

International Conference on
**KNOWLEDGE & POLITICS in
GENDER & WOMEN'S
STUDIES**

OCTOBER
9 – 11, 2015

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ABSTRACTS

Building Bridges within the Gender and Women's Studies Community in Turkey

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ABSTRACTS

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Female Shopkeepers and Gendering
Urban Space
Female Shopkeeping in Caferağa
Neighbourhood, Kadıköy

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Abstract

Contrary to the image of small shopkeepers (esnaf) as “vestiges of the past about to disappear” commonly produced in the scholarly literature and public discussions, this paper puts forward the claim that they are very much alive and form a significant part of today’s urban life. The second image commonly encountered about this social group is that shopkeepers are all male. This paper attempts to draw attention to the significance of female shopkeepers in Caferağa Neighborhood, Kadıköy, Istanbul. What distinguishes this neighborhood community from many other parts of the city is the dominance of female shopkeepers, who are not very visible at first sight, but who appear to be quite powerful under close scrutiny. The small stores and workshops women run there are the hubs of crucial discussions and debates about the neighborhood, its future and residents. The female shopkeepers claim the right to define the urban space, and distinguish their neighborhood in comparison with the other parts of the city. The paper is based upon the 38 in-depth interviews conducted with female shopkeepers in Caferağa Neighborhood in 2015. In order to provide a ground for comparing them with male shopkeepers, I will make use of the data I had collected in my previous research (mainly on male shopkeepers and artisans) in Caferağa Neighborhood and other parts of Istanbul.¹