WOMEN AS HOPING SUBJECTS: NEGOTIATING FAME, LABOR AND IDENTITY IN THE TURKISH BLOGOSPHERE

by

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Women as Hoping Subjects: Negotiating Fame, Labor and Identity in the Turkish Blogosphere

Koç University

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This is to certify that I have examined this copy of a doctoral dissertation by

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DEDICATION

I am dedicating this dissertation to my dear son Aren Uzay Sim, who was born in the second year of my PhD, as they grew up together. His presence always brought me strength and motivation whenever I felt stressed or overwhelmed. I hope he would never stop following his dreams and this dissertation would be an inspiration for him to continue, no matter what.

ABSTRACT

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Work done in digital environments and media production are generally examined within certain binaries. These binaries may include exploitation or pleasure debate in digital labor studies, public vs. private, and real vs. virtual dualities in virtual world studies. The main purpose of this research is to offer a new way of looking at the digital culture production in blogs to go beyond these dualities and examine the practices and performances of women in a non-western context with a patriarchal and authoritarian regime through the concept of hope. The study considers blogging as a media practice and tool, and the blogosphere as a field that creates salient performances and conflicting emotions with its fragmented structure. Based on ethnographic research methods, through the narratives of amateur to professional women bloggers, I analyze the Turkish blogosphere, the motivations, and expectations of women, their negotiation of hope, along with the labor they produce.

This research examines how hope is attached to blogging as practice and is experienced and understood in ordinary performances of women bloggers. The aim is not to suggest that the experiences of blogging discussed are uniform, but rather to draw attention to some points of connection that coalesce around ideas of hope temporality, and to examine these connections through the notions of aspiration, success, and fame. Categorizing women bloggers as aspirants, businesswomen, and celebrities, it is shown that as an "existential affective" (Alacovska, 2019, p.1118) tool, hope has a replicative reorientation dimension among bloggers which allows it to travel, circulate, transcend and expand. While doing this, hope also serves as a tool for bloggers to challenge the dominant normative conceptualizations.

Keywords: hope, blogging, digital labor, women, aspiration, fame

ÖZETÇE

Umut Eden Kadınlar: Türkiye Özelinde Bloglarda Şöhret, Emek ve Kimlik Müzakeresi

Melike Aslı Sim

Tasarım, Teknoloji ve Toplum, Doktora

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Dijital ortamlardaki medya üretimi genellikle belirli ikilemler çerçevesinde incelenmektedir. Bu ikilikler, dijital emek araştırmalarında sömürü veya zevk, kamuya karşı özel tartışmalarını ve sanal dünya araştırmalarındaki gerçek ve sanal ikiliğini içermektedir. Çalışmanın temel amacı, bloglardaki dijital kültür üretimine bu ikiliklerin ötesine geçerek, ataerkil, otoriter, ve Batı dışı bağlamda, Türkiye blog dünyasındaki kadınların bloglama pratiklerini ve performanslarını ele alarak yeni bir bakış açısı sunmaktır. Umut kavramını teorik çerçeve olarak belirleyen bu tez, blog yazmayı bir medya uygulaması ve aracı, blog dünyasını ise parçalı yapısıyla dikkat çekici performanslar ve çelişkili duygular yaratan bir alan olarak ele almaktadır. Etnografik araştırma yöntemlerinden yola çıkan çalışma, amatör ve profesyonel kadın blogcuların anlatılarıyla Türk blog dünyasını, kadınların motivasyon ve beklentilerini, umut müzakerelerini ve ürettikleri emeği analiz etmektedir.

Bu araştırma, umudun blog yazmakla olan pratik ilişkisi ile kadın blogcuların sıradan performanslarında deneyimlenme ve anlaşılma biçimlerini incelemektedir. Amaç, tartışılan blog deneyimlerinin tek tip olduğunu öne sürmek değil, daha ziyade umudun geçiciliği fikri etrafında birleşen bağlantı noktalarına dikkat çekmek ve bu bağlantıları istek, şöhret ve başarı kavramları aracılığıyla incelemektir. Kadın blog yazarlarını adaylar, iş kadınları ve ünlüler olarak kategorize ederek, umudun "varoluşsal duygusal" (Alovacska, 2018) bir araç olarak blogcular arasında seyahat etmesine, dolaşımına, sınırları aşmasına ve genişlemesine izin veren, tekrarlayıcı bir yeniden yönlendirme boyutuna sahip olduğu gösterilmiştir. Bunu yaparken umut, aynı zamanda, blog yazarlarının baskın normatif kavramsallaştırmalara meydan okumaları için de bir araç görevi görmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: umut, bloglama, dijital emek, kadın, özlem, şöhret

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

I started researching women's blogosphere in Turkey in 2015. While bloggers were only bloggers before, currently there is a shift in the blogosphere. Due to the platformization of the web, a blogger is not solely a blogger anymore, but also an Instagrammer, Youtuber, and Vlogger. Content-creators continuously feel the need to synchronize their social media accounts to keep up with the trends and new technologies. Thanks to social media, pro-bloggers, YouTubers, Vloggers, and Instagram influencers have all arisen as shining new career exemplars over the last decade (Duffy, 2018).

This dissertation focuses on women bloggers' performances in relation to hope concept and their labor production in the blogosphere. The main domain of the research is blogspot.com due to its free and popular usage among bloggers. Having started blogging in 2006, which was the early phase of blogging in Turkey, I also witnessed the expansion of the platform. The platform's usage grew very fast in parallel to the world. Blogspot.com was offering an ease of use to many bloggers and was giving the opportunity to personalize their home pages freely. Nowadays, it looks maybe easier with filters, emojis, gifs, photo collage and editing options, however it doesn't mean that it requires less work and energy. Currently, there is a more competitive market, where anybody can use these platforms and tools if they have the access. That is the reason why authenticity and creating original content appear as important aspects of blogging.

My position as a contester in the blogosphere inserts its significance in understanding how hard it is to stay up-to date and keep up with the pace and temporality in these platforms, while staying authentic. Between 2006 and 2019, I established and managed four blogs of my own, given an opportunity to build a blogger network and attend various blogger events. Having spent much time with blogs and bloggers, I have witnessed a wide range of performances and practices experienced both

online and offline. The contested nature of blogging, the blogosphere as a field, and this culture-making process along with the nature of production of labor attracted my attention as a field of study.

In 2008, one blog illegally broadcasted a soccer game, which was under the rights of Digitürk. After the lawsuit over match broadcasts, all blogs were closed in Turkey. Although the ban was released later, due to the ongoing court, for the same reason, it was repeated in 2011. Because of a single blog publishing, access to over 4 million pages were denied at that time. Those were the years when blogging was at its peak in Turkey. During this period, the bloggers' inability to access their blogs caused great anxiety, sadness and stress. The dread of losing their content, the sense of losing their blogs, which bloggers use as a journal, a job, and a source of revenue at times, in an atmosphere where the government regularly imposes internet prohibitions, forces bloggers to stay active in whatever environment they can. To reach their content, bloggers found ways to change the settings and logged in non-legit ways, hacking the system. Believing this was unjust as the innocent suffer along with the guilty, this situation was reflected in the bloggers' lines as a rebellion against the restriction on freedom of expression. Millions of people's labor was ignored under authoritarian constraints, ruining a variety of expectations. These types of practices have also pushed bloggers into a struggle for existence in diverse environments. The fear of their assets being erased in the digital world due to the restrictions placed on the internet at every opportunity, the feeling where their labor can be wasted at any moment, directed them to evaluate every other internet platform that emerged. That panic and fuss were reflected in the lines of each. This chaos became a trending topic in Twitter from time to time as also in 2018, all blogs were shut down again with no reason, but later explained it was due to an undefined error[1].

The blogger.com is widely used in Turkey, which offers free domains with an ease of use. Allowing to upload templates and play with them, blogger.com/blogspot.com is chosen against tumblr.com or wordpress.com by bloggers who want to personalize their blogs. Some bloggers master their skills on blog page personalization, and they offer their skills to others without payment but, in return of a promotion of their blogs. So, sweepstakes or barter appeared as common types of

[1] Bloggers couldn’t reach to their content or enter to other blogs both in February 28, 2011 and July 24, 2011. The ban was released in a day saying it was a mistake. The formal messages didn’t appear in the institutional level. People complained about these bans in an informal critical page. For more: https://eksisozluk.com/28-subat-2011-blogspot-erisim-yasagi--2697357

exchange methods to gain more followers, allowing a reciprocal relationship among bloggers. Previously, there was a popular introduction method called *mime* where bloggers were tagging each other asking several questions, and with a domino effect they were spreading this challenge. This *mime* event appeared as a method they used to introduce each other to the blogger community intending to gain more followers. It was also a support to each other, especially popular among the newcomers and amateur circles.

Later, many blogger meetings have started to take place. Keeping up with the advancing technology, bloggers have begun to exist on other platforms and increase their followers without much need for these "primitive" methods, simpler or more sophisticated views offered by the social media tools like Instagram and YouTube. The offerings of different web platforms and social media tools allow bloggers for self-development in terms of using these opportunities. They still like and comment on each other on Instagram, but events like *mime* are not popular as before and started to disappear. Despite the existence of various new methods for expansion, sweepstakes are still used to gain more followers. But currently, in a more competitive market, people have even begun to buy followers.

Continuous efforts to innovate, discover something distinctive, and stay on the agenda promote an enduring cycle of hope in this environment. There are diverse dynamics among women bloggers, who try to survive in the rival market conditions, that go beyond the duality of the approach that arrived with Web 2.0, the celebratory approach to social media, and the other extreme; exploitation and alienation produced by the use of new digital media tools. Thus, this study focuses on the women who are making every effort to remain current in the competitive world of blogosphere, either by posting to their blogs or with their on-site performances. Categorizing women bloggers as aspirants, businesswomen and celebrity bloggers, the performances and blogging practices of these women both in the digital and physical world are explored. Performances occur in various platforms in the form of participating in blogger meetings, workshops, appearing in TV programs, newspapers and magazines, engaging in self-compromised preparation processes, and so on. This study demonstrates that these women constantly strive to show their efforts to be approved and appreciated, to be noticed and to turn this into monetary/non-monetary gains. Therefore, instead of seeing the blog practice solely as a tool of empowerment (Eltantawy, 2013; Zareie,

2013; Cantek, 2011), which creates a space for developing women, I consider it as a stimulating and expressive tool. Beyond this dilemma, as many different aspirations, dreams, and performances emerge, the blogosphere becomes a field where women wish to actualize their diverse expectations.

The blogosphere acts as a "hoping" mechanism here, which can give women the chance to provide certain benefits such as different status in the public sphere, upward mobility, monetary rewards, socialization, networking opportunities, and self-realization possibilities. But still, contradictions and fluctuations continue in their thoughts in terms of both complaints and celebrations. Consequently, while this is a platform where they redefine their already existing identities including being a mother, housewife, businesswoman, or retired person, it can also become a platform where they get tired of being in debt, being in constant representation in front of an audience and get exhausted from presenting themselves neatly, from feeling obliged to be there and write continuously. Since this is a voluntary act, when it brings a responsibility, it may feel like a regular job which sometimes makes it harder to continue. Subsequently, some of them quit blogging, which requires stronger performance and writing longer posts, and move to fast-consuming platforms such as Instagram and YouTube where they can appeal to people through visuals.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This dissertation investigates the blogosphere as a field of labor production through the concept of hope. The blogosphere as a vibrant, unstable field creates salient performances and conflicting emotions with its fragmented structure among women bloggers in Turkey. The blogosphere is not a static field, but a complex, contested terrain. It produces new embodiments for women, allowing a multiplicity of hope. With its context and environment, the field of blogosphere has a direct bearing on the development of subjectivities and practices. It leads to self-development of women allowing them to become more risk-taking entrepreuners who want to keep up with the changing dynamics in the field, while producing more content to reach a wider audience for different purposes. So, the blogosphere with its fragmented structure allows women to compete for the accumulation and exchange of different kinds of capital. The blogosphere offers hope for self-development, unity and upward mobility opportunities through production, while also creating rivalry, disappointment, despair and exhaustion. Its complexity produces various kinds of feelings in itself, so blogging as a practice

diversifies in other platforms in the form of new performances and hopes. Thus, this research explores the Turkish blogosphere, including the motivations and expectations of women, their negotiation of hope, and the labor they produce. Considering blogging as a media practice (Couldry, 2004) and tool, this study examines the narratives of aspirant, businesswomen and celebrity bloggers. Couldry offers a new paradigm for media research that "sees media not as text or production economy, but first and foremost as practice" (2004, p.115). Couldry's media practice theory focuses on "what people are doing that is related to the media "(Couldry, 2012, p.35). Media as a practice requires a regular, social action and the notion of media practice seeks to identify the ways in which individuals incorporate media into their daily lives – almost inadvertently, implicitly – in order to fulfill their many unique human needs (Couldry, 2012). Thus, bloggers engage with media as a daily practice and blogging as a media practice includes writing, reading, commenting, guest-posting, and participating in the blogger community. Blogging as a media practice creates hope for new embodiments for women who can make claims about their existing well-being or future. It also brings other struggles including being present and visible in the newly appearing web-platforms. The diverse forms of media and our possible interactions with them bring the need to study the daily practice of blogging of women from a "polymedia" (Madianou &Miller, 2012) perspective. Madianou and Miller defines polymedia as "an emerging environment of communicative opportunities that functions as an 'integrated structure' within which each individual medium is defined in relational terms in the context of all other media" (2012, p.170). Studying media in a polymediated way from the practice approach, the research focuses on routine activities of women bloggers shedding light on their media production processes to prove the media effects through these subjects. By doing so, it offers a new perspective to study the complex relationship to media(tion) in our daily lives. As a basis for the research, I identified the problem to be threefold.

The first major issue identified is the work done in digital environments and media production which are generally examined within certain binaries including an exploitation or a pleasure debate in digital labor studies. Digital media production in blogs is part of the creative industries, and creative work has been associated with adjectives like "cool," "hip," "self-realizing," "fun," "promising," and "doing what you love," so it encourages enthusiastic and hopeful wannabes to perform their dream jobs for free (Alacovska, 2018). Labor-production in blogs is either seen as empowering or self-exploitative by the two dominant discourses: celebratory (Jenkins, 2006; Kaplan

and Haenlein, 2010) and critical approach (Fuchs, 2014; Andrejevic, 2011; Hesmondhalgh, 2010) to new media production. Despite the precarious conditions posed by the competitive blogosphere, where voluntarily given work is open to exploitation, blogging is still appealing. In order to explore this further, three primary questions should be asked: why many people aspire to have a blogging career, what keeps them in the blogosphere and how.

The second major issue is the fast pace of technological advancement, mainly the evolving nature of new media tools under the name of platformization[2]. Because these platforms are constantly updated, migrating, opening, or closing, and the content on the web is quickly consumed, users adapt to these changes and bring about various embodiments in terms of self-expression and performance. The growth of technology is the main reason for the fluctuations in these platforms. The struggle to survive in these shaky, ever-changing platforms creates complicated feelings among bloggers. I seek to answer why these users want to exist on various platforms at the same time and how they negotiate fame, labor, and identity in the age of extreme self-display.

The last research issue I address is bloggers' negotiation of hope in these digital environments, specifically in the blogosphere. Women bloggers in the Turkish blogosphere are "hoping subjects" (Hage, 2004, p.107) shaped by the changing conditions of capitalist and neoliberal dynamics adopted by several national/multinational companies who cooperate with bloggers for advertising strategies and also by their temporal existences in various web-platforms. In the neoliberal restructuring of the country, many women in the Turkish blogosphere take initiatives and come out as successful trendsetters, influencers, content creators, or businesswomen while some others still struggle to achieve certain aims in the field of the blogosphere where rival market rules apply. Bourdieu argues that "fields consist of various social and institutional arenas in which people express and reproduce their dispositions, and where they compete for the distribution of different kinds of capital" (cited in Gaventa 2003, p.6). Thus, for a better understanding of the blogging practices of women, we need to investigate the contested state of the blogosphere through the framework of hope which influences the forms of capital these women have or gain. According to Hage (2004), the only possible way to construct a meaningful future for ourselves, is to

[2] "Platformization is defined as the penetration of infrastructures, economic processes and governmental frameworks of digital platforms in different economic sectors and spheres of life, as well as the reorganization of cultural practices and imaginations around these platforms" (Nieborg et.al, 2019, p.85).

have hope and work within a society that acts as a distributor of social opportunities for self-realization.

However, in the case of women bloggers investigated, hope appears as a more individualistic practice and an existential tool when the social opportunities are not equally distributed in a society. Although many studies (Pedersen, 2007; Nardi et.al, 2004) analyze the reasons behind blogging, we need to investigate these motivations in terms of wider social relations and performances. One of the main reasons that people choose to blog is to engage in hope which takes various forms. People blog because they have the hope to actualize something in return. It can be fame, self-realization, publicity, economic gain, survival, and escapism, just to name a few. But less has been said about hope in the background which both gives the impetus for these practices and is used as a tool to continue blogging. Bloggers engage in labor production in and outside their blogs with the hope of achieving their goals, while also engaging new forms of hoping with the labor they produce. Therefore, hope becomes both an existential tool and an affective practice for bloggers.

In this framework, blogging as a media practice and the blogosphere serve as mediums that create hope for new embodiments for women who can make claims about their future in terms of publicity, employment opportunities, sense of belonging, and self-realization. The blogosphere has become a promising site that offers to combine storytelling with multimedia content, from lifestyle to politics, and hobbies and crafts. From a neoliberal and postmodernist perspective, we can assume that the entrepreneurial self is rewarded through the recent explosion of social media usage and platform economies which make the game worth playing. However, there are other variables effecting the performances of these women including the unstable, ever-changing web platforms, fast pace in the development of technological tools, and strict rules on the Internet. So, we need to allow the salient and complicated feelings in the world of women's blogosphere in terms of achieving success, fame and career opportunities.

Ultimately, categorizing women bloggers as aspirants, businesswomen, and celebrities, this dissertation asks how hope functions as an affective tool in women's blogging practices and what these performances of women tell us about hope and labor in between the existing discussions revolving around digital labor and platformization debates. Specifically, this research examines how hope is attached to blogging as practice and is experienced and understood in ordinary performances of women

bloggers. Based on 4-years of ethnographic research, this study shows that as an "existential affective" (Alacovska, 2019, p.1118) tool, hope has a replicative reorientation dimension among bloggers which allows it to travel, circulate, transcend and expand, while mobilizing women to challenge the dominant normative conceptualizations.

1.3 Definitions: Blog, Blogging, Blogger

The last two decades witnessed tremendous growth in the number of blogs published worldwide making them a significant feature of online culture. Bloggers currently play a vital role in the marketing and global advertising industries, and the story-telling format of blogging allows for more opportunities for self-explanation. Reshaping the borders of the public sphere, blogs are one of the most important features of media making and prosumer[3] culture and serve as a platform where "self" is made and remade.

Blogs are commonly defined as online journals whose entries are displayed in reverse chronological order and updated frequently (Herring et al., 2004). The first blogs were started in the early 1990s, and the "explosion year" of blogs is stated as 1999 (Hookway, 2008, p.106). The first blog in today's format is Dave Winer's blog that he created as part of his project "24 Hours of Democracy", and the term weblog was also used for the same page for the first time in 1997 (Herring et al., 2004, p.1). Despite arguing the term's first usage was in another source by John Barger, Du and Wagner (2006, p.790) also stated that the date of introduction of the word blog into everyday use was 1997. With the advent of easy-to-use weblog software, the number of blogs has risen to an estimated 133 million – a number that doubles every 200 days (Sifry, 2008). Nielsen (2012) estimated the number of blogs worldwide as more than 200 million by 2013. Blogs gained a rapid popularity worldwide as today's consumers not only consume but also share their own opinions about the products they use, while also following the advices of other users, believing in a more interactive interaction. Most of the software used to create blogs is free, which enables anyone with an internet connection to create and maintain their blogs and disseminate their voice to the world. One of the things that differentiate blogs from other kinds of writing on the web is that they are imbued "with a strong sense of the author's personality, passions, and point of view" (Nardi et al., 2004, p.42).

[3] Prosumer is a term coined by Alvin Toffler (1980) referring to the amalgamation of the producer and the consumer into the prosumer.

The blogosphere is an ecosystem of interconnected bloggers and readers; a global community of individuals who write and maintain personal blogs on the internet. Generally excluding corporate blogs and publications from its definition, the term encompasses all blogs written personally. Being more about the configuration and interaction among bloggers as it was about any given site, the term gained popularity in the early 2000s, referring to collections of blogs and the conversation appeared among them (Halavais, 2016). The blogosphere stands as a critical platform where user participation becomes a particular form of labor for promoting not only products, but also emotions and personalities. Blogging, on the other hand, refers to writing, photography, and other media that's self-published online. Blogging began as a way for individuals to write diary-style entries, but it has since been incorporated into many businesses' websites. Blogging practices vary from creating and posting a blog post (pictures and/or text), commenting on other bloggers' entries, replying to feedbacks from blog readers and linking or tagging other bloggers. Blogging, as a regular and social action, requires an active online and offline performance-based on not only writing, reading, commenting, guest-posting but also participating in the events. Finally, what is meant by blogger is someone who writes a blog which appears as a regular record of someone's ideas, opinions, or experiences that are put on the internet for other people to read. Bloggers who update themselves and their blogs on a regular basis in line with the advances in technology remain current in the blogosphere. Given these practical definitions, this dissertation uses the term blogging as the active performances of bloggers both online and offline while the blogger term is used to refer to those who are self-defined bloggers whether they have active blog pages or not, but blogged once, still blogging or navigated to other social media platforms keeping their blogger identities. The active, social and regular performances of individuals in the blogosphere correspond to media practice approach whose aim is "to decenter media research from the study of media texts but redirect it onto the study of the open-ended range of practices focused directly or indirectly" (Couldry, 2004, p.117).

The "blogger" is the subject of the study who is the entrepreneurial woman; technologically savvy, independent, and social and who has access not only to the virtual world but also to physical places -where blogger events take place- including hotels, TV studios, schools and even to events in different cities or countries. Making these women the representatives of the information revolution, being a blogger is closely related to Zygmunt Bauman's (2000) "late modernity" concept, corresponding

with global, capitalist modernity. Currently, online and offline experiences represent the dynamic character of modern societies and this requires a consideration of the discussion on "identity through the notion of fragmentized subjectivity across different spheres" (Bauman in Serafinelli, 2018, p.151). Giddens also identified the internet as the ideal environment for the articulation of identity expressions, pluralization of self-disclosures, and negotiation of multiple identities (in Serafinelli, 2018, p.151).

1.4 Contextualization: Researching Blogosphere

1.4.1 New Media and Platformization of the Web

When I interviewed Doğa (49) for her blog in 2016, she teased me by asking which blog I was talking about. She is a top-earning influencer, who started her career with a fashion blog. She considers herself a blogger despite only rarely taking an active role in writing her blog. Currently her blogs have completely disappeared and now she devotes herself mainly to Instagram stories and YouTube broadcasts. As she stated later, "*it is show time, you have to show your face more, so that people won't forget you*". This is also true for many women bloggers who have started to navigate, and sometimes float in between different web platforms for the sustainment of their blogger careers due to the fast growth of internet technologies. To maintain this pace and rapid changes, many bloggers choose to diversify their platforms to represent their digital selves. Some bloggers have been successful in building their careers while simply publishing blog tutorials. Others are still attempting to achieve their goals with the additional burden of having to learn complex web 2.0 tools and negotiating multiple digital platforms. Despite the DIY (do-it-yourself) careers some women bloggers were able to build; blogging is no longer regarded as a viable pathway to career for most women as blogging platforms re-anchored women to feminized affective labor (Lukács, 2020).

Besides the individual desires, motivations, or hopes, what makes blogging act important is also the way it builds a community around this performance. The most recent uses of the Web 2.0 are marked not only by their openness to contributions by the user but also by their tendency to foment community. Raising important questions about story-telling and self-representation, motivations for media use and the building of community online, being one of the most popular new media tools, blogs, and bloggers are widely explored and many theories have been proposed to explain the use of digital networked technologies, user-generated content and how it effects people by various disciplines such as digital media and communication studies, celebrity and audience

studies.

With the features of digitality, interactivity, hypertextuality, diffusion, and virtuality differentiating from traditional media environments (as cited in Lister et al., Binark, 2009, p.60), new media, based on computer usage and interaction, made user-generated content available along with the rise of social media websites. The infrastructure of Web 2.0 has enabled Internet users to interact and collaborate, allowing social media to become one of the most powerful tools with a major impact on our communication styles, socialization, and self-formation processes. Henry Jenkins (2006) has emphasized the co-creativity aspects of social media where fans are empowered by being involved in cultural production[4]. Social media platforms have materially broadened the access and ease of production, inviting users to co-create content and value (Jenkins, 2006; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Interfaces such as blogs, Instagram, Facebook, Youtube, and Twitter have become powerful social media tools that highly dominate our leisure time. Although blogs are effective in many respects and there is a remarkable blogger power in the marketing area, one can only accept the fast growth of Instagram and YouTube usage among bloggers. The contemporary era fastened the blog-making process carrying it further, as technological developments pushed bloggers towards synchronizing their content with other platforms as well. Current discussions revolve around the platformization of the web, characterized by the fast pace and temporality, resulting in a struggle for these people to survive in the fast competitive market.

According to Manovich (2001), if the logic of old media corresponded to the logic of industrial mass society where everybody was enjoying the same goods with the same beliefs, the logic of new media fits the logic of the post-industrial society which values individuality over conformity. Trying to target each individual separately, marketing strategies are created that are automatically customized for every visitor on the web. Putting the individual at the center, new media technologies provide both opportunities and challenges to those who want to be present in the digital world. “Interactive modalities provide users with a feeling of agency—the sense that they can shape the flow of information and engage with a computerized interlocutor” (Briggs, 2007, p.554). New entrepreneurship opportunities appear along with the possibility for

[4] Jenkins was criticized for his tendency to overstate the creativity of users and neglect processes of exploitation and alienation since users’ time and energies have been utilized as an unpaid form of work (Fuchs 2014; Andrejevic 2011). However, this pleasure vs. exploitation discourse is not the particular focus of this study.

self-branding while organizations use social media as a promotional tool, to enter a dialogue with stakeholders and to reach a larger audience.

After the introduction of web 2.0 and widespread technological, economic and political transformations in the global labor market, creative work is extensively discussed in academic spheres. When we look at the media studies scholarship from a historical perspective, we see that much of it focuses on texts and audiences. However, recent debates in media and communication literature encompass studies of media labor. Mainly, the discourses revolve around the celebratory approaches and critical perspectives on Marxist grounds. Framing of (new) media industries as 'cool', non-hierarchical and egalitarian in one hand, we have techno-utopian celebrations like thanks to Internet and digitization, anyone can become a creative producer. One can easily become famous, wealthy, or develop a great career online by doing what she/he loves (Duffy, 2017), without leaving the comfort of their home. Contrary to highly celebratory discourses that position online content creation as more diverse, inclusive, and meritocratic than traditional creative industries, on the other side of the coin, there is the Marxist critique of digital labor, where all social media users, who produce unpaid labor, are seen as exploited (Fuchs and Sevignani, 2013; Andrejevic, 2011; Hesmondhalgh, 2010). As Scholz explains "… labor markets have shifted to a place where labor does not look like labor at all" (2010, p. 242).

Scholars have framed the type of work done in creative industries with different concepts including hope-labor (Kuehn & Corrigan, 2013), immaterial labor (Lazzarato, 1996), venture labor (Neff, 2012), relational labor (Baym, 2015), emotional labor (Hochschild, 1983), passionate labor (Sandoval, 2018), and co-creative labor (Banks&Deuze, 2009). These kinds of labor are often regarded as self-exploitative, not necessarily expecting economic benefits, but accept non-monetary rewards such as promising careers, fame, self-realization, publicity, and more leisure time. These conceptualizations are criticized by their lack of gender aspect by scholars like Gill, 2002; Duffy, 2016; Arcy, 2016; McRobbie, 2016 who have focused on the gendered and emotional aspects of digital labor emphasizing the structural inequalities experienced by those working in these industries. According to Duffy (2016), the male-centric approach to digital labor studies is especially problematic because labor is increasingly feminized in the media workplace. So, drawing on Duffy, this research adopts a critical re-examination of the interrelationships between gender and labor through the framework of hope in socially mediated contexts. Not only gendering the

digital labor debate matters, but also gendering the particular kinds of hopes bloggers experience for achieving different forms of capital through blogging does. Studies show that men are generally more hopeful than women (Alvi & Mirza, 2018), while it is revealed that women are more frequently and severely exposed to depression compared to men (Wikström et.al, 2018). However, hope is not a static emotion or state as it changes forms depending on various contexts, environments, and situations. Thus, this study would help to have a better understanding of the perception of hope among women in a mediated context highly dominated by women, apart from the already acknowledged gender differences.

Nowadays, the existing digital labor debate started to extend to platformization discussions. Platformization of cultural production involves the "penetration of economic, governmental, and infrastructural extensions of digital platforms into the web and app ecosystems, fundamentally affecting the operations of the cultural industries" (Duffy et.al, p. 4276). The content produced in web are dependent on digital plaforms such as Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon, and Microsoft in the West, and the dependent relation between cultural producers and platforms affect all forms of media making, allowing constant revision and re-circulation (Nieborg & Poell, 2019). Due to the fast growth of social media/social entertainment platforms, an increasing proportion of content creators are being professionalized. Cross-platform tendency makes online content creators synchronize their social media accounts and many of them choose to carry their online careers to YouTube eventually, to have a more professional look. Thus, the professionalization of content creators on live-streaming platforms is a prominent trend. However, this fast pace also brings an atmosphere where these instantly changing platforms appear as unstable places that lead to shaky careers that people work for long hours with no pay. According to Glatt (2020), as a result of the platformization of creative labor, content creators face long-standing discriminations and new forms of structural inequalities as this advertising-driven industry makes visible the most profitable creators, and those who do not disrupt the neoliberal status quo: white, straight, male, middle class, cis-gendered, brand-friendly, are excluded. Those who do not comply with the market's expectations and do not fit this narrow demographic face are subject to stay in the shadows while a huge pay gap emerges among famous influencers and amateur content creators. Despite the volatility of these cultural markets, the main idea of social media users or content creators is to be visible putting themselves out there.

Moreover, the problems are not limited to those as cultural workers pursuing creative careers amid platformization face an especially capricious system of constraints: algorithmic systems (Duffy, 2020). According to Duffy (2020), bloggers, Instagrammers, YouTubers, TikTok creators, and Pinterest tastemakers find themselves struggling with the algorithmic visibility problems like rankings, ratings, and scores which results in the production of various kinds of immaterial labor. Thus, especially aspiring creative workers engage in a continuous effort to remain current in this environment. Some bloggers have already gained SEO (search engine optimization) expertise, Youtuber, and Vlogger identities to enhance their blogger careers and their blogs. As creative workers are expected to be hyper-vigilant about their self-branding efforts, Duffy (2018) argues that investing energy in online relationship-building is the key to being well-marketed for bloggers, vloggers, and other content creators. These activities comprise what Baym (2015) calls relational labor, or the "regular, ongoing communication with audiences over time to build social relationships that foster paid work" (2015, p.16). According to Baym, relationships in labor should not be understood as" inherently either genuine or alienating, empowering or oppressive", since "they are all of these and more, often at the same time" (2015, p.20).

Power imbalance does not disappear in digital platforms but continue to exist among digital producers, due to the hierarchical structure among content creators. If someone is a wealthy influencer, blogger, or vlogger, she is already utilizing all her resources and is easily followed. Third parties want her to promote the products that she can already buy with her wealth. Some other blogger, on the other hand, aspires to be like her, but she is not picked by the firms, therefore she is unable to reach this circle despite her efforts. Nowadays, one can even buy followers for their social media profiles. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these platforms for individuals is determined by their reliance on them. Bloggers who are dependent on these platforms have a more compulsory type of labor, so it feels like an office job at times, causing distress and exhaustion in the end. Those from a wealthy family and social status, on the other hand, see it as a hobby and do it for joy rather for profit. As a result, their experiences are unique. To be more precise, aspirants who want to survive in this competitive market, or celebrities who want to maintain their status quo, face fierce competition and struggle to achieve their goals. However, others have achieved a certain level of success through their blogs, utilizing them as a vehicle for job advancement and career-making.

Along with the labor created, this cross-platform mobilization and change bring

the transformation and evolution of hope and various hopeful practices to the fore. The hope of getting ads by increasing the number of views and subscribers, as well as the desire and hope of making money, force content-creators to appear on various platforms at the same time. This is evident in the case of Pınar (35), who was a fashion designer in Turkey and moved to England after getting married. She started to share the bread she cooked via Instagram and turned out to be a successful influencer. She tells her story[5] on her YouTube page to her followers to be a source of inspiration saying,

> *"I had nothing when I moved here, no neighbors, no friends, no job. I was a mother of a two-year-old, making bread at home. Things have changed fast after sharing my stories on Instagram, now I have agreements with many companies. I drink tea with my followers, make workshops with many important names, and I don't have time to spare for myself right now. I'm trying to catch up and edit videos for days. I also had to give my child to the daycare center. "*

In other words, the life of Pinar changes with YouTube along with the transformation of her hopes. While Pınar's commitment to this platform is increasing day by day, her investments in herself like joining online courses for video-making, broadcasting, SEO, and also the types of equipment she buys including a new Vlogger camera, a tripod, and professional lights increase as well. Furthermore, her followers' capacity to produce the same sort of bread and exhibit their ingenuity even on something as simple as bread, believing that they can accomplish the same thing, spreads this optimism to others. Making innovative sorts of bread and being pleased of what they are doing, and maybe earning money from it, raises new hopes among women, especially during a pandemic. Pandemic has made our houses public, and this self-presentation via Instagram and YouTube has converted a mundane task like baking bread into a source of inspiration and affirmation, among other things.

Bloggers, like Pınar, engage in platform-dependent kinds of cultural production. If the same individual moves from Facebook to Twitter, to a blog, or to YouTube, the platform is not the cause; rather, we must look at underlying cultural concerns to understand why a certain network is occupied. Once blogger.com, then Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat or TikTok. They are becoming fashionable and recognized as potential places for anyone wishing to achieve something with and via these platforms. These sites offer a free and flexible format for people to realize their hopes.

To have a self-brand and a chance in an unpredictable and individualistic field, cultural workers are urged to be self-directed, adaptive, and entrepreneurial in

[5] Pınar's story "İstanbul'dan İngiltere'ye serüvenim": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQrT9KL_6qA

accordance with the ideals of the larger commercial environment and neoliberal logic. Even though these networks are altering the nature of employment, decreasing prosperity, and increasing precarity, there are chances to transform economic relations and create chances for people to make money without relying on employers. It is also vital to consider the communication opportunities that digital economies provide for individuals. Despite their volatility, working voluntarily/creating content in these digital platforms allows a utopian kind of approach and aspiration to kind of transform the economic institutions people are critical about. People are utilizing these digital platforms to construct new types of markets and economies that meet their moral goals, which in turn creates new hopes and reorients the idea of hope by expanding the circle.

1.4.2 Research on Women's Blogging

> *"Bloggers have an undeniable force of power in the industry: they're driving sales, they're contributing to campaigns", "you want to wear what she's wearing and it really does translate into numbers, it really does translate to sales." (Duffy, 2016, p.11)*

Since blogs are usually researched as part of the creative industries, then bloggers are cultural workers as they produce culture while they also give impetus to the economy. Being one of the most popular new media tools, blogs and bloggers also suffer from the precarious nature of creative industries although it is a voluntary-basis culture production and content creation.

In the early 2000s, blogging, which gained popularity in many different countries of the world, has been the subject of various studies within the framework of the performances of women bloggers and the labor they produce. Many studies suggest that blog writers are mainly women, and blogging has a feminine language with its emotional, fragmented and inspiring nature (Bowen, 2004; Hayton, 2009; Hookway, 2008; in Depeli, 2015, p.274). Besides these, the main reason to put particular emphasis on the women's blogosphere depends on the feminist perspectives which emphasize the gendered history of invisible work, pointing out the women's work in digital platforms represent an extension of women's labor exploitation in domestic life (Jarrett, 2014, 2016; Arcy, 2016). Much of the digital labor debate is based on Marxist grounds as domestic work is seen as free labor and exploited and, it continues in digital platforms as well. The digital labor debate, which focuses on a "male-centric conception of work and social struggle" (Federici, 2012, p.89) needs to be critically evaluated from a gendered perspective.

Studies focus on the reasons why people blog have found that individuals have a

desire to document their own life, express their opinions, have an outlet for catharsis, inspire their creative juices, and participate in a community forum (Nardi et al., 2004). Based on her interviews with fifty women, Sarah Pedersen concluded that female users' motivation to blog, is the need for the approval of their experiences, lives, and thoughts (in Cantek, 2011, p.14).

The nature of blogging and the motivations behind show differences based on the demographics, geography, politics, and culture of various countries. Many studies consider blogging as an empowering tool for women in non-Western contexts (Zareie, 2013; Eltantawy, 2013; Pahwa, 2014; Jurkewicz, 2018) where they struggle for their hopes via this medium. Along with the opportunities web 2.0 brings, blogs appear as a reflexive medium for women to interact and communicate with each other, and also provide the digital spaces through which they reflect on their status in society (Zareie, 2013). The blogosphere offers women a wide range of possibilities to discuss social norms and hierarchies and at times challenge authorities in their countries. Social media played a significant role in the Arab Spring in the Middle East in late 2010, enabling uprisings to have an autonomous communicative capacity away from power structures (Castells, 2012). Thus, thanks to social media's affordances regarding leadership and empowerment (Radsch and Khamis, 2013), Arab women redefined their activism, empowerment, and resistance through social media, and the Western world was introduced to "a new image of women in the Middle East: women who are courageous, independent, and technologically savvy" (Eltantawy, 2013, p.765). Similarly, despite death threats, female bloggers in Afghanistan resisted patriarchal attitudes by posting about prostitution, poverty, and their causes. Moreover, digital media let the transformation of social space for women in Egypt since they use blogs as nodes where spaces of home, work, and political interest are integrated (Pahwa, 2014). Examining the blogging in Beirut, Sarah Jurkewicz (2018) finds out that the public are not as static 'spheres' that actors merely enter, but as produced and constituted by social practices.

Besides the socialization, empowerment, publicity, and attention it brings, the blogosphere may also provide job/career opportunities, serving as a new battlefield for women where they struggle for "hope". For example, at the opposite side of the world, in 2006, more blog posts per hour were produced in Japanese than in English (Jodi Dean, 2010, p.37) and Lukács (2020) claims that many women who had long dominated Japan's irregular workforce turned to blogging to develop new life projects. While most of them failed, blogging platforms generated wealth from bloggers' uncompensated

labor (Lukács, 2020). Furthermore, in the US, there are near-continuous stories of "fem-prenuers"(female+entrepreuner) and women who have profited tremendously from the platform economies in media[6]. Narratives of women are not only tempting for academic circles, but also the role of media and political institutions in circulating this image of digitally mediated "hope" is undeniable in Western contexts. Thus, it makes sense that these narratives would animate the individual experiences of women. But the reality of the situation is much more complicated when these women find competition, a lack of traditional forms of support, and increasingly, the need to self-brand in complex and exhausting ways. So, despite many do benefit from self-expression in the blogosphere or other social media platforms, they share complicated experiences. These experiences range from achieving success and fame to have disappointment, frustration or envy, while also allowing a precarious labor production and struggle to stay active.

1.4.3. Blogging Trend in Turkey

Evaluating the Turkish blogosphere from a gendered perspective, this research points out the gendered side of creative labor produced in blogs letting creative industry studies communicate with feminist theory. From this point of view, the dissertation adds to the digital labor scholarship which is mainly Western and has a male voice. Additionally, in terms of celebrity studies, this research sheds light on bloggers as celebrities in a non-Western context, which will also provide us an understanding of the differences and similarities between them on a regional basis. Being in a liminal space, women's blogosphere in Turkey differs from its Middle Eastern counterparts like Egypt (Pahwa, 2014) or Lebanon (Jurkiewicz, 2018) where women bloggers are historically affected by the interplay between digital media and activism. Rather than social media activism on blogs, we address more individualistic entrepreneurism in Turkey, whether for monetary incentives, job opportunities, or self-fulfillment and self-realization.

The focus on the Turkish blogosphere demonstrates that the blogosphere appears as a playground for women's struggle for hope, while bloggers' performances can be associated with a future-oriented hope. As social hope leads to self-investment for a better, dignified future, this future-oriented hope is also supported by a rewards system. However, while blogging as a media practice give women bloggers the hope to build a

[6] Based on the statement of Brooke Erin Duffy, in the Q&A section of her presentation, "Very Unpredictable Platforms: The Nested Precarity of Social Media Labor" in Virtual Symposium: Platformed Creation, organized by Stanford Ethnography Lab on October 16, 2020.

better future, it also brings a continuous struggle allowing a precarious, never-ending hope to prevail. In Turkey, bloggers occasionally find support through national competitions organized by private companies in which they can win titles such as "best expert blog," "best-designed blog," "most promising blog", and are rewarded with a column in a newspaper/magazine or temporary sponsorships. However, there is no regular or ongoing government or institutional support for "fem-preuners" on platform economies, and women's success stories are only rarely highlighted in national media. Rather, they are disseminated through specific blogging workshops or by individual postings. Additionally, sponsor companies support some of the bloggers appropriate for their targets, usually chosen among White-middle-classed celebrity bloggers. This situation is further exemplified in Chapter 6, in the case of Doğa, who has more access to economic and social resources, so she can use her economic and social capital effectively for promotion purposes. Along with the power dynamics inherent in digital platforms, this social exclusion and segregated inclusion prevail (Glatt, 2020), however, it is a wider topic for the scope of this dissertation and deserves further research. Thus, other women bloggers who are struggling on their own, try to self-brand in complex and exhausting ways in the hope of achieving their targets in this competitive market. They experience salient and complicated emotions while attempting to be present on several platforms at the same time. Given the obstacles they encountered on their journeys, this struggle may result both in success and disappointment. Women's hope appears in the contested character of the blogosphere as something that travels and circulates, reorients, can be imitated and copied, but also demanding a genuine self. While some women benefit from this circumstance, others do not. In both cases, hope is a daily struggle for them.

In terms of social media use in Turkey, it is reported that Turkey is one of the world's largest Internet users, with over 51 million active social media users, accounting for 63% of the population, 42% of whom are women (Wearesocial.com 2018). It is hard to imagine the number of bloggers and how many of them are women, but it is constantly growing despite the popping of other social media interfaces. Studies about blogging in Turkey generally revolve around thematic blogging, focusing on specific fields, including news blogs (Atikkan and Tunç, 2011), academic blogs (Bayraktutan-Sütçü, 2010), food blogs (Cantek, 2011) and mommy blogs (Yelsalı-Parmaksız, 2012). These studies explore blogs as a new form of communication medium, an alternative providing many possibilities to its users. Cantek (2011) argues that blogging activities

allow women to improve their skills of using information technologies, and help their socialization and self-representation processes, while Yelsalı-Parmaksız (2012) claims that mommy blogs let socialization among women constituting an online community of mothers. Moreover, Sarıkaya (2011) considers a blog as a medium to express one's true self, offering a very personal way of self-expression. Blogs are analyzed not only as a communication medium but also as a research tool for ethnography (Saka, 2008) or language learning (Bakla and Arıkan 2011). Depeli (2015) on the other hand, analyzes female literariness in blogs through the textual and discourse analysis of 21 female bloggers' pages and argues that the language of new media is feminized in a sense but, it is also true that female language is also masculinized. Yıldırım (2015) also investigates the relationship between the blog writers and readers measuring readers' contribution to blogs with the influence of blogs on the readership.

