

TRAPPED IN BETWEEN STATE, MARKET AND FAMILY: EXPERIENCES OF
MODERATELY EDUCATED DIVORCED AND WIDOW WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

TRAPPED IN BETWEEN STATE, MARKET AND FAMILY: EXPERIENCES OF MODERATELY EDUCATED DIVORCED AND WIDOW WOMEN

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In this study, my main purpose is to grasp how women whose marriage is ended up either by divorce or the loss of the husband experience the life after marital dissolution as widows and a divorced women. My basic argument is that widowed and divorced women are trapped in between family, market and state; and that gender based, family oriented patriarchal society and social policies do not allow these women to live their life the way they want and to stand on their own feet; but make them lean on their families or men. In this study, I further argue that divorced and widow women experience economic decline, loss of social network and social support but in different ways. These women are stigmatized such as they are called “deviant” or assumed sexually threat to stable marriage and families as widow or divorced women. Thus, because of these attitudes, they are isolated and stayed in more closed relations. They have difficulties in labor market since they are responsible for child care as a single parent. On the other hand, we see starting points for empowerment of these women after marital dissolution since they re/started to work and to control the money and spending. However, because of the cultural context they live in, divorced and widow women trapped in the control of other men in the family, in the neighborhood or in the society.

Keywords: Marriage, family, widow woman, divorced woman, Turkey.

Öz

DEVLET, PİYASA VE AİLE ÜÇGENİNDE TUTSAK KALMAK: ORTA DERECEDE EĞİTİMLİ BOŞANMIŞ VE EŞİ VEFAT ETMİŞ KADINLARIN DENEYİMLERİ

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Bu çalışmada amacım Türkiye’de evlilikleri boşanma ya da kocanın ölümü ile sonuçlanan kadınların, evliliklerinin sonlanmasının, evlilik sonrası yaşamlarını nasıl etkilediği ve bu alanları dul ve boşanmış kadın olarak nasıl deneyimlediklerini incelemektir. Temel argümanım boşanmış ve dul kadınların evlilikleri sonrasında aile, piyasa ve devlet üçgeninde tutsak kaldıkları ve toplumsal cinsiyet temelli, aile odaklı ataerkil toplum ve sosyal politika anlayışının boşanmış ve dul kadınlara kendi istedikleri hayatı, kendi ayakları üstünde istedikleri gibi yaşayacak ortama olanak sağlamadığı ve onları aileye ya da bir erkeğin bakımına muhtaç bıraktığıdır. Aile ve evlilik kurumunun kutsallaştırıldığı Türkiye’de bu kadınların toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri ve ev içi toplumsal cinsiyet iş bölümü nedeniyle, evliliklerinin sonlanmasından sonra ekonomik açıdan (farklı) zorluklar yaşadığı, sosyal dayanışma ve sosyal ağların evlilik dönemine göre büyük bir değişiklik yaşadıkları ve kültürel önyargılar (erkeksiz kadının evli aileler için tehlikeli olması, dul kadın imgesi gibi) nedeniyle evlilik dönemine göre daha kapalı ve izole bir yaşam yaşadıkları, evlilik hayatlarına göre görece daha fazla sınırlandıklarını ve tek ebeveyn olmanın bir yandan iş gücüne katılım açısından (çocuk bakımı konusu gibi) sorunlara neden oluyor.

Öte yandan bu kadınların ev dışında gelir getiren bir işte çalışıyor olmaları onların güçlenmeleri yönünde ilk adımlar olarak sayılabilir. Ancak içerisinde

bulundukları ataerkil ve kültürel ortam nedeni ile ailedeki, mahalledeki ve toplumdaki diğer erkeklerin kontrolünde kalıyorlar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Evlilik, aile, eşi vefat etmiş kadın, boşanmış kadın, Türkiye.

to Efe, my lifelong miracle.
Without him, neither this dissertation nor I would have existed.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

TÜİK	Turkey Statistical Agency
ASDEP	Programme of Social Support for Family
AKP	Justice and Development Party
KSGM	General Directorate on the Status of Women
KEİG	Women's Labor and Employment Initiative
SHCEK	Directorate General for the Social Services and Child Protection Agency
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
KAGİDER	Women Entrepreneurs Association of Turkey
TURKSTAT	Turkish Statistical Institute

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

"To Divorce Is to Die a Bit..."

(Gahler, 2006)

"Widowhood is a curse on women."

(Upreti and Adhikary, 2009: 250)

In recent years, one of the major discussion topics in Turkey has been observed in relation to the rising divorce rates, which is perceived as worrisome. Hence, the state has been trying to reduce these rates with social projects¹, television shows² or compulsory family therapy sessions for couples who have

¹ A Family Imam for Every Married Couple (Her Evli Çifte Aile İmamı), which was discussed in Samsun. Because of the increase in divorce and domestic violence, the Provincial Mufti of Samsun made a proposal; the family imam was considered to act as a family doctor. The Mufti's office established a "Family Bureau" for couples experiencing domestic violence and in the process of divorce, which started working to eliminate problems and working for the continuation of marriages (<http://haberlink.com/haber.php?query=84456#.UotwGsQW0iz>, accessed in 17.01.2015). Marriage School: In the course, information about why people get married, marriage preparation, dating and mate selection, marriage, psychology and mental health, marriage, communication, conflict and problem-solving techniques, sexuality, fears to being parents, consanguineous marriages and divorces was given (www.hurriyet.com.tr/kadin/7724673.asp, accessed in 17.01.2015). These two examples and many other examples will be discussed in Chapter III.

² On the state official television channel TRT, there is a TV Show called "Böyle Bitmesin" (Don't Let It End Like This). Like the government's office fighting against divorce, in this show, there is a Family Office to prevent couples from ending their marriage and damaging the family. However, in almost every episode, it was pointed out that the one who caused problems was the woman. It was shown that their marriages came to this point because the woman didn't listen to her husband. Moreover, families in the show were blamed for not preventing the couples from seeking divorce. At the end of each episode, couples were conciliated even though they had real problems in the family and in the marriage. On private channels, there have been various marriage programs which bring people together in order to get married for almost seven years. However, those programs were fined by RTÜK (Supreme Council of Radio and Television) in Turkey. It was considered that these programs were against family protection policy since the questions, asked by participant women and men to get to know each other (like Do you own a house? Do you have social security? Do you have retirement salary?), presented marriage as if it is something done just for economic reasons.

decided to divorce.³ Many divorces in Turkey are considered to be arbitrary⁴, and mainly and deeply for the JDP (Justice and Development Party-AKP) government, but generally for many governments in Turkey, one of the major duties of the state should be to protect the family from breaking up. According to the statistics of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies, in Turkey; an average of 120 thousand divorces were granted in 2013 (Turkish Statistical Institute-TÜİK, 2013). 80 percent of divorced couples chose to remarry, while 17 percent chose to remarry their former partner. The rate of those who remarried their former partner is equivalent to about 20 thousand people. Thus, according to the Ministry of Family and Social Policies, “Divorce Consultancy” program was introduced to hinder unhealthy decisions to terminate the marriage. However, in Turkey there is not any criterion for what an unhealthy decision to divorce is. In addition, there are not any studies on why people, especially women, remarry, or why people, especially women, choose to remarry their former partner. Additionally, in recent years, the number of murders of women who are either divorced or in the process of divorce have increased. In 2014, 13 percentage of women were killed because of seeking for divorce according to Bianet media coverage statistics⁵.

