisans Adayı, 2024
Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü

Doçent Berna Yazıcı Tepeyurt, Tez Danışmanı

Bu tez, 1980'lerde Van-Erciş'ten Büyükada'ya göç eden ve zamanla kendi işlerini kuran göçmenlerin anlatılarına odaklanmaktadır; kendi işini kurmanın işgücü piyasasındaki ayrımcılığı aşmak noktasında, bir strateji olarak nasıl rol oynadığını incelenmektedir. Ayrıca, tezde aile dinamiklerinin girişimcilik faaliyetleri üzerindeki etkisi de değerlendirilmektedir. Tez, göçmen serbest meslek literatüründen, özellikle de 'zorunluluk girişimciliği' ve 'gömülü piyasa yaklaşımı' kavramlarından yararlanarak, Van-Ercişli göçmenlerinin girişimcilik süreçlerini anlamaya çalışmaktadır. Bu çalışmada dört ana literatürden faydalanılmıştır: Adalar üzerine yapılan çalışmalar, 1980'lerden bu yana kırdan kente göç üzerine yapılan çalışmalar, Kürt işgücü üzerine yapılan çalışmalar ve göçmenlerin kendi işlerini kurmaları üzerine yapılan çalışmalar. Tezin saha çalışması, Nisan 2022 ile Ocak 2023 tarihleri arasında Büyükada'da gerçekleştirilen 21 derinlemesine görüşmeye dayanmaktadır. Amaç, Türkiye'de işçi sınıfı girişimciliğinin etnik bağlamını Büyükada özelinde araştırarak, kayıt dışı işçilikten girişimciliğe geçişe odaklanarak bu alandaki yazını çeşitlendirmektir.

40661 kelime

To my grandmother Fethiye and to my mother Şermin

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When I look back, I will remember my master's degree journey as both enjoyable and instructive. Many people made this process meaningful for me, and I owe them a debt of gratitude. I would like to thank my professors Berna Yazıcı, Seda Altuğ, and Umut Türem, who consistently opened new doors for me with their ideas throughout my master's journey; professor Polat Alpman, who supported me during and after the Migration Research Association's Graduate Researcher Training Programme, making this journey less lonely; and Deniz Duruiz, who was just an email away and always ready with valuable insights.

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I also deeply appreciate my friends, who, despite coming from very different fields, patiently listened to me and shared their creative ideas and comments. A heartfelt thank you to my dear friends Başak, Betül, Dağlar, Deniz, Ece, Alperen, Şevval, and İrem—I love you all. I send a big hug to my whole family, especially my mum, dad, grandmother, and my cats Limon and Lokum for always supporting me throughout this process, no matter what.

NOTE: The in-house editor of the Atatürk Institute has made detailed recommendations with regard to the format, grammar, spelling, usage, syntax, and style of this thesis.

1

Introduction

Just as the garden has a door, when it is closed, no one can enter, and the island was just like that.

– Maria[1], *Interview, 2022*

Someone came up to him and asked, "Who are you?" He explained that he came from Van. They told him he couldn't sit there and made him move. He says, "Ever since then, I've had trauma. When I saw that this place was for sale, I bought it just to get over that feeling. I'm going to sit here even if I don't earn a penny for two years. I'll keep this place running, and then I'll sell it.
– Veli, *Interview, 2022*

The Princes' Islands are archipelago and the least populated district of the Anatolian side of Istanbul. It consists of 9 islands and two reefs close to the coast. The largest of these islands in terms of population and surface area, Prinkipos, Ada-i Kebir, or Büyükada as it is known today,

1 All names are pseudonyms.

has been home to people with many different lifestyles throughout its history. The following chapters will be dealing with the Van-Kurdish migration to Büyükada after 1980, the changing labor dynamics and Van-Kurdish migrants' capital accumulation processes in a specific context.

Over the last century, Büyükada was periodically opened to land-development practices, its shores were filled in, and until the conservation zoning plan was made in 1984, when it was subject to transitional building conditions, many buildings were demolished and rebuilt, while new buildings were built in the gardens of some of them. During this period, the island's population increased significantly. In addition to the growth in living spaces, migrants who came to work on construction projects initially settled on the island seasonally, then more permanently. Most of these construction workers were from the villages of Karatavuk, Karlıyayla, and Akçayuva in the Erciş district of Van.

Maria's words, which I have quoted above, can be considered in two ways. The island may have been a sheltered, closed space of freedom for some for a long time, but in the early years of the Van-Kurdish migrants, this structure of the island was also an obstacle for them to become a member of the island.

Kurdish migrants from Van do not find a place for themselves in the nostalgic narratives about the island or in its historical accounts. Today, the Büyükada Museum, which has become an important meeting place for islanders, features a beautiful museum and conference hall. While the museum covers the island's centuries-old history, its flora and fauna, significant personalities, and events that have faded away, it doesn't mention the migration to the island since 1980.

The fact that the presence of Kurdish migrants from Van on Büyükada is relatively invisible, despite their significant activities, led me to distinguish between Kurdish migration to this unique location and Kurdish migration to other districts of Istanbul.

When you enter the bazaar and the side streets of the island, or when you observe the drivers, transporting passengers in battery-powered vehicles, you can see that Van-Kurdish migrants form a significant group that keeps the island's economy vibrant. Additionally, many individuals

from this marginalized migrant group have climbed the economic ladder, transitioning from construction workers to contractors and shop owners, eventually owning their own businesses.

Given all these circumstances, could Büyükada have enabled upward-mobility for at least some of the Van-Kurdish migrants? In my thesis, I will examine the upward mobility trajectories of some of the Kurdish migrants from Van Erciş who migrated to Büyükada, which is not one of the popular districts that Kurds prefer to migrate to, and which is historically a district preferred by upper-middle classes.

Until 1984, Büyükada was a branch directorate of the Istanbul Municipality, but in 1984, it became an independent municipality within the borders of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality. During the period when the Motherland Party was in power, the island was greatly affected by the transformation of İstanbul. Recep Koç, the Motherland party candidate on the islands who came to be in charge, paved the way for the construction boom on the islands[2]. In 1984, with the decision of the High Council for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage, the islands were declared a protected area. Despite this, a rapid construction process was initiated, the island coast was filled in during this period. This post-1980 transformation in Büyükada was in line with the larger urban transformation that characterized the entire city of Istanbul at the time. Motherland Party's Istanbul mayor's "Dalan's vision was to turn Istanbul

2 Şakir Sırmalı, one of the columnists of Milliyet newspaper, expressed his fears about the architectural transformation of the island in his article written in 1989: "While only a single building can be built on a parcel of land in the islands until today, with a new regulation that is being tried to be introduced, more than one building can now be built on a parcel of land according to the size of the parcel. This means that the nature of the Adalar will be covered with a concrete curtain in the future". Sırmalı, Ş. (1986, August 29). Adaları kurtarmak. *Milliyet*. https://adalarpostasi.com/2011/11/12/adalar-postasi-2619-adalarin-imar-dosyasini-aciyoruz/

3 Çağlar Keyder and Ayşe Öncü, "Globalization of a Third-World Metropolis: Istanbul in the 1980's". Review (Fernand Braudel Center), 17(1994): 383– 421. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40241297

into a world city. In this respect, suburban areas in the city were being transformed; new hotels were being built and the city was being reshaped for cultural consumption.[3]

Realizing such large-scale projects in the Princes' islands by creating refilled areas meant the multiplication and sharing of urban rent".[4] The construction workers and laborers who would carry out the structural transformation that the island underwent in the 1980s were provided by labor substituted from outside the Princes' Islands. Because the number of people who could perform construction work and marginal sector jobs was limited on the island, where there were many houses that belonged to a certain class and were used as summer residences. It was precisely during this period that Büyükada started to receive an intense labor migration from Van-Erciş. In fact, Van-Kurdish migrants from Pendik and Kartal, who had been migrating to the island as seasonal workers for small-scale construction works since the late 1970s, settled on the island in the 1980s. The people from Van who migrated to the island during this period witnessed the transformation of the city firsthand by working precariously and under rough conditions in the construction sites on the island. One of the places that met the accommodation needs of the workers who came to the island to work in those years was the rough construction of a building called Lido Terrace. The building, the construction of which was abandoned due to corruption allegations, existed on the island for many years in an abandoned way.[5]

Compared to those upper–middle classes who have been living on the island for a long time and see it as a place of leisure, the migrants'

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4 Aylin Çankaya, "Bir İçe Kapalılık ve Dışa Açık Olma Hali Olarak Adalık ve "Ada Hakkı": İstanbul Adaları ve Burgazada Örneği". Master's Thesis. (İstanbul Bilgi University, 2016).https://acikbilim.yok.gov.tr/bitstream/hadle/20.500.12812/623810/yokAcikBilim_10120492.pdf?se- quence=-1&isAllowed=y

5 İstihbarat Servisi (1989, January 12). Adalar Belediyesi'nde yolsuzluk iddiaları: İstanbul'da SHP'den "dosyalı muhalefet" Milliyet https://adalarpostasi.com/2011/11/12/adalar-postasi-2619-adalarin-imar-dosyasini-aciyoruz/

purpose for being on the island is practical, aimed at meeting their vital needs. The aim of the migrants who joined the island economy with marginal sector jobs that did not require skills and education, i.e., jobs that were "not done by the formal sector, small and small-scale jobs that were neither horizontally nor vertically organized",[6] was to turn to jobs that would provide them with a more stable source of income after a while, to become entrepreneurs, to become their own business.

This period coincided with the construction sector boom in Istanbul, which formed a significant basis for capital accumulation. For these Van-Kurdish laborers, the initial years in Istanbul were a blend of hardship and anti-Kurdish discrimination. Their relatively smooth integration into the labor network was facilitated by close kinship ties, labor shortages, and the high demand for daily labor on Büyükada. However, prevailing perceptions of Van-Kurdish labor were steeped in racial stereotypes; jobs like construction work were linked to the Van-Kurdish community, often viewed as 'uneducated, unskilled, and in need of money.' Over time, Van-Kurdish laborers accumulated capital and established their own enterprises on the island, ranging from contracting firms to restaurants and small shops.

Mindful of the racialized perceptions of Kurds and their work, these migrants endeavored to challenge the stereotype of being uneducated, disrespectful, or untrustworthy. They demonstrated their dedication through hard work, ownership of small businesses, and advancement to becoming contractors, considering these achievements as milestones. Those who came to the island as construction workers at first took their work to the next level in time and mobilized from being workers to contractors and business owners.

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6 Mübeccel Kıray, "Göç ve Gecekondular Adalar'da da Var. Adaların Türk Turizmindeki ve Edebiyatındaki Yeri ve Önemi". Burgazada Lioness Kulübü Derneği, 1984.

While examining the changing concerns and various forms of (im)mobility of Van-Kurdish migrants, I realized that the relatively remote location of the island from the mainland made labor valuable, and that Kurdish migrants accepted to work cheaper than those who could fill this position on the island and saved money by cutting their living costs. It should also be noted that another aspect that contributed to the upward mobility of migrants was the fact that the economic-political conditions of the period created a rent-based form of urban development that spread to the island. The population from Van, who were on the island as construction workers, constituted the manpower to realize this transformation, and subsequently, with the help of kinship relations, they accumulated capital and established their own businesses. It is also conceivable that this kind of upward mobility may have been easier and faster as they filled the void left by the state's liquidation of the small capital owners - mostly non-Muslims - who would have carried out these businesses on the island. Upon their arrival in Istanbul, Van-Kurdish entered the job market as day laborers in marginal sector jobs and integrated into the informal economy. In the following years, they worked incessantly to sustain their livelihood in their new destination-Büyükada. This steady labor produced results, and they managed to accumulate capital over the years and successfully establish their own businesses. Some family members even expanded their ventures. However, their bodies bore the traces of hard labor, destitution, migration, as well as the anti-Kurdish discrimination they encountered in Büyükada. The majority of the Kurdish male migrants I interviewed looked way older than their actual age.

§ 1.1 Theoretical Framework and Contribution to Literature

Focusing on the hardship-hard work and endurance narratives of a group of Van-Kurdish migrants who were able to become self-employed, my thesis highlights the role of self-employment as a strategy to overcome labor market discrimination for migrant minorities and the impact of family on entrepreneurial activities. I will explore the impact of Kurdish

identity on this situation. Subsequently, through Asef Bayat's concept of 'quiet encroachment',[7] which addresses how disenfranchised groups can achieve their rights without a specific political plan, I will discuss how the Kurds on the island have turned hard work into a strategy to consolidate their presence on the island.

The reason why I constructed my thesis around this vision was that the studies dealing with the arrival of Kurdish migrants in Western metropolises and their entry into the labor market, although they do not name the figure of Kurdish migrants as passive victims of ongoing state policies and the market, address the changing labor dynamics over the years in a static manner. The possibilities of upward mobility for migrant labor have often been overlooked. Instead, migrants are frequently portrayed as trapped in poverty or relegated to subsistence in informal and marginal sector jobs. There are, of course, a number of reasons why this situation is handled in this way.

With the establishment of the Republic, Turkishness became the dominant identity, and the Kurdish-majority eastern and southeastern Turkey experienced state violence in the form of military and political repression, along with economic dispossession. Kurdish migration to Istanbul traces back to the late 1970s but notably increased in the mid-1990s due to the state-led evacuation of the Kurdish countryside as part of the Turkish state's campaign against the PKK. This period witnessed the destruction of thousands of villages, the forced migration of millions of Kurdish villagers to urban areas, and the country's shift towards neoliberal economic policies. The internal migration of Kurds to western metropolises, concurrent with neoliberal economic changes, led to their integration into urban slums, occupying precarious, low-paid positions in unskilled jobs within the urban economy. While many studies on the state of Kurdish migrants in the city focus on the experiences of vulnerable migrants, they do not make a distinction between Kurds who

7 Asef Bayat, "From Dangerous Classes' to Quiet Rebels". International Sociology, 15(2000):533–557. https://doi.org/10.1177/026858000015003005

migrated to western metropolises for economic reasons in the early 1980s and migrants who came to cities as a result of forced migration. Although both groups have quite different migration experiences, both groups have experienced informalization when it comes to the way they are articulated to the market. Considering the impact on the value of labor of experiencing this phenomenon in neighborhoods where Kurds live in majority and where informal sector businesses are located, Büyükada is in a unique position.

§ 1.2 The Research: "Tu bi Kurdî dizanî?"[8]

The fieldwork for this thesis included 21 in-depth, face-to-face interviews and participant observation conducted in Büyükada between April 2022 and January 2023. Among the interviewees, 10 were long-term island residents who do not consider themselves migrants. The rest were Van-Kurdish migrants who moved to the island after 1980. The majority of these Van-Kurdish migrants I interviewed were middle-aged men and shop owners.

On April 18, 2022, I went to Büyükada, which I had been visiting frequently since my childhood for my mother's work, for a different purpose. On that day, I was going to meet with Fahriye teacher who would be of great help to me during the rest of my fieldwork. My fieldwork continued intermittently until January 4, 2023. During these visits, I was either conducting interviews or attending various events on the island. When there were no events, I studied at the island library, took long walks, bought island-specific snacks from the Büyükada patisserie, and tried to chat about what was going on the island if I came across acquaintances on the street. Throughout this period, on the way to the island, I wrote down what I planned to do that day, and at the end of the day, I wrote down what I did that day in a small notebook.

I utilized ethnographic research methods in my study. In line with the preliminary research, I had conducted before starting my fieldwork, I

8 It means “do you speak Kurdish?” in Kurmanji.

created an interview guide that would guide me in the in-depth interviews. This guide included open-ended questions about the interviewees' arrival to the island and their experiences as islanders. However, while I was initially going to focus on the relationship between islanders who have been on the island for years and the migrants who came to the island and the changing meanings of being an islander, my study evolved into something different. Thus, my fieldwork, which I thought I would conduct with islanders who have been living on the island for many years, ended with interviews with both islanders and Van-Kurdish migrants. One of the situations that led to the change in the direction of the study was that on April 18, 2022, when I went to the island for the pilot fieldwork, Emine teacher, who was very helpful to me, introduced me to Murat, a Van-Kurdish migrant.

In my research, in which I followed snowball sampling, my mother's friend Fahriye, who worked as a teacher at the public education center in Adalar, became a very important gatekeeper for me.[9] As a folkloric dance teacher, Fahriye knew many people with different backgrounds on the island, as she also taught in schools on the islands. In the previous mukhtar elections, she was a mukhtar candidate from the Nizam neighborhood, so she had a good relationship with the shopkeepers and the locals. In short, she was a very social person. After chatting with teacher Fahriye for a while, she took me to her acquaintances who she thought knew the history of the island well, one of them was Murat.

Murat, whose story of arrival on the island I will discuss in detail later, was a middle-aged, well-dressed man, owned many shops in the center. He welcomed us at the kebab shop he had just taken over, opposite the bicycle shop he and his brothers ran together. Fahriye told Murat that I was talking to islanders for my thesis, and I added that I was curious about his experiences as an islander. After a bit of a conversation, he emphasized that he had come to the island alone at a very young age, that he had suffered great hardships, and that he had tried very hard to

9 Martyn Hammersley, Atkinson, Ethnography: Principles in Practice (4th ed.). (Routledge: 2019). https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315146027

survive on the island, and he added, "The first people from Van who came to the island are very different, very well-mannered", and Fahriye confirmed this by naming other people from Van that she could think of, and after chatting a bit more, we begged for permission and left. However, Murat's emphasis on being good-natured, fitting in and adapting to the lifestyle on the island made me think. Therefore, I searched for another gatekeeper who could introduce me to the first-generation Van-Kurdish migrants to the island. Subsequently, while meeting with a group of mostly women who have been living on the island for a long time and attending their weekly rope doll knitting class as a listener, I continued to meet with the first-generation Van-Kurdish migrants who came to the island as construction workers when they were children and later became property owners, tradesmen and shop owners on the island.

During the process of my ethnographic fieldwork, I interviewed a total of 21 people. While 10 of the people I conducted in-depth interviews with were Van-Kurdish migrants, 11 of them were interviewees who had been living on the island for many years or had long-standing ties with the island. While talking to the Van-Kurdish interviewees about their reasons for coming to the island, their migration stories, their island experiences, and the processes of becoming tradesmen and business owners, I tried not to interrupt the flow of the narrative.

When talking to those upper-middle class interlocutors who have been settled on Büyükada for a longer period and identified themselves as “islanders,” we proceeded in a semi-structured interview format. I asked “the islanders” about their memories of the island, the transformation of the island over the years and the reasons for this transformation, and questions about the migration that the island has received in recent years. All but two of my interviewees agreed to audio record the interviews, which lasted an average of one hour and were all conducted face-to-face. With the three people I interviewed, we kept in touch throughout my thesis process, communicating and evaluating the developments on the island.

My identity as a researcher often facilitated my communication with my interviewees from different backgrounds. The fact that my name is in Kurdish, especially with the Van-Kurdish interviewees, often opened my communication with them with sentences starting with "you are also one of us", but I had to leave their follow-up questions "Tu bi Kurdî dizanî?"[10] unanswered because I could not speak Kurdish, which was sometimes a frustration for my interviewees. On the other hand, for the interviewees from the island who called themselves *civilized and modern*, the fact that I was a student studying at Boğaziçi University and that I was a woman caused them to sympathize with me. As Narayan notes, I experienced a kind of "shifting identifications" during my fieldwork.[11]

§ 1.3 Thesis Outline

Following chapters will be dealing with the Van-Kurdish migration to Büyükada, the changing labor dynamics and Van-Kurdish migrants' capital accumulation processes in the specific context of post 1980s Turkey. Hence, to comprehend how life on Büyükada Island has shaped Kurdish identity and how individuals construct their identity through daily interactions, the second chapter delves into Büyükada's historical background. Beginning with the island's first inhabitants during the Byzantine period, I will explore how Prinkipos, later Büyükada, evolved from a fishing village to an isolated space for leisure activities primarily for affluent non-Muslims during the Ottoman period. Subsequently, I will examine the demographic shifts on Büyükada resulting from Turkification policies implemented throughout the 20th century, and how these changes have impacted Van-Kurdish migrants who arrived after 1980.

10 It means "Do you speak Kurdish?" in the Kurmanji dialect of Kurdish.

11 Kirin Narayan, "How Native is a "Native" Anthropologist?" American Anthropologist, 95(1993): 671-686.http://www.jstor.org/stable/679656

In the third chapter, the literature review section following the historical background comprises three main areas: (1) studies on Princes' islands, (2) studies on migration and urban poverty, (3) studies on Kurdish labor, and (4) studies on migrant self-employment. One of the most significant reasons behind Istanbul's rich history as an intertwined, multicultural, and multi-religious settlement is the migrations it has witnessed over the years. However, relatively few studies have delved into the transformation of the islands brought about by migrations. References to migrations in the island's history can be found in works focusing on the history of the islands, accounts of past travelers, and memoirs of islanders written in the 20th century. Nevertheless, the transformation of the island in the 1980s bears both similarities to and differences from the rest of Istanbul. To gain a deeper understanding of these parallels and disparities, I have referenced studies on migration and urban poverty, which have garnered increased attention, especially since 1990.

Another literature which thesis draws on correspond to the studies on Kurdish labor. The reason for this was that the Kurdish identity of the Van-Kurdish migrants on the island came to the prominence as a determining feature in their daily encounters with the so-called islanders. Well, how was the Kurdish identity of Van-Kurdish migrants affected by all these encounters? As Lauran Berlant argues in Cruel Optimism,[12] "does the way people attached specific fantasies and life goals differ from the ethnic background, religion, and other backgrounds?" or "What forces should be considered responsible and what crises urgent in our adjucation of survival strategies?" Berlant's questions are an important interrogation to think about why some of the Van-Kurdish migrants experience the upward mobility and other ethnic groups on the island do not. In order to understand this, I have utilized the studies that focus on the migrant and vulnerable Kurdish labor.

12 Lauran Berlant, Cruel Optimism. (Duke University Press, 2012).

As I have mentioned in the previous sections, the trajectories of upward mobility of Van-Kurdish migrants on the island and the changing labor dynamics of the island are central to the study. Focusing on the hardship-hard work and endurance narratives of a group of Van-Kurdish migrants who were able to become self-employed, the study highlights the role of self-employment as a strategy to overcome labor market discrimination for migrant minorities and the impact of family on entrepreneurial activities. Therefore, while writing the thesis, I have extensively utilized the literature on migrant self-employment. The studies that I have utilized also address the impact of social positioning (gender, race, class) on entrepreneurial opportunities and how these social positions are a key determinant of the migrant group's economic chances in the place of migration.

The fourth chapter focuses on the experience of being Van-Kurdish within the island context, and the processes of Van-Kurds making a place for themselves on the island during their first years of arrival. Although the island has historically been home to people from many different ethnic identities and religions, it has not been easy for the so-called islanders to accept the presence of Van-Kurdish migrants. Yarkın[13] and Grosfoguel et al[14] state that "migrants do not arrive in an empty or neutral space, but in metropolitan spaces that are already 'polluted' by racial power relations with a long colonial history, colonial imaginary, colonial knowledge and racial/ethnic hierarchies". While examining how Van-Kurds connect the emphasis on hardship and hard work, which they frequently underlined in the interviews, with a well-deserved existence, I will explore the impact of Kurdish identity on this situation. Subsequently, I will discuss how the Kurds on the island have turned hard

13 Gülistan Yarkin, “Fighting Racism in Turkey: Kurdish Homeownership as an Anti-racist Practice”. Ethnic and Racial Studies, 43(15)(2020): 2705-2723. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2019.1685116

14 Grosfoguel et al., “Racism, Intesectionality and Migration Studies: Framing Some Theoretical Reflections”. Identities 22(6)(2015): 635–652. https://doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2014.950974.

work into a strategy to consolidate their presence on the island through Asef Bayat's concept of "quiet encroachment".[15] Quiet encroachment can be characterized as a silent resistance that disenfranchised groups develop against property owners and those who hold the power as a strategy to compensate for what is their 'right'. Quiet encroachment does not have an institutional counterpart or a specific program; groups resort to legal-illegal means to obtain the services they believe they deserve. In this respect, the Van-Kurds' strategy of demonstrating their power and existence as property owners, which they have determined as a response to years of marginalization practices, can also be seen as a manifestation of quiet encroachment (2013).

In the fifth chapter titled "Entrepreneur, Self-Employed or Business Owner: Van-Kurdish Migrant Labor," upwardly mobilized Van-Kurdish migrants are examined within the context of the "embedded market approach." The concept of embeddedness is employed to understand how economic phenomena are interrelated with institutions, organizations, and other social structures. Sociologist Zulema Valdez utilizes the embedded market approach in her book called *The new entrepreneurs: How race, class, and gender shape American enterprise* (2011) investigating factors that affect the entrepreneurial opportunities of the Latino community in Houston. She aims to "capture the integration of structure and agency within the American economy" (2011). Valdez underlines three fundamental power and oppression mechanisms within American society: capitalism, patriarchy, and white supremacy, and these mechanisms directly affect socially constructed categories such as race, class, gender, and ethnicity, determining individuals' social positions (2011). The success of Van-Kurdish migrant entrepreneurs on the island is also influenced by socially constructed categories, social positions and various oppression mechanisms, and the matrix of these determinants have an impact on the life chances of the migrants. Initially working as day laborers, the Van-Kurdish community achieved upward mobility by

15 Asef Bayat, "From Dangerous Classes' to Quiet Rebels". International Sociology, 15(2000), 533–557. https://doi.org/10.1177/026858000015003005

overcoming structural challenges and oppression mechanisms. With support from family and community, they transitioned to self-employment, establishing businesses in various fields.

