

## **An Anthropological Approach to the Status of Women in Circassian Culture: The Case of the Village of Soğucak**

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## **Abstract**

This qualitative study aims to explore the status of women in Circassian Culture through the lens of Feminist Anthropology. Soğucak village, one of the Circassian villages in Yalova, was chosen as a sample in the research. The research is prepared using qualitative research techniques, participant observation, and in-depth interviews. The field interview was conducted between 17 December 2022 and 16 July 2023 with 25 female and nine male participants. Participants are determined by the snowball sampling technique. As a result of the study, it is revealed that housework, especially cooking, and taking care of children is the responsibility of women in the village of Soğucak, which is also described as traditional gender roles of women in the literature. Additionally, the status of women in society, their roles in the family, their roles in rites of passage such as weddings and funerals, and their roles in transferring culinary culture to the next generations are also considered. All these results reveal that the secondary status of the woman in Circassian culture, which is the assertion of this study and is perceived by the literature research, is not found in the village of Soğucak. In addition, it is revealed that women's roles in Soğucak village have changed from past to present. Consequently, cultural change has emerged in Soğucak village, including the status of women.

**Keywords:** Circassian culture; Circassian women; feminist anthropology; gender roles

## **INTRODUCTION**

In this study, the status of women in Circassian Culture is examined fundamentally considering the feminist anthropological perspective. By considering the status of women in Soğucak village, it examined not only the roles of women in the family but also their roles in rites of passage such as weddings and funerals, and in domestic works such as cooking. As a result of the study, a general framework is drawn about the status of women and their roles in the culture of the village of Soğucak.

The word Cherkes (Cherkess) is used to describe all peoples who migrated from the North Caucasus in Turkey. These groups are Adyghe, Abkhazians, Dagestanis, Ossetians, Chechens, and Karachay-Balkars. However, the people defined as Circassian also define themselves as Adyghe. ". The tribes of Adyghe are identified as Abadzekh, Besleney, Bzhedug, Chemirgoy, Hatuqway, Kabardian, Natukhaj, Shapsug, and Ubykh. There are also very small communities such as Jane, Mahoş, and Mamheğ (Kaya , 2011, pp. 76-78).

In addition, the historical background of the Circassian society is also examined in this study. The Circassians were exiled due to the Russian invasion of the Caucasus on May 21, 1864. One of the countries where the Circassians were exiled was the Ottoman Empire. Circassians came to the Ottoman lands both by land and by sea routes (Karataş, 2013). Circassians were settled in Ottoman lands along with the line from Sinop to Hatay. Their settlements are located around this line in the cities of Sinop, Samsun, Amasya, Çorum, Yozgat, Sivas, Kayseri, Maraş, Adana, and Antakya. Furthermore, Circassians also immigrated to the Balkans to increase the Muslim population in these areas (Berzeg, 2006, pp. 213-214), (Eser & Kocacık, 2010, pp. 190-191), (Karpat, 2010, p. 21). Moreover, they held many important positions within the Ottoman Empire and took part in important levels of the state (Çorlu, 1993, p. 11), (Avagyan , 2004, p. 98). They also founded organizations and associations (Avagyan, 2004, p. 104), (Atlı , 2021, p. 183).

## **RESULTS**

### **The General Information About the Village of Soğucak**

The information given by the participants reveal that the meaning of the name Soğucak is matched with the literature information. The findings of the study show that Soğucak is the name of the region in the Caucasus that the Circassians left last. There is still a castle named Soğucak in this region. Additionally, the fact that the compatibility of the information given by

the participants about the meaning of the name Soğucak with literature information strengthens the argument that this is a village where Circassians live.

Additionally, it is revealed that Soğucak is defined as a Circassian village by most participants. In contrast, some participants define it as a modernized village due to the forgetting of traditions. Some participants mentioned that there is almost no crime rate while describing the village, while others explained the village's lack of development and its reasons. In addition, most participants emphasized that everyone in the village was distantly related to each other. In short, the perceptions of the participants about their villages give us clues about the structure of the culture. Additionally, the participants explain the differences between two separate neighborhoods in the village, the upper and lower neighborhoods. Moreover, they also mention the effects of the Earthquake of 1999, the Syrian War, and COVID-19 on the village of Soğucak.