Moreover, as the literature review shows that studies on women’s post dissolution experiences that have effects on the different parts of the divorced women’s lives in Turkey has not been discussed except a few studies. Furthermore, conducting such studies on the consequences of divorce and on divorced women

³ See, Plan of the State to Protect Marriage (Devletin Evlilik Kurtarma Planı). It is a joint project of Ministry of Family and Social Policies and Ministry of Justice in order to reduce the rates of divorce in Turkey. A compulsory therapy session is required for couples seeking to divorce. Each session will be 90 minutes long. At least four sessions are required. According to this project, it is planned to save 20 thousand marriages. (http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/10843/iste_devletin_evlilik_kurtarma_plani.html, accessed 17.01.2015, accessed in 17.01.2015). This will be discussed in Chapter III.

⁴ See, Compulsary Counsel for Divorced Couple, (Boşanan çiftlere zorunlu aile danışmanı), (<http://www.haberdar.com/bosanan-ciftlere-zorunlu-aile-danismani-3954076-haberi/> , accessed in 17.01.2015).

⁵ See, Appendix II: Male Violence Report 2014, <http://www.bianet.org/bianet/erkek-siddeti/161582-erkek-siddetinin-2014-grafigi>, accessed 17.01.2015.

may also lead to the accusation that these studies cause an increase in divorce rates.⁶ This approach about divorce studies is criticized by women's rights organizations in Turkey.

In contrast to divorced women in Turkey, widow women are considered to be protected by society and the welfare state in Turkey. To illustrate, with recent social policy arrangements, it was decided to give monetary help to widow women.⁷ However, before this arrangement, the research (Özar et al, 2011) was prepared for arrangements in the social policy which included single mothers with a wide range of statuses, such as separated, divorced, widow women and women whose husbands had abandoned them or were in jail. More recently, after the mining tragedy in Soma⁸, the Ministry of Family and Social Policies started to prepare programs to protect the wives of the miners who had died in the dent and to compensate for the loss of the husband financially by providing a monthly salary, providing housing in a residence called 301 Houses⁹, and by providing financial support for the education of deceased miner's children. The most important program is providing a death pension for the widow woman who cannot access her

⁶ Şemsa Özar and her colleagues did a research for the state about women living without men, which included not only divorced and widow women but also separated women, women whose husbands are in jail or women who were left by their husbands. In a meeting to explain the outcomes of this research, Özar expressed how the government officers resist not including divorced women into the sample because of the fear that this would increase the rate of divorce in Turkey (http://www.spf.boun.edu.tr/content_files/SPF-SYDGM_NihaiRapor.pdf, accessed in 17.01.2015). In addition, during dissertation writing period, I had a job interview with a university in Ankara. During the interview, I was asked what my research was about. When I explained what my research was and what my outcomes were, first reaction was that what if this research would cause the increase of divorce.

⁷ The First Payment for Widow Women Will Be In April (Eşi Vefat Eden Kadına İlk Maas Nisanda), with this social policy arrangement, widow women will be paid 250 TL monthly (<http://www.cnnturk.com/2012/ekonomi/genel/03/08/esi.vefat.eden.kadina.ilk.maas.nisanda/652297.0/index.html>, accessed in 17.01.2015).

⁸ An explosion in a coal mine near Soma in Turkey took place (<http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/soma-mine-disaster-reveals-cracks-in-turkish-leadership-a-970284.html>, accessed in 17.01.2015).

⁹ "301 Houses Project" (301 Evler Projesi) which is a residence arrangement for the relatives of the miners who died in the explosion in the coal mine (http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/madenci_aileleri_icin_konut_projesi_301_evler-1193988, accessed in 17.01.2015).

husband's salary because of his inadequate premium payments.¹⁰ As we shall see in the following chapter, the financial help given to widow women is significant in providing a decent life for them after marital dissolution. Those different perceptions for divorced and widow women in Turkey made me think if there is a difference between experiences of divorced and widow women after marital dissolution. Moreover, while searching for a thesis topic, one of my aunts divorced and I witnessed what she lived and experienced. The stigma and violence she faced compelled me to study divorced women, and I started to question whether widow women are in a more advantageous position than divorced women because contrary to divorced women, the widow women I have known so far were shown great respect.

In this study, post dissolution experiences of divorced and widow women is scrutinized in a comparative way. Researching what happened to divorced and widow women after marital dissolution, what they experience after marital dissolution, what challenges and difficulties they faced, and the strategies that divorced and widow women developed are important to understand the attitudes toward divorced and widow women in Turkey, and these form the backbone of the questions in this study. This study searches for answers to the question of whether or not there is a difference between the effects of post dissolution via the act of divorce and the death of the husband for divorced and widow women. This dissertation argues that in some areas divorced and widow women experience difficulties and challenges which may put them in an isolated positions. However, this study points out that divorced and widow women also develop coping strategies through which divorced women reread traditional norms and values, while widow women accommodated with traditional norms and values to mitigate limitations, restrictions and challenges they were faced with after marital dissolution. Therefore this study departs from other studied in the literature

¹⁰ The first day of Ramadan in Soma, Turkey (Ramazan'ın ilk günü Soma'da), <http://www.aile.gov.tr/tr/28018/Bakan-Aysenur-Islam-Bakan-Taner-Yildiz-ile-Ramazanin-ilk-gunu-Soma-da>, accessed in 17.01.2015).

because post dissolution experiences of moderately educated, lower middle class¹¹ divorced and widow women is an unexplored issue in Turkey.

1.1. Research Question(s) of the Study

For the purpose of this thesis, the effects of the new marital status of divorced and widow women in a family based social policy in Turkey will be analyzed by looking particularly at the case of women's employment, parenting and caring, housing, social stigmas and social bounds. Consequently, this paper focuses on divorced and widow women in post dissolution and this study looks for answers of following questions:

How do divorced and widow mothers experience marital dissolution? How should we evaluate their experiences of "new" marital status in terms of patriarchy?

My purpose here is to analyze the dynamics of the new marital status of women that affect divorced and widow women's post dissolution experiences differently. Through a close reading of divorced and widow women's experiences, I aim to examine the manifestations of patriarchy in Turkey. I aim to analyze the factors that have created the invisibility of these women in this specific social context.

To what extent consequences of marital dissolution change for women in terms of how the marriage ended? How do widow women differently experience social and economic positions relative to divorced women?

