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Exploring feminist urban geographies: women workers in the peanut industry of Osmaniye, Türkiye

Explorando las geografías urbanas feministas: trabajadoras en la industria del maní de Osmaniye, Turquía

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ABSTRACT Osmaniye is well-known for its substantial peanut production, and women workers play a crucial role in every aspect of this sector. The article manifests original research findings on the working conditions and the socio-spatial experiences of women workers, who are integral to the peanut industry. The findings rely on semi-structured in-depth interviews and non-participant observations conducted in 2022, involving women workers and other key actors at two major factories. Among the common issues confronted by women workers are low wages, precarious working conditions, and unsuitable work environments and worsening mobility patterns which exacerbate their urban daily life experience. Their work does not lead to empowerment or an increased usage of space but instead results in a "double shift"; and a negative perception of their work. Ultimately, the working environment and the daily urban geographies of women workers dramatically reproduces patriarchal dynamics.

RESUMEN Osmaniye es conocida por su importante producción de cacahuets, y las trabajadoras desempeñan un papel crucial en todos los aspectos de este sector. El artículo presenta los resultados de una investigación original sobre las condiciones de trabajo y las experiencias socioespaciales de las trabajadoras, que son parte integral de la industria del cacahuete. Las conclusiones se basan en entrevistas en profundidad semiestructuradas y observaciones no participantes realizadas en 2022, en las que participaron trabajadoras y otros actores clave de dos grandes fábricas. Entre los problemas comunes a los que se enfrentan las trabajadoras se encuentran los bajos salarios, las condiciones laborales precarias y los entornos de trabajo inadecuados, así como el empeoramiento de los patrones de movilidad, que agravan su experiencia de la vida cotidiana urbana. Su trabajo no se traduce en empoderamiento ni en un mayor uso del espacio, sino en un «doble turno» y en una percepción negativa de su labor. En última instancia, el entorno laboral y las geografías urbanas cotidianas de las trabajadoras reproducen dramáticamente las dinámicas patriarcales.

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1. Introduction

Feminist Urban Geography (FUG) is used as a theoretical framework to understand the inequalities among genders and the ways in which urban spaces can reproduce patriarchal gender relations that prioritize men's daily lives. Urban spaces are not neutral but rather reflect societal and cultural values and biases. We see examples that discourage women from participating in the public realm both in social and economical terms. Promoting an equitable and just environment is possible when there is accessibility for all, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or age. FUG also highlights the historical roots of gender inequalities in workplaces and how they have been institutionalized over time to support capitalist economies by creating a link between gender and space (Newman, 2008; Madanipour, 2014; Praharaj, 2021).

There is a growing number of women joining the workforce (Flores et al., 2021; Maheshwari et al., 2021; Surdu et al., 2021), and this is one of the indicators that women take part in everyday life. The phenomenon, commonly referred to as the Feminization of the Workplace (FOW), has significantly transformed various industries in developing countries, including healthcare, finance, education, technology, and manufacturing. These sectors have shifted from being predominantly male-dominated to achieving a more gender-balanced composition (Lee, 1998; Barman and Sarkar, 2022). This concept is deeply rooted in feminist theory, which seeks to decrease gender inequalities and injustice. However, despite women's advancements in this regard, their significantly disadvantaged position concerning working conditions, hierarchical relations in the workplace, and emancipation in the public sphere continues to be perpetuated. Besides, societal and cultural norms are the common reasons that reinforce gender norms, and in the end, this might lead to unfair treatment of women (Rios, 1990; Fussell, 2000; Dedeoğlu, 2010; Pepper, 2012; Heath and Mobarak, 2015; Hossain et al., 2013; Erdoğan, 2020; Nguyen, 2022). Women are still expected to be the primary caregivers, resulting in more working hours for them in both paid and unpaid labor. In this study, we aim to evaluate the aforementioned issues using a representative case study from the labor sector.

Osmaniye, a city in southern Türkiye, is well known for its peanut production, processing over 90% of the country's harvested peanuts. We aim to provide a thorough understanding of the factors affecting women's participation in peanut production in terms of Feminist Urban Geography and the concept of Feminization of the Workplace which guides efforts to promote gender equity in this sector. Our main goal is to highlight women's roles in peanut production in Osmaniye, Türkiye, and examine how it affects their daily lives both at work and at home.

We argue that the presence of patriarchal power structures extends into the workplace, and feminization of the workplace does not necessarily produce positive results for women. In addition, women's participation in the workforce does not automatically increase their

economic empowerment or presence in the urban space. In this line, we identified our research questions as (1) how do working conditions, daily urban mobility patterns, and socio-spatial experiences affect women's participation in peanut production in Osmaniye, and (2) what implications does this have for gender equity in this sector within the framework of Feminist Urban Geography and the Feminization of the Workplace? In this context, while local factors significantly impact gender dynamics, our findings have the potential to inform policies and practices aimed at promoting gender equity in the peanut production industry and other sectors.

In the following sections, we will first discuss how women interact with the urban environment and how its components reinforce the patriarchal structure in society, which affects both their domestic responsibilities and participation in employment. We will examine this through the lens of feminist urban geography and the feminization of the workplace, a phenomenon observed with the shift from import-led to export-led production in developing countries. Second, we will present descriptive information about the methods we used. Third, we will identify findings related to women's employment in peanut production. Finally, we will discuss our results in line with the literature.

2. Theoretical background on feminist urban geography and the feminization of the workplace

In her book *Feminist City: Claiming Space in a Man-Made World*, Kern (2020) emphasizes that all societal values and norms, including gender norms, are embedded in the spatial context. As a field built around this main argument, Feminist urban geography emerged in the 1970s and emphasizes minimizing the inequalities among genders by focusing on the rights of women living in urban areas (Fuentes and Cookson, 2020). In its formative years, urban geography faced criticism for its focus on the male body and heterosexual male experience, often neglecting what was perceived as "women's issues" (Tuncer, 2012). During the 1980s, numerous empirical studies were conducted with the aim of integrating women's experiences into urban geography. This period involved an analysis of the mutual construction of space and gender in relation to other social components (Mirioglu, 2018). Numerous empirical studies highlighted spatial disparities resulting from women's unequal and subordinate status (Tuncer, 2012).