The results of the study also revealed that most participants hang Circassian motifs on the walls of their homes. Besides, musical instruments belonging to the Circassian culture and objects such as the Flag of Adygea or family are observed in the participants' houses. A traditional Circassian oven, Haku, is also observed in the garden of almost every participant's house. Also considering all these pieces of information, it can be revealed that these objects may be one of the ways to protect the identity and memory of the participants.

### **The Circassian Culture and the Perceptions of Participants in Soğucak Village About Circassian Culture**

The participants' statements reveal that concepts such as respect, hospitality, love, and solidarity are vital for the village of Soğucak. Besides, the fact that the basic definitions of the participants about the Circassian culture and being a Circassian are compatible with the literature shows that some features of the Circassian culture are still being preserved in the village of Soğucak. It is also revealed that the Soğucak village consists of mainly three Circassian tribes: Abzakh, Shapsug, and Bzhedug.

### **The Social Structure and Basic Elements of the Circassian Culture in the Village of Soğucak**

Moreover, the participants of Soğucak village mentioned essential elements of their culture. Xabze is defined as all kinds of rules, manners, procedures, ways, laws, constitutions, customs, and traditions in the Circassian language (Domaniç , 2000, p. 37). Traditional Circassian life was organized through Xabze rules, which are passed down from generation to generation by

living (Aslan, et al., 2011, p. 25). The results of this study show that most Xabze rules and customs are no longer practiced in the village of Soğucak. The fieldwork in the village of Soğucak also revealed that the Circassian language is forgotten by the younger generations. The participants generally understand and speak Circassian, as they belong to the middle-aged and older age groups. Those in the group who can understand but cannot speak Circassian are middle-aged participants. In addition, most participants stated they cannot teach Circassian to their children.

### **The Status of Women in the Village of Soğucak**

It is revealed that Circassian women occupy a respectable place in Soğucak culture, most female emphasized that their husbands appreciated them very much. Participants also described their female status with words such as diligent, freedom, comfort, and laziness. Most female participants said that the women in the village are quite free and can do what they want. However, the participants' accounts revealed that women were not free and had to obey their elders about the decisions they would have made in the past. This situation shows that the position of women in culture and gender roles has changed. In addition, customs described in the literature, such as women acting as mediators between men, are not found in the village of Soğucak. This is another indication of the changing of women's roles in the village.

Circassian girls are also considered precious members of the family. They are bred quite freely. It is revealed that Circassian girls are liberal; they go to weddings before they get married and often go to zekes meetings. It also turns out that even in the past, boys and girls always spent time together and had fun. Circassian girls never had to do housework in the past. It is also one of the most frequently expressed phrases that there is no distinction between boys and girls in the Circassian culture. However, although the participants say that they behave equally to their boys and girls, the housework is done with the help of their daughters. Women reported relying more on their daughters than their sons to help with housework and cooking. However, girls' freedom begins to change after marriage. They are responsible for many matters related to the home and family after they get married.

### **The Status of Women in Family in the Village of Soğucak**

Although the authority figure and decision maker are expressed as the father in Circassian culture in the literature (Merker, Kafkas, 1953, p. 20), (Tuna, 1977, p. 102), (İmamoğlu, 1991, p. 832), it is revealed that the primary decision maker in Soğucak village is the mother. Besides,

some female participants also say that women were not heard or consulted in the past. This situation shows that the power of women in the family has changed from the past to the present. On the other hand, the statements of some male and female participants reveal that not only today but also in the past, women are in the position of authority and decision-making in the home. According to the participants' explanations, the mother-in-law made all the decisions about the house in the past. All these data reveal that women have a decisive role in the family in Soğucak village. These results also show that the gender roles and place of women in the family have changed from past to present in Soğucak.