¹¹ I chose to define social class using the dimension such as education, occupation and as well as income because as Kurz (1995: 37) claims these dimensions have crucial impact on a woman's opportunities and chances than income alone, especially divorced and widow women. After marital dissolution, as it will be discussed in following chapter, divorced and widow women can experience financial difficulties and income changes. Kurz (1995) claims that we also need more stable class indicators like education and occupation that were available prior to and after the marital dissolution. Moreover, in assigning women to a class group, I did took poverty level by income. I classified the women in the study on the basis of whether their incomes were below 1000TL which is also below the poverty threshold determined by TÜİK. Divorced and widow mothers in this study have elementary or highschool diplomas, many have stable work histories, but their income levels are below.

This question focuses on the ways in which living without a husband affects divorced and widow women in distinctive ways such as financial issues, children and parenting issues, housing/living arrangements, and stigma. I plan on understanding whether there has been any difference in the experiences of divorced and widow women after marital dissolution. The aim of this question is to understand differences and/or similarities of post dissolution experiences of divorced and widow women.

Through which channels are these women able cope with the problems they face after the end of marriage via divorce or death of a spouse?

This question focuses on the ways that divorced and widow women formulate coping strategies to deal with the difficulties and problems they face.

In this study, I decide to use the feminist methodology and focus on women at the center of the study. I study women's experiences from the point of them.

In feminist methodological approach, the researcher studies the issue in a non-hierarchical, self-reflexive way by focusing on women's experiences. Moreover, the output of the feminist research has also aims for women's movement such as changing women's secondary position in the society through empowering them while scrutinizing it. As I stated in the previous pages, this research has been developed through my own aunt's experiences. Therefore, as a researcher I tried not to exclude myself from those women.

This research is based on a case study conducted in Ankara which is the capital city of Turkey. I conducted qualitative research. I personally conducted all interviews during 2014 in Ankara. Before, I conducted interviews with women; I conducted seven structured pilot interviews with divorced and widow women and unstructured interviews with divorced women and executive officer at her office. Besides interviews, I became participant observer. Through her help, the arrangements for interviews with divorced mothers were easy. In order to understand the change in women's experiences with patriarchy, semi-structured interviews were conducted with nineteen divorced mothers and seventeen widow

mothers living in Ankara. The criterion for selecting these women was that the time period after marital dissolution should be at least one year and maximum ten years. Both divorced and widow women should have at least one child. They should be living alone or with their family but without a male partner. The snowball sample technic was used in selecting the interviewees.

1.2. Significance of the Study

There are various factors that necessitate further academic interest on divorced and widow women in Turkey, and that pushed me to conduct a research on this issue. First of all, as I indicated at the beginning, the most vulnerable stories belong to divorced women. Although there are a lot of discussions about divorce and its consequences on society, the voices of those who experienced divorce, especially women, are mostly not heard. Looking for and listening to this voice is meaningful in itself. The literature in Turkey mostly focuses on the divorce itself not on the individuals. There aren't many studies about post dissolution experiences of divorced and widow women in Turkey (Yılmaz and Fıdıloğlu, 2005: 87). The studies that have been conducted on divorced and widow women are limited; they mostly focus on the negative consequences of being a single parent and the negative effects of marital dissolution on families and children (Şentürk, 2006; Serin and Öztürk, 2007; Yılmaz, 1998; Şirvanlı, 1999; Şirvanlı, 2003; Toksoy, 2005; Yıldız, 2004; Keskin, 2007; Sucu, 2007; Ekmekçi, 2010). They are inadequate to examine the whole frame of the cultural norms and patriarchal features of the post dissolution experiences of these women. These studies examine marital dissolution as a "problem" for the society, the family and the children. They examine divorce with the presumption that it results in a "broken" family, and they analyze the negative consequences of marital dissolution rather than focus on the experiences of individuals after marital dissolution. A few studies, though, provide information

about one's marital status or new marital status has impact on his/her daily life (Kavas, 2010; Özar, 2011; Özar and Çakar, 2012; Demircioğlu, 2000).

Upon divorce and widowhood, single parent families are considered as a challenge to the ideal family structure in the society. Therefore, examining different patterns and their recognition in the society, in which there are different approaches, has significant impact on understanding the change in the structure of the family in Turkey. On the whole, the significance of this study is to increase information about the conditions of divorced and widow women in Turkey; to elucidate the dilemmas and difficulties these women experience. In addition, none of the studies compare the experiences of divorced and widow women after marital dissolution. This study aims to close this gap in the literature and searches for answers to the question of whether, for divorced and widow women, there is a difference between the consequences of post dissolution via act of divorce and the death of the husband or not.

Secondly, according to Lewis (1992), in a society, particular types of ideal behavior and expectations about women and their actions in the society were created by social policies. For example, working at home, describing the women's primary role as wife and mother are assigned as women's ideal activities in the societies. Social policy can have various functions for people in society, such as providing housing, child care, financial aid, etc. However, these functions may determine the position of certain groups and establish basic characteristics to receive support such as labelling them as "deserving". For example, according to Ruspini (1998: 1), women without a husband have usually been labelled as a "less deserving or undeserving group". Nevertheless, among the women living without a husband, widows are treated in a different way when compared to divorced women. As Millar (1989: 23-24) and Lewis (1993: 14) have discussed, widows are labeled as "the most deserving" group among the women without husbands. Researchers' main reason to define widow women as the most deserving is based on the male breadwinning approach. Since for divorced women, (ex)husbands are still there to provide financial support like alimony or child support. However, for widow

women, there is not a man to be responsible for their economic well being. However, in this frame, the literature in Turkey does not examine widow women or widowhood much. There is only a recent study of Yakut-Çakar and Özar (2012) confirming this deserving/undeserving dichotomy. However, even this study was not specifically focused on widow women. The reason why current study differs from previous studies is that it focuses on two particular groups of women, specifically on widow women, and compares their experiences with divorced women in Turkey.

Single parents particularly face with the complicated gendered interaction of the labor market, family and welfare systems. According to Ruspini,

The difficulties that single parents have to face within the labor market and social dimensions are multiplied if we think that the institutional framework, originally conceived for a different kind of organization of family life, is not ready to give an answer to the single-parent families (1998: 2).

Nonetheless, single parents' conditions are strongly related to gender inequalities in the labor market, in the family and the state. These inequalities also define and determine their socio-economic status. The economic difficulties faced by single women can be seen as a lack of child-care facilities, which has also crucial impact on women's participation in labor market; as women gradually being employed in lower-paid jobs; as the problem of reconciling work and family; as inadequate education and occupational training; and as the problems related to housing (Kitson et al., 1989; Ruspini, 1998).

In this sense, few social policies directly target divorced and widow women with children in Turkey. As far as existing welfare provisions are concerned, these women are neither seen nor heard (Özar, 2011). These women are generally integrated into the system of social services on the basis of employment. They may be recognized within policies as a target group such as mothers, low earners or poor people but not as widow or divorced women. This context states that different group of people are included in the system in different ways. For example, men can

be considered as “appropriate” breadwinners while women are considered as home carer. On the other hand, single women are considered as a problematical group (Kavas, 2010). According to Ruspini (1998), if single parents get benefits, these benefits are given under the rights of their children. The logic behind the social policies’ attention on single parents is that they are mothers who are raising children.

