

Chapter 8

The Song of Immigrants

Okan Yılmaz

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7078-788X>

Yıldız Technical University, Turkey

ABSTRACT

This article will reveal how the issue of femininity and immigration is handled in a Middle Eastern society through the texts of two of the young generation poets of contemporary Turkish poetry published in digital media. The first of the poets in the article, Yaprak Damla Yıldırım -an immigrant- writes about her own experiences. Yaprak Damla Yıldırım turns her feminist activism into a literary action by publishing her poems in a Turkish digital magazine called Cin Ayşe. The other poet, Mihrap Aydın, reveals the connection between herself and the upper generation women in her family with immigration. Through these two poets, the chronological relationship of immigration trauma will be investigated and the narrative memory left from grandmothers to grandchildren will be examined.

INTRODUCTION

Migration is a significant social phenomenon, particularly affecting migrant women, who face challenges in economic, social, and psychological spheres. The effects of migration can be both positive (e.g., better healthcare, educational opportunities) and negative (e.g., life-threatening events, bodily exploitation, psychological/physical traumas). Some social groups are more affected than others, and women are especially vulnerable to human trafficking, a severe human rights violation (UNODC, 2016, 7). In addition to human trafficking, studies on migrant women focus on issues like caregiving, domestic work, and arranged marriages (Fleury,

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3693-9979-8.ch008

2016). This reveals why migration, especially among the female population, has increased in recent years.

The increasing proportion of female migrants, particularly in Europe and North America, has introduced the term “feminization of migration” (Fleury, 2016, 7). This concept is associated with five trends: 1) more female migrants in developed countries, 2) an overall increase in female migrants, 3) women’s participation in various types of migration (for instance, labor-related, sex trafficking, or occurring under refugee status), 4) men’s difficulty finding full-time work leading women to seek jobs abroad, and 5) a rising demand for jobs traditionally associated with women, such as nursing and caregiving (Piper, 2006, 24-25).

Migrant women face not only the hardships of migration but also discrimination, exclusion, and identity crises in the host society, all of which affect their psychological health. One of the primary psychological traumas migrant women experience is related to identity crises. The cultural, social, and economic differences between their home country and the host country can lead to self-questioning and difficulty adapting. As Kofman (2004, 65) notes, migrant women often struggle to balance their cultural values with local expectations. This crisis forces them to reassess their family and social roles.

Discrimination, particularly based on race, ethnicity, and language, is another significant challenge for migrant women. This discrimination leads to social exclusion and exacerbates their psychological trauma. Chavez (2001, 100) argues that migrant women are seen as “the other,” a status that isolates them. This exclusion impacts their social ties and mental health. Castles and Miller (2009, 125) note that racism forces migrants into low-status jobs, while Anthias (2000, 79) highlights that ethnic discrimination exacerbates social and economic disadvantage, making it harder for women to find employment.

Migrant women also face familial responsibilities, which can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness, particularly when separated from their families. Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994, 88) suggests that distance from family can contribute to depression and loneliness. These emotional struggles are compounded by the exploitation and violence migrant women may experience, particularly in domestic work, where physical and emotional abuse are common. Such violence deeply impacts their sense of security and self-worth. The trauma from exploitation, including human trafficking, leaves long-lasting psychological scars.

Additionally, migrant women encounter gender-based discriminatory policies, which hinder their access to education and healthcare. These barriers result in lower educational attainment and fewer opportunities in the labor market, limiting their social mobility (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1992, 23). Domestic abuse and sexual exploitation are also prevalent among migrant women, who may avoid seeking help due to their legal status or fear of further harm (Hynes, 2003, 62). Their access to

24 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/the-song-of-immigrants/383594

Related Content

Discarding Political Hypocrisy and Mystification of Xenophobia While Maximizing the Economic Weight of Immigrant Nationals in African Economies

Keatlegile Moses Mabena (2021). *Impact of Immigration and Xenophobia on Development in Africa* (pp. 189-209).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/discarding-political-hypocrisy-and-mystification-of-xenophobia-while-maximizing-the-economic-weight-of-immigrant-nationals-in-african-economies/268273

International Migration and the Rights of Migrants Guaranteed by the Legislation of Georgia and Their Implementation

Maka Kartoza (2023). *Handbook of Research on the Regulation of the Modern Global Migration and Economic Crisis* (pp. 55-69).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/international-migration-and-the-rights-of-migrants-guaranteed-by-the-legislation-of-georgia-and-their-implementation/318753

Human Trafficking and Forced Labour in Southeast Asia: Legal Framework and a Way Forward

Farahdilah Ghazali and Siti Fazilah Abdul Shukor (2023). *Handbook of Research on the Regulation of the Modern Global Migration and Economic Crisis* (pp. 37-54).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/human-trafficking-and-forced-labour-in-southeast-asia/318752

From Schengen to Lisbon: The European Union's Responses to Migration

Sureyya Yigit (2023). *Handbook of Research on the Regulation of the Modern Global Migration and Economic Crisis* (pp. 257-276).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/from-schengen-to-lisbon/318767

Barriers to the Blackboard: The Uphill Battle for Immigrant Learners

Suman Lata (2026). *Barriers and Opportunities in Education for Immigrants and Refugees* (pp. 1-22).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/barriers-to-the-blackboard/392332