It is also revealed that a Circassian woman experiences some difficulties after marriage in their family. Circassian girls are quite free. But after marriage, they face some restrictions in their husband's houses. They were asked to abide by many rules and fulfill many customs out of respect. However, according to the participants' statements, this situation changed over time in the village of Soğucak. These strict rules that brides must comply with have decreased considerably over time.

Additionally, the field research in Soğucak reveals that housework is women's responsibility. On the other hand, there is also a transformation of women's gender roles. Most of the participants state that there are no strict differences between the works of women and men in domestic space compared to the past. Participants' comments indicate that housework is no longer divided into women's and men's work. Some participants say that gender discrimination in housework has disappeared because men also do housework. However, it is revealed that women still do most of the domestic work, such as kitchen work.

The participants' statements revealed that the kitchen is the domain of women in the village of Soğucak. Most of the female participants say that they are responsible not only for housework but also for kitchen work and especially cooking. All these results also match the literature about housework, especially cooking, which is the responsibility of women. Female participants also say they spend approximately 2 to 4 hours daily in the kitchen. In addition, female participants stated that they are uncomfortable with the disruption of this order and, therefore, do not let other people into their kitchens. Also, according to the literature review, one of the gender roles of women is the responsibility of cooking. Therefore, all these results match the information in the literature about the gender roles of women in the kitchen.

Addedly, the statements of the participants in Soğucak reveal that women have an essential role in transferring culinary culture to the next generations. The female participants explained that

they learned how to cook traditional Circassian dishes such as şıpsi, Kaçamak, haluj, Cennet Künkü, şelame, and cevizli lokum from their mothers and mothers-in-law. Besides, descriptions of these dishes are expressed in the table in the last section. Some female participants also say they teach their daughters traditional Circassian foods like şıpsi, haluj, and homemade foods. Moreover, male participants were also asked questions about cooking and kitchen work.

In addition to these, it is revealed that brides in Soğucak village have experienced many difficulties in the past. They were asked to abide by many rules and fulfill many customs out of respect. However, according to the participants' statements, this situation changed over time. These strict rules that brides must comply with have decreased considerably. Besides, it is also revealed that caring for the children is another main responsibility of the women in the village of Soğucak.

### **The Roles of Women in Marriage and Religious Practices**

In Circassian culture, people can marry whomever they want (Saltık, 1998, p. 39). Most of the participants in Soğucak village stated that they could marry the people they wanted, and their children could marry the people they wanted. This freedom given to women in choosing a partner also reveals the status of women in Circassian culture. Women can make their own decisions in choosing a spouse, as in other matters. Addedly, consanguineous marriage is strictly prohibited in this culture. Even if the neighbor's child is seen as a sibling, they do not marry them (Ersoy & Kamacı , 1992, p. 130). Circassians also do not welcome giving daughters to other nations or taking daughters from other nations. But Circassian youth are free to choose wives between each other (Zihni, 2007, pp. 50-51). The field research conducted in Soğucak village reveals that the traditions of prohibitions of relative marriages and late marriages continue. However, the rule of marrying daughters only to Circassians is no longer practiced in the village.

Young girls and young boys meet each other at meetings called zekes. Then, boys and girls become kaşen with each other (Tanrıverdi & Öz , 2018, pp. 149-162). Kaşenlik is when young girls and boys get to know each other before marriage. In short, it can be identified as the dating period (Gergin , 2016, p. 143). These customs and traditions reveal that Circassian women were relatively free in their society. However, according to the information obtained from Soğucak Village, the practices of kaşenlik and zekes have disappeared. This may be because these traditions have lost their function today. Moreover, it is revealed that an ideal type of bride is

described with words like skilled, clean, and obedient. However, this type of description of brides does not exist anymore in the village of Soğucak. Therefore, these results demonstrate that women's roles in Circassian culture are changing.