Although much has been written about blogging from a variety of perspectives, little attention has been given to blogging as a media practice that serves as a playground for women who struggle for hope negotiating disclosure, fame, and labor in their online self-presentation. This study considers blogging as a medium for the transformation of feminine subjectivities but encompasses a wider perspective including bloggers from various kinds of blogs and backgrounds. Neither focusing on a specific genre nor considering blogging as a mere medium, this dissertation allows the examination of labor production in blogs through the notion of hope and vice versa. Specifically, it discusses the transformation processes of bloggers -randomly chosen from popular ones to amateur souls- from offline to online personas in reference to time and effort they spend, social and economic mobility they experience, and the kind of labor they produce.

Even though majority of the blogs are individualistic in Turkey, currently, most of the blogs contain backlinks to third parties such as sister blogs they cooperate with, sponsored products, and companies they advertise with. Despite the competitive market conditions, support and collaboration appear among women bloggers, especially among amateur bloggers who address a smaller audience. Amateur blogs also benefit from the poking movement called *mime* (a poking sound meaning "*I marked you*"), in which one blogger asks and answers some private questions in her blog post, and at then dares another blogger with a link to her blog. With the help of the *mime* effect, unknown bloggers started to be recognized among the blogger community and *mime* appears as a way of showing support and understanding to each other. Other types of support and

social interaction among bloggers include commenting on one other's postings, endorsing each other in their writings, and displaying each other's blogs as banners. However, these practices evolve in response to the additional opportunities that newly emerging platforms provide to content creators, such as hashtag usage, narrative postings, and other types of tagging systems.

The above-mentioned literature needs an insider's look to understand the ways bloggers become "influencers", "trendsetters" and adopt "blogger" identities as their lifetime careers. Thus, deploying an ethnographic approach, this research gives voice to the bloggers themselves, offering a wider perspective where different kinds of bloggers are in scope, not only based on their professions or types of blogs, but because they are women. This approach allows for comparisons between bloggers in terms of their professionalization methods as well as aspirations.

1.5 Chapter Outlines

1.5.1 Theoretical and Methodological Framework

The rising power of neoliberalism is accompanied by a form of reputation economy (Gandini, 2016) where the state is not capable of distributing "hope" in an equal manner, especially in terms of job opportunities. Creative work in blogs comes out as subjective and independent entrepreneurship based on hope labor (Kuehn & Corrigan, 2013), while also bringing new job titles or belongings. In all the creative works done by various kinds of bloggers, there is a tremendous effort and production of labor. Hope is realized in many ways through these processes, depending on variables such as socioeconomic status, education, occupation, background, and fame gained. The differences in women's blogger identities indicate the labor they produce, the positions and mobility they earn in society, as well as their quest for hope in the blogosphere.

The second chapter of the dissertation focuses on the "hope" concept as the main theoretical framework of the study, questioning the ways hope is used among women bloggers. Examining it through the existing discussions in hope literature, which are focused on certain binaries including neoliberalism vs. social hope, present vs. future debate, and optimism vs. pessimism, this research conceptualizes hope as a timeless, existential affective tool that is created/nurtured by the continuous active performances of women bloggers -a replicative reorientation that enables bloggers to challenge the dominant conceptualizations and make a difference both on the individual and societal level. Engaging in hope as productive labor, women bloggers allow it to mobilize and

inspire each other. The exchange of hope among the bloggers in various occasions reorient these women towards producing labor for their goals while also hope -leaving the private realm- reconfigures the affects of the publics. This chapter aims to go beyond the existing dichotomies but also contextualize the use of hope in social theory. Rather than discussing hope solely in an optimistic and future-oriented way, I argue that hope is both- an optimist and pessimist state and both future-oriented and ordinary (Alacovska, 2018). Given the changing nature of hope as an emotion that can become happiness, pleasure, satisfaction, emancipation, but also disappointment, denial, impotency, anger, and sadness based on both our ordinary activities and expectations, this chapter develops the theory of hope as a method[7] (Miyazaki, 2004) and an analytical tool. Through this focus, it investigates the relationship between hope as an emotion and a coping process, labor production in and outside the blogs, and identity formations of women in digitally mediated environments.

The third chapter of the dissertation explains the methodology. Adopting an anthropological approach, this study deploys ethnography as the main method. Ethnographical fieldwork is conducted through participating blogger events and theme-based workshops. Interview data is gathered through semi-structured interviews, life-story interviews, and spontaneous conversations. Semi-structured interviews are conducted with fifty bloggers. The methodology chapter focuses on the different data collection methods chosen such as life history approach, comparative case studies, and participant observation, and a detailed map of the methodological phases planned for the conduct of this research. Four methodological phases include: choosing ethnographic sites, entering and immersing into the field, conducting digital ethnography, and implementing the ethics.

Ethnographic fieldwork aimed to focus on women bloggers' performances to provide a better understanding of how hope is practiced and realized, and the ways these bloggers manage hope when it fails. Ethnographic data is explored in three chapters, dividing the women's blogosphere in Turkey into three and investigating blogging practices of women around the notions of fame, success, and aspiration. These chapters encompass separate data for three types of bloggers' performances on various occasions and platforms. In this manner, celebrity bloggers have already achieved a certain status in society showing upward mobility (Chapter 4), while aspiring bloggers'(Chapter 6)

[7] In his book *The Method of Hope*, Hiro Miyazaki (2004) considers hope not simply a social phenomenon, but as a method of knowledge formation, in academic disciplines no less than in societies.

struggle continues. In addition to this dichotomy, some women achieved successful careers (Chapter 5) through their blogging activities which will be given in more detail in the following section.

1.5.2 Ethnographic Fieldwork

Offering the narratives of three bloggers who reached a certain kind of popularity in the Turkish blogosphere, fourth chapter explores the similarities and differences among celebrity bloggers in negotiating the fame they gained. Deploying a case-study approach as its main method, the analysis is based on a comparison of three blogger events, through which the audience management techniques and self-branding strategies of celebrity bloggers are discussed. The comparative study of celebrity bloggers' performances highlights the neoliberal selves who are risk-taking entrepreneurs always changing, appearing and disappearing, constantly renovating their subjectivities switching between various web platforms in the hope of preserving their fame, but also demonstrates the common themes arising in the media production of women bloggers. This chapter seeks to answer what it takes to be a celebrity blogger, drawing the portrayal of the celebrity blogosphere in Turkey and their negotiation of fame in relation to their hoping practices. Audience management is one of the most important strategies among celebrity bloggers who want to preserve their existing fame in rival market conditions. Given their effects on the final product, viewers and readers have much to say about the success of the product, in our case the celebrity blogger who is commodified. Thus, the passive-active relationship between the content-creators and followers is transformed in the coexistence of the product (Andrejevic, 2008) as both sides are responsible for each other.

The fifth chapter is about the bloggers who had obtained their jobs through their blogs. Focusing on the narratives of three successful food bloggers who experienced upward mobility both socially and economically via their blogging activities, this chapter investigates the ways hope travels and transforms around the notion of success. The main distinction between celebrity bloggers' narratives and stories of these women explored in this chapter, lies in the opportunities gained career-wise. While several women left their jobs after adopting a blogger identity among celebrity bloggers, the women who are the subjects of this chapter, had the opportunity to have job careers after their blogs were discovered. The three bloggers strategically constructed their businesswoman images in different ways upon which they also formed their blog

narratives. The life-history approach is used extensively for this chapter, given the respondents' blogs determining role in their career choices. Life story interviews provided a scope that allowed for the analysis of the elements influencing the life paths of these women and the explanation of the reasons behind the motivation to commodify their leisure activities. The data uncovers that regardless of the age, by the effective use of blogs, both changes in one's socioeconomic position and future perception are likely. Thus, hoping as a goal-directed thinking and an affective practice at the present, allows these women to relate to their future with career motivations, while also transforming the narrative; distributing their hopes as a motivation and inspiration to their readers.

Chapter six concentrates on the bloggers who do not achieve economic gains, employment opportunities, or celebrity status but have hope to do so. It investigates how "hope" functions and prevails on the performative actions of aspirant women bloggers in the Turkish blogosphere. Devoting their time and energy, these women participate in blogger events so advertising brands voluntarily without being paid for their efforts. Thus, this chapter aims to answer how these actions affect women's daily and social lives, based on participant observation and semi-structured interviews. The analysis focuses on the labor-production of aspirant bloggers, who consider blogging as a gateway for upper mobility opportunities, a sense of belonging or self-realization, and the extent hope is related to these performances. Therefore, apart from an individualistic entrepreneurial performance, blogging activity appears as a hoping practice that takes place at the present to engage with daily life, but also a collectivity ideal where they feel belonging, usefulness, relief, and the possibility to become integrated into a community. Through a deeper investigation of three blogger gatherings at a public house, this chapter investigates the aspirations, expectations, and motivations of these women that reveal their need for hope as a current practice. This practice of hope allows them to transform their leisure activities or responsibilities into a form of labor around which aspirants unite. Therefore, along with the aspirational labor produced by these women, hope is transformed into a desire to see success, appreciation, and validation at the present.

Finally, chapter seven provides the concluding remarks in two sections: summary of the dissertation, and contribution to literature and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2

THEORIZING HOPE

2.1 Introduction to hope

"I have never worked before. When internet entered my house in 2002, all the universe was in front of me and when I learned to blog in 2007, I believed I can do anything. I am now hoping for more." (Hayriye, internet news editor, 41)

"I had a tumor but because of dealing with things being a blogger brought to me, I totally forgot about it. It made my day, gave me pleasure and I felt terrific. I just hoped to survive without the surgery. And blogging practically saved my life since I haven't had the surgery. I forgot my pains and I keep attending the events." (Gülay, chef, 58)

"I believe that blogging changes our perceptions about life and our perspectives about how we live life. I look at life as a blogger." (Ece, housewife, 40)

These are quotations taken from three successful bloggers, whom I interviewed separately in different times and places. Their ages vary as well as their education, socio-economic status and occupations, while they share the optimist, positive statements they make about the role of blogging in their lives as it creates change, transformation and hopeful thoughts. Still, the fact that these are all bloggers who have successfully built their online careers should not be forgotten. This type of optimistic sentiment is not always a shared experience for aspirants who struggle in achieving this success, or for another celebrity blogger who feels exhausted from all the associated responsibilities. The blogosphere has a contested and heterogenous structure with many different bloggers whose feelings about hope change based on various other reasons including their motivations, expectations, capabilities and resources.

The transformative character of hope is underlined by its ability to foster one's personal growth and well-being as a positive emotion, transforming the individual for the better (Cohn & Fredrickson, 2009). Individuals' hopes may differ like material goods, personal achievement, hedonic experiences, interpersonal relationships or altruistic motives. According to Averill et al.(1990), the actions taken towards their

fulfillment could also vary significantly: “Working harder, becoming better organized, planning activities, being more creative, being more risk-taking, relating with others to get support, relying on faith, meditating, praying, etc.” (in Kraftt&Walker, 2018, p.8).

This optimistic atmosphere lacks an understanding about the negative side of hope as the outcome of attained goals is uncertain. Averill et al. (1990) argue that hope should involve a realistic appraisal of probability. However, even if there is no probability of achieving the goal, one can only dream about it. It might still be a fantasy or a means just to survive by dreaming of that fantasy. Can we associate hope also with disappointment? What happens when these hopes fail?

Sara Ahmed (2014) in her book *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* suggests the ‘doing’ of emotions. Based on this idea, “emotions work by working through signs and on bodies to materialize the surfaces and boundaries that are lived as worlds” (Ahmed, 2014, p.191). Ahmed’s tracking of emotions’ circulation between bodies differs in her suggestion of the sticky relations between signs and bodies and her examination of the ways emotions ‘stick’ as well as move (Ahmed, 2014). Individuals do not feel emotions in an isolated and independent manner. The feelings we experience are part of complex structures consisting of many emotions. Being part of an active process, “emotions can undergo multiple and enigmatic transmutations that are both voluntary and involuntary, or conscious and unconscious” and the nature of emotions is relational (Bericatt, 2015, p.493-494). Therefore, hope can involve a blend of both positive and negative judgments and affects, being either approach-or avoidance-oriented (Lazarus, 1991, 1999). Just as positive emotions pave the way to the achievement of goals motivating us for more action (Clore, 1994; Fredrickson, 1998; Lazarus 1991), negative emotions often associate with dysfunction, depression or loss of belief and hope in the achievement of goals, and lead to passivity rather than action. Thus, hope as an emotion can transform itself. It becomes happiness, pleasure, satisfaction, emancipation, but also disappointment, denial, impotency, anger and sadness based on both the ordinary activities and expectations of women bloggers in this study.

These fluctuations in emotions, specifically in the hopes of women bloggers also shape the level of labor production in blogs. There is a reciprocal relationship between hoping and laboring in this digitally mediated environment. Being a blogger requires much work in the rival market conditions as “companies expect online personalities to work for free, motivated by the always-deferred promise of exposure” (Duffy, 2019, p.379). As hope is considered cruel in the analysis of creative labor (Duffy, 2017;

Mackenzie and McKinlay, 2020; Neff, 2012), this normalization of the not-yet in creative industries is seen as a self-exploitative and subjugating work experience (Alacovska, 2018).

The literature has already acknowledged this double bind in the creative industry and digital media studies about the voluntarily given labor for pleasure purposes turns to self-exploitation or exploitation dilemma. This research aims to go beyond this dilemma which is already inherent in these digitally mediated performances. Drawing on Baym (2015)'s analysis about the relations in labor is all of them-pleasure, exploitation, alienation, genuine, oppressive- and even more at the same time, this research adopts a both/and approach rather than either/or and claim that women bloggers are struggling for hope in an unstable environment where an unequal distribution of social hope let them for self-investments (Hage, 2004). Thus, aiming to unite Alavocska's method of hope as an "existential affective stance"[8] (2019, p.1118) towards the present and Duffy's aspirational labor term as a highly gendered, forward looking and entrepreneurial enactment of creativity (2016, p.443), this research seeks to determine the extent to which women bloggers' hope and labor are mutually influential. Further, I explore how levels of hope fluctuate in relation to temporality in digital platforms that are constantly updating, migrating, opening and closing. I use hope as a theoretical framework for this research in developing the theory of hope as a method and an analytical tool that activates, develops and sustains the labor production in blogs. I focus on the relationship between hope as an emotion and a coping process, labor production in and outside the blogs and identity formations of women in digitally mediated environments.

Categorizing the existing discussions in hope literature into three, I discuss hope not solely in an optimistic and future-oriented way, rather, I argue that hope is both- an optimist and pessimist state and both future-oriented and ordinary (Alacovska, 2018). Only emphasizing future-orientedness makes the role of hope in people's daily lives less visible. In fact, hope motivates people today by setting up a temporal promise that requires us to think about the present at the same time. This motivation leads to practice, which is the labor itself. Hope emerges as a tool used today, that is, in the present time, taking inspiration from Alacovska's work of hope as an "existential affective stance", an active moral practice oriented towards the present (2019, p.1118), and unlike that, a

[8] Examining the relationship between future-temporality and precarity in creative work, Alacovska considers hope "not as a delusional aspiration for upward mobility or prosperous celebrity careers but as a psychosocial temporal resource oriented to the present, an existential attitude that allows one to persist through chronic illness, disrupted lives, destitution and precarity" (2019, p.1120).

situation arises where it also challenges the dominant norms. Challenging the dominant is not always about politics, but in the blogosphere through their personalized narratives, individuals engage with everyday issues enacted through discursive practices on the internet (Breindl, 2010; Shaw, 2011). In fact, hope emerges as a practice that exists continually - in the past, the future and the present. Contrary to its linear perception[9], the aim of this research is to investigate hope as it circulates through the performances of being a blogger, to understand how it reorients among women, how it is contagious, that it is something that can be copied, exchanged, imitated and sustained**.** I analyze how much effort women bloggers invest in their blogger careers, how they keep hope alive as it turns out to be both a tool that encourages them to move forward, and a tool that allows them to exist at the present time.

In this framework, the study aims to understand labor processes through hope. I read hope as something very practical and political, as something that determines people's behavior and their relationship with each other. Thus, the concept of hope appears here as something that determines practice and socialization, which is the labor itself on blogs. Emotions are discussed in many contexts, but this research brings together the issue of emotion and labor. While doing so, I specifically claim that the sense of hope is an analytical approach to understand the form of labor here. This kind of an approach will uncover the reciprocal relationship between hope and labor production of bloggers, the experiences and subjectivities of the people who create this labor, and the forms of social engagement. Thus, engaging in the hope problem through the practices of blogger women in Turkey will add a new perspective to digital labor and creative industry studies from a woman-centered, non-Western approach and anthropological framework.

The reason I chose “hope” as a framework is the participant observations conducted and the answers received from the respondents. Based on the data, it is demonstrated that “hope” is the main tool animating the women’s blogosphere and their performances. As blogs vary based on their themes and targets, as do the women in the blogosphere, this research aims to understand how these women perform and circulate hope in this platform. Moreover, the existing discussions on hope in social theory

[9] According to Richard Snyder, hope theorist in pschology, hoping process involves two components of goal-directed thought—pathways and agency as “one can find pathways to desired goals and become motivated to use those pathways” (Snyder et.al, 2002, p.257). Snyder’s hope theory sees emotions as a result of goal-directed thoughts, putting emphasis on success, performance, achievement, resilience and coping (Snyder et al., 1991).

prevail around certain binaries which will be explained further in section 2.3. The aim of this chapter is to establish a reconsideration of hope beyond those discussions. The reading of labor through hope, and the reading of hope through labor will shed light onto each other. Therefore, this chapter frames hope as a way of thinking in terms of emotion-based and cognitive approaches and firstly it focuses on the definition of hope. Following that, I aim to show my understanding of hope by categorizing current arguments in hope literature into three groups. Finally, in the light of theoretical framework, I describe how I operationalize the idea of hope through the practice of blogging.

2.2 Definitions of Hope

"Hope" is a word that has many meanings. While it reflects the concept of a potential desire or anticipation for a certain event to happen, it also brings one face-to-face with the definition of a confident expectation. It is defined as, "an optimistic state of mind that is based on an expectation of positive outcomes with respect to events and circumstances in one's life or the world at large." As a verb, its definitions include: "expect with confidence" and "to cherish a desire with anticipation (Merriam-Webster, 2020)". A more integrative definition for hope is, "hope is future-oriented belief, desire, and mental imagining surrounding a valued outcome that is uncertain but possible" (Howell and Larsen 2015, p.20).

As hope is defined with its association with desire, sometimes we mix the feeling of desire with hope, we often use hope to mean desire as in these specific cases, "I hope we will have a daughter" or "I hope to have this car". Hope figures in complex ways in the temporality of worldly manifestations or it may be open-ended, lacking final definition, vague, and subject to chance (Crapanzano, 2003). Looking critically at the discursive and meta-discursive range of "hope", Vincent Crapanzano (2003) attempts to distinguish the notion of hope from desire taking it as a category of both experience and analysis. Drawing on Eugène Minkowski's (1970) "mediate future" concept which "lies between the zone of the immediate future, characterized by expectation and activity, and the zone of the remote future, characterized by prayer and ethical action", he states that hope and desire are characteristic of that /one of experienced time (in Crapanzano, 2003, p.9). Unlike the action and anticipation that Minkowski correlates with joy and terror, he sees both desire and hope to be optimistic, pointing out that "We are charmed by hope because it opens the future broadly before us"(1970, p.92).

We can distinguish desire from hope as both still contain an activity, but the desire is more egoistic. Hope sounds more spiritual where desire is worldlier. According to Minkowski (1970), desire contains activity and it is fuller than hope. Looking further into the future, it is more intimately connected with the ego than mere activity as there is also a withdrawal to the intimate me, "toward the interior, toward the inside of the active ego" (Minkowski, 1970, p.98). Being more episodic, desire enables us to settle, whereas being full of promise hope shares the same direction as expectation-toward the future-present (Crapanzano, 2003). Thus, based on this discussion, hope offers us a free space where we can differentiate ourselves from the ambiguity of the unknown and rather nurtures a positive way of thinking for the future opening ahead of us. This way of thinking is also rooted in the studies of hope theorist Richard Snyder (1994) who considers hope as a way of thinking about our goals in life where we follow a linear path like defining the goals, finding routes to achieve, and find the motivation to use those pathways to realize them. According to him (Snyder, 1994), hope is something that can be measured, taught, and learned and that can lead to success.

Mary Zournazi, not associating hope solely with the desire for things to come, or the betterment of life, refers to hope as the drive or energy that embeds us in the world, "what sustains life in the face of despair" (2002, p.15). Darren Webb (2007, p. 67) on the other hand, defines two overarching meta-modes of hoping, first being directed towards a specific objective and takes the form of "I hope that/for p", whereas the second lacks a concrete objective and takes the form of an open-ended orientation towards the future (Webb 2007, p. 68). This distinction of Webb (2007) is important to understand the apparent tension between hope as tied to particular "things to come" and as a "drive or energy". Thus, the experience of hope by various subjects in different circumstances and fields shows differences so as the definition of hoping as a practice. Finding Webb's distinction relevant, this research focuses on hoping not necessarily as "yet-to-come", but more on the continuous motivation and the utmost energy put forward in the case of bloggers.

Often construed as an emotion or an emotion-based coping process, the various definitions attempt to distinguish hope from other related states such as optimism, joy, and desire. To do so, scholars have reached various defining characteristics of hope, such as "uncertainty, limited controllability, realism, positive anticipation of achieving desired outcomes or avoiding undesired outcomes, goal setting and planning, a general motivational energy, future orientation, high perceived importance, and contexts of

challenge or loss" (Howell&Larsen, 2015, p.24).

Drawing on these theories, I acknowledge that hope is goal-directed thinking which motivates people to act towards their goals. However, hope experienced in real life does not necessarily follow this linear path as in Snyder's model. Rather than a planned action-oriented thought, it is also a feeling that keeps someone in the present time. The aim is to use "hope" as an operational term to have a better understanding of the processes people experience through the practice of hope. So, I take blogosphere as a field where women do various performances and practices for establishing or maintaining social connections and creating different forms of capital, either for future careers, monetary/non-monetary rewards or just to survive the day. The character of a blogger as a risk-taking, profit-seeking player in this field is either satisfied or unsatisfied from her status which she gained through achieving certain amount of capital in the blogosphere. To reveal the conflicts in the blogosphere, this study asks how the hope in this field prevails, in what forms, in which circumstances among women bloggers, and what happens when hope fails. Thus, using hope as a method, the study aims to understand the state of the women's blogosphere in Turkey, how women bloggers differ from each other based on their negotiations of fame, labor, and identity in the age of extreme self-display.

2.3 Existing Discussions on Hope

Hope is a concept generally used in migration studies and health studies, and recently became popular in sociology as environmental, economic, and social insecurity has been flourishing our agendas in this era. There is a growing interest in sociology, politics, law, and communication studies on the empowering and inspiring state of hope as a medium that enables people like refugees, immigrants, indigenous communities, the disadvantaged, or activists. Existing discussions on hope in social theory prevail around certain binaries such as neoliberalism vs. social hope discussions from an economy-political perspective, present vs. future debate, and optimism vs. pessimism. These debates are explained in the following sections along with my understanding of hope in the framework of the existing discussions.

2.3.1 Neoliberalism vs. Social Hope

Currently, neoliberalism offers hope and hopefulness to those it is unable or unwilling to offer anything else: populations affected by poverty, climate change, or colonization are to rely on hope as a driver that could lead to a better life and more security in the

future[10]. However, in this neoliberal atmosphere, still, the growing uncertainty in the nature of hope is discussed along with the precarious conditions in various spaces of life. Today's society suffers from people's apathy and lack of motivation so the tradition of utopian impulses and radical imaginings appear to be in decline as "the idea of hope, nowadays, typifies conventional discourse, and 'seems, at best, a nostalgic remnant of the 1960s'" (Giroux, 2005, p.2). According to Giroux (2002), the abolition of the welfare state, as well as the lack of confidence in it, injected a radical sense of fear into many people's lives, making the perception of labor as long-term, stable, and linked to a conventional work ethic turn into a liability rather than an advantage. Thus, job stability, which had always been precarious at best, came under growing attack as deregulation, competition, downsizing, and instability reduced labor to part-time and minimum-wage employment everywhere, and a future devoid of any sense of security (Giroux, 2002).

Miyazaki argues that "the emergence of hope of social theory is partly driven by a metatheoretical problem of loss of critical hope arising from the loss of alternatives to global capitalism and neoliberalism" (Miyazaki&Swedberg, 2017, p.21). Claiming that hope shifts dimensions from social state hope to neoliberal state hope, scholars like Zournazi (2002), Mouffe (2005), Hage (2004) discuss the need for hope in response to neoliberalism. According to Zournazi (2002), in today's world, people lose their belief in the future and the field of politics requires people to think about their present condition could be better. "In the past, there was the idea of a socialist future for many people…People are told there is no alternative to the neoliberal hegemony, and that it is here to stay" (Zournazi, 2002, p.123). In other words, we are discussing a social state hope that is being eroded by neoliberal capitalism. However, there are other ways to connect new kinds of hoping than assuming a socialist future to come.

Arguing for the need to focus on 'joyful hope': 'a hope that emerges from a refusal of the capitalist logic of deferral' that reduces hope to utopian dreams of upward mobility and bold aspirations for 'a good life' (Hage, 2002, p.171), Hage calls "'minor utopias' as a kind of hope 'on the side of life' aimed at fertilizing the present and transforming potentialities into practical possibilities" (2004, p.107). Hage's Bourdieusian approach concentrates on hope as a social category, emphasizing the ways social hope is produced and unequally distributed by the state. Asserting that societies are mechanisms for the distribution of hope, Hage points out the shrinking capacity of

[10] Call for Papers. Workshop: Politics of Hope, 27-28 November 2017, Copenhagen, Retrieved from https://ccrs.ku.dk/calendar/2017/workshop-politics-of-hope/

the nation-state to distribute hope in the sequel of neoliberal policies (2004, p.3). The nation-state's ability to disseminate hope amid massive social inequalities in the society works in tandem with the capitalism as it lets overriding the determining of inequalities of the present for the dream of a better future (Hage, 2001). In a neoliberal society, building a dignified future becomes difficult to sustain as the sense of prospective mobility is being replaced by long periods of waiting, depression and frustration. Inspired by Nietzsche, Hage differentiates between "hope for life" (hope that induces an active engagement with reality) and "hope against life" (hope that breeds passivity and disengagement), arguing that this unequal distribution of social hope-a hope that is for life- let people invest themselves in social reality (2004, p.12). Thus, we nurture new hopes which are compatible with the nature of neoliberal capitalism itself.

Women bloggers' practices lie at the intersection of gender with neoliberal power and material culture. Therefore, these women as post-feminist[11] subjects appear as individual entrepreneurs, who freely choose to be whoever or however they want on the blogosphere, by self-investing, taking initiatives, or risks as autonomous subjects. They invent and invest new forms of hopes along with different kinds of embodiments, towards a more valuable future, a more realized self, a more individualistic enterprise, or sometimes a more collective ideal. Neoliberalism is seen as a key driving force in the promotion of feminine subjectivities by some feminist media scholars and media promulgate affective attachments to the entrepreneurial subjectivities showing them the activities they do are freely chosen and doable as neoliberalism demanded (Kanai, 2019). In the contemporary era, it is possible to talk about a "neoliberal governmentality for young middle-class aspirational women-governmentality structured through futurity based on smart and careful self-investments in the present for an enhanced return in the future" (Rottenberg, 2018, p.15). On the other hand, while neoliberalism creates its own autonomous, self-inventing hoping subjects in the post-Fordist era, the social reproduction crisis in which our lives and the labor force are reproduced confronts us (Carlin & Federici, 2014). Silvia Federici asserts that "capitalism continuously creates underclasses that perform these activities without any remuneration and under

[11] Post feminism is a set of ideologies, strategies, and practices that marshal liberal feminist discourses such as freedom, choice, and independence, and incorporate them into a wide array of media, merchandising, and consumer participation (Banet-Weiser 2018:153). The "post" in "post feminism" represents not only a temporality (as in "after" feminism), or a backlash against feminism, but also a sensibility; core features of post feminism included an emphasis on individualism, choice, and agency, a resistance to interrogating structural gendered inequalities, and a renewed focus on a woman's body as a site of liberation (Gill in Banet Weiser 2018:153).

conditions that make their exploitation invisible and naturalized" (Carlin & Federici, 2014, p.2), and this dual character of reproductive work-reproduction of the individual and the reproduction of labor-power, creates the site of a conflict that needs to be recognized by women. Acknowledging this dilemma, the attempt of the study is not to be stuck in this binary but to go beyond it, to demonstrate hoping as a practice that is analyzed in terms of gender as performed and performative action in this neoliberal structuring.

Given the neoliberal atmosphere brings precarity and uncertainty about one's future in any sector, the discussion continues around the significance of hope for the present not only the future. Alacovska (2018) in her study on creative industry workers in a post-socialist context offers a more nuanced analysis of creative workers' future orientation, elaborating the notion of hope as the primary operational mechanism and method employed by creative workers in highly precarious and contingent creative industries and labor markets. However, it is not only about precarity brought by neoliberalism, but hope can also be precarious itself as Miyazaki (2004) argues for hope as an indeterminate future orientation and method of living. Alacovska (2018) on the other hand, demonstrates how hope operates in the daily struggles of people; how hope is about ordinariness rather than the future. This ordinariness of hope is closely associated with the precarious nature of labor production in blogs and constitutes one of the main moving points of this research. Alacovska (2018) says that in the precarious nature of creative industries in terms of working conditions, hope stays as a possibility to live a "sane life", which will be discussed deeper in the following sections.

2.3.2 Despairing Present vs. Joyful Future Debate

There are many theories about future-oriented hope and utopian modes of hoping. While there is the "abstract hope" of the religious kind, promising the utopian future joy of redemption (Crapanzano, 2004), or hope as a sort of daydreaming seen as a way of escapism and subjugation (Bloch, 1986; Jansen, 2015), hope is generally studied in two dimensions in anthropology: one that locates hopefulness against all odds and one that studies specific formations of hope and temporal reasoning. Many hope studies concentrate on people's engagement with future putting uncertainty both as an affliction and a precondition for hope (Cooper and Pratten, 2015; Johnson-Hanks, 2005). This means without uncertainty, there is no probability or potentiality for future outcomes**.**

Arguing that hope as "a futural orientation bridges the gap between potentiality

and actuality", Bryant & Knight (2019) see hope as a means to handle the indeterminacy of potentiality that "provides momentum to mobilize potential for a push into the future actual". They claim that when a potential is not yet realized, or its realization is thwarted, then, hope can emerge which gives the stimulus for the behavior towards its realization. Hope is seen here as the pursuit of materializing the otherwise-than-actual. To achieve this momentum, Bloch asserts the need to locate hope in the "world process," in everyday moments of emergent potentiality where potential "has not yet been defeated, but likewise has not yet won" (in Bryant&Knight, 2019, p.137). Drawing on Bloch, Bryant & Knight see hope as "a snowball, the unstoppable force that encompasses an element of positive movement, in navigating toward the future providing a drive, harnessing and producing a captivating energy, stimulating emotional response, operating at different speeds in the pursuit of actualizing potentiality" (2019, p.137-138).

Even though this type of momentum is acknowledged among bloggers in their hoping practices and performances, the issue we must address is if hope is linked to the future and optimism serves in this manner. What can we say about the despair or disappointment brought by hope when the goal is not achieved, or when *not yet to come* is not as expected? What happens in the case of unsuccessful achievements? Even if hope provides the impetus to act, it does not guarantee that the outcome will be favorable; it may equally be a cause of disappointment. Despite the utmost labor women bloggers produce, sometimes the targets are not achievable, and this situation creates not only disappointment, but also stress, frustration, and envy among bloggers. Thus, this fantasy, dreaming about the thing *yet to come* prevents bloggers to act prosperously in the existing situation -now-because of the pessimist feelings they are trapped in.

This clinging to the future with hope is criticized by scholars like Claire Colebrook (2003) who considers hope *both intoxicating and toxic* as an orientation beyond the present, Lauren Berlant (2011) who sees optimism towards future as necessarily cruel, or Hage (2002) who emphasizes the "ethic of hope" as the deferral of joy. While the concentration has shifted from the utopian, ebullient hope to the quotidian character of hoping in daily life (Anderson, 2006; Zigon 2009; Mattingly, 2010) utopian and everyday engagement with futurity prevails when dealing with a precarious present (Alacovska, 2018, 2020). Drawing on Webb's 'resolute hope' which is a mode of hope 'takes control and creates the chances' for achieving the good, against all odds (Webb, 2007, p.75), Alacovska claims that hope "leaves the sphere of the

affective and the cognitive (the psychosocial resources to keep going) and enters the domain of behavior and practice (the resolve to re-enact the future achievement of the good, however hazy and unobtainable, in the present)" (2020, p.6). In other words, this is the place where we need action and performance despite the challenges we meet in our journeys. In the women's blogosphere, hope is not only attached to futurity, but also everyday life. So, hope, daily life and practice are intimately entwined. Alacovska's point is remarkable here in showing hope "as a mode of work within the creative industries in both as an active and passive, utopian and everyday engagement with futurity when dealing with a precarious present" (2020, p.6).

The future is appropriated in the present moment by reimagining the present via the future (Miyazaki, 2006). Miyazaki (2004, 14–15) argues that active hope involves a commitment to changing the world. Rather than assuming a goal like changing the world which is a quite open-ended assumption arising from the indeterminacy of the future, Jansen focuses on the particularities, temporal hopes. The holistic indeterminacy of hope proposed by Miyazaki is criticized by Jansen (2015) as he argues that hoping can also be tied to specific objects. He investigates soccer fans as an example who exhibit a distinct preference for particular rather than any genuinely open-ended multiplicity as Miyazaki suggested. The temporality of hope is also valid for the subjects of this research as women bloggers experience hope in their daily practices as a motivation and tool for labor production in blogs. Their hopes continuously change, transform, expand and circulate in the temporality of digital platforms they perform. According to Jansen, by looking into the historical circumstances of the production of hope, and its duration in shorter, rigid, epochal time-spaces, we do not avoid its future-oriented qualities, but this way of looking provides us a better contextualization of ethnographically why and how people hope for certain futures (in Byrant&Knight, 2019, p.140).

So, either it is a future-oriented or an ordinary daily hope we are discussing, hope for women bloggers is both an emotion that leads to behavior, a coping process that allows them to bear today while dreaming about the future, and an outcome of other hoping ways. Overall, as an existential affective tool, hope functions for each person in a different manner, in various circumstances. It is not as Colebrook (in Coleman&Ferreday, 2010, p.317) states *"intoxicating in its capacity to … open a world beyond the given" and "toxic [in] precluding us from acting and living in the now,"* or we are not necessarily surrounded by cruelty as we are enduring all the challenges today

for future rewards (Berlant, 2011). But on the contrary, we live with hope in the past, today or in/for the future; it is a fundamental way of being as Zigon (2009) stated. The present is not toxic or cruel because of hope, but sometimes bearable, joyful, survivable. Thus, hope can be active/passive, utopian/ordinary, at times precarious/safe especially in the case of creative industries. However, hope is not following a linear path. The data shows that, one can hope to become like she was before -emulating her past-, or she can dream about obtaining a specific position in the upcoming years. Therefore, hope is both timeless and temporal for the women bloggers under investigation, reorienting and reshaping both itself and the route taken, as well as the wider relationships surrounding it. Thus, we need to give room to saliency and conflicts in one's thoughts while experiencing and practicing hope.

2.3.3 Optimism, Disappointment, and Crumbling of the Dream image

So, when we consider a future-oriented hope, it is easy to associate it with positivity and optimistic dreams. Since the future is far and has yet to be realized, we might conceive of it as good and promising. We only know for sure when it comes; when it becomes the present. We will see then either it is good or bad, if our goals have been met or not. This is valid for women bloggers under study, especially true for those who aspire to be like popular bloggers sometime in the future. They show hopeful determinations and tendencies to act towards their goals feeling optimistic about them, however, when they fail, that hope leaves its place to disappointment. It is not what they expected, but an unfulfilled potentiality they dream of.

Thus, these positive dreamlike thoughts about the unrealized future are sometimes a source of despair. Attachment to the anticipation of fantasies of a future good life, upward mobility, stable jobs, fame, or monetary rewards, would represent a double bind making us forget about the present (Bloch, 1986; Haiduk, 2016; Alacovska, 2018, 2020). That is the reason why Berlant (2011, p.24) calls optimism can be cruel when you discover that the dreams you are attached to are either 'impossible, sheer fantasy, or too possible, and toxic' where Haiduk claims that "hope functions as a disciplinary, subjectifying force that ensnares people into a continually passive state of waiting—waiting for a better job, a better economic situation, a better life" (in Endrissat& Alacovska, 2018, p.1137). This view of Haiduk is parallel to Berlant's(2011) cruel optimism as she also states that people keep doing what they do because of the self-deluding nature of promises and prospects about the future although

hoped conditions might threaten their well-being and this attachment to the object of desire becomes cruel. Thus, here waiting for an unknown but optimistic future is seen as highly problematic as it might be a source of the distresses, despairs, and struggles experienced today.

Hope can be a source of disappointment as there is always the probability of it being partially actualized or even not actualized at all. Bloch focuses on disappointment claiming that sometimes the realization of the "dream image is darker and occasionally barren and empty" (1986, p.180). Disappointment, then, is the recognition that actualization never realizes all potentials or the paradox that can occur "that the dream appeared firmer or at any rate brighter than its realization" (in Bryant&Knight, 2019, p.138). Thus, disappointment occurs as the result of unsuccessful goals and not realized expectations. According to Snyder's hope theory, this is the result of an unsuccessful goal pursuit which can stem from one's inability to make a sufficient agentic and/or pathway thinking or impotence to overcome a thwarting circumstance. However, this view remains deterministic as sometimes other variables including one's job position, job sector, family relations, and demographic features, may affect goal-oriented action to take place. To make anthropological sense of such moments of hope, Jansen (2015) argues, we must acknowledge relational histories of hopes since they grow and shrink in relation to other hopes, and often they have expiry dates.

Drawing on Ybema (2004)'s "postalgia" and Miyazaki (2006)'s "economy of dreams" concept, Alacovska (2018) points out the projection of a golden future with success, fame, stardom, or an upbeat future which let people invest in their future careers while consenting their present precarity and contingency. According to Endrissat& Alacovska indefinite periods of waiting – for the empty promise of prosperity and a better life, create situations in which exploitation, precariousness, and injustice are sustained instead of resisted, so, "hope and optimism work as whores" (2018, p.1138). However, precarity itself can also be productive as "it produces subjects who are keen on the hard work ethos, competitive play, and self-surveillance to secure their temporary position both at present and in the future" (Bulut, 2015, p.253). Uncertainty and precarity can be both disorienting and triggering for the individuals. Thus, hoping can be a precarious process that allows one to experience both an optimistic future and unstable present or an enthusiastic present to achieve an unknown maybe disappointing future. Acknowledging this double-bind especially in creative industries, my aim is not to go into the detail of these dilemmas of exploitation vs.

pleasure or optimist future vs. cruel present, but rather considering blogging as a sub-category for the creative industry, take this argument further. Considering hope as an everyday experience that might let us bear today and keep workers going despite the precarious conditions is relevant, however, it lacks the point that we do not need necessarily think about the present as a source of suffering for future rewards. It might also be a valuable journey not necessarily cruel, yet sometimes disappointing but also allowing new hopes to prevail. So, I give room to all these feelings in this dissertation-rather use hope as an operational term under these discussions and frameworks to understand how it is used, experienced, and negotiated in the context of blogging and being a blogger.

Recognizing these two conflicting views about hope as utopian optimism and optimism feeding pessimism-in the form of passivity, waiting, disappointment- because of the cruelty of hope itself, this research attempts to go beyond this dichotomy and instead focus on hope as an analytical method. Hope can bear pessimism or optimism, cling to the present than the future. It is not simply about the outcome, which may be satisfying or unsatisfying, thus we may be glad and pleased with the results or we might be sad about it. However, we need to show what the road tells us-the road taken to fulfill these aims or just to exist and hang out with the hope of just being- not fighting for the future. Blogging is a practice that makes hoping possible. We are not necessarily discussing a linear hoping here. Hope is a natural state of being, and we should avoid categorizing it as one way or the other. Consequently, the research seeks to comprehend the nature of hope and its dissemination in the form of blogging practice, providing significance to both the present and the future.

2.4 Operationalization and Conceptualization of Hope

Hope notion is discussed in various forms in literature. In feminism, the study of hope focuses on a utopian idea of hope in which men and women are equal, but in cultural studies, hope is especially discussed in the context of race, class, migration studies, and the field of health. There are few studies about hope in communication or new media studies. The concept of hope in creative industries is explained through an insecure and uncertain hope effort towards better positioning in the future. In the light of the existing discussions, this research seeks to answer how women bloggers engage in hope, and what forms and methods they use to practice, keep, nurture and distribute hope.

Believing what they do, bloggers engage in hope as productive labor with both

online and offline performances. Their productive labor is nurtured by the hope which at the same time appears as a medium that mobilizes, transcends, endures, circulates, and reorients through the practice of blogging among women. Hope emerges as affect, departing from being only a private emotional state, but a performative and productive expression taking place in front of an audience and works to reconfigure the affects of the publics. In this way, it is not considered as mere daydreaming (Jansen 2015) or utopian bliss (Crapanzano 2003), instead, it is a state of being which challenges the dominant situation, individually or collectively. Drawing on Alacovska's (2019) definition of hope as an existential category, this research focuses not only on the future but also present, as hope challenges both the future and the present to deal with and change the existing situations for the better. We need to reconsider and rethink hope in the performances of blogger women as an existential affective tool and as a practice-oriented action towards both the present and future.

Apart from an internship which is done without a salary to have a future career or working in low wages in creative industries to come to a higher position eventually, bloggers' situation is different as blogging is a voluntary-based action. It does not necessarily require a job-oriented nature as people have various reasons to blog, and hope here, shows different embodiments. Alacovska et.al (2020) points out the clash between utopian hope and everyday hope, arguing active hope as a mode of work that differs from a passive future-oriented hope. Bloggers also have an active hope that clings to present but differs among the practitioners based on their different statuses despite being in the same industry.

According to Fenton (2008), blogging and social media may allow a reimagining of hope. Despite the association of hope with positive feelings, "hoping for more" creates various kinds of performances for those who struggle to survive in a competitive market like the blogosphere, allowing them to accumulate continuous labor. Either it is free or paid, there is an utmost labor put forward to achieve their goals and keep their hopes alive. If no effort is made, it is probable that one might be forgotten in the market or that it might be impossible to go from being an amateur to professional. According to the research, most women see their blogging practices as something that would ultimately develop into economic benefits or that they will pursue blogging as a career at some time in their life, in addition to many other motivations to start blogging. As a result, there appears to be a significant amount of labor behind the blogging activity in order to keep this hope alive.