Gilbert (1997) states that earlier studies of feminist geographers indicate that spatial patterns of cities both show and support patriarchal gender relations that prioritize men's daily lives. However, in the 1990s, early feminist urban geography studies faced criticism for generalizing women's behaviors and experiences without adequately addressing differences such as class, race, and ethnicity (Sanders, 1990). Bondi and Rose (2003) argue that urban spaces evolve in response to the diverse characteristics of individuals, including

age, gender, ethnicity, and income (Garcia-Ramon et al., 2004). During the 1990s, a substantial number of studies were conducted on knowledge, body construction, power relations, ethnicity, and other differences through the lenses of gender and space (Bondi, 1992; Rose, 1992; McDowell, 1993; Kobayashi and Peake, 1994). Additionally, issues such as data collection procedures, the sexist nature of fieldwork, and the role of the researcher were increasingly examined (McDowell, 1992; King, 1994). As a result, qualitative studies focusing on women's experiences became more prevalent.

Since the 2000s, feminist urban geography has also engaged with post-modern deconstructivist methodologies to challenge its traditional narratives and structures (Bondi and Domosh, 1992). This relationship made it possible to reveal the fluidity of identities and experiences, recognizing that urban spaces are not merely physical locations but are also shaped by social constructs, power dynamics, and cultural interpretations.

In the case of Türkiye, studies advocating a feminist perspective on space began to emerge in the 1990s and became more widespread in the 2000s. However, it can be noted that there are relatively few studies focusing on the relationship between women and space, and those that exist have had a limited impact (Alkan, 2012). Despite this, the research produced in the field of feminist urban geography is both valuable and instructive. Özbay's (1999) study on the modernization of Türkiye through the relationship between gender and space, Yüceşahin and Yazgan's (2017) work on the production of space from a feminist perspective, Aksit's studies (2009, 2011) on women's publicness, and Tuncer's (2015, 2018) research on women's access, presence, and safety in public spaces have provided significant breakthroughs in this context.

As feminist urban geography research expands in both quantity and scope, it increasingly enriches itself as a field that spans various disciplines, including public administration, urban planning, architecture, economics, geography, sociology, and more. This branch of study has long sought to understand geographies of difference through an intersectional lens and continues to transform the frameworks of these disciplines with its diverse and robust research agenda (Deniz and Şenol, 2024).

Feminist urban geography addresses a wide range of issues that often pose challenges for women in urban areas. These include the evaluation of specific themes through a feminist perspective, such as the right to housing, urban mobility, urban public spaces, urban infrastructure, etc. (Yavuz and Welch, 2010; Park and Garcia, 2020; Quinones, 2020; Vera-Gray, 2020; Navarrete-Hernandez et al. 2021; Bueno Carvajal, 2021). All these issues are connected to equal access to city resources and the fair provision of urban services without gender-based disparities (Sadiqi and Ennaji, 2006). Besides, the built environment is a component of urban space associated with society's social dynamics since it contributes to issues such as place identity, belonging, and safety. However, urban spaces are often designed in ways that disadvantage and exclude women (Wilson, 2001).

For example, various studies show how urban planning often neglects the mobility needs of women (e.g., demands of both employment and caregiving). Though their mobility patterns, such as trip chaining, highlight constraints in their spatial behaviors, their caregiving roles are disregarded in urban design practices (Scheiner and Holz-Rau, 2017; Montoya-Robledo et al., 2020; Savran Penbecioğlu and Büyücek, 2024). Similarly, poor urban infrastructure, such as insufficient lighting and unsafe streets, negatively contributes to their access to public spaces. It affects their safety and freedom in cities (Beebejaun, 2017; Manolache, 2013). Alkan (2000) states that in the differentiation between private and public spheres, certain values are also divided according to gender, such as self-sacrifice versus selfishness, emotionality versus rationality, and reconciliation versus aggressiveness. The first set is linked to women and the private domain, while the second set is connected to men and the public domain. These studies highlight the need to rethink urban design and transportation planning to better address women's needs, improve safety, and support their social and economic participation (Law, 1999).

Women's participation in the workforce, their working conditions, and the nature of their work environments are also examined with regard to feminist urban geography, as they reveal how gendered dynamics influence spatial arrangements and urban experiences (Preston and Üstündağ, 2005). Our research focuses on the working conditions and socio-spatial experiences of women workers involved in peanut production in Osmaniye, Türkiye. Before presenting our findings, which align with the field of Feminist Urban Geography, we will explore the development of the post-industrial global capitalist system and its impact on gender norms.

The division of space according to gender and the debates surrounding public-private spaces have emerged primarily as a result of urban development driven by industrialization. Within this framework, feminist urban researchers critique urban planning practices that legitimize gender roles by separating the spheres of home and paid work (Fenster, 1999). Hartmann (2006) explains the interrelationship between patriarchy and capitalism, highlighting the shared interests of capitalism and men in the gendered division of labor. Similarly, Coddington (2015) argues that urban planning practices marginalize women's roles and contributions by focusing on economic production over caregiving. Male domination and urban economic markets mutually reinforce each other to maintain their power. Consequently, feminist urban geography research seeks to understand, illuminate, and transform these power relations as they manifest in urban spaces (Walby, 1989).

Gender roles assigned to women and men by society have been institutionalized over time to support capitalism's constant drive to maximize profit. Traditionally, men were supposed to go to work, while women were expected to stay home and care for their families. At first, the so-called role of women was to contribute to capitalism by sustaining the reproduction of labor by taking care of their husbands and children.

This also contributes to gender inequality in access to jobs since it is related to access to workplaces (Bondi and Rose, 2003). Modern capitalist cities now have weakly connected or separated urban land uses, limiting women's participation in labor. Workplace and home are spatially and ideologically separate spheres dominated by gender-typed activities (Rose, 2010). Fincher (1990) argues that industrial restructuring is connected to social practices in the home, workplace, state, and community across different regions, emphasizing the gendered nature of authority and control in both the workplace and the home.