Besides, Circassians are a nation that attaches great importance to weddings. Weddings are big and crowded (Eser , 1999, pp. 78-79). Traditional Circassian weddings are held for 7 days and 7 nights (Serbes, 2016, p. 154). Participants stated that people living in the village usually have their weddings in Yalova or the village square. It is revealed that the women of Soğucak village gather for weddings and funerals and make Haluj cooperatively. Participants also state that when there is a funeral, women of the village take food to the funeral home for seven nights. These results reveal their role in essential transition rituals such as weddings and funerals. According to these results, women are responsible not only for feeding the family but also for society.

Moreover, most of the participants state that women do not go to the cemetery for the funeral. The reason for this situation is expressed as the respect for men. The fact that women do not attend funerals and go to the funeral home may be one reason why women were not wanted in the public sphere in the past. However, participants now state that young women in the village go to the village cemetery. This is again an indication that the traditions and roles of women in the village are changing.

### **A Controversial Perspective on the Separation of Public and Private Spheres Based on Gender in the Village of Soğucak**

The results of the study reveal that that the village coffee house and the headman's office are primarily male-dominated areas in Soğucak. According to the report of the female participants, it is considered very shameful for a woman to enter the coffee shop. Most of the female participants in the village expressed that they avoid entering the coffee shop. On the other hand, the declarations of some female participants reveal that women can now go to village coffee shops.

In addition, it is resulted that women mostly meet at home and rarely spend time together in public places, in consequence of the field research. It has been observed that women mostly meet in private areas, usually at their homes. Female participants refer to an activity called " gün," where they gather at their homes to spend time together. During this event, women come

together in a house by eating various meals, and thus, they can spend time together. The activity of "gün" was also held in a room above the village coffeehouse and headman's office before the pandemic. It has also been stated that women gather in the village dining hall to cook for weddings and funerals. These acts indicate that women also use the public sphere. However, men are still more active in the public sphere.

The interviews with male participants revealed that six male participants are members of Circassian associations, especially in Yalova, and they collaborate in some activities in these associations. Some male interviewees stated they had been managers in Caucasian associations for a long time. However, only one female participant is found to be actively working in Circassian associations. According to the testimonies of the participants, women in the village of Soğucak do not play an active role in the Circassian and Caucasian associations in the city center of Yalova.

## **DISCUSSION**

Circassian women occupy a respectable place in Soğucak culture, according to the accounts of the participants. It is also appeared that they are the main decision-makers in family. According to the literature, the father is the head of the house in the Circassian culture (Merker , Kafkas, 1953, p. 20). In addition, the father makes the decisions, and the other family members follow these decisions (Tuna, 1977, p. 102). Also, the literature review about gender roles reveals that in terms of traditional gender roles, men are expected to be strong, maintain their families, control their environment, and women are expected to be patient and understanding, run the house, and organize human relations (İmamoğlu, 1991, p. 832). On the other hand, Zihni also argued that mothers make decisions about the home in Circassian culture. The father does not interfere in domestic affairs because this is considered disrespectful to the mother (Zihni, 2007, pp. 24-25). However, according to the participants, there is a change in the decision-making power of the women in Soğucak village. Because in the past, women were not the ones to decide everything in the family, but today, women have the power to make decisions.

Although the authority figure and decision maker are expressed as the father in Circassian culture in the literature, it is revealed that the primary decision maker in Soğucak village is the mother. This may be the case to preserve the traditional roles of men and women in the eyes of society. Alternatively, the authority of men may be prevented from being devalued in front of society. Besides, some female participants also say that women were not heard or consulted in the past. This situation shows that the power of women in the family has changed from the past

to the present. On the other hand, the statements of some male and female participants reveal that not only today but also in the past, women are in the position of authority and decision-making in the home. According to the participants' explanations, the mother-in-law made all the decisions about the house in the past. All these data reveal that women have a decisive role in the family in Soğucak village. These results also show that the gender roles and place of women in the family have changed from past to present in the village of Soğucak.