Currently, there is an ongoing effort to be present in many social media platforms at the same time, which brings also a continuous struggle to mobilize between these platforms with varying performances. One must remain authentic while keeping up with the newest trends in order to avoid falling behind. Pooley (2010) discusses this as "calculated authenticity" and portrays bloggers as curated identities. So, each move is planned and curated for the sake of a successful online presentation. There is a need to conquer each platform so that they can survive in the competitive, day-by-day developing new media platforms. This situation may seem to empower many people, but it also creates dilemmas, despair, and disappointments. In this kind of atmosphere, if a blogger cannot update her blog, publish, or stay behind, then the feeling of hope turns to something else, such as envy, sadness, regret, stress, or frustration emerging from the obligations and responsibilities. This is especially noticeable among celebrity bloggers, who may feel exhausted and reluctant at times, but also feel the responsibility of their audiences, and the fear of disgrace. Hope in this respect becomes something discursive, more on the level of defending and preserving their already existing situation. On the other hand, for the aspirant bloggers, hope turns into a desire for validation today and an aspiration for better possibilities in the future. We need hope to act, we need inspiration, and sometimes even comparison, to keep hope alive and present. We can have those, but that does not guarantee that we will have favorable consequences. The blogosphere appears as a rife field for all these struggles along with both positive and negative emotions, celebrations, and dilemmas, while blogging as a practice requires hoping in its nature from past to present, and for the future. Given the gendered form of competence over certain types of capital in the field, hoping as a practice changes and transforms in multiple ways. For this reason, we need to rethink hope that is generally associated with future-oriented optimism or as a source of despairing present from the lens of blogging and performances of women bloggers.

Based on Hage's (2004) Bourdieuan variant of "hope for life", blogging and new media tools might propose an opportunity for upward social mobility-which is a capitalist-specific dream. Blogging as a practice appears as a tool that let women produce hope connecting them to social reality and technology. However, it also creates a precarious, indeterminate, unending form of "hope labor". Through the neoliberal practices offered by blogging, women experience "hope" in various ways, as it turns out to be a transforming emotion which may result with joy, success, optimism, but also with despair, disappointment, anger and envy. In the context of negative emotions like

frustration or despair, hope as a motivation loses its ability to affect people for a better future. With the rapid advancement of Internet technology, particularly social media platforms and their use, hope appears as something that quickly waxes and wanes. Regardless of the instant rewards these platforms may offer, the next day more effort might be required for the achievement of a lesser one. Women bloggers continuously struggle to prevail over their existing hope, which causes them to have contradicting thoughts and acts upon reaching different forms of capitals. Thus, different fields and settings produce and negotiate different notions and modes of hope and future-making, allowing us to doubt the positivity of hope and rather adopt a critical stance for understanding hope as an ethnographic category occurring in physical social settings.

Hope, which is intended to be addressed here, is not only related to future expectations and goals, but it is a continuous and never-ending process that exists at the beginning and now, reflecting on all performances. By focusing on the women's new media practices and performances on a specific platform, I position the hope, born with an opportunity like blogging, as an analytical tool. However, I assume this is not by saying that new media tools allow women to set sail for better hopes and opportunities, social or economic upward mobility, but that their performances are also steps towards encouraging them to continue hopefully in reaching their goals and to pursue better. So, I argue that this ongoing effort has arisen not only because of optimistic hope for a better future, but also as a hope that creates contradictions and conflicts. It is also possible that this hope, by being there, will make this effort bearable. In other words, hope continues its duty not only in theory, but as a tool in daily life and routine practices.

Hope, created by ongoing activity, exists both now and in the future. Although bloggers' motivation to start and continue blogging is not necessarily for a utopian purpose, eventually they start to have goals such as self-improvement, creating networks and job opportunities, or preserving their current place. Based on the data, I further argue that hope appears as "a tool of replicative reorientation" among women bloggers. In other words, hope becomes a source through which women inspire and eventually replicate each other. While doing so, they reorient both themselves and the others (other bloggers, followers) in terms of their personal/public goals, roles in the society. Miyazaki investigated the repetitive and replicative dimension of hope among Fijian people and argues that "each replication is different in itself and replication as a method of hope did not simply generate repetition" (2004, p.128). He proposes that

“one should make explicit one's hope retrospectively via replication of others' hope on a new terrain” (2004, p.140). In the case of women bloggers, this dimension of hope among women starts by seeing other bloggers’ achievements and thinking that “I can also have this!”, “I can do that too!” Thus, the concept of hope is realizable, feasible, and accessible. It inspires other bloggers to be motivated by the previously fulfilled dreams of successful bloggers. Hope, in this context, is something that may be imitated, replicated, and reoriented individuals, but it does not require a repetition, rather an authentic self. While replicating hope, one also needs to do it in her unique way in order to survive in the competitive market. This, in turn, necessitates a great deal of effort and struggle, as well as a contradictory hoping practice in a precarious environment.

In this sense, this research aims to consider blogging not only as a media practice, but also as a formation that contains hopes. The blogosphere is not a platform to create alternative paths to the "better". Although various reasons effect people’s motivation for blogging and social media participation, as they progress, their perspectives, hopes, and emotions change. So, the question becomes: “How do we gender the particular kinds of hope that we deal with in each group of bloggers?” To illustrate, the desire to break certain stereotypes, to have an impact and to make a difference, can be given as examples for the changing motivations of women bloggers. Among the perceptions that some bloggers try to demolish, stereotypical images appear such as Muslim women, tech-disabled mothers, young businesswomen, religious businesswomen, and pregnant women. In this context, hoping challenges the dominant normative thought that draws the image of "housewife, caretaker, mother", rather than dreaming in vain. But although they still want to do so, many women bloggers have rewritten or underlined inherited gender roles in their online and offline performances.

Finally, these women are involved in creating a space of hope through blogging, in line with discursive, symbolic, and emotional practices. Hope is present in their blogging practices both as strategic, discursive medium and also a transforming emotion, given the tension between their hopeful performances. On the one hand, women bloggers direct themselves to lead more positive, healthy, happy, and successful lives, on the other hand, they attribute the responsibility of their fatigue and failures to these practices.

Understanding the motivations and performances of women bloggers will enable us to shed light on the different conditions and situations that drive them to both stress and hope. In this context, we will see what kinds of transformations they went through

while becoming an “aspirant, celebrity, and businesswoman” and what these titles and descriptions mean. I claim that the hopes in the women's blog world, which emerges as a platform where definitions such as femininity, motherhood, celebrity, amateurishness, businesswoman are rewritten, also play an important role in shaking the normative stereotypes in the social field in the name of change.

Thus, in the case of women bloggers, hope emerges as something that can travel, can be desired, aspired, and inspired while it also circulates among bloggers whether with an expected outcome or not, whether it brings despair or success at the end. What we have here, is the reorientation of hope to go on further. It does require a full struggle among bloggers. In this framework, this research attempts to determine the different kinds of hopes these women have, seeking an answer how they negotiate hope and how their struggle for hope differ in this dynamic digital environment. Therefore, the study draws a picture of the Turkish women’s blogosphere, instrumentalizing hope to have a better understanding of the blogosphere digging women’s ordinary performances.

In sum, building on theories of hope, this dissertation conceptualizes hope as a timeless, existential affective tool created/nurtured by the continuous active performances of women bloggers- a replicative reorientation that enables bloggers to challenge the dominant and make a difference both on the individual and societal level. Thus, this dissertation aims to illuminate how women practice hope through their blogging performances in a precarious environment, how they realize or fail their hopes, and what they experience through their journeys as women bloggers. To do this, given the empirical data, the women bloggers under study are divided into three categories as aspirants, businesswomen, and celebrity bloggers based on their different blogger career statuses and experiences. These categories are analyzed under the framework of notions of aspiration, success, and fame.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

In the light of the above-mentioned literature, an anthropological approach is adopted for the dissertation. This research benefits from longitudinal ethnographic fieldwork (since 2015) and a retrospective evaluation going back to the researcher's entering (2006) the blogosphere. Interview data is gathered through semi-structured interviews, life-story interviews, and spontaneous chit-chats. In many ways, this dissertation extends the conversation about labor and the digital economy by situating the activities of the women bloggers as undertaking new forms of media industry work. Thus, it attempts to go beyond the dichotomies of public vs. private and participation vs. exploitation and add new perspectives to study social media activities and self-presentation techniques of women in cyberspace.

To have a better understanding of the motivations behind women's blogging, their content-creations, labor production, opportunities, and challenges they experience, ethnography is chosen as the main methodology of this dissertation which is conducted both online and offline. Due to the pandemic, the last phases of the research heavily benefited from digital ethnography, while the early phases concentrated on the physical participant observation methods. I spent much time among bloggers and since I was blogging from 2006, I had the chance to develop an insider's point of view which also eased the ethnographic process while especially entering the field, selecting my key informants, and speaking the same language with my respondents.

With the diverse and heterogeneous nature of the women's blogosphere in Turkey, I aimed to use different data collection methods appropriate for each group to enrich my data. Allowing multiple data collection methods, the ethnographic process benefited from participant observations, comparative case studies, life history approach, and semi-structured interviews. While some of the interviewees are selected by a snowballing survey method, some of them are chosen from the blogger events participated where acquaintances were established.

When studying the digital platforms, using ethnographic methods means using both online and offline together. Making a distinction between offline and online worlds is rather misleading, so this research stands at the intersection of these two worlds as it is hard to separate one from the other. As Boellstorff makes clear, "online worlds are simply another arena, alongside offline worlds, for expressive practice, and there is no reason to privilege one over the other" (Horst & Miller, 2012, p.13). Thus, this research benefited from a multi-sited ethnography conducted both offline and online without making a clear-cut distinction between the two.

3.1 Why Ethnography as a Method?

As the primary goal of ethnography is the "immersion in life-worlds and everyday experiences of people" (Emerson, 1995,p.17), it entails the study of behavior in natural settings, "getting the seat of your pants dirty … in the real world, not the library" (Fielding, 1993, p. 157). Studying the blogosphere requires a holistic approach as bloggers' performances, blog practices, and social behavior cannot be fully understood without immersing in their symbolic world of performances and seeing the world through their eyes. Ethnographic fieldwork is necessary to reach the shared meanings among bloggers as it allows to collect different types of data in multiple ways. When a researcher spends a certain time on a site, this experience makes the researcher acquainted with the community, thereby facilitating involvement in sensitive activities to which he/she generally would not be invited (Bernard, 1994). Thus, participation in blogger meetings, events, and workshops as well as participation in online forums, blog lotteries, and use of hashtags were important for speaking the same language and establishing good relationships with the subjects of research. Enabling the researcher also to attend closed-door meetings where private invitations were necessary, this participation, in turn, let gaining an intuitive understanding of the meaning of the data. Addressing problems that are simply unavailable to other data collection techniques, ethnography reminds us that there is often no substitute for doing things yourself, as a participant-observer, rather than only analyzing what you read, ask, witness, or document (Bernard, 1994).

3.2 Data Collection Methods

Using an idiographic method that focuses on individual cases or events, the study aims to construct, not necessarily a uniform, but an overall portrait of specific community-

women bloggers in Turkey. A major strength of the idiographic approach is its focus on the individual as only by knowing the person as a person we can predict what the person will do in any given situation. Thus, this study draws on Jenna Burrell's (2009) intercept model, which requires "following the object", in this case following the individual who is the blogger. Based on Burrell's (2009) concept of "intercept", by following the individual in various sites, a mult-sited ethnography becomes possible. That is why, this research not only investigates the blogging performances of these women online- their blog posts, social media usages, or videos- but also their physical performances including their event gatherings, attended workshops, and advertisement shootings. So, I followed my respondents both in public and private realms including Tavsiye Evi, Macro Atelier, TV studios, university workshops, hotels, and also their houses.

Blogger events and workshops are fruitful sites for conducting participant observation and face-to-face interviews, to gain close familiarity with the bloggers and their cultural and social environment. I have observed and engaged with many bloggers who serve a wide range of subject areas, including make-up, fashion, do-it-yourself, sewing, literature, poetry, spiritual experience, and food culture. Having 4 different blogs on different subjects has let me get to know so many bloggers from 2006 onwards. I have access from first hand to these blogger communities and participate in blogger events. Acting also as an "advisor angel (*tavsiye meleği*)" who is generally chosen from a blogger to try new products of different companies and give advice to people especially using social media tools, gives me a good opportunity in terms of accession to many informal gatherings and areas during my research.

The upcoming chapters (4-5-6) benefited from multiple data collection methods. which will be explained further in detail in each chapter[12]. A comparative case study (Noor, 2008) approach is adopted for Chapter 4 and Chapter 6 focusing on different themed events. According to Yin (1989), the term "case" refers to an event, an entity, an individual, or a unit of analysis. As Yin defines it as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context using multiple sources of evidence, Anderson (1993) sees case studies as "being concerned with how and why things happen, allowing the investigation of contextual realities and the differences between what was planned and what actually occurred"(in Noor, 2008, p.1602). Therefore, the case study's intention is not to study the entire organization but

[12] Further details about interviewees will also be given in each related chapter.

to focus on a particular issue, feature, or unit of analysis (Noor, 2008). Furthermore, the interpretative paradigm inherent in qualitative research emphasizes subjective experiences and the meanings they have for an individual, allowing the subjective views of the researcher on a particular situation to play a vital part in the study results.Thus, analyzing the performances of celebrity and aspirant bloggers through particular cases provides us a bigger picture of the women's blogosphere demonstrating its contested and heterogenous structure.

Chapter 5 on the other hand, focuses on the success stories of three women with a life history (Angrosino, 2002) approach. Allowing for a wider analysis of the elements influencing their career paths, life history approach is chosen for these bloggers to see the prominent effects of a narrative-based success. In this way, we are not only bound to superficial declarations of the respondents to spontaneous questions or conversational chit-chats, but with more in-depth analysis, the researcher's observations and determinations would also be important. Adopting a life-history approach not only provides us with stories but also serves as a social interaction possibility. For example, although Gulay -one of my respondents from Chapter 5- has a YouTube Channel and she acts on Migros TV and even if she declares that she feels very independent while blogging, she is a naïve and humble person who speaks quietly and answers shortly. Concentrating not only on one condition but many life elements, conducting a life story interview with her was effective to open her self-enclosed personality. Adopting a conversation-like interview, I used open-ended questions for descriptive data with a chatty, natural and neutral tone, giving examples from my own blog experiences as well. Apart from the life story interviews conducted with three bloggers in Chapter 5, for the other chapters, semi-structured interviews, surveys, and conversations are used. Furthermore, as part of the digital ethnography, blog posts, hashtag sharing, Instagram and Facebook stories, comments and feedbacks…etc. are used as data collection methods.

In this framework, the following section explains the methodological phases of the research in detail.

3.3 Methodological Phases

Ethnographical fieldwork is conducted through participating blogger events and theme-based workshops. Through these gatherings, groups and communities are formed, as usually the same bloggers are invited to sponsored events. It is hard to enter into these

informally tied gatherings. Many of the important blogger events are mostly participated by the same popular bloggers who are dressed up, whose hair and make-up are done professionally. Sometimes these popular bloggers are accompanied by their photographers or assistants in the events. Along with the rising demand from various multinational companies such as Unilever and Procter & Gamble to work with bloggers for viral advertising strategies, forming a bridge between virtual and the physical worlds, blogger meetings, and events have become very popular among women bloggers in Turkey. These events create the opportunity to give an embodiment to online connections letting to the establishment of physical conversations, collaboration, and friendships. Drawing on face-to-face interviews with many bloggers, it is seen that participation in a blogger event is a "fancy", "cool" and "desirable" thing among bloggers and a sign of good status in the blogosphere.

There are two kinds of blogger meetings; one is through taking an invitation from a certain company or brand for their product promotions and the other is an invitation from a blogger herself to unite with other bloggers for a cause like a baby shower, a summer welcome party, mothers' day, etc. which are also sponsored by related companies. So, blogger events are important sites to have a better understanding of the different kinds of interactions and communications among bloggers both with each other and with the brands. For this purpose, 2 main ethnographic sites are chosen.

3.3.1 Choosing Ethnographic Sites

As preliminary ethnographic fieldwork, two sites are chosen for participant observation. The first one is *Tavsiye Evi* which is a public relations and media agency company that has close ties with certain brands like Profilo, Pınar, Migros, Bosch, Unilever, Doğuş Mobilya, and so on. It acts as a vehicle between these brands and bloggers. Tavsiye Evi relies on word of mouth in viral campaigns and invites bloggers to the house and unites them with its clients who also decorate parts of the house as sponsors. Tavsiye Evi names its members as Tavsiye Melekleri and expects them to write about the events they organize or the gifts they give to bloggers for certain purposes. Located in Bagdat Street, one of the fanciest and popular streets of Istanbul, Tavsiye Evi has visitors both weekdays and weekends, mostly in the daytime. Banks, offices, and several kinds of fancy shops surround its neighborhood, so it is very likely for people to come there after their lunch breaks to drink coffee or just to say hi. Renan, the owner of the house says; "Tavsiye Evi is just like a real home, where you can chat and have coffee with your

friends, it is that comfortable and our angels feel themselves at home." The space distribution in Tavsiye Evi is organized as a family home. As soon as you enter from the flat door, you face the open kitchen and the dining table at the very center of the big saloon around which the events are generally organized. So, the atmosphere is intimate, and all the blogger events that take place here are very friendly. Women come here bringing homemade cakes and cookies with a sense of belonging. Tavsiye Evi generally targets housewives so that they can join the events on weekdays as well and spend much more time on distributing the events' details on their blogs.

The second site my participant observations took place is Macro Atelier, which is part of Macrocenter-a supermarket- at Kanyon, one of the most popular shopping centers of Istanbul located in a busy business center. Macro Atelier lets people come together for cooking workshops accompanied by a professional chef. The number of people does not exceed eight. Usually, these people are chosen from bloggers so that Macrocenter can also promote its products- they give freely to each person for cooking purposes- and circulate its brand on social media. The space distribution in Macro Atelier is important since it is designed as a big kitchen counter, where eight people can fit working in pairs and see each other while cooking, so that they can also socialize. Thus, for Macro Atelier, the aim is to give pleasure while advertising. The target blogger community of Macro Atelier is more working or student bloggers since they organize all the workshops after 6 p.m. on weekdays.

These two sites are distinct from each other, so they allow comparing bloggers in different settings. Tavsiye Evi appears as a family-like, sincere atmosphere where women meet each other on a regular basis. What is striking here is the reproduction of gendered relationships in this setting, where women attend the meetings bringing snacks they cooked at home, and men deal with technical stuff like photo-shootings and filming. They organize theme-based events including knitting, cooking, sewing together. So, this site in a way, reproduces the traditionally inherited gender roles. Macro Atelier, on the other hand, presents a more "business-like" atmosphere, where people meet for the first time (every time new people are invited) and men and women cook at the same time, not only with bloggers but also with other people from various occupations.

3.3.2 Entering and Immersing into the Field

In my participant observation methods, I was closer to participants since I had the

opportunity to attend blogger events and take invitations due to my blogger career. Even if I rarely post to my blogs, my previous experiences as a blogger gave me the chance to be a real participant. Renan and Deren were my key informants who let me into the two sites chosen.

Tavsiye Evi's owner Renan knows me very well since I am an advisor angel of her company. I had attended many of the blogger events she organized before, so I asked her to invite me to any upcoming blogger event so that I can meet new bloggers. On the other hand, for Macro workshops, my connection was Deren, who is also my main informant. Deren is a friend of my sister from university and she works as a product and sales specialist in Macrocenter, a job she took with the help of her blog. Thus, listening to Deren's story was important and I had a life story interview with her to understand the role her blog played in her career path.

In the blogger meetings I attended in Tavsiye Evi, I disclosed my blogger and researcher identity from the beginning for ethical purposes. As a friendly ethnographer, I had several conversations with the bloggers at these events. Given my previous blogger career, retrospectively, I had already observations and determinations, so I went to the field with some presuppositions. Since I was one of them and I had easy access to their networks, I thought I could conduct interviews easily and we could understand each other. However, as Johnson indicates a liminal period between arrival and admission to the field (in Robben, 2007), my researcher & blogger identity in the field posed a controversy among the participants. While some participants found the use of blogger identity for research insincere and distance themselves, others welcome me and wanted to help voluntarily since I was one of them.

The participants are aware that they are being watched constantly, there is a gaze upon them, and they are aware of it and it also means their presence and their blogger identities are underlined and accepted. But as I watch them, they watch me too. Ethnographer needs to fully devote her/himself for full accession to membership in the community she/he researches obeying all the rules of the community (Robben, 2007). But at times, the identity I trusted most was an obstacle for a full devotion and I had a dilemma about favoring my blogger identity and wanted to keep it behind.

When you tell the bloggers that you are a researcher, then your researcher identity becomes the prominent one and they don't see your blog as a serious one and you are not a blogger for them anymore. Despite the difficulties created by this duality of my identity presentation in the field, it still has many advantages. Given the exchange

of blog links and names within the blogger community and to keep a track of each other, it was easy to follow our blogs on social media. On the other hand, being a blogger was useful for establishing connections and growth of the network and entering the field. By actively being present in these sites, I had the opportunity to talk to women face-to-face and interviews are conducted either at these sites or promises are taken to conduct later.

3.3.3 Digital Ethnography

As a model that based on interaction and face-to-face interviews and living subjects, as well as lived experiences, an ethnographic method is chosen with its interpretivist approach as the main method of the study. Given the subjects of this study are bloggers and even they attend blogger events, their blogging activities mainly take place in the virtual world. Besides the physical sites -Tavsiye Evi and Macro Atelier- chosen for participant observation, or any other physical field I randomly attend an event, a digital ethnography is also conducted to fully understand the relationship between online and offline worlds. Online activities in some settings might also create offline mobilization as bloggers make invitations from/take invitations at their blogs.

Blogging is a process does not occur only in one realm, but rather exists, entangles,

and disentangles in a constant flow through a variety of mediated contexts. As a result, it's important not to get caught up in the online vs. offline controversy, as there's already a lot of debate in academia about how to draw a clear line between the two realms. Thus, this study examines how traditional forms of ethnography are being incorporated into, as well as questioned by, some of the more recent approaches, encouraging anthropologists to use digital tools for ethnographic analysis and interpretation of social-cultural phenomena occurring in every interactive space.

This methodology helps to comprehend the types of flexible activities that exist in the market, what culture is, how it manifests itself in online environments, and where the line between the offline and the online exists. It also seeks to address the question, "Is it an important boundary to maintain or should we be challenging it in our study practices?" To challenge this dichotomy between offline and online, as well as the limits, this research employs Burrell's (2009) concept of "intercept," seeing a field site as a network that includes physical, virtual, and imagined spaces. In her discussion of the ethnographic tradition, she refers to Marcus's (Marcus, 1998) theories, according to

which field site arrangement can take many forms: "follow the individual," "follow the object," and "follow the metaphor" – all of which contribute to an overall "cohesion to 'multi-sited' ethnographies" (Burrell, 2009, p.183). In this "newer conception, the movement of objects, of individuals, of ideas, of media, and the fieldworker is attended to, uncovering insights and objects of inquiry that were not visible in studies that assumed culture was spatially fixed." (Burrell, 2009, p.183). She claims that site selection is made as part of a continuous process of data collection and assessment. Burrell recommends doing a "mobile, multi-sited, and simulated" (Burrell, 2009, p.187) ethnography to assess these radically different spatial locations. That is why, using Tavsiye Evi and Macrocenter as stationary bases, the researcher also followed the bloggers in other gatherings like welcome parties, baby showers, product launching events, as well as their blog, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube pages.

In the blogosphere, the connections and acquaintances incur via exchange of messages and they sometimes find their embodiment in the form of blogger events. In return, these events quickly go viral across social media with hashtags that allow bloggers to file their comments about the brand, event, and other bloggers. Hashtags are markers through which users develop a specific conversation thread – mostly used in Twitter or Instagram. They are modes of expressions used for organizing and shaping thoughts, not only in the platform they appeared but also spread to other platforms as well. Exceeding their boundaries, sometimes they even raise social consciousness among many other people than its first users. Thus, they gain power and presence which might even call for political actions such as #MeToo #ArabSpring, and #OccupyGezi. The use of hashtags in various platforms at the same time is regarded as polymediation, which takes the convergence of these "mediated moments" (Thornton, 2016, p.110) one step further. Users generally self-categorize their tweets or Instagram feeds by using these markers, however, hashtags also create a corporate social responsibility. Although, the use of hashtags is not regularly monitored for this research, hashtag usage among bloggers before, during or after the blogger events attended were taken into close consideration. The meanings assigned to them and the cultural connections that link them together, make hashtags an important part of the digital activity, so they are followed to enter into a dialogue with the event organizers to be invited to the events, or shared both during and after the event for being liable to the sponsor brands and organizer bloggers.

Bloggers spend most of their leisure time on their blogs or social media accounts

to be able to reach a broader audience and gain publicity. Since bloggers establish their online careers based on their writings mainly, this publicity comes from the virtual world and reflects on the physical world of the blogger. One way to examine this is to follow women bloggers as much as I can and determine what they generally hashtag about and how. In addition to physical ethnography, following the use of hashtags also help to interpret the digital data. I became members of their blogs, google+ pages, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter accounts. To fully integrate the blogger experience, I explored the connections between different activities including message/comment exchanges, tag exchanges (in blogs, Instagram and Twitter), interviews, and hyperlink paths. I read their posts and write feedbacks to them, joined their gift lotteries online, took part in a "*mime*", guest-posted some blogs and organized lotteries in my blogs, all of which constitute my online engagement in the process. So, I am fully immersed in the virtual field.

This is exemplified in the lottery I organized to understand the time and effort required for bloggers to find sponsorship and to organize a lottery in their blogs. After deciding to organize a lottery[13] in my blog, I wanted to find a sponsor for it. I was told to be aggressive, so I tried my best and found one newly established jewelry company for my wedding organization blog, *Oh My God, I am Marrying!* We made a deal for making 300 people members of this company's Facebook and Google+ pages in exchange for 2 diamond necklaces, one will be given in the lottery and the other will be given to me in exchange for my efforts. The result was my overload work for reaching the target day and night, bugging people to become the company's member which they are not that much interested in. In return, the diamond necklace was a silver necklace with a very small diamond that one can barely see, and the winner was not happy at all. In exchange for the time and energy I put forward, I gained 100 followers more who will disappear later, since they were only there because of the necklace. The aim of this activity was not to win a small diamond necklace but to gain followers which is the main objective of bloggers organizing lotteries.

3.3.4 Ethics

Either in a written form through e-mail exchanges or orally via phone conversations and face-to-face interviews, for this research, informed consent is taken from the respondents. An advanced understanding of what the researcher is doing, and what they

[13] See appendix 3 for further details on the lottery.

would be asked to do, and that they could withdraw at any time is clearly explained. However, as Thorne (1980) stated informed consent is always negotiated and in a state of renewal. So, there were times consent was not simply resolved through the formal signing of a consent document at the start of research. Instead, it was continually open to revision and questioning as some of the respondents wanted to see the written version of the research while some others gave up in the middle of the study. In that case, new respondents were added to the research process.

Thorne (1980) points out that social structures, as well as systems of sponsorship and introduction, can lead to a breakdown of the theory of voluntary consent – participants may feel uncomfortable not giving consent if those in authority or senior figures in the group have already given theirs. In one of the blogger events attended, when an elder and experienced famous blogger, Oya, agreed to the interview, then those who were unwilling at first decided to take part in the research as well. In this regard, Oya became the pioneer and led the way, as a source of inspiration and trust among the other bloggers. However, that didn't mean that those who participated feel comfortable in the research process although they gave their consent. For some, it might feel like an obligation, while others might find it beneficial.

In conducting digital ethnography also, I treated my respondents as offline researchers might treat observation in a semi-public space, like a busy school or community center. However, in concession to the unique nature of social media sites as a liminal public/ private space, I maximized confidentiality by creating pseudonyms, paraphrasing more and avoiding direct quotes from blogs or Instagram pages (which could be searchable in some cases).

Chapter 4

Celebrity Blogger in Turkey: Negotiating Fame and Publicity

"In a sense who you are has always been a story that you told to yourself. Now your self is a story that you tell others." (Ryman, 2011, p.225)

4.1 Introduction

> "*I am happy that you are here, I am pleased to meet you in person and will be happy to see you again. I am here for you; you can ask anything to me if you need help."* (Mercan, 29)

> "*One person who retweets this tweet of mine will deserve to come to the summer welcome party of Curcuna with me*." (Doğa, 49)

> "*The guest list is prepared by the organization company, they have a list, I have a list and we combined all of you. Please sit together so that you can meet with each other. What are these events for?"* (Emel, 39)

Living in the metropolitan city of Istanbul, Mercan, Doğa, and Emel are among the popular women bloggers in Turkey, despite rarely taking an active role in writing their blogs lately. The above quotes are taken from their dialogues through which they address their guests and followers. In the quotes, while Mercan and Emel directly speak to their audience in the blogger events they organized, Doğa is making a call from Twitter to her fans for participating in an event together.

These women are among those who made good use of the opportunities the blogosphere provided them when blogging reached its peak in Turkey in the beginning of 2010s. They became very popular among social media circles and many companies wanted to advertise with them. These women are not conventionally famous in the same way as social media stars like Kim Kardashian or Gigi Hadid, but in the Turkish blogosphere, they are celebrities in their networks. Although, blogger term is used spontaneously for many content-creators, even those who had never blogged but became influencers or trendsetters by their contents on Instagram or Youtube, the celebrity blogger in this chapter refers to those who are famous and experienced in blogging. Being a celebrity blogger requires an experienced/professional self who have many followers and who has a say in the market trends. They engage in contracts with

companies for advertising purposes and earn monetary rewards while adding their fame. Despite they focused on different themes and built different online personalities, Mercan, Doğa, and Emel are lifestyle bloggers who abandoned their blogs recently with the rising effect of other social media tools like Instagram and YouTube. Although they carried blogging into new platforms to remain current and trendy, they keep calling themselves bloggers and develop different strategies with the hope of preserving their fame.

Their blog subjects, entries, and negotiation of fame and identity differ depending on their demographic features including ages, homelands, occupations, and socioeconomic conditions. Each woman has established a unique style of interacting with the audience while promoting a sense of self-branding strategy. The audience of these bloggers ranges from those who share similar *habitus*[14] with the blogger to those who aspire to be like her. Some celebrity bloggers already have higher socio-economic standards and have unique styles of self-presentation with their outfits, assistants, and photographers. Others experience upward mobility through the fame they gained. When someone achieves a celebrity status, she needs to sort out how to act in another field and how to keep up with the pace in rival market conditions. As much effort as it takes to get famous, the more effort it takes to maintain that fame, especially in an environment where anybody can be a star in a single day. Therefore, celebrity bloggers find new techniques to cherish their hopes in the field.

Despite the construction of an autonomous, strong, risk-taking, entrepreneurial, successful woman image, we also witness their reproduction of normative gender roles in different platforms. These posts support women's stereotypical image as famous, but still proper, fancy, cooking, cleaning, and nurturing. Gendered division of labor is inherited by many women as they continue putting emphasis on their routine household activities in their posts such as child-care and cooking that are generally associated with women. Furthermore, there are also times they include their husbands and kids into the fame circle as they share posts about them not only for being intimate with the audience, but also for strategical purposes. One of the most common tactics of preserving this fame and reminding themselves to the community is to attend blogger events or organizing their own events under sponsorships. Over the years, I have attended many events as it is the best way for gaining networking opportunities and meet the bloggers

[14] Bourdieu defines habitus as "a subjective but not individual system of internalized structures, schemes of perception, conception, and action common to all members of the same group or class" (1977, p.86).

followed in person. Given the fragmented state of the celebrity blogosphere, I chose three events retrospectively (2013-2016-2019) as comparative case studies to have a better understanding of the celebrity bloggers' always changing, appearing, and disappearing, constantly renovating subjectivities in the age of extreme self-display. These events, which I chose at 3-year intervals, will also provide an insight into the transformation of the "celebrity" concept in parallel to the rapidly changing technology.

The first event to be focused on is the brunch hosted by Mercan in 2013 in a high-end restaurant surrounded by the Bosporus view. Being one of the biggest blogger events held in Istanbul, with more than a hundred bloggers attended, the event became a pioneer for further events. Given the hardship in finding sponsorships for organizing blogger events, due to the reason that Mercan was awarded in 2012 for having "the most social blog"[15], sponsor companies were in line. After the award, in a year, she had gained so much popularity and established her own business networks online. It was the time when blogging in Turkey was at its peak and being in such an event was exciting for many amateur bloggers who were invited by a professional one, to share her wisdom, know-how, and insights. Although she was only 20 years old, she achieved great success in blogging. She was one of the first people who brought the DIY concept to Turkey and teach many of her followers shopping from abroad. It was also the event where Mercan got a marriage proposal with all the invited bloggers took part in the setting up the organization. Private and public spheres were blended into each other, where her private life, working life, and social life are intersected.

The second event under scope is the summer welcome party of a fancy roof-top bar located in Taksim Square in 2016, which I had attended through retweeting. Doğa, a popular lifestyle blogger, was especially concentrating on fashion previously. Nowadays she quitted blogging but uses Instagram and YouTube mainly. In June 2016, I retweeted her tweet about her invitation to the party and I won it. Doğa has many fans competing to go to a party with her. She had already an invitation for two as sponsor companies usually distribute these kinds of sweepstakes to the bloggers. Her tweet was explicitly saying, one of the luckiest who retweet her would deserve to come to the welcome party with her. She shared it via using her social media account as a vehicle to connect with others and the usage of the phrase "deserve" in her call from Twitter, reflects that this invitation is given to the follower as an opportunity, both to have fun

[15] Award was given in national blog award competition called Bumerang Awards, sponsored by one of the most important media conglomerate-Doğan Holding.

and to meet her in person. This is one of the usual tactics celebrity bloggers use to stay active, and also a sign that they are connecting with their audience. A product coming from sponsors that they will not use themselves or something earned from a lottery, a gala invitation, etc., can be exchanged with retweets, mentions, or post-sharing. The gift-giving action in turn provides them with new followers.

The third event is a baby-shower organization for Emel's second child. Emel is a lifestyle blogger who turned her content into mommy stuff after learning she was pregnant for the second time. I had met her in a mommy bloggers' event organized by a well-known diaper company, where she asked for sponsorship to organize a big baby shower event. Even though the company refused her request, months later, she succeeded to organize a big fancy event in a luxurious hotel sponsored by many other baby-product brands. Attended by almost ninety bloggers, the event was not only a baby shower, but also an advertising and networking opportunity for brands and bloggers.

These three events are all sponsored by national and multinational companies and took place in fancy settings. Neither these three cases nor the three bloggers represent all the celebrity bloggers in Turkey, but the above-mentioned case studies need to be explored in detail to gain a better understanding of the phenomena of being a celebrity blogger through these women's performances. These unique cases will shed light on why these women choose to live their private moments like a marriage proposal or expecting a baby with a group of strangers in relation to the ways in which they hope for keeping their fame. The hoping practice for these women is a recurrent one, through which they perform a neoliberal subjectivity. The celebrity blogger emerges as a risk-taking, entrepreunerial self who acts autonomously for her individual desires in compliance with the neoliberal capitalism. Therefore, this chapter investigates the hopes of celebrity bloggers whose self-presentations require a post-feminist entrepreneur self, their differences from each other in negotiating their fame, and their relations with their audience. Hope here emerges as a practical and political practice that shapes the bloggers' relationship with their audience and other bloggers.

In this framework, first, this chapter discusses negotiating fame and publicity expanding on existing theories of micro-celebrity. After introducing the key definitions and conceptualizations, it explains the methodology used for this chapter. Finally, it presents and discusses the findings from the comparative analysis of three case studies to argue that celebrity bloggers are in constant labor production with the hope of preserving their existing fame in competitive, ever-changing market conditions. Despite

the use of several self-branding techniques and the time and effort spend for the content production, audience management appears as a prominent strategy to keep their existing fame, while also showing their presence in several web-platforms at the same time. While experiencing fame differs by the type of blog and audience, the study demonstrates that despite the fragmented nature of the celebrity blogosphere, common tendencies emerge in blog production among celebrity bloggers. Thus, this chapter also shows how celebrity bloggers perform behind and in front of the stage (Goffman, 1959), attempting to understand the features of being a celebrity in the women's blogosphere from the perspective of the micro-celebrity framework.

4.2 Transformation of Celebrity and Creation of Micro-celebrity

The term "celebrity" is a general and encompassing term referring to well-knownness, regardless of the way it has been acquired whereas "concepts of hero, star, and leader are more specific categories of the public individual that relate to specific functions in the public sphere" (Marshall, 1997, p. 7). However, celebrity as a person is often thought as having "innate qualities, skills, authenticity, star quality or charisma" (Rojek, 2001, p.5). Generally referring to "famous people" such as Hollywood artists, musicians, and sports players, the term celebrity requires a visibility gained through mass media (Marshall, 1997; Cashmore&Parker, 2003; Turner, 2004, 2010). However, the distinction between celebrities and ordinary people has blurred as the traditional[16] understanding of celebrity and fame has changed with the emergence of social media, making celebrity culture a part of our daily lives.

Sean Redmond and Su Holmes shortly describe the phenomenon of celebrity in the current era, as 'the contemporary state of being famous' (in Hamad, 2018, p.45). In this way, they emphasize the novelty not in fame itself, but more on the various forms it takes, the ways it manifests and circulates, and the manner and extent of its permeation of media content, platforms and landscapes (Hamad, 2018, p.45). While social media platforms replacing traditional national mass media making spatial and national boundaries more superfluous, they also offer new possibilities for the creation of celebrity. Having enabled would-be celebrities to promote their amateur efforts in new ways, media conglomeration has allowed synergistic promotion of celebrity images

[16] A celebrity is an individual who is primarily 'well known for their well-knownness'; they are famous for being famous (Boorstin, 1972, p.57). Boorstin (1972) defines celebrity as a "human pseudo-event," that is manufactured-a creation-rather than the result of merit. Providing visibility and distribution possibilities, the media's role in the creation of celebrity is undeniable. So, according to Giles (2000), fame is also defined as a process, which is a consequence of how the media treat individuals.

(Krieken, 2012). Once reality TV created the average celebrity, later many new media platforms including blogs, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube have extended celebrity personae into everyday life. Implying especially the appearance of ordinary people in reality shows and talent competitions, Turner (2004) calls this shift as a "demotic turn". According to Turner (2004), celebrity term begins to evolve losing its elite and magical condition and becomes a feasible expectation from everyday life. So, the sharing of everyday ordinary life by self-made celebrities-referred as DIY celebrities by Turner (2006)- becomes significant in and of itself.

Marshall describes (2006, p.635) celebrity culture as a discourse that focuses on individualism, identity, and public transformation which is constituted by a real or imagined audience. The concept of Internet-related celebrity has been elaborated by Senft when she defined the term "micro-celebrity" which means "a new style of online performance that involves people 'amping up' their popularity over the Web using technologies like video, blogs, and social networking sites" (2008, p. 25). While Senft finds micro-celebrities -non-actors as performers- "more real" than television personalities with 'perfect hair, perfect friends and perfect lives' (2008, p.16), Marwick (2013) emphasizes on their authenticity as a distinguishing mark. According to Marwick&Boyd (2011), being a micro-celebrity requires a set of practices in front of an audience which is seen as a fan base through the popularity is maintained. They argue that "'celebrity' has become a set of circulated strategies and practices that place fame on a continuum, rather than as a bright line that separates individuals" (2011, p.40). Thus, being a micro-celebrity involves various performances in front of an unknown audience, including providing up-to-date contents in their blogs or other social media platforms, replying to comments and feedbacks from followers, attending to product launchings, blogger events, workshops or any other occasions they are invited to. These performance-based actions also require a continuous struggle of a self that is carefully curated and presented to be consumed by others.

Influencer is also another term that became popular with the rise of social media fame, which also coincides with the rise of the informational/post-industrial economy. According to Abidin, influencers are micro-celebrities that accumulate followers on platforms like Instagram, YouTube, or Twitter through the "textual and visual narration of their personal, everyday lives, upon which paid advertorials –advertisements written in the form of editorial opinions – for products and services are premised"(2016, p.86). They engage with their followers in "digital" and "physical" spaces, and not only

monetize their following by integrating advertorials into their blog or social media posts, but also making physical appearances at events (Abidin, 2015). This dual performance is important as 'socially recognized self-realization' is seen as a "primary motivation for online social production in which people collaborate, both for achieving pleasure and also peer recognition" (Arvidsson, 2008, p.332). As Marwick's (2013) "micro-celebrities" address being famous within a niche group, either via self-promotion or through the recognition of others, bloggers show off for the audience to achieve self-realization and publicity on a personal level. In turn, it brings economic benefits which becomes one of the main concerns of bloggers' online social production, while also allows a larger workforce that performs immaterial labor. In our interview in 2015, one of my respondents, Mercan, claimed that turning that much effort into an economic gain was necessary and logical, so she decided to establish an e-commerce site and accumulate her labor there. She was sure that her followers would follow her site as she was always in a good relationship with them. Mercan was engaged in "performative practice" (Marwick & Boyd, 2011) of celebrity, building fame by packaging herself through a "careful and ongoing affective management of an online following" (Abidin, 2015; Abidin & Thompson, 2012; Marwick & Boyd, 2011), through which she would also benefit outside the blogging realm. Economic gains also have a positive effect on achieving feelings like self-fulfillment, emancipation, celebration, and recognition as bloggers feel more fulfilled, appreciated and validated. Thus, when she gets used to being famous, influencer/micro-celebrity's job is a little more than product promotion, but more about protecting her existing image and fame.

It is no coincidence that the prominent subjects of this chapter gave up their initial blogs and started to appear more on Instagram and YouTube. As Doğa makes it explicit, the reason she closed her blog and started to use Instagram and YouTube more, was to keep herself up to date, complying with the necessities of today's world which are mainly surrounded by story postings. Additionally, Mercan explains her reason for not writing to her blog anymore as, *"I think blogs are outdated. Nobody reads blogs anymore since there is Instagram now, which makes life easier. But still, you need to work hard in that platform as it works by likes and comments."*

Mercan's or Doğa's migration into Instagram demonstrates that in the platform economy, it is the hope of visibility that is fought for. Even though switching platforms may seem as a free choice for these celebrity bloggers, they hardly have control over their labor process, given the other dynamics in the platform economy regarding the

algorithmic requirements. For instance, Instagram algorithm views every possible likes, comments, shares and saves and assigns a personalized feed to the user. While it may provide more quality time for the user, it jeopardizes content-creators who make income out of this platform (O'Meara, 2019). Content creators have to comply with the changing algorithms, performing based on the requirements coming from the advertising companies, and also algorithmic experts. Thus, this shift between social media platforms, represents a struggle to remain current preserving their celebrity status, whereas the platform exerts control over their visibility and make profits out of it. Hoping that switching platforms would be helpful for keeping their fame in this rival market, celebrity bloggers/micro-celebrities/influencers find themselves in constant endeavor for maximum visibility. Moreover, constantly trying to figure out what the platform values, creates additional burden for the content creators who are trying to remain famous.