Building on this, feminist critiques in economics, anthropology, and related disciplines have challenged simplistic, unitary models of the household. These critiques emphasize bargaining and negotiation as central to understanding intra-household dynamics, viewing households as sites of both cooperation and conflict shaped by social norms, cultural ideologies, and economic structures (Kandiyoti, 1998). Together, these perspectives reveal the deeply gendered nature of labor, authority, and spatial organization under capitalism.

As we mentioned above, well-accepted gender roles in societies rely on the idea that the primary role of women is to take care of their family and home. This began to change with the increased women's participation in paid employment since the 1960s (Shelton and John, 1996). However, women are still expected to be the primary caregivers, resulting in more working hours for them in both paid and unpaid labor. In feminist theory, this phenomenon is known as the "double shift," where women take on both paid work and unpaid domestic labor (Fincher, 1990; Álvarez and Buigues-Nollens, 2023). This significant burden of responsibilities highlights the dual roles women often occupy: They contribute to the workforce during the day while simultaneously managing household chores in the evenings and on weekends. While joining the workforce is a critical strategy for women's empowerment, it does not inherently resolve gender inequalities (e.g., participation in public life) (Çetin and Türkün, 2022).

Feminist scholars argue that this dual workload can have detrimental effects on women's health, well-being, and economic independence as they struggle to balance the demands of their jobs with the expectations of their domestic roles. Housework is task-oriented and can be time-consuming or require frequent attention. One of the most distinguishable features of domestic work, which differs from paid employment, is its unpaid nature (Luxton, 1997).

Another important concept that helps to understand the issue of women's participation and representation in paid employment is the feminization of the workplace. This concept refers to the shifting gender balance in traditionally male-dominated industries and the resulting changes in those workplaces (Shaw, 2022). Beginning with the post-World War II period, relatively high levels of female participation in the workforce were observed, especially in industrialized countries, yet women's integration in the labor force varies by country, region, race/ ethnicity, and class.

The feminization of the workplace is also related to the rise of capitalist economies, globalization, and neo-liberal policies. Maximizing profits, which is the main drive of capitalism, benefits from the situation. Minimizing costs to maximize profits led some jobs and industries to be feminized. This is explained by less compensation, benefits, and wages paid to women compared to men and is generally anticipated by society by creating a so-called idea of gendered discourses of work (Bowles and Babcock, 2013; Tejani and Milberg, 2016). The labor market flexibility promoted by neoliberal policies has resulted in employment and income insecurity, pushing an increasing proportion of women into paid employment. Export-oriented production has recruited a large number of workers, while the informalization of employment—manifesting as casual, contract labor, and home-based work—has further facilitated the rising demand for women workers (Benería, et al. 2015).

The concept of the feminization of the workplace addresses both quantitative aspects, such as women's workforce participation rates and wages, as well as the implications of the gender-based division of labor in workplaces (Núñez-González and Moya-Olmedo, 2023). Because, even if the statistics indicate positive results in favor of women regarding their participation in employment and their wages, women's working conditions and their varying demands in the workplace are still important issues and need to be researched in different cases. Although women have gained greater economic independence, patriarchal power structures continue to be carried into the workplace (Peterson, 2004).

The current discussion on the feminization of the workplace centers on the relocation of labor-intensive industrial sectors by multinational corporations to developing countries,

aiming to take advantage of lower production costs and a cheaper labor force. They are drawn to female labor because they must employ the cheapest labor to compete in global markets (Caraway, 2005). Additionally, the concept has been tied to the growth of activities in those countries, such as export manufacturing, services, subcontracting, and commercial agriculture. We have seen employer preference for women workers in a variety of activities, particularly for those in export-oriented, labor-intensive industries that rely on low-cost production to maintain competitiveness (Benería et al., 2015). Türkiye can also be considered within this context.

However, the feminization of the workplace is neither universal nor necessarily irreversible. There have been prominent cases of stagnant female share of the labor force in Türkiye since the 1980s (Çağatay and Berik, 1990; İlkaracan, 2012). There are also reversals of the feminization of employment at sectoral levels, such as the defeminization of manufacturing employment (Kucera and Tejani, 2014). These trends in women's share of employment have been associated with slow change or persistence in gender segregation by industry or occupation.

Building on these observations, for example, it is notable that Türkiye adopts state-level strategies similar to those of other countries, such as Japan. However, they differ in how women balance work and family life. In Türkiye, women often postpone joining the workforce rather than delaying childbirth, while in Japan, the situation is reversed. Despite significant modernization efforts and reforms since the 1980s, neither nation has fully realized women's liberation. This study also highlights the lack of recognition for women's agricultural contributions. Throughout sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean, women frequently serve as unpaid family laborers, a role often overlooked in official statistics (Dixon, 1982). In India, for example, women's involvement in sugarcane production is largely seasonal and intermittent, with their efforts remaining unpaid and unacknowledged (Baliyan, 2018). A similar pattern emerges in Portugal, where, despite the increasing role of women in family farming, their work continues to go unrecognized and is shaped by traditional gender divisions of labor (Gomes et al., 2022).

This study explores women's participation in peanut production in the case of Osmaniye, Türkiye. Before examining the historical development of peanut production in Osmaniye, it is important to recognize that women in rural Türkiye have long played a crucial yet often underappreciated role in agricultural activities. They frequently serve as unpaid family laborers, performing tasks such as planting, weeding, harvesting, and processing. Despite their integral contributions to the agricultural sector, their work has not received the national-level recognition it deserves (Morvaridi, 1992; Dedeoğlu, 2004; İlkaracan, 2012). Historically, Turkish agriculture relied on the extended family as the basic production unit which reflects deeply rooted traditional norms and the economic exploitation of women's labor within family units. This system ensured resource sharing, collective responsibility, and the inclusion of multiple generations in labor-intensive agricultural tasks (Sirman, 1988). Male family members are generally the ones that do tasks requiring decision making, while female members are responsible for manual labor and household chores (Cesur, 2018). Although not integrated into the global and capitalist economy, we open a discussion about the feminization of the workplace through women working in a relatively advanced manufacturing sector in a medium-sized city in a developing country. We also aim to highlight its contribution to discussions within feminist urban geography. The concepts of the "double shift" and the feminization of the workplace are crucial for understanding the intersection of gender, labor, and social structures, as they highlight the need for systemic changes to address the inequalities faced by women in both the workplace and the home. Ultimately, this enables a deeper understanding of the effects of both concepts on feminist urban geography by linking gender and space together.

