

## CHAPTER 13

# Sex Work in Turkey

## Experiences of Transwomen

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### SUMMARY

Most research that is available on transgender sex workers focuses on Western nations, and research on the status of transgender sex workers in non-Western societies remains limited. This chapter focuses on transwomen who participate in sex work in Turkish society. Turkey presents a unique example as a predominantly Muslim society where prostitution is legal in the form of state-run brothels, also known as *genelevler*. I posit that the current *genelev* system marginalizes transgender sex workers by allowing only biological women to work as registered sex workers. I then perform a content analysis of the experiences of transwomen, drawing from 53 previously collected interviews and testimonials. I argue that indoor prostitution in the form of *genelevler* would provide a superior working environment for transgender sex workers and could alleviate some of the hazards associated with street prostitution.

### KEY TERMS

*genelevler*; registered sex workers; sex workers; transgender; Turkey

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