Finally, I will briefly address my thesis question, what it argued, and its contribution to the literature, then discuss the limitations of my study to conclude.

2

Historical Background

> *The impulse that carries human beings to the islands continues the dual movement that produces the islands themselves. To dream of islands, with joy or anxiety, is to dream of disconnection—already separated, far from the continents, alone and adrift. Or it is to dream of starting anew, of recreating from scratch.*
>
> – Gilles Deleuze, *Desert Islands and Other Texts, 2009*

The first time I met one of my Van-Kurdish interviewees, who had lived on the island since he was a young boy and is now a contractor, I told him about the research I was doing and that I was collecting the narratives of Van-Kurdish migrants on Büyükada. Fatih, whose father came to the island in the early 1980s and himself in 1987, took offence at my description of the Van-Kurds in Büyükada as migrants and said, "We are the centuries-old community of this land, we are not migrants". As a citizen born within the borders of this country, he was of course right in what he said, but what he said also reflected a very other kind of sensitivity. This was perhaps related to the realization that he was

outside the homogenous Turkish-Sunni citizenry imagined by ethnic nationalist sentiment. The social and legal reflections of this ethnic nationalist sensibility can be seen in the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish nation-state. Cultural Anthropologist Ayşe Parla argues that just looking at the statistics of this period is evidence of the transformation of the population into an ethnically and religiously identical nation.[16]While non-Muslims constituted 20 per cent of the 16 million population of the Ottoman Empire before the First World War, this rate has dropped to 0.01 per cent as of 2018. Sociologist Sema Erder, in her study titled From Forced Resettlement to Displacement, in which she analyses Turkey's changing resettlement policies, argues that resettlement practices created composite areas in empires that grew through conquest, whereas in empires that shrunk by losing territory, they created an effect that dissolved the composite structure and identified the population. [17]Considering all these, Büyükada, which had been a place where only the Greek population lived for many years, lost this population to a great extent during the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the nation-state, but the Kurdish migrant population was articulated to this population, which had become homogenized over time, as of 1980. From the Ottoman Empire to the construction of the nation state, Büyükada has been a settlement that has experienced all these transformations through occupation, exile, settlement, forced displacement and migration, reflecting important transformations in this geography and harboring many individual narratives.

This chapter will provide a brief overview of Büyükada's historical background, emphasizing its connections with migration throughout its history. Using academic studies, memoirs and the narratives of the islanders from the fieldwork that I conducted, I will discuss the historical background of Büyükada, taking into account the general political,

16 Ayşe Parla, Precarious Hope: Migration and The Limits of Belonging in Turkey. (Stanford University Press, 2019).

17 Ibid.

economic and social atmosphere that affected life on the island. The chapter will provide a general periodization of the history of Büyükada as well as discuss the process of the decline in the non-Muslim population over the years and the transformation of the labor market on the island, along with its relation to migrations to and from the island. This chapter will consist of four main sections.

In the first part, I will briefly talk about the history of the island during the Byzantine period, and the connection the island established with the mainland. In the second part, I will discuss how the island underwent a transformation from the end of the 18th century until the establishment of the Republic, and how it became a summer resort for well to do non-Muslims in particular. In the third part, I will address how the multicultural and multiethnic structure of the island was eroded as a result of the policies implemented in favor of creating ethnically and religiously homogenous nation, the migrations the island received during this period, and the transformation of the labor market. In the last section, I will provide information about the migration of the island from Van-Erciş and discuss the Van-Kurdish migration on the island in its historical context.

§ 2.1 Exile, Seclusion and Worship: Island in the Byzantine Period

On the evening of a day when I was on the island for sightseeing, while waiting for my ferry to arrive to cross to the mainland, I thought it would be a nice idea to have a cup of tea at a nearby café. Since i was attracted by its makeshift appearance and touristic atmosphere, I went into a cafe located in the island's filling area. At first glance, I realized that it was a family-run business, and the mother and daughter, who I would learn were the owners of the cafe, were busy cleaning a table full of cassidony herbs. As we chatted, they told me that the island was very rich in cassidony and that they collected them from the island's forest to make jam. I was quite surprised, as I did not know that the islands, which are now very much in the "center" of Istanbul, had a flora that could be made

use of cooking. However, later, as I read the book Büyükada by Akillas Millas ,[18] and talked to others, I realized that the island had been an important place for agricultural land, fishing and floriculture for many years.

Büyükada is the largest island in the Marmara archipelago with an area of 5.4 square kilometers, and it is the most populated of the Princes' Islands, consisting of 9 islands, large and small, and 2 rocks near the shore. The naming of the island changed according to whoever was in power in Istanbul. In the Byzantine period it was called Prinkipo, the Prince's island, or in the Ottoman period it was called Ada-i Kebir, the largest of the islands. According to the historian, Janin, the reason why the island was named Prince's Island was that Iustinian II owned the island in the 6th century, and he built a palace and a monastery.[19] Subsequently, it is thought that the women's monastery, which now consists only of ruins, and where the empresses were imprisoned during the Byzantine period, was built on top of this palace. However, unfortunately, due to the geographically vulnerable nature of the island, the island was frequently looted by the invaders of Istanbul throughout its history and many of the Byzantine period structures of the island were destroyed.[20]

It is stated that the islands became uninhabited in the years after the conquest of Istanbul. For this reason, Greek families from villages on the Black Sea coast were settled on the island. According to the Hudutname records, in the middle of the 16th century, the island consisted of 3 main settlements, Kariye-i Rumiyan, Kariye-i Kariye and Kariye-i Serfiyan, with a population of 192. Kariye-i Rumiyan, in particular, was a settlement that developed after the conquest of Istanbul by Ottomans and formed the

18 Akillas Millas, Büyükada: Prinkipo, Ada-i Kebir. (İstanbul: Adalı Yayınları, 2014).

19 Janin, "Les îles des Princes. Étude Historique et Topographique". Revue Des Études Byzantines, (1924):178–194. Persée. https://www.persee.fr

20 Akillas Millas, Büyükada: Prinkipo, Ada-i Kebir. (İstanbul: Adalı Yayınları, 2014).

nucleus of the current center. According to the records kept during this period, all of these three settlements were inhabited by Greeks.[21]

During the 16th century plague, urban Levantines and Greeks left their homes and started to live temporarily on the islands. Baron Ghislain de Busbecq, who visited the island during this period, described the islands as a "private place",[22] and listed the plants growing on the islands, including cassidony, also known as French lavender. in addition to the rich vegetation, the island and its surroundings were also rich in fish diversity. The island that was mainly visited for religious purposes started to become a holiday destination for well to do non-Muslim population. Dopper, who visited the island in 1688, stated that the island was an ideal resort for Europeans and Greeks residing in wealthy neighborhoods of Istanbul and underlined that the island had a very entertaining life.

In the 17th century, with the Ottoman conquest of Crete, Peloponnese and the Aegean islands, a migration from these regions to Anatolia and Marmara began. During this period, some migrants settled on the island. A traveler who visited the island in 1788 mentioned the abundance of summer houses in the villages of the island.[23] According to Charles Petusier,[24] who visited the island in 1815, all of the island's population was Greek. He mentioned the number of Greek merchants who preferred to spend the summer months here, in addition to this, there was also a

21 Akillas Millas, Büyükada: Prinkipo, Ada-i Kebir. (İstanbul: Adalı Yayınları, 2014)

22 Busbecq, Itinera Constantinopolitanum et Amasianum. 1581. https://books.google.com.tr/books?id=e0lTAAAAcAAJ

23 Watkins, Travels through Switzerland, Italy, Sicily, the Greek Islands to Constantinople, Through Part of Greece, Ragusa, and the Dalmatian Isles. In J. Owen (Ed.), A series of letters to Pennoyre Watkins, 1794. https://books.google.com.tr/books?id=S-Y-AQAAMAAJ

24 Pertusier, Promenades pittoresques dans Constantinople et sur les rives du Bosphore: Suivies d'une notice sur la Dalmatie (3. c.). (H. Nicolle, 1815). https://books.google.com.tr/books?id=yJIUAAAAQAAJ

modest population trying to earn their living by gardening, vine cultivation and fishing. It is also stated that the population of the island was 1,200 during these periods.[25]

Ease of transportation may also have had an impact on the increase in demand for the island. In the early 1800s, although there were no ferries yet, the island could be reached after a 2–3-hour journey by boats departing from Tophane, an important port of the period. These boats had a capacity of approximately 60 people and served for 2-3 cents [26].

§ 2.2 Island Ferry with Paddle Streamer: Büyükada in the Late Ottoman Period

The islands were regarded as a land of pleasure and entertainment by the well-to-do and fun-loving people of Istanbul's wealthy residents, due to the difficulty of access caused by the sea and its absence from state surveillance.[27] From the mid-1840s onwards, the islands began to experience the most vibrant times in their history with the start of regular steamboat services to the islands.[28] The regularity of steamboat transportation brought about a great economic and social change on the islands. With the decision of Tersane-i Amire in July 1848, a steamship made one voyage from *Arnavutköy* to the islands every day. Thus, the continuous contact of the islands with Istanbul began. The number of casinos and patisseries in Büyükada increased, churches damaged by fires were repaired and new ones were built.[29] As the number of people coming to the island for leisure increased, the settled area has gradually

25 Marcellus, Souvenirs de l'Orient (Issue 1. c.). (Debécourt, 1839). https://books.google.com.tr/books?id=6EBlgtUcUpoC

26 Akillas Millas, Büyükada: Prinkipo, Ada-i Kebir. (İstanbul: Adalı Yayınları, 2014).

27 Ibid.

28 Pars Tuğlacı, Tarih boyunca Istanbul adaları. (İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1992).

29 Akillas Millas, Büyükada: Prinkipo, Ada-i Kebir. (İstanbul: Adalı Yayınları, 2014).

expanded. According to the records of the council of elders, summer residents rented houses from the locals of the island to stay for 2-3 months during the summer months. The local rich and prominent families built their own mansions. In particular, since ferry services were frequent and regular, the Levantines and Europeans living in *Galata* and *Pera* built their own luxury mansions.

In 1861, the islands gained a separate municipal administration. The islands were now the 7th district of Istanbul and Büyükada was the main center of this district. During this period, a part of the coastline of the island was filled with soil and a casino, houses and a hotel were built on this part. The pier was extended to the sea for ferries to dock more easily. According to the cadastral records organized by the Büyükada Elderly Council between 1880 and 1890, there were 1127 properties on the island. Among these, 906 were residential houses, 205 were shops, 2 were hotels, and 6 were bakeries. Notably, there was also one bathhouse and one factory classified as residential properties. The 993 of these properties were owned by Greek locals and summer house owners, and the rest were the properties of Catholic Levantines, Armenians, Turks, Jews, and Syriacs.

Records indicate that after the earthquake of 1894, the islands suffered extensive damage and were largely uninhabited. However, many efforts were made to revitalize island life, for example, important buildings were illuminated, and events were organized. In 1895, at the request of Abdülhamit II, the Hamidiye Mosque, the first mosque of the island, was built. Also, during this period, a yacht club was opened, sailing regatta was organized on the island, balls and family parties were organized.[30]

In the early 1900s, life on the island began to change and revitalize. During these years, the island started to host many writers and artists such as Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, Yahya Kemal Beyatlı, Füreyya Koral and Aliye Berger. Moreover, foreign and non-Muslim business people were even involved in various enterprises on the island. As an example of

30 Akillas Millas, Büyükada: Prinkipo, Ada-i Kebir. (İstanbul: Adalı Yayınları, 2014).

this, Menelaus Danioli was producing Roquefort cheese under the Fromage Bleu label at the Danioli mansion[31].

In 1910, in accordance with the principle that all citizens of the Empire were equal regardless of race, language and religion, Greeks were also subjected to military service. According to Akillas Millas, during this period, Greeks started to leave Istanbul or smuggled their children to Greece.[32] In the following years, the number of the Turkish population on the island started to increase. One of the reasons for this was that following the proclamation of the Second Constitutional Monarchy, dozens of pashas and gentlemen in the service of Abdülhamit II were deported to the island. Thus, some of the beautiful mansions on the island were rented or bought by the elite exiles of the Ottoman aristocracy. This situation enriched the cosmopolitan atmosphere of the.[33]

The artist Füreya Koral, whose grandfather, who was a pasha, settled in Büyükada at this time, stated that there was only one ferry in the morning and one in the evening, and that they panicked when they heard the sound of an engine.[34] Because the untimely sound of an engine was a sign that someone was approaching the island, and according to the narratives, these people would usually come to deport the already exiled pashas to other places. However, some of the wealthy families of the Ottoman aristocracy, who continued to stay on the island for many years, suffered a partial loss of wealth in the following years. Nermin, whose father was a member of the Committee of Union and Progress, told that in the years following the establishment of the Republic, these families, due to lack of capital, put their antiques up for sale in the gardens of their grand but dilapidated mansions.

31 Pars Tuğlacı, Tarih Boyunca İstanbul Adaları. (İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1992).

32 Akillas Millas, Büyükada: Prinkipo, Ada-i Kebir. (İstanbul: Adalı Yayınları, 2014).

33 Semiha Akpınar, Büyükada: Bir Ada Öyküsü. (İstanbul: Adalı yayınları, 2014).

34 Ibid.

§ 2.3 Büyükada's Loss of its Non-Muslim Population: The Island after the Establishment of the Republic

In 1910-1920, the island's permanent inhabitants numbered 15,000.[35] After the First World War ended with the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, foreigners and Greeks on the island hung the flags of their nationalities on their houses and shops. Füreya Koral reported that during the years of occupation, the Greeks made outbursts and shouted "Zito Venizelos!" (long live Venizelos!) in front of their doors.[36] However, as a result of the changing balances from 1922 onwards, many Istanbul Greeks began to leave the city in panic. Millas stated that during this period, the notables of the island fled, leaving everything they owned. One of the reasons for this was the Population Exchange that took place between 1923-1924, although it did not include the Greeks of Istanbul and Western Thrace. Between 1922 and 1924, 1,200,000 Anatolian Greeks and around 400,000 Muslims from Rumelia living in Greece were displaced by the population exchange between Greece and Turkey.[37] This situation had social as well as economic consequences. The large number of businesspeople, entrepreneurs and skilled laborers among the Greek population subjected to forced migration created a serious gap in Turkey's economic life.[38] Following the 1920s, the shops in Çınar, Lonca and Çarşı, the important streets of the island, were transferred to new owners.[39] In some island narratives, it is also mentioned that new migrants occupied

35 Akillas Millas, Büyükada: Prinkipo, Ada-i Kebir. (İstanbul: Adalı Yayınları, 2014).

36 Semiha Akpınar, Büyükada: Bir Ada Öyküsü. (İstanbul: Adalı yayınları, 2014).

37 Akar and Demir, İstanbul'un Son Sürgünleri: 1964'te Rumların Sınır Dışı Ddilmesi. (İstanbul:Doğan Kitap, 2014).

38 Özgür Kaymak, İstanbul'da Az(ınlık) Olmak: Gündelik Hayatta Rumlar, Yahudiler, Ermeniler. (İsanbul: Libra Kitapçılık, 2017).

39 Hercule Millas, Küçük Asya Araştırmaları Merkezi: Göç: Rumlar'ın Anadolu'dan Mecburi Ayrılışı (1919-1923). (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001).

houses and shops that they found closed.[40] Although the islands remained outside the borders of the population exchange, many Greeks emigrated during this period. During these years, a ship named *Archipelağos* was transporting poor Greeks from the islands to the port of Piraeus in Greece.

Under the Treaty of Lausanne, the Greeks of Istanbul and the Turks of Western Thrace were exempt from the population exchange. However, this did not free the non-Muslim businesspeople concentrated in Istanbul from the pressure of Turkification policies.

In the 1930s, although Büyükada has lost part of its Greek population, it was still a holiday destination and center of attraction for both well to do non-Muslims and newly emerging national bourgeoisie. Wealthy people of Büyükada used to dine at popular hotels of the island at night while officers were spending time at Anatolian club, which had known as Yatch Club but turned into Anatolian Club after the proclamation of the republic with the encouragement of Mustafa Kemal. The abandoned Greek properties in areas outside the exchange borders were passing into the possession of the Turkish treasury, "The buildings on the islands that used to belong to Greeks and were now abandoned posed a separate issue. Eventually, all of them were transferred to the treasury. Thus, most of the abandoned mansions and large houses on Büyükada were sold for next to nothing to opportunistic and cunning individuals who occupied them".[41] Although Turkish-Greek relations improved in 1933 with the visit of the Greek Prime Minister to Heybeliada, the relations between the two countries deteriorated again between 1942-1944 due to the Wealth Tax. According to Ayhan Aktar, the Wealth Tax imposed during the Second World War could not be characterized as a simple enforcement of tax law. Rather, it should be seen as a part of the 'Turkification' policies to be

40 Millas and Koç, Hala Hatırlıyorum-I still Remember. (İstanbul: Adalı Yayınları, 2013).

41 Nejat Gülen, Heybeliada: Tarihi, Coğrafyası, Yaşamı. (İstanbul: Tek boşlukin Yayınevi, 1985).

implemented in the following years.[42] Aktar states that these policies aimed to strengthen the dominance of the Turkish ethnic identity in various aspects of economic, social and cultural life. Subsequent social events also led to a significant decrease in the non-Muslim population. With the pogrom of 6-7 September 1955 and the deportation of Istanbul Greeks in 1964, the proportion of non-Muslim minorities, which was 2.78% in 1927, is now 0.50%.[43]

Records and narratives from the period report that during the 6-7 September pogrom, shops belonging to Greeks in Büyükada were looted. The church of Hagia Dimitri was also severely damaged. Although many people left the island after this incident, there were still 525 Greek Orthodox families living on the island in 1960.[44] However, the escalating tensions in Cyprus led to the termination of the Treaty of Residence, Commerce and Navigation signed between Atatürk and Venizelos in 1930 on the grounds that it threatened the country's defense. In 1964, when the treaty was cancelled, Greeks living in Istanbul but holding Greek citizenship were deported.[45] During this period, the number of people who had to leave the country with their families in a rather hurried manner was 40,000 people.[46] The deportation of those with Greek citizenship caused anxiety and distrust among Greeks who still stayed in Istanbul. During these years, the Greek population of the island almost

42 Ayhan Aktar, Varlık Vergisi ve Türkleştirme Politikaları. (İstanbul: Aras, 2021).

43 Ibid.

44 Millas and Koç, Hala Hatırlıyorum-I still Remember. (İstanbul: Adalı Yayınları, 2013).

45 Aktoprak, "İnsan Hakları Çalışma Metinleri - XVI: Bir 'Kurucu Ötek boşluki' Olarak: Türkiye'de Gayrimüslimler", 2010. https://insanhaklariizleme.org/vt/yayin_view.php?editid1=1498

46 Akar and Demir, İstanbul'un Son Sürgünleri: 1964'te Rumların Sınır Dışı Ddilmesi. (İstanbul:Doğan Kitap, 2014).

dropped to zero. [47]The student population of the Greek school in Büyükada, which had 248 students in 1948, was 55 in 1970 and 4 in 1985.

Yakup Barokas, in his book titled *Büyükada of my Childhood*,[48] in which he describes the island between 1950-1970, where he spent his youth and childhood, explains that after the forced migration of the Greeks in 1964 and the 1974 Cyprus events, the economic life on the island changed considerably. Before these years, Greeks had a strong presence in all occupational groups on the island, and when they left the island, they handed over their jobs to their helpers who had apprenticed with them for many years. I know that one of them was Niko Mundi, the founder of the Büyükada Patisserie. The current operator of the patisserie, which is still open, is a family that is still using Niko Mundi's recipes. In addition, Yakup Barokas mentions the abundance of such examples: "Master Tanaş the blacksmith, Nikoli the waterman, Yanni the grocer, Hristo the carpenter, Yamalaki the baker has been replaced by the ones of the locality who have a similar culture and know the philosophy of island life, such as Hüseyin the blacksmith, Tuluğ the restaurant owner, Mümtaz the grocer, Cemal the carpenter, Fethi the baker".[49]

Despite all these transformations, the years following the 1960s are still described in the narratives of the old islanders as the beautiful and yearned years of the island. In these times, the island was still full of people who "knew the philosophy of the island". I think that this "philosophy" can be seen as knowing and complying with the rules of manners, being aware of the island's past and its multicultural character and respecting each other. As one of my interviewees, Maria, said, the island, in those years, was like a garden that is covered by the fences that

47 Millas and Koç, Hala Hatırlıyorum-I still Remember. (İstanbul: Adalı Yayınları, 2013).

48 Yakup Barokas, Çocukluğumun Büyükadası: 1951-1970. (İstanbul: Adalı Yayınları, 2022).

49 Yakup Barokas, Çocukluğumun Büyükadası: 1951-1970. (İstanbul: Adalı Yayınları, 2022).

you can close its doors whenever you want, in other words, it was safe and isolated.

> The island was very beautiful in the time of the Greeks. .... There was a very refined community. When we landed at the pier, we would see those Greeks welcoming their husbands, they would smell of perfume. .... The front of the houses was so clean, that everyone would sweep their own houses. It was a very beautiful island, now it has deteriorated a lot. (Güler, Housewife, Istanbul, connected with the island since birth, born in 1957)[50].

It is possible to see the traces of the longing for the rather "refined" community of the island in many other narratives. The island's secluded nature, even though it has become increasingly accessible from the mainland, has certainly made it attractive to many. However, over the years, the island has also become more connected to the mainland, and this has paved the way for a series of transformations.

§ 2.4 The Island after 1980: Migration from Van-Erciş

The Marmara archipelago has been a protected area since 1984, according to the decision taken by the Immovable Cultural Heritage and Nature High Council. In accordance with the law, the islands are separated as natural and urban protected areas and the areas on the island were ranked. According to these ranks, it was determined how to preserve all the green areas and architectural authenticity of the islands, which have a rich history. Unfortunately, this did not mean that construction could not be done on the islands. According to the Master Development Plan, which was created afterwards, although the rules to be followed in the

50 Rumların zamanında ada çok güzeldi. ....Çok nezih bir kere toplum vardı. İndiğimiz zaman eşlerini karşılardı o Rumlar, parfüm kokusundan geçemezdik. ....Evlerin önü tertemiz herkes kendi evini siler süpürür. Çok güzel bir adaydı şimdi çok bozuldu (Gülfem, Ev hanımı, İstanbul, Doğduğundan beridir ada ile bağlantılı, 1957 doğumlu).

constructions to be made were determined and necessary measures were tried to be taken to protect the architectural texture, an interim period called the Transition Period Structuring Conditions emerged. The Transition Period Structuring Conditions determined by the commission during the two-month period from 31.03.1984, when the Marmara archipelago was declared a protected area, to 16.05.1984, were decisive in the decisions to be taken regarding the conservation development plan. It can be said that temporary conditions paved the way for the construction of areas that would serve tourism and the reconstruction of some buildings by preserving their exteriors.

Tarık, the president of the Cultural Association of the Islands, describes this transformation as follows:

> Independent municipalities and district municipalities changed the fate of these territories once they were established. Firstly, there was a significant increase in construction. During those years, it was a time when the ANAP government and municipalities took over everywhere, leading to extensive construction all over Istanbul, which also affected the islands. However, the islands were declared as conservation areas in '84, but merely declaring something doesn't solve anything. In my opinion, you should first establish the infrastructure before making declarations. Here, everything gets declared first, and implementation follows later. That's why they caused considerable damage; rules weren't enforced. The ugly buildings you see today are the result of those days. (Tarık, Turkish, President of the Cultural Association of the Islands, on the island since 1964).[51]

51 Bu bağımsız belediyeler, ilçe belediyeleri kurulduktan sonra buranın da kaderi değişti bir anlamda. Bir kere çok yapılaşma oldu. O seneler ANAP hükümet ve belediyelerinin her yeri aldığı bir dönemdi ve muazzam bir yapılaşma yaşandı bütün İstanbul'da, tabi adaya da yansıdı. Halbuki adalar 84'te sit alanı olarak ilan edilmişti, ama şimdi bir şeyi ilan etmekle her şey bitmiyor. Bence, önce bir şeyin altyapısını yapacaksın sonra ilan

He goes on to explain that population movements on the island have accelerated in recent years, making the island unrecognizable. Moreover, He states that in addition to the people from Erzincan, Malatya and Black Sea region who have been on the island for a long time, the people from Van came to the island in the 1980s with the construction that took place on the island.

> People from Erzincan came and started to work. In time they became plasterers, bricklayers, and worked mostly in construction and heavy labor. At some point, Black Sea people came and worked in bakeries and similar jobs. When I say Black Sea people, I mean people from Rize and Trabzon, but there are also people from Kastamonu and other places. People from Van came after these municipalities were established. When the municipalities were established, there was a construction boom here. Contractors came from Van, mainly from Erciş and Karatavuk villages, the majority of them. I know them, we are acquainted with those contractors. Illegal constructions were built here, not befitting the island... Until the 99 earthquake, there was already a decline towards the 99 earthquake... These people who came here were not knowledgeable about construction... We were really shaken. There was an earthquake on Monday, on Tuesday people were taking their suitcases and were leaving... Of course, the constructions have stopped, some of the people who came from Van have returned, some of them have stayed. Those who stayed endured and became tradesmen. When they became tradesmen, they brought people from Van to work with them. I think 10 per cent of the islanders are from Van. (Tarık, Turkish,

edeceksin. Bizde önce ilan ediliyor her şey geriden geliyor. O yüzden oldukça hasar verdiler, kurallar uygulanmadı. Bugün gördüğünüz abuk sabuk binalar o günlerin eseri.