Such efforts indicate that the urban environment reflects patriarchal relations, which are reinforced by traditional gender roles and gender-segregated labor markets. This connection can be directly seen in various urban spaces, including residential, commercial, and industrial areas, all of which are influenced by intensified patriarchy. Our focus in this study is on workplaces of the peanut production industry in terms of women's experiences and how these workplaces reproduce patriarchy in the urban environment. The urban environment now and before is a component of patriarchy, and workplaces are one of the components of the urban environment.

3. Study area: Osmaniye as the peanut capital of Türkiye

Osmaniye is a medium-sized city located in southern Türkiye, which has suitable climate and soil conditions for peanut farming. This puts Osmaniye at the top of peanut production, distribution, and trade in Türkiye. 90% of peanuts harvested in Türkiye are processed in Osmaniye. There are more than 300 businesses, and approximately 10000 families earn their living from peanut production in the city.

Peanut production in Osmaniye began in the 1930s. Between 1930 and 1960, production was concentrated in the central villages, where agricultural lands ranged from 3,000 to 5,000 square meters. During this period, small-scale family businesses cultivated and hulled peanuts (Figure 1). They typically produced 50 to 100 kilograms of peanuts in boutique-style gardens. After harvesting, they sold the peanuts in small shops, each about 70–80 square meters, located in the city center. Male family members were primarily responsible for sowing seeds and harvesting crops, while females and children predominantly managed the hulling process.

During that time, small family businesses delivered peanut sacks to homes daily. Women primarily handled hulling and removing rotten peanuts during the process. In the evenings, other businesses collected the

processed peanuts. Since production was small-scale and limited, most of the peanuts were transported to other parts of the country by railway, rather than being sold to local nut shops (Figure 2).

Since the 1970s, peanuts have increasingly become an important product and sector in Osmaniye. The structure of small businesses had been shifted to a more industrial scale with the rise of mechanization by the mid-1970s. Machinery began to perform tasks such as sowing seeds and harvesting, which were previously primarily carried out by men in the fields. Also, several small businesses, each occupying 50 to 60 square meters, were established one after another for hulling processes, indicating a separation between the 'home' and the workplace. But women's labor has always been the most crucial part of the hulling process. Because machines could not perform the detailed processes that humans could, women had to manually pick out the rotten, shelled, or crushed peanuts after the machines had done their work.

The demographic characteristics of women who continued to work in newly established businesses at that time reveal a common trend: women with unemployed husbands, divorced women and widows.

Figure 1: A peanut producer family in the 1960s. Respondent 1 (Copied in 2022)





Figure 2: Historical timeline of peanut production in Osmaniye. Traslato (2020-2022)

4. Method

From this information, we can infer those women assumed the primary income-generating roles in families where men lost their jobs due to mechanization in agriculture. Conversely, we estimate that a significant number of women withdrew from the workforce after the separation of home and workplace. As expected, it is not possible to determine the exact number of women working in this sector, as we lack access to historical data disaggregated by gender. Additionally, women without husbands (divorced women and widows) are included alongside those whose husbands are not working.

During the 1980s, Osmaniye and the rest of Çukurova experienced significant internal migration from southeastern Türkiye. The region's fertile agricultural land required labor almost year-round, so many newcomers found work in agricultural production. During this time, peanut production also grew, creating opportunities for women to work in peanut workshops. By the 1990s, more farmers began cultivating peanuts due to their profitability. With advancements in technology, peanut production became increasingly industrialized, and production capacity has continued to expand. Total peanut production has grown to 250,000–300,000 tons this year, compared to just 60–70 tons in the 2010s (Doğaka, 2015). Today, women's labor remains a vital part of the peanut commodity chain (Figure 3). Osmaniye is home to nearly 300 peanut processing businesses with varying capacities, and women comprise 80%–90% of their workforce (OTB, 2020).

As a recent development, small businesses that were previously concentrated in the city center have been decentralized to a newly established organized industrial zone on the periphery of the city. This has increased the distance between home and workplace for women, making this journey dependent on vehicles instead of walking options. This also results from the fact that Osmaniye is a small city that continues to experience urbanization.

Semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations, both qualitative research methods, constitute the main data sources for this research. Among the 26 people interviewed, 6 are key figures, including bosses, headworkers, the chairman of the peanut exchange market, and women employed as white-collar staff in factories (Annex 1). We conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews between February and June 2022 with 20 women workers in peanut production in Osmaniye, Türkiye. We also conducted non-participant observations to deeply understand women's employment in the peanut production process.

First, we conducted interviews with key figures. These interviews provided insights into the overall structure of peanut production, the historical development of the sector in the city, and specifically the operational logic of the factories, including their hierarchical and patriarchal structures. We formally presented our research objectives, methodological approach, and plans for ensuring confidentiality and anonymity to the managers of the leading peanut production factories in Osmaniye. We also clarified the intended outcomes of the research, emphasizing our goal of understanding everyday working practices as well as the socio-economic and socio-spatial dynamics of women involved. After receiving access to the factories through prior interviews, we approached women workers individually as potential participants, explaining our roles as researchers, the purpose of our study, and the voluntary nature of their participation. We obtained verbal consent before conducting observations and interviews.

We interviewed 20 women workers working at two different factories. These factories are two of the biggest ones in Osmaniye. Semi-structured in-depth interviews lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. We conducted in-person interviews privately and during the non-working hours of women, such as lunch breaks and after work. The content of these meetings extended beyond the interviews themselves, as we aimed to create a safe environment by prioritizing intersubjectivity over 'objectivity' (McDowell, 1992), allowing women to freely express their feelings and thoughts.

We spent a significant amount of time in the working environment of women as non-participant observers. Many texts and articles discussing feminist research

5. Results

We analyze the research findings under three subheadings: socio-demographic profile, working conditions, and spatial dynamics.