Given the fast-track lives we live in, it is easier for readers and writers to lose less time in reading or writing. Posting a picture than writing a whole piece of a blog post or seeing a picture or a video than reading a long piece of writing is easier. It is quickly consumed by the audience who has always less time and is in a hurry. No time to read, but there is always time to look. Mirzoeff (1998) explains this as "sensual immediacy of picture." Marwick (2015) emphasizes Instagram's role in contributing to the popularity of the "selfie" culture which also favors certain types of self-presentation. Thus, there is also another form of effort and time spent in creating good-looking photos and videos while trying to stay authentic and famous. But it is obvious that the affordances of new media tools such as Instagram, YouTube, and Snapchat, have helped privilege the blogger's online presence in a broader network. Despite pushing the blogger to exist on many platforms at the same time for fear of falling behind the game, which might be a danger to invisibility (Butcher, 2018), these platforms allow the blogger to diversify and categorize their performances in a variety of ways. This situation is exemplified in Doğa's online self-presentation- having vacations in yachts, in luxurious hotels, throwing parties and picnics at her backyard on her Instagram stories, always smiling in her trendy, expensive clothes on her Instagram posts but at the same time, cooking dinner at home, visiting parents in their households and also taking care of her child on her YouTube videos. Doğa's platform switching is due to her hope to gain more followers to sustain her fame. Hence, the Instagram and YouTube practices of bloggers have diversified the performances, expanded the reputation of

bloggers, and so has their social environment, thereby attracting a larger audience.

The typical contemporary era celebrity emerges as the one who is ordinary, up-to-date, entrepreneurial, inspiring, diversified, and mediated across platforms. Today's celebrity culture doesn't take its novelty from the fame itself, but rather from the ways fame takes forms, manifests, and circulates, and the manner and extent of its permeation of media content, platforms, and landscapes (Hamad 2018, p.45). Practices of social media celebrities have been widely explored as a form of digital labor that blurs the notion of hobby and work (Abidin, 2016; Duffy, 2017; Rocamora, 2018), as well as the self-presentation of them as authentic, carefully-curated selves of branded persona (Pooley, 2010; Duffy, 2017; Marwick, 2013). However, little attention has been paid to understand the activities-focused on the promotion of brands- and how these women are negotiating the fame they gain in relation to their hopes. Therefore, this chapter seeks to answer what it takes to be a celebrity blogger in Turkey, what kinds of strategies these women develop to remain current and how they negotiate fame in relation to their hopes.

4.3 Who is the celebrity blogger in Turkey?

This chapter's data originates from three main sources. Semi-structured interviews and conversations with celebrity bloggers as well as the audience, three case studies drawn from blogger events, and lastly the digital ethnography that benefited from visual and textual discourse analysis of blogs and other social media accounts of bloggers in question. To preserve the data up-to-date and to comply with the ever-changing field (celebrity blogosphere), after attending the events, follow-up interviews were also conducted with the three respondents.

I chose three sponsored events as case studies for a better understanding of the performances of celebrity bloggers in public events on a comparative basis. These (primarily descriptive) illustrative case studies aim to show the existing situation to make the readers more familiar with the topic.

In the following case studies, I examine three highly followed bloggers who are using micro-celebrity techniques hoping to preserve their fame while also achieving attention and popularity. The focus of these case studies is the daily practice of "celebrity" by non-famous individuals in the traditional sense, but also achieved a certain fame in their niche online environments. While the distinction between micro-celebrity and 'real' celebrity was traditionally based on popularity, approachability, or

mainstream status, acknowledging the informants' micro-celebrity statuses, this research considers being a celebrity as a practice. These women's celebrity practices revolve around their hope to remain current and preserve the fame they have. Their self-presentations in the blogger events attended also allow new hopes to bear among their followers. Therefore, this chapter refers to three bloggers, Doğa, Mercan and Emel, as micro-celebrity bloggers to avoid the binary implications of the term "celebrity", while also refraining from referring to these women as "influencers" that is more associated with the Instagram only. Thus, just for simplification, I will refer to these micro-celebrity subjects as celebrity bloggers, using them interchangeably. Doğa (49) is a previous fashion blogger who turned into a lifestyle blogger lately ranking as one of the social media influencers with her 60K followers on Instagram[17] and partners with prominent social media brands on her Instagram and YouTube accounts. Mercan (29), a DIY blogger, was awarded as "the most social blog" in national blog awards and has 40K followers on Instagram and 335K followers on Facebook. She was very popular back in 2012, and she was employed by several companies as a social media specialist. Emel (39) quitted her job after becoming a mother and began her career as a social media professional. She writes about parenting in her column in a woman's portal and has a website on mommy blogging and women's issues. She has 27K followers on Instagram.

Despite these women are both self and publicly defined bloggers, nowadays they rarely post to their blogs, or their blogs faded away. The fast pace of Instagram and YouTube captured them as well, resulting with their switching to these platforms. Moreover, the blog domains that took them to this day are no longer useful (for two of them). It is time to update and see the challenges in other platforms. As part of the longitudinal research, retrospectively, their previous blog posts were also taken into consideration as well as their contemporary postings on Instagram and YouTube. This transformation between the platforms constitutes a sign of the coping mechanism with the contemporary while trying to preserve their celebrity status. However, in doing so, they also feel the burden on their shoulders to be present in each platform, to keep up with the algorithmic changes, so stay online all day long for content production.

This chapter offers a portrayal of the features of women celebrity blogosphere in Turkey. Although the analysis has greatly benefited from the comparison of three cases,

[17] Source: Boomsocial, a social statistics website.

it does not only analyze these three women[18]. Emel and Mercan were the organizers and Doğa was the host of these events and they were chosen based on their self-defined blogger occupations in their profile pages, their micro-celebrity statuses, and based on my acquaintances with them. However, the study also encompasses the observations of other celebrity bloggers who participated in the so-called events as part of the micro-celebrity phenomena. Ethnographic fieldwork consisted of different forms of blogger gatherings, such as workshops, product launching events, birthdays, picnics, fashion shows, welcome parties, and opening parties. Thus, these three events should be considered along with the longitudinal ethnographic fieldwork where many other blogger events attended, and many celebrity bloggers followed and get acquainted. The data is gathered from participant observation, conversations, and interviews with many bloggers who attended these events. The analysis and results of the study are based on the participant observations in various blogger events, specifically the three events which will be analyzed in detail in the following section.

4.4 Negotiating Fame and Publicity in the Field of Blogosphere

Mercan's Brunch

The rise of digital media and new forms of collaborative work and organization, let reputation appear as a shared cultural conception of value and a form of social capital, which is operated by independent, self-investing individuals with the expectation of economic return (Gandini, 2016). Marwick defines reputation as "the collective or shared perception about one another, which is crafted over the judgments made upon the mosaic information publicly available" (in Gandini 2016, p.30). Thus, for Mercan who gained an important reputation after she was awarded for her blog, it was important to share and prosper this reputation and make good use of it. Given the rising popularity of bloggers in the 2010s, when other tools such as Instagram and YouTube were not popular (as Instagram was established in 2010 and was still in its early stages), organizing a blogger event in a fancy restaurant where the attendees and press were ready to talk about, emerged as a strategy for a micro-celebrity blogger to strengthen her ties in the market.

Mercan's brunch in a high-end restaurant by the Bosporus in 2013 was one of the pioneering blogger events in Istanbul and even in Turkey. It was the first time I was invited to a blogger event with my amateur blog. Given that it was my first blogger

[18] See appendix 2 for additional information on the celebrity bloggers took part in the study.

event as a blogger, I had presuppositions that I would feel alienated. However, there were around a hundred bloggers who were mostly inexperienced and had just started their blogs. Almost everyone in the group was a Mercan follower; otherwise, they would not have known about this gathering. To be eligible for an invitation, you had to fill out a form that only Mercan's followers could access. Mercan was friendly, welcoming, and supportive to her guests, making them feel comfortable. I had made many friends, exchanged e-mail and blog addresses with them so that we might stay in touch for future contact. Throughout the event, she visited each table to express her gratitude for our attendance and to ask if we needed anything from her, which was a kind gesture appreciated by her followers.

Mercan's remarks felt sincere, as did her invites to her future events and seminars, as well as her promises to assist her fans who wish to start their own blogs. She revealed later in our interview[19], this friendly approach was a deliberate strategy in the early years of her blogger career and the reputation she built:

> "*3 years ago, the market was new to everyone and although I gained an award, I was still learning. I was young and there was nobody to guide me. But I knew the enthusiasm of a new blogger, so I wanted to help. I had to be sincere with my audience, since I won that award because they voted for me and circulated my stuff. So, I needed to pay back!"*

Acknowledging that her audience has an important role in her existing fame, Mercan hopes this relationship to prosper for her fame's sustainability. As Deuze (2007) suggests, networked reputation not only comes from a voluntary act for creating labor for society, but also from defining one's self to him/herself via autobiographical self-expression and communal interaction. Garcia and Serrano position the bloggers as in a halfway between a celebrity and an opinion leader claiming that "social media networks like Instagram allow anonymous people become true leaders of opinion" (2016, p.106). With a practical motive, Mercan performs a guiding self-presentation among her followers. Despite it was a brunch, she even made a public speech about how to generate good content on blogs. Mercan's attitude toward her guests reflects a self-branding strategy centered on a leadership position, since she feels responsible for assisting newcomers. Her hope to teach amateur bloggers and inspire others through her leadership skills becomes attached to her self-presentation in her interactions with her audience.

[19] A semi-structured interview with Mercan in a workshop organized by her in Bursa in 2015.

Everyone had enough food and beverages and was well-served over the 5-hours event. In addition to the pleasant environment, Mercan's boyfriend Yigit (31) addressed each table and informed us that he was going to propose to Mercan and that we would all be a part of it. This kind of inclusion to Mercan's private life was exciting for all of us at the table. As Yagmur (31) who was just starting her blog showed her envy, "*I wish I had such a powerful blog like hers*", or Ayten (27), "*I cannot wait to see my blog has that kind of an impression one day. I am so new, but I think I can do better and organize something like this in the future.*" These emotions including envy, pretension, excitement and desire in the lines of Yagmur and Ayten, turn into a productive labor allowing new hopes to prevail. As a result of this gathering, many women got inspired to give more care and to put much effort into their blogs, with the hope of achieving a similar kind of status in the blogosphere. This inspiration was also apparent in Yiğit's explanation,

> "*After I knew Mercan, I learned that blogging changed her life and she is happy about it. I just want to share her happiness too, and I wanted to start a blog as well. Since I am chubby as you see, it will be a cooking blog".*

His sincere self-criticisms helped people to feel familiar and comfortable. Thus, as a couple, Mercan and Yiğit were in cooperation in dealing with the guests and their lovely portrayal together gave the event a touchy atmosphere. This intimacy and the way Mercan included her followers in her private life strengthened her ties with her audience.

Summer Welcome Party in Taksim

The blogosphere stands as a stage where individuals take various kinds of roles determined by different situations, and mostly shaped by the interaction with each other. According to Goffman (1959), performances take place in the daily lives of performers to justify themselves as selves before the others whom they regard as the audience. Performance is shaped by environment and audience put into an act to provide impressions that are consonant with the desired goals of the performer (Goffman 1959). This interaction and socialization process lead the individual to construct his/her own social identity and serves as a self-making process. Doğa's summer welcome party tweet not only presented her with new followers, but also a face-to-face interaction possibility with her fans, demonstrating to her network that she is engaging with her audience. This is a reciprocal opportunity, as "receiving a message from a highly

followed individual is a status symbol" within the fan community (Marwick & Boyd 2011, p.150). Therefore, perceiving feedback from a celebrity blogger might also seem like an achievement for an aspirant blogger and a follower.

After winning the retweet lottery, I went to the summer welcome party at a fancy rooftop bar, which is located on one of Taksim's posh streets. We agreed to meet at the location at 7 p.m., but I had to wait an hour for Doğa to arrive. We didn't have many possibilities to chat, because she was surrounded by photographers, company officials, and other bloggers, being a well-known blogger in the community. When we initially arrived, we made our way to a large table reserved for bloggers. There were many famous bloggers at the table and Doğa introduced me to them as a fan of hers. Although having blogs of my own, what I witnessed was an unwilling inclusion of me in the conversation. Despite my efforts to participate in the discussion, it was difficult for me to penetrate the exclusive blogger circle.

Sponsoring firms provide numerous free tickets to the bloggers for promotional purposes, and they cannot say "no" to them who want to bring extra guests with them. The table was full of celebrity bloggers, who were joined by their spouses and/or children. The number of attendees was substantial for a free invitation, but none of them saw a problem with this. As a result, the gathering was overcrowded, and the food was not adequately given to everyone, but to the celebrity blogger table. When I waited for the lunch for around 40 minutes, Doğa said, "*Oh didn't you say that you were my guest*?" which might be interpreted as my presence is worthier if it is known that I am with her. Furthermore, when one of the bloggers at the table, Naif Girl, requested an expensive drink, the server stated that he needed to inquire whether the drink was included in the complimentary beverages. However, Naif Girl replied: *"Do you know who we are? This is the blogger table and of course it will be free for us."* This reaction of Naif Girl shows us that negotiating her fame in an occasion like this allows her to place emphasis on her blogger identity, which is more preferred and caused her to be there. After her reaction to the waiter, Naif Girl wanted to justify her actions by saying, "*Since they give importance to our thoughts, they invited us here and now they need to behave us properly, otherwise they will be damned*", which is followed by a laugh at the table.

The damned part was to point out that if the organizers of the event don't act as the bloggers want, they'll write about the event negatively, so they'll be condemned to suffer the consequences. If the interactions and circumstances change, people can adopt

different selves and choose however and whomever they want to be in online platforms. However, social self continuously needs to be achieved through interaction with the other people in the society and one's position in different fields needs a consistent performance towards the others. Given Doğa's online self-presentation, which is based on an unreachable glamour idea, her strategy was to preserve this image in other fields as well. Her hope to nurture this glamourous identity reveals itself in the way she interacts within the blogger community, both with her fans and other bloggers. Doğa needed to be ready to join her other blogger friends at the blogger table, which was reserved, served better food and drinks. Because of her public persona, she couldn't spend much time with me as a guest as depending on the context, environment, and power relations, people can behave differently, which also influences their self-making. Thus, the self-confidence of Doğa and Naif Girl at the example, coming from the self-identification of being famous bloggers, let them behave like celebrities, who want to feel privileged.

Mira Becomes Sister

I had attended a blogger event for a well-known diaper brand at a fancy hotel, where mommy bloggers tried the brand's newest diaper for the first time and made its public debut. As many of the mother bloggers were busy taking pictures with diapers, I met Emel, who was sincere and friendly. Emel was expecting a baby and invited me to her baby shower, for which she had not yet found a sponsor. According to the blogger parties in which I have attended, celebrity bloggers are accustomed to funding many of their private gatherings through sponsorships. Therefore, Emel requested the brand to assist her in planning a lavish baby shower for her second child. This request is a good illustration of the influencers' attempt to exert control over their "conditions of presence-to-others" (Couldry, Fotopoulou, & Dickens, 2016) and, in so doing, combat precarity and protect wages in the field. Other examples of these control mechanisms include demanding taxi for going to events, asking for professional photographers to accompany their event participations, and requesting for sponsorships for organizing lotteries. These kinds of attempts can be regarded as compensations for their ongoing labor.

Months later, I was at Emel's baby shower on a fancy hotel's rooftop with a wonderful view. The venue was lavishly adorned, and the cake, gifts, and sponsor firms were all present, along with around ninety bloggers who had been invited. Emel was

pleasant to everyone, making certain that everyone at the same table was acquainted to one another. If not, she introduced us and attempted to start conversations that we could all enjoy. In this case, a different technique was used, and professional and amateur bloggers were mixed in tables of five.

In this event, I had the opportunity to meet Sare (40), one of Turkey's most popular bloggers (272K followers in Instagram). She attended the occasion with her youngest child. Sare has been blogging for five years and told me that she saw it as a career opportunity from the beginning. She said,

> "*I gave birth to 3 children in 1.5-year time and I jumped into motherhood right away. So, I left my job as a researcher and I started giving advice about motherhood from my Facebook page.*"

Sare's hope to earn her living from blogging pushed her so far and led her a significant amount of labor production. Even without having written a single post, she made herself blogger business cards and then acquire a domain name as a mother blogger. She promoted herself with a successful business plan. Her Facebook followers are now increasing by 3000, daily. She has her own book, which she autographs at every chance.

Sare has used serious strategies that many bloggers overlook, such as Facebook advertisements and Facebook live broadcasts, since the day she began writing. As part of her self-promotion plan, she also wrote and published her own book. She is a powerful and an inspiring woman who connects brands with other blogger women. For five years, she organizes mother events. She says,

> *"I became a pioneer in the provision of brand gifts or coupons to moms, and I included these brands into my sponsorship projects. Each firm has a distinct target audience, and I was able to reach them through my experience and the way I created my online presence. I never lied; I always stated that I do this as a career, so seeing advertisements on my site is natural. Then people understand me and stop criticizing but started to benefit from my advice.*"

She believes that her direct engagement with her audience from many platforms revealing her true intentions from the beginning let her career prosper. She is a source of inspiration for many amateur bloggers who are producing hope labor (Kuehn&Corrigan, 2013) to achieve a blogger career like hers. Having 7.5 million clicks in a day, she gives utmost importance to her blog:

> "*I tell my followers that I put so much effort into making these posts and I do this for living, so I do not get any criticisms. Blogging changes our perceptions of life and increases our self-consciousness. I look at life as a blogger who wants to be persistent, assist others, and raise*

women's awareness."

Sare also adopts the leadership role and sees herself as a pioneer in the market, hoping to make a change in women's lives. She sets a successful example who fulfilled her goals through the opportunities blogosphere provided. However, as her responses reveal, hoping for a career brings additional labor production, not only in blogs but also outside this realm. Additionally, Yeşim (48), Emel's best friend, is also a well-known blogger. Upon my question about the benefits of blogging, she told me that the new abilities she gained from blogging gave her a clear advantage in her profession in the field of communication. Because she has always desired to work in the field of communication, she used her blogging talents to improve her position in the job market while also gaining access to economic capital.

Emel's baby shower party not only brought so many famous and non-famous bloggers together, but it also created a friendly and ice-breaking atmosphere with many competitions organized throughout the event. One of them was to write acrostic poems in the name of the baby. The winner received small beauty products from one of the event's sponsors. This acrostic poem is immediately shared in the winner's and Emel's Twitter accounts. It is then retweeted with relevant hashtags which include the name of the event (#Emelsbabyshower), the name of the baby (#babyBatu), or the name of the beauty product given. Some bloggers not only tagged Emel and the sponsor company in these tweets, but also the winner blogger. Thus, Twitter appears as the mostly used platform for sharing these kinds of texts or pictures, that it is short, instant, to-the point and related to the present time. In this way, these hashtags provide for the participants the possibility to follow the event in the digital platforms while also spending time right in the action simultaneously. Besides the current performances of bloggers in the event, it becomes possible to follow their online text-based blogging practices. While sharing the winner and the poem directly on their Twitter accounts, bloggers later talk about these competitions widely in their blogs. So, the bloggers diversify their actions by diversifying the platforms they use. Additionally, these diverse platforms appear as mediums for different types of media practice. The poem writing experience was not the only sponsored competition, but there were other competitions that were sponsored by different firms as well. As a result, this event was a perfect example of how to transform a baby shower into a successful blogger event where bloggers shared the newly launched products of sponsor companies via hashtags, including the name of the new coming baby. In addition to the party organization, Emel could get a package of baby

products she is promoting. When I asked Emel if she knows all the people in the event, she replied,

> "*I know most of them, but not closely. The guest list is prepared by the organization company. They invited the bloggers they wanted. They have a list; I have a list and we combined them*."

Despite being a sentimental gathering for a mom-to-be, it can also be considered as a mechanical and pragmatic move through which Emel fulfilled her hopes to be remembered, spoken of, and appreciated by her guests. Due to her desire to have a big baby-shower, she didn't care much about the participants as far as the event was fancy enough. She added,

> "*I want my Mira (first kid) to enjoy as much as she can before her brother comes. I wanted to call this party "Mira Abla Oluyor" and design it for her. The rest doesn't matter. The cake, the games, the gifts, they are all for her. And of course, the memories are for me and for my new coming baby. When he is grown up, it is important how it looks in the photos. Many people – the right ones- would talk about this event for a while."*

The baby shower became real with the help of many sponsoring companies and invited bloggers, among whom there were the "right ones". What she means by using this phrase is her referral to the micro-celebrities whose participation would add to the exclusiveness of the event. Therefore, with the hope of reaching more people, Emel saw no problem with welcoming her new coming baby with strangers; she didn't want an intimate, sincere, family-like gathering, but rather a big event that would be remembered for a long time. Hoping here emerges not only as a practice at the present time, but also, we witness a hope that is related to a future desire which is to be seen by the baby. Additionally, it becomes a form of hoping that would be remembered through time as a nostalgic memory from the past.

4.5 Comparison of the Bloggers

While Mercan's and Emel's parties were more participatory, Doğa's welcoming party was a lonely event. Although this situation mainly stems from the fact that Doğa was not the organizer of the event we participated in together, she was nonetheless liable for the fan she invited. As a follower, I anticipated a more personal interaction with the blogger and would like to be included in their circle. However, this distanced relationship might be part of her self-branding strategy serving for the persona she cultivates as unreachable glamour. Doğa and other celebrity bloggers who attended the event drew an apparent line between themselves and the rest of the guests. There were

bloggers on one side of the line, and others on the other, including fans, babysitters, servers, organizers, and other visitors who were not bloggers. This distinction, based on their common profession, offers them a sense of belonging, a unity-namely a sisterhood-that only they comprehend. They believed they were the most important guests of the night, so anybody should serve them and treat them however they wish. They saw no problem with bringing their spouses, kids, and even babysitters with them to a freely attended event. Hence, it is seen that fame comes with an extensive level of self-confidence.

Doğa is popular among her blogger friends as well. Despite she was not the organizer of the event we participated in together, she is very famous for organizing blogger events, including house parties and picnics. The picnics she organizes every year attract many celebrities from the Turkish blogosphere. However, these gatherings are held in a vicious circle where only upper-class bloggers are invited, especially those who are as famous as her. She is regarded as an elite blogger because of the fancy style of living she has. Despite she is known as a lifestyle blogger, her previous posts and photos were specifically concentrated on fashion. She was and still is attending many of the international fashion week events, including NY, Paris, Milano, etc. It is also important to bear in mind that to be invited to these events or to be able to attend these events, one should meet the high standards required. She was the only model of her blog, as her photos were taken in expensive, trendy outfits in certain settings by a professional camera. Most of her photos are taken in an urban city atmosphere or vacations, accompanied by yachts, luxurious hotels, or by objects such as a champagne glass, Armani sunglasses, Gucci bags, Louboutin shoes, etc. This proves what Zappavigna explains: "The mediated still life foregrounds the photographer's relationship to represented objects… Depending on the domain, these are often 'fetishized' objects such as shoes or coffee" (2016, 288). In Doğa's case, coffee is usually replaced by a glass of champagne or wine. This kind of a portrayal in the photos make her audience think about her as a classy lifestyle blogger, as apparent in K. K's (2017) comment in her blog,

> "*She is truly elegant, I mean real. She does not have any worry to seem "classy" since she is not a "nouveau riche". This is what distinguishes her from the other lifestyle bloggers who force themselves to seem like her. She is not insincere; she doesn't hide anything or impose. That's why I like her. She just lives her life and it is nice to watch her*".

Many readers are unaware that Doğa's father is a well-known ship owner and her

spouse is a prominent businessman. Doğa, who was born in Istanbul and raised between Istanbul and Bodrum, claims to have had a beautiful childhood. She does not require a full-time job, yet she earns money via blogging. Thus, the fact that she is coming from an upper-class familial background and the environment she cultivated with her blogger identity in time, addresses a similar level. One may claim she is not spoiled by her fame, rather, she continues to act in the way she is accustomed to. It is a routine to hang out with people like her and stay in that vicious circle.

While not all lifestyle bloggers live as affluently as her, many are financially well-off and have time and resources to invest in their blogs. Even if they have other occupations than being a blogger, their blogs become sites to explore their newfound identity as a mom and housewife. This is a common narrative in many lifestyle blogs, and also true for the three bloggers featured here. Emel writes about her children as an expert mommy blogger not only in her blog, but also as a columnist in a newspaper and magazine. Doğa, on the other hand, brings her son everywhere and makes an appearance not only with her clothes (she was a fashion blogger who is calling herself a lifestyle blogger now), but also with her everyday life, particularly with her cooking. Both have YouTube channels, with Doğa focusing on cuisine and Emel on parenting. Mercan, on the other hand, stopped writing after becoming a mother and now posts about parenthood on her Instagram page. Her previous posts also featured many writings about wedding planning and what to acquire as a dowery to be a better housewife.

Compared to Doğa, Mercan and Emel started working at an early age. They come from middle-class families who are based in the South-Eastern part of Anatolia (Elazığ and Tunceli). They were raised in rather smaller cities but came to Istanbul for a university education. As Mercan was one of the first people to blog at her early age, she is understanding to everyone:

> *"I knew nothing at the time, but I tried hard. I did my best, but I understand the concerns and expectations that new bloggers have, as well as the stages they go through. That is why I strive to make them feel that I was like them, I understand them, and I am always there to assist them."*

Mercan's self-presentation is sincere. She is always willing to help new bloggers and anyone who wish to start blogging. The national blog award she won, her early success in blogging, and the employment she did as social media specialists for many well-known firms led her to believe she should act as an expert in the field. For years, she continued to organize blogger events and content-writing workshops in different

cities to tell people how to be a good blogger.

Her online self-presentation has shifted since becoming a mother. She gave up blogging and even lost her domain name, turning her blog into a website where she sells stationery products. Yiğit, who proposed to her at a blogger event in 2013, married her, and they co-founded an e-commerce firm. This was not merely a virtual shift; she also launched a stationery in Bursa, where she moved after marrying. She now mostly promotes the products she sells on her Instagram and YouTube accounts, as well as occasional family photos she posts. When I questioned whether she missed her colorful days as a blogger everyone wants to collaborate with, she told,

> "*You know, everything has a time. I started fast and saw the peak already. Blogging gave me hope for a better life. I am still a blogger but have other obligations too. I have a daughter and husband I should take care of. And, I have a job that I enjoy doing, physically I am there and meeting new people in real life. I realized that I missed it. And as I said, it was logical to turn this effort into a real job."*

She also added that moving from Istanbul had also changed her feelings a bit:

> *"I live in a district of Bursa and it is nice to know people, they come and drink tea in my store. They all like my products, and I become very happy. I think I slowed down a bit, but this doesn't mean that I left writing. I still use Instagram and YouTube actively. And who knows what will happen in 5 years."*

Selling Chinese products in her stationery is a habit she has acquired through her blogging experience. Mercan previously introduced small, fun stationery equipment she fancies in her blog and told her audience how to make shopping from abroad via online channels. She bought so many accessories whilst teaching people how to shop online that she eventually decided to sell them. Her strategic moves to create a large audience by introducing new concepts like DIY and online shopping via her blog have turned into another job opportunity than blogging. Her aggression and ambition at the beginning of her career left itself into a humble, mother, and housewife portrayal in which she contributes with reasonable money to household income. However, despite the uncertainty in her lines, she leaves the future possibilities open. She still has the hope of gaining new opportunities through the use of Instagram and YouTube.

Emel is the only one who still writes her blog patiently among them. She talks about several things in her blog, such as cooking, child-care, daily housework, to-do lists, DIY projects, current news, parties, illnesses, motherhood, and pregnancy. Her

writings have an intimate tone, and she regularly responds to follower comments that contain inquiries. Otherwise, she does not respond to words like "well done," "bonne appetite," or "you look gorgeous." She has good relations with her audience since she is active on each platform, such as her blog, Instagram account, and YouTube channel. Her children are frequently featured in her blogs and videos. She even takes comments on routine advertisements, advertorials she shares. When I asked her about her relationship with the audience, she said:

> "*I don't see them as my fans. They are followers since these platforms offer a title like that, even the widgets in blogs contain buttons like "follow". I am an ordinary person not different than anyone. So, I am of course happy to have people reacting to my posts and having conversations with me, since what makes me keep posting is their sincere comments and knowing that they like me and expect me to write. Because I know people like to read me, I continue to write*".

Thus, knowing that she's read and liked by her audience, keeps Emel active. She trusts her audience, and she thinks that they trust her, too. "*Not to let them down, I should continue,"* she adds. *"It makes no difference which platform it is. Simply put, the show must go on!"* Then, while performing a good show for the audience and herself, liability to the sponsor companies and brands shall be fulfilled in any of the social media platforms. Since attracting a larger audience is one of the main motivations among bloggers, switching between these platforms becomes a necessity for these women in the competitive market conditions.

4.6 Discussion and Results

As for the nature of the social interaction conducted at blogs, bloggers need the audience to realize their identities as "selves". They put so much effort to gain more followers each day, as the contribution coming from the audience means more recognition. Especially after the introduction of web 2.0 infrastructure, audience contribution became crucial since they form trends providing data. Drawing on the writings of Adorno and Horkheimer (1989) on the culture industry, celebrities are commonly seen as products of the celebrity industry or as commodities. Cashmore and Parker define celebrity as something that is "produced, can be consumed, worshipped, and adored" (2003, p. 215). While celebrities generate audiences and markets both for themselves and for the commodity brands they promote, their followers relate themselves to the content created. Despite the Marxist perceptions of celebrities as both products of capitalism and as vehicles of its ideology (Dyer, 2007[1979]; Marshall,

1997), critical approach to culture and its industries devalue the role of the audience. Not only being passive consumers but also producers, their audience give sincere feedbacks to bloggers, and judge both the blogger's and the promoted brand's sincerity and authenticity. In this way, the audience has a direct say on the success and fame of the blogger.

In three of the cases, there were different attendee profiles and the three bloggers have also different audiences. Doğa targets and addresses fancy and independent women, who like luxurious stuff in traveling, cooking, and dressing. Thus, her audience is likewise upper-class, who understand her better and enjoy her posts, while others desire to be like her and envy her lifestyle. Emel's target is usually women with children. She does not use a specific language but talks about things that are easily affordable regardless of income or social level. Sometimes women are referred to in general, while other times they are referred to particularly as mothers. Mercan, on the other hand, focuses on crafting and DIY concepts, as well as on her own products, which attract young and adolescent girls in particular. Furthermore, their audience management shows differences. These micro-celebrities carefully curated their self-presentation/self-branding techniques with respect to their hope to stay famous. This in turn, requires labor to diversify their performances, expand on their blogging practices, and mediate their public persona in various other platforms. For many bloggers, their other social media accounts especially Twitter and Facebook appear as a notifier for longer posts in their blogs. As during her blogging Mercan used her Facebook account only for announcing that there is a new post in her blog. Her posts in Facebook consisted, "*I told some hair extension tips in my blog, for reading click the lin*k" (June 14, 2016), and "*There is the LG5 phone experience in my blog, please click!*" (May 16, 2016). Emel has a similar approach in using her Facebook account, as her Facebook posts include, "*Click for my nail routine*" (July 4, 2019), or "*Here is my watch, I wrote about it in my blog*." (June 9, 2018). They need to produce more content to be liked with the increasing burden of companies and sponsorships. So, with the hope of staying in the game while keeping their fame and their "perfect" image, they get into an utmost struggle that leads to the blurring of the lines between work and leisure time. For this reason, they put themselves out there -to be seen- switching between web platforms, organizing events and workshops, distributing invitations, showing off in product launchings, or shooting videos for their story postings.

Given the close connection between seeing and being seen, Brighenti suggests,

"visibility breeds identification and makes it possible" (2007, p.325). According to Brighenti, "for a model to exist, it has to be before everybody's eyes and tends to be defined in moral terms as it inspires behavior and attitude" (2007, p.334). Being a celebrity brings the idea of being a model to be followed and this fame and attention needs to be reproduced, while the image needs to be looked at and desired. Barthes points out that "the image is created to invite the gaze of the individual and the collective. It is interdiscursive and relies on the spectator to become fully realized" (in Fuery and Fuery 2003, p.101). On the other hand, by gaining a networked reputation through their interaction with the audience, bloggers have the chance to manipulate the spectator's way of seeing in the way they want. Through the power attributed to this networked reputation, there appears an asymmetrical relationship between the blogger, and the spectator given that the blogger decides what the spectator sees and reads. However, seeing and being seen are intimately connected as the gaze is also twofold. It is not only the gaze of the spectator, but also the blogger herself. The gaze corresponds to desire, the desire for self-completion through the other (Lacan, 1978). So, there is reciprocal relationship between the blogger and the audience (spectator). The spectator watches the blogger and the blogger behaves accordingly, knowing that she is being watched. She constructs her online identity through the desire to complement herself with the presence of the audience, which in turn feeds her with feedbacks, likes, and comments, so that she could exist. If the gaze is taken out, then her existence would be meaningless.

So, despite the connection they have with their followers -which is mainly through comments- celebrity bloggers are in constant renovation and endeavor to look good to an unknown audience. Reciprocally, a follower may also aspire to be a popular, lovable, loyal fan of a famous blogger, even catch some opportunities like going to an event with the blogger herself. It was like going to the summer welcoming party with Doğa. This kind of relation "operates at a more affective level as a motivating feeling as well as embodied sense of desire and hope" (Taylor, 2018, p.39). However, the bond established in the virtual world may sometimes crumble when the parties carry their relationship into the physical world.

The above-mentioned events all serve as a show-off, but the celebrity bloggers' behaviors in the events were different from each other. Doğa seems very intimate in her photos and videos but she is a little distant in her relationships with her audience. The way she treated her audience highlights that she sees her audience solely as a fan base

but does not provide much room for a personal relationship. As Lawler suggests, "*class relations are not just economic relations but also relations of superiority/inferiority, normality/abnormality, judgment/shame*" (1999, p.4). This view coincides with the behavior of celebrity bloggers at the blogger table in the summer welcome party, showing performances humiliating the waiter and the follower. Instead of addressing the "ordinary" woman, Doğa and her other celebrity friends' online self-representations build on a more middle-high-class, bourgeois woman image that allows only for a relationship between equals. Thus, material markers of class both limited and expanded the discourses available to women. This kind of a self-presentation leads to a distanced relationship with the audience allowing for alienation among her followers.

Mercan on the contrary, preferred to approach amateur bloggers as her core audience and built a humbler image. Whether they were celebrities or not, all the participants were blended without any distinctions. A similar mood was felt at Emel's baby shower event since celebrities and non-celebrities were mixed with the help of the organization company's different games. In Mercan's event, look-alikes (in terms of blog content and production) sat at the same tables, causing no alienation or prejudice. Rather, it facilitated the flow of information between them. Mercan and Emel both included the audience in the event, with a greater purpose, such as marriage or pregnancy, therefore the blogging identity was temporarily suspended. People were also pleased and delighted with the presents provided by the sponsoring firms. On the contrary, at the welcoming party, blogger identities were more declared and highlighted, as well as the use of fame as a tool to attain personal goals.

Because it is impossible to identify a person based on a single event, their performances on several platforms, as well as the discourses of other celebrity bloggers, have been evaluated for the analysis. All three bloggers had dominant characters in the events attended, however, we cannot essentialize these characters since these self-presentations appear as embodiments performed in a swinging platform like blogosphere for self-branding strategies. When we think of micro-celebrities in the blogosphere, we cannot think of women as a homogenous group of bloggers. Instead, the celebrity blogosphere has a fragmented character in which different kinds of feelings including envy, passion, ambition, hope, disappointment prevail. Strong conflicts may arise between celebrity bloggers, especially in understanding some famous bloggers who easily call themselves with many titles, as witnessed in a discussion of two famous bloggers in Emel's baby shower. One celebrity food blogger did not hesitate to harshly

criticize another famous lifestyle blogger, who calls herself a communication specialist, a photographer, an author, and a mommy blogger. She said, "*Considering the labor, time, and sacrifices I put forward in my life, even I do not say I am this, I am that. I think it should not be that easy. You have to work hard, for years!"* This criticism turned into a never-ending discussion between the two, during which they raised their voices, completely disregarding the other people in the room. Therefore, it is not only about managing their followers as a celebrity blogger, but also managing their relations and emotions with other bloggers as well.

Digital activity in social networking sites is closely linked to reputation and "celebrity construction is crafted via the techniques of self-branding" through which Marwick's micro-celebrities acquire a status and higher rank (Gandini, 2016, p.30). If bloggers are liked and commented, followed, and became a sense of inspiration to other women, then they feel they are completed. Thus, the hope that animates this chapter is the hope of self-completion through the audience and the hope to remain current keeping their fame. To realize this hope, celebrity bloggers engage in audience management strategies. While fame brings an audience, this relationship brings self-fulfillment and completion through the other (what she is not). So, a famous blogger becomes addicted to the idea of being liked and watched. She is the leading figure in the field who is constantly being watched and envied. However, as demonstrated in the case studies -Mercan's helpful attitude towards the amateur bloggers, Doğa's unreachable glamourous attitude among her blogger friends, Emel's tendency to mingle amateur and professional bloggers- this digital activity not only requires approval from an unknown audience, but also benefits from the recognition of other bloggers in the fame circle. As a result, we cannot speak of a unified, homogeneous group of famous bloggers because each person is unique, as is her negotiation of fame. Some celebrity bloggers dress like fashion models, while others go everywhere with their assistants or fans. These distinctions may be due to the reason that some people rose to fame overnight, while others worked their way up. Some hope to do blogging as a job, while others use their fame to create a super identity, and still others blog for pleasure. Celebrity bloggers also differ among themselves due to the conflicted nature of the Turkish women's blogosphere.

4.6.1 Categorization of Celebrity Bloggers

As a result of this ethnographic fieldwork, celebrity bloggers can be defined in three

categories based on the hopes and performances, which can be analyzed in detail for further studies. These categories include blogger by profession, blogger as part-time, and blogger as a super identity.

Blogger by Profession

These women are those who sustain their lives as bloggers, which means that they earn their living solely through blogging. Their target is to have blogging as a job, and they start from the beginning: from having no blogging experience to becoming a professional blogger and earning a living. This journey entails conducting ongoing research, writing blog posts, promoting your blog, and finally monetizing it. These people run from one event to another to realize the possibility of cooperation and building networks. They have the chance to choose between their occupations and being a blogger. They choose to be a blogger for a lifetime. Because they see blogging as a job and continue to invest in it, they include many advertorials and advertisements in their blogs in collaboration with brands. It is the same as if you worked hours at a daytime job and went to the office every day for work. Behind the scenes, there is a significant amount of work to be done, and it is not as simple as many people think. As Doğa complains, "*people think that we do nothing but earn money and gifts without any efforts. They think that we just show off. It is not that simple*!" They consider being a blogger as an occupation and try to distinguish their virtual and physical worlds from each other. Despite they still share photos concerning their family lives, knowing that blogging is only a job for them, they try not to blur the lines between their job and private lives. This group especially consists of mommy bloggers or lifestyle bloggers, such as Sare and Doğa who blog as a profession.

Blogger as Part-time

These women are those who continue their full-time jobs and do blogging as a hobby. This group usually consists of travel, cooking, or technology blogs, and they do not consider blogging to be their only work because they have been in strong positions in their occupations for years. Even if it is tiring, managing both makes them feel more successful. Most of the celebrity bloggers I contacted are university graduates who have higher symbolic capital. They are entrepreneurs, self-investing women who know what they want from life. Most of them have business careers not only blogger identities, which also led them to look into the future with more confidence than a woman who is economically tied to her husband. Thus, women in this group are economically well-off

and have successful job positions. Having ambitions in their job market, they do not consider blogging as a job opportunity, but as a vehicle to move forward in their existing careers. As a communication specialist and a celebrity blogger, Yeşim says, blogging is a medium for achieving her career goals in the communications field. Emel and Mercan are also other examples of this group. These people are satisfied with their jobs and do not consider blogging as a future career.

Blogger as a Super Identity

Developing an identity out of a combination of physical and cyber inputs may create a more active and complete picture of who someone is. Sometimes, many bloggers create a favorite identity on the web, and it becomes more real and engaging for them. Putting being a blogger at the center of their lives, they generate an online personality which sometimes overcomes their routine self-presentation in their daily lives. This means the development of the 'blogger' identity helps to reach the ideal self. The blog serves as the place for practicing self-confidence and self-identity construction. The real self is yet to be found and defined and through which the ideal self is constantly reached. These bloggers choose to define themselves with their blogger identities on every occasion. They are those who may even threaten the companies to write negative comments about them if their desires are not met. When this situation is nurtured by fame, the blogger identity becomes a vehicle between the practitioner and the companies. This is exemplified in the behaviors of Naif Girl at the summer welcome party. The transformation of a domain name from Naif Girl to Naif Anne after giving birth can also be given as an example of keeping the blogger identity no matter what, despite the changing conditions. Being a celebrity blogger allows women who are mothers, housewives, and workers to share their narratives. This situation provides likes and appreciation, as well as the possibility for negotiation of the tension between their own identities at home and their jobs. Therefore, being a blogger may become the most favored one among a woman's multiple identities.

Despite the adopting of different self-branding techniques and having different hopes, the data have shown that 4 common themes emerge among celebrity bloggers' performances. They hope to remain famous and preserve their existing fame; and want to build a better future by turning blogging to the sole career at some point. Furthermore, it is revealed that there is hope for creating a collective identity, hope to inspire, hope to teach, and hope for creating a difference among celebrity bloggers'

performances. These themes are stated shortly as interesting topics for further research.

4.6.2 Common Themes

Inspiring effect

Celebrity bloggers have a common tendency to tell about their own interesting success stories to their audience. By doing this, they hope to appeal and inspire their followers. Hoping to highlight their leadership skills along with their success in blogging, celebrity bloggers turn themselves into sources of inspiration. While they want to feel appreciated, they also use this as a tactic to keep their followers. These narratives are not only told in their blogs, but also at content-writing workshops, YouTube channels, and interviews. They usually talk about the strategies they used for achieving their current status and give advice to others. For example, Mercan is one of the first bloggers to inspire women for content writing about the practical things they do at home, concentrating on the DIY concepts. Afterward, many people are inspired and established similar blogs to showcase their crafts and DIY projects. Even, Mercan's boyfriend Yiğit attempted to establish a food blog because Mercan inspired him and they could cooperate on it. Following the celebrity bloggers, many women consider turning their leisure activities into job opportunities. Mercan's case revealed that the do-it-yourself mentality has impacted the rise of the DIY bloggers, encouraging and inspiring them for sustainability and recycling. Its affordability worked for many women who wanted to establish blogs, and the brands who wanted to work with these bloggers.

Public-private blends

Recent communicative dynamics lead to shifting linkages between public and private spheres. When Mercan accepted Yiğit's marriage proposal in a blogger event where she hardly knows many of the attendees in person, or when Emel celebrates the birth of her baby with many unknown people surrounding her, then it is true to say that public and private spheres are blended. As blogging blurs this line already, becoming a celebrity brings responsibilities towards the audience. Sharing personal life and letting the audience in are some of the micro-celebrity strategies content-creators use. Reshaping the borders of public and private realms, blogging offers these women to engage in various techniques for representing the self. Fame makes the doors of their lives wide open while opening those doors into public also reflects a strategy of self-branding

which is revolving around the hope to sustain their existing fame.