President of the Cultural Association of the Islands, on the island since 1964)52.

In fact, during this very period, Istanbul itself was undergoing neoliberal restructuring. Economic liberalization policies aimed to shape the Turkish economy in accordance with the expectations of global capitalism, while reducing the state's influence in the economy. In this context, Istanbul was to be transformed into a global city to attract foreign capital .[53] To achieve this goal, a series of urban renewal projects were implemented, involving major demolitions in old neighborhoods in the city center, and relocating manufacturing establishments from the center to the periphery.[54] Efforts were made to increase the city's tourism potential through revitalization initiatives. As Harvey points out, the socio-economic and political processes of neoliberalism paved the way for treating the entire urban area as a market commodity.[55]

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52 Erzincanlılar geldi ve bunların yanında çalışmaya başladılar. Ve bir zaman sonra onlar da sıvacı oldu, işte duvarcı şu oldu bu oldu, genelde inşaat işleri, ağır işler yani. Birara Karadenizliler gelmiş, fırınlara onlar da fırın gibi işlere. Karadenizlilerden kasıt böyle Rize Trabzonlulardan bahsediyorum ama Kastamonulular var başka yerler de var. Vanlıların gelişi gene bu belediyelerin kurulmasından sonra oldu. Belediyeler kurulunca burada bir inşaat patlaması oldu, müteahhitler inşaat işlerinde çalıştırmak üzere Van'dan Erciş'ten, bunların çoğu Erciş ve Karatavuk köyünden, büyük çoğunluğu. Tanıyorum da yani, o müteahhitleri de biliyoruz. Burada tabi şey işler yapıldı, adaya uygun olmayan, yasaları da zorlayan…99 depremine kadar, 99 depremine doğru düşüş olmuştu zaten…bu gelen insanlar da inşaatı bilen insanlar değil…….iyi sallandık gerçekten. Pazartesi deprem oldu salı günü insanlar valizlerle birlikte gidiyordu yani…tabi inşaat işi de bitti, Vanlıların bir kısmı döndü, bir kısmı kaldı. Kalanlar oldu. Kalanlar dayandılar bir kısmı esnaf oldu. Esnaf olunca tek boşlukrar Van'dan adam getirttiler, yanlarında çalıştırtmak için. Sanıyorum ki adanın yüzde 10 falan Vanlıdır.

53 Çağlar Keyder and Ayşe Öncü, "Globalization of a Third-World Metropolis: Istanbul in the 1980's". Review (Fernand Braudel Center), 17(3)(1994): 383–421. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40241297

54 Ibid, 383-421.

55 David Harvey, Spaces of hope. (Edinburgh University Press, 2000).

With the municipal law enacted in 1984, metropolitan municipalities were divided into a two-tier system of metropolitan municipalities and district municipalities. This change brought about a series of liberalizations in the financial resources and organizational structures of municipalities. "These changes led to the emergence of an entrepreneurial local government acting as a market facilitator, and the privatization of various municipal services such as transportation, housing, and provision of natural gas".[56] While Istanbul Mayor Bedrettin Dalan, from the center-right Motherland Party, implemented mega-projects such as Tarlabaşı Boulevard and the demolition of industrial complexes in the Golden Horn, Büyükada also experienced neoliberal restructuring in different dimensions. As mentioned earlier, in addition to the architectural transformation that occurred prior to the conservation plan, a part of the island's coastline was also transformed in 1984 when the islands became a municipality. While efforts to turn Istanbul into a global city continue, the cultural identity of the city and the image it creates have also become a matter of debate. "In the case of a city with diverse, multi-layered histories like Istanbul, which past will be preserved, mobilized and are becoming vital political problems to be marketed".[57] Because a past that is preferred to be marketed sometimes excludes or ignores the existence of the other, such as the Van-Kurds not having a place in the island past mentioned in nostalgic narratives.

The stories of other islanders about Van-Kurdish migrants are very important, because they are not a group that has been able to find a place in nostalgic narratives about the island or in the history of the island. Today, the Museum of the Princes' Island, which has become an important meeting place for islanders, hosts a beautiful museum and

56 Ayfer Bartu Candan and Biray Koluoğlu, “Emerging Spaces of Neoliberalism: A Gated Town and a Public Housing Project in İstanbul”. New Perspectives on Turkey, 39(2008): 5–46. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0896634600005057

57 Ayfer Bartu, Eski Mahallelerin Sahibi Kim? Küresel Bir Çağda Tarihi Yeniden Yazmak. In İstanbul: Küresel ile Yerel Arasında, 43–60. İletişim, 2000 .

conference hall. While the museum includes the centuries-old history of the island, its flora and fauna, important personalities and disappearing events, it does not touch upon the migration that the island has received since 1980.The absence of any traces of Van-Kurdish migrants' lives in the island narratives within the museum, contrasted with their high visibility in the island's economy, is one of the reasons that spurred my research into this issue.

It has been said that Istanbul is the largest Kurdish city in the world. Today, more than 10 percent of the population of Istanbul, which is a huge metropolis with a population of 18 million, is made up of Kurds. Although the Kurdish population is dispersed to various districts in the city, Büyükada has a different place due to its ethnic composition. The island, which was a Greek fishing village from the late Byzantine period until the 18th century, was a home for great number of non-Muslims for a long time. Although their numbers dwindled considerably, the non-Muslim population continued to use their homes on the islands as primary or secondary residence until the 1980s. However, the Greek population immigrating from the island began to be replaced by migrants from Anatolia over time. Following the 1980s, the island has started to receive Kurdish migration from Van.

It would be said that the island is a small replica of Istanbul considering its ethnic diversity; people from Black Sea region who have been living on the island since the 1950s, Erzincan people who migrated to the islands after the Erzincan earthquake, a small number of non-Muslims, Central Anatolians, old Istanbul families, Kurdish people… Life on the island, which is a place where people from different backgrounds have daily interactions, is quite lively. As one of my Van-Kurdish interviewees said, "The island is such a diverse place that there cannot be a man anywhere without being a man here." The reason why he says this must be the state of being together resulting from the interactions that took place in a very limited area. For this reason, especially considering the economic activities undertaken by the Kurdish population on the island, it can provide us with information about the possibilities of mobilization of the Kurdish community, whose identity is

identified with informality.[58] Currently, the percentage of the Kurdish population from Van living on the island almost coincides with the percentage of the Kurdish population living in Istanbul. In terms of seeing the transformation of Kurdish migrants' Istanbul experiences over the last 40 years, the island is an example that will provide new perspectives and research opportunities on the Kurds in Istanbul in general. Therefore, I hope that my work will open up new questions about internal migration, informal market relations, family networks.

According to the data provided by address-based population registration system for the 2021, the number of Van-Kurdish people who reside on the island is 1080.[59] Among the 1080 people from Van, there are 1046 migrant who are registered in Erciş district, 5 in Gürpınar, 6 in Edremit, 5 in Başkale, and 11 in İpekyolu districts of Van province. In short, 97% of the Van-Kurdish population on the Princes' islands is from Erciş. Unfortunately, the data provided by the address-based population registration system does not show the second or third generation population born on the islands whose families migrated from Van. Considering this situation, it is likely that the number of Van-Kurdish population on the islands is higher.[60]

§ 2.5 Büyükada: Vibrant Tourist Economy and Van-Erciş Migrants

As soon as I get off the historical pier, I walk towards the square, it is crowded. Ushers coming from different parts of Anatolia shout to attract customers to restaurants and cafes. I go to the market, following the sounds. After buying pastries called Börekitas from Büyükada Patisserie, the original owner of which is Greek, I turn towards Lonca Street. Now I have passed into another world, from the world of consumption to the world of production. I might not say that Büyükada

58 Polat Alpman, Esmer Yakalılar: Kent-Sınıf-Kimlik ve Kürt Emeği. (İstanbul: İletişim, 2016).

59 TÜİK, 2023.
60 TÜİK, 2023.

has a well-operating dynamic economy, it is a small island with 7,400 inhabitants after all. However, it is a tourist attraction visited by thousands of people every year. This situation creates an employment opportunity for the migrant population that will work in tourism related sectors.

The district of Adalar is almost at the top of the list of districts where a significant portion of the labor force is employed in wholesale and retail trade, restaurants and hotels. According to the 2000 Adalar Master Plan Report, the number of people working in these fields of activity is very high in the expressing the business function distribution table according to their economic activities in the Princes' Islands. In an unpublished master's thesis on the economic and social history of Büyükada during the Republican Era,[61] the economic activities in Maden Quarter, one of the two neighbourhoods of Büyükada, were examined based on the records of the mukhtar's office. Since the bazaars and squares in the center of the island are located within the borders of this quarter, it is possible to say that the economic activities in this region contain important details about the island in general. According to the research, the most employed sector in Maden quarter is the phaeton business. However, in 2020, with the decision taken by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, the phaetons were abolished. In accordance with the decision of the Provincial Traffic Commission, 277 phaeton plates registered by Adalar Municipality were purchased by IMM Public Transport Services Directorate with a price of 300 thousand TL[62]. In the interviews, it was stated that phaetons are mostly driven by migrants. This situation shows that Van-Kurdish migrants are looking for other jobs. However, neither the address-based population registration system nor the mukhtar's

61 Kerem Yılmaz, Cumhuriyet Dönemi'nde Büyükada'nın İktisadi ve Sosyal Tarihi. MA Thesis, (Marmara University, 2007). https://kata-log.marmara.edu.tr/veriler/yordambt/cokluor- tam/B/C/E/D/A/T0057459.pdf

62 İBB: Adalar'da atlı faytonların yerine kullanılacak elektrikli araçları belirledi. (2020, March 4). Evrensel. https://www.evrensel.net/haber/398697/ibb-adalarda-atli-faytonlarin-yerine-kullanilacak-elektrikli-araclari-belirledi

registers contain data on the ethnic distribution of economic activities. This situation necessitated in-depth interviews in order to understand which ethnic groups or migrant groups perform which occupations in particular.

Even in the early hours of the day, there is an active life on Lonca Street. On this street, where there are shops of local people selling construction materials, I can hear people speaking Kurdish among each other. There are drivers of battery-powered vehicles loaded up supplying drinks to restaurants, ironsmiths, construction workers, repairmen, and house painters, in other words, many workers who keep the island's daily life running pass through this street. Some stop by their relatives' shops to take a breath and have tea, while others stop by Resul Cafe, which is located on the street and is run by a Kurd. The name of the cafe is almost a code.

If you take a walk in the streets, you can see that the owners or employees of most shops are Van-Kurdish migrants. Migrants from Van, who now have a presence in many business lines, have a very visible position on the island. However, it can be said that they mostly do construction work, bike rental, electric vehicle driver, mechanic and restaurant business.

Due to the lack of data showing the sectoral distribution of economic activities generated by Van-Kurdish community, it is not possible to know actual number of Van-Kurdish people engaging in economic activities on the Princes' Islands. However, according to the data based on the interviews, it would be said that Van-Kurdish migrants operate at least in 8 of the 23 different commercial functions mentioned in the table above. Although it does not show the migrant population from Van separately, the table below showing the employment status is useful in terms of seeing the sectoral distribution of the workforce in the district of Princes' Islands.

TABLE 1: Sectoral Distribution of the Workforce:

Employment Status on the Islands	Total Number	%
Total Employment	6568	100.00
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	57	0.87
Mining and Quarries	9	0.14
Manufacturing Industry	867	13.20
Electricity, Gas and Water	28	0.43
Construction Work	451	6.87
Wholesale, Retail Trade; Restaurants and Hotels	16.81	25.59
Transportation, Communication and Storage	538	8.19
Insurance, Immovable Property Transactions and Ancillary Business Services	699	10.64
Community Services; Social and Personal Services	2203	33.54
Not well-defined activities	35	0.53

The business lines in the islands in 2000, as specified in the Islands Master Plan Report, are as follows.

TABLE 2: Business Function Distribution in the Princes' Islands:

Type of Function	Büyükada	Heybeliada	Burgazada	Kınalıada	Sedefadası	Total number	%
Food and Beverage activities	89	25	18	32	1	165	31
Food, Beverage, Tobacco	72	30	14	21	2	139	27
Services	38	16	16	14	0	84	16
Entertaintment activities	5	0	2	9	0	16	3
Clothing	11	4	1	1	0	17	3
Toy&Souvenir	8	0	0	0	0	8	2
Cosmetic&Medicine	5	3	2	3	0	13	3
Stationary	4	4	0	0	0	8	2
Wholesaler	8	0	0	0	0	8	2
Construction Products	5	1	2	2	0	10	2
Home Appliances	14	1	1	1	0	17	3
Fuel	2	1	0	4	0	7	1
Jewelry	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Wood Shop	2	0	0	0	0	2	0
Betting Shop	2	2	0	1	0	5	1
China Shop	2	1	1	1	0	5	1
Forage Shop	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Bijouterie	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
Petshop	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Cleaning Supply Shop	1	1	0	0	0	2	0
Hardware	5	0	0	1	0	6	1
Dry Cleaner	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Antique Shop	0	2	0	0	0	2	0
Total	276	92	57	91	3	519	100

At this point, in order to understand the economic sectors in which Van-Kurdish migrants working on the island are operating, it may be insightful to pay attention to what the migrants said in the interviews. The numbers reported by the interviewers are quite inconsistent, making it impossible to provide an exact figure. However, when observing the crowds working in the bazaar, side streets, restaurants, engaged in transportation, repair work, or when entering a hardware store on Loca street, or engaging in conversation with individuals at Resul Cafe, the predominant answer to the question 'where is your hometown?' is mostly Van.

One of the interviewees, who served as a district chairman for one of the opposition parties, claimed that nearly 50 percent of the migrants, 80 percent of whom were construction workers in the 1980s, are now shopkeepers in Büyükada. Another interviewee, a restaurant owner, stated that 90 percent of the 70 households from his village, who settled on the island, are currently shopkeepers. Another migrant, involved in construction work on the island, estimated that out of 2000 Van-Kurdish migrants, 100 own shops. According to the Business Function Distribution table, there were 276 businesses on the island in the year 2000, though this number may have increased since then. Therefore, if the reported number of migrant-owned shops by the interviewers is accurate, it represents a significant proportion.

Today, there are 1080 people registered in the province of Van in Büyükada, which does not even include the children of Van-Kurdish migrants born on the island. One of the participants that I conducted an in-depth interview, who was appointed as a civil servant to the island in the late 2000s, described his surprise when he first came to the island as follows:

> So, when I first went to the island, I didn't even think there would be an Easterner there. Indeed, when I got on the ferry, I was pretty worried about not knowing any foreign languages. When I got there, I saw the people with darker skin, just like me. So, people are swarming right away. There is a saying that the blood boils.

> When I asked, I learnt that there are many people from Van here. Really, all the gardeners, plumbers, waiters are from Van. (Veli, Erciş, Turkish, Government Employee, 1966, on the Island since 2010)[1]

Of course, all this should not lead to the conclusion that the island is a Van-Kurdish Island. In fact, when I tell most people on the mainland about my work, they are astounded by the Van-Kurdish presence in the settlement. However, Van-Kurdish migrants constitute the backstage of a neighborhood that stands out with its touristic function. My aim is to show how this group, trapped in subordination and deprived of their rights, copes with this situation. Because perceiving those pushed to the peripheries of the city as if they are doomed to constant deprivation no longer captures the complexity of changing dynamics and migrants' survival strategies.

63 Yani ben adaya ilk gittiğimde orada Doğulu olacağına ihtimal bile vermiyordum. Hakikaten Vapur'a bindim, dedim ben dil falan da bilmiyorum, beni oraya gönderiyorlar ama, ben dil falan bilmiyorum. Gittim bir çevreme baktım, renkler esmer. Hemen insan kaynıyor yani. Kanı kaynar diye bir laf vardır ya. Sordum, dediler burada Vanlı çok var. Baktım, bahçıvanı, tesisatçısı, simitçisi, garsonu hep Vanlı.

3

Literature Review

In my thesis, which focuses on the capital accumulation processes of Van-Kurdish migrants living in Büyükada, I draw on four main literatures: (1) studies on Princes' Islands, (2) Studies on rural to urban migration after 1980, (3) studies on Kurdish labor, and lastly (4) studies on migrant self-employment.

These four distinct bodies of literature hold particular significance for my research. Under the first subheading, 'Studies on Princes' Islands,' I will delve into significant research regarding the islands throughout history, particularly examining how these studies tend to view the islands through a nostalgic lens. However, it's worth noting that while there is a

study on the initial migration to the islands from Anatolia, none of the studies explore literature on ethnic labor migration.

Moving on to the second category, 'Studies on Rural to Urban Migration after 1980,' I will discuss how Kurdish migrants who settled on the islands post-1980 share similarities in their post-migration strategies with those who migrated to Istanbul from rural areas. Nevertheless, it's important to highlight that Van-Kurdish migrants differs from the other migrants in terms of their potential of upward mobility. The reasons for this differentiation include the island's remote location from the mainland, the demand for labor on the island coupled with the scarcity of affordable labor to fulfill this demand, and the observation that migrants accumulate capital more rapidly by living in close-knit family units.

In the section dedicated to 'Studies on Kurdish Labor,' I will elaborate on why the position of Van-Kurdish labor on the island stands out among existing research on Kurdish labor. This distinction is closely linked to the self-employment strategies employed by migrants, a topic I will explore further in the fourth literature.

Therefore, I will delve into two key concepts, the 'embedded market approach' and 'necessity entrepreneurs,' to provide a framework for understanding the position of Kurdish migrants on the island.

§ 3.1 Studies on Princes' Islands

Büyükada, which bears the traces of the cosmopolitan life that reigned in Istanbul for a long time, has been described as almost an oasis in many islander narratives with its unique architecture, churches and monasteries, phaetons, patisseries and hosting different lifestyles. Until 1964, the non-Muslim minority in Büyükada, which was mostly composed of Greeks, was gradually replaced by new Muslim islanders and the migrant population from Anatolia.

One of the first studies on rural migration to the Princes' Islands is a panel discussion by Mübeccel Kıray. The panel on the Importance of the Princes' Islands in Turkish Tourism and Literature was held on May 3,

1984.[64] One of the sessions in the panel was on the socio-economic reasons for migration from Anatolia to the islands. Kıray states that the Prince Islands were also affected by the rural-urban migration caused by the mechanization of agriculture following the 1940s. She states that there is a mass of people migrating to the islands mostly from Northeastern Anatolia and that this mass is organized in jobs that cannot be performed by the formal sectors, which we call the marginal sector. This mass, mostly composed of people from Erzincan, turned to jobs such as cleaning and portering to meet the needs of summer residents.

Although there are studies on non-Muslim migration outwards from the islands and forced migration, Kıray's study has a very important place because it deals with rural to urban migration towards the island. However, despite the significant seasonal labor migration, particularly to Büyükada, during those years due to construction and coastal filling activities, Kıray's study does not touch upon ethnic labor migration.[65]

In Coşkun's study, the occupational sectors of migrant groups on the Princes' Islands are described in detail. Similar to what Kıray mentioned, in Coşkun's study as well, migrants mostly work in labor-intensive, daily-wage, informal jobs. In the study, it was stated that migrants from Malatya, Sivas and Van, who were seen as the poor of the island, mostly worked as carriage drivers and porters and were ostracized by the islanders.[66] Despite the study being conducted relatively recently, it does not address the diversity in living conditions among migrant groups. Migrants are treated as if they were a single homogenous group.

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64 Mübeccel Kıray, "Göç ve Gecekondular Adalar'da da Var. Adaların Türk Turizmindeki ve Edebiyatındaki Yeri ve Önemi". Burgazada Lioness Kulübü DerneğI, 1984.

65 Ibid.

66 Fatma Coşkun, Metropol'ün Adası: Heybeliada'nın Değişen Gündelik Yaşam Pratikleri Üzerinden Sosyolojik Analizi. MA Thesis, (Mimar Sinan Güzel Sanatlar Üniversitesi, 2008).

In fact, considering the historical background, the island has throughout its history been home to a very heterogeneous demographic structure, hosting many different communities. While this diversity has made the island a different living space from the mainland in terms of lifestyle, spatial segregation has also been observed within the island.[67] The relationship that different people have established with the island and its spaces diversifies the feeling of "islandness" for several groups.[68] For many years, Van-Kurds were not allowed to join the Anatolian Club, the Water Sports Club, which is one of the most prominent symbolic places on the island. While the former islanders define the island as a place of leisure, for the Van-Kurds it is a place of work and earning money.

Although not directly connected with the islands, there are also many studies on the minority policies of the Republic of Turkey, which has a very important place in the history of Büyükada.[69] The population exchange of 1923 and the forced displacement and resettlement policies of 1964, which can be regarded as Turkification policies, changed the lives of many non-Muslim minorities on the island. It has also disrupted the multicultural life of the island. While trying to trace the traces of this transformation of the islands through the narratives of islanders, I have also endeavored to examine the demographic transformation of Istanbul during the transition from empire to nation-state through various oral history narratives. Tracing the transformation of the islands through minority politics helped me to understand how Van-Kurdish migrants came to Büyükada. Today, for many former islanders, the island had an

67 Kabaoğlu, Kültür ve Kentsel Mekan Bağlamında Ada Yerleşmelerinin İncelenmesi: İstanbul Prens Adaları Örneği. MA Thesis, (İstanbul Tek boşluknik Üniversitesi, 2012).

68 Şenses, Islander identities: The cases of Heybeliada and Burgazada. MA Thesis, (Kadir Has University, 2020).

69 Elif Babul, İmroz'da Tanınma Siyasetleri: Ulusal Vatandaşlık, Yerel Aidiyet ve Toplumsal Hafıza. In Tansuğ, F. (Ed.), İmroz Rumları: Gökçeada üzerine. (İstanbul: Heyamola Yayınları, 2012).

authenticity that was missed and lost. Architectural structures, monasteries and churches, which signaled the multicultural and multi-religious past of the island, became objects of popular culture.[70]

According to the literature review I have conducted; I did not come across any research on the Van-based Kurdish migration Büyükada has received since 1980. Unlike the mass migration that started with mechanization in agriculture as mentioned by Kıray, the process of urbanization of capital caused a new influx of migration by paving the way for high-rent activities such as tourism and construction. Apart from the news in the local newspaper and population records, I did not come across any documents showing the presence of migrants from Van on the island. Although there are many old photographs and documents on the history of the island in the museum of the islands, there were no documents on the migration that the island had received in the past years. Although they started migrating in the early 1980s, the date of arrival of the Van people who started migrating to the island is often stated by the old islanders as after 2010. On the other hand, it is possible to say that Van migrants have also developed a distance from being islanders. Despite the narrative of islandness based on pleasure, calmness and enjoying life, for Van migrants, the island is a place where they are constantly striving and trying to make a living. For this very reason, it is possible to encounter different ways of living.

The fact that the presence of Van-Kurdish migrants in Büyükada has been rendered relatively invisible, but that the migrants are in fact quite active, has encouraged me to reveal the difference between Kurdish migration in this particular place and Kurdish migration in other districts of Istanbul. In order to understand the nature of the example more closely, it would make sense to consider studies on migration to cosmopolitan cities in the West.

70 Amy Mills, Streets of Memory: Landscape, Tolerance, and National Identity in Istanbul. (The University of Georgia Press, 2010).

§ 3.2 Studies on Rural to Urban Migration After 1980

Australian sociologist Raewyn Connell argues that intellectual workers reflect the social divisions of the society in which they live. Connell's remarks can also be applied to the development of migration literature in Turkey. In migration literature, it is possible to see various epistemic communities working on topics such as rural-urban migration, labor migration to Germany, asylum and international migration, and forced migration. In this section, I will focus on studies on rural-urban migration after 1980, which provide a large body of literature on how migrants establish solidarity ties and common ethnic labor networks. While there are aspects of this literature that correspond exactly to my study, there are also aspects that diverge. For example, the urban survival strategies of migrants who came to Istanbul after 1980 and the strategies of Van-Kurdish migrants may be similar. In the city, difficulties related to housing and precarious working conditions are tried to be minimized through kinship and fellow-citizen ties. On the other hand, economic mobilization and upward mobility opportunities do not come to the fore as an alternative, even if the survival strategies developed through kinship networks of migrants settling in slums in the city are mentioned.

As of the 1980, the shift towards high-rent activities such as tourism and construction through neoliberal policies that would ensure rapid growth paved the way for a second wave of migration from rural to urban areas. With privatization, informalization and the dissolution of the welfare state, workers' rights declined to a much more precarious position than in previous periods.