5.1. Socio-demographic profile of women workers interviewed

The mean age of the women we interviewed is 41. 13 of them (65%) graduated from primary school, and none of them went to college. 15 of the women (75%) are married and have children. 4 of them are single, and 1 of them is widowed. The average number of children is 3, and the mean age of the children is 20. The average household size is 5. Three women share their home with people other than their own family. One lives in the same house with her mother, one with her father-in-law and mother-in-law, and one (who is widowed) with her aunt and her aunt's husband. The hometown of 11 of the women we interviewed is Osmaniye. 3 women were born in the nearby provinces (Kahramanmaraş, Mersin, and Şanlıurfa). 6 women are Syrians who migrated to Türkiye as refugees after the Syrian Civil War in 2011 (Anexx 1).

Job opportunities related to peanut products are significant for Osmaniye since the other economic sectors are not well-developed in the city. According to the Ministry of Development, Osmaniye ranked 53rd among Türkiye's 81 provinces in terms of socio-economic development (Ministry of Development,

2013). The city has been assigned as one of the priority provinces in development since 2004. Living in a city with such economic challenges significantly affects women. When their husbands are unable to find work, women often take jobs as workers in peanut factories.

At first glance, this may seem beneficial as it increases women's employment rates. However, the work is highly labor-intensive, precarious, and poorly paid. For women workers, these jobs are often viewed as a last resort. In families of single women living with their parents, the fathers also have paid employment. 5 out of 15 married women are the sole income earners for their families. While the husbands of 5 women are actively working, 3 husbands are retired. In the case of the last 2 women, their husbands do not work; however, other family members—specifically, one woman's daughter and another's father-in-law—are employed. Most women workers already know each other. They are each other's families, relatives, or neighbors. These networks are often used to get jobs. 18 of the women we interviewed (90%) said that they found this job with the help of an acquaintance. One of the interviewees explained how she found her job as follows: "We heard by chance that they were going to hire workers in this factory. Actually, we were here for my daughter and sister-in-law to apply for a job. Then, they asked me if I would want to work too. I accepted their offer. Later, both my daughter-in-law and my sister-in-law quit the job but I kept working" (W-14). These experiences show that the family working culture in the first years of production seems to have been partially transferred to the present day. As another example, a mother said that she worked with her three daughters in the past.

Figure 4: (a) Workplace of women. (b) Picked rotten, shelled, and crushed peanuts. (2022)



5.2. Working conditions: the reality of labor in the peanut industry

The most common task women perform in factories is "picking" peanuts. After machines sort the peanuts by size, women manually pick out the rotten, shelled, or crushed ones from the production line (Figure 4). Women must perform the picking task with great care because retailers who wholesale peanuts may return them to the factory if there are more than 100 grams of rotten, unshelled, or shredded peanuts per kilogram. Since the "picking" job does not require advanced skills, anyone can do it regardless of their education level. Beginners quickly become proficient by working alongside experienced workers. Factories, which can store large quantities of raw peanuts after harvest, keep the picking process ongoing throughout the year.

We asked women if the job is difficult. One of them described the repetitive and labor-intensive nature of the work, stating, "It's a tough job, of course. I wouldn't say it is easy. Tons of peanuts pass through our hands one by one. We extract approximately 300 kilos a day" (W-4). This points out the challenging conditions faced by women in peanut production. Another worker highlighted the same issue:

Sometimes, there are huge amounts of peanuts that need to be picked up urgently, so we work fast. I am feeling too tired at those times. The number of peanuts is not the same every day, and so is tiredness (W-18).

Women mention the labor-intensive and tough conditions while talking about the difficulties of their job. One of the interviewees also highlighted the gendered nature of the job, stating: "Picking peanuts requires working in detail. You have to be patient, attentive, and careful. It's not the kind of job for men. That's why men work outside and women work inside the factory" (W-9). This is a valid observation that directly points to the division of labor categorized as 'women's work' and 'men's work'. In addition to picking peanuts, some women take on roles such as cleaning and cooking within the factory. A small number of women work as white-collar employees, such as accountants or food engineers, but they do not share the same workspace with other female workers due to hierarchical relationships. Male workers are typically assigned "heavy" tasks, such as carrying sacks of peanuts from trucks to the factory, and most factory owners are men. Additionally, the supervisors overseeing the work of female workers are, unsurprisingly, also male. The women refer to the headworker as "sergeant". We also interviewed one of the sergeants. He described his work as follows:

What am I doing here? Actually, I'm running errands for bosses. I control each step of the peanut business. I control the truck that brings the raw material to the factory. I monitor whether the peanuts are being transported properly. I also control the picking work done by the women. If there are rotten or broken ones in the peanuts we send to the shops, they

return them to us. We all would be at a loss if this happened. That's why I need to be sure that the women do their job properly (R-3).

The sergeant consistently positioned himself hierarchically below the bosses but above the women workers. He supervises the women not only within the workplace but also outside of business hours. During our interviews, we noticed that the women were generally reluctant to discuss their relationships with the sergeant. However, one worker expressed her frustration, stating, "The sergeant gets mad at all of us if one person retards the job. This is not a good thing. If someone is wrong, pull her aside and tell her; why are you gathering all of us and shouting?" (W-2). This comment highlights the collective anxiety among the women regarding the sergeant's management style, emphasizing their desire for more constructive communication rather than public reprimands.

White-collar women and male head-workers oversee the quality of work performed by female workers, including adherence to hygiene standards. Since the job involves food processing, women are required to follow specific rules, such as wearing designated clothing, maintaining proper hand hygiene, and refraining from wearing jewelry. These inspections are conducted periodically and without prior notice. Additionally, they monitor the women's working hours and break times. During our interviews, it became evident that the women faced strict limitations regarding their breaks. One worker voiced her frustration about the restroom policy, stating, "We are not allowed to go to the restroom whenever we want. They say we should do it on our lunch break. They get angry if we do it during working hours. We do not drink water to not go to the restroom" (W-6). This comment underscores the significant impact of rigid workplace policies on the women's well-being, revealing how such restrictions force them to prioritize their work over basic needs.