Based on the results of recent study about women without a husband in Turkey (Yakut-Çakar and Özar, 2012), we can argue that in the settings in Turkey, the visibility of divorced and widow women with children as a social category is certainly different due to the crucial role of the family and the importance of marriage for women. As for social policy benefits, only (un)married women and widows are considered needy and therefore they are given attention in the social policies (Özar, 2011). In this sense, this research is an effort to see the differences between divorced and widow women created by a gender biased, family-based welfare state and patriarchal social policy understanding in Turkey. Moreover, it is an effort to show how this process is experienced and challenged by mothers who experienced marital dissolution either through divorce or the death of their husband. In Turkey, it seems changes in the family structures are not effectively included into the social security systems since existing reforms and implementations do not examine the different group of women’s changing lives and needs. The lack of attention to single parents is linked to the major approach of the family in the society and to implementations of the welfare that prioritize and support the family. It is also strongly linked to the cultural and patriarchal features of womanhood and manhood in the society. Social policy in Turkey can be defined as “family based”, but the main emphasis is given to the “traditional” family (Alınçık and Üstübcü, 2012). The attitudes of public authorities to gender issues in the social policies or in the society has been constructed according to the conservative family setting, social security models based on employment status and social security benefits for only (un)/married and widow women. Another crucial dimension of the social policy in Turkey is the centrality of the family and unpaid

labor of women; in other words, the system assumes the family and the women within the family as the main provider of the welfare state. In this respect, this study examines the ways of establishing connections between different structures, in order to be able to show that divorced and widow women do not have adequate opportunity to stand on “your own two feet” outside family and marriage.

Thirdly, divorced and widow women with children are an interesting case in the sense that they experience some of the most difficult issues such as the unpaid work of caring alone, dilemmas about the responsibilities of individual and the family. These issues are further complicated by the fact that these women are seen as a problem in terms of cultural norms and social values (Gerstel, 1987). Despite the increase in their number, Ruspini (1998:7) claims that women without a husband are still considered as “a moral embarrassment since they emerge as the image of misbehavior against the norm of the marriage-based family”. In Turkey they challenged the norm of the sacred marriage and family. Due to their assumed “deviant positions”, single parents have been labeled as a threat to society since honor (*namus*) is related to a woman’s body, sexuality, and is the main pretense for control of men over women. Usually honor in Turkey is the equivalent of sexual purity (Hasan, 2003; Işık and Sakallı-Uğurlu, 2009). Women's sexual behaviors may consist of not only sexual intercourse but also style of dress, holding hands with the opposite sex, dedicating a song to a man on the radio, kissing, and flirtatious behavior (Arın, 2001). Honor is a very comprehensive concept that is much valued and it is considered to be one of the important social problems in Turkey (Sev’er and Yurdakul, 2001). Indeed, Turkish proverbs such as “you live for honor, you die for honor” and “the woman who left the house in wedding dress, comes back home in the shroud” are evidence of the importance of the honor issue. In this respect, in Turkey and conservative Muslim societies, honor is a man's wife, his “halal”, his sister, his mother, the other women in the family, and even women in the neighborhood. The honor issue, which causes extreme pressure on women, makes men as the women's "honor guard" which puts women under the supervision of men, of not only their fathers, brothers, and their husbands, but also of men in the

neighborhood (Birleşmiş Milletler Kalkınma Programı and Birleşmiş Milletler Nüfus Fonu, 2005: 62–63).

In a discussion about family, marriage and women, this research aims to evaluate the relation between the women and society because question of how the conventional definition of family and womanhood in Turkey is re-created is significant in this research. Hence, this study argues that divorced and widow women are surveilled by their families, relatives and social networks to keep an eye on their honor. This causes isolation of divorced and widow women. Further research is needed to study why divorced and widow women experience stigmatization more than divorced and widow men, and why isolation is more prevalent in both divorced and widow women. As feminist research concedes, women's oppression is universal, and men continue to control women. Divorced and widow women also experience occupational segregation according to their marital status, which gets its strength from the sacred family understanding, both strengthens the obstacles for women in work life, and promotes women's dependence on the men and the family and the secondary status of women in the labor market and the society. The struggle and the difficulties are not limited to the work place. Once a woman has become divorced or widowed, she experiences its consequences at work, at home, in her relations, and she experiences it within the boundaries of her socially constructed gender norms or roles. She lives the stigmatization at work, and she struggles with it as an employee, and as a wife and/or as a mother. Early studies in the literature which examine stigmatization have not had adequate effort into understanding the different impacts of the stigmatization on different group of women. Rather, it has defined stigmatization as a consequence of single women in the society. However, divorced and widow women experience stigmatization differently. This study is an attempt to keep the focus on women who experience stigmatization differently by looking at the issue through gender and patriarchy.

Finally, after reviewing the literature, it has been concluded that international literature conducted during the 90's on women's post dissolution

experience viewed the issue from the negative perspective adopted in Turkey today. In more recent international studies, however, divorce or being a widow is not a problem in the way it is still a problem in Turkey. Recent studies mostly focus on issues such as being single mothers by choice, how single mothers should be integrated to the labor market as a mom or as a worker (maternal employment) (Christopher, 2002; Berggren, 2003; Orloff, 2009; Craig and Mullan, 2011), welfare to work discussions (Giullari and Lewis, 2005; Haux, 2010; Davies, 2012), psychological aspects of widowhood and divorce, physical and mental health problems of single women (Simon, 2002; Williams and Umberson, 2004; Kalmijn and Monden, 2006). However, in Turkey marriage and family are still important institutions and concepts in examination of the gender division of labor and women's roles in the domestic sphere, in discussions of abortion, the norms of sexual behavior, sexuality and increasing divorce rates (Cinoğlu, 2010). Thus, end of marriage through death of divorce has many impacts on the many areas of the divorced and widow women's lives in Turkey. However, this area is an almost ignored issue except for a few studies (e.g. Kavas, 2010). Although the issue of marital dissolution is an area of intensive research, hardly any attention is directed to its consequences.

Consequently, in this study, I aim to contribute to filling this gap by analyzing the post dissolution experience of divorced and widow women. This analysis is an attempt to provide a comprehensive picture of the social and economic consequences of marital dissolution for divorced and widow women. Based on this account, the coping strategies of divorced and widow women will be explained. In particular, financial difficulties, single parenting after marital dissolution, and changing social network and the stigmas they face will be scrutinized. This study deals with the consequences of marital dissolution and focuses on its economic and social aspects. More specifically, it explores the matters of making new arrangements of economic resources, seeking employment, applying for financial support, searching for informal and social support, discussions about childcare,

custody, living arrangements, and dealing with cultural and social stigmas as well as loneliness.

It is important that divorced and widow women with marital dissolution experiences convey these experiences to the public sphere so that the differences between single mothers' experiences and those of married women are brought out into the open, which will in turn pave the way for change in the current conditions of these women. So, it is significant to evaluate divorced and widow women because marital status can impact women's entrances in public sphere and labor market. When we consider our understanding of women without a husband in Turkey, however, there are some major points that are missing. This is why it is necessary to give more attention to the experiences of divorced and widow mothers. By focusing the research on their experiences, and lives after marital dissolution, we can change the mainstream assumptions about the family, marriage, divorce and widowhood on lives.