Again, among the post-1980 studies focusing on rural-urban migration, it can be said that studies focusing on neighborhood-settlement shed light on my study. In this respect, Sema Erder's prominent research *İstanbul'a Bir Kent Kondu: Ümraniye*,[71] first

71 Sema Erder, İstanbul'a Bir Kent Kondu Ümraniye. (İstanbul: İletişim, 2013).

published in 1996, is a very comprehensive example. While the study deals with the process of the districtization of Ümraniye, which was famous for hosting the 1 Mayıs neighborhood in the 1970s, in the background, it also reveals findings on the migration movements of the region. One of the points highlighted in Erder's book is that migration from rural areas to Istanbul has occurred in a chained manner, layer by layer, over the years. In other words, migrant groups coming from a certain region, city or village were instrumental in the subsequent migration movements of their relatives and fellow townspeople to the city. Perhaps the most important reason why the solidarity provided by kinship relations is so important is that the primary struggle of rural peasants and low-income groups migrating to the city is the struggle for settlement (Erder, 2000). Moreover, the relationship channels developed through the ties of fellow citizen are an important job-finding network. However, these jobs are mostly for low-skilled and irregular jobs such as construction, market work and hawking.

It is possible to witness the same pattern among the Van-Kurds who migrated to the island. The elders of the family who came to the island to work invited their siblings and close relatives to join them when they saw the labor potential. Migrants, who lived in crowded groups in the same house until they saved enough money, started to earn a stable income over time. As they began earning a stable income, they invited their remaining families to join them and rented separate houses. Occasionally, families have become business owners on the island by combining their economic power and savings. The prominence of the touristic function of the island in this period and the need for service sector workers led to the formation of new business lines on the island. The fact that the people who met the need for labor force to work in these branches were none other than migrants also affected the survival strategies of Van-Kurds. From this point of view, a different situation emerges on the island than the one mentioned in the book *Nöbetleşe*

Yoksulluk,[72] which has a very important place in the literature on rural-urban migration and urbanization. Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, in their study titled *Nöbetleşe Yoksulluk*, explore squatting and urban poverty through Sultanbeyli. In their analysis, they also examine in detail how migrants from the Southeast region of Turkey, whose inhabitants are mainly Kurdish, are affected by previously established networks of relations in the settlements where they immigrated. This situation, which they define as ethnic origin-based concentration, makes it difficult for newly arrived migrants to participate in certain lines of work, leading to a kind of impoverishment cycle. This is a situation that Van-Kurdish migrants who immigrated to the island experienced in the process of getting out of irregular marginal jobs and initiating their own businesses. However, Van-Kurdish migrants have also started to dominate particular lines of work over time.

The dynamics faced by migrants living on the island differ from those encountered by migrants on the mainland. Labor holds greater value on the island, with a demand for labor in sought-after sectors and no other labor force to meet this need. Additionally, since the island has not previously experienced mass migration, it lacks a shantytown where migrants can initially settle and then rent to other arrivals. In essence, for at least some of the migrants who arrived on the island in the 1980s, opportunities were abundant, and competition was limited.

Yoksulluk Halleri[73] is a very important study that combines migration and urban poverty. In the section on origin-based solidarity in this edited volume, similarly to the study on *Nöbetleşe Yoksulluk*, it is underlined that origin-based relationship networks are an important survival strategy for the urban poor. Here, solidarity networks are defined as "the

72 Oğuz Işık and Melih Pınarcioğlu, Nöbetleşe Yoksulluk: Gecekondulaşma ve Kent Yoksulları: Sultanbeyli Örneği. (İstanbul: İletişim, 2001).

73 Necmi Erdoğan, Yoksulluk Halleri: Türkiye'de Kent Yoksulluğunun Toplumsal Görünümleri. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011).

solidarity relationship of individuals or households surrounded by various non-economic and continuous ties with each other, framed by certain norms and principles", following Sahlins. In the following remarks, the possibility that these solidarity networks, while providing a means of mobility and survival for older migrant groups, may create the opposite cycle of poverty for newcomers is emphasized. Both studies underscore the fact that migrants and the urban poor are trapped in poverty under certain conditions.

At this point, it should be emphasized that not all Van-Kurdish migrants on the island have the chance for class mobility, and some of them still work in unregistered and precarious jobs such as battery-powered car driving. However, as an alternative to the understanding of a culture of poverty inherited from Oscar Lewis, it is necessary to point out that migrants seek to way of mobilizing upwardly.[74]

The studies I have mentioned in this section have looked at migrant groups more from the perspective of urban poverty due to the period they were studied and the points they focused on, as stated in the introduction of the book *Yoksulluk Halleri*,[75] "The hungry class speaks in this book... Those who were poor before and after the economic crises, those who will always be poor, those who experience poverty as a fate, those at the 'bottom'...". I hope that my study will be able to offer a comparable alternative in this regard. Even if the strategies are similar, sometimes opportunities may lead to other alternatives.

74 Oscar Lewis, Five families; Mexican Case studies in The Culture of Poverty. (Basic Books, 2000).

75 Necmi Erdoğan, Yoksulluk Halleri: Türkiye'de Kent Yoksulluğunun Toplumsal Görünümleri. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011).

§ 3.3 Studies on Kurdish Labor

In order to comprehend what kind of labor environment Kurdish laborers face under the conditions created by the economic restructuring of work since 1980, it would make sense to examine some studies on Kurdish labor. Here, I have tried to include studies that focus specifically on Kurdish labor and informalization.

The percentage of the Kurdish population from Van living on the island almost coincides with the percentage of the Kurdish population living in Istanbul. In terms of seeing the transformation of Kurdish migrants' Istanbul experiences over the last 40 years, the island is an example that will provide new perspectives and research opportunities on the Kurds in Istanbul in general. Therefore, I hope that my work will open up new questions about internal migration, informal market relations, family networks.

Turkey's nonlinearization process necessitated a series of transformations in the labor markets. Different classes have been affected differently by this transformation. In addition to studies examining the impact of informalization on the working class, there are also studies examining the ways in which disenfranchised groups who have migrated from rural to urban areas are included in the market. Some studies focusing on disenfranchised groups tend to portray migrant groups as trapped in poverty and living in vulnerable conditions. Nevertheless, the strategies that migrants have developed against poverty and deprivation have diversified over the years. Therefore, the study of the processes of inclusion in the labor market is a transforming and evolving field, especially in the context of ethnic labor, taking into account the relatively unique position of Kurds. In this regard, Büyükada offers a different perspective as it is home to a group of Van-Kurdish migrants who have accumulated capital over the years.

Character traits attributed to Kurdish identity have been a matter of debate since the founding of the republic, and “The Kurdish issue, which is an ethnopolitical, or more commonly known, national issue, has been distorted within the ideological narrative of the Republican period state

discourse, and it has been identified with the resistance of the tribes and bandits against the modern state (....) with regional backwardness, and it has been presented as something else".[76]

However, considering the years following the 1980s as a turn that addresses the changing nature of the ethnic relations, Saraçoğlu indicates that the Kurdish question goes beyond being a problem between the state and the Kurds".[77] With the rise of the neoliberal stage of the capitalist economy, many Kurdish people from the Southern East have immigrated to the big cities with employment opportunities in the sectors such as construction, industry, and tourism. The increasing population of Kurdish migrants in cities like Istanbul, Antalya, and Izmir has raised the likelihood of them interacting with city residents in shared places of everyday life, such as markets, shops, and public transportation.[78] The rising possibilities of everyday interaction have changed the idea towards the Kurds, who have been expected to be loyal due to the longstanding assimilationist tradition of the state by positioning them as the "primary" others. While it addresses a change in ethnic relations, the negative perception towards the Kurds has permeated. The anti-Kurdish discourse "is not a false consciousness that is directly imposed by some external agents such as an organization, party, or class. Rather, it is a discourse that has been primarily developed independently within the circle of everyday life social relations",[79]arising from external contacts and based on the idea that the Kurds are ignorant, culturally backward, and separatist. However, if these negative stereotypes do not come from the ideological narrative of the Republican period state discourse, how would they be produced and permeated?

76 Mesut Yeğen, Müstakbel Türk'ten Sözde Vatandaşa: Cumhuriyet ve Kürtler, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2006).

77 Cenk Saraçoğlu, Şehir, orta sınıf ve Kürtler: İnkar'dan "Tanıyarak Dışlama"ya, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2011).

78 Ibid.

79 Ibid.

The perception of Kurds gained different characteristics in the 1980s when the migration from the Southern East to the big cities in the West where informalization of labor became the dominant strategy of producing the commodity.[80] However, it should be underlined that migration from Eastern Anatolia was not a new concern emerging in the last 40 years but a phenomenon seen since the 1950s. Yet, after 1980 "it gained qualitatively different characteristics"[81] because of the neoliberal stage of the capitalist economy. The cheap labor needs of the neoliberal accumulation strategy, which needs informal production relations that do not have a standard form, were provided by those at the bottom of the class hierarchy,[82] and "the combined social effect of these processes has been the creation of a large, poor and informal proletariat".[83] The economic restructuring of capital-labor relations paved the way for the employment structure to shift from more secure jobs to temporary ones. Deteriorating welfare programs and rising flexible employment schemes helped the Turkish market to join global economic flows at the cost of precarization.

The transition from import substitution industrialization to export-oriented growth in 1980s has brought about a series of change in the economic policies that implies privatization, flexibilization,

80 Onur Günay, "Becoming Kurdish: Migration, Urban Labor, and Political Violence in Turkey", Doctoral Dissertation, (Princeton University, 2017). http://arks.princeton.edu/ark:/88435/dsp01z890rw90t

81 Cenk Saracoglu, "Exclusive recognition: The New Dimensions of the Question of Ethnicity and Nationalism in Turkey". Ethnic and Racial Studies, 32(4)(2009): 640–658. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870802065226

82 Polat Alpman, Esmer Yakalılar: Kent-Sınıf-Kimlik ve Kürt Emeği. (İstanbul: İletişim, 2016).

83 Erdem Yörük, "Welfare Provision as Political Containment: The Politics of Social Assistance and The Kurdish Conflict in Turkey." Politics & Society, 40(4)(2012): 517–547.

informalization, and deregulation in Turkey.[84] Export-led growth aims to open domestic markets to foreign competition to get hard currency to import goods manufactured more cheaply elsewhere. Since increasing competitiveness requires higher productivity and lower prices, some developing economies have started to promote deregulation; in other words, they have reduced state regulations in the economic sphere. This meant that large numbers of labor forces entered the market without any protection from the state. In the years following 1980, with neoliberalization, the mode of production was arranged to ensure the informalization of the workforce.[85]

To Erdem Yörük, migrant Kurds who create a reserve army of cheap labor is the reason behind the 'success' of neoliberal capitalist accumulation in Turkey, "the globally competitive sectors of the Turkish economy, i.e. textiles and apparel, construction, shipbuilding, and electrical equipment production, depend largely on subcontracting chains based in the informal economy, and on an informal working proletariat, which has crowded the slum areas of big cities in the 1990s".[86] Kurdish migrants suddenly found themselves in metropolitan cities, followed by the traces of early migrants from central Anatolia in the 1960s. They became tenants in the slum areas built by the formers and

84 Cizre-Sakallioglu and Yeldan, "Politics, Society and Financial Liberalization: Turkey in the 1990s". Development and Change, 31(2)(2000): 481–508. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-7660.00163

85 Polat Alpman, Esmer Yakalılar: Kent-Sınıf-Kimlik ve Kürt Emeği. (İstanbul: İletişim, 2016).

86 Erdem Yörük, "Welfare Provision as Political Containment: The Politics of Social Assistance and The Kurdish Conflict in Turkey." Politics & Society, 40(4)(2012): 517–547.

worked for low wages in jobs that did not require skills.[87] The system, which compelled the Kurds, who left their place of residence permanently or temporarily due to economic instability or state policies, to business lines that do not require any qualification and have low economic returns, resulted in "rapid urbanization and proletarianization of Kurds".[88]

Many studies show that the Kurds, who migrated from Southeast Anatolia to the districts of Istanbul, could only work in specific sectors. Parallel to the political and economic conditions of the period, increasing informal market relations and precarity do not provide much opportunity for class mobilization to the Kurds, who were forced to displace their villages or had to migrate for economic reasons after 1980 and 1990. According to Alpman, in this way, Kurdish migrant workers have lost their chance to specialize in any profession due to neoliberal regulations.[89] This situation is one of the main reasons for the Kurdish identity to gain an "informal character." The systematization of the mechanisms of domination that impose heavy working conditions and long working hours on the migrants without security affects the Kurdish identity and the perception of the Kurds in society. The informal character that implies negative peculiarities such as ignorance, lack of formal education, and lack of necessary cultural capital turns into a comprehension attributed to Kurdish ethnicity. In that sense, the concept of "exclusive recognition" used in Saraçoğlu's research on the changing nature of ethnic relations and the perception of Kurdish migrants in İzmir

87 Oğuz Işık and Melih Pınarcioğlu, Nöbetleşe Yoksulluk: Gecekondulaşma ve Kent Yoksulları: Sultanbeyli Örneği. (İstanbul: İletişim, 2001).

88 Erdem Yörük, "Welfare Provision as Political Containment: The Politics of Social Assistance and The Kurdish Conflict in Turkey." Politics & Society, 40(4)(2012): 517–547.

89 Polat Alpman, Esmer Yakalılar: Kent-Sınıf-Kimlik ve Kürt Emeği. (İstanbul: İletişim, 2016).

is entirely instrumental in conveying underlying reasons for anti-Kurdish discourse and sentiments.[90] To Saraçoğlu, "the agents of exclusive recognition produce and reproduce a particular image of the Kurds based on their individual experiences and interactions in everyday life of Turkish cities".[91] Kurdish ethnic identity acquires new meanings by reproducing itself through daily interactions. In this way, the way of being perceived also affects the Kurds' coping mechanisms with these particular images.

In this same historical period of the 1980s and 1990s when Kurds migrated to Istanbul and other metropolitian cities, there was also a migration to Büyükada from certain villages of Erciş district of Van. At first, the Van-Kurdish population, who was willing to work on the island as a seasonal construction worker, later decided to settle in the island and sought more permanent jobs. Due to the island's need for labor and job potential, the island provided the Van-Kurdish migrants with the opportunity to mobilize.

In his book *Kürt Damgası* , Serkan Turgut focuses on how individuals try to make sense of ethnic boundaries and how they cope with everyday stigma and discrimination.[92] In the book, the forced migration that occurred especially in the early 1990s coincided with the political reasons and the neoliberalization process. This situation legitimized the inequalities faced by Kurdish ethnic identity in the informal market. According to Polat Alpman, this situation results in the "informalization"

90 Cenk Saracoglu, "Exclusive recognition: The new dimensions of the question of ethnicity and nationalism in Turkey". Ethnic and Racial Studies, 32(4)(2009), 640–658. https://doi.org:10.1080/01419870802065226

91 Ibid, 640-658.

92 Serkan Turgut, Kürt Damgası: Etnik Sınırlar ve Başa Çıkma Stratejileri. (İstanbul: İletişim, 2001).

of Kurdish identity.[93] Alpman emphasizes that the precarization experienced by Kurdish migrants is not just a matter of employment, but rather a mechanism that encompasses various layers of life. In this respect, precarization is an effective exploitation mechanism on labor and identity.

The informalization of Kurdish identity is also evident in the way Van-Kurds on the island define themselves and in the way islanders see Van-Kurdish migrants. While the Van people force themselves to "adapt" to the island culture and way of life, this is also the expectation of the islanders from the migrants. Deniz Duruiz's study on seasonal Kurdish workers,[94] shows how the informalized identity is embodied by the workers itself. Duruiz states that the state perpetuates informal labor practices not only by deregulating labor, but also by excluding the entire agricultural sector from labor laws. Thus, Kurdish seasonal workers, whose working conditions are aggravated by the owners and not monitored by the state, become, in their words, 'like garbage' at the end of the working period. As Polat Alpman points out, this is an example of informalized labor becoming something that transcends labor and becomes embedded in identity.

There are also studies showing that informalized workers are not passive actors in this situation. Looking at the patterns of upward mobility, struggles for subsistence and dignity of Kurdish workers who want to own their own business as a strategy against market-induced uncertainties and vulnerabilities, Onur Günay provides a very important example of ethnic labor mobility. One of the questions he asks in his research, what are the strategies of survival that Kurdish workers made

93 Polat Alpman, Esmer Yakalılar: Kent-Sınıf-Kimlik ve Kürt Emeği. (İstanbul: İletişim, 2016).

94 Deniz Duruiz, "Embodiment of space and labor: Kurdish migrant work- ers in Turkish agriculture". The Kurdish Issue in Turkey, (2015): 289–308. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315740881-22

use of after the migration, is a question I have been looking for an answer to throughout my research.[95]

I think one of the answers to this question is the strategy of self-employment, of owning property. There are numerous studies on migrants' self-employment strategies. The next section provides a discussion of selected studies in this literature which are relevant to frame the self-employment practices of migrants examined in this thesis.

§ 3.4 Studies on Migrant Self-Employment

The factors that determine the relative success and failure of migrants extend far beyond their class position and human capital. While social capital plays a crucial role in establishing reliable co-ethnic labor and information networks, it should not be overemphasized. On Büyükada island, nearly all Van-Kurdish male migrants share the same class background, education level, and market capital. Consequently, under similar conditions (ceteris paribus), one might mistakenly attribute all migrant entrepreneurs' success solely to their social capital. In this section of the literature, I will delve into two concepts in detail. The first concept is the 'embedded market approach',[96] which suggests that the economic opportunities available to migrants may vary based on different circumstances and social positions. The second concept is 'necessity entrepreneurship', which emphasizes entrepreneurship pursued by migrants, especially those without significant capital, as a means to secure their livelihoods. Both concepts shed light on why certain migrants on the island experience upward mobility.

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95 Onur Günay, "Becoming Kurdish: Migration, Urban Labor, and Political Violence in Turkey". Doctoral dissertation, (Princeton University, 2017). http://arks.princeton.edu/ark:/88435/dsp01z890rw90t

96 Zulema Valdez, The New Entrepreneurs: How Race, Class, and Gender Shape American Enterprise. (Stanford University Press, 2011).

However, social capital alone does not explain why Van-Kurdish migrants tend to become self-employed rather than wage workers, nor does it elucidate why Van-Kurdish women, such as Ayşe, face significant challenges in self-employment. Thus, it's crucial to recognize that structural and contextual factors, though interconnected, are distinct entities. A genuine analysis of migrant entrepreneurship in Büyükada necessitates an understanding of the ways in which control and subjugation operate within societal structures.

It's essential to consider the "matrix of domination",[97] which arises from intersecting oppression mechanisms inherent in societal structures, affecting individuals based on race, gender, and class. To comprehend the interplay between structure and agency in economic life, exploring the "embedded market approach" becomes indispensable.

The concept of embeddedness helps to understand how economic phenomena are dependent on institutions, organizations, and other social structures. Polanyi argues that economic action cannot be separated from the social reality in which it takes place. Mark Granovetter, in his article Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness are highly instrumental in linking economics with sociology.[98] The concept of embeddedness makes it possible to understand how people are dependent on the surrounding social environment. As he puts it, "most behavior is intimately tied to networks of interpersonal relationships, and such an argument avoids the excesses of inadequate and over-socialized views of human action". This approach is highly relevant for understanding how family ties create new employment opportunities for the Kurdish community. Barberis and Solano's article on Mixed Embeddedness and Migrant Entrepreneurship: Hints on Past and Future Directions underlines the mixed embeddedness approach that matches migrants' skills, resources, and opportunity

97 Ibid.

98 Mark Granovetter, “Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness”. American Journal of Sociology, 91(3)(1985): 481–510.

structures in which "the contextual conditions of the place where the business is located".[99] Of course, it should be supported by their networks of social relations. As the mixed embeddedness approach set forth, Büyükada is a setting where "migrant entrepreneurship is influenced by entrepreneurs' embeddedness in the context where they develop business and in the social sphere".[100] In other words, the conditions provided by Büyükada for Van-Kurdish migrants directly impact their entrepreneurial life chances.

Sociologist Zulema Valdez uses the “embedded market approach” in her study examining the factors affecting the entrepreneurial life chances of the Latino community living in Houston and tries to "capture the integration of structure and agency within the American economy”.[101] In her study, Valdez states that there are three basic power and oppression mechanisms in American society, these are capitalism, patriarchy and white supremacy. And these mechanisms directly affect the socially constructed categories of race, class, gender and ethnicity that determine the social location of people. Individuals with different "matrix of domination" have advantageous or disadvantaged positions in society. For this reason, Valdez argues that the entrepreneurial life chances of individuals with different social locations should be examined with the embedded market approach that takes all these different categories into consideration, "the embedded market approach takes this concern seriously, as it attempts to distinguish between these distinct yet intersecting social group formations and their effect in entrepreneurship

99 Barberis and Solano, “Mixed Embeddedness and Migrant Entrepreneurship: Hints on Past and Future Directions. An Introduction. Sociologica, 12(2)(2018): 1-22. https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1971-8853/8617

100 Ibid, 1-22.

101 Zulema Valdez, The New Entrepreneurs: How Race, Class, and Gender Shape American Enterprise, (Stanford University Press, 2011).

within the stratified American economy".[102] This approach is very useful in explaining why migrants with different matrix of domination (gender, ethnicity, race, class etc.) have different entrepreneurial life chances in everyday life. Of course, this also explains where certain disparities in life chances originate.

Lippman, Davis, and Aldrich, in their study titled "Entrepreneurship and Inequality," propose two basic approaches based on literature in the field. Firstly, entrepreneurial activities requiring certain financial resources are often inaccessible to some groups due to the unequal distribution of resources. Secondly, self-employment is viewed as a last resort for groups whose access to formal labor markets is restricted by inequality.[103] The study suggests that the latter approach is more prevalent in developing countries, which aligns closely with Birelma's conceptualization of "El işi".[104] The working class, finding it difficult to lead a dignified life due to their market position, may opt to start their own businesses rather than work in positions where they are dependent on employers.

According to the proposition from the secondary approach, the "positive role of inequalities in wealth and income" hinges on the idea that self-employment can serve as a source of social and economic mobility for individuals. The article also highlights the distinction between wealth and income: while wealth mainly pertains to familial and individual inheritance, income denotes the net earnings resulting from wage labor. Nevertheless, the significance of wealth is underscored for entrepreneurship or self-employment. Despite many small businesses

102 Ibid.

103 Lippmann, Davis and Aldrich, (2005). Entrepreneurship and Inequality. In Keister, L. A. (Ed.), (Emerald Group Publishing, 2005). https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-2833(05)15002-X

104 Alpkan Birelma, “Working-class Entrepreneurialism: Perceptions, Aspirations, and Experiences of Petty Entrepreneurship Among Male Manual Workers in Turkey”. New Perspectives on Turkey, 61(2019): 45–70. https://doi.org/10.1017/npt.2019.18

starting modestly and with minimal capital investment, financial resources have still been correlated with subsequent success in new business ventures.[105]

At this point, in order to describe labor market relations on the island, it is necessary to point out the difference between self-employed, entrepreneur and small business owner. According to the Cambridge dictionary, Self-employed is defined as "having your own business and working for yourself rather than for an employer". In contrast, entrepreneur is expressed as "someone who starts their own business, especially when this involves seeing a new opportunity".

Alpkan Birelma, in his ethnographic study on working class entrepreneurs, states that the concept of entrepreneurship does not have to carry innovative or heroic qualities and adds, "at the empirical level, self-employment is 'the closest approximation' to the manifestation of full-time entrepreneurship. However, the two terms 'self-employed' and 'entrepreneur' do not completely overlap, as there are two exceptional groups outside the overlap".[106] In short, while one can be both a wage worker in the formal/informal market and an entrepreneur chasing opportunities, being self-employed can be understood as being a full-time entrepreneur. On the island, it is possible to encounter Van-Kurdish migrants belonging to both groups. For example, Altan, who was mentioned both in the previous chapter and at the beginning of this chapter, started to work as a construction worker. But later on, he started working at a Coca-Cola dealer as a wage worker, also distributing dairy

105 Lippmann, Davis and Aldrich, (2005). Entrepreneurship and Inequality. In Keister, L. A. (Ed.), (Emerald Group Publishing, 2005). https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-2833(05)15002-X

106 Alpkan Birelma, “Working-class Entrepreneurialism: Perceptions, Aspirations, and Experiences of Petty Entrepreneurship Among Male Manual Workers in Turkey”. New Perspectives on Turkey, 61(2019): 45–70. https://doi.org/10.1017/npt.2019.18

products between the islands, independent from what he did as a wage worker. There were times when he was self-employed with his partners. However, these periods were always accompanied by small additional entrepreneurial activities. Another example is Ayşe, a Van-Kurdish migrant woman. Ayşe, who saved money by babysitting, later combined her money with her brother and bought a carriage. As a result of the removal of the carriages (phaetons), she bought a house with compensation paid by the municipality and rented out its flats. Then, she became a business owner by buying the restaurant that a close relative had transferred.