Reproducing gender roles

Adopting different techniques, bloggers use digital pictures, particularly selfies or family photos to create affective bonds between the audience and the micro-celebrity subject. They do not only fulfill the role of liberal, entrepreneur, post-feminist subjects but also seem to reproduce traditional gender roles in their content production. Still sharing posts about their cooking, cleaning, and nurturing processes, many of the celebrity bloggers look fancy and proper enough as it is expected from even a "celebrity woman who is married and with kids". In her YouTube videos for example, while cooking for the family household, or taking care of her child, Doğa always looks fashionable and stylish, seeing this as a responsibility for herself. Even if they include their spouses and children in their fame circle, many of their postings or videos reinforce women's stereotypical beliefs of being always ready and capable of handling several duties at the same time. The reproduction of gender roles become prominent in the platform economy especially when these women switches to YouTube, which is a highly gendered sector (Bishop, 2020). There are other dynamics inherent there, as the classification of content according to gender, ingrains androcentric culture through highlighting expected gender roles. These strict judgements include women watch videos of recipes, make-up, childcare, while men are expected to watch scientific videos, games or car videos. Thus, women bloggers feel the urge to comply with these standardized viewing practices and choose to produce related content with the hope of reaching to a wider audience. In this way, they reproduce the already existing gendered labor conditions.

Celebrity bloggers are all prominent, leader-type figures and they seem to bring a free, independent, and successful entrepreneur woman image- a neoliberal subjectivity- to the forefront. Contrary to the traditional view of the male-breadwinner model in the household, these women underline the dominant woman image with their performances such as carrying their spouses/children/fans to blogger events with them, organizing gatherings for their personal purposes, and at times controlling the organization and giving orders in these events. However, these performances at the event sites cannot be thought of separately to come to an early judgment. A further discourse analysis of their blogs would be necessary to show that in many of the blog posts domestic gender roles are underlined.

Believing That They Have a Mission

Most of the celebrity bloggers consider themselves as missionaries when they reach fame. They take blogging seriously, for the greater good. This mission is carried out in two ways: One of them is by organizing workshops, writing recommendations in their blogs, giving interviews to other blogs, magazines, newspapers, or YouTube channels. They believe it is their obligation to teach others who wish to start blogging or who have recently started. They act as advisories or teachers, as happened in Mercan's case. She organized many content-writing workshops after she reached celebrity status and gave presentations about how to start a blog and write good content.

The second way is to create a collective identity, a sense of unity among bloggers as revealed in mommy blogger Emel's gathering where she organized the tables by mingling amateur and professional bloggers for networking opportunities. This hope of creating a collective identity is found particularly among mommy bloggers. The evidence of the tendency to be united and form a collective identity can be clearly seen in the case of Kadıköy Mothers and Technological Mothers. These women's lifestyles, expectations, activities, and experiences revolve around motherhood, allowing the mommy blogosphere to appear as a field where they can play with this identity along with various performances. There is always a leading figure among these celebrity mothers (usually someone who wrote a book) and she attempts to unite celebrity bloggers around a cause. Kadıköy Mothers and Technological Mothers are the two communities formed by celebrity mommy bloggers in Istanbul, which I had the chance to learn about them in Emel's gathering. Following Emel's event, I attended a workshop organized by mommy bloggers and I met the leaders of the two groups, Aslı and İpek.

One of them is Kadıköy Mothers, the first local mother group in Istanbul. Aslı is the leader of the group who has a book about mothering, and she tells that she researched the prototypes of these groupings in America and adopted the "community" idea to Kadıköy. kadikoyanneleri.com is a multiple-authored website and aims to unite the neighboring mothers. They organize neighborhood meetings and gather for different causes. Aslı says,

> "*The reason that I formed this community was to support mothers who experience similar kinds of troubles. We became an example and other mother communities were formed in other districts of Istanbul, also in other cities of Turkey. Although they are formed with community ideal, now you can find even competition between them.*"

Not only they share posts in the virtual world, but also, they meet face to face in

person, which makes them a more powerful group. While trying to revive the neighborhood concept, they are realized by many brands and agencies. Since each of the mommy bloggers in the community were already well-known ones, the brands could now reach them as a community.

Technological Mothers are another group under the leadership of İpek, who started this group with the hope of opening leading ways to women in technological fields. They aim to make a difference in the stereotypic understanding of women, especially for those who are mothers. They want to break the perception that "*women especially mothers do not understand technology. They are not capable of managing technological stuff. They only do mothering, and things related to caregiving services*." Thus, even if it is only one example, it's a rebellion against existing normative constructions of gender. In their blogs, these women discuss technological news especially those related to children and women. They take mothering from a different perspective which is unique from the usual understanding of mommy blogging which needs to be explored in further studies.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter investigated the celebrity blogosphere in Turkey, concentrating on women bloggers' differences in negotiating fame and their identities concerning their audience management strategies. Deploying case study approach as a method, this analysis is based on the participation of three blogger events which sheds light on the similarities, differences, and conflicts among celebrity bloggers from a comparative perspective. Offering the narratives of women bloggers who reached popularity in the Turkish blogosphere, this chapter explored the self-branding and self-presentation techniques of celebrity bloggers to understand how these women negotiate *fame* in relation to hope.

Audience management emerges as one of the most important strategies among celebrity bloggers who want to preserve their existing fame in rival and temporary market conditions. There is a defensive and discursive range of hope inherent in the actions of celebrity bloggers, given the rapidly evolving state of technology which also transforms blogging. The comparative study of celebrity bloggers' performances highlights the neoliberal individual selves who are risk-taking entrepreneurs always changing, appearing and disappearing, and constantly renovating their subjectivities switching between various web platforms. While experiencing fame differs according to the blog types, audience, and occupation of bloggers, negotiation of this fame in the

ever-changing digital platforms brings additional burden to its practitioners. This pace and temporality and hope to survive in the competitive celebrity blogosphere allow a change in women's social practices along with a transformation in the creation, operation, and communication of "celebrity".

Turner calls for new approaches in celebrity studies,

> "... I think we need to do more to actively foster other approaches to studying celebrity. To do that, we need to remind ourselves that celebrity is not only a category of media text nor merely a genre of media discourse. There are several ways through which we might define and thus approach celebrity that would help us account for other dimensions to its function and significance" (Turner, 2010, p.13).

In the phase of a major social technological trend that is called the 'digital turn', Turner's call finds an answer and digitally networked technologies offer new ways for studying celebrity. Referring to the immense cultural impact of the diffusion and sedimentation of digitally networked technologies and the social practices they bring about, "digital turn" allows a change in the production of celebrities, their function, and communication in a transformed media environment (Dessewffy and Daniel, 2017).

In this framework, this study offers a new way of looking at the micro-celebrity phenomena beyond analyzing the media as a text, but as performance. It is revealed that there is hope for creating a collective identity, hope to inspire, hope to teach, and hope for creating a difference among celebrity bloggers' performances. Hoping here emerges not as an expectation from future, but rather as an ordinary state of being revealing itself right in the action. Hope appears as a practical tool that is inherent in the actions of these women, shaping their relationships with their audience and the other bloggers.

Ethnographic fieldwork which benefited from the comparison of three blogger gatherings, has shown that there is a fragmented nature of the celebrity blogosphere, as these women are all different from each other on an individual level. And then, a segment of bloggers seems to oppose such formations and organize activities on a social basis and stand up to fancy organizations. Their audience management is completely different, where the ego is eluded, and community awareness becomes important. While some celebrity mothers want to revive neighboring, others like Technological Mothers try to emphasize that technology is not male. These initiatives, taken by activist mothers, focus not only on individual desires in a neoliberal environment but also on the hope to act collectively to fulfill a community ideal. These kinds of groupings represent an achievement in terms of women's socialization, empowerment, and social activism

and deserve to be fully analyzed in further studies.

Chapter 5

Blogger to Businesswoman: Cooked in The Kitchen, Served in The Blog and Turned into Success Stories

5.1 Introduction

> *"Writing for a food blog requires much work. You never know how much time you spend, because it is part of your daily routine. You do something not so special, but yes, you do something very special actually. When you want to share a recipe, you must be prepared hours, sometimes days before. You must shop for the right ingredients, preserve them neatly. Scale them, wash and prepare them, take recipe notes and cook them. You have to be neat, your manicure and the way you dress are important, your kitchen has to be very clean and tidy. You need to catch the perfect light for photo-taking or recording to present the food you cooked. So, it better be nice! And of course, delicious and budget-friendly, too"* (Gulay).

These are the words of a professional food blogger Gulay (58), who started as an amateur blogger in blogspot.com and then proceeded to a website with .com extension. This is one of the important signs of the transformation of one's self; professionalization after gaining fame and experience and establish commercial ties in her field. Despite the requirement of more technological skills, these websites provide more opportunities than free domains like blogspot.com, wordpress.com, or tumblr.com. In parallel to this professionalization, expectations of and from Gulay, as well as her interests and target audience, also grow.

Given the time and effort spent, writing for a food blog requires considerable amount of work. There is also a hidden pressure on Gulay's shoulders which is inherent in her voice tone, acts, and the way she explains the situation. This stems from the dilemma she is in; trying to do a routine thing like cooking as the way she does at home, but also trying to cook for the audience in a professional manner. As food blogging is a genre that demands perfection in many respects; she feels constrained trying to balance things like the taste, budget, presentation of the food, and also the time she allocates for shopping, cooking, recording, writing, and sharing.

Gulay is not alone in experiencing these kinds of complicated feelings. Many other food bloggers share similar kinds of saliency in their thoughts. One of them is Deren (31) who has achieved her current occupation in a well-known supermarket chain

via her unique styling of food photos at her blog page. When I want her to define her blogging experience, Deren (31) admits:

> "*I have always liked cooking and I wanted to share my experiences with other cooking lovers. However, as time goes by, it starts getting hard to find the right words for the audience, the right angle, and light for the photos, and different recipes. After a while, I feel like I am in a loop. I feel sad when I cannot write to my blog properly*."

Although Deren started her blog enthusiastically, it becomes a burden for her to find the right content and if she cannot write to her blog, she feels regret. Whereas Nevra (39, chef) works harder to develop her blog each day, again she admits that she feels some sort of stress when she is asked the same question. She defines her blogging experience:

> "*I was working until midnight at my blog and waking up early to take photos of the food I cooked before I go to work. I was trying my every recipe again and again before I publish them. Yes, I enjoy very much what I do, but sometimes it becomes overwhelming!"*

Despite these dual but common feelings, the food blogosphere is not a homogenized community and each woman has her own story. Having unique experiences and different blog narratives, these three women share one thing that is their blogs' impact on their current job status and careers. 31-year-old Deren is a Product&Sales Development Specialist in Macro Supermarkets, while 58-year-old Gulay is working as a cook in Migros TV and travels Anatolia as a gourmet. Nevra (39) has her own company Kitchen Gossips and works as a chef. But, how do they differ from the rest of the bloggers? What kind of an impact do their blogs have on their careers? Not only the cooking recipes they share make them distinct, but the narratives they construct their careers on make them unique. Their interesting success stories appeal to and inspire their followers. Each of them has built a different strategy for their blogs and they achieved their current status by these strategies.

For example, Deren has a distinct way of visualizing her blog material. She organizes the meal in a fancy and unique way and waits for the right time to shoot their photos and present them (Figure 5.1). This effort paid off and helped her to be noticed by the companies and even offered a job.



Figure 5.1. Lavender hot chocolate by Deren

To unpack such individualized narratives of women bloggers, this chapter takes food blogs as a sub-genre of the blog as its focus, concentrating on women food bloggers who had obtained their jobs through their blogs. Life story interviews were conducted with three food bloggers, Deren, Gulay, and Nevra, who experienced upward mobility -socially and economically- via their blogging activities. Also, the research benefits from participant observation in blogger events, cooking ateliers, and video-making settings. The main distinction between celebrity bloggers' narratives and stories of these women explored in this chapter, lies in the opportunities gained career-wise utilizing blogging. While there are several women who left their jobs after adopting a blogger identity among celebrity bloggers, the women who are the subjects of this chapter had the opportunity to have job careers after their blogs were discovered. Deren, Nevra, and Gulay's blogger identity comes in the second place, although they are famous for their blogs as well. While many reputable brands are after celebrity bloggers for advertising opportunities, these women rather exist with their businesswoman careers. Thus, they are examples of those who used their blogs as a tool to achieve their targets or those who were discovered by their blogs.

In this framework, the study analyses how blogging adds to these women's self-realization and career developments, nurturing their hopes on their way to success. This chapter explores the terms and limits of belonging in the food blogosphere through the perspective of three women who are economically and socially privileged but still carry a precarious hope (Parla, 2019) in the field. Even as they join the labor market successfully, this success needs to be prospered through hard work. To stay updated, they feel the urge to catch the latest technologies like vlogging, live streaming, and snapchatting, besides blogging. Thus, for example for Gulay, who had no prior expertise of using advanced technologies, it is always difficult to adapt to changes in the competitive field of the blogosphere and maintain her position. Additionally, embedding

one's self in the narrative of these women, followers experience the production of different notions and modes of hope and future-making, that are negotiated and evolved in such settings. Thus, this chapter attempts to understand where the blog narrative stands in one's career-development process, asking how blogging serves to construct a successful businesswoman image, and, in what ways it gives hope to women.

In line with these questions, first, this chapter discusses several perspectives on the food blogosphere as a feminized genre. After introducing the key definitions and conceptualizations, it explains the methodology used. Finally, it presents and discusses the findings from the analysis to argue that blogging activities of these women paved the way to their successful careers, offering new ways of self-development and self-fulfillment opportunities while giving them and their audiences hope to build a better future. Covering an understudied topic which is the role of food blogging in career development for the selected Turkish women, this research gives attention to the narratives that underpin performances of identity and femininity on food blogs. Thus, the study will give us an understanding of bloggers' motivations about obtaining a job opportunity or economic gains from their blogs and the hope labor they put forward to achieve these ends.

5.2 Food Blogging as A Feminized Genre

Our communication styles and socialization processes profoundly depend on visual materials as the image has grown into a very vivid aspect of our culture. The use of mobile phones and computers allowed us to communicate through images, or even signs like "emojis", to express our feelings that in turn provide us with time and ease, as well as pleasure.

Food/cooking pictures are one of the most shared images on the internet as cooking also grew into something more than eating. Besides its comforting, fulfilling and pleasing purposes, we use cooking for communication namely socializing, celebrating, commemorating, etc. From the conduct of daily routines to the reflexive understanding of a global world, consumption of media changes within the everyday life experience. Thus, sharing food pictures is one of the emerging consequences of this change. People share food pictures on social media for a variety of reasons, such as being trendy, as a method of self-promotion, for artistic purposes, as personal diaries, to advertise, or just because they are "foodies" who enjoy delicious food. Whereas for food bloggers, this is a way of defining one's self with the food she cooks, intending to share

unique recipes and get validation from others. As mothers and homemakers, many women seek validation for the work they do, and exploring this need for external validation, Emily Matchar argues that "blogging about a recipe is a way to gain validation for making the nightly dinner, an underappreciated nightly chore"(2013, p.102). According to Matchar (2013), this is an effect of a more recent phenomenon what she calls *new domesticity*, defined as the fascination with reviving lost domestic arts like canning, bread baking, knitting, and chicken-raising.

As food and culinary remains to be a trendy topic all over the world, food/cooking bloggers grow in popularity in Turkey as well. This growth is also influenced by the rising demand on cooking shows on mainstream TV like *Masterchef, The Taste Türkiye, Damat Bayıldı, Gelinim Mutfakta, Seda Sayan'la Yemekteyiz,* and *Zuhal Topal'la Yemekteyiz*. According to Ouellette and Hay (2008), these kinds of reality TV programs reproduce a self-help discourse among individuals. They argue that reality TV intensify the embrace of this rhetoric widely in many areas including, romantic relationships, fashion, losing weight, child-caring, and remodeling your home, and this move is a new, uniquely neoliberal development. So, Ouellette and Hay locate TV as a "cultural technology" that offers practical techniques for managing our everyday lives in accordance with neoliberal governing strategies (2008, p. 14). The cooking shows in mainstream TV also feeds this self-help rhetoric as they usually promote individualism and competition. Compared to cooking programs targeting housewives about how to cook certain recipes, nowadays most of the cooking programs on TV concentrate on the fierce rivalry of the competitors especially fostered by the program editors driven by the rating system. The traditional and cultural component is tried to be fed and promoted in shows like *Damat Bayıldı* and *Gelinim Mutfakta* where the gendered nature of cooking is rewarded while making the brides compete before the eyes of their mother-in-laws. They can be degraded, humiliated, forced to cry, and sometimes praised if they are successful enough. *Seda Sayan'la Yemekteyiz, Zuhal Topal'la Yemekteyiz* are programs where 5 people cook for each other and try to be the best host of the week. However, the rivalry among them easily turns into fights and disappointments. Transferred from American TV Shows, *Masterchef* and *The Taste in Türkiye* let compete in different kinds of challenges and environments.

Those cooking shows share a similar pattern that is their stress on the promotion of rivalry and dramatic effect created consciously which makes them engaging for the audience than giving tips on cooking or recipes. The audience follows these

competitions every day like a soap opera which in turn effects their understanding and expectations from cooking and food consumption. People inquire about the food and its preparation, especially using social media tools. Searching certain recipes from the Internet, tagging what we eat on social media, rating a fancy restaurant on its webpage, meeting a friend in a café or restaurant, or sharing a recipe we cooked, appear as some of the routine activities of our daily lives. Thus, food and culinary remains as a trendy topic not only in mainstream media on TV, but in digital media as well.

Food is seen as a relevant sociological topic, but according to Johnston & Baumann (2015), it is also vital given that it is not effected even by the financial crises as the food market stock prices have increased tremendously despite the crises and food is always seen as an affordable luxury. Food blogging is one of the most preferred blogging practices among women and the food blogosphere offers many possibilities and challenges as a highly feminized space. Scholars like Beagan et al. (2008); Bugge and Almas (2006) agree that women rather than men primarily plan for, purchase, and cook food in the home (in Johnston & Baumann 2015). People read food blogs to find recipes, search for ingredients, for healthy eating, to search local cuisine, for exotic gourmet, for fine dining, or other food-related topics.

There are two types of food bloggers: one group is those who cook and share and the second is those who share their experiences of eating in several places. There is no clear-cut distinction between these groups since many food bloggers just start with something as simple as their local restaurant reviews or fun recipes they try at home, but as their blog grows so does their interests and target audience. Thus, they start covering other food-related topics as well. Despite the extension to other topics, they remain faithful to their core issue as food and culinary. Their feedback and comments about the posts rarely diverge from the recipes shared. Giving little room for personal sharing makes them more goal-oriented and open to rivalry.

According to Cantek (2011), the food blogosphere is a suitable platform to observe the transformation experiences of such an activity (food preparation and presentation) that is thought to belong to the private sphere (home) but moved into the public sphere with the help of technological achievements. Although, many of the well-known cooks are males around the world, cooking at home is usually thought to be a "woman's work". Dejmanee (2015, p.7) contextualizes food blogs "within a burgeoning lifestyle blogosphere skewed toward female authorship and readership and revolving around "women's" topics such as motherhood, fashion, health, and crafting" and states

that male food bloggers are a minority. Although there are some men food bloggers in Turkey, they are not as many and as visible as women bloggers in the community. The lack of men in the food blogosphere may stem from the gender norm that says cooking is women's work and the confinement of women to traditional gender roles (Dedeoğlu, 2012). For 5 years, I have witnessed only a couple of blogger men in the events and they were fashion or lifestyle bloggers. To have a better understanding of the food blogosphere's feminized nature, it is also necessary to ask the opinions of men in the community. One of the popular food bloggers explains the dominance of women in the food blogosphere:

> *"There are two types of food blogs. The first one is very crowded: they are the ones sharing recipes. 90% of bloggers and 90% of their followers are women. In the second group, there are those who share their experiences of eating/drinking and their numbers are fairly close. I can say 50-50. It is also valid for the followers. For ex: I have 48% female and 52% male followers." (*Arda, Yiyomfoodblogger*)*

Thus, gender distinction depends on the type of blog they write. Men food bloggers usually choose the second group which concentrates more on eating, tasting, traveling, trying new food and restaurants, and then share their own experiences. *Harbiyiyorum* is also one of these gourmet men bloggers who defines his account as "*the biggest independent food media*" in his Instagram profile page and himself as a "*public gourmet*" with a motto of "*where everything is a lie, we speak about the truth of eating/drinking so that anybody who searches for good taste, can enjoy our short lives*" (Sevinç, 2009). Also, drawing a taste map of the country, Oğuz from *Oğuz Yeni Hayat* gives advice for travelers, city by city about where to stop on the road and what to eat. He says:

> "*My biggest passion is eating and traveling. I've traveled to 60 cities. I enjoy sharing my notes on eating with my readers. This experience grows out of necessity, upon the questions asked to me from my Instagram page about where to eat in Bodrum, Izmir or Gaziantep, etc. Thus, I give advices and I like them to be part of my journey*".

Thus, men food bloggers are more advice-giving, and sharing their knowledge about their own experiences gives them more pleasure. How to cook sites and blogs are on the contrary, more under women's dominance.

According to Henry (2011), many men bloggers state that, "blogosphere is a sea of estrogen that allows the male minority to stand out in an overwhelmingly female world" (in Dejmanee, 2015, p.436). Besides these statements, the specific gendering of the blog coalition BlogHer that inspires, empowers, and celebrates women content

creators since 2005, and the special recognition of women and mom bloggers' influence on the blogosphere" in Technorati's State of the Blogosphere report (Technorati 2010) can be regarded as a basis for characterizing food blogosphere as a feminized genre and community. Moreover, Dejmanee asserts that the food blogosphere serves as a fruitful site for feminized media production that engages with digital constructions of femininity and the female body stating that, "By substituting food for the body, female food bloggers are able to displace the disciplinary postfeminist gaze from their bodies and direct it toward their creative and entrepreneurial capacity" (2015, p.430). Thus, in the compulsory "neoliberal moral framework, where each of us has a duty to ourselves to cultivate a self-brand" (Banet-Weiser, 2012, p.56), the entrepreneurial blogosphere offers a platform for women "to strategically, ironically, and creatively play with the representations, limits, and visibilities of the postfeminist, female body" (Dejmanee, 2015, p.435).

Banet-Weiser (2011) draws attention to "self-disclosure" in the context of a post-feminist era wherein young women are encouraged to use social media to brand themselves. She argues that young girls on web platforms not only present a successful performance of postfeminist femininity, but they also adapt an idealized neoliberal subjectivity by generating income and becoming an entrepreneur of the self (Banet-Weiser, 2011). Although this is an important argument, it tells us little about women in different age groups who complicate neoliberal postfeminist womanhood through their online identities. This chapter analyzes these women who are brave enough to change their existing worlds, and the ways they utilize digital platforms to perform alternative identities. It also explores how food blog as a genre serves to the construction of the postfeminist subject. Drawing on the combination of Banet-Weiser (2012)'s argument on the self-branding of the neoliberal subject with Dejmanee (2015)'s "postfeminist female body in the blogosphere", the study demonstrates that creating their own cooking styles as well as their own definitions of food blogging, the three bloggers strategically constructed their businesswoman images in different ways upon which they also formed their blog narratives. Three different success stories are revealed through their food blog practices, which also give inspiration and hope to other women. Data have shown that creativity and entrepreneurial capacity are features that can also be fostered and earned by the help of blogging. In these stories, the emphasis on individual entrepreneurship leading to success is crucial, underlining the hope to relate future, upward mobility, or hope to turn passion into a career opportunity. However, the labor

production in this process can be overwhelming giving way to a precarious hope in the field.

Thus, blogging as a media practice requires more effort for self-branding for future career opportunities rather than engaging in a simple pleasurable performance, but a competitive one. Each blogger has to find her own ways of constructing her story to be different and stay in the game. Food blogs are very popular for writing and reading and the food blogosphere offers a wide variety of choices both for its practitioners and audience. While some food bloggers have more space to promote vegetarian and vegan lifestyles, some have the chance to shine by adopting ideas like how to cook with only one ingredient or with 5 TL for example. Adopting different strategies, many home-based women have received greater popularity as feminine food figures, transforming from a housewife to a popular social media phenomenon. Thus, this makes each woman's blogging narrative unique and worth exploring. Bloggers of this chapter stand out among their rivals with their success stories. We need to focus on the narratives of these women to investigate their blogs' role in their successful career development process, and how they manage this success along with the precarious conditions in the blogosphere.

5.3 Definitions and Concepts

Three bloggers were chosen based on the acquaintances the researcher had in the blogger events. They are important names in the food blogosphere who developed a successful businesswoman career. The term "*businesswoman*", used throughout this chapter, refers to women, who practice job skills. It is chosen as it implies a disciplined working style, favoring the development of a career and reaching a certain status in the public space. It is a productive term to define women who work on a routine basis, outside of the domestic sphere, and define themselves with their work careers. Not all successful blogger women are necessarily developing a businesswoman career, but some choose to remain as self-defined bloggers.

Deuze (2007, p.77) suggests, "People seem to be increasingly willing to participate voluntarily in the media making process to achieve what can be called a networked reputation." This is because of the desire to better position oneself for future employment opportunities. Therefore, what I mean by "*future employment opportunities*" is the likelihood of gaining a job out of the work done in blogs. Women write blogs with different motivations and achieve pleasure. So, the effort and labor

given for writing gives back as *self-realization* -fulfillment by oneself of the possibilities of one's character or personality (Merriam-Webster, 2019), *networked reputation* -gaining a celebration and recognition through their online performances. This networked reputation is closely related to *micro-celebrity* concept which Marwick (2013) describes as a fan-based self-presentation technique adopted within social media to gain publicity and attention. Thus, in line with Marwick's definition of micro-celebrity, I argue that the three bloggers in the focus of the study are micro-celebrities in their niche group of food blogosphere where they grow a successful businesswoman career via their fame and success.

I use Kuehn and Corrigan's (2013) concept of hope labor for the labor produced in blogs to have future employment opportunities. Bloggers' search for sponsor companies, their attending blogger events for networking opportunities, and publishing free commercials are some of the indicators of the labor produced in the blogosphere to gain recognition and economic benefits. Earning money from blogs motivates people to pursue blogging as a career.

There is also another important relationship between hope labor and self-development process. What I mean by *self-development* here refers to the enhancement of one's own skills and proceed in their ways compared to former self-status. Blogging offers women opportunities such as developing their computer using skills including SEO applications, web design, and Photoshop skills. They also attend content-writing workshops, photography courses; in the case of our respondents, to cooking workshops and events that will allow them to develop and improve their former status.

Self-development, self-branding, self-fulfillment, and emancipation are various forms of satisfaction feelings apart from the economic advantages blogs provide. What I mean by *self-branding* is labeling one's self through routine practices in online social platforms. Cyberspace gives women the opportunity to prioritize their names, styles, and works via promoting so a peer-recognition process starts. *Self-fulfillment* is also defined as the fulfillment of one's self having "the feeling of being happy and satisfied because she/he is doing something that fully uses her/his abilities and talents*"* (Merriam-Webster, 2019). To understand the feelings of satisfaction blogs provide, I asked questions including whether the informants feel fulfilled, feel that they are away from their home/mother/wife/daughter responsibilities and whether they feel free/independent/strong while writing.

5.4 Who is the businesswoman blogger?

Providing an understanding of how women bloggers act and interact in the blogosphere, this analysis gives the researcher the advantage to immerse in the respondents' world of performances, labor, feelings, expectations, and opportunities allowing multiple data collection methods and a narrative-based interpretation.

Focusing on food blogs as a highly feminized area, the study concentrates on three women who had obtained their jobs through their food blogs. The food blogs I examine are typically individually authored digital texts that offer original or adapted recipes that are produced by the bloggers at their homes. The content of these blogs rarely benefits from the private lives of the bloggers but rather, to create a visual brand, the aesthetics of food styling along with the web design is mostly cared for.

Conducting semi-structured interviews with many respondents, I chose Deren, Nevra, and Gulay as my main informants since their blogs have important effects on their career development processes. Given their blogs' determining role in their choices, life story interviews were suitable for them to learn all the elements influencing their life paths and to explain the reasons for commodifying their leisure activities. As there is a strong connection between professional career and life course, three of the respondents acknowledge that their blogs served as a medium to climb the stairs both in their jobs and their lives. Interviews and participant observation took place in ethnographic sites including Tavsiye Evi, Gulay's house (during TV shootings), a university (during a panel discussion), and Macro Atelier.

5.4.1 Interviewee's profiles

31-year-old Deren's case is important for explaining the future employment opportunities the blogs can provide as she was discovered by her blog for her current position in the company. She had applied for a job interview, but she was not hired for that position. The human resources coordinator liked her blog and consulted with her manager to hire Deren, creating a new job definition for her. Under the title of product&sales development specialist, she has taken a position specifically related to what she is doing in her blog which focuses on authentic cooking photography. 58-year-old Gulay is also another blogger who acquired her job as a cook in Migros TV via the success of her blog that she opened after getting retired. She is traveling to Anatolia, tasting and cooking local food with local people, and then shares her experiences in her blog. Whereas, Nevra's (39) story turns into a brand with 2 million hits in a month

while she was only a blog writer. She has owned her own brand and company via her blog, and she won a bursary from a reputable chef school. Currently, besides running her company, she is a celebrity chef working not only in the food sector but also in advertising.

Three of the respondents are all well-educated and graduated from reputable universities. Gulay and Nevra had worked before they established their blogs, but Deren is the youngest respondent who was still a student when she started her blog.

5.4.2 Ethnographic Sites

Besides the evaluation of their blogs and life-story interviews conducted, the study largely benefited from participant observation methods. Blogger events and workshops were fruitful sites for conducting participant observation and face-to-face interviews and to gain close familiarity with the bloggers and their cultural and social environment.

For the ethnographic fieldwork, two sites were chosen. The first one is *Tavsiye Evi*, a public relations and media agency company, acts as a vehicle between brands and bloggers. Relying on word of mouth in viral campaigns, it matchmakes bloggers and sponsor companies. It was the place where I first came across Gulay for a margarine launching event. Based on our previous acquaintance, we went to several blogger events organized in Tavsiye Evi together. Besides the participant observations I made there, I had the chance to talk to Gulay several times in the events, on the way home, or while having coffee in some cafes. Upon the close relationship we established, I had also attended Gulay's video shootings for Migros TV at her own house.

The second site my participant observations took place is Macro Atelier, which is part of Macrocenter-a supermarket- at Kanyon, one of the most popular shopping centers of Istanbul located in a busy business center. The place was important for my relationship with Deren since she works in Macrocenter and Macro Atelier is part of it. Deren organizes the cooking workshops for bloggers in the atelier, although once she was the one who was attending them as a blogger. Thus, it was important to see her in action with her identity transformed from blogger to an organizer.

I know Nevra from the food blogosphere and witnessed her cooking performances on several occasions. But I had met her at a bloggers' workshop of a university for interview purposes. Later, our meetings are carried from university saloons to more familiar café shops.

5.4.3 Effect of Blogging on Choice of Profession

Deren, Gulay, and Nevra all recognize the fact that their blogs have important effects on their current careers.

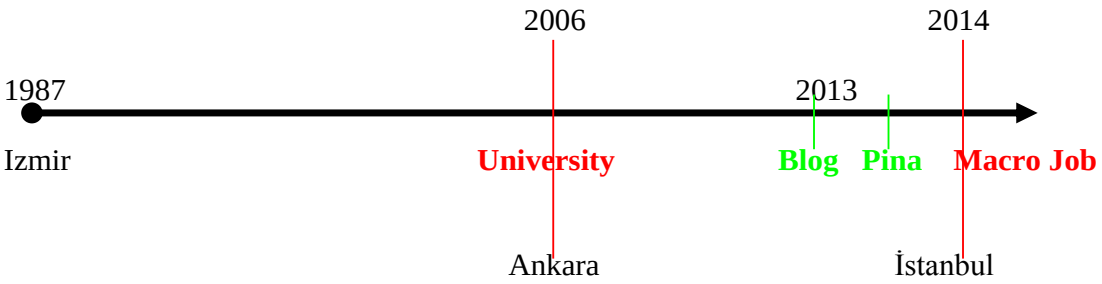
Data for this research is mainly focused on the respondents' choice of profession and occupation's importance in self-presentation and the effect of blogging in the whole process. Life-story interviews were conducted with the respondents and the interview questions varied from their private lives, hobbies, leisure activities, education, working lives to how they ended up in their current careers. Their life events have been motivated by adequate causality since the informants both stress the causality of their choices of each profession and the continuity between their choices to make a coherent narrative (Linde, 1993). The establishment of blogs stand as landmark events in all three respondents' life stories and they all give adequate reasoning for their current businesswoman careers, as seen in the below quotes.

> "*I was good at organizing my blog, so they discovered me and provided me this job title." (Deren)*
>
> *"I got Migros TV job via my blog and recovered from my tumors by the help of blogging." (Gulay)*
>
> *"I won Chef School's and also USLA's bursary because of my blog." (Nevra*)

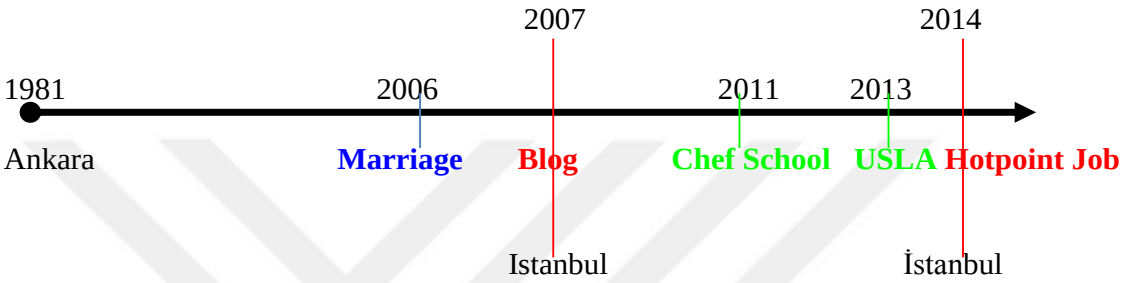
Although there are many intervening variables in these women's lives to achieve their current status including their familial background, education, hobbies, and choices, they believe that their blogs served their purpose, and this acknowledgment of blog as a medium is important for their career development processes. Below, Table 5.1 shows time sequencing of specific events and turning points in our respondents' lives. The red color represents the turning points, while green represents the landmark events that have effects in reaching their final targets, and blue refers to the events in the private realm.

Table 5.1 Time sequencing of events and turning points

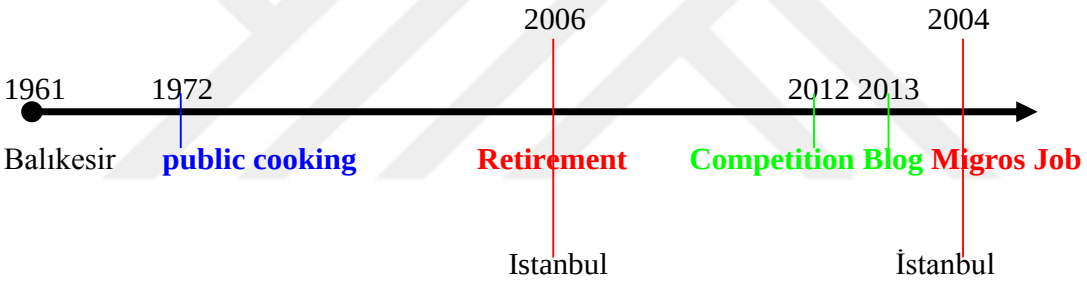
Deren's life course



Nevra's life course

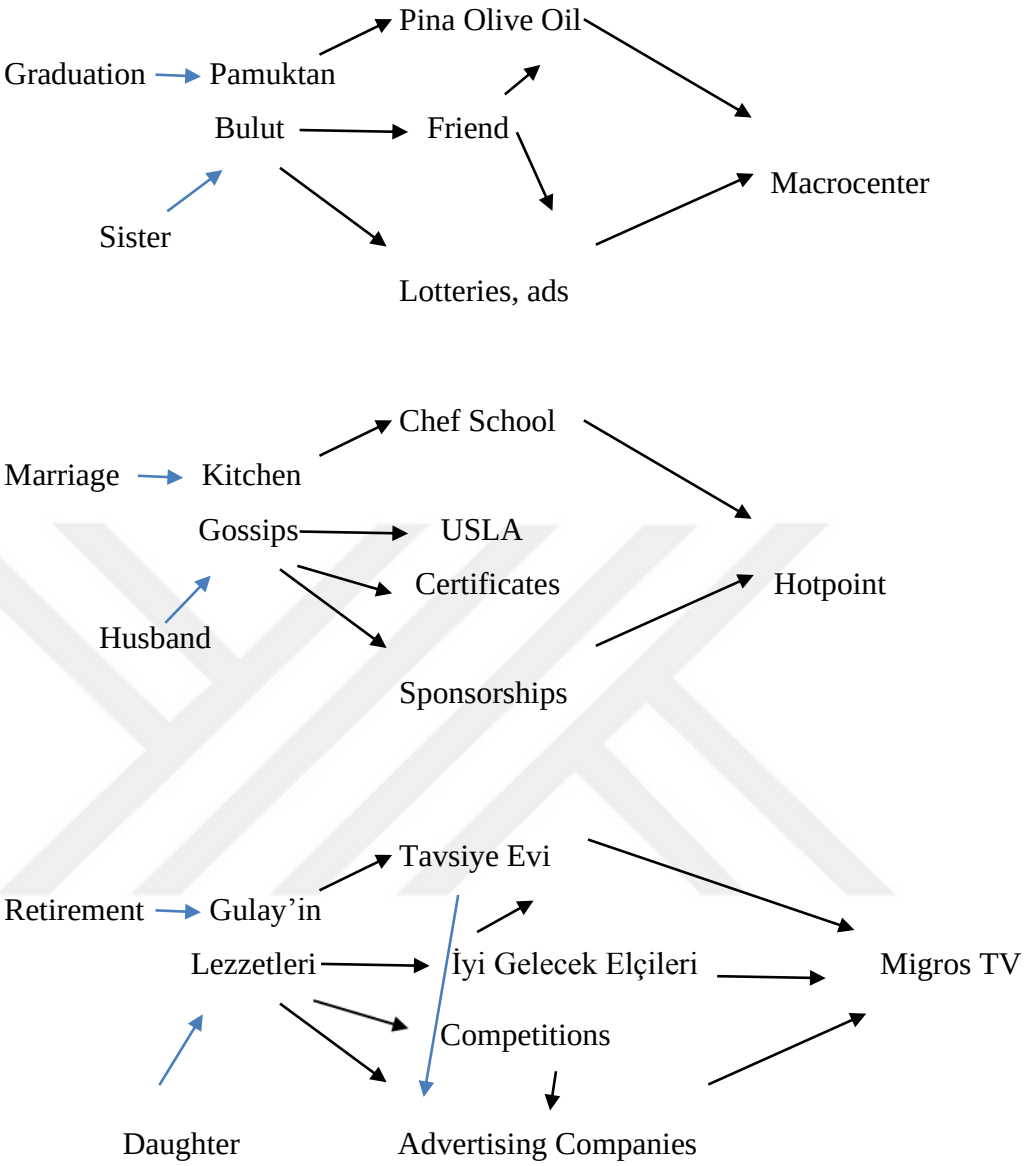


Gulay's life course



In Table 5.2, we see how the intervening variables are connected to each other and how the causality between them brought them to their contemporary situations.

Table 5.2 Intervening variables and their causality



As Angrosino (2002) points out, current views in anthropology give more importance to the construction of the narrative than its coherence. Given their blog's determining role in their career development, besides all the other elements influencing their lives, the informants' construct their narratives upon their blogs. Deren states that she had her job directly because of her blog and she hopes to turn her blog into her sole career one day. She says, *"I wish I could do it as a job and earn money from it*". Stating that she would love to continue her career on her blog one day, she shows that despite her successful career, feeling uncertain she still carries another hope for future.

Despite Deren's blog has fewer followers or she is not as famous as Gulay or Nevra, her blog paved the way for her current working life. Deren's blogging narrative

is important in her brand making process since her current job title is even created with the help of her blog. The style and content of her blog inspired the human resources of the company to create a new possibility for Deren rather than the job she applied for. While Deren was a new graduate looking for a job and was discovered by her blog, Nevra was already a white-collar worker when she reached success with her blog.

> "*I was graduated from Chef School with a half scholarship from Kadir Has University just because of my blog. Then, USLA came to me and gave me a full scholarship for pastry. They all happened because they liked my blog and because my blog reached a growing success*." (Nevra)

This success provided her with new opportunities like bursaries from cooking schools which was her passion. These bursaries paved the way to leave her former job and choose to be a chef as a profession. She sees her blog as the main reason behind these and constructs her success story on it which serves as a mechanism that provided her new hopes. Gülay, on the other hand, experiences growing happiness as her popularity grows after she got retired.

> *"Migros found me via my blog and asked me to record my recipes in my natural environment. Later, they offered me to do this by traveling to 16 cities. As the popularity of my blog grows, people started to recognize me wherever I go. Thanks to my blog, I visited the cities I did not have the chance to go before and I felt prized after this age."* (Gulay)

The blog she started after a cooking competition she won, turned into a vehicle that carried her into different experiences she did not imagine before. She divides her life into two, one before her blog- that is dull and just a civil servant life- and the other after her blog-that is healing, prosperous, hopeful, and joyful. She admits that she is a new Gulay now whom she starts to know recently. Thus, her blog not only constructed a success story for her, but also a new identity full of hopes.

The chosen informants are not a representative sample of homogenous successful food bloggers, but they are unique examples of their niche group with different ages, occupations, and ethnic backgrounds. These women share something in common that is the construction of their success stories via their blogs and their rising career line in a continuous sequence, as well as the hope they provided for the newcomers and their audience. Then, it is necessary to dig their stories to see the impact of their blogs on their pathways to successful careers.

5.5 Stories Behind Blogging

One of the most important questions in the interviewing process was to ask their main motivation for blogging. A simple question: "How did you decide to start your blog?"

was a good way to start hearing the respondents' life stories since they all put their blogs in the center of their lives. In a familiar environment, in-depth interviews let them open up and talk about their memories which helps us to understand various elements that influenced their choices.

5.5.1 Cooking as A Feminized Practice in Gulay's Life

Gulay's adventures with cooking dates to her early childhood. Her first inspiration was her grandmother when she saw her sewing a tripe of mutton with a needle to stuff it with rice and liver. Describing this first experience as astonishing, she adds that she felt like she has to be as skillful as women of her family in cooking. So, she started to try cooking *sarma* -stuffed grape leaves- at the age of 11. After not being able to do it by her fingers only, she made up her own way to do it with a wooden vehicle. She was praised for her success since her sarmas were very neat, diligent, and tasty. She goes back to those days and claims to me:

> "*We were living in a family apartment and it was not easy for me to receive approval from all the women in the family. I was invited to all our flats when somebody wanted to cook sarma. So, recognition of my skill in cooking by the women in my family was groundbreaking for me*."

Explaining the dominance of women and the feminized nature of cooking in Gulay's family household, this event stands as a landmark event in her life course which is –unconsciously or not- an important intervening variable in her choice of blogger career.

The other important turning point in Gulay's life was her winning of a competition. After her retirement, with the insistence of her daughter, she applied for a cake baking competition in 2012. Her cake from carob flour won the competition and was sold with her name in all Özsüt (a famous patisserie) branches in Turkey for 2 years. Upon the jury's question about her blog page, the idea of establishing a blog came out. Gulay explains this as:

> "*I wasn't even aware what a blog was, and I had no idea how to establish one. I wasn't familiar with the technology. My daughter saw the need and she opened a blog for me*".

As a continuous supporter in her life, her daughter is a prominent figure. Throughout the interview, I didn't hear about her husband or son, but grandmother, mother, aunts, and her daughter. So, women in Gulay's family have important effects on Gulay's decisions.