Among the women we interviewed, 17 (85%) stated that their working hours are neither short nor long but "normal". Factories operate six days a week and occasionally on Sundays, depending on the workload. However, workers are not required to work on Sundays. Since they are employed and paid on a daily basis, the concept of a "working day" can sometimes feel ambiguous. 15 of them (75%) said that they find the wages low and cannot afford their expenses. One woman highlighted that the pay is not proportional to the effort required, emphasizing that receiving at least the minimum wage would increase her motivation to work (W-16). Another worker supported this view:

Sometimes the wage is enough, sometimes not. It is enough if we spend only for our daily needs. But if we go to a wedding, for example, we need to buy a gift. Or when something is broken at home, we need to replace it with a new one. These are unexpected expenses. Even with an installment payment plan, it is still difficult to afford. So, the wage just saves the day (W-19).

The bosses claimed that they pay workers for any extra hours they work. However, men earn more than women for overtime, justified by the perception that their tasks are “harder”. Health insurance is another problematic theme. Employers often rationalize the lack of insurance for some workers by stating, “the women themselves do not want insurance.”

Few women workers continue to work more than 4–5 years in the same factory. Of the women we interviewed, 11 (55%) had been working in the same factory for less than a year, 6 (30%) for 1 to 3 years, and only 3 (15%) for more than 3 years. This high turnover is influenced by various economic and cultural factors, including gender norms and working conditions. Women who work in these factories are often either unmarried young women or older women, indicating that many quit their jobs after marrying or having children. Marriage often introduces expectations that women focus solely on domestic responsibilities and childcare, especially if their husbands are employed. Additionally, some women take breaks from working due to personal circumstances, such as family obligations or health issues. One worker shared that she paused her work after losing her mother and undergoing surgery (W-7). Another explained that she stopped working after giving birth and later had to quit again to care for a sick relative, though she returned to work once the situation changed and her daughter could be cared for by others (W-18). These experiences highlight the multifaceted challenges that women face in maintaining stable employment in the peanut industry:

After I worked for 16 years, I took a break for a year and a half because my mother got sick. I worked at another factory for 11 years, then that factory closed. So, I had to quit. The last time I started working was 5 months ago at this factory (W-19).

Peanut factories do not provide daycare services for women with children. Instead of addressing this responsibility, the bosses we interviewed often emphasized that women with children are unsuitable for work or complained about their tendency to quit their jobs. One factory owner explained the reasons for this with the following statement:

Our biggest problem is the long-term employment of our employees. Single women quit after working for 1 to 2 years and then get married. Workers are mostly single or divorced. If they have children at home, their mother or mother-in-law takes care of them. Women who got pregnant and gave birth also quit and never came back. I have been working in the industry for 40 years and have never seen it. Very interesting. The children of older women are already grown up. However, it is very rare that women who take a long break from working return to work at their older ages (R-1).

Ultimately, being a housewife with only domestic responsibilities appears to be perceived as more advantageous for women compared to working in a factory. Although employed, women are still primarily responsible for housework and childcare, with 9 of the women we interviewed (45%) experiencing this “double shift.” Seven women (35%) mentioned that their older daughters assist with these tasks, while only 3 women said their husbands provide any form of support with housework and childcare. When asked about their activities at home outside of work, women described spending their time cleaning, cooking, baking bread, and gardening (W-15). Many expressed that they rarely have any free time, as household chores and responsibilities dominate their schedules. Some noted that longer days in spring and summer simply extend the hours available for housework (W-13). These responses highlight the significant overlap between women’s employment and their domestic responsibilities, leaving little to no time for personal leisure or rest:

I cook and wash dishes in my free time, and also I talk with my fiancé. We do not go outside much, and we do not have time. All the chores of the house are my responsibility since my mother is sick and I am the only girl at home (W-16).

In short, working conditions are far from being a positive aspect that supports women to participate in employment. Most of the women workers in the peanut industry have negative thoughts about “working.” Women express their dissatisfaction with work due to challenging working conditions and the burden of

Figure 5: (a) Before and (b) after renewal and (c) new industrial area. (a) Büyüköztürk and Oral, 2020; (b, c) Website of Municipality of Osmaniye, (2019)



domestic tasks they must manage. However, some of them also have positive opinions as well. Women who hold a positive perspective on work are mainly driven by the desire for economic freedom and self-confidence.

5.3. Spatial dynamics: the changing geography of peanut production and its impact on women in urban areas

In the 1950s, most peanut shops were concentrated in the city center, with around 120 small shops, each covering 50–60 square meters, located in the same area. However, by the 1990s, as business capacity grew, these shops became insufficient to meet demand. To accommodate the expansion, businesses began moving to larger spaces, typically ranging from 150 to 200 square meters, situated on the ground floors of apartment buildings. Consequently, some smaller shops were demolished, and their land was acquired through expropriation. In 2012, a town square design was introduced in this area (Figure 5).

The implementation of the square design led to an increase in rents for the remaining shops. As a result, many shops gradually became vacant due to the high rental costs. The chairman of the peanut exchange market commented on this renewal with the following statements:

Although the area was intended to serve as a town square, it is not widely utilized by residents. In retrospect, it would have been a wiser choice to have another group of traders, such as shoemakers, occupy the space once the peanut businesses had vacated. Unfortunately, it has deteriorated over time and become a neglected area (R-6).

Recently, a small industrial area has been established on the outskirts of the city, accommodating approximately 60 peanut factories with significantly larger spaces. Both factories we interviewed are located on the periphery of the city. Başpınar Peanut Factory is positioned along the northern border, while Yilmazer Peanut Factory is located along the western border. The decentralization of the peanut industry can be analyzed in relation to women's mobility within the city (Figure 6). Previously, walking from home to work was feasible due to the proximity, but now it has become necessary to use a vehicle. Nevertheless, as previously mentioned, Osmaniye is a relatively small-sized city, and commuting remains a minor concern. Given the city's compact size, even the peripheral areas can be reached within a maximum of thirty minutes.

Among the women we interviewed, 19 (95%) rely on factory-provided shuttle services for their daily commute. Regarding the distance between their homes and the factories, 16 women (80%) described it as neither close nor far. Although it is generally expected that women entering the workforce would become more mobile in the city (Hermida Palacios et al., 2023), this does not appear to be the case in Osmaniye. Despite being employed, women seem to have limited interaction with other parts of the city. Only 2 women (10%) reported going out alone to complete their tasks. For example, one of the interviewees said, "She doesn't go anywhere alone in the city and she always has someone with her in the public areas" (W-16). Another example is as follows:

When I go out, it's either for a specific purpose, like getting something done or going to the hospital. So, there's no such thing as going out and walking around (W-14).