In this case, the position of Circassian women in the Soğucak village contradicts the views of anthropologists who argue for the universality of female subordination in culture. For example, materialist anthropologists state that women are inferior in class society (Sacks, 1974, pp. 207-221). Also, according to Nancy Chodorow, who was influenced by Freud's views on psychoanalysis, personality, and gender development begins in infancy. According to Chodorow, the subordination of women is universal (Chodorow, 1974, pp. 43-66). Structural anthropologist Levi Strauss argued that women's universal subordination is derived from women's roles in the system of exchange. Because, according to him, the reason for women's subordination was that women were exchanged between men or families in the past. This situation caused the woman to be perceived as an object (Mascia Lees & Johnson Black, 2017, pp. 72-76). In addition, cultural anthropologist Sherry Ortner attributes the reason for the universality of women's subordination to women's identification with nature (Ortner, 1996, pp. 21-42). Besides, according to feminist anthropologist Michelle Rosaldo, the reason for women's subordination is that women are limited to the private sphere because of their duties, such as childbirth and childcare (Rosaldo, 1974, pp. 23-24). Therefore, the subordination of women's universality is a controversial situation, according to the findings of this study. However, to better understand the position and roles of women in culture, it is necessary to look at their roles in the home and other responsibilities in their families.

It is also revealed that women are responsible for most of the domestic work in Soğucak. These results also matched with the literature information about the responsibilities of Circassian women in the family (Ersoy & Kamacı, 1992, pp. 151-152), (Tok, 2018, pp. 61-63). In addition to all these, most participants say that men in younger generations help their wives with housework. However, the people that the participants give as examples in this regard are usually their sons, brothers, or an acquaintance. These people generally live in cities. Therefore, inferring the change in women's domestic roles may not be correct. However, the fact that the young population is dividing labor at home indicates that traditional gender roles are changing.

Most of the participants also state that there are no strict differences between the works of women and men in domestic space compared to the past in new generations.

In addition, the questions are asked to understand the Circassian Cuisine and women's relationship with the kitchen. All 25 female participants say they are responsible for kitchen and cooking tasks. Additionally, these results are consistent with some sources in the literature that reveal that women are responsible for the care and nutrition of the family (D'Andrade, 1974, p. 18), (DeVault, 1991, p. 118), (Allen & Sachs, 2007, p. 1), (Aarseth & Olsen, 2008, pp. 277-287), (Hook, 2010, pp. 1509-1513). Moreover, it is revealed generally, women purchase food products and other products for their homes. These results are consistent with studies stating that kitchen shopping is a woman's responsibility (Miller, 1998, p. 39), (Zukin & Maguire, 2004, p. 175), (Lachance-Grzela & Bouchard, 2010, pp. 767-780). It has also emerged that the responsibility of transferring the culinary culture is primarily identified with women in Soğucak. In this way, the Circassian culinary culture is transmitted between generations, and the continuity of this culinary culture is ensured. In addition, these results are consistent with studies revealing that Circassian women transmit Circassian food culture from generation to generation (Dweik & Omar, 2016), (Usta & Yaman, 2020, p. 1009).

In addition, the fact that the person responsible for childcare in Soğucak is the mother and the father has a more distant relationship with the children. These results are match with some literature sources about the responsibility of a Circassian women (Merker, Kafkas, 1953, p. 20), (Saltık, 1998, p. 42), (Şeo, 2005, p. 198).

Additionally, according to the participants' statements, the Circassian women cook for weddings, funerals, and special occasions. The fact that women gather and prepare wedding and funeral meals reveals their role in important transition rituals such as weddings and funerals. Women's roles in these rituals make them important members of society. Because, according to these results, women are responsible not only for feeding the family but also for society. Moreover, meals are prepared on special days and events to build solidarity among community members. In addition, the preparation of traditional Circassian dishes at events ensures the preservation of culinary culture. Because the most traditional Circassian dishes are served on special days like weddings, funerals, and religious holidays.