She won four other cooking competitions consecutively and in total, she got

more than 20 medals and prizes in cooking. Finally, she opened her blog *Gulay'ın Lezzetleri* and started sharing her recipes and experiences. Following this success, she started to appear in TV shows, magazines, and newspapers. She wrote travel writings about gastronomy in some newspapers and websites too. After connecting her blog to her social media accounts in 2015, she continues to share her food, restaurant, café and product experiences. Her current job title is blogger and writer, and she works for Migros TV. She is a t*avsiye meleği* and she became *iyi gelecek elçisi* (ambassador of a better future) of Migros. She got a job offer from Migros after she cooked a local dessert for a big supermarket chain. For 3 years, she has created over 1000 cooking videos and other videos shot for Internet TV about practical issues to make life easier. Besides these, she has visited many houses around Turkey that calls to host her and share their food with her in a program called "*Misafir Ol Gel Bana*" (Be My Guest). She became part of a women's movement since it was not only food they shared, but also women's problems, expectations, and wishes from life. Her experiences with the local food and local people in different cities of Turkey are broadcasted in live stream.

5.5.2 Deren's Blog Creates A New Job Title for Her

Deren was graduated from a French high school in Istanbul and won a reputable university in Ankara with a full scholarship. Even she was graduated from the chemistry department, she didn't want to do anything related to her degree. She preferred sales and marketing. While she was in search of a job, she started cooking. Taking it further, she began to take photos of the food she cooked. Deren explains her motivation:

> *"I liked what I had done and wanted to share those with other people to see. Cooking and taking photos are two of my biggest hobbies and I just wanted to unite them somehow. The best way was cooking photography, so I started my blog."*

Although it was a simple hobby blog at first, she had bigger expectations like broadening the scope of the blog and become global. So, with the help of her sister, she began to translate every post she wrote into English and created a bilingual blog. When a friend of Deren established an olive oil company, Pina, she wanted her to promote them in her blog. Therefore, she gained some experience in marketing and advertising through her blog.

Since Pina was not a "real" job for her, Deren was still looking for a full-time job. Applied for a position about e-commerce analysis, she was not found eligible. However, during their conversation with the human resources coordinator, they realized

their common hobby was cake baking and design. Deren told her about her blog and this attracted the coordinator's attention. A few days later, she called Deren for another job position saying, *"We analyzed your blog and liked it so much and persuaded our director for creating a new job title and position for you. We just want you to do similar things you do in your blog.*" Since then, Deren is working in Macrocenter Supermarkets. She is responsible for the styling of Macro products, the content of the bilingual Macro magazine, and cooking workshops in Macro Atelier. Deren feels her blog is the sole reason she got this job and she believes that the authenticity of her blog helped this process:

> "*I don't know what attracted their attention this much, but maybe the authenticity of it. The recipes are not necessarily mine, but I organize and reinvent them in my style. Sometimes I create a recipe out of doing some other recipes wrong, when I am trying to combine them. But if it is nice, I put it on my blog as well. I think they felt my sincerity*."

Despite she shares recipes of desserts, drinks, and food decoration ideas in her blog, her work takes most of her time. Because of her busy job career, currently, she pays much more attention to her Instagram account, finding it easier and faster.

5.5.3 Nevra Establishes Her Own Company Via Blogging

Nevra has a story that starts as a blogger and turns into a reputable brand with 2 million hits a month. She is one of the first ones who inspire women in content writing. "*I had no idea about cooking until I got married. Dinners for me were salads and toasts only. After I got married, like many other women, I officially got introduced to the kitchen. I remember how I was frightened even cooking beans,"* says Nevra and her blog story begins.

She was working far from home and when she got back, it was already late. With that tiredness, she was cooking, washing the dishes, cleaning the kitchen and she realized that all of these were the same things every evening, taking her private time. She couldn't manage to cook from cookbooks and searched the internet where she met with blogs. After she grew her skills in cooking, her husband encouraged her to share what she experienced in the kitchen and how she ended up being a good cook at home. Her husband is an important figure in her blogging experience since he was not only supporting her emotionally, but also due to his IT career, he was the one who developed her blog technologically. Nevra explains her starting motivation:

> "*I wanted to set up a platform for women like me, in search of tips about cooking, not like those*

circulating on other blogs, but somethings practical and special. I aimed to help women to cook without wasting their ingredients and efforts. I am happy to succeed it."

She describes her experience:

"I was working in a full-time job which I hate and when I started writing this blog, I felt like I went to a psychologist. It took little time for me to attach to my blog."

Soon enough, Nevra's intimate kitchen and food stories grew in popularity and she got a lot of feedbacks from the housewives, especially newlyweds. In 4 years, she left her full-time job she hated and got certificates from cooking workshops and ateliers. She underlines the fact that she got a scholarship from a university's chef school because of her blog and this was a turning point in her life. Then USLA (Uluslararası Servis & Lezzet Akademisi) came to her and offered a bursary in pastry. Not only a great cook she became, but a blogger, an influencer, a food stylist, and a food photographer. Thus, she buried her white-collar job deeper as she reaches a point of what she wanted to do. She remained as a chef of her own brand Kitchen Gossips. After cooking in her kitchen, Nevra takes photos of the food in her small studio she designed at home. She is the owner of Kitchen Gossips and started to give food blog pages to her followers on her website so that anybody who wants to share her cooking or recipes can establish her own blog page easily. Her website turns out to be the biggest food blog now, and Nevra has become one of the most searched chefs for consulting purposes. Finally, she works as the official consultant of a reputable home appliances firm.

These three women have something in common that is to fill a gap with their blogs. Deren started her blog after graduating from university when she was unemployed. Gulay had retired from her job which she worked for 22 years so that she was feeling empty and trying to figure out what to do. Nevra was working unhappily as a white-collar worker. So, she was trying to fill in the psychological emptiness created by her job.

5.6 Results and Discussion

Blogging activities of these women paved the way to their successful careers, offering new ways of self-development and self-fulfillment opportunities while giving them hope to build a better future. To ground this argument, the results of the study will be explained in line with our research questions in the light of the narratives mentioned above.

5.6.1 Blogging as A Tool to Climb the Stairs

The first question was asking where the blog narrative stands in one's career development process. The study showed that all respondents place their blogs at the center of their career development process, ascribing an utmost meaning to the establishment of their blogs. In Deren's case, we witness that marketing her blog provides her a job opportunity that changes her life. Gulay also starts her new business career as well as growing a different identity by establishing her blog. Finally, Nevra's case is telling us that she even leaves her job and channel her energy to her fast-growing blog, which in turn affects her many choices.

Deren admits that she owes her current status to her blog:

> "*I got my current job directly via my blog. Even if I had declared my credentials and experiences during job interviews, that would not help as my blog did. Although I had not many followers back then, it served as a portfolio, a proof of what I have done*".

Deren's labor production in her blog is bearable as it provided an experience for job opportunities which she was already in search of. Her blog narrative is heard by the job authorities she had applied for and her job position is created based on what she does in her blog. When she was a student in chemistry, she had two summer internships in drug companies and she decided not to do anything related to her profession, but she wanted to do sales&marketing. However, cooking photography and styling that she continued to do in her blog as a hobby, let her go in a different direction than she had expected. In line with her blog's content, a new job definition offered to her by the supermarket chain, which was to create concepts for special days like Mother's Day, Valentine's Day, and Father's Day, for both the magazine Macrostar and for Macrocenter product styling. She was appointed as the organizer for Macro Atelier workshops where she is responsible for blogger events, celebrity invitations, and creating workshops based on different concepts. Thus, her career development process is shaped by her blog, making her switch from developing a career based on her university education to one based on her hobby. Turning her occupation from an unemployed student to a successful businesswoman, Deren's blogging activities let a change in her social class upward. As she asserts:

> "*Blogging totally changed my business life and my life course. I gained a lot since I had no idea how to switch from chemistry to this. Without my blog, I would never have the chance to do what I am doing right now. It served as a vehicle for me to come to this company*."

She feels content and happy about what she achieved and predicts that in 5 years' time she would probably be in the same company. She adds:

> "*Even if I quit this job, I would definitely go on with the food sector. Because it makes me feel happy. But of course, I wish my blog gains so much popularity and turns out to be my only job*."

After opening her blog page, Nevra had fast growth in the food sector. During the first year, she was able to pay only the server expenses of her blog, but in time, her blog hit the targets and she made a contract with a reputable advertising company. This move doubled her revenues and bring her blog income to a level that is more than a regular full-time salary. She started to gain so much money from her blog and she was offered consultancy for many companies. During that time, she gained a scholarship from Chef School, and these steps one by one encouraged her to quit her job. She confesses that when she quitted her job, she was sort of money. So, she focused on her content more that let companies notice her. After gaining the bursary of USLA for pastry education, with the help of her active social media usage, she and her blog gained impetus:

> "*I wasn't stoppable. Besides being a cook, I became a blogger, an influencer, I learned to take photos, food styling. I melted everything in one pot and opened my own company. These are all because of my blog but still, I am not done. I can't say I am a photographer; I am a Chef now. I still need to learn."*

She says one can only professionalize in one area and for her, that is blogging. She constructed her businesswoman image on her blog and once she considered herself as a blogger, now calls herself a chef and her next target is to publish a cookbook. Following a linear success story, she does consultancy in social media projects regularly and acts as an advisor for Hotpoint officially. She achieved her current status through a hard work, turning her blog from hobby to pro, her occupation from a white-collar worker to a successful businesswoman of her own. In terms of social class and economic situation, Nevra experiences upward mobility through her blogging activities.

As Gulay was thinking that her working life was over after getting retired, blogging has opened a new exciting page in her life. Her blog narrative is a constructive one since she admits that opening a blog changed her life, both career-wise and as a woman. She reports: "*Getting back to work at this age, after getting retired, just feels like I am young again. I feel dizzy, enthusiastic, and happy about it*."

She considers her blog as a new friend by whom she is invited to events, formed

new friendships, got advertisement opportunities, and even offered newspaper authorships. She adds:

> "*It also makes me develop myself in cooking and culinary culture. I know that was already in me but for 22 years, while I was at the back of a desk working as a clerk, I never set my passion free. So, my blog gave me the chance to find my real career opportunity and real me*."

Thus, rather than staying at home as a housewife after retirement, she had the chance to develop herself into a brand-new career based on her passion. In this way, blogging provided her the hope for underlining her success and prosper her newfound identity. Despite she liked her blog as a hobby at first, eventually she wanted it to turn into a job, without giving any harm to its simplicity and intimacy. By means of her blog, she has started working as a new face of Migros TV, becoming a cultural ambassador for women in Anatolia. With the retirement, Gulay experienced social mobility. Her social class has not changed since she has not earned more money than she was working before, but her occupation since she became a famous blogger, author, and cook. She constructs her online identity on her publicity and self-branding as an independent-urban woman who is in her late 50s, but still active and alive.

As all told, they had the opportunity to have job careers after their blogs were discovered. Despite, they all consider being a blogger as a full-time career, these women rather exist with their businesswoman identities. When their basic demographics asked, none of them defined themselves as a blogger, but they told their exact occupations, underlying the fact that they reached via their blogs. Being a blogger does not appear as a super identity because all are well-educated, skilled, working women who just wanted to fill a gap in their lives using their blogs as a vehicle to develop their careers in the food sector. Thus, we see a transformation of passion into a job opportunity. Blogging adds to these women's self-realization and career development processes, allowing them to experience upward mobility both socially and economically. Their blogs served as portfolios to enter their existing jobs, allowing them to construct their businesswomen images via their blogging activities. The success stories of these women are examples of what blogs can provide to their practitioners.

5.6.2 Success Comes Through Labor and Self-Development

The second question that guides the study was about how blogging serves to construct a successful businesswoman image. Providing many challenges and opportunities, the blogging activities of these women paved the way to their success. Until they reach their

current status, the data showed that they exhibit a hard-work and much effort. As far as the labor produced in blogs concerned, firstly I anticipate respondents produce a level of "hope labor" in their blogs and write mainly to gain future employment opportunities. This implies also another important relationship between hope labor and the self-development process. With the hope of gaining more from their blogs and creating a better blog, bloggers develop their web-based application usage skills, attend content writing workshops, continuously research and add on to their knowledge on which they professionalize. Certain time and effort spent on these subjects with the hope of building better relations or gaining job opportunities with better blogs. Thus, to develop their business careers, they also develop themselves adding on to their existing skills and abilities. Developing a better blog requires a better developed-self and blogging provides self-development opportunities to its practitioners. Data have shown that the blogging activities of these women paved the way to their successful careers, offering new ways of self-development opportunities while allowing them to improve their skills of using information technologies, socialization, and self-representation possibilities. However, while blogging as a media practice gave them the hope to build a better future, it also brought a continuous struggle allowing a precarious, never-ending hope to prevail.

Self-development

Bloggers generally reference and promote their self-made products intending to sell them. These products can vary from a well-designed cake, a handmade bag, jewelry to handmade clothes. By promoting their own or other brands, bloggers make profits from their blogs via sharing advertisements, press releases, or promotions. Word of mouth becomes one of the main tools of third parties that want to use bloggers as tools for reaching a wider audience. There are many different motivations behind women's blogging such as self-realization, networked reputation, emancipation, peer recognition, and achieving pleasure. However, these motivations also lead to the main idea of gaining job opportunities or earning money from blogging activities. Gulay's explanation as, "*even if one starts blogging as a hobby, at some point she wants to transform it into a job*", Deren's desire to do blogging as a job that brings income, and Nevra's quitting her official job to focus on her blog, highlight the hope of gaining a job through blogging.

I had assumed that self-development occurs as a result of the expectation of

providing a better blog charming for third parties, so that they could gain more reputation, so job opportunities, and economic gains. However, there is also the other side of the coin. If they write and gain money from blogs, they feel the urge to be better for their followers, and have better-looking blogs serving their reputation. This also leads the way to fully developed selves. In our case, while hoping to be better in their blogs, we see that three respondents continuously developed themselves. This is exemplified in Deren's statement:

> "*I started to use my sister's professional camera for shootings of my blog posts. To do it better, I decided to take photography lessons and develop my skills. This became a full advantage for me, since it was not only useful for my blog, but also made me progress in my work.*"

With a little technology knowledge, Gulay dedicated herself to learn more about blogging after her daughter opened a blog for her:

> "*I did not have any idea of becoming a blogger and use the fame it brings. I established my blog because the juries in the food competition asked me about it. But of course, along with it, I grew too. I learned a lot not to look stupid in front of my audience*".

Nevra also explains:

> "*I was so happy when I got comments to my posts. To be more eligible for them, I took photography and cooking courses. I got many certificates from workshops including cooking styling, cooking, and studio photography. It wasn't an obligation, but my audience deserves this, they deserve qualified content from a qualified chef*".

Still attending workshops and certificate programs, Nevra continues to develop herself. She also underlines that she tries each of her recipes she publishes in her blog before, so that she could be sure everything is perfect, and she would not disappoint her followers. Currently, her blog is regarded as an income model which inspires and encourages other individual entrepreneurs, especially women who try to make their kitchens known to the rest of the world. Thus, her efforts paid off.

Blogs open the doors for self-development, not only in terms of technological skills but also socialization and networking opportunities. Gulay claims:

> "*I even changed my look. I attend blogger events with my hair done, full make-up, to look fancy enough for my followers who set me as an example, and for companies to have more possibilities in business making. I am not sitting at home and enjoying my retirement"*.

Thus, along with the fame blogging brings, its practitioners try to change themselves and adapt the new identities brought by blogging.

Labor

While hoping for the better, blogs serve as a tool to encourage their practitioners for hard work. Not only does the investment they make to themselves take time and effort, but it is necessary to consider the amount of time their blogs require. Gulay claims that she spends on average 4-5 hours a day creating a post, not counting the time spent replying to her mails, feedbacks, and comments. As the platform practices diversify, her work and labor increases bringing additional burdens each day.

Deren also admits that blogging requires much effort and time:

> "*I can't just ordinarily write something. First, I need to decide what to cook and it is the hardest part. I need to research about its other recipes and compare, I need to cook, and it needs to be perfect. I can't put something that I didn't like on my blog. I am a perfectionist and pay attention to details*."

Her perfectionism makes her spend more time on everything and that is why when she got a job, she began to neglect her blog. She complains about her perfectionism:

> "*I need perfect daylight for my photos, and I work during the daytime, 6 days a week. So, I wait for Sundays and that means I need to cook on Saturday night and take photos on Sunday morning, and reserve my only day off for my blog. That is too much!"*

Thus, balance of work and blog is problematic in Deren's case, which could be disadvantageous in a competitive blog environment. What makes her relieved is her belief that her blog fulfilled its duty as she already got her job.

Contrary to Deren, Nevra shows a full dedication to her blog. She defines her blog as her baby since she took so much care and gave so much love to it, raising it as her child. As Nevra tells her sacrifices:

> "*I wasn't even sleeping, working until midnights, and waking up at dawn just to post my recipes. As a full-time worker, I was already tired but even then, I spent 8-9 hours a day for my blog.*"

This tiredness is due to the fact that she turned her blog into her company. With the hard work and effort, and all the sacrifices like quitting a full-time job pays off and Kitchen Gossips appears as a reputable brand in the food blogosphere. Nevra's hard

work, full dedication, and determination brought success. As she confesses: "*After quitting my job, I was broke. My blog had no income back then and I put a target. I promised myself to work hard and succeed to turn it into a profit in a year.*"

Deren also explains the fact that her blogging activity filled a gap when she needed:

> "*In blogging, you don't need to be ambitious, assertive, or professional. You can also write jejunely as long as you want. I also started like that, telling myself, "why not!" It gave me so much pleasure when I felt empty in my unemployed days*".

All three respondents started blogging with a similar idea, just for fun in an unprofessional and humble way. This amateur soul, the content embodiment, union of body and soul, brings success, along with the hard work and efforts they exhibit.

5.6.3 Hope to Build A Better Future

The third guiding question of the study was asking the ways blogging gives hope to women. The data demonstrated that blogging acts as an important hoping mechanism for women regardless of their age, cultural, economic, social background, or occupations. It is also not affected by the type of blog they write. But when it comes to something like cooking, which is traditionally considered as a feminized domestic practice, blogging may act as a norm-breaking activity that can provide many opportunities for women. These may include, looking at the future with hope to gain a job opportunity, to gain recognition, validation, appreciation, self-reliance, and to feel more emancipated, fulfilled, and empowered. Additionally, blogs serve as a tool for encouragement and motivation for women. Nevra's quitting her job, Deren's showing off with her blog for her job application, and Gulay's video recordings in social media with hardly any technical skills can be given as examples of the self-reliance and empowerment blogs can provide to its practitioners.

Therefore, blogging and the community -surrounded by local women- she entered in via Migros TV activities in Anatolian cities also provided Gulay hope for a better, more meaningful life which made her feel valued, young again, and still useful. She explains:

> "*Blogging gave me the chance to hold on to life, to hope for more. If somebody had told me that I will be famous in my 50s and I will touch other people's lives, I would never believe. My blog changed my life and gave me the reason to continue and to believe there is always room for*

more. After retiring, I was thinking life would be boring since I had worked 22 years behind a desk. I would not imagine a blog and competition would change my life. This fast pace made me forget my problems, even my tumors, and let me see other worlds. A new Gulay is born at her 50s."

Thus, Gulay came across with a new Gulay, a new identity she favors more via her blog. The self-realization she achieved gave her the hope to continue doing new things and enjoy life after retirement. She even believes that her new active blogger life is the reason for her tumors vanishing. Blogging in her case, has a healing effect on Gulay. Additionally, considering blogging as a dream job, Gulay's expectation from the future is to have a better professional blog so her journeys would not stay limited with Anatolia, but she can open to the world and experience their kitchens as well. She concludes that for the first time in her life, she dreams individually, not for the collective good of all family, but about herself. So, once her world was limited to her work, home and children before, blogging gave her the chance to hope for a better future for herself.

Despite the current jobs and careers, they have, for all the three respondents, blogging continues as a source of joy and pleasure, not an official job where they count on financially. They use the outcomes of their blogs. Although they all declare they used their blogs as vehicles to achieve their current situations, they expect that one day they can only set their blogger identity as their sole occupation. They see blogging as a dream job. Deren says this more openly since currently, she is not blogging very often:

"*I would like to do blogging as a job. Just to earn money from it without doing anything else. I am not normally a 9.00 am to 6.00 pm person and I still hope at some point if I can increase the number of my followers, I plan to focus on this target*."

The interesting thing is that Gulay and Nevra still define themselves as chefs, although they do blogging as a job as well. Especially in Nevra's case, the whole situation is different from the other two, since she turned her blog into her company. Even her current job status remains as a consultant chef, she is still known as a reputable blogger. Nevra still thinks that she is living a dream and appreciate what life brought to her:

"*While I was thinking what I should say, how I should start to my blog, 10 years passed, and my kitchen and my blog have become my shelter. If somebody told me that I would reach where I am, I would say "no way!" Everything is like a dream!*"

She had once a job that she hates, and blogging gave her the hope to build a

better future. She found encouragement and joy in her blog and decisively she progressed towards her new targets. As she points out: *"Chef School was a brand new and unbelievable opportunity. Starting as a blogger and having this kind of self-transformation is like magic*."

Thus, Nevra indirectly declares that she had left her blogger identity and she does not call herself a blogger anymore, but a chef. In her narrative, we witness the growth of a new identity based on her occupation, a story of a white-collar worker's transformation into a chef with the help of her blog. She gets many job offerings from TV for live stream cooking shows but does not prefer to be at the forefront. Her new target is to publish a cookbook that she hopes would provide prestige for her and burst her brand more.

5.6.4 Transformation of The Narrative

When it comes to cooking TV shows, there is always a judge to judge, criticize, or not like anything whatever you do, part of the rating monster. As audience you never know how much of them is a setting and how much is real. Sometimes the viewer is not sure if they are real persons or members of a casting agency. However, in a blogging environment, there are real people. The reciprocal relationship and to be able to contact with them directly, let the narratives to be experienced together.

Gulay, Deren, and Nevra's success stories inspire many women allowing the audience to experience a "transformation of experience in narrative" (Labov, 1972). Insinuating themselves within the everyday lives of consumers, their blog narratives create an immersion experience that is called "narrative transport" (Hsu, 2008). Accordingly, "emotions of storytelling recipients become inextricably tied to the emotions of the character. The audience takes on the narrator's perspective, reliving the experience as it is told" (Matwick, 2014, p.157). For example, Gulay's traveling to Anatolia for visiting the houses of her audience causes her followers to associate themselves with Gulay allowing them to look from her perspective. This situation stems from the power of her success narrative. In other words, a usual story which starts from a simple dream anybody can reach through hard work. As she admits:

> "*I have never thought that these visits would start a women's movement. Started as a simple cooking show, my journey turned into a platform where women can discuss not only their recipes but also their problems, expectations, and dreams with me. They told me that I am one of them and they were curious about how my tumors are healed, how I find the courage to do so many*

things at this age, etc. When I tell them my story, they feel like they can do the same things as well and I say to them "why not"?"

Nevra is also one of the most important names who inspired women about turning their leisure activities into job opportunities. Providing free blog pages on her website, she allows women to share their cooking experiences publicly. She calls them into her blog:

"I started this service to be able to experience the pleasure of blogging together. From now on, you can have your food blog that you could design and decorate for free. Just open your blog and let's learn, share and enjoy together."

Reaching her targets, now she acts as an advisor, a supporter for the other women's dreams, giving them a chance to grow other success stories. This is a hope anybody can have, and her success serves as an inspiration for her followers allowing new hopes to be born[20]. This is exemplified in some of the feedbacks Nevra received from her audience such as, "*I hope one day I will succeed like you*" (Zehra), "*I hope I can show a steady rise as you*" (Dilek), "*I know now how to do it, thanks to you*" (Mine)[21]. Yıldırım (2015) in his analysis of bloggers and blog writing in Turkey, asked 100 bloggers whether they inspire their readers or not. Accordingly, 53% of the bloggers stated that they encourage readers to write a blog, while 32% of them admitted that their readers are influenced by their articles and started writing a blog.

These three figures also, "win" the audience by using their narratives on the transformation process of their blogger identity to a successful businesswoman image, giving hope to those who want to be like them. Becoming an ideal model for the ordinary housewife who cooks at home for the family- they provide an opportunity to be discovered and climb the stairs. Thus, these stories give the message that anybody can achieve the status they had achieved. Without any class, age, or ethnicity distinction, it is a reachable target, you just need to work harder. Gulay, Nevra and Deren are hard-working women and they reflect this feature both in their self-presentation in public events and their blog narratives. Their blogs also appear as a medium to climb the stairs and to have a chance for upward mobility.

5.6.5 Blogging as A Way of Self-Fulfillment

[20] See appendix 1 for the example comments of Nevra's followers- a topic to be investigated in further studies.

[21] See appendix 1 for the extended versions of these comments'. Only screenshots of the comments are presented due to the anonymity of my respondents.

We usually hear about success stories of young people overcoming the odds and achieving great things. Deren was young enough and she was just graduated and maybe have time to build a successful career, but with the time, devotion, hard work, and sacrifices, Nevra has an inspiring success story. Gulay is also a good example of successful women over 50s, who never gives up and starts life from the beginning and does what she wants.

Cyberspace gives women the opportunity to prioritize their names, styles, and works via promoting. In cooking blogs also, the stories created along with the recipes shared legitimize the chef's status. One can turn into a celebrity chef in front of the eyes of the audience from being an amateur, everyday cook in the household. Food blogging is seen as rewarding and its practitioners felt valued and appreciated by the good comments they receive.

Although blogs provide employment opportunities and economic gains on a personal level, achieving self-realization, publicity, and by this way, self-fulfillment becomes some of the main concerns of bloggers' online social production. But in Gulay's case, this process goes unconsciously in her acts. She asserts:

> "*I didn't do any conscious move to gain followers or to be recognized. I just behave as I behave at home and I think this intimacy and authenticity are liked. But of course, I was so happy when Alp Chef came to me and wanted to meet with me in Migros shooting. More surprising thing was that he tried to persuade me to accept the terms&conditions of Migros job offering*."

Being a micro-celebrity, Gulay experiences different feelings by this fame and admits that she had no knowledge about terms&conditions, but because she was so happy to be recognized and wanted by them, she accepted the agreement immediately. Having experienced the feelings, she has never felt before, Gulay was affected by the fame she got and gave her decisions unconsciously.

The feeling of self-fulfillment and economic gains provided by blogs- are not necessarily interrelated. Gaining economic benefits from blogging may not have an important impact on the self-fulfillment process. In three of the bloggers' narratives, it is seen that the moral satisfaction feeling was at the forefront.

Chosen as *iyi gelecek elçisi* a campaign created by Migros for promoting certain products with the help of reputable names in their own areas-, Gulay talks about the moral satisfaction, self-fulfillment, and encouragement she gets from Migros TV job:

> *Migros offered me this job saying that they liked my blog and wanted to work with me in my most*

natural look at my own house. It was part of their campaign of "İyi gelecek Elçileri". They would spare a budget for me for my travels like the two-way tickets, for videos I make including the shopping I make for my recipes. I had never asked about its financial side because I didn't need it. All I need was the feeling it gave to me. I raised my kids, they already have their jobs, families, and their own life. To feel valued, praised, and supported worth more than anything for me and that is all I want."

Besides these feelings her career development through blogging provides for her, she even feels recovered from the tumors she had in her bones. She explains:

"*I forgot my pains and I didn't have the surgery. It was not necessary anymore. The moral support I got, from my audience, from my blogger friends, and most importantly me being active and alive again not only in the blogosphere but also on TV, social media, and on the road, gave me pleasure and joy. In sum, saved my life. If I am doing all these 2 years to my 60, think about what kind of things you could do in life. So, I invite women to produce and share!"*

Thus, Gulay gained her self-reliance and puts herself into some position where she could raise her voice and make a public call for the rest of the women.

Nevra also talks about her blog as her sanctuary since it was the place she harbored when she was unhappy and depressed about her job and career, and when she felt that she was stuck in her life at some point. She says:

"*If I tell you what my blog has provided me, the words won't be enough. Of course, I had conflicting times. It isn't just a happy bubble I live in. I am not only sitting and eating what it brought me. It takes all my time, my energy, my soul. But it is not because it is my company. Because it is my baby. It is my home, my shelter and because of my blog, you are also in my most special place, in my kitchen.*"

Deren also calls her blog, "*It is my private place. It is an outlet nobody can intervene in*". She is the only blogger among the three who does not necessarily cook her own recipes. She makes experiments where she mixes different recipes to recreate something. So, it is not only her creativity that let her blog prosper, but also her blog made her more creative as well. She also carried this creativity that she could experience in her leisure activity through her blog into her job platform. She has a job definition based on her creativity as she is responsible for brainstorming about concept-based organizations.

5.6.6 Success Comes with Its Flaws

Despite the appreciation and thankfulness, the three bloggers have for their blogs, the blogging scene is not necessarily a homogenous platform where everybody is happy. There are many obstacles, challenges, and conflicts bloggers face for sure. Based on the

types of blogs they write, women in the blogosphere dare to criticize other bloggers, especially if they are famous enough. For example, Gulay confesses that she is irritated by most of the mommy bloggers. She calls them "free eaters" and asserts:

> "*They want everything from the companies when they go to events, such as car fare, their meals, and money for blog posts. Even I heard someone who asks from a baby diaper company, to cover her baby's diapers for a year in return for one post she would share. Unbelievable!"*

This hate towards mommy bloggers is seen among many women bloggers as for most, earning money from a natural state like motherhood is contradicting with the sacredness of it. Despite Gülay's cooking abilities are transformed from the women in her family and she sees cooking as a traditional and domestic practice for women, she still criticizes mommy bloggers because of doing a gender-based performance.

Furthermore, Gülay underlines the jealousy and certain groupings among bloggers. Many bloggers don't attend blogger events if those whom they don't like are invited. So, before they go, they call the company and demand the guestlist. Based on their reputation, bloggers might choose not to go to smaller events or to those whose guestlists they don't like.

Another problem is the use of reputable bloggers' names with bad intentions. Someone from Konya called an important company Gulay worked for and told them she was a friend of her whom she directed her for asking a job opportunity. Gulay was neither aware of the person, nor the call. Nevra also experienced something similar, as somebody went to buy kitchen appliances for herself and wanted discounts using the name of Nevra. Additionally, Deren points out the problem of copy-pasting. She complains about those who copy the content of their blogs and with little changes repost in their own blogs. She says, "*It is a total theft!"* Thus, fame does not only bring opportunities but also may create abuse and exploitation. By telling their problems about the blogosphere, these women want their labor to be realized highlighting the efforts they put in for achieving their targets, since success did not come easy.

5.7 Conclusion

In the light of the research conducted, this chapter investigated women's blogging practices in relation to career development and future employment opportunities, focusing on the narratives of three successful food bloggers. This chapter analyzed the changing socio-economic situations and futurity perceptions of women bloggers by the effective use of blogs. Based on qualitative methods, the data is gathered through life

story interviews and participant observation. The study demonstrated that by creating their own cooking styles as well as their own definitions of food blogging, the three bloggers strategically constructed their businesswoman images in different ways upon which they also formed their blog narratives.

Deren, Gulay and Nevra gained an opportunity for upward social mobility through their blogging activities. Hoping as a goal-directed thinking and an affective practice at the present, allowed these women to relate to their future with career motivations. Hope here, does not only appear as a future orientation and dreaming of an unknown future, but also something that is practically used in their daily lives as an important motivation. Their dependency on their blogs about the socio-economic status and their current occupations, allows them to negotiate hope at present time in an optimist way. However, hope is a continuous and never-ending process that reflects on all labor practices of these bloggers. Although hope here seems like an opportunity gained by blogging, it also serves as a motivating practice for these bloggers to reach their goals and to pursue better.

Three of the respondents acknowledge that their blogs served as a medium to climb the stairs both in their jobs and their lives. Despite the other intervening variables in these women's lives to achieve their current status including their familial background, education, hobbies, and choices, they all place their blogs at the center of their life stories. Data have shown that the blogging activities of these women paved the way to their successful careers, offering new ways of self-development opportunities while allowing them to improve their skills of using information technologies, socialization, and self-representation possibilities. The labor production in their blogs is a welcomed one despite all the challenges and struggle they put forward in a shaky and rival market. The reason behind this celebration is the achieved success and satisfaction via blogging through which their labor also turns into human capital, valuable 'experiences' for exposure and reputation, self-managing 'risk strategies', creativity, and autonomy (Mackenzie &McKinley, 2020). Their blogs provided them the hope to build a better future, while allowing them to feel fulfilled and satisfied with the works they have done. Thus, the narratives of three women demonstrate the ways how they self-invest enhancing their skills compared to their former self-status and proceed towards their targets, while also distributing their hopes as a motivation and inspiration to their readers.

But then again there are some limitations of the stories. For many women

"opting out" (Matchar, 2013) of a career is simply not an option as happened in Nevra's case. This privileged experience is normalized by many lifestyle bloggers as "stay-at-home-mom" as they voluntarily leave the workforce and do blogging as a hobby (Matchar, 2013). Thus, this romanticizing of blogs might be problematic as "opting out" of a career is not likely for everyone. Even if Nevra was broke when she left her job, she has the necessary means to continue her life including a salary coming from her husband, a financial source because she had worked before and certain advertisement opportunities created by her blog. Despite Nevra's story has traditional normative grounds like cooking appears in her life as an expectation from a married woman, still, with the three narratives, it is seen that cooking is not a mere domestic practice, a necessity for women that they need to do as a duty. It can also turn to a hobby, a passion one can earn from it, not only financially but also emotionally.

We witnessed the transformation stories of women- one retired, one unemployed, and one who hated her existing job- into three successful businesswomen through the practice of blogging. Thus, providing a mechanism for hope for a better future, blogging allowed them to realize their dreams based on their passions. However, given the heterogeneous nature of the blogging community, it would be better to investigate other women also, who are in a struggle to achieve this kind of success but not necessarily succeed. Future research would benefit from an ethnographic study of aspirant bloggers who experienced a failure in their blogging activities while hoping for success. The next chapter will focus on the practices of aspirant bloggers in the Turkish women blogosphere in relation to their hopes and dreams and their existing struggle in the field.

Chapter 6

Amateur Bloggers as Aspirants

6.1 Introduction

Knitting Event in Tavsiye Evi

As I started climbing the ladders, I hear chirpy laughter of women inviting me to join their Monday morning routine. I enter the flat and see almost 15-20 women knitting altogether in the same room, chatting and drinking tea. Welcoming me, they give me knitting needles and a ball of wool. Then Renan (41), the owner of the house says, "*You are late, start immediately because today's target is to finish these baby vests and send them tomorrow".*



Figure 6.1. Knitting Gathering

This is a usual knitting routine held in Tavsiye Evi which is a public relations and media agency company that acts as a vehicle between brands and bloggers. Regularly, Renan invites women bloggers for a social responsibility project where they knit baby vests, socks, hats, and gloves to send them those in need. The participants are generally housewives or those who have loose working hours so that they could attend

the events on weekdays. Assuming that as a woman I know how to knit, they try to make me part of this activity immediately. The expectation is to finish the project the same day so one has to be quick. The performance takes place at the center of the saloon that faces the flat door, so as one enters the room, she can be part of the group and the activity. Since the sole aim of the event is to knit, one cannot miss the project when she comes to the flat. This knitting performance is accompanied by the bloggers' social media posts, Instagram stories, and live streams, where they share pictures of the activity and finished pieces. Thus, not only staying in the physical world, but knitting performance is also shared in the virtual world, with the expectation of reaching more people so Tavsiye Evi and the bloggers will be praised and appreciated.

Tavsiye Evi hosts many blogger events not only for this type of routine social causes but also for profit-making. The company aims to unite blogger women with its customer brands in an intimate atmosphere for advertising strategies. Product launching ceremonies appear as one of those strategies which are mainly focusing on home appliances, cooking, and baby products.

Cooking Event in Tavsiye Evi

> "*This margarine is good for cooking cookies and stuff, it is not very good for baking this kind of a recipe, but what can I do? Now it is sent to me for free and to attend the event, I have to cook something special. I don't want to make cookies, you know, anybody can do that,"* says Nurcan (35) to me.

Nurcan is an unemployed architect, whom I met in Tavsiye Evi before and became one of my key informants. We interviewed at her house and then went to a product launching event of a margarine brand in Tavsiye Evi. Having started a food and culinary blog recently, she wants to be unique with her recipes putting much effort to be noticed and invited to following events.

After cooking her food, Nurcan goes to make her hair done. She plans to take a cab since it would be hard for her to carry the food via public transportation to Tavsiye Evi, where the launching of the margarine takes place. While accompanying her with my "simple" homemade cookies in my backpack, I listen to her complaints about mommy bloggers:

> "*I know some of them who are very snob and bossy. They won't take part in these kinds of events for free. They don't go to events on their own as we do, they have to be taken from their homes by car and they should be paid*."



Figure 6.2. Product Launching Event

Knowing that the payments done to hairdresser's, clothes, taxi, and even to the preparation of the food, are much more than what a margarine costs, she spends time, effort, and money with the hope of gaining recognition, praise, and networks, at the same time bearing a dose of resentment to certain popular bloggers. When we enter Tavsiye Evi, an open buffet welcomes us, full of different kinds of food nicely presented with name tags on, including the names of the blogs and owners of the recipes. We place our food somewhere between and put our name tags on. Then we proceed to the big table waiting for us.

Child-caring Event in Tavsiye Evi

One of the rooms in Tavsiye Evi is sponsored by a company for child products. It is designed and filled by the sponsor company with furniture, toys, carpets, and books. Bloggers with little children are invited to an event in which a popular retired child nurse - a pregnancy coach and an advisor- gives clues about how to take care of a child. The topics vary from how to wash a newborn to how to feed an 8-months baby and what to expect from a 2-years syndrome and so on. The program is recorded with a professional studio camera and put into live stream both on the company's YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram channels and participant women's social media accounts. These women are generally mommy bloggers, but not necessarily. The advisory office of the nurse Esin (45) is very close to Tavsiye Evi and this is a routine performance that occasionally takes place on weekdays. She has also a book called, "*Nursing Mothers Ask and Esin Answers*". Esin says,

"*What we do is very important because there is much wrong information circulating on the*

> *Internet. New mothers always share the same concerns, "what if I can't take care of my child? What if I can't hold her/him? What will happen if my milk is not enough?" These worries make life stressful. This atmosphere lets us share our experiences and knowledge and comforts us. Women feel that they are not alone in this path*."

One of the mommy bloggers, a 42-year-old housewife, Canan, shares the same feelings and adds,

> "*I do appreciate these kinds of events. You know, as a woman you must do everything alone and you must be on schedule. Sorry sir, but no, I am not capable to do so. And what happened? I had to quit my job to take care of my children on my own*".

Not only do the participants have a good time sharing know-how, complaints about husbands and mothers-in-law, or solving problems while their kids are playing in the kids' room there, they also eat homemade food, drink tea/coffee and share each step they take in their social media accounts. Also, the live stream videos taken professionally in Tavsiye Evi are uploaded to their YouTube account with little games. The audience is winning gifts if they can answer the questions the organizers ask from their social media accounts. Sometimes a sponsor company can also be present at the event. Thus, following all social media accounts and hashtags related to the event is important since the question can come from anywhere. The gifts are generally related to children, like caring or cleaning products, toys, and organic clothes.

Participation in these three events is important to understand the motivations and dreams of women who are giving their time and energy to become part of these occasions. They attend blogger events voluntarily and spread the word via their blogs and social media accounts although they are unpaid. Thus, this chapter aims to answer how these actions affect women's daily lives and how these performances add to their social lives.

Therefore, participant observations are conducted in Tavsiye Evi giving voice to the bloggers themselves, at the same time the researcher being a part of their daily activities. Blogger events and workshops are fruitful sites for conducting participant observation, face-to-face interviews, and gaining close familiarity with the bloggers' social environment. Being a blogger myself, I have observed and engaged with many bloggers who serve a wide range of subject areas, including make-up, fashion, do-it-yourself, sewing, literature, poetry, spiritual experience, and food culture. Acting also as an "advisor angel" who is generally chosen from a blogger to experiment with new products of different companies and give advice to people especially using social media

tools, gives me a good opportunity in terms of accession to many informal gatherings. The above-mentioned three events are some of those gatherings.

Given the importance of blogger events for the blogging community, to be invited to a blogger event is something very desirable among aspirant bloggers. For a better understanding of the labor production in blogs and how hope is related to aspirant bloggers' performances, blogger events as part of the blogging activity are fruitful sites to explore. Considering the bloggers in my sample, by aspirant bloggers I mean, bloggers who have a limited number of followers, hardly seen as influencers or trend-setters, are amateur souls trying to improve their blogger status and post once a week or so. Based on the interview data and the participant observations in events, I argue that aspirant bloggers produce a form of hope labor both for the future and today. Apart from an individualistic entrepreneurial performance, blogging activity appears as a hoping practice that takes place at the present to engage with the daily life, but also a collectivity ideal where they feel belonging, usefulness and relief, and the possibility to become integrated to a community.

With different topics and targets, the events introduced above, took part in the same place, Tavsiye Evi, which is a public relations and communication agency. Despite they took place in different rooms of the house which are reserved for separate purposes, they always ended up at the same dining table, bringing various women together. Thus, this comparison provided an opportunity to analyze different types of bloggers in terms of their physical performances in blogger events.

This chapter draws on semi-structured interviews and spontaneous conversations with 28 bloggers[22] and 3 company officials- aged between 27 and 58- from various cities of Turkey but based in Istanbul. The interviews were conducted with women bloggers who participate in blogger events and workshops in Tavsiye Evi to develop their blogs and their networking opportunities. Potential interview subjects were determined firstly via an online survey- asking whether they attend blogger events or not- and later narrowed by participating in various events in Tavsiye Evi including social cause gatherings, product launchings, sportive events like yoga or Pilates, and breakfasts. I narrowed my sample to women who identified themselves as bloggers and who have followers between 600-1000. This scale is determined with the help of 3

[22] See Appendix 2 for further information on the informants. In order to preserve the anonymity of my informants, I will refer them with nicknames.

different companies' brand managers[23] -Renan, Cansu, Sibel- based on their criteria to invite amateur bloggers to their product launching events. Most of the respondents were married women with children whose occupations vary. 11 bloggers mentioned that they are housewives, 4 bloggers stated that they are unemployed, while 13 of them either work at home, work part-time, or self-employed, which was interpreted as a flexible position for mothers to have time to spend with their children. Interviews took place in Tavsiye Evi, but with some of the informants we agreed to meet up for later discussions in different venues, including their homes and cafes. Interviews were recorded and transcribed and for ethical purposes all names used are pseudonyms.

Therefore, the second section reviews the relevant literature on aspirational production and hope labor concepts as the basis of the theoretical and conceptual framework. Then, in the third section, blogger gatherings consisting of practices traditionally associated with women, like knitting, cooking, and child-care, that take place in Tavsiye Evi, are considered. Following the interpretation of these events, the fourth section focuses on Tavsiye Evi's role as a matchmaker between the bloggers and companies. In the fifth section, the results of the ethnographic research are discussed, and finally concluding remarks are presented.

6.2 Literature Review

6.2.1 Participate or Not: How to Stay in the Game?

Although not witnessing the binary between labor and leisure in their staged online personas, aspirant bloggers put so much effort and time in the digital culture-making process behind the stage, having different kinds of hopes. As entrepreneurial aspirants engaging in self-branding practices, they perform a kind of labor production that Marwick calls "aspirational production":

> "*The production of cultural content in an attempt to claim a certain status position. Aspirational production also applies to community creation of media about micro-celebrities to emulate a mass celebrity culture. It interpellates members of the technology scene as spectators in a culture that is as high-status as that of celebrities"* (Marwick, 2013, 57).