Most women use the city for shopping, going to the hospital, and visiting relatives. Only 7 women mentioned that they go out just to walk around and have some time for themselves. This demonstrates that the shift from centrally located, small-scale shops to larger, peripheral factories highlights the trade-offs between urban renewal, economic efficiency, and social inclusion, particularly in terms of gender dynamics. Physical separation of usages not only affects women's mobility but also changes the dynamics of urban life, with peripheral industrial zones often lacking the vibrancy and amenities of central areas.

The decentralization of peanut production in Osmaniye highlights the intersection of spatial dynamics and gendered labor practices. Women in the industry face compounded challenges as they balance workforce demands with domestic responsibilities. Although Osmaniye is a compact city with relatively short commuting times, the increased distance between workplaces and homes exacerbates women's time poverty by extending their commute. This leaves little room for leisure or self-care, as highlighted by the findings of Erman and Kara (2018). These transformations not only reflect economic shifts but also

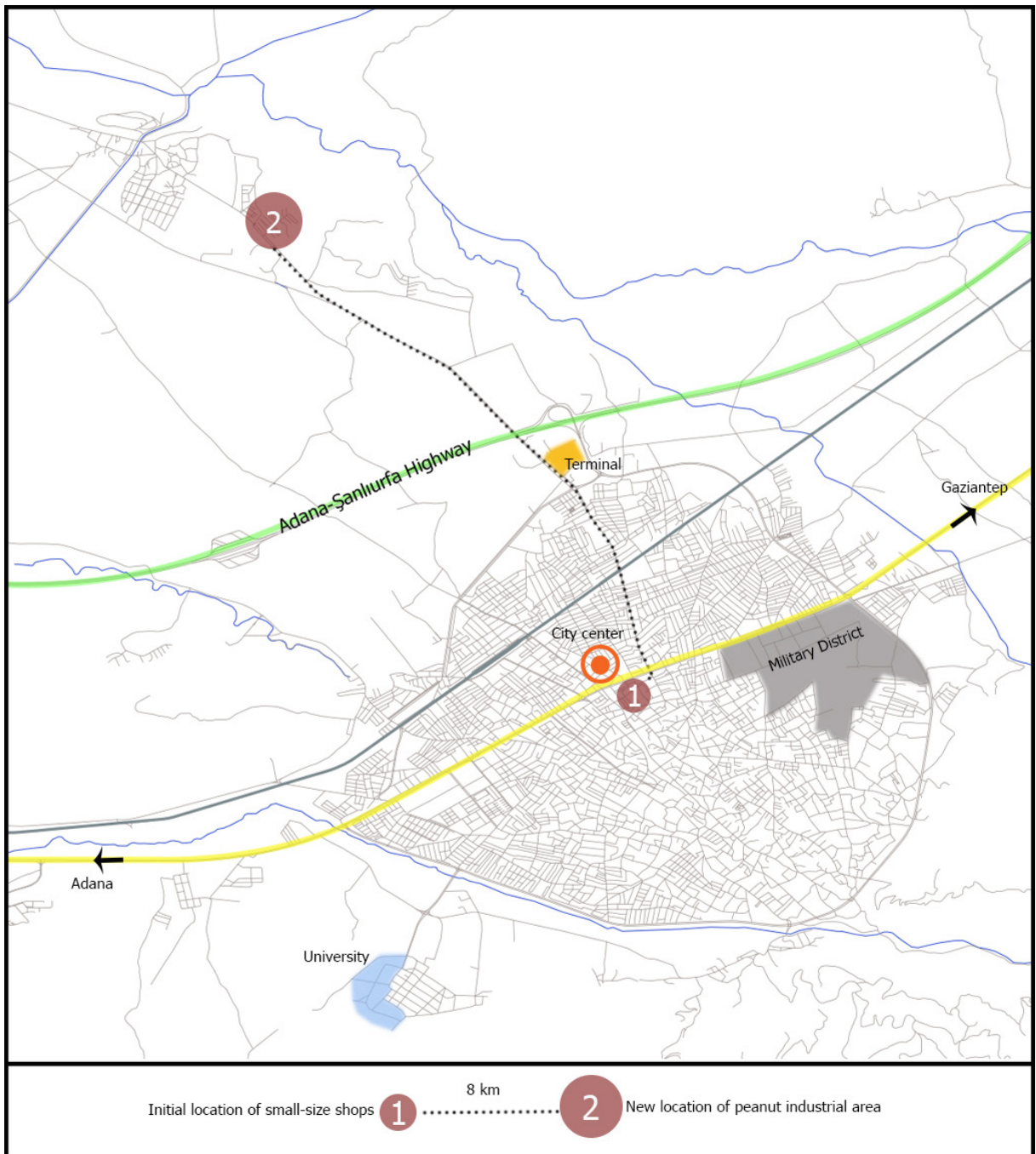


Figure 6: Decentralization of Peanut Production Factories. Prepared by authors on *geofabrik* open-source GIS data.

Results		
Research questions	Working conditions	Spatial context
1. How do working conditions, daily urban mobility patterns, and socio-spatial experiences affect women's participation in peanut production in Osmaniye?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low wages, precarious working conditions, limited autonomy at work • Male-based supervision and the exclusion of women from decision-making practices • Limited social interactions during work breaks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased distances from their homes to workplaces as another breaking point after separation of home and workplace • Changing daily urban mobility patterns
2. What implications does this have for gender equity in this sector within the framework of feminist urban geography and the feminization of the workplace?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignoring women's differentiated demands in the workplace and the lack of support mechanisms they need • Reproduction of patriarchal power relations and gender inequalities in the workplaces • Restriction of women's economic empowerment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges women face in balancing workforce demands with domestic responsibilities resulting women's withdrawal from the public sphere • As a result, women's socio-spatial empowerment through employment is not realized, leading to their withdrawal from the workforce.

Table 1: Linking findings to research questions. (2024)

provide insights into the broader implications of urban planning, industrial decentralization, and the persistence of gendered social norms. The table 1 below summarizes the relationship between our research questions and our findings.