Furthermore, the result of the study reveal that men generally spend more time in public spheres such as village coffeehouses or Circassian associations, and women generally spend time in private spheres such as their homes. However, the separation between the public and private

spheres of gender is not very sharp in the village of Soğucak. All these findings lead to the idea that the main reason women spend more time in private or domestic areas is the identification of women with nature. According to cultural anthropologist Sherry Ortner, women are defined as subordinate or worthless in every culture because of the title of women with nature. Because nature is an event that must be overcome, just like women. Women are identified with nature because of their physiology, social role, and spiritual structure. The fact that the woman had to act under the needs of her physiology during the menstruation period and the birth process caused her animal side to be seen as more dominant than the man. Moreover, due to processes such as pregnancy and breastfeeding, women's lives are limited to domestic space, which affects their social role (Ortner , 1996, pp. 21-42) . As a result, the restriction of women in the domestic sphere is also observed in the village of Soğucak. The women in the village of Soğucak still pay attention when passing in front of the coffee house of the village and pay attention to meeting at home more with other women in the village. Moreover, the fact that women spend more time in the private and men in the public sphere in the village of Soğucak also matches the theory of anthropologists Michelle Rosaldo and Rayna Reiter about the private and public sphere.

Michelle Rosaldo and Rayna Reiter are other influential anthropologists who produce theories on the relationship between the private-public sphere and gender. According to Rosaldo, the reason for the power difference between men and women comes from the existence of women in the private spheres (Rosaldo , 1974, pp. 23-24). For Rosaldo, the women's role in childbearing and breastfeeding confine them in private spheres, and thus, women become universally secondary (Rosaldo , 1974, pp. 23-24). Also, according to her, "But what is perhaps most striking and surprising is the fact that male as opposed to female, activities are always recognized as predominantly important, and cultural systems give authority and value to the roles and activities of men." (Rosaldo , 1974, p. 19).

Moreover, some social activities are practiced by women called "gün." Women gather in a room above the village coffeehouse and headman's office before the pandemic for this activity. They also cook food together in the village's dining hall. Women also spend their time in some public spheres in the village. Apart from these, it has been observed that women do not exist in some public spaces of the village. As stated in the section on religion and belief systems, women in Soğucak village do not go to the cemetery for funerals or do not go to the village mosque for worship. According to all these data, it can be said that in Soğucak village, men belong to the public sphere, and women belong to the private sphere. However, the boundaries of this

distinction are not very sharp. Because both men and women can spend time together or separately in both private and public spheres. Therefore, the distinction between private and public spheres in the village of Soğucak does not show the secondary status of women. Because women in Soğucak do not see themselves as secondary to men. Most female participants state that women are the people who manage the house and family. Most of the male participants also say that their wives manage the house.

As a result of all these, this study aims to determine the status of women in the Circassian culture in Soğucak village, the status, and responsibilities of women in the family, the roles of women in marriage and religious practices, and the roles of women in public and private spaces are evaluated. All data obtained from the village of Soğucak reveal that women have important functions in society and are the prominent decision-makers in the family in the village of Soğucak. Furthermore, household chores such as cooking and childcare, defined as women's traditional gender roles in the literature, are also described as women's responsibilities in this village. Moreover, according to another study result, the gender roles and status of women in Soğucak village have changed from the past to the present.

## **CONCLUSION**

This dissertation aims to explore the status of women in Circassian Culture from an anthropological perspective. The field research of the thesis is carried out in Soğucak village, which is one of the Circassian villages in the city of Yalova. The field research revealed that this village was founded by Circassians who settled in the Yalova region due to the Circassian exile in 1864. Moreover, the field research revealed some essential characteristics of Circassian Culture in the village of Soğucak.

The data obtained from Soğucak revealed that while some basic traditions of Circassian cultures, such as respect for elders and hospitality, are preserved, some have been forgotten. It is also observed that some elements of Circassian culture are still being held in the village. Nevertheless, all the aspects of this village obtained in the findings reveal that the village has a high representation of Circassian culture. Additionally, since the general purpose of this study is to examine the status of women, evaluations have been made regarding the position and roles of women in culture.