Marwick's definition is useful for telling the feelings of compulsion for sharing anything the aspirant bloggers get from the companies with the hope of further inquiries or rewards. But, downgrading this production into a celebrity status target might be

[23] These women are responsible from brand management of different products and companies and they organize blogger events for advertising purposes.

misleading as it over determinates about the emulation of mass celebrity culture, given the existence of various authentic amateur bloggers who have other motivations like socialization, enhancing networking opportunities, increasing their economic capital, self-realization, feeling useful or belonging. Although, I argue that aspirants have pretensions for the celebrities showing themselves sometimes with feelings of appreciation or envy, at times it also turns to harsh criticisms and underestimation of their labor.

Although there are many different motivations behind women's blogging, such as self-realization, networked reputation, emancipation, peer recognition, and achieving pleasure, these motivations also lead to the idea of gaining job opportunities or earning money from blogging activities as time passes. So, the time and effort spent, and the experiences gained in blogging change the starting motivations of amateur bloggers in time. Maintaining a networked reputation also lets future employment opportunities emerge, which stand as a common factor in motivating social production. By promoting their own or other brands, bloggers make profits from their blogs. Companies frequently send advertisements, press releases, or promotions to bloggers. Given that readers use bloggers and their recommendations when purchasing products, word of mouth becomes one of the main tools of third parties that want to use bloggers as tools for reaching a wider audience. Bloggers appear as cost-effective mediums compared to traditional marketing tools for many companies targeting the core consumer segments. One of my respondents Cansu (29), who is a brand manager of a reputable company, explains that they categorize bloggers based on their audience capacity: "*If a blogger has 5000-10000 followers, then she is regarded as an amateur blogger"*. This means that the company invites her to the event without paying anything but expecting their news to be circulated while they pay huge prices to celebrity bloggers just to show up in the events.

Thus, not only the celebrity blogger but also the aspirant blogger is important for companies given the effort and time they put forward for reaching the companies' targets as well as her own aims. However, as seen in Cansu's statement, the criteria are very high for the companies, whereas having 5000 followers is a dream for an aspirant blogger that she has to work hard to achieve this target, and even then she could only be regarded as an amateur. Therefore, the blogosphere stands as a critical platform where user participation becomes a form of labor for promoting various products including self-made and corporational brands, also an ideal site to explore how aspirant bloggers

negotiate hope while trying to build a branded persona.

6.2.2 Hope Labor

Self-branding performances of bloggers require a certain digital labor production. Regarding the motivations for social media participation, Kuehn and Corrigan (2013) coined the term "hope labor" to address the dynamics of "un-or under-compensated work" carried out in the present, often for experience or exposure, in the hope that future employment opportunities may follow. Distinguishing hope labor from other forms of free labor, the authors emphasize "the temporal relationship between present and future work— a relationship that shifts costs and risks onto the individual" (Kuehn&Corrigan, 2013, p.9). In the neoliberal and post-industrialist societies, hope labor is naturalized and normalized under the name of self-investment for upcoming future employment opportunities. According to Kuehn and Corrigan (2013), the hope labor term is the expansion of the free labor debate as it emphasizes the individual as a subject who is driven by future orientations for investment opportunities. This labor production dreaming of future rewards is criticized by many creative labor scholars (Duffy, 2017; Mackenzie and McKinlay, 2020; Neff, 2012) who stress the cruelty of hope in digital labor production. The normalization of the not-yet in creative industries seen as a self-exploitative and subjugating work experience (Alacovska, 2018). Mackenzie and McKinlay (2020) illustrate an ambivalent mixture of competitive, conflicting and contradictory relations to self in the constitution of entrepreneurial subjectivity. Rearticulating the term "hope labor", Duffy (2017) coins up "aspirational labor" that accounts for the gendered nature of blogging specifically. She describes "content creators' belief that their (mostly) unpaid work, motivated by passion and the infectious rhetoric of entrepreneurialism, will eventually provide respectable income and rewarding careers" (Duffy, 2017, p.15).

Thus, women bloggers engage in the consumption and promotion of various brands which is the labor production process of digitally mediated hope in a rival market. Either they are serving this process for free or paid, self-branding performances of bloggers require a certain digital labor production. Therefore, I anticipate bloggers produce a level of "hope labor" writing or acting mainly to gain a sense of belonging in return along with economic benefits. Three reasons make me think about the production of hope labor among this group of bloggers. Firstly, there is tremendous preliminary research done to find blogger events and to establish networks for attending

the events. Just to be invited to the events, bloggers write/talk to companies, other bloggers, and colleagues. Secondly, to keep themselves updated, they make comments on other bloggers' pages, join lotteries, competitions, and become followers, and like pages/posts. Thirdly, before attending events, bloggers engage in much work such as cooking for the company, sharing them via hashtags and posts, distributing banners, publishing free adverts, and even buying new clothes and doing hairdressing.

Therefore, online and offline labor produced by women bloggers harbors some kind of hope behind the scenes in all the creative works done: hope to move forward, hope for better future possibilities, hope to gain economic or social capital in return, hope to relate to something; a hope for life.

Given the gendered aspect of the digital labor produced in these blogs, this hoping mechanism is studded with the aspirations of amateur digital workers outlined here. Duffy's "aspirational labor" term argues that "this type of labor requires participants to engage in the consumption and promotion of branded goods" (Duffy, 2017, p.15). This term may seem more useful than hope labor for the outlined research, however, although this might be the case for many women bloggers in the blogosphere, stressing more on the interest-seeking perception of aspirational labor does not encompass the group of women who are not focusing on economic gains. Among the amateur bloggers who can still be considered aspirants, there is more an anthropological hope concentrating on another well-being apart from being financially well-off. Thus, drawing on Duffy's definition, these bloggers can be called aspirants who at times imitate celebrity bloggers with their look, styling, or writing. What differs these women from the celebrities or professional bloggers in the above-mentioned two chapters is their liminality which is characterized by their pretension to be part of the professional/celebrity blogger circle trying to differentiate themselves from the ordinary worker, housewife, or mother. The problem lies in the ambiguous position of this group of people who tries to adopt similar tastes and styles of the celebrity bloggers but lack the necessary resources. In this framework, aspirant bloggers show efforts with the hope of achieving a high status in their blogging careers whereas they also want to differentiate themselves from the "ordinary" women.

Sibel (43) is a Marketing Communication Group Coordinator of a reputable media company and organizes blogger events for their customers. She asserts,

> *"Sometimes we give chance to amateur bloggers… just to be spoken of, you know. They have the will to share everything immediately. But even if they do, they can't make a tremendous effect as*

celebrities do. They lack the followers, necessary language to reach people, more importantly, charm!"

As Sibel's point is important to keep in mind, one should not forget that each blogger event is not accessible to everyone and amateur bloggers may not have the access to certain events or products. Gandini also points out that those who work without gaining a salary, but maybe for social relations, reputation, or some sort of economic gain, "look more like shareholders of their own self-enterprise, rather than laborers-which is in line with their frequent reluctance at being seen as working-class or precarious" (2016, p.92).

Borrowing the term "aspirational labor" from Duffy (2017) for the labor produced in these blogs this chapter aims to examine the motivations, actions, and dreams of these women attempting to understand the extent to which women bloggers' hope and labor are mutually influential. Thus, this chapter asks, "How are blogging and hoping related? What are the motivations and reasons for attending blogger events?" Narratives and findings suggest that attending these events presents a self-branding and impression management tactic to have upward mobility, social or economic, having pretensions to be like the professional or celebrity bloggers. While struggling with this hope, they remain in between, as aspirants. They don't accept to see themselves as amateurs but also, they are not pros. I will scrutinize three blogger events and bloggers' performances to find answers to the above questions.

Participant observation of three performative actions that take place in different parts of a public house, namely knitting, cooking, and child-care allow me to examine the performances of bloggers in the physical world and identify the hoping mechanism functioning in the attendance of these events. Assigning different rooms help to draw the distinctions between the events based on their purposes. Women do not feel estranged to enter these rooms since what is happening there, is something they already know. But all events result in the same dining table discussing the day, eating and drinking together, creating a common space for women where everybody can be heard. They are not unfamiliar with the process since it imitates daily life. Binark (2009), referring to Levy, says that due to the feature of digitality, the difference between writer and reader, performer and spectator, creator and interpreter is erased and that the final buyer is in a structure where they can contribute to the effectiveness of the other, so that the final signature disappears. In other words, the interactivity of the virtual environment offers a common knowledge of femininity, solidarity, a medium for

production (in Cantek, 2011). They are struggling with managing the feelings that come with these performances. That is something new for amateur bloggers. Sometimes one or two celebrity bloggers attend these events and amateur bloggers can also get in touch with those bloggers they emulate. If one succeeds to be followed by a celebrity blogger or can fit into the same photo frame with her, then it is a success, because it will turn into new followers. This kind of hope is worth investigating. Attempting to explore the relationship between hoping and blogging, these three cases help to identify similarities and differences among women as hoping subjects.

6.3 Ethnographic Fieldwork

6.3.1 Knitting as a Performative Collective Action: Celebrating a Collective Identity

The knitting event takes place on Mondays, once a month, so participants are generally housewives, students, or those who work from home. A performance like knitting is usually associated with womanhood and only women bloggers are invited to the event. This routine is important for understanding women's organization around knitting as performance, their exchange of views around knitting patterns, know-how, and the reactions associated with knitting as a social cause.

All women sit in the same room and knit while they are sipping their tea. There is an intimate and happy atmosphere in the saloon and some women put on the hats they knitted and pose, some wear every knitted piece on and dance, others show each other knitting patterns. There are various reasons to take part in this kind of practice. But when these bloggers- amateurs or new starters- explained the reasons that appeal to them to participate in the event, the most salient themes were the intense hope to invest in their future careers and to have a sense of relief that comes along with the celebration of a collective identity. Feeling unsettled in her current job as part-time accountant and actively searching for a different career, Gül (27) explains her reason to be there:

> "*I established my blog just 6 months ago intending to turn it into a full-time job. I work as a part-time accountant and I want to quit it and just earn money from my blog. I do not want to miss these kinds of opportunities and I try my best to get invited so that I can get recognized and establish certain networks. To participate here, I even learned how to knit. I just want to be a famous blogger, if I earn money, I will leave my job. You know, nobody wants to work 9-5 in our generation anymore*."

Gül is focused and she knows why she is there for. Resisting the idea of getting an ordinary lifetime job as 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., she prefers to go for easy money in more

flexible conditions. Her main aim is to have upward economic mobility and flexibility by being a famous blogger. She hopes to build the necessary networks and relationships to achieve this end. Thus, any kind of blogger event would be useful for her, knitting as performance does not matter. But not to feel estranged, she went there well prepared. In this manner, blogging indirectly serves as a vehicle to build or enhance social capital which in turn will lead to future career opportunities.

Bahar (33, unemployed) also hopes to earn some money out of this activity. She thinks that if serving for a social cause also brings economic benefits, then it is a good opportunity. For her, the sole aim is not to help those who are in need but also to turn this into profit.:

> "*To be chosen for the event, a survey was sent to us. The questions vary from if we knew how to knit and how often we knit, to if there is a possibility, we would like to take part in the marketing of certain knitting tools. I find this interesting, while serving for a greater good, I also have the chance to earn some money."*

Though bloggers varied in how they described their motive for participating in certain events, a collective practice like knitting in a public house usually revives positive feelings about the self and the community. Banu (48, academic) has 3 different specialized blogs and tells how she feels useful while knitting:

> "*I am not that ambitious to get recognized or to find sponsors for my blogs. But apart from promoting a brand or writing about a product, this event is charming since it is done for a social cause. I feel like I am useful, in the overall contribution, I do my part. That is a valuable feeling nothing can buy."*

Banu's point can be taken further if we pay attention to Nermin (37) -a university graduate working as a clerk- who talks about the meaning-making process of the knitting event. Nermin is a hobby and crafts, DIY blogger, and she complains that although she shares anything she does in her blog, she does not take much attention. However, she is a good knitter, and she leads the knitting group with her know-how. She adds:

> "*I feel like I am of value among this community. I have never thought that my knowledge about knitting matters this much and is appreciated. I am grateful for this opportunity."*

Despite the less attention her blog gets, Nermin is happy about feeling valuable among the blogger community she is in, especially with something she always does at home. Thus, turning something practical and ordinary into a profession, a domestic practice into a public experience, for a woman like Nermin, blogging events establish a third place other than home and work where women grow a sense of belonging, unity,

and relief. This is also apparent in the explanations of Nur, Sevgi, and Aycan.

> "*From all the routine daily work, this place is out of the world. Knitting relieves my stress, and to do this kind of a practice surrounded by friends in a place rather than home, and for a better purpose makes everything more special."* (Nur, 39, housewife).
>
> "*Here, my all responsibilities are gone. This gathering is like an "Altin Günü"*[24] *without gold. Knitting is our target and we do that. It is also good that I learned many patterns that I did not know before."* (Sevgi, 52, housewife).
>
> "*I usually knit at home especially in the wintertime, in front of the TV, while watching a series. But I have never done it before with many people as a collective performance. I liked it so much. Feels like we are one altogether."* (Aycan, 37, housewife).

Routine daily work in Nur's, and responsibilities in Sevgi's explanation tell us something about the domestic work associated with women. Knitting in Tavsiye Evi symbolizes an escape from those, making them appreciate the event and the organizers. Knitting as a collective performance also allows to wriggle out the individualized self who becomes isolated in front of the TV -like in Aycan's case- providing a sense of unity and hope to become integrated into a community.

Given the different motivations which led the blogger women to participate in this specific event without getting paid, Deniz (38), who works in an insurance company explains her reason to be there as:

> "*We are grown up by handmade clothes. I mean, who can forget those vests knitted by our grandmothers? Everybody must have some old-school vest in their chests, knitted by their grandmothers or mothers. Now knitted stuff is trendy again."*

She enjoys knitting's nostalgic taste, commemorating the elder women of her family placing knitting practice on normative grounds.

Knitting as a communal performance answers to women who seek an escape from everyday life. While changing knitting patterns, chitchatting about their daily lives, they improve their knitting skills, imitating each other. Despite the similar performances they show in the blogosphere, their motivations and expectations from blogging vary. The most shared motivation for attending these events emerges as their wish to have an enhancement in their blogger status. However, this specific performance does not often serve ambitious goals about improving their social or economic status, but more gives a sense of relief, adding to their talents, leadership

[24] Getting together of women at regular intervals with their friends and/or neighbors where many different types of food (cakes, cookies, borek) and tea are served while chit-chatting and sometimes collecting money or gold as a way of adding to future savings.

skills, socialization, and networking opportunities. Furthermore, their blogging as a practice allows them to be invited to this event and to give hope to enjoy the present while producing labor for both their future and existing situations.

Tavsiye Evi helps the formation of a female homosocial space- a women's only space- that allows building intimate, strong bonds between women. Thus, knitting as a practice, away from rivalry, competition, and ambition, allows to establish a liminal, informal space between home and work, sometimes helping to the revival of nostalgic taste and at times leading the practitioner to escape from the daily routine of the urban environment. Surrounded by this community of practice, the practitioner holds on to a leisure activity which in turn has a social significance.

6.3.2 Cooking as a Rival Competition

Unlike the knitting performance surrounded by a collective goal, the cooking event for Luna margarine takes place in a competitive environment. Rivalry among women shows itself in the presentation of their food, creation of unheard recipes, promoting their blogs to company officials, and competing for the gifts the company distributes via cooking contests. As already mentioned in the previous chapter about food bloggers, the cooking show genre dominating mainstream TV, transformed "a domestic ritual of cooking from an ordinary practice into extraordinary" (Matwick&Matwick, 2014, p.158). The social media platforms took cooking practice out of our kitchens allowing it to travel across boundaries with many posts on stylistic cooking, detox cures, healthy recipes, and so on. Not only the prepared food is at the center but the way it is presented is also important. However, despite this extraordinariness, these contests make the audience believe that anybody can become a starring chef!

The launching of Luna brand was not only limited by the event in Tavsiye Evi, but the angels -the women chosen for the brand launching- promoted the brand for two weeks. These promotions gave the start to the rivalry since they consisted of online cooking contests using hashtags like "Food love with Luna", "Luna kitchen". The best recipes were chosen and awarded. Participants share their recipes online and proudly talk about Luna in their blogs or social media accounts with the appreciation of being chosen for the event. So, while the company is spoken of by word of mouth, women have also something to tell in their blogs making them feel important. They also expect their works to be appreciated by the brands they speak of. Generally, food and culinary bloggers are invited to these kinds of events. Every time there are one or two popular

names and the rest is chosen from a more amateur crowd. According to Duffy (2018), companies expect online personalities to work for free motivated by future promises. As Sibel (43) explains:

> "*You have to have at least one celebrity blogger in the event, so her place is already reserved in your marketing budget. She announces the event at some point and small bloggers contact us to be invited to the event. They ask for it, so we do not have to pay anything to them. They come on their own, enthusiastically, and share everything for free*."

This is true for many companies that invite amateur bloggers to the events without paying anything expecting their news to be published and circulated by them while they pay huge amounts of money to those who are regarded as celebrities even just to show up in the events. Cansu, being the brand manager of a well-known diaper brand, confesses that, a reputable mommy blogger was hired by them for two years with a satisfying salary like 10.000 TL/month (2015-2017) to promote a baby diaper brand in her social media accounts and blog. Despite this monthly salary, she was also rewarded by many promotions and for extra events, she was paid again.

Günay (41), a famous blogger and a cook, talks to Tavsiye Kanalı, the official YouTube channel of Tavsiye Evi that makes live stream broadcasting. She promotes Luna praising it as a tub of very practical and delicious margarine to be used in every kind of recipe. When I ask whether she gets something in return for this explanation, she states that being a well-known blogger, she must take something in return. Because she is doing blogging as a job, she believes that doing it for free would lead to exploitation.

The other bloggers are aware of Günay is paid for the event and they give her compliments and talk about her blog's success. I ask one blogger, Gülsüm why she attended the event. Gülsüm (32, housewife) answers:

> "*I just want to be like her. She is known by everyone. I mean everyone in the blogging community. Especially among culinary blogs, you know, she is like a star. I cannot imagine earning someone's living out of something she already does every day at home. I cook very well, and I want to be a cook too. And I also want to be famous. I think not only Luna can provide these for me but will help in that way."*

Gülsüm's point is important as the pretension to become a celebrity blogger not only comes from the search for fame but envying the ability to transform one's routine practice into something that pays off. Domestic ritual turning into something profitable becomes attractive to many women who know they are also capable of doing similar

things. Nurcan also supports Gülsüm, believing that she has nothing less than Günay and she can be the new face of many brands. She has that ambition and she wants to be chosen for the next events again, so she mentions one more time: "*I cook delicious food. My recipes are special, I follow my grandmother's cooking diary. This is a tradition in our family. Cooking. And the skills also pass as the tradition*". Nurcan's wish to make a special piece for the Luna event- underestimating making cookies arises from her wish to be authentic than the other bloggers. Bloggers desire to be unique in the blogosphere by posting on unexplored themes, and this extends not just to the virtual world but also to the physical world, where they want to be distinctive by producing novel recipes.

Turkish culinary culture has been transferred from one generation to the other. According to Cantek (2011), one of the motives of establishing a food blog was to protect, share and pass on recipes that are memorable to women, especially to girls to revive the "dead recipes" in their notebooks, magazines, or minds into flesh and bones. The owner of the Orange Tree, Hatice Özdemir Tülün, stated that she started this business in order not to lose the recipes of her mother's favorite dishes (in Cantek, 2011, p.22). It was striking to see in the Luna event that many of the recipes were also a visit to old roots, inspired by Ottoman cuisine, or at times they were carrying bloggers' hometown characteristics. İnci (56) -a housewife- who is from Kastamonu asserts: "*Since Kastamonu is the hometown of Fatih the Conquerer as well, the kitchen of my hometown consists of many charming recipes of Ottoman cuisine made out of dough*".

This is something that you can also see easily when you have a look at the table prepared by bloggers for Luna. It is again like women gather for an "Altın Günü (gold-saving day)" since the food served is kind of like those served in these kinds of gatherings.

Given the basic activity in Luna event is to eat and talk around the table, after Luna promotes its brand for a short period, participants pass to daily talks that include sharing of recipes, sharing of their blogs or social media accounts, reading future from coffee cups and also sometimes gossips about other bloggers who are not there. Feelings like resentment and envy against celebrity bloggers are also seen among some bloggers. Not hiding her feelings about popular bloggers, especially mommy bloggers, Nurcan criticizes them for being spoiled and uncanny. Sümeyra (37, housewife) also claims:

> "*I don't think celebrity bloggers have much effect on distributing news of the companies or products. They have the right to do everything you know, they can choose not to publish, not to attend, or have weird demands like they are rock stars or something. I do not see them as models*

to follow".

Eda (36, food engineer) supports her saying:

"*I check their blogs for certain topics that interest me however, I have never bought a thing they recommend. I am not interested in their self-portraits but the products*".

Sümeyra and Eda harshly criticize celebrity bloggers preferring not to recognize the works done by them without seeing the efforts they put forward to achieve their current status. Merve (27, university student) explains this situation that many celebrity bloggers' online self-representations build upon a more middle-high class, bourgeois woman image rather than constructing an approximate modern Muslim woman image. Thus, she admits that they somehow feel alienated given that they are not members of high society. Calling many bloggers who attend blogger events as freeloaders, she tells that she leaves her house and kids, make her hair done and put on her nicest clothes to look presentable in the events.

İnci (56) claims that given the fast pace of our lives, everybody consumes everything very fast just paying attention to the fancy-looking food pictures. She adds:

"*You look at some of the famous food bloggers and you see just a pile of selfie addicts whose blogs are full of fancy pictures of food, neatly organized for the nice photo-shootings. There is no recipe, or there is nothing special about the food. Just the picture. When we were competing in cooking competitions, big chefs were afraid of us, they were uncomfortable with the idea of food bloggers back then."*

Given the older age of İnci, she has a hard time using digital technologies as easily and as fast as younger bloggers and she has stronger ties with her traditions and historical roots. Contrarily, Şeyma (28) is a devoted follower of Günay and believes that successful bloggers act as models to be followed, so they need to be careful about what they share and do. "*Their real personality and online identity should coincide. Then there is no problem*", she says.

On the company side, Bilge (37), Luna Brand Manager, talks about the campaign:

"*We come together with advisor angels, who have contributed our brand very positively for 2 weeks. We had sent Luna packages to them; they cooked and shared many recipes online. Now we eat what they cooked for us altogether, sharing recipes and a wonderful time. I am thankful."*

These cooking practices in the margarine launching event presents more individualistic, competitive, and ambitious performances. It can even go further to make comparisons with other bloggers, feel envy and hate. Thus, these performances shed light on the tensions among bloggers. To be eligible for one specific event, much effort

has been put behind the scenes. Many aspirants believe that if they take every event seriously, they will be respected, and their efforts will be appreciated. They serve not to a collective good but for a better self-presentation both in physical and virtual worlds, hoping to be noticed by the companies. Thus, they believe that their efforts will lead third parties to feel that they need to work with aspirants rather than collaborating with celebrities since amateur bloggers will put more effort to prove themselves to the companies.

Many brands advertise through food bloggers than using traditional forms of advertisement. So, many women turn their cooking hobbies into job opportunities, experiencing important transformations via their successful blogs. Increasing their followers with sponsorships, lotteries, and advertisements, they build on both their social and economic capitals. Some started doing blogging as a full-time career quitting their jobs, which is one of the aims of aspirant bloggers. So, this specific event and events like it, seen as a future profit-making opportunity for those who hope to make a blogger career. These aspirant bloggers aim to construct their blogger identity and self-presentation around individualism than targeting a collective ideal like uniting for a social cause or challenging normative constructions of gender. This collectivity ideal among bloggers emerge as certain groupings such as Technological Mothers which is formed by mothers to challenge the idea of a stay-at-home-mom who is technologically incapable. This kind of groupings against the existing normative constructions of gender are discussed in Chapter 4 in more details, and they deserve further analysis.

6.3.3 Some Women Are More Mothers Than Others

Usually participated by mothers with toddlers, child-caring activity in Tavsiye Evi turns to a public therapy session for women looking for a different place to breathe. They can easily unite in a common ground which is kids. Sharing private information makes women relieve and the sacredness of motherhood is something to be told, praised, and appreciated via these kinds of gatherings. They share the problems of raising a child and exchange know-how while also telling their own motherhood stories to each other. In their stories, it is common to hear that they are thankful to God for having their kids despite all difficulties, and being a mother is priceless. These kinds of feelings prosper as they are shared among like-minded people who are experiencing similar things.

Zehra (31), a self-employed fashion blogger, presents her motherhood as an excuse to her audience about her neglect of her blog lately. She tells that she is sorry for

not writing but she is a mother now and her life revolves around her son. Personal fashion blogs are primarily based on personal experiences on style and fashion. However, when it comes to "motherhood", the findings[25] unfold that as soon as they become mothers, blogger women's attitudes switch towards motherly issues and blogs start being neglected as motherhood comes with extra domestic labor. As a social construction, motherhood is seen as something to be proud of and worth mentioning, which sometimes results in the neglect of the blog's own content and bloggers start talking about their experiences as mothers. This is also apparent in a blog called *Kokoşgirl* who transforms her blog into *Kokoşanne* (Kokoş Mom which means fancy mom), after she becomes a mother. Another one is also *Aslı'nın İçsesi* turns into *Annenin İçsesi* (Mother's Voice)! This is also related to the wish of staying in the game via the events that are central to one's life. Their blog practices differ and change in parallel to their own experiences. Becoming mothers do not mean to stay out of the field but to transform and use it according to your changing needs. Thus, a blogger career does not end but may even benefit from this change in women's social and private lives.

Arzu (40), who was a PR manager before but unemployed now, takes part in the event with her son, explaining:

> "*Birth of my baby was a turning point in my life. Because I finished my 15 years of successful career just to be with my son. But then I felt helpless. Having 2 degrees does not help."*

To be a care-taking mother, she sacrificed her business career but at the same time, her voice and attitude bear a regret. Although she mentions that she wants to wriggle out of the motherly issues, she still attends the event seeing it as an opportunity to be listened to, understood, and a way to escape from daily life, at the same time as a place to find some answers to her questions about child-care. Also, Canan, a mommy blogger who quitted her job to take care of her children regrets this decision but does not dare to enter the job market again. She says:

> "*It is hard after becoming a mother of two. People are changing and so does the job market. It is very competitive, and they need young and devoted people. But still, I do not want to stay only as a mother at home, I want to turn blogging into an opportunity. I can easily share my know-how about raising children and like*."

As not many women have recognized motherhood as a viable career, being a mother can be a source of income; a job opportunity for women through the practice of

[25] Textual content analysis data from Sim, M. A. (2017) and a survey data of 90 respondents.

blogging. Despite her fear and hesitation to enter the job market, Canan still wants to be productive publicly, taking part in the economic responsibility of her house. Resisting against the idea of having the "mother" her only label, she needs to keep the public part of her life and her identity flourishing adding to her economic capital via blogging opportunities. This quote of her shows that despite seeing herself disadvantageous to the younger generation, she hopes that blogging might turn into a job opportunity helping her to share her experiences with other people. In this respect, blogging makes the role of housewife, which she could not get used to, the depression caused by being locked in the house, tolerable.

In this specific blogger event where Nurse Esin is the speaker of the day, shared and discussed topics include much private information as cycles of menstruation, breastfeeding, physical body changes, and shape, details regarding pregnancy, nurturing, and child-care. These topics resemble what these bloggers also eventually write in their blogs. Each blogger tells their own stories, which usually involves their families especially their children. Duru (33), a self-employed designer, is a fashion blogger, and she says:

> "*I wish I have the chance to bring Mina everywhere with me. I know Doğa (a very famous fashion blogger) carries her son everywhere and he grew up in blogger events, playing on the ground with the promoted goods and products. Companies are generally so nice to think about blogger babies as well. I know that they don't only give free products and gifts to Doğa, but also her son.*"

Thus, not only fancying celebrity bloggers but also there is certain envy for the treatment their kids also get. Moreover, the participants of the event are content with the gifts they are given in the kids' room of Tavsiye Evi. Sponsor companies organized satisfying gifts for mothers and children.

Ayşen, a life coach who is 36, says: "*These muslin clothes are lifesavers you know. Even if you buy several of them, every time one more is needed*." Arzu also thanks the event organizers and sponsor companies saying: "*These cremes are very practical. You can use them with every kind of bruises and diaper rash. I hope these kinds of events will continue."*

Although these kinds of small products are not expensive, they are appreciated. Maybe it is not something they cannot afford to buy; in return for the smallest gift, they feel happy. Bloggers like to earn something for free when they attend blogger events. They expect to be given free products which are a crucial part of organizing an event.

While these small gifts make them happy, it is not usually the case for professional/celebrity bloggers, since expectations from blogger events vary depending on the blogger's status in the blogosphere. As Yeşim (48), who is a celebrity blogger, asserts:

> "*There are bloggers who make agreements with sponsor companies to tell their pregnancy stories or there are those who sell their babies' birth videos to companies. Just think about the future of that baby, what if she hates you for doing this. You can never trust people, maybe your baby's videos will be used in bad hands. You never know. How can you do this?*"

The discussions during the event also expose many criticisms of other mothers for hiring a nanny, using birth control, or for not breastfeeding, thus turning motherhood into a rivalry platform. Douglas and Michaels call this as "new momism" which is "the insistence that no woman is truly complete or fulfilled unless she has kids, that women remain the best primary caretakers of children, and that to be a remotely decent mother, a woman has to devote her entire physical, psychological, emotional, and intellectual being, 24/7, to her children" (2004, p.4). This kind of attitude and belief create stress and responsibility on women especially those who have recently become mothers. Zehra criticizes a mother because she eats her dinner while the nanny is taking care of the child in a restaurant saying: "*Is this motherhood? I confuse which one is the mother."* Thus, emphasizing on the practice of mothering, Zehra's comment indicates that she is engaging in promoting "new momism". According to Petersen (2014), the promotion of new momism has contributed to the competition of women with one another for power or elite status, through their own or children's achievements. Furthermore, Petersen (2014) argues that this situation is changing because blogging allows a more egalitarian approach to motherhood as achieving status in blogging only happens when bloggers share information, and in this case the information is about how to be a "professional" mother.

Özden (35, freelance interpreter) participates in the conversation and adds:

> "*You are lucky because there is no mother here who carries the nanny along with. You know some women carry them wherever they go even they do not need them. It is their own choice. If there was a famous mommy blogger here, you would not be able to talk like this".*

Özden's reaction is worth mentioning since she admits that she follows many famous mommy bloggers who made her laugh in her toughest moments and she took much help from their recommendations.

> "*One has to give their credits. They were like us once. They created their contents and worked*

like hell and even distribute them wisely and successfully when social media was not this powerful. I follow many mommy bloggers and I know they also do. Most of the new starters are learning from those blogs. People imitate each other. I confess that I even took the best practices of many successful blogs to my own."

Given that many bloggers start blogging inspired by those successful blogs they follow or read, Özden's confession tells us amateur bloggers can imitate the professional bloggers while learning some skills including good content writing, commenting, sharing, page development, photo-taking, how to cooperate with a company/brand and even using the language, which in turn adds to someone's cultural capital.

It is striking to see that although there is pretension to be like the famous bloggers in terms of monetary rewards, respect and invites they get, still, there is a resentment about them. This resentment shows itself in many of the events in the form of gossips, criticisms, and devaluation of the celebrity bloggers' work. Being in this dilemma, aspirant bloggers usually claim that celebrity bloggers fail to be authentic with their excessive femininities, but themselves are more natural as they are not slaves to the brands and capitalism. This claim stems from the fact that aspirant bloggers feel that their work is not seen, understood, appreciated, and not rewarded, while they think celebrity bloggers spend less effort than they do to achieve fame and success. This validation and appreciation are not expected from future, but from today. Therefore, when their hopes to be validated are not achieved today, the dream images they have start to crumble. However, many reasons prevent bloggers to achieve celebrity status. These include inadequate determinacy, hard and devoted work in blogging, unequal production of labor, less networking opportunities, less ambition, different expectations, unequal access to economic resources, different cultural meanings and also the fast change in technology which requires more knowledge about the issues like changing algorithms or search engine optimization techniques. Through the above-mentioned performances, we witness a women profile who is overworked, inadequate, unsatisfied, and unable to catch up with the pace in the blogosphere. The emotions of envy, criticism, unrecognized labor of others who are successful, stems from their inability to construct their subjectivities online while balancing their other roles in society. According to Skeggs (2002), in its contemporary manifestations, femininity is produced through the processes by which the women mediate textually. In addition to that, switching between several web platforms, women's online self-presentation is not only

textually but also visually mediated requiring more labor to make performances. Thus, aspirant women have a hard time recognizing their subjectivities and their labor while trying to catch up with the fast change in web platforms.

Mom blogs have reached popularity and fascination over the last decade and are quickly becoming a way for women to get paid for being mothers, for their potential to build communities and to challenge dominant representations of motherhood within our society (Lopez, 2009). Thus, each woman has their own stories and they want to be heard, share the common problems seeking advice from experienced mothers. There are always those who know better than others, and who like to lead the conversations. At times, these comforting sessions turn into something where they compete with their motherhood. Like everybody needs to know certain brands and use them, if not, they underestimate you as a mother. Using a diaper by a certain brand even is a visual representation of a blogger's social capital giving her social power among other mothers. The real-life self-presentation of mothers reflects on virtual space as well. These kinds of attitudes also find their places in their blog posts. Self-consistency is pursued among mother bloggers since they want to create an idealized character. Thus, "mom bloggers engage in the characteristics of professional communicators, model egalitarian professionalism, employ an ethic of care that combats elitism, and challenge the field to include their work, from the home and through new media, as professional" (Petersen, 2014, p.277). However, when they are criticized by other bloggers treated as if they are less important than those who write about fashion, food, lifestyle, or beauty products and as if there is nothing more important than their children, they experience ambiguity. As a result of the ambivalence, they experience intense, confusing emotions like fury, imperfection, inadequacy, and annoyance because of the other bloggers, but also validation, celebration, and appreciation coming from their followers. Therefore, "the title of 'mommy blogger' is not always wanted as it can be both a source of pride and a source of embarrassment; it can both compliment and demean" (Lopez, 2009, p. 730). Thus, in this specific gathering, they share these dualities as well and feel understood among their counterparts.

6.3.4 Tavsiye Evi as A Matchmaker

Distributing hope to bloggers through different performances, the house acts as a medium between the bloggers and companies and provide an income out of this match-making process. By bringing them together, the place serves as a uniting source,

creating a collective sense of identity, but also, a place where traditional gender roles are reproduced. Men in Tavsiye Evi's administration deal with sponsorships, financial and technical matters like being responsible for the camera, video recordings, and computer. However, the event planners, matchmakers, and the cook are women. Under the cozy, friendly, informal atmosphere of the place, anything can be shared like gossips about other bloggers, family members, magazine news, and upcoming blogger events. Compared to celebrity bloggers' attitude about not sharing other companies' blogger events commonly, aspirants share the information they heard so that other friends can also join, and they won't feel alone and neglected there. Thus, they have the chance to attend more events and grow their network.

This is also apparent in Gülay (58, retired)'s explanation: "*My only aim to come here is to be together. I am retired and I don't like to sit at home, alone. Even before, I was paying to attend to these kinds of events*." However, this changed when Gülay became a popular blogger. She now admits that she asks for transportation and money in return for attending an event because she is well-known now and has a prestige that shouldn't be exploited.

These meetings occur in a third-place other than home or work, providing women the opportunity to serve for a common good, also an opportunity for self-liberation. This is not only a collectivistic goal, but also an individualistic desire. Although most respondents admit that their main reason for attending blogger events is socialization and networking (Tuçe, Gülay, Hayriye) individualistic desires also play some roles as in beauty blogger Tuçe (36, make-up artist)'s case: "*I like being the first one to try new beauty products, I'm going to product launchings since they give us a product to try for the first time*."

Being a blogger attributes a kind of power to womanhood since actions traditionally and deterministically accepted as woman's job like knitting, cooking, child-caring are not only regarded as inferior or secondary duties than breadwinning but transforms into something beneficial and advantageous. Knitting performance in a public gathering place differs from knitting at home in front of the TV. Producing a cheaper sweater doesn't add to home economy or it is not only a leisure activity to relieve stress, but it has a new special meaning like a social responsibility project for the greater good. Thus, organizing a collective practice, Tavsiye Evi helps to transform an individualistic, subjective ordinary practice like knitting into a public performance serving a social cause. Here, a housewife sees herself as useful and has the power to

make a change. Her blogger identity and her performance as a blogger woman in the arena give her this power that she would not have if she stayed at home. Thus, the sole aim is not the craft production, or serving for a good cause, but also socialization, escaping from home or work with the hope of feeling togetherness, and networking for future blogger careers.

6.4 Discussion

Not only do blogs appear as a reflexive medium for women to interact and communicate with each other with their readings, comments, and feedback, but also the blogger meetings held in physical spaces offer women the opportunities to reflect on their status in society. Blogger events can provide three types of opportunities: socialization, networking, and self-realization. Not only blogging on the virtual world but also appearing physically among other bloggers and third parties they cooperate with, gives power to women, since when they are invited to the event, this feels like they are important and appreciated.

Performances in the above-discussed three cases are less art than it is labor. There appears a goal-oriented performative action, shaped by the aspirations of amateur bloggers as well as the wishes of third parties they cooperate with. We witness a hard-working group of women who wish to create their own opportunities for better future possibilities via using social media tools. Although the motivations for attending these blogger events vary, they mostly inherent hope of upper mobility possibilities, economic or social. No matter what the theme of the day in Tavsiye Evi is, in all three events, women finally sit at the same table, eating the commonly prepared and cooked food. The food shared at the same table provides socialization and networking opportunities, where women generally exchange their social media accounts, e-mail addresses, and telephone numbers. They tag each other in their photos. This socialization process takes place in a content atmosphere where everybody relieves after the compulsory situation is over both for the companies and bloggers.

Although having a contested nature, aspirant bloggers does not conflict with each other, but experience incompatibility with the celebrity blogosphere. Aspirant blogger community consists of rather a helpful, understanding, and sharing group of people. They have different motivations to blog, hope for their future careers, and different views about other bloggers. Whether blogging is for self-realization/self-fulfillment or economic gains, it still serves as a hoping mechanism for its practitioners.

Celebrity bloggers or professionals feel that they have the power over the companies in choosing which product to recommend or not, however, aspirants are not that picky. They do not have the chance to choose from the many but take every chance they get. Many of the bloggers interviewed (Gül, Aslı, Sevgi, Merve, Özden, Banu, Canan, Nur, Eda) mentioned that usually, they are the ones who contacted the third parties, companies or other bloggers, to be invited to an event or for cooperation.

Even though blogger women compete as individual entrepreneurs, being part of a blogger community provides different possibilities and new forms of hoping ways to these women. People benefit from the opportunities given or they create the rife circumstances themselves in each situation or society, either as individuals or as part of a larger community. Thus, blogging appears not only as an individualistic practice but also as an aspiration of a collective identity ideal -meaning to act together and feel belonging to a group- based on their blog professions like food bloggers, mommy bloggers, fashion bloggers, and so on. They differentiate themselves around their writing themes but unite in terms of their aspirations as a group of amateur bloggers. There are bloggers whose hopes are fulfilled and those not, but still aspire to be part of the community with the sense of belonging and the prospect of upward social mobility.

Aside from gossiping about other bloggers, especially famous and successful ones, aspirant bloggers want to be like them, even if they deny it or fiercely criticize them. The animosity they feel is a result of their pretension. They set themselves aside from regular women, who are not bloggers, believing that by participating in the blogosphere, they become a part of something bigger and earn power as a result. Envying the professional practices, aspirant bloggers enter an unending labor production with the hope blogosphere provides them. According to Nabi and Keblusek (2014), as hope is uncertain about the future, the attainability of the goal too and for that reason, he argues that envy would be more likely to spur action than would hope, especially in the case of desirable media figures. In this regard, aspirant bloggers' envy also appears as a motivator that bears new hopes both for the present and the future. So, not only hope leads to action here, but also do the envy and ambition aspirants have.

However, the struggle to climb the stairs in the blogosphere cannot be thought separate from the other dynamics arising from the platform practices. Based on the algorithmic changes in the diverse and fast-developing web platforms, the audience starts to value the high-quality "perfect" picture and this perfectness creates an illusion among the aspirant bloggers as they think with less work this is doable. According to

them, celebrity bloggers who already live a high-quality life don't do much to earn this fame and success. Therefore, valuing their own work more, aspirant bloggers often devalue the celebrities' work and yet, aspire to be like them. This situation stems from the perfectness presented by the celebrity bloggers which attract more people each day. Since presenting this perfectness does not look like real work for the aspirants, it looks easy from distant to make an income out of something you enjoy when you establish the right connections. This kind of flexible work idea or being self-employed is promoted among aspirant bloggers as they do not see the transferred risk, effort, time, and extra work celebrity bloggers put into. For this reason, when they enter the blogging market, their hopes can also fail and crumble resulting in despair and resentment towards others, as it is not an easy task.

Furthermore, these practices in blogger events including sharing of a collective identity, know-how, sense of belonging, transforming self-realization, achieving economic gains, network and socialization opportunities, linking, commenting, gossiping, photo taking, and tagging, all add to the exchange of different forms of capital.

In the cooking event, we see that how the struggle over certain forms of capital is performed. The rivalry between the bloggers- to achieve social capital namely networking opportunities for better future careers- was striking given the hopes created by their counterparts' success. One of the main motivations of aspirant bloggers is the hope of raising social capital which will eventually follow the increase in one's economic capital, and this move is calculated and goal oriented. Not only the creative work done by bloggers in terms of social media usage, but the effort they put into being "valuable" enough to be invited to an event, is also worth mentioning. It is planned and calculated. In Nurcan's case, she did her best not to be viewed as a typical blogger, and with her unique recipe, she wanted to be as authentic as possible in order to get noticed by companies. However, it is not an always authenticity problem, but more of access to certain networks and resources. A blogger with a higher socio-economic status, for example, may have all the resources she needs to attain her goals easier. Some respondents indicate that they can't always find a way to attend an event, even if they want to. If someone comes from a wealthy family, they will have more options for networking and socializing for future careers.

Furthermore, women are obtaining personal identity through blogging since it provides social engagement, affiliation, and a feeling of accomplishment via work to

women who are typically isolated in the private sphere as moms, housewives, or working but inefficient, inadequate women. So, we should view it as a new avenue of professionalization that addresses the concerns many have experienced over the ambiguous character of this in-between status of aspirant bloggers.

Three distinct cases demonstrated that women bloggers transform their narratives of hope, struggle and challenge in mothering, cooking and leisure time activities such as knitting into interactive conversations with other women. In so doing, they are beginning to expand our understanding of cooking, knitting, child-caring not only as domestic, individual practices, but also collective interactions bearing new hopes to deal with the present. Furthermore, the case studies provided a new lens for the meaning-making processes of labels of women like working, stay-at-home-mom, and housewife and the ways women negotiate these identities within the public sphere. The performances show that women's blogging can be overwhelming and exhausting, hilarious and exuberant, promising and challenging, all at once. Capturing the multifaceted portrait of women's mediated activities, blogs underscore the hopeful initiatives of women towards both their future and present.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter explored the performative actions of aspirant bloggers through their self-presentation in three case studies. The blogger events participated in were concentrated on practices traditionally accepted as domestic chores that are associated with women. On the background of the social and cultural dynamics of these gatherings, women bloggers' aspirations, expectations and motivations are analyzed.