Van-Kurdish migrants who worked as informal day laborers on the island and then became self-employed as a result of entrepreneurial activities have some common points: they tried to create their own opportunities in a condition where gainful market participation was not possible, “Studies from a variety of theoretical backgrounds have found that the factors that affect countries' levels of income inequality also affect their labor market structures, dynamics, and outcomes. These studies have focused mainly on how a country's level of economic development,[107] or position in the world system[108] affects the size and growth of various economic sectors, and how these sectoral dynamics affect income and wealth inequality and opportunities for social mobility".[109]

In their study, Lipmann, Davis and Aldrich divided entrepreneurship into two categories based on the impact of structural factors: *Necessity Entrepreneurship* and *Opportunity Entrepreneurship*. ‘Necessity

107 Kuznets, Shares of Upper Income Groups in Income and Savings, (National Bureau of Economic Research, 1953).

108 Wood, North-South Trade, Employment, and Inequality. (Oxford University Press, 1994).

109 Lippmann, Davis and Aldrich, (2005). Entrepreneurship and Inequality. In Keister, L. A. (Ed.), (Emerald Group Publishing, 2005). https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-2833(05)15002

Entrepreneurship' or "*Survival Strategy Entrepreneurship*" relies on little financial capital, and it is common when there are few opportunities for satisfying labor market participation. Moreover, the success of the economic activity is mainly based upon social and human capital.[110] On the other hand, 'Opportunity Entrepreneurship' is most common when there is high level of capital investment. It is initiated for taking advantage of existing market opportunities. The entrepreneurship activities of Van-Kurdish migrants would be often characterized as a 'survival strategy entrepreneurship',[111] which is highly self-exploitative, and relies upon little or no financial capital. As small business owners, or self-employed entrepreneurs, their primary goal is to chase economic opportunities that will make them free from being a wage-worker under an employer. Therefore, Van-Kurdish migrant entrepreneurship is rather 'necessity entrepreneurship' than 'opportunity entrepreneurship'.

I believe that understanding the significance of social positions in labor relations is elucidating, particularly when it comes to becoming a necessity entrepreneur through establishing co-ethnic labor networks. From this perspective, I aim to contribute to the literature by exploring the ethnic context in working-class entrepreneurship in Turkey, particularly in the transition from informal labor to entrepreneurship.

The four different literatures I utilized helped me position my research in relation to existing studies. From this perspective, Büyükada serves as an example of racial labor accumulation after 1980, coinciding with Kurdish migration from rural to urban areas. Its status as an upper/upper-middle-class settlement, given its historical past,

110 Ibid.

111 Zulema Valdez, The New Entrepreneurs: How Race, Class, and Gender Shape American Enterprise, (Stanford University Press, 2011).

distinguishes the island from other neighborhoods receiving Kurdish migration. While the island's unique location creates the possibility of upward mobility for some migrants, I examine the forms of entrepreneurship among migrants on the island, the impact of power and oppression mechanisms on this mobility, and the influence of family-neighborhood networks on this mobility by drawing on migrant labor literature.

4

Narratives of Hardship, Hardwork and Endurance

> *Their childhood years were spent here; their grandfathers and ancestors always told them something about a colorful past. I do not know anything about that kind of life and lifestyle. Even if I was born here, what my father tells me is nothing but work.*
>
> – Burak, *Interview, 2022*

Says Burak while drinking tea offered by his younger compatriot. We talk at the beach run by his father and uncle. It is the answer that he gave me when I asked him whether he might consider himself an islander or not. He compared those who lived on the Island for many years and the Van-Kurdish migrant community. The last sentence weighs intensely on my mind because he is not the only one who underlines the relation between being Van-Kurdish and working too much. Working for years without giving a small break is a personal trait that nearly all my participants willingly embrace. It is a part of a sequential narrative. Their narratives on hard work become more meaningful when it is thought together with why and how they came to the Island, what they have experienced, and whether their Kurdish identity and how it is perceived

affect this narrative. At first glance, hard work has a central place in their life, and this situation makes me ask, "What is the key motivation behind their will to work so hard?"

Narratives of hard work constitute an essential part of the life of Van-Kurdish migrants who have accumulated a significant amount of capital following the 1980s. For them, the economic status they have right now results from the hardship experienced over many years. Furthermore, they feel proud of showing great endurance in all those hardships and hard work. Yet, it requires asking, "What are the implicit meanings behind their narrative on hardship, hard work, and endurance?"

This narrative has a meaning for them. It is an unconscious revealing of how they have constructed their identity against the imposed perception of Kurdishness. Kurdishness is a very loaded concept. As much as the complexity of its historical background, everyday interactions have a great impact on this concept. The communication between the bearers of the ethnic group and the effects of the hegemonic culture in which they live causes Kurdishness to be rebuilt and reconstructed. The determinants of this process are the macroeconomic system as well as the small factors. In other words, it is necessary to look at the dynamics occurring on the island both from the perspective of the neoliberal system and from the structural conditions of the island.

The Island is a relatively small place where people from different social and economic statuses interact daily. Nevertheless, summer house vacationists of Büyükada and the early settlers, those who have lived on the Island for many years, have had a different lifestyle and culture of living compared to the Van-Kurdish community who have sought to live with limited or no capital and full of precarity. The conflict does not arise only from the economic disparity and different lifestyles but from how Kurdishness has been perceived by the early settlers who have embraced islander identity full-heartedly. Kurdish identity, identified with occupation, ignorance, and banditry for a long time, was mainly seen as a

security problem, and its ethnopolitical nature was rejected.[112] This perception still puts pressure on Van-Kurdish people in many ways leading them to try to be recognized on the Island, especially in the island economy. Therefore, hard work is a statement. While working hard for them can be considered a strategy to overcome economic uncertainty, it is also a way to become more visible.

In this chapter, I will focus on the Büyükada story of Van-Kurdish migrants, their life trajectories from informal labor to business ownership. In the following, I will seek answers to questions such as what it meant to be an informal Kurdish worker in Büyükada in the 1980s, and what could be the reason for trying to overcome the negative connotations assigned to Kurdish identity through hard work. Finally, I will touch upon the forms of resistance of Van-Kurdish migrants in the context of "quiet encroachment."

§ 4.1 Büyükada in 1980s

> *"Every day he hears about the metropolis. The name of the city changes. It is all cities, overlaying one another and becoming a city that exists nowhere but which continually transmits promises. These promises are not transmitted by any single means. They are implicit in the accounts of those who have already been to a city. They are transmitted by machinery, by cars, tractors, tin-openers, electric drills, saws. By ready-made clothes. By the planes which fly across the sky. By the nearest main road. By a wristwatch. They are there on the radio. In the*

112 Mesut Yeğen, Müstakbel-Türk'ten sözde-vatandaşa: Cumhuriyet ve Kürtler, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2006).

news. In the music. In the manufacture of the radio itself. Only by going to this city can the meaning of all the promises be realized. They have in common a quality of openness."
-John Berger, A Seventh Man, 1975

In Karatavuk, a village in Erciş, where many Van-Kurdish migrants originated, people gathered in the village square in the evening. Their purpose is to collectively read letters from their fathers, uncles, and grandfathers who had migrated to Istanbul some time ago. Murat reminisces about his childhood, when tales of Istanbul and the islands were woven into his upbringing. Back then, Istanbul remained a distant, uncertain place for them. Although the notion of leaving the village began to take shape in their minds, they were plagued by the fear of not finding employment. Murat recalls how the idea of the island seemed like a distant dream.

> The island was a dream. So, we only heard about these places in fairy tales. Imagine, you are in such a place geographically that grandmothers and mothers were telling tales of distant lands. We used to hear about the islands from those tales. During the Menderes period, our prisoner relative escaped from Yassıada with a plank. It was told so. I mean, imagine what it's like, listening to fairy tales in your childhood. In Kurdish, island (he says the island in Kurdish), that is, in the seven seas. We were dreaming and we came to live the reality. (Murat, Yaglik, Kurd, Construction-Craftsman, 1973, in Büyükada since 1985)[113]

113 Hayal, biz masallarda falan buraları duyuyorduk yani. Düşün, coğrafi olarak öyle bir yerdesin ki, neneler anneler masal anlatıyordu, biz adaları oradan duyuyorduk. Menderes döneminde bizim bir akraba Yassıada'dan kalasla kaçıyor. Mahkûm. Söylüyorlardı, Yassıada'yı söylüyorlardı. Yani nasıl bir şey, hayal etsene, çocukluğunda

The fact that the village was not economically promising was decisive for the departure of the first generations, who would later live permanently on the island. Thus, they started to live with their relatives who had already worked as seasonal workers in Istanbul or even on the island. Unfortunately, it is not known which Van-Kurdish worker came to the island first, for whom he worked, and who provided the connection. However, one interviewee says:

> Conditions were suitable. Before I came to the islands, I went to the Mediterranean, I went to the cities in Aegean region. I couldn't find a shelter. It wasn't for me, I didn't like it. When I came to Bostancı, Istanbul, the beach was empty at that time. I got off the train, I saw the ferry, they said it went to the island, I got on and went. I came here purely by coincidence and fortunately I stayed here. (Sami, Karatavuk, Kurd, Construction work, on the island since 1980)[114]

Saying that he was the first Van-Kurdish worker to come to the island and that he paved the way for those who will follow, Şefik adds:

> So, when someone goes out of the province, he calls his relatives, his wife, his friend. He informs others that he found business potential when he goes. I've also been a pioneer here. People started coming when they saw me. In other words, people from Karatavuk-Karlıyayla-Akçayuva, 4-5 villages migrated here as well. Very few people come from other villages of Erciş, almost none. They came to the islands mainly from 3-4 villages. Pendik-

masal dinliyorsun. Kürtçede ada (:::)(adanın Kürtçesini söylüyor) yani yedi denizin içerisinde filan. Hayal ediyorduk ve geldik gerçeğini yaşadık.

114 Koşullar uyuyordu. Ben adalara gelmeden önce Akdeniz'e gittim, Ege'ye gittim. Barınamadım. Bana ters geldi, hoşuma gitmedi. İstanbul Bostancı'ya geldiğimde o zaman sahil boştu. Trenden indik, gemi gördük baktık adaya gidiyor binip gittik. Buraya tamamen bir tesadüf eseri geldim ve kısmet de öyle oldu burada kaldık.

> Kurtköy has a significant Van population. In Istanbul, I think, Van is the second province after Sivas, which is emigrated the most. We chose the islands. (Sami, Karatavuk, Kurd, Construction work, on the island since 1980)[115]

However, as the number of people I interviewed increased, some said that his father and the others said that his brother were the first people to come to the island. There was almost a race to be "first to the island". There are also various narratives about the workers who came to the island first worked for. I ask this because, it was not clear how an migrant from Erciş came to the idea of moving to Büyükada. Instead of staying in Istanbul considering the economic vitality of the island, which was one of the least populated districts of Istanbul and which was not very touristic place in the 1980s. Some interviewees stated that they came to the island through a Jewish construction company in the early 1980s, but some denied this. Despite the narrative of Van-Kurdish workers working at the construction site of an island-owned Jewish construction company in mainland Istanbul, there is one thing in common with all these rumors that all Van-Kurdish workers who came to the island, worked as construction workers at the very beginning. The island's need for construction workers was a very important pull factor. Because at that time, the Marmara archipelago, including Büyükada, had not been declared a protected area, yet. This means that the island, whose touristic function has just begun to emerge, had a great potential for construction.

A note should be made here: Although the conservation plan came into effect in 1984, construction activities on the island were not completely halted. During the Transition Period Structuring Conditions

115 Şimdi bu genelde yaşamın şartları böyle, bir yerde biri il dışına çıktığı zaman, akrabalarını, eşini dostunu çağırır yani Bakın burada iş var diye. Ben de bunlarda öncü oldum. İnsanlar beni görünce zaten hep aynı çevreden, 3-4 köyden göç olmuş. Yani bölge artık, Karatavuk-Karlıyayla-Akçayuva, 4-5 köyden olduğu gibi buraya göç geldi. Erciş'in diğer köylerinden çok azdır, yok denecek kadar. Ağırlıkla 3-4 köyden adalara geldiler. Bir bölümü Pendik-Kurtköy'de, ciddi bir nüfus var, Vanlı nüfusu. İstanbul'da da sanırsam, Sivas'tan sonra ikinci ildir, göç veren. Biz adaları tercih ettik.

phase, which preceded the implementation of the plan, many buildings on the island were demolished and replaced with new ones, as recounted by the islanders.[116] Thus, the islands underwent a major transformation in the 1980s, despite the conservation plans. The construction sector, which is seen as a part of economic growth, has spread to the islands and some of the labor force it needs has been provided by the Kurds, who are also the carriers of this sector.

Radio broadcaster Serpil, who is fighting for the islands to be included in the UNESCO World Heritage List, expresses the transformation of the island in the 1980s as follows:

> The road you walk from the historical pier to my house when you get off the ferry, that whole lane, was built with the rubble of the houses that were destroyed here in 1984. There is so much rubble that they are starting to fill this shoreline from the pier. What I want to point out is that so many houses were being demolished here in 1984. Historically, the island experienced a tremendous loss and fracture. Many mansions today are actually replicas of previously demolished ones. Although they are officially registered, apartments have been built on those magnificent gardens. Like here. There is no garden anymore. (Serpil, Istanbul, Turkish, Radio broadcaster, 1961, coming to the island since 1974)[117]

116 Master Development Plan, 2007.

117 Vapurdan inince tarihi iskelenin oradan benim evime kadar yürüdünüz, bütün o şerit o dönem, 1984'tek boşluki, burada yıkılan evlerin molozlarıyla bütün o iskelenin oradan başlayan, kamyonlarla aşağıya dökülüyor. Dolduruluyor büyük bir alan ama yetmiyor, o kadar çok moloz var ki, bu sefer başlıyorlar iskeleden bu kıyı şeridini doldurmaya. İşaret etmek istediğim, o kadar çok ev yıkılıyor ki burada 1984'te. Tarihi olarak muazzam bir kayıp, kırılma yaşıyor ada. Bugün birçok köşk yıkılmış, replikası yapılmış ve o muazzam bahçelerine, peyzajdır bu ve tescilli yerlerdir, apartman yapılmış. Burası gibi. Bahçe yok artık.

In other words, it seems possible to say that there was a construction boom on the island in the 1980s. Thus, Van-Kurdish workers provided some of the construction worker demand that the island needed. In the beginning, seasonal workers had to live in difficult conditions since they had lived in the construction sites. However, they stated that working on the island is economically more profitable:

> Let me put it this way, the island is expensive, but the money earned on the island is also high. Now, wages in construction, let me tell you that I was trained in construction, how much is it in Istanbul? 150 liras. How much money on the island? 300 liras. So actually, the island looks expensive but it is not. (Altan, Erciş, Kurd, born in 1980, came in 1995)118

Later, Van-Kurdish workers, who invited their close relatives to join them, started to save the money they earned by living with their close relatives more easily and to make rational investments.

People from economically deprived Kurdish villages, aiming to provide better opportunities for themselves and their families, came to the city to work at a very young age. Almost all the participants I spoke to had more than five siblings, and nearly all of their brothers had migrated to the Island before or after the one who came first. This situation provided migrants with the opportunity to cope with both material and immaterial hardships and enabled them to make financial breakthroughs together. The system has a simple loop. Siblings and close relatives who get temporary jobs in the informal market provide a certain amount of capital after a while. Then they seek to find more permanent and high-yielding jobs together. In this way, migrants who become small entrepreneurs start other ventures to invest in after expanding their business a little. Some migrants who were construction workers in the first years of their arrival on the Island later celebrated their businesses with their brothers in the marketplace.

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118 Şimdi şöyle söyleyeyim, ada pahalı ama adanın parası da pahalı. Şimdi inşaat yevmiyesi, ben inşaattan gelmeyim öyle diyeyim ben sana. İnşaat yevmiyesi kaç lira İstanbul'da? 150 lira. Bizde kaç para? 300 lira. Yani aslında ada pahalı gibi görünüyor ama öyle değil.

For example, a participant who was a wall painter in construction later established a construction company with his brothers and obtained a large amount of capital. When he realized that the construction works on the Island had reached saturation point, he opened a bicycle-rental shop with his siblings. One of the standard features of successful entrepreneurs on the Island is that they always partner with their siblings in the shops they open and run the business together. In this way, familial mobilization is ensured for some migrants. The most crucial factor that paves the way for familial mobility is the willingness of migrants to start their businesses. This is the only way to escape the uncertainty, insecurity, unpredictability, and exclusion from working for others.

Van-Kurdish migrants' projection of upward mobility would be recognized as a strategy to cope with the perception of Kurds imposed towards outside groups. However, it also determines how the Kurdish community defines itself. In that sense, while informalized character of the Kurdish identity in everyday economic action is a negative signboard that strengthens unfair labor practices and heavy working conditions, in the case of Büyükada, it turns into a push factor for the community to improve their living conditions. The strategy is rooted in hard work and guaranteeing their presence on the Island through material gains. The path through upward mobility emerges with the discourse on how they had great difficulty adapting to life in the early years of the migration and how they pulled themselves away from these difficulties by working hard.

§ 4.2 Kurdish Migrants on the Island: First Encounters

It is an often told story among the Van-Kurdish community that they have often experienced in their first years on the island, which they were obliged to carry out physically demanding jobs such as transporting woods and coals inside the station by the police officers, free of charge. One of the interviewees, Murat tells those days while linking how their

identity as Kurdish was perceived and how this perception has made their labor vulnerable to exploitation.

> People of Van have faced with great difficulties in the past. All Kurds were presented as if they were the sympathizers of PKK, that was an opinion shared by many. I experienced racism so many times, but I responded with a good manner, in a respectful way. That's the biggest reason why Van people have been able to stay on the island. For example, coal was supplied to the police station, who is going to carry them inside? Of course, Van people. (Murat, Yaglik, Kurd, Construction-Craftsman, 1973, in Büyükada since 1985)119

The fact that migrants with Van-Kurdish identity have become targets of exploitation in daily life should be seen in connection with the informalization of Kurdish identity that I mentioned in the previous sections. As stated by Fraser,[120] racialized communities are continuously dispossessed of opportunities, and power because of their identities, and these practices come into existence through racial segregation, discriminatory policies and exploitation of their labor.

It is difficult to say that they developed a reactionary response to the racism they experienced in the first years of their arrival. On the contrary, isolated events in which brute force was used have been harshly criticized by the people of Van on the grounds that they render the group's representation 'inaccurate'. Instead, they were in favor of their

119 Vanlılar ilk zamanlarda çok büyük zorluklarla karşılaştı. Bakış açıları şöyleydi, hak vermiyorum değil, çünkü bu da bir devletin ayıbı mı diyeyim, Kürtlerin hepsi PKK'ymiş gibi lanse ediliyordu. Ben de çok ırkçılık ayrımcılık gördüm ama hep terbiyemle efendiliğimle karşılık verdim. İşte tutunmamızın en büyük nedenlerinden bir tanesi de buydu. Burada bütün kürtleri aynı şeye, karakola kömür gelirdi, kim? En kolay Vanlılar. Birisinin bir çamaşırı mı çalınıyor? Vanlılar.

120 Nancy Fraser, "Expropriation and exploitation in racialized capitalism: A reply to Michael Dawson. Critical Historical Studies", 3(1)(2016): 163–178. https://doi.org/10.1086/685814

own identity being tolerated by the islanders, 'contributing' to the island's existing condition. I use 'tolerance' consciously here, because the state of being tolerated, which is called 'adaptation' by the Van-Kurdish migrants, requires acting within the codes whose frameworks are defined by a broader context. What is meant by this broader context here cannot be explained simply by being an islander and having high economic and cultural capital. On the contrary, a majority whose relationship with the space is on a more solid basis can determine the framework of who can and cannot be included in this field.

At this point, it can be said that the determining factor is Turkishness and its basic interests. The privilege of being a Turk is a property that brings "material and immaterial privileges",[121] and it is protected by many means. Here, property should not be considered only as a house, car or job, on the contrary, status is a kind of property. And status property can be commodified according to the specific needs.[122] It is not easy for the disenfranchised groups to have this property. Harris emphasizes that property is primarily the expectation of privilege. For this reason, excluded groups that "look at their own self through the eyes of the other"[123] and live with a "dual consciousness" will have to play the game according to the rules of the privileged so that they can enjoy having those properties.

Of course, the meaning of Kurdish identity on the island is not independent of the perception of Kurdishness in Turkey. Van-Kurdish migrants, who had experienced various difficulties until their existence was accepted on the island, made an effort to have status property. They stated in the interviews that the spatial segregation was much more evident when they first came to the island. It is a well-known fact that

121 Cheryl Harris, "Whiteness as Property". Harvard Law Review, 106(8)(1993): 1707-1791. https://harvardlawreview.org/print/no-volume/whiteness-as- property/

122 Ibid, 1707-1791.

123 Du Bois, The Souls of Black Folk, (A. C. McClurg&Co, 1903).

Van-Kurdish migrants do not have access to every area on the island, from living places to symbolic places.

> They did not let us into the Anatolian Club. Sometimes, we were insisting on entering. They accepted the members only, I think they were mostly MPs, ministers, certain people on the island. (Ahmet, Karatavuk, Kurdish, Restaurant owner, 1970s, in Büyükada since 1985)124

As can be seen in the citation above, Anatolian Club is one of the places where spatial separation is evident. The club, which has an important place in the memories of the islanders, was an inaccessible place for Van-Kurdish migrants. However, another interviewee stated that after he became a respected person on the island, he was able to perform his son's circumcision ceremony at the Büyükada Water Sports Club. What is meant by being respected here? What qualities does "a respected person" have? What sets the limits of being respected?

In that sense, what one of the interviewees said about the island's past is quite meaningful, *"Just as the garden has a door, when it is closed, no one can enter, and the island was just like that"*[125]. Indeed, for a very long time, the island was like a garden where strict controls determined who could enter and who could not. In order to open the doors of this garden, it was necessary to master the rules of the house.

> The police would pull over the badly dressed ones, the ones that he did not like his appearance just after the ferry approached. So not everyone could enter. They interrogated the guy where he would go, let's say he told them that he would go Hacı Bekir, then the police would go to Hacı Bekir to ask whether he knew such a person or whether he invited him or not. If the host said yes, he would sign a document so that the visitor could come. Then he

124 Bizi almıyorlardı kulübe, bazen zoraki giriyorduk. Üye olanları alıyorlardı, sanıyorum daha çok milletvekilleri, bakanlar, adadaki belli kişiler falan alınıyordu.

125 Nasıl bahçeni kapatıyorsun ve hiç kimse giremiyor, ada da öyle bir şeydi.

> was allowed to enter the island. (Maria, Istanbul, Greek, Housewife-Restaurant manager, 1957, in Büyükada since 1961)126

On the island, where spatial segregation was evident, for the Van-Kurdish migrants who were aware of this situation, obtaining a place on the island required imitation of the privileges of the early comer islanders. For the Van-Kurdish migrants, this meant working hard to acquire property and have a job in order to secure their place on the island. In this way, it would be possible for them to bypass the informality imposed on their identity and benefit from the status property. In other words, it seemed possible to open the gate of the island only by obtaining a certain status. Nevertheless, according to the codes of the majority who defined themselves as the owner of the place, having a job and property was necessary to achieve this status.

It is important to understand the difficulties that Van-Kurdish migrants experienced due to the lack of property status when they first arrived, in order to understand the hard work and endurance discourse that followed. In the next section, I will talk about the difficulties the migrants faced when they first arrived on the island and how they coped with it.

§ 4.3 Arrival: Heavy conditions -Hardship

126 Asıl önemli olan, vapur iskelesinden kötü giyimli olan, polis beğenmediği adamı kenara çekerdi. Yani elini sağlayan giremezdi. İşte nereye gidiyorsun, Hacı Bekir'e gidiyorum. Hacı Bekir'e gidilirdi, sorulurdu, siz böyle birini tanıyor musunuz? Çağırdınız mı? Evet derse, o imzasını koyardı ki sana geliyor. Sonra alınırdı adaya

> I was very surprised when I saw that Büyükada was above the sea.[127]
>
> *-Ayşe, Interview, 2022*

The first encounter with the sea for many who came to the island to work in the 1980s was when they boarded the island ferry. In the interviews, they described this first moment when they encountered the sea in a rather epic way. Afterwards, a process was waiting for them on the island that required them to live without basic necessities at the construction sites. The Lido construction, which was in the memories of many workers who came to the island at that time and was still under construction from 1980 to 2010, was the first place of residence of the Van-Kurdish workers on the island. Most workers who arrived in the 1980s initially had to live in this area, which lacked clean water, toilets and proper electricity.

> I was only 15 when I came to the island. I got the bus, and got off in Esenler. It was the first time that I saw an escalator, it was pretty interesting for me. If I am not mistaken, I got off around 12.30, and I did not know how to get to the island. I went to Erciş İtimat (Bus firm) office so that I could call someone from the island. I called but there was no one in the construction. Half an hour later my brother called me back, and said that someone would come to pick me up after 6 pm. I waited hours and hours. One of my cousins came and took me. With an old luggage in my hand, I got the ferry. I have already seen Lake Van, but It was very interesting for me to get the ferry. There were so many ships, so many people. So, I arrived, went to the construction site. My brothers were staying at the construction site, I stayed with them too. I say without exaggeration, there were at least 50-60 men living together in that construction. They formed walls by stretching the sheets, 5-6

127 Çok şaşırdım, Büyükada denizin üstünde

> people were staying in each section. It was so ridiculous. (Altan, Erciş, Kurd, born in 1980, came in 1995)[128]

As they talk about their first year on the island, the hardship narratives dominate the conversations. One of the reasons for the difficulty experienced was that the island was not prepared for such a seasonal migration.

> We were abroad, living in difficult conditions. We were in needed of sleeping in a proper place. We encountered many difficulties while living in those construction sites, the basements of those constructions, the place where we lived flooded. (Murat, Yaglik, Kurd, Construction-Craftsman, 1973, in Büyükada since 1985)[129]

When they came to the island, they tried to spend as little as possible, as their aim was to save and help their families in order to live in more comfortable conditions.