1.3. Why Feminist Research?

In this study a feminist theoretical framework has been used in an attempt to analyze the experiences of divorced and widow women. Feminist perspectives criticize dominant traditions and challenge the status of women in the society. This study will use feminist approach not only as a theoretical framework but also, with the help of this approach, it will try to grasp the ways in which women cope with difficulties. Feminists generally deny a "universal" or single idea of the family. Rather, feminists provide new points of view and make us to reconsider the assumptions about the family. Thus, putting women's experiences at the center of the study will provide us an opportunity to understand the relations between women and family (Glenn, 1987). Accordingly, feminist perspectives on post dissolution focus on the implications of divorce and widowhood. By doing so, this study aims to contribute to family studies by examining the post dissolution

experiences of divorced and widow women in a feminist perspective, which is not explored adequately in Turkey.

This study is a feminist research since it will question the traditional understanding of family/marriage, and gender division of labor, all of which are considered to have a significant place in examining the experiences of divorced and widow women. Feminist research in the study of post dissolution challenges traditional family values which idealize the family as a married man and woman, living in the same residence, raising and taking care of children. There is bias against alternative family models because they depart from the ideal family type. Hence, any alternative model, especially divorce, is perceived as “breaking up” the family. But feminists reject these assumptions. For them, divorce is not an event, but a lengthy process. Their approach is opposed to the traditional conception of divorce as “breaking up” the family.

Moreover, one of the main aims of the feminist theory is not only to change women’s secondary status in the society but also to empower women. By challenging the traditional family understanding, the feminist study emphasizes that there are significant relations between families and paid work, welfare state, day care, etc. (Thorne, 1992). By pointing out these relations, I will try to examine important questions regarding the contradictions between family and women’s employment, care giving and the labor market. This study moves beyond documenting inequality in the family; it addresses the contradictions of family relations after marital dissolution, and how women cope, adapt or challenge to their difficulties after marital dissolution. Post dissolution research with a feminist perspective now can build upon existing literature and develop broader research initiatives that: a) “discuss women's post-divorce experiences and its determinants in both a gender structured family organization and a gender-stratified social structure” (Acker, et al., 1983; Cook & Fonow, 1990; cited in Catlett & McKenry, 1996) ; and b) move beyond viewing women as victims, highlighting women's ability to alter the marital dissolution as a life course in which women transform

oppressive conditions into empowerment opportunities (Catlett & McKenry, 1996).

This study with a feminist methodology will generate the research based on women's words and experiences. I decided to use feminist methodology in order to scrutinize women's experiences from their points of views by putting them at the center of the study. This study places women's experience at the center of the study and puts personal experience in a broader social context. Hence, what distinguishes this study as a feminist study is not because the constructing the research questions are done through feminist methods but also data evaluating process is also done by feminist methods and perspective.

1.4. The Plan of the Chapters

The dissertation consists of seven chapters including the introduction and conclusion. Chapter two presents both international and national literature on post dissolution experiences and the theoretical framework is presented. I will provide the theoretical perspective of this research by reviewing the contemporary feminist theoretical perspectives on patriarchy. First, financial difficulties and consequences after marital dissolution are investigated. Second, the literature on single parenting, difficulties about child care after marital dissolution is presented. Third, the issues of residence problems and re-structuring the "home" are discussed. Fourth, the literature on social networks after marital dissolution is presented. Last, the social stigmas and social attitudes towards divorced and widow women are also examined. Although divorce has progressively become a more visible issue, it is still considered a problem and the culprit of the loss of the family and family values. Thus, in this chapter, with related literature, the outcomes of social attitudes are examined.

In the third chapter, the factors responsible for the invisibility of divorced and widow women in Turkey are discussed. The significance of the family and family based social policy are examined.

In the fourth chapter, the methodology of the research is discussed. The reasons for the choice of narrative interviews, the interview process and the profiles of the interviewed women are stated. Additionally, the methodological discussions presented by feminist researchers are referred to and the reasons for the choice of a feminist methodology in this study are given.

Data analyses are presented in two different chapters. Chapter five examines how divorced and widow women are made invisible, how they are isolated and restricted to the family and the marriage by analyzing three important areas; financial consequences, single parenting, and living arrangements. Additionally, how women develop coping strategies are elaborated.

Chapter six looks into areas of social stigma toward women and their social relationships. In this chapter, how women react to social attitudes of the dissolution and what type of strategies divorced and widow women develop are discussed. The chapter then examines the issues of loneliness and critical thinking of divorced and widow women. Next, how the post dissolution affects divorced and widow women's identity construction independent of marriage and ex-husband are discussed.

I will review the literature that provides the background for the present study in the following chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF MARITAL DISSOLUTION

Life after marital dissolution can be considered as a time of change. It leads alterations in one's living arrangements, economic situation, social network, single parenting and so on. These alterations cannot be overcome easily. After a couple divorces, the transition to being a single parent consists of some problems. The problems that arise can be listed as such: financial problems, having sole responsibility for raising a family, social stigma and loneliness. Hence, the following sections will discuss these issues of work, rearing children, housing and social network relations, resolving economic conflicts, coping activities, support within the extended family, state and friends. In order to argue manifestation of patriarchy on post dissolution experiences of divorced and widow women, this study follows a theoretical path of two steps. First step is the discussion about relations between patriarchy, family honor, shame and single mothers. Second step is the feminist critiques of relations between single mothers, market, state and family.

The definition of the concept of patriarchy is one of the most important points in feminist studies. It has been used in a variety of meanings in feminist writings. According to Acker (1989: 235), in order to reconceptualize the subordination of women in the society and to change the male based social theory, theorizing patriarchy should be the first step. However, there are different types of oppression over women, which make the concept of patriarchy complex and difficult to have consensus upon the concept. There are also various theoretical explanations about the meaning and definition of the patriarchy. The concept of patriarchy is an important tool to analyze the characteristics of male dominance, women's oppression, and inequalities in the family, in the labor market and gender relations after marital dissolution. In that sense, patriarchy will be used as the key theoretical explanation in this dissertation. In following section, I discuss concept of

patriarchy. Here I will explain discussions about patriarchy and how the concept is used in this study to analyse the experiences of divorced and widow women.

2.1. Patriarchy, Family Honor, Shame and Single Mothers

In order to understand divorced and widow women experiences in a patriarchal society, we should examine the structure and practices of the patriarchy in that society. Dimensions of patriarchy differ from common dimensions used by “Western feminists, who tend to see patriarchy, in the simplest form, as privileging of males over females” (Pateman, 1988 cited in Hopkins, 2001: 169). This notion of patriarchy fails to capture the important aspects of patriarchy we come across in many Middle Eastern societies, including Turkey. In many societies like Netherlands, Norway, the social consequences of the end of a marriage through divorce or the death of the spouse, which are related to stigma and honor, became an outdated issue. However, in many Western Asian, North African and Middle Eastern cultures such as Turkey, the realities of patriarchy and honor prevail. Difficulties related to stigma and honor issues after marital dissolution occur in these societies. These difficulties are based on the belief that a woman is the property of her family, and men are considered to be the head of the family and women are to be obedient. In this context, I will examine different forms of patriarchy in Middle Eastern societies, including Turkey, in order to grasp why divorced and widow women experience difficulties after marital dissolution.