Drawing on ethnographical fieldwork, I focused on blogger women who produce aspirational labor, hoping for the better, and keep this hope alive in their present practices. However, despite their hard work, they are not fully satisfied from their existing situations. Many of the aspirants aim to attend blogger events, not for the goods and services but relations, for creating their own stories, for feeling a sense of belonging, and eventually for achieving upper mobility opportunities. Pushing the boundaries of the domestic sphere and forming friendships centered around leisure activities or responsibilities, women try to create a society, a public community unto themselves in an urban atmosphere.

Although hope has a triggering effect among aspirants, this is not only related to the future. Aspirational labor arises among bloggers because they aspire to something in

return for their blogging practices, but not necessarily future careers or rewards. Aspirational labor term can be rethought under the framework of laboring and hoping practices of these women as hope emerges as something that is in their works, posts, event attendings, and even in their gossips or their sharing of private information with each other.

In other words, aspirant bloggers' perception of success or their realization of hope is not an expected situation from the future anymore, instead, hope is transformed into a desire to see this sense of success, appreciation, and validation today. The hoping is a practice happening today (Alacovska, 2018), at the present, and the failure to achieve their hopes emerges as a source of resentment against other bloggers. This is the image of a blogger woman unable to keep up with everything at the same time feeling inadequate; sometimes a mother, sometimes a businesswoman, and at times a young woman who wants to change her life, which is suppressed by other existing roles.

However, to generalize the results of this chapter to a broader context, other blogging activities of aspirant women bloggers, such as content writing, commenting, sharing, photo-shooting and tagging, should be taken under scope as well. This chapter aimed to increase the understanding of the researched phenomena in the overall picture, providing an insider's view to the blogging practices of women in relation to hope through the participation of blogger events. Further research would benefit from an ethnographic study of aspirant bloggers who experienced a transformation through blogging, the opportunities they gain through the blogosphere, and how blogging improves their lives.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

7.1 Summary

This dissertation has concentrated on the women blogosphere attempting to analyze the ways in which blog production is manifested in Turkey, through the concept of hope. Considering the constantly changing practices due to the advancements in technology and temporality in web platforms, the study focused on the labor production of women bloggers and their negotiation of identities in relation to hope. Specifically examining how hope is attached to blogging as practice and is experienced and understood in ordinary performances of women bloggers, the study has revealed the need to rethink hope not only related to future orientations but also as a timeless orientation, a tool that exists at the present to cope with the current situation.

Highlighting the heterogeneous, fragmented structure of women's blogosphere, the research emphasized the temporal, contagious, and expanding nature of hope over the discussion of three dominant notions - aspiration, success, and fame. Deploying ethnography as the main method, this research categorized women bloggers into three: aspirants, businesswomen, celebrities and investigated their labor production through their blogging performances. Dividing women's blogosphere into three main categories allowed for the analysis of the whole problem through three separate discussions. Light was shed on the different ways of labor production stemming from the diverse characteristics, practices, motivations, hopes, and expectations of each group, thus presenting a portrayal of the Turkish women bloggers. Based on the participant observation methods, case study, and life history approaches, the data manifested that hope emerges as an existential affective tool, circulating, expanding, transcending, being replicated, and transmitted among bloggers. While doing this, with its fragile character, it was demonstrated that hope turns into an active practice for these women, allowing them to challenge some of the dominant normative conceptualizations such as motherhood, housewife, and working woman.

Thus, using hope as an analytical framework has allowed us a better understanding of the labor production of women blogs. Appearing as a practical tool, it

was shown that hope shapes women's performances and their relationship with each other, which in turn creates the rife circumstances for labor production on blogs. In this respect, the blog becomes an object that nurtures hope and paves the way to hopelessness in an environment intensified with excessive continuous feminized labor engrossed by an endless fragility and struggle.

Given the global capitalism expanded by the advances in technology, a future-oriented, entrepreneurial, individualistic creative work is discussed on web platforms. This situation gives way to various kinds of immaterial labor (Lazzarato, 1996) production, as well as the emergence of new job definitions including bloggers, influencers, vloggers, and Youtubers. While being a blogger is something that serves capitalism in the neoliberal framework, more individualized subjectivities are created and flattered which triggers competition in an individual self-struggle. However, an examination of these subjectivities through the performances of women in blogger events revealed that despite the need to adopt these kinds of neoliberal self-presentations to remain in the game, women try to oppose this structure and dominant paradigms in the field of the blogosphere. Despite, the triggered neoliberal subjectivities especially by the platformization of the web, coming together via the blogging performances uncover the social hope arising from the sense of belonging to an integrated community in unity and collectivity. Tracing the possible advantages offered by being part of a group, women as individuals face their goals, all of which are fostered in the context of a group. Being in a community gives bloggers the sense that they are not alone in their paths. In addition to that, knowing that someone might have experienced these before, it is shown that they feel comfortable to talk about their shared goals or perhaps alternate with others in the attainment of desired goals, no longer feeling the need to think about them individualistically.

Regardless of their motives and expectations for starting a blog, most of the women interviewed stated that they wish to transform their volunteer work into a career opportunity or eventually leave their essential jobs to earn a living from blogging. The interviews showed that being a woman comes with an extra burden as they quit their jobs for the sake of their children, and they think that turning blogging into a job opportunity will be promising in terms of its flexibility. However, it is not the sole reason for gaining a job opportunity out of blogging. They want this because they know they can! Because some people already did that, and it is doable! Thus, especially through collectivistic gatherings and blogging practices online, women both inspire

each other and aspire to be like each other. Nonetheless, it also brings struggles and dilemmas as it requires hard work to remain current and continue in this competitive market.

In the conflicted nature of the blogosphere, different self-representations appear. Bloggers' self-presentation and identity negotiation techniques vary based on the types of their blogs, success, fame, and recognition they get. Fame brings certain types of practices and representations including over-styled clothes, attending fancy events, and following the latest trends. However, some successful women who used their blogs to achieve a business career and appear in the job market, leaving their blogger identity behind this career, show up more humbly. In this framework, despite their success and recognition, women in chapter 5, who developed their businesswomen careers via their blogs, differ from the celebrity bloggers in Chapter 4 in terms of their negotiation of fame. Thus, through chapters, 4, 5, and 6, we witness the women bloggers' struggle and labor productions through the negotiation of their identity presentations.

Specifically, as shown in Chapter 5, the narratives of three businesswomen affirmed that these bloggers' hopes circulate around success. These women, trying to avoid an elitist look, make their stress on their hard-work ethos. Their self-presentation is grounded on their narratives which tell their audience an achievable success story referring to their climbing of the stairs by scratching them with their fingernails. So, the introduction of a hard-working self becomes something that can be hoped for. Based on these narratives, one can assume that "*I don't have to be rich or look fancy for this success, or I don't have to study at super schools"* (Nurcan). Therefore, success achieved by hard work, adorns dreams. This humble attitude differs from the unreachable glamorous self-presentations of some of the micro-celebrities, as success looks more achievable than fame. While hard work can be put at the center of success, fame comes with additional necessities including one's socio-economic background, stylish and trendy look, and network. However, for the women in chapter 5, fame also comes from the success they gained. So, their humble attitude and will to inspire other women can be understood as "life is bearable because of the role of blogging in their lives". For them, a blog has been a mechanism that adds meaning to the present and enables them to see their future, which brought along a situation that they could hope for both in the present and in the future. Thus, these women are those who succeeded in realizing their hopes via their blogs. Recreating and transforming their hopes, this achievement makes their lives enjoyable while they were on the verge of losing them.

This recreation of hope via blogging gives them the ambition and motivation to work hard presenting the utmost labor production. Therefore, in this transformation process, we witness the transformation of women with the self-investments they have made, the risks they take, and the self-esteem and value they add to their individualities. This celebratory situation also presents a humble state of showing that it is shareable, communicable, and achievable that it can be experienced by other women. While their passions turn into job opportunities, the labor given becomes bearable for new hopes. They don't miss the present for future rewards because they enjoy it at the same time. As an existential tool, hoping continues in the present and evolves into the future. However, there is always a need to take into account the other factors behind this celebration, such as the socio-economic status of these women, their access to certain means, their supporters (family, spouse, friends), and business environment, which are also important determinants. In other words, this celebratory attitude towards blogging is valid for those who have realized their hopes, as it is not always the case for each blogger.

On the other hand, we witness the endless struggle of amateur bloggers who are aspirants (Chapter 6). They also work hard to realize this hope, but when this situation is not crowned with success; when hope fails, they become more aggressive, jealous, but still constantly striving and exploited by both themselves and by the third parties. What stands out here are bloggers who want this kind of a struggle, but also experience a constant contradiction. There may be those who find it difficult to digest the success of others, as well as those who want to acknowledge this success, even if a little. These women also recognize that these successful ones have passed through the same paths, and they go into an optimistic state of hope, and this way of hope allows them to continue their labor production. Thus, based on their different expectations from blogging, aspirant bloggers' perceptions about fame and success vary. It would be misleading to come to a rigid conclusion based on one sample only, however their self-presentations, labor productions, expectations from blogging, and practice of hope show similarities. In this framework, aspirant bloggers do not expect to realize their hopes in the future, as beyond an expectation, hope is transformed into a desire to see themselves successful, appreciated, and validated today. The hoping becomes an ordinary practice that finds its place among these women's celebrations, joys, failures, resentments, envies, and frustrations.

On the celebrity side (Chapter 4), things are not that easy as it is. Celebrity

bloggers not only have to deal with the biased beliefs about them in the blogger community but also from the need of a constant renovation and endeavor to look good to their audience and the other bloggers. As achieving fame requires much work, once achieved much more work is needed to preserve and keep it. So, celebrity bloggers try to cope with the ever-changing dynamics in web platforms, keep up to date, look perfect, and switch between the newly emerging platforms. Especially in the age of platformization, this switch ceases to be selectable but becomes a necessity for these women. Platforms like Instagram, where many celebrity bloggers migrate, develop new algorithms each day which forces micro-celebrities and influencers to produce more material to be liked with the increasing oppression of brands they cooperate with. Also, the idea of always looking "perfect" matters for them, and constantly working on this image brings other burdens. Thus, with the hope of staying in the game and keeping their fame in a fast-developing market where rival conditions apply, they get into an utmost struggle and labor production. Diversifying their performances, they develop different self-branding and self-presentation techniques to attract more audience as it is crucial for their popularity. Audience management appears as an important strategy and effort for the negotiation of fame among celebrity bloggers. Their work time and leisure time is blurred as the blurring of the distinction between their public and private lives. Thus, through the performances of celebrity bloggers, we also witness the transformation of celebrity notion as it appears as the one who is ordinary, up-to-date, entrepreneurial, inspiring, diversified, and mediated across platforms.

All in all, through this ethnographical fieldwork, the data has revealed that there is an unending hope apparent in the practices of women bloggers; to go for better, to hope for more, and to hope for survival, which brings an unending struggle and labor production along with. To cope up with the technological advancements, trends, and the dynamics of the market, as well as the competition in the blogosphere, blogger women struggle to develop themselves, their blogs, networking opportunities, and their audience. Blogs and other social media platforms give them a new area to act rather than home, opening to the public. They favor their curated identities as bloggers in the physically attended events like blogger events, product launchings, and workshops which also provide an escape from daily life. Through the practice of blogging, they not only step out of their homes but also have the possibility to relate with their readers. Establishing a good relationship with the audience means more support and recognition, while also for the audience it might mean inspiration and encouragement.

So, the three types of bloggers analyzed in this study offer us a remaking of hope in the case of bloggers through which hope is reoriented, replicated, imitated, inspired, and circulated. In this framework, blogging is not only seen as a media practice, but also a formation that contains hopes. As a result, these women are involved in creating a space of hope through their blogging performances, in line with discursive, symbolic, and emotional practices. Still, there is tension between these hopeful practices. On the one hand, they direct themselves to lead more positive, healthy, happy, and successful lives, on the other hand, they attribute the responsibility of their fatigue and failures to these practices. Therefore, hope becomes a tool, a method, not only bringing positive thoughts but also disappointment and despair as shown through the salient, conflicted emotions of bloggers. However, it also makes these women go on!

Therefore, instead of seeing the blog practice as a tool of empowerment, which creates a space for developing women, I consider it as a stimulating and expressive tool and the blogosphere as a field where they want to realize their expectations that differ based on their positions in the blogosphere. As data have shown, for an aspirant blogger hope may be a future-career orientation based on raising economic capital, or it may be a validation and recognition desire. For a celebrity blogger, hope may appear more on a discursive level trying to preserve the existing status and already achieved fame. Along with these, hope allows a voluntarily produced labor in the field of blogosphere, while bloggers' identity negotiations vary based on their various expectations. Although hope is circulated, replicated, appeared as a tool to cope with the present, there are other variables affecting the performances of these women. So, we need to allow the salient and complicated feelings in the world of women's blogosphere in terms of achieving their targets. The field offers both hope and hopelessness to its practitioners, allowing a multiplicity of hope, that is both productive and conflicting. Hence, labor production in the blogosphere might also be both productive and exploited where it is sometimes triggered by hope or through which new hopes can appear. In other words, very different desires, expectations, and performances stand out beyond the existing dilemmas in the literature. Acknowledging the double bind regarding blogging as celebratory or exploitative, the attempt of the study is not to be stuck in this binary but to go beyond it, demonstrating hoping as a practice that is analyzed in terms of gender as performed and performative action in this neoliberal structuring. Ultimately, the existing hope discussions given in the theoretical framework chapter (chapter 2) are all attached to and affect each other. While neoliberalism brings precarity and uncertainty

to our lives, it also pushes individuals to develop a survival strategy for making their future. In the ever-changing, uncertain, precarious structure of the blogosphere, we witness women turning their passion into a labor production voluntarily through the practice of blogging. Hoping in this framework appears as an existential affective tool that makes this practice possible and realized. Thus, hope gains a timeless feature as it appears sometimes as a longing to or a nostalgic fragment from the past, a way of survival in the present, and an expectation from the future among blogger women. All in all, they use and celebrate hoping through the practice of blogging as a transformative and identity-forming tool.

Although this study focused mainly on women bloggers' performances and blogging practices concerning hope, these activities cannot be thought of separately from the dynamics of capitalism, not only on the national but also global level. Given the rapid developments in the technologies such as the Internet of Things, online platforms, and data analytics, "digital products and services" and hence the list of things that are part of the digital economy is growing rapidly which turns data into a fundamental form of capital to be accumulated (Sadowski, 2019). Without the data, most of these technologies and organizations wouldn't even be operational as data flow means profit flow (Sadowski, 2019). Thus, companies actively participate in the extraction, manufacturing, and accumulation of data as capital. As the newly emerging platforms make data more available attracting more users, capitalism constantly finds new spaces to exploit. Currently, because of the constant and continuous creation of content on the internet, only the material that is liked the most is displayed and clicked. The clicks and views identify profits in a digital era, where every content is measured by its profitability and valued accordingly. Rather than creating the product itself, distributing and circulating it has become a bigger work for the content creators. With various technological tools, content is monitored frequently, and content, as well as content providers, are more commodified than ever. Under these conditions, labor becomes recurrent in these platforms as they offer instant and temporary rewards which might require more efforts the other day. Thus, the developments in the platformization of the web (Nieborg et.al, 2019) bring a struggle for the content creators to survive in the fast competitive market which in turn allow the emergence of hopes that are compatible with the nature of neoliberal capitalism itself.

On the other hand, women's content productions taking long hours and sometimes days, audience management strategically planned and implemented, or their

carefully curated identity presentations in the hopes of developing meaningful careers are all naturalized as part of their blogger identities. As a result of this normalization, their efforts are neither recognized as labor nor compensated. Lukács (2020) argues that in this kind of environment, only media platform owners reap the profits although they are the women's efforts that drove the digital economy. This normalization of unpaid labor makes such labor necessary for bloggers who want to develop an online career as well as preserve the one they already established. So, this voluntarily given labor is open for exploitation as it is seen as leisure or passion rather than work. However, companies bloggers cooperate with, continue to make their advertisements, or media platform owners continue to gain their revenues by selling content creators' and their readers' data to other third parties. Despite their volatility, working voluntarily/creating content in these digital platforms allow a utopian kind of approach and aspiration to these women to create new kinds of markets and economies that fit their moral aspirations and in turn, create and reorient new hopes in the circle they are growing.

7.2 Contribution to the Literature and Recommendations for Further Studies

This dissertation provides several contributions to internet, media, gender, and cultural studies, in terms of its data collection methods, theoretical framework, context, results, and also its offerings on the potential research areas.

The ethnographic approach is now being extended to the cultural practices of computer-mediated communication, thanks to the advent of the Internet. Benefiting from a multi-sited ethnography, this dissertation offers an approach based on the combination of traditional and digital ethnographic methods for researching a recent cultural arena in which embodiment and personality vary significantly from conventional media reception. Contrary to the understanding of online and offline worlds as separate entities (Boellstorff, 2008), attempting to contextualize internet research socially and environmentally, this dissertation examines internet communication concerning wider social relations and interactions that exist in spaces and places that are not only virtual but also physical. By doing so it adds to the media ethnography literature that considers the internet as an integral part of the everyday (Wellman and Haythornthwaite, 2002; Kjaerulff, 2010; Postill, 2014). It also opens further investigation possibilities for the study of "polymedia"- a term coined by Madianou and Miller (2012) to capture the new predicament of media users around the globe faced with a vastly expanded choice of social technologies- given the platform

swinging tendencies of users.

Emotions are discussed in many contexts, but this study is bringing together the issue of emotion and labor while doing so, specifically claiming that the sense of hope is another analytical way to understand the form of labor here. Drawing on Kuehn&Corrigan's (2013) concept of hope labor, this research has expanded the scope of the concept from future to present. Although hope labor is naturalized and normalized under the name of self-investment for upcoming future employment opportunities, labor production in blogs allows a rearticulation of the term as the action is happening today, not necessarily for future, but also for present. Looking at women bloggers' performances and blogging practices through the framework of hope, provides us a better ethnographic contextualization of the reasons behind women's blogging, as well as how the labor process is affected by an emotion like hope, and how hope is affected by the labor itself. Through the reciprocal relationship between labor and hope, subjectivities of the people who make this labor, and the forms of social engagement are also investigated.

Exceeding the critical understanding of blogging, digital labor, and entrepreneurialism as neoliberal practices that often bind subjects to precarious and limiting work opportunities, engaging in the hope problem through the practices of blogger women in Turkey adds a new perspective to digital labor and creative industry studies from a woman-centered, non-Western approach and anthropological framework. Looking through hope provides us a better understanding of women bloggers' voluntary labor in digitally mediated contexts in terms of the risks they take and opportunities they gain. Through the practice of hope, these women are integrated into the economic and public sphere, presenting a neoliberal identity in search of a more flexible career, socialization, self-realization, and sense of belonging. Through the examination of their labor production, we see that hoping among bloggers might be a source of pretension, aspiration (Duffy, 2017), or relatability (Kanai, 2019)-to future-to a career, to a belonging, or self-realization. In between the existing discussions revolving around certain binaries in the scholarship, the reading of labor through hope, and the reading of hope through labor sheds light on each other.

This study opens new areas for deeper analysis. Based on the ethnographic data, there is room and highlights for new thematic explorations including, blogs as collective communities like Technological Mothers who stand out against the normative constructions of gender, and mommy blogging and motherhood as a site of

dualism where being a mother is seen as sacred but also an unwanted label. Furthermore, feelings arising towards celebrity bloggers or mommy bloggers like resentment, envy, or devaluation of their work need to be further explored. Additionally, the tendency to abandon blogs and switch to newer other popular platforms is another common theme among bloggers and it worths exploring as it may raise the question: *Is blogging fading away*? Blogging is not fading away, but it is transforming. According to Rettberg (2014) blogging has adapted to the social media ecosystem, and that "a lot of people enjoy blogging on more limited services like Tumblr and Pinterest. Even Facebook is a kind of blogging" (2004, p.5). So, rather than putting blogging in a limited and fixed definition, we can extend "blogging" into any kind of online expression. Despite the popularity of newer platforms, blogging remains as the basis of the diversified platform practices, where many women still define themselves as bloggers although they switch to other platforms. Platform switching becomes a necessity for most of the bloggers to reach a larger audience and network possibility. So, even the blogs may change faces, or some of the bloggers abondon their blogs, blogging as a social, regular, active media practice is not fading away, but becomes more intertwined with other online practices such as tweeting, hashtag sharing, or vlogging. These new practices appear as new tools used to prosper and support the existing blogger identity, revealing itself in other platforms in the form of new embodiments and diversified performances. Blogs are still there for those who want to tell a longer and relatable story to their audience. Additionally, for many women, the well-designed and consistent image of being a blogger is used, even after years of blogging, for furthering their careers. Nevertheless, the motivations and reasons of women bloggers' platform switching would deserve a deeper investigation to shed light on the newer dynamics that come along with the platform practices, like the commodification of both the user and materials produced and the intensification of the works done by content-creators.

Overall, this study gives room for posing new questions including: «How can we read the platform switching tendencies of women from the perspective of hope?» «How does dependency on platforms affect the media making and labor produced in blogs?» and «How does fluctuating nature of hope affect the production, distribution, and circulation of cultural content?» These questions would deserve further investigation as they would shed light on the newer dynamics that come along with the platform practices, like the commodification of both the user and materials produced

and the intensification of the works done by content-creators. This dissertation would benefit from a wider content analysis of the blog posts of bloggers and audience responses to fully understand the performances and effects of women bloggers in Turkey. Furthermore, the paradigm introduced in this study could be incorporated into international comparative research designs, which is still a profound lack. A comparative approach in terms of women's blogging on a national scale would provide an insight into the relative importance of blogs with respect to the broader media and social software environment. Offering new areas for research, this dissertation contributes to media ethnography, new media studies, gender and communication studies, as well as adding to the literature on the representation of self and self-branding techniques in cyberspace (Marwick, 2013; Eltantawy, 2013; Banet-Weiser, 2011).

To conclude, exceeding the either/or approach towards hope as uncertain, despairing or utopian, and optimist, I developed a both/and approach to argue that hope is both an optimist and pessimist state and both future-oriented and ordinary. It is shown that hope clings to the practices of women bloggers as an affective tool. Hope is both a tool that encourages them to move forward, and a tool that allows them to exist at the present time. This way of thinking offers a performance-oriented perspective to the new media and digital labor literature that extends to platformization and algorithm studies. This anthropological approach provides the possibility to investigate the computer-human connection not just individually, but also within the context of wider social relations, without relying primarily on textual material on blogs. Use of hope as an analytical approach to understand the form of labor in digitally mediated environments would help to uncover the reciprocal relationship between hope and labor production of content-creators, the experiences and subjectivities of these people, and the forms of social engagement in precarious, ever-changing platforms. In this way, this research contributes to a better understanding of the fluctuating nature of hope in relation to temporality in digital platforms that are constantly revised and updated, while also shedding light on the dependent relation between cultural producers and platforms that affect all forms of media making and labor production.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Audience comments for the "about me" section in Nevra's blog (In Turkish)

bsen
26 Aralık 2012 tarihinde, saat 23:45
Permalink

Çok emek verilmiş çok güzel bir site. sizin gibi hayallerinin peşinde koşup gerçekleştiren insanlara hayranım. başarılarınızın devamını dilerim. sevgiler.

ÖZGE EROĞLU
27 Mart 2008 tarihinde, saat 15:49
Permalink

Şimdi gördüm baştan yazayım:-)
Öncelikle sizi tebrik ederim.İçerik harika:-)
Yalnız bende size tarif göndermek istiyorum ama yapamadım bana yardımcı olursanız çok memnun olurum.Başarılarınızın devamını ve benim sitemede göz atmanızı diliyorum:-)(şaka bir yana bende sizin kadar olmasamda bişeyler yapmaya çalışıyorum henüz yeniyim çünkü)
Sevgiler
Özge EROĞLU

zeynep
29 Mart 2012 tarihinde, saat 15:28
Permalink

Bende mutfakta kendini bulan ve benim işim bu olmalı diye düşünen ama mevcut işini, kariyerini kaybetmemek adına bulunduğu yerden ayrılamayan basireti bağlanmış bir mutfaksever olarak sizi tebrik ediyor başarılarınızın devamını diliyorum.
Kimbilir belki birgün biryerlerde karşılaşırız...

mine
01 Ocak 2012 tarihinde, saat 18:49
Permalink

ben yıllardan beri yemek yapmayı çok severim, bilmediğim yemekleri de internetten bakarak deneyerek öğrendim.. hep bu konuyla ilgili çalışmak istedim ama nasıl yapacağımı bilemedim.. sizin sitenize girmeye başladıktan sonra kendi blogunuzu oluşturun linkini görünce hemen harekete geçtim.. yorumlar gelince ben de aynı heyecanı duyuyorum:))

zehra
05 Kasım 2011 tarihinde, saat 18:03
Permalink

merhaba...
harika bir iş yapıyorsunuz tebrik ederim.mutfakla uğraşan mutfağı sewen insanlara her zaman özenmişimdir, bende sanırım sewiyorum mutfağı ama hiç tecrübem yok hatta çok beceriksizim bile diyebilirim.çok küçük yaşlarda iş yaşamına girdiğim için olmalı ; hiç zaman ayıramadım dolayısı ile gelişemedim bu konuda ...sizi izlemeye dewam ediyorum, belki bir gün bende başarabilirim...

Dilek Bilginer Ihlamur
26 Temmuz 2011 tarihinde, saat 13:46
Permalink

İlk satırdan itibaren sizi sarmalayan bir anlatımla , ne güzel ifade etmişsiniz. Bende yaklaşık 7 aydır bir yemek blogu yazıyorum. Heyecanınızı en iyi ben hissedebilirim. İyi yemek yapmak ayrı, tarifi anlatabilmek çok ayrı biliyorsunuz. Bende çevremdekilerin ve benim en iyi tariflerimizi bir araya getirme amaçlı yazmaya başladım.
Umarım sizin kadar istikrarlı bir yükseliş gösteririm, harikasınız ...
Tebrik etmenin ötesi bir kelime ne olabilir , başarınız katlanarak büyüsün. Heyecanınız hiç dinmesin. Sevgiyle yazın.

Appendix 2: Interviewees' profiles

Chapter 4

First name	Age	Occupation	Degree	Marital Status
Mercan	29	Self-employed	BA in Graphic Design	Married-one child
Doğa	49	Housewife / Influencer	BA in Economics	Married-one child
Emel	39	Columnist	BA in Economics	Married-one child
Naif Girl	37	Influencer	College Graduate in Marketing(London)	Married-two kids
Sare	40	Academic	MA in Social Psychology	Married-three kids
Yagmur	31	Accountant	BA in Finance	Married
Ayten	27	Bank clerk	BA in Banking	Single
Yiğit	31	Self-employed	BA in Business Administration	Married-one child
Yeşim	48	Photographer, PR specialist	BA in Istanbul Unv.	Married-three kids

Chapter 6

First name	Age	Occupation	Degree	Marital Status
Gül	27	Part-time accountant	BA in forestry operation	Married-one child
Nurcan	35	Unemployed	BA in Architecture Design	Single
İnci	56	Housewife	High School	Married-two kids
Nermin	37	Clerk in ISKI	BA in Business Administration	Married-one child
Bahar	33	Unemployed	High School	Single
Banu	48	Student Affairs Manager in a university	MA in Educational Inspection	Married-one child
Nur	39	Housewife	High School	Married-two kids
Sevgi	52	Housewife	High School	Married-two kids
Aycan	37	Housewife	BA in Sociology	Married-one child
Deniz	38	Insurance broker	BA in Finance	Married
Günay	41	Electrical Engineer, Cook	BA in Electrical Engineering	Married
Gülsüm	32	Housewife	High School	Married
Sümeyra	37	Housewife	-	Married-three kids
Eda	36	Former food engineer-qutted her job	BA in food engineering	Married-one child
Merve	27	Student	BA in Public Relations	Single
Şeyma	28	Student	BA in Graphic Design	Single
Canan	42	Former Finance manager-quitted her job	BA in Economics	Married-two kids
Zehra	31	Self-Employed	BA in Sociology	Married-one child

Arzu	40	Former PR Manager-quitted her job.	BA and MA in Public Relations	Married-two kids
Duru	33	Self-employed designer	High school	Married-one child
Ayşen	36	Life Coach	BA in Mathematics	Married-two kids
Yeşim	48	Photographer, PR specialist	BA in Istanbul Unv.	Married-three kids
Özden	35	Freelance interpreter	BA in English Literature	Married-one child
Gülay	56	Retired from banking	High School	Married-two kids
Tuğçe	36	Make-up artist	High School	Married
Esin	45	Retired Nurse, Life Coach	BA in Nursing Faculty	Married-one child
Hayriye	41	Online news editor	Secondary School/High School(distance learning)	Married-three kids
Bilge	37	Luna Brand Manager	BA in Labor Economics and Industrial Relations	Married-one child
Cansu	28	Brand Manager	BA in Industrial Engineering MBA from Italy	Married
Sibel	43	Marketing Communication Group Coordinator	BA in Business Administration	Single
Renan	41	Owner, Tavsiye Evi	BA in Political Science and International Relations MBA degree from USA	Married-one child

Appendix 3: Lottery as Part of Digital Ethnography

Screenshot of blog post of lottery on Tanrım Evleniyorum blog page

HEDİYE ÇEKİLİŞİ: Dora Alyans ile bir izleyicime tektaş pırlanta kolye hediye ediyoruz!



Türkiye'nin En Büyük Alyans Mağazası Dora Alyans ve Mücevher'den birbirinden güzel 2 hediyemiz var.

Dora Alyans ile sizler için çok şık ve zarif bir pırlantalı kolye seçtik. Bir izleyicim bu güzel kolyenin sahibi olabilecek. Bunun için yapmanız gerekenler aşağıda!



Bu hediyeye ilave olarak yine kazanana Dora Alyans sitesinde bir sefer kullanabileceği %30 indirim kuponu...

Şartlarımız çok kolay ama ondan önce Dora Alyans'ı biraz yakından tanıyalım:

DORA
TÜRKİYE



Alyansımızın yıllar boyunca kalitesini koruması, parmağımızdan hiç çıkarmak istemeyeceğimiz kadar rahat olması ve şık dizaynı sanırım hepimizin aradığı özelliklerden.

O zaman, doğru adrestesiniz çünkü "En Kaliteli Alyans" sloganıyla yola çıkan Dora Alyans 1994 yılındaki kuruluşundan beri, bugün ABD ve Avustralya'nın en bilinen alyans markalarından biri olarak ilerliyor.

Dora International'ın tüm markalarının resmi distribütörü olarak 2011 yılı itibarı ile Türkiye'de de faaliyete geçen firmada, sadece Dora markası ve Dora koleksiyonlarının *alyans, tektaş, tamtur, trio ve fantazi yüzükler ile erkek yüzükleri* bulunuyor.

7000'den fazla model seçeneği ile Türkiye'nin en büyük alyans mağazası olma özelliğine sahip mağazada bir çok farklı tasarımlarda *kolye, küpe, bileklik* gibi pırlantalı ürünler de beğeninize sunuluyor.

Çekiliş için zorunlu şartlar

Blogumun GFC'den izleyicisi olmanız (sağ tarafta en üstte bu siteye katılın yazan kısım)

Dora Alyans'ın *instagram* hesabını takibe almak (buraya tıklayın)

Dora Alyans'ın *Google Plus* sayfasını takibe almak (buraya tıklayın)

Ek Hak Kazanmak için

www.doraalyans.com sitesi ve ürünlerini blogunda tanıtana +3 hak

Çekilişi sosyal ağlarda (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) duyurana +2 hak

Tanrım Evleniyorum'un Facebook sayfasını takibe alana +1 hak

Çekiliş 200 katılımcıya ulaştığında kapanacaktır. Yorum kısmına e-mail adreslerinizi, blogumu izlediğiniz isminizi, Dora Alyans instagram ve google plus hesaplarını hangi isimle takibe aldığınızı ve tüm diğer paylaşım linklerinizi belirtmeyi unutmayın!

Herkese bol şans!

Screenshot of lottery result blog post on Tanrım Evleniyorum blog page



Çekilişimizin Talihlisi Belli Oldu!

Herkese merhaba,

Uzun bir yolculuk oldu ama sonunda Dora Alyans ile birlikte gerçekleştirdiğimiz çekilişimiz son buldu ve hediyemiz sahibine ulaşmayı bekliyor.

Sabrınız için teşekkür ediyor ve talihli izleyicimi açıklıyorum. Ta taaa, tebrikler Hatice Pesen Ayaz. Güzel günlerde kullanmanız dileğiyle..İletişim bilgilerini benimle paylaşırsan hediyen yola çıkabilir.

Sevgiyle, takipte kalınız:)

True Random Number Generator

Min: 1

Max: 293

Generate

Result:

194

Powered by RANDOM.ORG

193	haticemayaz	zorur
194	haticemayaz	facet
195	haticemayaz	facet
196	lerzan kara	zorur

Appendix 4: Informed Consent Form

AYDINLATILMIŞ ONAM FORMU

Koç Üniversitesi doktora öğrencisi Melike Aslı Sim tarafından yürütülen "Umut Eden Kadınlar: Türkiye Özelinde Bloglarda Şöhret, Emek ve Kimlik Müzakeresi" konusunda yürütülen araştırmaya katılımınız rica olunmaktadır. Bu çalışmada katılımınız tamamen gönüllülük esasına dayanır. Lütfen aşağıdaki bilgileri okuyunuz ve katılmaya karar vermeden önce anlamadığınız her hangi bir şey varsa çekinmeden sorunuz.

ÇALIŞMANIN ADI: Umut Eden Kadınlar: Türkiye Özelinde Bloglarda Şöhret, Emek ve Kimlik Müzakeresi

ÇALIŞMANIN AMACI

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye'deki kadın blog yazarlarının profilini, motivasyonlarını ve ekonomik ve sosyal yaşama katkılarını araştırmaktır.

PROSEDÜRLER

Bu çalışmaya gönüllü katılmak istemeniz halinde yürütülecek çalışmalar şöyledir;

45-60 dakika arasında mülakat.

OLASI RİSKLER VE RAHATSIZLIKLAR

Çalışmaya katılmanın herhangi bir riski yoktur.

TOPLUMA VE/VEYA DENEKLERE OLASI FAYDALARI

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye'deki kadın blog dünyasını, blog yazmanın kadınların kültürel ve sosyal dünyasını yeniden şekillendirmesini açığa çıkarmak ve günümüz gösteri çağında bu kadınların, sosyal medya platformlarındaki kimlik oluşumlarının, emek üretimlerinin ve ekonomik ve sosyal alanlardaki var olma süreçlerinin, toplumsal cinsiyet perspektifinden incelenerek tanımlanmasıdır.

GİZLİLİK

Bu çalışmayla bağlantılı olarak elde edilen ve sizinle özdeşleşmiş her bilgi gizli kalacak, 3. kişilerle paylaşılmayacak ve yalnızca sizin izniniz ile ifşa edilecektir. Gizlilik tanımlanmış bir kodlama prosedürüyle sağlanacak ve kod çözümüne erişim yalnızca çalışmanın sorumlusu araştırmacıyla sınırlı kalacaktır. Tüm veriler, sınırlı erişime sahip güvenli ve şifreli bir veritabanında tutulacaktır.

KATILIM VE AYRILMA

Bu çalışmanın içinde olmak isteyip istemediğinize tamamı ile bağımsız ve etki altında kalmadan karar verebilirsiniz. Bu çalışmaya gönüllü olarak katılmaya karar vermeniz halinde dahi, sahip olduğunuz her hangi bir hakkı kaybetmeden veya herhangi bir cezaya maruz kalmadan istediğiniz zaman çekilebilirsiniz. Çalışmadan çekilmek isterseniz bir cezası yoktur ve sahip olduğunuz faydaları kaybetmezsiniz.

ARAŞTIRMACILARIN KİMLİĞİ

Bu araştırma ile ilgili herhangi bir sorunuz veya endişeniz varsa, lütfen iletişime geçiniz:

[redacted]
Koç Üniversitesi
Rumelifeneri Kampüsü Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü
[redacted]

Yukarıda açıklanan prosedürleri anladım. Sorularım tatmin olacağım şekilde yanıtlandı ve dilediğim zaman ayrılma hakkım saklı kalmak koşulu ile bu çalışmaya katılmayı onaylıyorum. Bu formun bir kopyası da bana verildi.

_____
Katılımcı Adı-Soyadı

_____
_____
Katılımcı İmzası Tarih

_____
_____
Araştırmacının İmzası Tarih

Appendix 5: Interview Questions (in Turkish)

1. Kendinizi tanıtır mısınız? (eğitim, meslek, aile, yaş vs.)
2. "Deniz kimdir?" diye sorduğumuzda kendinizi nasıl tanımlarsınız? Hangi kimlikleriniz ön plana çıkar? (ilk aklınıza gelenleri söyleyiniz)
3. Ne zamandır blog yazıyorsunuz?
4. Blog yazmaya nasıl karar verdiniz? Hangi neden sizi blog yazmaya itti?
5. Blogunuzun adı ve konusu hakkında bilgi verir misiniz? Niçin kendi adınızı blog ismi olarak seçtiniz?
6. Blogunuzda yazmak size nasıl hissettiriyor?
7. Bloglarınızda özel hayatınızı paylaşıyor musunuz? Paylaşıyorsanız, bu nasıl hissettiriyor ve size getirileri ne oluyor?
8. Blogunuzun uzmanlık alanını nasıl belirlediniz?
9. Bloggerlık size belirli bir ün getirdi mi? Bu ünün sizi bulma süreci hakkında biraz bilgi verir misiniz?
10. Belirli bir camiada da olsa dijital kimliğinizle de tanınmak nasıl bir duygu?
11. Alanınızdaki tanınırlılık ile sosyal statünüzün alakası olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz?
12. Ün kazanan bloggerların kültürel ve ekonomik arka planlarının bu camiada yükselmesinde sizce etkisi var mıdır? Varsa nasıl?
13. Bloggerlık ve sosyal medya fenomenliğinin size kazandırdıkları neler? Maddi ve manevi olarak?
14. Bloggerlık sizin için bir kariyer mi?
15. Hem anne, hem blogger, hem de sosyal medya fenomenisiniz. Belki bizim bilmediğimiz başka kimlik ve işlere de sahipsiniz. Bunca sorumluluğu aynı anda götürmek zor olmuyor mu? Dengeyi nasıl kuruyor, herşeye nasıl yetişiyorsunuz? Bu süreçte her daim bakımlı olmayı nasıl başarıyorsunuz?
16. Bloggerlık emek yoğun bir iş mi?
17. Bir gününüz nasıl geçiyor, özetleyebilir misiniz?
18. Blogger buluşmalarına katılıyor musunuz? Neler hissediyorsunuz? Bu tip buluşmalardan beklentileriniz neler oluyor?
19. Eşiniz ya da çocuğunuz size bu tip davetlerde, buluşmalarda eşlik ediyor mu? Ediyorsa neler hissediyorlar?
20. Blogger buluşması düzenlediniz mi hiç? Biraz süreci anlatır mısınız, nasıl yapılıyor? Sponsor bulmak, kimler davet edilecek, nasıl edilecek, nasıl seçilecek vs.
21. Blogger buluşmalarının en büyük getirisi size göre nedir? Ne tür katkılar sağlıyor?
22. Sizi niçin takip etmeliler? Takipçileriniz bloğunuzdan neler kazanıp neler öğreniyorlar?
23. Takipçilerinizle ilişkiniz nasıl? Biraz tarif eder misiniz?
24. Çok feedback alıyor musunuz? Takipçiler size sık ulaşıyor mu?

25. Blogunuzda ürün tanıtımı yapıyor musunuz? Basın bültenlerine yer veriyor musunuz? Yoksa kendi beğendiğiniz ürünleri paylaşıyor musunuz?
26. Tanıtımını yapmak istemediğiniz ürünleri, firmaları nasıl geri çeviriyorsunuz?
27. Tanıtımlar karşısında ücret ya da hediye vs. alıyor musunuz? Ücretler hangi kanallardan geliyor? Google ads, firmalar vs.?
28. Ücret almasanız da tanıtım yapar mıydınız?
29. Teklif karşıdan mı geliyor yoksa siz mi arayıp buluyorsunuz? Siz nasıl ulaşıyor ve neden sizi seçiyorlar? Kriterleri neler oluyor?
30. Blogunuzu ticari olarak kullanıyor musunuz?
31. Blogunuzda hiç reklam yayınladınız mı? Yayınlamak ister misiniz?
32. Blogunuz sayesinde hiç para kazandığınız oldu mu? Bu uğurda girişimleriniz oldu mu, olacak mı? Ne gibi girişimler?
33. Sponsorlarınız var mı?
34. Hediye çekilişleri düzenliyor musunuz? Bu çekilişlerden siz de bir şeyler kazanıyor musunuz?
35. Başka blogların hediye çekilişlerine hiç katıldınız mı?
36. Reklam dünyasının stratejilerini değiştiren blogger hareketi hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz? Bloggerların yaptığı tanıtımlar ne kadar kitleye ulaşıyor? Bu tanıtımları etkili ve amaca ulaşır buluyor musunuz?
37. Blogunuz için günde ne kadar zaman harcıyorsunuz? Ne sıklıkta post ediyorsunuz?
38. Bir gönderiyi oluşturmak için ne kadar zaman harcıyorsunuz? Yazılarınızı genelde evden mi yazıyorsunuz, her yerden yazar mısınız? Belli bir masanız ya da özellikle yazmak için kendinize ayırdığınız bir yer var mı?
39. Blogunuza yazamadığınız zaman pişmanlık, üzüntü veya stres duyuyor musunuz? Kendinizi blogunuza yazmak için zorladığınız oluyor mu?
40. Blogunuzu daha da geliştirmek adına kendinizi geliştiriyor musunuz? Ne tür şeyler yapıyorsunuz?
41. Gündemde kalabilmek için neler yapmak gerekiyor? Özgünlüğünüzü nasıl koruyorsunuz? Sizi özgün kılan özellikleriniz nelerdir?
42. Blogunuzu bir işe dönüştürmek ister misiniz? Sadece hobi olarak mı gitmeli yoksa bir kariyere dönüşmeli mi? (dönüştüyse nasıl dönüştü?)
43. Blogunuz için ne kadar emek harcıyorsunuz?
44. Blogunuzdan sonra hayatınızda neler değişti? Blog sahibi olmak size neler sağladı?
45. Blogunuzu kurarken ileride bu konuyla ilgili bir iş sahibi olurum düşüncesi var mıydı? Blogu kurma amacınızı ve şimdi geldiği noktayı düşünürsek ne söylemek istersiniz?
46. Kendinizi 5 yıl sonra nerede görüyorsunuz?
47. Blog yazmak sizi ev-içi rollerinizden bir nebze olsun sıyırıp özgürleştirdi diyebilir miyiz? Sanal dünyadaki Deniz kimliği ve fiziksel dünyadaki Deniz birebir örtüşüyor mu?