> We were buying food from grocery stores. There were a couple of such shops in the bazaar. We bought food, mainly potato-onion. Well, there was a shop selling chicken at that time, the wings were free, and they were throwing them away because no one eats

128 Çocuğum daha yani, 15 yaşındayım. Hiçbir yerde inme, dedi, otogara git. Esenler'e. Çok şaşırdım, garip bir yerdi, hele o yürüyen merdivenler çok ilgi çekici geldi bana hiç unutmuyorum. Orada yanılmıyorsam 12.30 gibi indim, neyle gideceğimi bilmiyorum. Orada yine, Ercişli İtimat yazıhanesine gittim. Dedim adayı aramam lazım, aradı. Zaten o esnada inşaatta kimse yoktu, bir yarım saat geçti. Neyse abimle konuştuk, bekle dedi 6'da birisi gelecek. Ben gittim saat 12, 6'ya kadar bekleyeceğim. Neyse, bizim kuzenlerden birisi geldi aldı beni. Elimde bir tane eski çanta, bindim vapura. Vapura binmem gerçekten ilginçti şimdi benim başımdan, Van gölü görmüşüm ama, bu kadar gemi, bu kadar insan. İşte adaya geldim, inşaata gittim. O zaman abimler inşaatta kalıyordu. Gittim onlarda kaldım o gece. Biz o zaman abartısız diyorum, o inşaatta minimum 50 kişi yaşıyorduk, kalıyorduk. Bölüm yapılır telle, 5-6 kişi bir yerde kalır 5-6 kişi bir yerde, saçma sapan bir şey.

129 Geldik işte gurbetteyiz, o zaman zor şartlar. Doğru dürüst yatma yeri yok. İnşaatlarda, bodrum katlarda, sular içinde yani çok sıkıntılarla karşılaştık.

> wings. Wings were free. We were buying wings. Wings are the most expensive and tastiest part of chicken right now. They did not take money; they sorted them out and gave them to us. (Murat, Yaglik, Kurd, Construction-Craftsman, 1973, in Büyükada since 1985)130

Realizing the labor scarce on the island, the migrants started to organize to fill this gap in a short time. A migrant who saw that there was a shortage of construction painters on the island came to the island after learning the job from a painter on the mainland and formed a team with his brothers, another Van-Kurdish migrant started to run the island's first grocery store, another migrant, who realized that the construction business on the island had reached its saturation point, opened a bicycle shop for tourists, and so on. What made this possible on an island scale was that the migrants, who were aware of the labor scarce, had the acumen to close this gap.

Despite the difficult living conditions, the migrants started to create additional business lines on the island. One of the main factors that made this possible was the fact that most of the non-Muslims who ran the economic functions on the island had to leave the island as a result of the Turkification policies. The fact that the necessary business lines could not be filled until 1980 created a labor scarce on the island. Filling this gap, some of the first-generation Van-Kurdish migrants accumulated capital in relatively short period of time.

> As people say, we have come to these days into difficulty; it is not as it seems from the outside. Let me tell you, it was not much; it was five or two years ago. Would you go out of bed twice a night

130 Bakkallardan kumanya alıyorduk. Dükkân öyle bir iki dükkân vardı çarşı içinde. Kumanya alıyorduk ya da inşaatta ağırlıklı patates-soğan yani. Şey vardı o zamanlar, tavukçu Sabri Bey vardı şurada, kanatlar bedavaydı, çöpe atıyorlardı kimse kanat yemiyor diye. Kanatlar bedavaydı. Biz alıyorduk kanatları. Kanatlar şu anda tavuğun en pahalısı ve en lezzetli yeri. Para almıyorlardı, ayıklıyorlardı bize veriyorlardı.

> for 10 liras? People do not go. (Altan, Erciş, Kurd, born in 1980, came in 1995)[131]

We were sitting in front of one of his shops in Büyükada when he told me about his arduous life. He woke up twice at night because, in addition to the permanent jobs he was in charge of, he was also driving battery-powered cars illegally operated as taxis. He also underlined that he was the first to use battery-powered cars as taxis on the Island. And it has started being commonly used by the islanders after the phaetons were removed in 2020. Although many islanders have battery-powered cars right now, for those who do not live on the Island and those who visit the Island touristically, the service provided illegally by the car drivers is essential. Mainly it is a business line with a high economic return during the summer season when thousands of tourists visit daily. However, it leads to a bitter conflict between the early comers and the drivers, who are primarily from the migrant community, since the number of cars has been rising day by day, and it has caused car crashes, severe injuries, and noise pollution. Nevertheless, neither conflicts nor sanctions could not turn them aside since it has been a lucrative source of livelihood.

> If he returns to Van, he will buy two cows, but stays here, buys a carriage and becomes rich. It's easier to make money here. He doesn't need to go back to Van right now. (Murat, Yaglik, Kurd, Construction-Craftsman, 1973, in Büyükada since 1985)[132]

Altan Bey has other jobs in addition to being a driver. He owns a beach that he runs with his business partner and two businesses in the center, wholly owned by him and his siblings. In addition to all this, he continues to be the gardener of a site. While chatting, he also states that he has

131 Gerçekten derler ya ezile ezile geldik biz bu günlere, öyle dışarıdan göründüğü gibi değil. Şöyle diyeyim ben size, fazla değil 5 sene önceydi ya da 2 sene önceydi, 10 lira için gece yatağınızdan iki defa gider misiniz? Gitmez değil mi insan?

132 Valla dönen çok az kişi. O da keyfe keder. Yoksa korsanlık için gelenler var. Van'a dönse iki inek, burada bir araba alıyor köşelik oluyor. Daha kolay para kazanıyor. Van'a dönmeye gerek duymuyor şu anda.

many other projects. He says he hopes the gift shop he opened in the center will generate income in summer and winter because the beach and other shops profit during the summer when tourists visit the Island. Altan aims to invest the money he earns by working in different business lines into more permanent investments. The way to do this is to work in marginal sector jobs and own property with the capital obtained. Therefore, most Van-Kurdish migrants dream of working hard and owning a house and a shop in the center of the Island.

§ 4.4 Hardwork as a Strategy: Van-Kurdish Migrants Way to Acquire Property and Establish Business

Maintaining a business is a status indicator for Van-Kurdish migrants. This status requires hard work, and 'adaptation'. Owning a property and a business is the end result after hard work. In their narratives, they can distinguish themselves from other disenfranchised groups on the island with the status property they have obtained.

Hard work, emphasized as a strategy by the migrants, is just one of the approaches that facilitate upward mobility for Van-Kurdish migrants on the island. While it stands out as a metis—craft, wisdom, and skill—it is only part of their broader upward mobility practices. From this perspective, the influence of existing power and oppression mechanisms on the construction of Kurdish identity plays a role in the acquisition of this wisdom. In other words, the way ideology functions as a practice of everyday life affects Kurdish identity and its survival strategies.

> The people of Malatya came when money was most easily earned. They could reign over money. But they came as porters, they continued as porters. It still is. They didn't get a job; they didn't learn a craft. We have done painting; we have done subcontracting. Now we have a company, we have a business, it is growing. So, it is. This is how you shape your future. Are you going to make your investment retrospectively, is it possible? We are in the age of technology. At least you must adapt. The people of

> Malatya thought that the money would always flow. A burden was coming, they were giving large sums of money to the people of Malatya because no one could carry it. They made a lot of money. But they spent that money on drinks and gambling. (Murat, Yaglik, Kurd, Construction-Craftsman, 1973, in Büyükada since 1985)133

Of course, 'adaptation' is not a situation in which the Van-Kurdish migrants are compelled to obey with absolute passivity. On the contrary, they maintained a silent resistance to the difficulties they experienced.

> Nevertheless, the people of Van passed that test with great success. The answer of the people of Van to this situation has always been to work hard. (Murat, Yaglik, Kurd, Construction-Craftsman, 1973, in Büyükada since 1985)[134]

As seen in the example, working hard and enduring is a strategy created by Van-Kurdish migrants to stay on the Island. However, this strategy is shaped around something other than collective goals with a specific plan. Although the discrimination and marginalization of Kurdish identity drive this strategy, migrants do not organize against a specific authority. They continue to work quietly, and as a result of this work, they become much more visible both in island life and in economic life. Of course, Van-Kurdish migrants do not consist of a single class either. Some come to the Island from the villages of Erciş to work as waiters in their relatives' restaurants in the summer. Some are illegal battery-powered car drivers

133 Malatyalılar, paranın en güzel en temiz zamanında geldiler. Paranın saltanatını süren. Hamal geldiler, hamal gittiler. Halen de öyle. Üç beş, ya bir meslek, bir sanat. Boyacılık yaptık, taşeronluk yaptık. Şimdi bir firmamız var, işimiz var, büyüsün. Böyledir yani. Sen şimdi benden alacan, ondan alacan geleceğini şekillendirecen. Yatırımını geriye dönük mü yapacaksın, mümkün mü? Tek boşluknoloji devrindeyiz. En azından bir adapte olmak. Malatyalılar zannettiler ki bu hep akacak. Bir yükün geliyordu, kimse alamıyordu. Bir dünya para veriyorlardı. Ne paralar kazandılar. O parayı akşam içkide kumarda bitirdiler.

134 Vanlılara büyük şeyler yapıldı zamanında. Bu başka bir şey, onu da yaşadık yani. Ama o sınavı da çok büyük başarıyla verdi Vanlılar, hiç kendilerini bozuntuya vermediler. Hep çalışarak cevap verdiler.

and live in crowded houses with their relatives who do not have a home on the Island. However, some came to the Island as construction workers in the 1980s and now own many shops and houses there. This group I interviewed has quietly encroached on their place on the Island with hard work and endurance. This is street politics pursued by Van-Kurdish migrants on the Island, who have become carriers of the informal character. As a result of working for many years and resilience, this is a way of compensation for migrants who have managed to go beyond the informal identity attributed by society and become the owner of their businesses.

> For example, I have a friend, he was the head of the HDP's district organization for a while, he is also engaged in construction work. It's doing build-sell. Most of the rich people of the island are from Van now, of course, when I say people from Van, I repeat, I mean all the people coming from the South East. I saw that he opened a cafe and run a hostel. I asked, "Mehmet, it's not your business line, is everything ok?". “Brother, I came here when I was 9 years old. Of course, there was no telephone at that time, my family wrote a letter to our relatives that I would come to the island". They also advised the child to sit in front of the first building when he got off the ferry. The boy sat down, someone came and asked who he is, and he told them that he came from Van. They did not let him to sit there. They lifted the child. He says, “I have been traumatized since then. I saw this place was for sale, I bought this building in order to overcome this trauma. I will sit here as long as I want to sit. Even if I don't make any money, I will run this place and then I will hand it over”. (Emin, Çelebibağ, Turkish, Civil Servant, 1966, in Büyükada since 2007)135

135 Mesela benim arkadaşım var, HDP’nin ilçe başkanıydı bir ara, inşaat işiyle de uğraşıyor. Yap-sat yapıyor artık baya büyük şeyler. Adanın çoğu zengini Vanlı şimdi, tabi Vanlı deyince tek boşlukrar ediyorum, Doğulu. Baktım kafe açmış, üstünde de pansiyon var. “Mehmet, hayırdır, bu senin işin değil” dedim. “Abi, ben buraya 9 yaşında geldim.” Tabi o

It is a resistance without a headline, as James Scott states.[136] To be more precise, having a property or being a small-business owner would be considered as the ordinary weapons of the relatively powerless group, to Scott "they require little or no coordination or planning; they make use of implicit understandings and informal networks; they often represent a form of individual self-help; they typically avoid any direct, symbolic confrontation with authority".[137] This resistance lacks a headline, a leader, a specific agenda, and is not organized against authority. Today, it is possible to come across a Van-Kurdish migrant in almost every line of business on the Island. Many Van-Kurdish migrants from illegal taxi drivers, restaurants, hardware stores, and contractors are visible in the island economy.

> It was challenging to even dream of. Even dreaming of it... I couldn't even imagine that I would stay on the Island, own a house! It was tough; I should have lived here with what I earned and worked for 50 years or so. Later, when I became a tradesman, I could only settle down. (Sami, Karatavuk, Kurd, Construction work, on the island since 1980)138

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zaman telefon falan yok, mektup yazıyorlar "bizim çocuk gelecek, onu oradan al" diye, Çocuğa da tembihlemişler, vapurdan inince ilk şeyde otur diye. Çocuk oturmuş, biri gelmiş kimsin sen diye sormuş, o da anlatmış Van'dan geldim, diye. Demişler, oturamazsın. Çocuğu kaldırıyorlar. Diyor ki "o zamandan beridir travma vardır üstümde.Buranın satılık olduğunu gördüm, sırf bu şeyi atmak için üzerimden burayı aldım. Bomboş oturacağım burada. İki sene hiç para kazanmasam da burayı çalıştıracağım sonra devredeceğim".

136 James Scott, Weapons of The Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance, (Yale University Press, 1985).

137 Ibid.

138 Hayalini kurmak bile çok zordu. Hayali bile kurulması…Adada kalacağım, ev sahibi olacağımı bile hayal bile edemiyordum ki! Gerçekten çok zordu, kazancımla, herhalde

Resistance is a complex phenomenon that goes beyond just large social movements. The existence of informal proletariat and marginalized communities who play central role in driving social change is often ignored.

Sociologist Asef Bayat underlines the inherent complexities within the notion of resistance by highlighting that the quest to rigidly define it renders invisible the impactful actions of everyday practices by ordinary individuals.[139] There are also forms of resistance in which there is no active participation, and the demands of dominant groups are not rejected. Asef Bayat proposes using the "quiet encroachment" concept to save the concept of resistance from this ambiguity. He theorizes this concept as "a silent, patient, protracted and pervasive advancement of ordinary people on the propertied and powerful".[140] Encroachment is the silent resistance of the migrants, the unemployed, and the urban poor towards those with property and power. It is a way to provide what is urgently needed to establish a dignified life. It is also considered "quiet" because it has no leader or follows a specific program. In that sense, the quiet encroachment of the informal actors is an example of everyday resistance that falls outside the institutional realm. Although the primary purpose of the groups in different places in the social stratum is to reach the goods and opportunities that are not accessible, the quiet encroachment does not turn into an urban social movement because the

kalacağım arasında herhalde 50 yıl çalışmam gerekiyordu. Daha sonra esnaf olunca ancak yerleşebildim.

139 Asef Bayat, Life as politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East, (American University in Cairo Press, 2013).

140 Asef Bayat, "From `Dangerous Classes' to Quiet Rebels", International Sociology, 15(3)(2000): 533–557. https://doi.org/10.1177/026858000015003005

primary purpose here is to meet the needs practical ways, rather than to gain political rights.[141]

Considering the concept of resistance in a broader context, disenfranchised groups seem to continue their silent resistance whenever they have the opportunity. While informalization is one of the significant consequences of the new global structuring, which leads to the dissolution of the welfare state, the resulting poverty is not passively accepted by the groups exposed to it. On the contrary, through tactical practices, these groups can resist marginalization and sustain their livelihoods. Therefore, the notion of the "quiet encroachment," as defined by Bayat, would be influential in understanding how Van-Kurdish migrants have infiltrated the informal economy of Büyükada dominated by a complex socio-political structure and were able to become a part of the economic cycle through the entrepreneurial systems.

§ 4.5 Conclusion

Back to the questions I asked at the beginning of the chapter, Van-Kurdish migrants who immigrated to Büyükada for economic reasons in the early 1980s are constantly working on eliminating the uncertainties and unstable status created by being a Kurdish migrant. This also explains why Van-Kurdish migrants are more visible in the Island's economy than other migrant groups. The characteristics attributed to the migrant group by the society and the strategies developed against the limitations of these characteristics significantly impact the visibility of Van-Kurdish migrants on the Island. The rise of informalization and precarization with the transition to the neoliberal stage deeply affected the lives of Kurds who migrated to the cities for economic reasons in the 1980s and forced displacement in the 1990s. Thousands of people without economic

141 Gillespie, (2016). "From Quiet to Bold Encroachment: Contesting Dispossession in Accra's Informal Sector", Urban Geography, 38(7)(2016): 974–992. https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2016.1191792

capital and certification entered the informal market as precarious and unregistered workers. The concentration of migrant groups with Kurdish identity in specific sectors caused Kurdish identity to become more identified with informality, which has negative connotations such as ignorance, poverty, and terrorism. This situation caused the Kurdish identity to gain an informal character. This is also the case for the Van-Kurdish migrants who came to Büyükada as construction workers from the villages of Erciş in the early 1980s. It took years for the Van-Kurdish migrants, who worked for many years in inadequate housing conditions and temporary jobs, to reach a permanent position on the Island. Migrants, who have tried to survive by working in short-term, insecure jobs in marginal sectors, have determined to work hard as a strategy to eliminate the uncertainty and domination brought about by the negative features attributed to their identities. This strategy lacks a specific program or plan, or cannot be seen as a social movement. It does not come up with a solution or demand from authority. This is a quiet encroachment of those trying to end life's uncertainties by working and acquiring.

5

Entrepreneur, Self-Employed or Business Owner: Van-Kurdish Migrant Labor

I went to the island to have our second meeting with Altan. Our last meeting took place at the end of the summer, at the beach-cafe, of which he was one of the partners. Since the last interview, I had decided to meet again with my self-employed, entrepreneurs, interviewees to find out what kind of process they followed while developing their businesses. My aim was to learn about the social and human capital they had while developing their business, as well as to learn about the "modes of incorporation" when they arrived on the island, that is, the structural and individual conditions that shaped the entrepreneurial outcome and their life chances on the island.[142]

Although we had already determined the date and time of the meeting, I called Altan just after I got off the ferry, since we had not yet clarified where we would meet. Altan, who has a very hasty personality, said: "Let me invite you to my new shop in the ... Square. Let's meet at the shop". I knew that Altan run his own halvah shop and a beach-cafe on the

142 Portes and Rumbaut, Legacies the Story of The Immigrant Second Generation, (University of California Press, 2001).

island, of which he was a partner, but I did not know about his new shop. The new business was a gift shop located in a very central and touristic location. When I got there, Altan and two middle-aged men, I later learned that they were his brothers, were chatting in front of the shop. After showing me around, he offered to doing the interview while having tea at the cafe of a Van-Kurdish migrant friend. Saying good-bye to his brothers and giving good wishes for their new business, Altan and I left the place.

While at the cafe, I asked him about how he decided to run a new shop. After mentioning a journal article on "never putting all the eggs in one basket", he started to tell how he decided to open this shop with his brothers in addition to his beach-cafe business.

> After the beach, I also got into the souvenir business. I entered that as well on consignment. The shop was empty; it belonged to an acquaintance of ours. I told him, 'Give me this shop, let me run it until summer; there's no business in winter.' He initially said it's not available, but I insisted. I had already measured the business capacity in my mind. Anyway, he agreed. I went to Karaköy and called my siblings too. I said, 'We're opening this shop,' jokingly. 'The three of us are partners,' I said, without them even knowing. 'We don't understand these things,' they said. 'You have to start somewhere; we opened the beach, but we don't know what will happen with it,' I said. We started the business, and at that time, we paid 500 liras each to the guy. We told my brother, 'You go, get supplies from Tahtakale.' His supplies are still there. This time, I said, 'You step back,' because I don't want to exaggerate, but I'm kind of into business. 'Go here, go there,' but I started liking the job. I told the guy, 'I promised you, but I don't want to back out.' 'They're renting out the shop across from us; let's take that and make you a partner too,' I said. Bless him, he helped, and we opened this shop. I'm not exaggerating, I'm working with Izmir, Konya, Gaziantep, Doğubayazıt, Istanbul... I work with all these cities. Without moving from my spot, I make a call and say I need

> this and that. They send things blindly. There's a guy in Topçular; when we started, I told him the materials that I wanted, 'You won't give anything to anyone else on the island without me,' I said. That's the essence of trade. (Altan, Erciş, Kurd, born in 1980, came in 1995)[143]

That day, Altan told me about his other business plans and future business dreams. At present, he already had a business with which he was a partner and a shop he owned. Although these jobs, he said, provided him with a stable income in the summer, they put him in a difficult financial situation in the winter. For this reason, this business, which he would jointly run with his brothers, and which did not require much capital, seemed to him a very secure way to earn living.

The economic settlement on the island seems to be divided into three layers: the beach, the bazaar, and the side streets with tool shops. The overwhelming majority of businesses on the beach are restaurants serving alcohol. Here, there are restaurants that have been there for a long time and that have a place in the memories of the old islanders. But in recent years, most businesses have either changed hands or become

143 Plajdan sonra da hediyelik işine girdim. Ona da emaneten girdim. O dükkân boş idi, bizim bir tanıdığındı. Ona dedim, "bana bu dükkânı ver, yaza kadar işleteyim", kışın hani iş yok. Önce yok falan dedi, ben de ısrar ettim. İş kapasitesini ölçmüştüm çünkü kafamda. Neyse tamam dedi. Gittim Karaköy'e, kardeşlerimi de çağırdım. Dedim biz bu dükkânı açıyoruz dedim, gülerek. "Üçümüz de ortağız" dedim, haberleri bile yok. "Biz anlamayız" dediler. "Bir yerden başlamak lazım, plajı açtık ama onun ne olacağı belli değil" dedim. İşe girdik, o zaman da adam başı 500 lira para verdik. Abime dedik, "sen git, Tahtakale'den malzeme getir". Onun malzemeler hala duruyor. Bu sefer dedim, "sen çekil", çünkü abartmayayım ama ticarete kafam biraz yatıyor. İşte oraya git, buraya git derken işi sevdim. Adama dedim "ben sana söz verdim ama çıkmak istemiyorum". "Karşımızdaki dükkânı kiraya veriyorlar, orayı tutalım seni de ortak yapalım" dedim. Sağ olsun o da yardımcı oldu bu dükkânı açtık. Abartmıyorum bak, İzmir, Konya, Antep, Doğubayazıt, İstanbul…Bütün bu illerle çalışıyorum. Hiç yerimden kıpırdamadan telefon açıyorum şu lazım. Adamlar gözleri kapalı gönderiyorlar. Bir tane tophanede adam var, işe başlarken kafama yatan malzemeleri söylemiştim ona, "benim dışımda kimseye vermeyeceksin adadan" dedim. Ticaretin olayı budur.

more attractive to tourists than locals. In the back street, which is the second layer, there is a bazaar. In addition to restaurants and cafes, there are chain markets, bakeries, pastry shops, banks and a post office where the inhabitants of the island will meet their daily needs. In addition to being very crowded during the touristic summer season, this street is also heavily visited by the islanders during the quiet winter season. On the third tier, there are hardware stores, ironsmith stores, repair shops, real estate agents, bicycle repair shops in the side streets. In this layer, it can be said that Van-Kurdish migrants, who are also the subjects of the study, are in the majority. Lonca Street, which was mentioned in the previous chapter, is also one of the streets that can be counted in this layer. In each of these three different layers, it is possible to encounter islanders of different class backgrounds, gender and race.

How do Van-Kurdish migrants, who own various businesses and enterprises on the island, contribute to the island's economy? Is it possible to classify their entrepreneurial types and how they acquire capital? In this context, drawing upon the migrant self-employment literature, particularly the concepts of 'necessity entrepreneurship' and 'embedded market approach' mentioned in the literature review section, I will endeavor to understand the entrepreneurial processes of Van-Kurdish migrants.

§ 5.1 Van-Kurdish Migrants as Necessity Entrepreneurs

Many Van-Kurdish migrants working in the market and owning shops were engaged in daily precarious and informal work when they first arrived on the island. After a while, those who were able to acquire sufficient capital found a way out of this precariousness by owning their own business. The classification of types of entrepreneurships made by

Lippman, Aldrich, and Davis[144] and Valdez,[145] has been defined in detail in literature section. The entrepreneurial activities of Van-Kurdish migrants would often be characterized as 'survival strategy entrepreneurship',[146] which is highly self-exploitative and relies upon little or no financial capital. As small business owners or self-employed entrepreneurs, their primary goal is to pursue economic opportunities that will free them from being wage-workers under an employer. Therefore, Van-Kurdish migrant entrepreneurship seems like 'necessity entrepreneurship' when considering their strenuous working conditions.

Barbara Ellen Smith and Jamie Winders, in their study, writing “We're here to stay: economic restructuring, Latino migration and place-making in the US south”, examine the effects of flexible accumulation under neoliberal globalization on the migrant 'body'.[147] As they quoted Harvey's work, "the body is not only a site for identity formation but also an 'accumulation strategy' for capital dependent on 'discovering new ways (and potentialities) in which the human body can be put to use as the bearer of the capacity to labor".[148]

> I never said I would do this one day. I never said I would become a shopkeeper. I really worked hard. I worked at a cola distributor for 6-

144 Lippmann, Davis and Aldrich, (2005). Entrepreneurship and Inequality. In Keister, L. A. (Ed.), (Emerald Group Publishing, 2005). https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-2833(05)15002

145 Zulema Valdez, The New Entrepreneurs: How Race, Class, and Gender Shape American Enterprise, (Stanford University Press, 2011).