6. Discussion

The findings of this study align with Feminist Urban Geography, which highlights how patriarchal norms and spatial arrangements intersect to sustain gender inequalities in urban and workplace environments. In Osmaniye's peanut production sector, women's disadvantaged status is evident in their low wages, precarious working conditions, and limited autonomy at work. These conditions reflect the patriarchal power structures embedded in urban and industrial spaces, as feminist urban geographers have highlighted (Oaxaca, 1973; Cain et al., 1979; Bergmann, 1989; Peake, 1995; Gilbert, 1997; Spierings, 2014; Kern, 2020). Women, who are constrained by the patriarchal system from becoming "skilled" workers due to gender inequalities and norms, often resign themselves to manual labor in the peanut production sector, where they face difficult working conditions, long hours, short breaks, and low wages.

The constant oversight by male supervisors and the exclusion of women from decision-making roles mirror the dynamics observed in labor-intensive industries, where gender-segregated hierarchies are deeply rooted (Wharton, 1986; Choudhry, 1997; Hartmann, 2006; Coddington, 2015). Similar to global trends discussed in the literature, the situation in Osmaniye can be characterized as a reflection of patriarchal hierarchical relations within the workplace. Precarious work does not solely refer to access to social security services. Women experience economic vulnerability in an ambiguous and arbitrary working environment, which deepens patriarchal power relations and is reflected in other socio-spatial dimensions of their daily lives. They also face significant challenges in accessing equitable working conditions despite their critical role in agricultural and manufacturing labor. Their limited social interactions during work breaks and the surveillance they endure further restrict their potential for empowerment, repeating broader critiques of urban and workplace environments that prioritize productivity over inclusivity (Fenster, 1999; Bondi and Rose, 2003; De, 2022).

The feminization of the workplace in Osmaniye's peanut industry, while increasing women's participation, has not translated into economic empowerment or gender equity. As the literature suggests, the feminization of labor often involves precarious, low-paying jobs with limited opportunities for advancement, reflecting global patterns of exploitation in gendered labor markets (Tejani and Milberg, 2016; Shaw, 2022). The patriarchal dynamics in the workplace mirror those in the domestic sphere, with women's roles confined to subordinate positions and their contributions undervalued (Luxton, 1997; Morvaridi, 1992).

The spatial organization of Osmaniye further compounds these challenges. The decentralization of peanut production to the outskirts of the city has disrupted women's connection to the urban environment, increasing commuting times and reducing their spatial mobility. As highlighted by feminist urban geographers, urban spaces often fail to accommodate women's needs, particularly regarding access and mobility (Bondi and Rose, 2003; Vaiou and Lykogianni, 2006; Scheiner and Holz-Rau, 2017; Montoya-Robledo et al., 2020). This disconnection reinforces the divide between home and work, exacerbating the "double shift" phenomenon, where women are burdened with both paid labor and unpaid domestic responsibilities (Fincher, 1990; Beckwith, 1992; Shelton and John, 1996; MacDonald et al., 2005).

Ultimately, the findings of this study reinforce the argument that urban spaces and workplaces are not neutral but are shaped by societal norms and power structures that marginalize women (Newman, 2008; Jones and Clifton, 2018). Addressing these systemic inequalities requires a rethinking of urban planning, workplace policies, and cultural norms to create spaces and opportunities that genuinely empower women and challenge patriarchal relations. This study's focus on Osmaniye contributes to the broader discourse on feminist urban geography and the feminization of the workplace by highlighting how these dynamics unfold in a medium-sized city within a developing country.

7. Conclusion

This study explores how working conditions, urban mobility, and socio-spatial experiences shape women's participation in peanut production in Osmaniye and the implications for gender equity in the manufacturing sector. The findings reveal that poor working conditions, limited spatial mobility, and entrenched gender norms restrict women's economic empowerment and reinforce patriarchal structures. Osmaniye's unique blend of urban and rural characteristics, combined with its reliance on agricultural processing, provides a valuable lens for understanding these dynamics in developing regions.

Future research could expand on these findings by exploring the intersection of gender, economic development, and spatial mobility in other manufacturing sectors or regions with similar socio-economic contexts. Comparative studies between urban and rural settings could further illuminate how spatial and social dynamics shape women's labor experiences. Additionally, investigating differences among women—such as age, class, immigration status, and ethnicity—would provide valuable insights into their varied experiences in the workforce. As research on social norms of masculinity continues to grow, future studies could benefit from comparative analyses of the experiences of women and men working in the same sector. Exploring the potential role of policy interventions, such as childcare support or improved transportation networks, could also offer actionable solutions to enhance women's participation and equity in the workforce. Addressing these gaps will contribute to a deeper understanding of the structural changes required to achieve gender equity in manufacturing and beyond.

Conflict of Interests. The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Respondent number	Age	Marital status, number of children	Education
W-1	44	Married, 6	Primary school
W-2	57	Married, 2	Primary school
W-3	21	Single	Literate
W-4	50	Married, 4	Literate
W-5	39	Married, 2	Primary school
W-6	35	Married, 4	Literate
W-7	20	Single	High school
W-8	41	Married, 1	High school
W-9	48	Married, 4	Primary school
W-10	38	Single	Primary school
W-11	42	Married, 4	Primary school
W-12	42	Married, 5	Primary school
W-13	59	Married, 2	Primary school
W-14	50	Married, 3	High school
W-15	50	Married, 5	Primary school
W-16	21	Single	Primary school
W-17	30	Married, 2	Primary school
W-18	37	Widow, 1	Primary school
W-19	58	Married, 2	Literate
W-20	47	Married, 2	Primary school

R. Number	Definition	Gender
R-1	Boss of Yilmazer Peanut Factory	Male
R-2	Boss of Başıpınar Peanut Factory	Male
R-3	"Headworker" of Yilmazer Peanut Factory	Male
R-4	Food engineer of Yilmazer Peanut Factory	Female
R-5	Accountant of Başıpınar Peanut Factory	Female
R-6	Chairman of the peanut exchange market	Male

Annex 1: Sociodemographic characteristics of the women interviewed and the roles of the key actors. (2024)