My main argument in studying the status of women was, first, to find out whether women played a subordinate role in Circassian culture. When I first examined the literature, I perceived

that women might be in a secondary position in Circassian culture. For example, according to information in the literature, women face many difficulties, especially after marriage. Circassian brides must serve their mother-in-law, father-in-law, husband, and others in the house by standing and waiting in front of the room door. In addition, it is stated that after all family members have finished eating, women are the last to sit at the table with their children. Because of all this knowledge expressed in the literature about Circassian culture and women, I perceive women to be in a secondary position in Circassian culture. Nevertheless, after doing field research in Soğucak village, I concluded that women do not occupy a secondary position in Soğucak culture. I observed that the main reason for this is women's roles in the family and society.

Primarily, women have an essential status within the family in Soğucak village. According to the results of the field research, prominent decision-makers at home are women. Also, mothers are the most listened to persons in the family by both their children and their husbands. It is also revealed that women have important roles in rites of passage, such as weddings and funerals. Additionally, according to field findings, it is revealed that women have responsibilities such as housework, childcare, and kitchen shopping. Further, none of the women I interviewed identified themselves as subordinate in their culture. These results also match those described in the literature as women's traditional gender roles. In addition to these, it was discovered that women have an essential role in transmitting Circassian Culture, especially Circassian Culinary Culture, to new generations. All these results reveal that women are not secondary in culture and that they are individuals with important functions within the culture.

To understand the status of women, standard cultural features, marriage traditions, religious rituals, and family relationships are examined in Soğucak village. Also, the role of women in culture, the role of women in the family, the presence of women in the public and private sphere, and their domestic responsibilities, especially in the kitchen, are considered. The results of all these findings clearly show that the gender roles and status of women in society have changed from the past to the present. Furthermore, it states that this change is still underway.

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**Table 1.**

The list of in-dept interviews

<b>Number of the Participants</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>The Dates of Interviews</b>
Participant 1	F1	Female	54	Married	17/12/2022 - 02/03/2023 - 12/07/2023
Participant 2	F2	Female	74	Single	17/12/2022
Participant 3	F3	Female	73	Single	30/12/2022
Participant 4	F4	Female	57	Single	07/01/2023 - 27/01/2023
Participant 5	F5	Female	62	Married	31/03/2023 - 14/07/2023
Participant 6	F6	Female	25	Single	31/03/2023 - 14/07/2023
Participant 7	F7	Female	67	Married	24/02/2023 - 13/07/2023
Participant 8	F8	Female	60	Married	19/01/2023 - 12/07/2023
Participant 9	F9	Female	59	Married	19/01/2023
Participant 10	F10	Female	87	Single	30/12/2022
Participant 11	F11	Female	52	Married	30/12/2022 -12/07/2023
Participant 12	F12	Female	59	Married	07/01/2023 -12/07/2023
Participant 13	F13	Female	62	Single	07/01/2023 -14/07/2023
Participant 14	F14	Female	69	Married	12/07/2023
Participant 15	F15	Female	45	Married	12/07/2023
Participant 16	F16	Female	56	Single	13/07/2023
Participant 17	F17	Female	44	Married	13/07/2023
Participant 18	F18	Female	40	Single	13/07/2023
Participant 19	F19	Female	46	Single	13/07/2023
Participant 20	F20	Female	65	Married	15/07/2023
Participant 21	F21	Female	55	Single	16/07/2023
Participant 22	F22	Female	58	Married	15/07/2023
Participant 23	F23	Female	79	Married	15/07/2023
Participant 24	F24	Female	50	Married	15/07/2023
Participant 25	F25	Female	48	Married	15/07/2023
Participant 26	M1	Male	66	Married	27/01/2023 - 03/03/2023
Participant 27	M2	Male	71	Married	19/01/2023
Participant 28	M3	Male	74	Married	27/01/2023 - 24/02/2023
Participant 29	M4	Male	58	Married	17/12/2022 - 02/03/2023
Participant 30	M5	Male	68	Married	03/03/2023
Participant 31	M6	Male	51	Married	17/12/2022 -12/07/2023
Participant 32	M7	Male	43	Married	15/07/2023
Participant 33	M8	Male	70	Married	12/07/2023
Participant 34	M9	Male	68	Married	12/07/2023