146 Ibid.

147 Smith and Winders, “We’re Here to Stay: Economic Restructur- ing, Latino Migration and Place-making in the US South”. Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, 33(1)(2008): 60–72. http://www.jstor.org/stable/30131208

148 David Harvey, Spaces of Hope. (Edinburgh University Press, 20009).

> 7 years. I would start at 8 in the morning, all day long, especially during the summer. Apart from that, I would go to the other side two days a week to buy yogurt and distribute it to Kınalı, Burgaz, Heybeli, and Büyükada at night. I never got tired of working. I'm still the same now. I wake up at 7:30 in the morning. I have gardens to take care of. I deliver newspapers and water the gardens I look after. I take care of about 3-4 gardens. Then I come here at 9, and I leave around 8. Then I go back to the gardens, and if there's garbage to be thrown away, I do that. Then I stop by a shop, get my money. From there, I visit a confectionery shop, collect the money, and go to the bank. It's around 10 o'clock when I get home. Most of the time, I can't even eat dinner; I just want to see my children. After that, I go to work; there's a security job I look after at night. I usually go around 11 in the evening. Normally, I'm supposed to stay until 7 in the morning, but it's not enough, you know. I go home at 3, and from 3 to 7:30, I rest. That's how my whole summer goes. They tell me, "Altan, sit down, aren't you getting tired?" I do get tired, but you know, I never got fed up with working. I never made anyone dependent on anyone else. I bought a house. I didn't buy it from here; it's tough to do that here. (Altan, Erciş, Kurd, born in 1980, came in 1995)[149]

149 Ben bir gün bunu yapacağım hiç demedim. Esnaf olacağım da demedim. Gerçekten çalıştım. 6-7 yıl kola bayisinde çalıştım. Sabah 8'de başlıyordum. Bütün gün. Özellikle yazın. Onun dışında haftada iki gün karşıya gidip yoğurt alıyordum Kınalı-Burgaz-Heybeli-Büyükada hepsine dağıtıyordum gece. Ben hiç çalışmaktan bıkmadım. Şimdi de öyle. Ben sabah 7.30'da kalkarım. Baktığım bahçeler var. Gazete dağıtırım, baktığım bahçeleri sularım. 3-4 tane bahçe bakıyorum. Sonra geliyorum buraya 9'da, çıkıyorum saat 8 gibi. Sonra tek boşlukrar bahçelere gidiyorum, çöp atılması gerekiyorsa atıyorum. Sonra bir ()dükkana uğruyorum, paramı alıyorum. Oradan da bir Helvacı'ya uğruyorum, oradan da parayı alıyorum bankaya gidiyorum. Saat oluyor 10, eve gidiyorum. Çoğu zaman yemek yiyemiyorum, çocukları bir göreyim. Ondan sonra işe gidiyorum, gece bir yer var baktığım güvenlik olarak. Akşam 11'de falan gidiyorum, normalde sabah 7'ye kadar kalmam gerekiyor ama yok yani yetmiyor. 3'te gidiyorum eve, 3'ten 7 buçuğa kadar yatıyorum. İşte bütün yaz böyle. Bana diyorlar Turan otur, yorulmuyor musun? Yoruluyorum ama bıkmadım biliyor musun çalışmaktan. Kimseyi kimseye muhtaç etmedim. Ev aldım. Buradan almadım, buradan zordur

Migrants escape from the insecurity caused by the flexible accumulation strategy, but this does not always promise them a more reliable life. “This body is productive, existing only to work. It is never sick, late or interrupted by life's demands. Ideally, this body works to the limits of human endurance because tomorrow, there may be no work at all".[150] So, they become entrepreneurs under a necessity. However, it does not guarantee them to have a promising life all the time. At the very least, 'partnership' or 'pooling money', seems like a solution to break the negative impacts of these initiatives. In the process of establishing a new business, the required capital is often gathered among close relatives.

The partnership established by Ayşe and her brother can be cited as an example:

> My brother said, 'Sister, we're buying a carriage. Can you come?' He asked for 100,000 Turkish Lira without telling my husband. I said yes, I'll give it to you, without informing my husband. I had 60,000 Turkish Lira. I went to my husband and asked him, 'Can you give me 40,000 Turkish Lira? We're buying a carriage.' He said, 'No, I can't, I don't have the money.' So, I said to my brother, 'I have 60,000 Turkish Lira; if you have the rest, we can go ahead.' I said, 'I'll work and pay you back every month.' He agreed, and we completed the 100,000 Lira. We had the carriage for 4-5 months, and then they took it back. That's how it went. Then, there was an Armenian guy who had a 4-story house. He said to a guy from Van, 'Find me a customer, and I'll sell this house and leave.' The guy from Van came to my brother and said, 'Edip, they're selling this house for 700,000 Lira.' Edip said, 'Wait, let me ask my sister.' I

150 Smith and Winders, “We’re Here to Stay: Economic Restructur- ing, Latino Migration and Place-making in the US South”. Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, 33(1)(2008): 60–72. http://www.jstor.org/stable/30131208

said, 'Yes, I'm in; I have 150,000 Lira, but where will I get the rest?'. He said, 'We can take out a loan.' I agreed. My husband also gave me 40,000 Lira. I completed 200,000 Lira and took out a 320,000 Lira loan with my sister. We bought the 4-story house, and now I'm renting it out and still working. Then, my husband's brother-in-law offered me a place. I said, 'Okay, I won't turn down my brother-in-law.' My husband said, 'Have you lost your mind?' I said, 'No, I'll open a business; if it sticks, it sticks.' I said, 'I'll open a business there.' The title deed for the 4-story house is in my brother's name, and I asked Ersin, 'Can you transfer the titles of both houses to me?' He said, 'Of course, sister.' I immediately took out a 350,000 Lira loan against the house, and now I'm here today. (Ayşe, İzmir-Çelebibağ, Kurdish, Restaurant owner 1978, On the island since 1998)[151]

151 Kardeşim dedi ki abla dedi bir fayton alıyoruz, fayton gelir misin dedi. 100 bin lira ver bir fayton alırız kiraya veririz dedi, tabi ki veririm dedim alırım dedim. Hiç kocama söylemeden. 60 bin lira param var, gittim eşime dedim ki 40 bin lira para verir misin fayton alacağım. Yok dedi veremem bende para yok dedi. Kardeşime dedim ben 60 bin lira veriyorum sende varsa tamamla dedim ben sana her ay çalışıp öderim dedim. Tamam abla dedi, o 100 bin lirayı tamamladık, paytonu 4-5 ay çalıştırdık, paytonları topladılar. Dur nerdeen nereye. Biz de oradan 300 bin lira para verdiler, 150-150 bin lira para verdiler. Bir tane Ermeni var, çocuk 4 katlı bir evi var. Bir Vanlıya demiş ki, bana bir müşteri bul ki ben bu evi satıp gideyim. O da gelmiş kardeşime demiş ki ya demiş Edip demiş 700 bin liraya bu evi satıyorlar, yo 650. Alırım demiş, dur ablama bir sorayım da. Abla dedi bu evi satıyorlarmış, sen var mısın, paramız da var. Ya Edip dedim bende var 150 bin lira var, ben gerisini nereden getirecem? Abla dedi, kredi çekeriz. Tamam dedim. Eşim de 40 bin lira bana para verdi. 200 bin lira para tamamladım, ikimiz de gittik 320 bin lira kredi çektik, 4 katlı o evi aldım. Şimdi kiraya verdim yine çalışıyorum. Sonra baktım eşim dedi eniştem bana burayı teklif etti, 5 kuruş para yok, eniştemi kırmadım tamam dedim, ya eşim diyor sen kafayı mı yedin. Hayır dedim ben bir iş yeri açacağım, taktı mı takarım dedim, iş yerimi açacağım. O 4 katlı evin de tapusu da kardeşimin üstüne, Edip dedim, 2 evin tapusunu bana verir misin? Tabi veririm abla, hemen gittim o evin üstüne 350 bin lira kredi çektim, bugün buradayım.

As can be seen from what Ayşe said above, although she had limited money to start a business, she managed to establish the business she wanted as a result of the financial support provided by her siblings and close relatives. Of course, limited financial resources cause these works to remain at a certain size. Ayşe's restaurant has less than 5 employees, including herself. Since they are small-scale, it may be correct to describe the businesses of Van-Kurdish migrants as small size businesses. In the Cambridge dictionary, small business is defined as "a small company, or small companies as a group. A small business is often privately owned, does not employ many people, and has a low volume of sales". Of course, this situation also puts a lot of responsibility on close family members. They both put money into the process of opening the business or attempting, and even if they are not a partner in the business, they have a responsibility on them. It is seen that family members take more responsibility, especially in the parts of the job that require trust. When I ask about the situation at the halva shop, he opened last year, Turan explains that things have not been great since his nephew, who worked as a cashier, left.

> My nephew was taking care of it... (He had previously worked at the beach, which was owned by Turan Bey as a partner, but he wanted to quit because he didn't get along well with the other partner.) Then he met a Spanish girl who was a teacher here in Kadıköy. The boy was studying in Hakkari. So, on weekends, the girl would buy his ticket and bring him here. Then she would go back to Hakkari. Then, before opening this shop called Helva, I told Emrah. But before getting into these things, you know how we talk about a mentor, I had a Jewish guy I consulted with a lot. I met that guy in the pirate taxi business, I met him. I said, "Hey, this and that, I have an idea," I said. He said, "Don't leave people in a position where they have to steal." "Look," he said, "what you're doing right now is quick money, and people will see that money. Even if it's just 10 liras, they'll take it," he said. "Don't put anyone who is not of your blood into the cash register," he said. I never forget that guy's words. Albert's words. Based on that guy's advice, I called

> Emrah. I said, "If you come, because I'll put you at the counter, I'll get into this business."... You can really do business, but someone from your own blood has to be at the cash register. (Altan, Erciş, Kurd, born in 1980, came in 1995)[152]

In order to analyze the economic success of a group of Van-Kurdish migrants on the island more analytically, I tried to explain what the concepts of self-employed, entrepreneur, and small business owner mean. Some migrants, most of whom started working on the island through formal/informal day labor and seasonal work, later preferred to establish their own businesses or become entrepreneurs instead of becoming wage workers. Of course, this choice cannot be independent of structural constraints, that is, macroeconomic conditions, the relationship of the social structure of the society (perception of the Kurds in the society, property relations etc.) with class, gender and race. For this reason, the traditional ethnic entrepreneurship approach that emphasizes the importance of social capital will be insufficient. Because kinship relations and close relative solidarity sometimes appear as an obligation rather than a choice. Limited market labor opportunities in a very limited space and other structural reasons have pushed migrants to establish their own businesses. However, lacking the necessary wealth to

152 Benim yeğenim bakıyordu….(Öncesinde Turan Bey'in ortağı olduğu plajda çalışmış ama diğer ortakla iyi anlaşamadığı için bırakmak istemiş) Sonra İspanyol bir kızla tanıştı, kız burada Kadıköy'de öğretmenmiş. Çocuk da Hakkari'de okuyordu. İşte hafta sonları kız bunun biletini kesiyor, getiriyor buraya. Sonra Hakkari'ye geri gidiyor. Sonra bu Helva'yı açmadan önce Emrah dedim. Ama bu işlere girmeden önce hani akıl hocası deriz ya, benim bir tane akıl hocam vardı. Çok şeyi danıştığım bir Yahudi adam. O adamı da nerede tanıdım? Korsanda, korsan taksicilik yaparken. Dedim abi böyle, bir fikrim var dedim. Turan dedi, "insanları çalma mecburiyetinde bırakma". "Bak dedi senin şuan senin yaptığın işler sıcak paradır, o insan o parayı görür. 10 lira bile olsa alır" dedi. "Senin kanından olmayan hiç kimseyi kasaya koyma" dedi. O adamın bu lafını hiç unutmuyorum. Albert abinin. O adamın lafına dayanarak, Emrah'ı aradım. Sen gelirsen, çünkü tezgâha seni geçireceğim, bu işe gireceğim dedim….Gerçekten ticaret yaparsın ama kendi kanından biri olacak kasada

establish a permanent, growing and sustainable business, migrants have tried to remedy this drawback through kinship relations. However, it is this determination to start their own business, which stems not from an abundance of opportunities but from a lack of decent opportunities, that makes migrants compulsive entrepreneurs.

§ 5.2 The Embedded Market: Fate, Skill, Capital, Vision

There is a vibrant group of Van-Kurdish migrant entrepreneurs who have been successful despite having limited financial resources to operate a business at the beginning. I have previously mentioned some of these entrepreneurs who have grown their businesses from nothing to a certain size, “facing limited employment opportunities, many migrants view self-employment as a route to upward mobility. Business ownership allows them to use their human capital/ class resources”.[153] These are entrepreneurs who are challenged to run their businesses in a structure that does not provide them with many opportunities, but who find ways to protect themselves from structural and contextual disadvantages.

When I asked Fatih, who has a “well-operating” family business on construction, the secrets behind the successful migrant entrepreneurs in Büyükada, he gave the answer *“fate, skill, capital, vision”*, without any doubt. He told the story of the people from Van who operate an Aygaz shop, saying, "They worked as laborers for 20 years; they drew water, looked after horses, carried coal”," "for the last 5-6 years, they have their own business." He gave another example of a restaurant owner in the market street, "they had washed dishes, worked as apprentices, raised their siblings, saved capital for many years, then started to operate their own business," "they didn’t start all of a sudden," "those who don't know

153 Sanders and Nee, “Immigrant Self-employment: The family as Social Capital and The Value of Human Capital”, American Sociological Review, 61(2)(1996): 231-249. https://doi.org/10.2307/2096333

how to manage business couldn't succeed," "we know what we have to do." He explained how they fill a gap on the island, "a local person wouldn't carry coal or work in construction even if he were starving." He gave an example of a Van-Kurdish migrant he knew, "he was in the 3rd year of high school. He worked with his uncle in the summer. Although he went to a private school, he worked as a laborer in construction so that he could learn standing on his own feet. But islanders never do that."

In short, after acquiring a certain skill and capital as a result of long years of labor, some migrants from Van-Erciş generally decide to take an action that would resemble their vision. I thought that "fate" probably indicates some kind of margin of error here. Why were some Van-Kurdish migrants mobilized upwardly and some were not? The main intention of this section is to indicate determinants of successful economic action which provides Van-Kurdish migrants divergent life chances in Büyükada.

Attributing the success of migrant entrepreneurs to an entire group makes invisible those who did not choose this path and those who could not get involved even if they wanted to. Of course, it is possible to talk about the collective experiences of Van-Kurdish migrants who experienced upward mobility, but it should not be forgotten that different combinations of socially constructed categories such as race, class and gender can produce a diversity of experiences as well. While intersection of these categories might create unequal starting position based on structural inequality, its encounter with group-based resource mobilization strategies might influence their disadvantaged position in the social structure. Therefore, throughout this section, I will use the term “embedded market”[154] in order to indicate the interaction between structure and agency within the broader economic context.

154 Zulema Valdez, The New Entrepreneurs: How Race, Class, and Gender Shape American Enterprise, (Stanford University Press, 2011).

Valdez describes White Supremacy as an oppression mechanism embedded in American society. In the previous chapter, I also discussed decisiveness of being Turkish as a form of White supremacy within a different context. I mentioned that being Turkish provides a status property in society and that those who are outside this framework develop various strategies in order not to be excluded. An example of this is that Van-Kurdish migrants tried to achieve this status by working hard and acquiring property. Those who received help from their close relatives and other Van-Kurds who were migrants like themselves in the process of starting their own business, becoming entrepreneurs, and obtaining a certain status also used their social capital as a resource mobilization strategy. Here, resource mobilization obtained through social capital should be seen as a result of embedded market relations. Tarık, as an islander, summarizes the strong solidarity between Van-Kurdish migrants as follows:

> For instance, they acquire a place, start a business, and never resort to bank loans. They immediately gather their resources together – five or ten of them pool their money, one person takes charge, completes the task, and then returns the funds. There's a strong sense of solidarity among them. They pass on jobs to each other, such as gardening or construction work, to minimize the need to venture outside. The city and the village are alike, and the ethnic composition is the same, so they feel very closely connected, almost as if confined by these shared elements. (Tarık, Istanbul, Turkish, Association President, 1958, has been on the island since 1964)[155]

155 Mesela bir yer alacaklar, bir iş kuracaklar bankadan kredi asla kullanmazlar. Hemen beşi onu bir araya gelir paralar ortaya konur, adam alır onu yapar sonra iade eder. Böyle bir dayanışma var aralarında. İşler, mesela bahçıvanlık, inşaat işleri falan hep birbirlerine pas ederler, mümkün olduğu kadar dışarı çıkmasın. Hem şehir aynı hem köy aynı hem etnik yapı aynı o yüzden çok sıkılar yani.

It is also seen that Van-Kurdish migrants encourage each other to open businesses:

> I persistently encouraged some of them to become tradespeople. I said, "Come, let's rent this shop," and so on. Most of the merchants became tradespeople due to my insistence, and it's a good thing they did. We live in harmony. That's how our lives began, my friend. (Sami, Karatavuk, Kurd, Construction work, on the island since 1980)156

Almost every successful business owner works with his siblings or has established his business with the capital they provided with their siblings. Apart from this, the human capital that siblings provide to each other cannot be ignored. For example, Fatih's brothers directly support the work when there are no mechanics or construction workers to come to their construction sites. Or, Altan works with his nephew who speaks English in the beach business, and a nephew he trusts is at the cash register of the Helva shop.

§ 5.3 We Are Like a Team: The Family as a Social Basis for Self-Employment

Hagen Koo, in his study on small entrepreneurship in developing countries,[157] argues that there are two main functions of small entrepreneurship in developing societies, “one is that petty trading and personal services tend to absorb marginal labor in the cities of developing countries. The other is that small business provides a channel

156 Gelenleri zorla esnaf yaptım, gelin dedim şu dükkânı kiralayalım falan. Esnafların çoğu da benim baskımla esnaf oldu, iyi ki de oldu. Bir ahenk içinde yaşıyoruz. Hayatımız böyle başladı kardeşim.

157 Koo, “Small Entrepreneurship in a Developing Society: Patterns of Labor Absorption and Social Mobility. Social Forces”, 54(4)(1976): 775-787. https://doi.org/10.2307/2576174

of upward mobility for urban manual workers". Having a small-business or being a small-entrepreneur do not guarantee that there will be both monetary and non-monetary forms of reward at the end of the day, but when it comes to having status property, it is a channel for providing upward social mobility for the close kins as well. Wong,[158] in his study on vertical effects in class mobility, states that "self-employment generates jobs not only for the owners, but also for unpaid family workers and other employees". In the related studies, it is admitted that the family is often crucial for both the establishment and operation of the small business since it reduces the potential risks and difficulties to maintain business in an unfamiliar environment that receive migrants.

According to Sanders and Nee, "The family supports self-employment by furnishing labor and enabling the pooling of financial resources. For example, informal subleasing arrangements in which homeowners share their residence with adult siblings and in-laws reduce living costs and promote the accumulation of financial capital. Intrafamily loans also facilitate the launching of new businesses. Moreover, the ability to rely on family labor significantly reduces operating costs. Because they have a greater stake in the success of the business, family workers are more productive than nonfamily labor when hourly wages are low. Furthermore, family labor can be trusted to handle sensitive transactions in which the risk of opportunism and malfeasance is high".[159]

In the context of Büyükada, the conceptualization of family support can be divided into 3 main domains: (1) living together with family and siblings in order to accumulate capital, (2) Working together with family members in a family business, (3) Charging a family member to operate an already established business so that he takes care of it.

158 Wong, "Vertical and Nonvertical Effects in Class Mobility: Cross-national Variations". American Sociological Review, 57(3)(1992): 396– 410. https://doi.org/10.2307/2096243

159 Sanders and Nee, "Immigrant Self-employment: The family as Social Capital and The Value of Human Capital", American Sociological Review, 61(2)(1996): 231-249. https://doi.org/10.2307/2096333

Güler, as a former inhabitant of the island, describes Van-Kurdish migrants living together in large numbers as follows:

> For example, my brother and I had sold a house, which was inherited from our uncle. Our uncle had no children. Right next door to them, there was a (Van-Kurdish) couple, they were husband and wife, and there was no one else with them. Then, their sibling came, and then their sibling, and so on, until there were a total of 12 people living in the house. They grew so much that, my friend, they are running a hardware store now, doing everything from tiles to marble and whatnot. I don't know how they manage it, how they do it, you know. (Güler, Istanbul, Turkish, Housewife, 1964, has been on the island since 1964)[160]

Another islander explains how Van-Kurdish migrants accumulated capital as follows:

> My friend Apo had five siblings. One year, he was supporting one of them, the next year, he was supporting another. He was buying cars, getting them married. All five of them were working together, like a company. (Maria, Istanbul, Greek, Housewife-Restaurant manager, 1957, in Büyükada since 1961)161

> I started working as a construction painter. I went to learn from a highly skilled master in the Bosphorus, a master from Bayburt,

160 Mesela biz bir ev satmıştık kardeşimle, dayımdan kalan bir evdi. Dayımın çocukları yoktu. Hemen …. yanında. Onlar bir karı bir kocaydılar yanlarında başkası yoktu sonra kardeşi geldi sonra onun kardeşi geldi sonra onun kardeşi derken tam 12 kişi oldu evde. O kadar büyüdüler ki arkadaşım, şey yapıyorlar nalburiye dükkanları var, her şeyleri yapıyorlar fayanstı mermerdi şeydi. İşte ne bileyim nasıl hallediyorlar nasıl yapıyorlar bilmiyorum.

161 Zincirleme çalışıyorlar, benim Apo 5 tane kardeşti, bir sene 5 tane kardeş, birisine çalışıyordu, diğer sene öbürüne çalışıyordu. Araba alıyordu, evlendiriyordu. 5'i birden çalışıyordu. Şirket gibi.

> and he trained me well. He really nurtured me. Then I came back here, took on some jobs, and called my brothers. We formed a great team and worked tirelessly, day and night, and we made a lot of money here on time. (Murat, Yaglik, Kurd, Construction-Craftsman, 1973, in Büyükada since 1985)162

Altan explains the secret behind the success of their businesses:

> We are like a team: one of us is the brain, one is the hand, and one is the foot. When I say 'the brain,' I mean myself. For example, this year I went to Van and then to Ağrı Doğubayazıt because it's a place where various things come together. This also applies to the beach. Our foot, for instance, is represented by Faruk, who handles tasks like fetching and carrying. Serkan is in sales. When it comes to business, you can't cheat, and we strive to be very loyal. (Altan, Erciş, Kurd, born in 1980, came in 1995)163

> My older brother Faik is still involved in the construction business, like a contractor. The other brother specializes in making fireplaces, and he does it himself because it's more of a craft. He never lets anyone else do his work. Faik, on the other hand, seems more like a supervisor; he comes and goes, doesn't stay here much. One of us worked in stores in Nişantaşı, but now he looks after an apartment building. The three of us are in the same line of work. We also have a stepbrother whom I placed in a hotel here. He's learning hotel management because it may be useful in the future. God willing, I have a dream too. I told him to come here to gain experience, and if I find a good place, we also have such a

162 Gittim kendimi Boğaz'da çok iyi bir ustanın yanında, Bayburtlu usta, yetiştirdim. Beni çok iyi yetiştirdi, geldim sonra burada iş aldım, kardeşlerimi çağırdım çok iyi ekip olduk. Böyle gece gündüz demeden çalıştık ve para zamanında çokça paralar kazandık burada.

163 Birimiz beyin, birimiz el, birimiz ayak. Beyin dediğim şu, ben. Mesela ben bu sene Van'a de geçerli. Bizim, ayak mesela Faruk'tur, getir-götür işlerini yapar. Serkan, satıştadır. Bir de ticarete hile kattın mı gidemezsin. Biz çok sadık olmaya çalışıyoruz.

dream. It's about unity. (Altan, Erciş, Kurd, born in 1980, came in 1995)164

The success of the economic actions of the Van-Kurdish migrant community seems closely linked with the household's social relations. Therefore, it would be useful to bring family dynamics into equation in order to understand their affect entrepreneurial process, "The family embeddedness perspective on entrepreneurship implies that researchers need to include family dimensions in their conceptualizing and modeling, their sampling and analyzing, and their interpretations and implications. Connecting the ''unnaturally separated'' social institutions of family and business will pave the way for more holistic—and more realistic—insights into the fascinating processes by which new business opportunities and new business ventures emerge".[165] Families have power to influence opportunity emergence and resource mobilization depending on the closeness of the ties within the unit. Therefore, operationalization of family is important for empirical investigation. In order from the family member with the most to the least influence on business processes: siblings, uncles, distant nephews and nieces, other Van-Kurdish migrants who arrived in the same years, other Kurds and acquaintances from the island. In other words, both the nuclear family and the extended family help each other in the business start-up process, "in simpler terms, social capital is the value gained from

164 Faik abim hala inşaat işiyle uğraşıyor, müteahhit gibi. Diğer abim de şömine işi yapar ama kendisi yapar, o biraz daha zanaat olduğu için. O işini kimseye bırakmaz. Faik abim daha çalıştırır havasında. Bir adım geldi gitti, gelmiyor buraya. Bir tanesi de Nişantaşı'nda, mağazalarda çalıştı. Şimdi apartmana bakıyor. Biz 3 kişi aynı işteyiz. Bir de üvey kardeşimiz var, onu da burada bir otele yerleştirdim. Otelciliği öğrensin ki, ileride lazım olacak. Allah izin verirse öyle bir hayalim de var. Sen burada piş dedim, ben de güzel bir yer yakalarsam öyle bir hayalimiz de var. Yani birlik.