2.1.1. Patriarchal Transformations: Different Forms of Patriarchy

Explanations of patriarchy and women’s subordination are significant in order to examine women’s post dissolution experiences. However, it is also important to understand women’s different experiences in various societies.

Feminist researchers examine different forms of patriarchy in different regions and produce different ways and policies to reduce women's subordination in those areas. Some of feminist researchers presented precise explanations of women's oppression and subordination related to regions similar to Turkey (Kandiyoti, 1988; Moghadam, 1993; Sharabi, 1988; and Walby, 1997).

Walby discusses the concept of patriarchy in detail. According to Walby (1989: 1), in order to evaluate the gender inequalities, the concept of patriarchy is vital. Her critique for the existing theories of patriarchy let her construct patriarchy as a set of patriarchal relations, which are interrelated and also autonomous. She (1989: 214) argues that patriarchy consists of structures and activities as a system in which men control and exploit women. For Walby, in order to describe patriarchy, depending on one base rather than several bases causes reductionism and essentialism and "to theorize the different forms of patriarchy which are produced as consequences of their different articulation" is significant to scrutinize the conditions of women in a patriarchal society (Walby, 1989: 36). Walby summarizes six structures forming patriarchy; patriarchal mode of production, patriarchal relations in wage labor, the patriarchal state, male violence, patriarchal sexuality, and patriarchal culture (Walby, 1989). According to Walby, all these six structures sanction women and provide basis men to control women.

The increase of participation of women into labor market in contemporary society can be considered a gain for women in a patriarchal society. However, patriarchy has also affected the employment process because *patriarchal relations in wage labor* cause economic difficulties for women through the lower wages, segregated positions, and the limited occupational jobs offered to women in comparison to men.

Moreover, for *patriarchal mode of production*, within a patriarchal household, the breadwinning position is given to men while taking care of the home is considered as women's work. In such a household, the appropriate job for women is assumed full-time responsible house chores. Because of gender division

of labor in the family, women are considered responsible for housework, caring for children, sick and older members of the family. Mostly, women deal with such work despite also being employed in full-time paid work. For the purpose of this study, this condition may cause women to be trapped in bad marriages because they may fear of not providing economic well being for themselves and their children when they end the marriages. Rather, when women's marriages end, women without husband support may face poverty or financial difficulties.

Another point in Walby's patriarchal structures is that in many societies, women are also *culturally* in secondary positions in social life because many cultures emphasize the importance of mothering, which hinders women in many. Furthermore, *sexuality* is another aspect of patriarchal structures. Walby (1989) argues that although women gained some rights in sexuality issues such as contraception, abortion and divorce law, the sexuality of women is still considered something which should be protected by men. As a result, most women face *male violence* which is sustained by patriarchy (Walby, 1989).

Finally, in a *patriarchal state*, there can be gender inequalities on the state level which limit women to held power in the state. For instance, despite limited changes such as easier divorce laws, some activities, policies and reforms of the state can regulate and control women's lives both in labor market, at home, in/out of the family and marriage, and women's sexuality/body.

Walby contributed to the literature on patriarchy by dividing patriarchy as a private patriarchy and public patriarchy. The six structures discussed above are provided by these two forms of patriarchy. *Private patriarchy* is constructed by inequalities within home and family (Walby, 1990). One aspect of private patriarchy is that women are engaged in full-time housework rather than in paid employment. The participation of women in the formally paid work is low because most of the married women are full-time housewives. Private patriarchy suppressed and controlled women individually with the activities and sanctions of a private

patriarch (Walby, 1990). Because of the patriarchal socialization and internalized gendered roles, women are restricted and limited with the family.

On the other hand, different from private patriarchy, *public patriarchy* is related to public structures such as schools, religious institutions, work places and the state (Walby, 1989). Different from private patriarchy, where women are restricted within the family, public patriarchy lets women participation in public spheres, but they are still subordinated by the gender inequalities and roles in the labor market, state level and financial issues. Walby (1989: 228) claims that private patriarchy does not include the women into the particular social arenas rather than a household headed by a private patriarch who is defining and shaping the roles of women and their activities in the private sphere of the home. On the other hand, according to Walby (1989: 2), women are not excluded from particular arenas in public patriarchy; but subordination of women in those arenas continues collectively than individually.

Therefore, even in the situations in which private patriarch does not exist; control over women can be provided by public patriarchy. Discussions of Walby help us to see how the family is one of the a primary sites of men's power over women through women's unpaid work within the family and how idealized cultural, economic and social views about the family. In particular, assuming man as the male breadwinner is implemented in many dimensions of the social policies and made women financially dependent on a male breadwinner. The assumed role of male breadwinner and the dependency on him is considered as public patriarchy in Walby's studies. In order to understand subordination of women and inequalities within the family, it is necessary to examine women's experiences within public sphere and in the labor market.

The significance of the family constructed as husband-breadwinner, wife-homemaker and dependent children is challenged by single mothers such as divorced and widow women. Thus single women are not controlled or subordinated by private patriarchs such as husbands, but instead they are controlled and

subordinated collectively by public patriarchs in the public sphere. Walby (1989: 89) points out that in public patriarchy, women are not necessarily controlled by their husbands as they did in the family; however, there has been a change from private to public patriarchy who continues to exploit the women's domestic labor in the public sphere, not as much as an individual patriarch. In a similar sense, divorced and widow women are no longer bound to a husband, private patriarchy. However, as a mother, they are subordinated by public patriarchy in the structures such as waged work, sexuality and social relations.

In that sense, there is a particular form of the public patriarchy in Muslim societies. Some researchers have been called it as "neopatriarchal" (Sharabi, 1988) to capture pervasive gender inequities and women's disadvantages in the society. Sharabi (1988) focuses on the particular patriarchal form in Arab societies. According to Sharabi, 'neopatriarchy' is "*neither modern nor traditional*" (Sharabi, 1988: 4). It is a modernized form of patriarchy (Sharabi, 1988: 4). Sharabi focuses on families, women and the role of the state. In the neopatriarchal form of patriarchy, family, society and the state are in a modern relation but they are rooted in patriarchal values. In a similar way, Sharabi (1988: 7) emphasizes that the central feature of neopatriarchy is still "the dominance of the Father (patriarch), the center around which the national as well as the natural family are organized." In the neopatriarchal society, women are reduced to a lower status than men and Sharabi claims that "a conservative, relentless male-oriented ideology, which tended to assign privilege and power to the male at the expense of the female, keeping the latter under crippling legal and social constraints" (Sharabi, 1988: 33). Neopatriarchal approach focuses on both the institutional and cultural structure of society. For Sharabi, the neopatriarchal approach is embedded in those institutional forms; for instance, through family policies which can discourage women's participation into the labor market. In these cases, the family law/policy reflects the patriarchal values and norms, and defines duties and obligations among its members.

