

Home, Art and Memory Refugee Women's Narratives of Displacement in Turkey

Homing, a desire to create a place as one's home is not limited to the structure of a place of dwelling, nor is it translated into the concept of homeland. 'Home' encompasses a wide array of objects, spaces, practices, politics and individuals. The relationship among these elements is disrupted when one is displaced through forced or voluntary migration from one's home country, or a country where they call 'home'. Based on a recent art project¹ with a group of Syrian, Iranian, Russian, Ukrainian and Turkish women in Izmir, Turkey, this paper argues that the link between home and memory must be critically reflected upon in order to offer novel ways of thinking about home and homing desire as well as to expand the impact of any research with refugees.

Refugee women construct home in Turkey through temporariness, precarious employment and fleeting encounters. Memory acts like a double-edged sword that holds them together through sharing similar stories of displacement with other members of the same ethnic group or disrupts the newly acquired daily routine by reminding them of bitter experiences of forced migration. In this paper, findings of the interviews that were conducted with 14 out of 32 participants will be presented where home is heavily tied to 'memories of home' as opposed to the current life in Turkey. Secondly, I argue that art methods have the potential to enhance social and relational capital of refugee and non-refugee women in Turkey whilst it enhances the quality of their everyday lives albeit for a limited time. As such the relationship between art and homing should be taken more seriously in academic research. Furthermore, the paper stresses art methods' ability to attract wider audience outside the displaced communities, a necessary step towards raising more awareness of the refugee crisis that currently exists in Turkey.

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