165 Aldrich and Cliff, "The Pervasive Effects of Family on Entrepreneurship Toward a Family Embeddedness Perspective", Journal of Business Venturing, 18(5)(2003): 573–596. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0883- 9026(03)00011-9

connections, while embeddedness highlights how these connections are woven into our social environment".[166]

§ 5.4 Limitations: Being a woman

The impact of power and oppression mechanisms on the socially constructed categories such as race, class and gender have power to direct entrepreneurial life chances of the migrant community. Considering the context of the island, while a Kurdish-male migrant needs to make a great effort to reach a good economic position on the island, this situation is much more difficult for a Kurdish-female migrant. It is possible to see the effect of patriarchy as a mechanism of oppression here. Van-Kurdish female migrants on the island are accused by the island women of not being included in economic life by their husbands. This situation causes women who describe themselves as islanders to distance themselves from Van-Kurdish migrant women. In the eyes of many islander women I interviewed, Van-Kurdish migrant women continue the habits they inherited from the village life and "most likely" cannot modernize themselves because of their husbands. However, Ayşe, whose name was frequently mentioned with praise by the women in the Amigurumi sewing course I attended, had a very different position in their eyes.

Ayşe, is a Kurdish migrant, originally from the Karatavuk village of Erciş in Van province. She is married and has 4 children. She was born in 1978 and came to the island, alongside her husband who has worked as a security guard in a residential complex, in 1996. When she came to the island, she knew almost no Turkish. Therefore, she attended a literacy course after her four-daughter started school. She began working as a babysitter for her neighbor's grandson. Then, she had worked in a

166 Portes and Sensenbrenner, "Embeddedness and Immigration: Notes on The Social Determinants of Economic Action", American Journal of Sociology, 93(6)(1993):1320–1350.

restaurant's kitchen owned by the women that she had helped as a maid. After a while, she and her brother bought a phaeton with the money she saved. When the phaetons were removed, she and her brother combined their money and purchased a house to rent. At the time I conducted an interview with Ayşe, she was running a restaurant in the mainland Istanbul that she took over from her close relative.

To meet Ayşe, I went to a district in mainland Istanbul, an hour and a half away from Kadıköy. Ayşe welcomed me in front of her restaurant. This was a two-story dining room on one of the main streets of the district. Ayşe wanted to offer me kebab or daily food, but we agreed to drink tea. This elegantly dressed woman, in her 40s, looked very serious, and I noticed that she paid attention to her pronunciation while speaking. I learned later that she learned Turkish at the public education center after she came to the island. Her experience on the island was quite intense. Always in a state of struggle since 1996, Ayşe felt compelled to work to provide a better future for her daughters. However, as she expressed, her preferences and perspective on life were different from other Van-Kurdish migrants. According to Ayşe, most migrant men and the culture itself put obstacles in front of working women, and women did not insist on overcoming these constraints. Again, according to Ayşe, as long as she worked "honorable"(namuslu), what was wrong with that?

> When my fourth daughter Fatma was born, I realized that things weren't going well with my husband. I knew I had to educate my daughters and help them succeed because I didn't want them to be like me and face hardships. I told my husband about this, but there was no solution. I learned how to read and write through adult education classes. My husband didn't want me to go, but I insisted on going anyway. (Ayşe, İzmir-Çelebibağ, Kurdish, Restaurant owner 1978, On the island since 1998)[167]

167 Benim 4. Kızım dünyaya geldiği zaman Kübra, baktım eşimle olmuyor, kızlarımı okutmam lazım, kızlarımı bir yere vardırtmam lazım, çünkü kızlar benim gibi olmasın ezilmesin, eşime dedim baktım çare yok okuma yazmayı halk eğitimde öğrendim. Bir de eşim izin vermezdi, gitmeyeceksin dedi, gidecem dedim.

> I used to ask my husband for money ten times, and he would reluctantly give me 10 lira each time. But I saw it wasn't enough. I had a neighbor whom I liked. She came to me and said, "Ayşe, I need a woman to help me raise this grandchild; I can't handle it alone. Would you come?" I was surprised and said, "Really? I'll come." At that time, she was offering a thousand lira in salary. (Ayşe, İzmir-Çelebibağ, Kurdish, Restaurant owner 1978, On the island since 1998)168

Ayşe, who started her working life in this way, later engaged in other businesses that I mentioned at the beginning of the chapter. She pooled money with her brother and bought a phaeton, then bought a house with the money from there and expanded her capital. But while she was doing all this, she also received various reactions from the Van-Kurdish migrant community.

> They marked all the working women as prostitutes. Today, in the diner, I have two female employees, and they work since they need money, and I even protect them. They work with honor. I've worked too; I worked until 3 in the morning and then went home. I haven't done anything wrong. When I used to work in the kitchen, people would say a lot of things about me. One day, my older brother got up and said to me, "You're going to the bar to work – I was in the kitchen section, and I didn't even touch alcohol – they're drinking and getting close to you." It just slipped out of my mouth, I said, "You scoundrel," and I said, "how can you say this to your sister?" I had a nervous breakdown. I know myself; how

168 Giderdim eşimden para isterdim 10 kere, 10 lira çıkartır verirdi elime, baktım olmuyor benim sevdiğim bir komşum vardı. Geldi bana balkonun önüne dedi ki Ayşe dedi bana bir kadın lazım, ben bu torunla başa çıkamıyorum beraber büyütmek için. Ben gelirim Gülşen Hanım dedin, dedi Neee!! Dedim gelirim. Sahi mi o zaman bin lira maaş veriyordu.

> can you accuse me of such a thing? (Ayşe, İzmir-Çelebibağ, Kurdish, Restaurant owner 1978, On the island since 1998) 169.

Ayşe stated that she resisted all this and was very happy. In fact, some other Van-Kurdish women started to work, encouraged by her story.

> The other day, a woman from Van whom I know from the island came up to me on the ferry. She said, "How are you?" and then she said, "Two years ago, you told me something. I wish I had listened to you two years ago and done what you said. You told me, 'Don't listen to anyone, if you listen to everyone, you'll fall behind. Just work and don't ever lose, I wish I had listened to you sooner. I've been working for about 3-4 months now, and I'm so thankful. Your words have never left my mind." I replied, "Those who work with honor never lose, no matter what anyone says." Once you have money, you can eat, travel, dress well, and even show off. But when you don't, they make fun of you. She spoke, "Abla (Sister), I really did what you said, and I'm feeling relaxed. I just close the door and leave the house, look how wonderful it is" (Ayşe, İzmir-Çelebibağ, Kurdish, Restaurant owner 1978, On the island since 1998) [170]

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169 Şu çalışan insanlar herkes o…… mu? Bugün bende iki kadın var, ihtiyaçları var ben bile koruyorum onları erkeklerin içinde. Namusuyla çalışıyorlar. Ben de çalıştım, gece 3'e kadar çalıştım sonra eve gittim. Kötü bir şey mi yaptım. Bir gün ben mutfakta çalıştığım zaman bana çok laf söylediler, büyük ağabeyim kalktı bana bir laf söyledi ben o abimi kaybettim. Dedi ki, gidiyorsun barda çalışıyorsun, benim mutfağım nasıl benim mutfağım böyle bar da bu taraftaydı, içkili tarafa ben girmezdim, kapalı bir kadınım bir kere bana yakışmaz, ellemezdim. Bana dedi ki adada sen gidiyorsun dedi barda çalışıyorsun içki içiyorlar arkana sarılıyorlar. Ağzıma geldi, şerefsiz dedim, pezevenk dedim, sen dedim nasıl kardeşine bunu söylersin ben sinir krizi geçirdim, benim gibi bir kadına, ben kendimi biliyorum dedim nasıl bana bunu yakıştırıyorsun?

170 Benim geçen gün adadan benim Vanlı ben motorda böyle oturuyorum geldi yanıma, Abla nasılsın, dedi Sabiha, abla dedi iki sene evvel sen bana bir laf söyledin keşke iki sene evvel seni dinleseydim, dediğini yapsaydın. Sen o zaman dedin ki, hiç kimseyi dinleme, elalemi dinlersen geri kalırsın, dinleme bak çalış, hiçbir zaman

It should not be forgotten that Ayşe's business is not on the island, but in a district on the Anatolian side, quite far from the island. Even though the solidarity she established with her brother contributed her to accumulate capital and enhance her entrepreneurial life chances. However, Patriarchy, which can be considered one of the macro-oppression mechanisms, prevented Ayşe from becoming a visible self-employed woman on the island.

Van-Kurdish women who experience totally different combinations of matrix of dominations have different life chances than that of the men. For example, Murat, one of the Van-Kurdish migrants who owns a business on the island, said during our conversation that one of the boutiques he opened was under his son's responsibility. However, he also had 2 daughters. Or, another entrepreneur, Altan, stated that things got worse after his nephew, whom he had agreed to keep an eye on the cash register of Halva Shop, stated that he could no longer do this job. When I asked Altan why his wife did not to work in the shop, he answered as follows:

> I said, "Honestly." Just two or three days ago, we had an argument about this. I said, "Honey, you're just staying at home." I told her, "Let me open a souvenir shop for you, and you can relax. Because you're putting psychological pressure on the kids and on me," but she said, "No." Our wives don't work, and why? We are still trying

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kaybetmeyeceksin, keşke abla seni dinleseydim. Şu anda dedi 3-4 aydır çalışıyorum, çok şükür diyorum o senin lafın hiç aklımdan çıkmıyor dedi. Ben dedim, namusuyla çalışan hiçbir zaman kaybetmez, kim ne derse desin.

....

Paran oldu mu yersin, gezersin, giyersin, hava da atarsın, olmadığı zaman dalga geçerler. Abla diyor valla senin dediğini yaptım rahat ettim, hiç evi bile diyor öyle kapıyı kapatıp gidiyorum, bak ne güzel.

> to maintain our customs and traditions, and that's why she doesn't want to work. (Altan, Erciş, Kurd, born in 1980, came in 1995)[171]

Moreover, Fatih added that it was not a problem for his wife to work and that he could even find a job as an electric vehicle driver on the island, but his wife declined this opportunity because she was afraid that the other migrants might find it strange.

Precisely for this reason, that is, out of fear of being criticized or excluded by much-needed close relatives and fellow countrymen, women are not visible in the island's economy. Of course, this situation is a barrier that prevent them to become successful self-employed individuals.

§ 5.5 Conclusion

To revisit the initial point of discussion, it is evident that social capital is one of the pivotal factors that determine migrant entrepreneurs' life chances and plays a crucial role in the success of entrepreneurs on the island. However, for more comprehensive understanding of this success, the embedded market approach is much more inclusive. In other words, when analyzing the upward mobility of Van-Kurdish community on the island, it is crucial to recognize structural factors and the macro-oppression mechanisms that determine them within their own context. Taking all of these into account, a group of migrant men who initially came to Büyükada to work as day laborers in construction in a state of deprivation of basic needs, later becoming entrepreneurs, and if they

171 Valla dedim. İki üç gün önce bunun tartışmasını yaptık, "Hanım, sen evde yatıyorsun" dedim. "Ben sana bir tane hediyelik dükkânı açayım, kafan rahat olur. Çünkü çocuklara psikolojik baskı yapıyorsun, bana yapıyorsun", o da "yok" dedi. Bizim hanım çalışmaz, o da neden? Hala da örf adetlerimizi sürdürmeye çalışıyoruz, o da ondan çalışmak istemiyor.

were able to accumulate capital, they became self-employed by receiving both financial and human capital support from their families and close communities. Now, they are restaurant owners, contractors, hoteliers, market owners, businesspeople, and many others. Van-Kurdish migrant entrepreneurs tried to overcome difficulties through hard work. Behind the effort of working hard, there is a desire for permanence. In connection with this, the desire to remain permanent in a place or in social position may have both individual and societal reasons. For this reason, factors that inhibit the life chances of a group should also be taken into consideration, as well as their life chances.

6

Conclusion

In August 2023, when I was writing my thesis, the island was discussing the destruction - or rather the transformation - that the suspended 1/5000-1/1000 scaled the *Master Zoning Plan* and the *Implementation Zoning Plan* might cause[172]. Because unlike the master zoning plan, which was also suspended in 2011 and canceled on the grounds that it would increase the population and would not be suitable for the environment; the implementation zoning plan paved the way for direct zoning application on any parcel, and this situation could continue until a suspension of execution decision was issued. Moreover, the islands were declared a special environmental protection zone in the aftermath of the mucilage that hit the Marmara Sea, and planning authority was transferred to the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization.[173] In the

172 https://adalar.bel.tr/duyurular/planlar-yayinlandi/

173 Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Çevre, Şehircilik ve İklim Değişikliği Bakanlığı. (2023, July 28). Marmara Denizi Ve Adalar Özel Çevre Koruma Bölgesi, İstanbul İli, Adalar 1/5000 Ölçekli Koruma Amaçlı Nazım İmar Planı Ve 1/1000 Ölçekli Koruma Amaçlı Uygulama İmar Planı. https://istanbul.csb.gov.tr/marmara-denizi-ve-adalar-ozel-cevre-koruma-bolgesi-istanbul-ili-adalar-1-5000-olcekli-koruma-amacli-nazim-imar-plani-ve-1-1000-olcekli-koruma-amacli-uygulama-imar-plani-duyuru-441159

new plan, some orchards and fields have been transformed into tourism areas, the registration degrees of some registered buildings have been reduced and some have even been removed, causing fear and panic on the island. With an additional article added to the regulation, coasts could be planned separately from the overall plan, paving the way for the island coasts to be designed as completely separate areas.

In fact, the Princes' Islands have been a naturally and culturally protected area since 1984, and the island's national park, mansions and many other historical structures were protected in this way. It was aimed that many registered buildings within the borders of the island would be passed on to future generations. However, in the period leading up to the plan, some prominent people had obtained the necessary permits to construct filled areas, new residences and beaches on the island, and the island gradually lost its function as a living space and became a touristic neighborhood. The "locals" of the island, who had observed the transformation of the island over the years with fear and anxiety, were very uncomfortable with the newly suspended plan and were trying to apply for legal means while at the same time trying to raise public awareness, while others thought that the benefits of the island's touristic function might not be so bad. At this point, my interviewees were also divided into two; interviewees who had spent their childhood on the island were very angry about the transformation of the island and those who supported this change, while the interviewees who had migrated to the island and worked as shopkeepers and business owners were more distant and watched the situation from afar.

All these discussions made me think about the subsequent transformation of the island, which was opened to development with similar zoning plans in different years, and the migration it received during this transformation. Van-Kurdish migrants, who are the subject of my research, came to the island as seasonal workers in the early 1980s with a similar transformation of the island and stayed on the island afterwards.

There are two distinct lives on the island that touch each other but do not intersect. The nostalgic narrative presented in the island's museum

and by the islanders omits the arrival of migrants, while the migrant narratives lack mention of significant events that shaped the island's multicultural structure, such as forced displacement, pogroms, and the transfer of non-Muslim properties. In this respect, the island's history is a past that is not fully acknowledged.

In my thesis, I aimed to examine the upward mobility trajectories of Van-Kurdish migrants, focusing on the key question, "Could Büyükada have made upward mobility possible for at least some Van-Kurdish migrants?" While exploring this question, I considered Büyükada's unique conditions over different periods and traced the urban reflections of Turkey's transformation under globalization and its shifting economic policies. I also examined how these changes were reflected on Büyükada.

However, while searching for answers to these questions, I supported my research with interviews with migrants to understand the impact of Kurdish identity in the labor regime and the living conditions of precarious migrant labor on the island.

This thesis examines the conflict between how Van-Kurdish migrants on the island are defined by outsiders and how the group defines itself, and argues that the implicit meaning underlying the concept of "islander" is closely related to holding various forms of ownership. From this perspective, the sense of nativeness reinforced by nostalgic narratives about the island, as well as the behaviors and manners encompassed in the "islander" identity, become attributes that Van-Kurdish migrants seeking upward mobility must adapt to.

In the introduction of my thesis, I presented my research question, discussed the contribution of my study to the existing literature, and then shared my fieldwork experience. In the next section, I provided a historical background of the island from the Byzantine period to the present. Subsequently, I addressed studies related to the Princes' Islands, studies focused on Istanbul's post-1980 migration patterns, studies exploring Kurdish migration, and research on migrant entrepreneurship. In Chapter 4, I delved into the capital accumulation stories of Van-Kurdish migrants on the island, focusing on their hardships, hard work, and endurance. I described their property acquisition process on the island

as a form of "quiet encroachment," a reclamation of rights without a political plan. In Chapter 5, I discussed the importance of social networks in the process of economic mobility, emphasizing the need for a nuanced approach by using an "embedded market approach." I also explored the impact of migrants' ethnic identity and social positions on their economic conditions.

This thesis contributes to the literature by examining the trajectory of economic mobility among Kurdish migrant workers on an island that has historically been a resort for the upper class, contrasting with traditional studies that focus on working-class neighborhoods known for their influx of Kurdish labor. Although there are numerous studies on Kurdish labor, I believe my research will add value by exploring the possibilities for upward mobility among migrants. From this perspective, the depiction of migrant labor as "trapped in poverty" does not apply to the island, at least not for a certain group.

The phenomenon of migration brings into focus the internal isomorphism imposed by the concepts of citizenship, sovereignty, solidarity within a group and nationhood dictated by the nation-state. The entry of Kurdish labor into the market, when viewed through this lens, becomes a reflection of methodological nationalism. The implicit assumptions of methodological nationalism often overshadow the different class and ethnic structures that exist within the wider national community. I hope that my study will be a micro-start for a wider body of work that will interrogate this situation.

Appendix A Information of Interviewees

Altan is a Kurdish migrant, originally from the town of Erciş, Karatavuk. He is married and has two children. He was born in 1980 and migrated to Büyükada in 1995. Upon his arrival, he followed the trace of his elder brother, who had previously worked as a construction worker on the island. Altan initially worked in construction sites, like his brother and father. His father had been a seasonal worker, coming to the island for work. Later on, Altan spent around 7 years working at cola dealership in Büyükada. He engaged in various marginal sector jobs, such as distributing yogurt between the islands, delivering newspapers, gardening, and even engaging in unofficial tax services with battery-powered cars.

During the period when I conducted an interview with him, he worked as a night security guard for a residential complex on the island. In addition to this, he was a co-owner of a beach club and also owned a cafe. Together with three siblings, he had opened a souvenir shop. While Altan has a house in Istanbul, he currently resides in a rented apartment on the island.

Murat is a Kurdish migrant, originally from the town Erciş, Karatavuk. He was born in 1973 and came to the island around 1985. Since he was quite young at the time of his arrival, he began working as shoeshine boy instead of working in construction like his uncles and the other close relatives. Later on, he apprenticed with a master in mainland Istanbul and started to work as wall painter in the construction industry. He then called his brothers from Erciş to join him so that they could form a team to specialize in construction painting on the island, which turned to be such a lucrative venture.

After the earthquake in Yalova in 1999, Murat carried out projects in there and earned great amount of money by working as a subcontractor for the

state. Seeking more stable employment, he and his brothers took over a bicycle shop in 1999 while continuing their projects in construction business. Additionally, by the time I talked with him, Murat owned a restaurant, a clothing boutique, and had a historic mansion that he is co-owner. His ultimate vision was to transform the mansion into a hotel. In the previous parliamentary elections, he was the candidate for the Van province deputy candidate.

Sami is a Kurdish migrant, originally from the Karatavuk village of Erciş in Van province. He is married and has 4 children, all of whom were born on the island. He was born in 1966 and came to the island in 1981. In the first years of his arrival, he worked as construction worker. Then he opened his first shop in 1984, but unfortunately, he had to close it in1986 since he joined the military service. After his return, he reopened his business on construction materials and then he established a new business on food dealership. He started to venture into construction projects and became a subcontractor for the state later. Sami emphasizes that being a business owner was essential for him to sustain his life in Büyükada.

Burak is a Kurdish migrant from Erciş. His father had already been on the island when he was born in 1993. He came to the island, alongside his father, in 2003. Currently, Burak works at the beach club co-owned by his father despite his background as a journalist.

Ahmet is a Kurdish migrant, originally from the Karatavuk village of Erciş in Van province. He is married and has 3 children. He was born in 1972. When he came to the island in 1985 his uncle had already been working in construction in Büyükada. Since he was quite young at that time, he had started working as a waiter in a restaurant instead of working as laborer in construction. Then he became a chef in the restaurant. In 1991,

after the military service, he got married and opened his own restaurant in the center of the island, which he currently owns.

Ayşe is a Kurdish migrant, originally from the Karatavuk village of Erciş in Van province. She is married and has 4 children. He was born in 1978 and came to the island, alongside her husband who has worked as a security guard in a residential complex, in 1996. When she came to the island, she knew almost no Turkish. Therefore, she attended a literacy course after her four-daughter started school.

She began working as a babysitter for her neighbor's grandson. Then, she had worked in a restaurant's kitchen owned by the women that she had helped as a maid. After a while, she and her brother bought a phaeton with the money she saved. When the phaetons were removed, she and her brother combined their money and purchased a house to rent. At the time I conducted an interview with Ayşe, she was running a restaurant in the mainland Istanbul that she took over from her close relative.

Hasan is a Kurdish migrant, originally from the town of Erciş, Zilanderesi. He migrated to Heybeliada in 1981, after he spent a year in Büyükada. Upon his arrival, he followed the footsteps of his close relatives, who had previously worked as a construction worker on the island. Then he had worked as shoeshine boy. By the time I spoke with him, he was in the construction business. In addition to that, he was a very prominent figure on the island since he served as the district president of a political party for a long period of time.

Veli is from Erciş, who had worked as a civil servant in Büyükada for 13 years. He was born in 1966 and started his job on the island in 2006. He is married and has a child. Currently, he works for the state in the mainland Istanbul.

Berk is the son of Veli, who was born in 1997, in Van. He immigrated to Istanbul from Van after his father's transfer from Van to Istanbul took place in 2006. By the time I spoke with him, he was a phD candidate. Currently, he lives in mainland Istanbul.

Fatih is a Kurdish migrant, originally from the town of Erciş, Karatavuk. He is married and has two children. He was born in the late 1970s and migrated to Büyükada in 1987. His father was also a construction worker on the island when Fatih immigrated. He went to primary and secondary school in Büyükada, then he graduated from Atatürk University in Erzurum. After his return, Fatih established a small business on construction materials with his three siblings in 2003. Currently, he carries out well-operating business on construction which he makes and renovates building again with his siblings and other close relatives.

Tarık is an islander who was originally from Istanbul. He was born in 1958, and first came to the island in 1968 as a summer house vacationist with his family. Currently, he lives on the island. Additionally, he is the president of the foundation of Adalar Kültür Derneği, established in 1994.

Nermin is an islander who has been on the island since 1931. Her father was a member of *Ittihat ve Terakki*, then he worked as a butcher on the island. Although she lived in mainland Istanbul for some periods, she spent most of her life in Büyükada. Nermin is a retired modelist. Currently, she lives in a mansion, inherited from her parents.

Nuray was born in the island, as a daughter of a parents who immigrated to the island at very young age, in 1950. Since his father was in the military,

she had to live in various cities in Turkey. However, Nuray, after marrying Hüseyin in 1975, has always lived in Büyükada. She worked as a sewing teacher in the Public Education Center. Currently, she lives on the island.

Hüseyin is an islander. He was born in 1950 and has been living on the island since the year he was born. He is retired.

Güler is an islander, originally from Eskişehir. She moved in Büyükada with her family just after she was born in 1957. She went to primary school on the island, then she continued her education in the mainland and in Britain. Güler worked as a controller in the airport traffic tower for a brief period, and then she helped his father in their family business. Currently she lives in the house that was built by his father in 1950s, which was a prominent businessman.

Maria is a Greek islander. She was born in 1957 in Istanbul. They settled in Büyükada in 1961 due to the duty of his clergyman father. For a while, the family lived in the lodging of the church. Maria lived in Thessaloniki for 5 years for the education of her husband, who is an islander like herself. However, they came back again because they missed the island so much. Although they lived in Istanbul for a while for the education of their children, Maria has been living permanently on the island for a very long time. She opened a restaurant in the center of Büyükada after the death of her husband. When I spoke to her, she was running the restaurant and occasionally was cooking there. Moreover, Maria also has a cookbook.

Ersin is an islander who was born in 1955 in Rize. He came to the island in 1968. After working as an apprentice with a Greek master, he opened

his own shop. He is currently in the construction business. He lives in an old mansion with his family.

I met him at the coffee shop while I was interviewing Fatih. While many islanders were not willing to rent shops to the Kurds, he trusted Fatih and his brothers. However, he did not hesitate to make some discriminatory statements about Greeks during the interview.

Nehir has been living on the island since 1990. She is the founder of Center for Migration Research at Bilgi University.

Osman is a journalist who was born in Tarsus in 1946. He has been living on the island in the summer since the 1990s.

Serpil is an islander who was born in Istanbul in 1961. She has been coming to the island since 1974 but has been living on the island for 4 years. Serpil is the host of the World Heritage Princes' Islands radio show on Açık Radyo. She has been actively fighting for the islands to be included in the UNESCO heritage list.

Dimitra was born in Istanbul in 1989 as the daughter of a Greek family that has been living in Istanbul for 12 generations. She lives permanently in their house on Büyükada since the pandemic, which they used as a summer residence in the past.

Christina is an academic and she is the writer of 3 books.

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