In Middle Eastern societies, families are more important than persons (Barakat, 1993), and identities are being defined in familial terms. The structure of the family is based on a larger kin system that defines members' roles, privileges, responsibilities and also limitations (Joseph, 2000, 2001). Patriarchy is rooted in this family structure and proceeds from it. In order to understand the patriarchy and gendered structures in Muslim societies, features of "belt of classic patriarchy" are used (Kandiyoti, 1988: 274-90). In the "patriarchal belt," women were controlled by strict control and limitations on behavior and gender division of labor which locate women out of public sphere (Moghadam, 1993: 108). Offenhauer (2005: 10) argues that "[t]he patriarchal belt stretches from North Africa across the Muslim Middle East (including non-Arab Turkey and Iran) to South and East Asia (Pakistan, Afghanistan, northern India, and rural China)." The patriarchal system in the Middle East is characterized by John Caldwell (1982: 162) as "male domination, son preference, restrictive codes of behavior for women, and the association of family honor with female virtue. In many areas, the preoccupation with female virginity leads to honor killings in the event of real or perceived sexual misconduct by women." In a similar way, Offenhauer (2005: 57) classifies the characteristics of patriarchal belt societies as extended household, polygamy, control of men over women, young age at marriage, arranged marriages, couples supposed to live with husband's family (bride is assumed as the assistance of the mother in law), no for the creation autonomous self for women.

Combining Kandiyoti's (1988) explanation of "classic patriarchy," with Sharabi's (1988) approach of "neopatriarchal society," Moghadam examines the alteration of patriarchy and the family due to changing social structures in the Middle East and North Africa such as economic progress, changes in the demographic structures, legal adjustments, women's increasing rates in education and participation into labor market (Moghadam, 2004: 137). Moghadam (1991) has transformed Sharabi's concept as "neopatriarchal state". According to Moghadam (1991: 131), the concept of the neopatriarchal state is an umbrella concept which consists of different various political systems. According to Sharabi (1988), the basic

common feature of neopatriarchy in the Middle East is the social class and its petite bourgeoisie culture in the 1950s. However, Sharabi claimed that the new class emerged in the 1950s in the Middle East soon after it became ineffective as a social force. Moreover, they were unsuccessful in providing both internal unities, coherence, capitalist development and the societal modernization of bourgeoisie as well as the revolutionary social transformation of proletariat. Rather, Sharabi argued that the discourse of nation and religion and tradition govern the society, politics and also the new petite bourgeoisie. Moghadam took the issue of the larger picture of the Middle Eastern countries like Turkey, Iran, Egypt, Syria, Algeria, and Tunisia and added the analysis that there was a transformation in these societies on the level of ruling petite bourgeoisie. Moghadam (1991: 133) stated that

In the course of exercising political power and through control over state property and the accumulation process, the ruling petite bourgeoisie became a state bourgeoisie, and the state system could be more properly called a developing capitalist state.

Among those cultural changes, there are some in gender relations which have taken place through revolutionary periods or state oriented legal adjustments, such as the Kemalist revolution in Turkey. However, Moghadam claimed that the transformation and development process of these neopatriarchal states both toward the past and the future, toward tradition and modernity. In those societies, there was a strong state and weak civil society. The nature of the neopatriarchal state and the ruling class causes uncertainty over “the woman issue” in these societies.

Moreover, Moghadam (2000) defines the woman’s conditions in the neopatriarchal state as a patriarchal gender contract based on male breadwinner and female homemaker. In this relationship between man and woman, the man exercises his authority on the woman by limiting her access to economic resources and to the public sphere (Başlevent & Onaran, 2004; Gündüz-Hoşgör & Smits, 2008). The patriarchal gender contract gives justified access to men to be in the public sphere, in the labor market and to held power on the state level, and the

right to concentrate on women's being in the private sphere and in the family. Moghadam's approach aims to make visible the taken-for-granted gendered structures between woman, state and family. In the families where women have a husband, the husband is expected to provide income. Women without a husband or male relatives are not allowed to participate in labor market.

According to Moghadam (1991), the state is also an organization that strengthens patriarchy just as other organizations of society do, such as kinship and family, class, religion, ethnicity, and educational institutions. State policies and legal system also facilitate the persistence of patriarchy, the isolation of women from the labor market and the preservation of patrilineal extended family (Moghadam, 2004: 145). Moghadam (2003: 130) points out that by focusing on patriarchal structures, states expect the help of the extended families. The neopatriarchal state determines and defines family in various forms: marriage process, family law/policy, reproductive rights, and contraception, and abortion, formal care facilities. By doing this, neopatriarchal states use gendered views of women within private and public structures (Moghadam, 1993: 14).

Turkey can be considered as a society what Caldwell defined as "the patriarchal belt" where male supremacy, restrictive codes of behavior and the relationship between family honor and woman's chastity are some characteristics. Moreover, Moghadam's neopatriarchal state is seen in the patriarchal model of AKP's gender policy in Turkey, which I will discuss in following chapter. The neopatriarchal state model in Turkey is built on conservative morals, sanctity of tradition and family values. One can easily conclude that this whole patriarchal social arrangement does not create favorable conditions for women after marital dissolution; especially in the family and in the society in which man is assumed as head and authority.

At this point, the ideas of Moghadam and Walby are important to underline that patriarchal changes its forms (e.g. from traditional to neopatriarchal, from private to public patriarchy) due to changing socio-economic and political structures

of society while still retaining its core in male domination. Although modernization process affected many aspects of the societies, patriarchies continue to exist by being transformed from one form to another form like neopatriarchies.

The above review of the feminist perspectives and different forms of patriarchy shows that in a patriarchal society in which marriage is considered as the only way for women to survive (both socially and financially) and have legitimates status, single mothers are often ignored. In neopatriarchal society, divorce and widowhood is a relatively stigmatized and disadvantageous condition for the reason that it causes a woman to lose her private patriarch, who provides familial, social or public status and recognition for her which is also related to her being married and rearing children (Cohen and Savaya, 2003). Haj-Yahia (1995) pointed out that for traditional societies; the wholeness of the family is significant while divorce is undesirable. As a result, divorced mothers ignore the problems in order to escape from stigmatization (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 1998).