**Table 2.**

The Name of the Circassian foods in Soğucak village

<b>The Name of the Dish</b>	<b>The Explanation</b>
<b>Abista (Pasta)</b>	It is a kind of bread considered a national food for Circassians. Abista is consumed as bread with dishes, and it is made from roasted corn flour. It is put upside down on the serving plate and then shaped with a spoon. This bread can be served by putting dry cheese, Şıpsı, or butter on it (Uğurkan, et al., 2017, p.1822).
<b>Şıpsı Pasta, Aktu-Akdu Sızbal (Circassian Chicken)</b>	This dish consists of a 'pasta' made with chicken and cornmeal. Chicken and pasta are cooked separately. Ingredients such as wheat flour, chicken broth, olive oil, garlic, onion, ground red pepper, and coriander seeds (Houben) are used in it. While Şıpsı was usually served as a wedding meal in the past, it is served on all special occasions and invitations today (Karaca & Güçlü Nergiz, 2020, pp. 58-59).
<b>Psi Haluj (Psihalive)</b>	Haluj is a ravioli-like pastry usually stuffed with cheese, meat, potatoes, and walnuts. Boran Art calls the cheese stuffed haluj 'Kuaye Haluj,' the meat haluj as 'Kabın,' and the potato haluj as 'Kantuf haluj' (Boran Art , 2017, pp. 113-119). Kabardinians call this dish psihalive, Abazas psihaluj, and Chechens as kurzunuş. The oldest and most original recipe for this dish is made with the combination of a creamy (kaymak) dish called Kojapha and haluj (Yolkolu Öksüz , 2016, p. 139).
<b>Şelame</b>	A kind of fried dough. It is known as a pastry that Circassians distribute at weddings, feast mornings, or religious days (Usta , 2020, p. 39).
<b>Cennet Künkü</b>	A participant explained the desserts in Circassian cuisine: "I don't know about desserts. There is a wrap called 'Cennet

	<p>Künkü,' and sometimes I prepare it for my daughter.”</p> <p>“Tatlıları bilmiyorum, Cennet Künkü diye bir sarma var, kızıma yaptırırım bazen” (Participant F3, female, 73).</p> <p>Another participant also gives information about the dessert of cennet künkü as: “They wrap the dough on a fork and fry it, then throw it into a syrup, Cennet Künkü.” “Hamuru çatala sarıp kızartıyorlar sonra şekerli suya atıyorlar. Cennet Künkü”. (Participant F1, female, 54).</p>
<b>Kaçamak</b>	<p>Kaçamak is a dish made with corn flour cooked with water. It is also served with cheese, roasted meat, and butter (Yıldırım Saçılık, et al., 2018).</p> <p>The participant M4 explains the preparation of Kaçamak as: The other name of the pasta is kaçamak. It is made by opening it in the middle, and then they put a piece of cheese or dried cheese in it. They also put fried sausage. It can also be consumed that way.</p> <p>O pasta dediğimiz onun içerisi açılır, kaçamak onun gerçekte şeyi. O kaçamağın içini böyle açarlar içine Çerkez peyniri, o kurutulmuş peyniri parça parça koyarlar, sucuk kızartıp koyarlar. O şekilde de yine tüketilebiliyor (Participant M4, male, 58).</p>
<b>Cevizli Lokum</b>	<p>“There is also a pastry called Cevizli Lokum (Pastry with Walnuts), they mix onions and walnuts and wrap them in yeast dough.” “Bir de cevizli lokum var gene böyle soğan ile cevizi karıştırıp mayalı hamura sarıyorlar.” (Participant F1, female, 54).</p>