Because of the status of women in the family, they create interpersonal strategies in the family. Kandiyoti points out that “women strategize within a set of concrete constraints”, in order to maximize their life opportunities both in the family and in society (Kandiyoti, 1988: 274). She defines these strategies as “patriarchal bargains” in which women bargain with the existing patriarchal system (Kandiyoti, 1988: 278). In a similar way, Samarasinghe (2000: 195) argues that in some societies “women may not be in a position to overtly reject their roles as designated by patriarchy. At the same time they may not resort to manipulative tactics within the expected norms of subservience”. She suggests a different way to cope with patriarchy in that “women may subvert some of the entrenched elements of patriarchy itself, by subtly using their designated roles as wives and mothers to transform the system itself” (Samarasinghe, 2000: 195). The logic behind this strategy is that women find appropriate ways to survive and have benefits within the system by accommodating patriarchal structures. We can read divorced and widow women’s efforts as a strategy to build a family based on the recreation of

the valued family type in the patriarchal society. In other words, the patriarchal family structure is structuring experiences of single mothers' doing family since it defines "standards" for a particular family. Studies (Cherlin, 2006; Sarkisian, 2006) show us that alternative families such as divorced and widow women families are defined by the family ideal. This idea remains a powerful cultural impact on single mothers' life and on perceptions about single mothers. A woman who internalizes traditional gender roles can face difficulties in restructuring her new family life as a single mother since she also stereotypes being a single woman as deviant, and she may believe that the spouse who is supposed to be the disciplinarian and breadwinner is the husband.

2.1.2. Men's Control and Care of Women

The family and kinship structures have different impact for different members of society, particularly between men and women (Stone, 1998). In Europe, a kinship system is constructed on "bilineal descent, nuclear family and an inheritance system, which gave women the right to inherit property, contributed to a relatively strong autonomy of women" (Chakrabarty and Kim, 2009: 8). On the other hand, they point out that in many parts of the Middle East, "a family is based on patrilineal descent, the importance of a joint family, the inability of women to inherit property, restrictions on widow remarriage, and severe restrictions on women's behavior" (Chakrabarty and Kim, 2009: 8). For example, a majority of Egyptian women needed spouses or male kin "to access social and subsidized products" (Moghadam, 2005: 29). As Youssef claimed in his study comparing Latin America and Middle East societies,

Latin America and the Middle East are in the institutional and normative contexts of kinship organization. Both types of societies are characterized "normatively" by a social order noted for its strong familism, patriarchalism, cultural tradition of male supremacy, and the

sanctioning of a religion (Spanish Catholicism in one, Islam in the other) which reinforces the subsidiary position of the woman in the social structure (Youssef, 1972: 143).

Youssef (1972: 145) points out that “kinship institutions provide that there is always a male member (father, brother, cousin, or uncle) who is economically, legally, and morally responsible for the woman, whatever her marital status.” In Stone’s study (1997), it is claimed that kinship involves cultural values which create the meanings and moral connections with others. Mullin (2005: 50), in a similar way, claims that construction of the Arab family involves both rights and obligations in which members of family not only get benefits but also have limitations on them. In this patriarchal logic, “the role of the masculine protector puts those protected, paradigmatically women and children, in a subordinate position of dependence and obedience” (Young, 2003: 2). For example, in some of the societies in the Middle East, “a married woman is not allowed to apply for government assistance even if her husband has long deserted her since all married women have an earning male to look after the family”(Mullin, 2005: 55).

The patriarchal system both cares for and controls family members (Joseph, 2000: 122-125). For women members, this relation is stricter as a result of social rules constructed within patriarchal structure. Patriarchy in this approach is defined as

Dominance of males over females and elders over juniors (males and females) and the mobilization of kinship structures, morality, and idioms to institutionalize and legitimate these forms of power. By power, I mean the capacity to direct the behavior of others, even against their will (Joseph, 1994: 234).

This condition distinguishes family members according to their age and their gender. The young respect and conform the old; the women conform to the requests and needs of men in the family and in the kinship. In return, women and the young are protected and supported by elder males. In a sense, this patriarchal structure aims to provide social protection to those who need it. As Barakat

(1993: 98) claims, “the success and the failure of an individual member becomes that of the family as a whole.” If men are privileged with power, they are kept responsible for a moral and material responsibility as well (Moghadam, 1993: 102). Women, even if they are married, are cared for and controlled. In the patriarchal structure, the father has authority and responsibility. The patriarchal norms and values keep men in the family and the kinship responsible for the economic and social well being of women until they marry. After they marry, husbands take over this role (Barakat, 1993). Since women are kept dependent for protection and care, socially and economically, women and also men are constrained and “locked” to family (Joseph, 2000: 123-124).

These concepts allow us to investigate the relationship between families and divorced and widow women within patriarchal relationships. In such a system, caring and control of women continue after the marital dissolution, which has an impact on women’s experiences. Until marriage, men in the family of origin are responsible for women in the family. After marriage, the husband takes over this duty. However, both the family of origin and the family in laws also have impact on the married couple. When the marriage ends divorce, care/control is provided by the ex-husband and family of origin/in law. On the other hand, for widow women, the husband is deceased but the family is still there to maintain control. Both groups of women are formerly married but not “single again.” Taking charge of the lives of divorced and widow women are the continuity of this care/control system. Men and society continue to be responsible for women’s behavior and welfare throughout their lives, even after the dissolution of marriage, and a sense of responsibility for females and juniors continues.

2.1.3. The Honor-Shame Connection

Based on the patriarchal structure discussed above, there are two basic concepts that come up: honor and shame. Honor is defined by the sexual relations and behavior of a man's womenfolk such as chastity of the daughter and sister,

loyalty of the wife, chastity of the widowed and divorced women. Shame ensures that men feel a sense of responsibility for their folk in terms of family honor.

The concept of *namus*, translated as “honor”, is crucial in examining the consequences of the post dissolution experiences of women in Turkey. Honor is usually related to women’s sexuality. The control of women’s sexuality is like an unwritten contract among men (Sirman, 2004: 45). Thus a divorced or widow woman’s sexuality becomes a threat to the social order because it is not in control and is socially suppressed. As Sirman (2004) explains, a man’s honor is understood through the women (in the family, in the kinship, etc.) that he is responsible for, while a woman’s honor is understood through her sexuality. Awwad (2011: 105) points out that the social construction of honor is very much related with the social construction of femininity and masculinity in the society. In her study, Kandiyoti (1988) described this construction of femininity and masculinity in the Middle East on two bases: Men are characterized by domination and control while women are characterized by sexual purity and obedience. In the Middle Eastern societies, femininity is equaled with roles, duties and obligations which make women weak and limit their options of changing their own lives. Patriarchal culture in these societies expects virginity and being honorable (*namuslu*) from women at all ages and from women of all statuses; married, divorced or widow (Awwad, 2011: 106).

According to Gill (2009: 3), in a society prioritized honor as a major social dimension, man as a head of family is considered as responsible to guard the family honor and to prevent any shameful or humiliating behavior of the members of the family. The reputations and sexual relations of womenfolk of a man are linked to his honor (Nagel, 2010). An honorable woman should have chastity and virtue. If a woman has a relationship with a man other than her husband, this is seen as dishonorableness (*namussuzluk*), and such a woman is called dishonorable (*namussuz*). A woman therefore has to be under strict guardianship of male members in the family (Ouis, 2009). This situation creates social pressure on women because she feels obligatory to protect while man feels obligatory to restore the honor in everyday life of women (Abu-Lughod, 2011; Hussein, 2009). The

reputation of a woman is worth everything, even more than her well-being or her life (Erez & Berko, 2010; Ouis, 2009). This also puts enormous pressure on the divorced and widow women and their families to not bring shame upon their families. In this sense, the dimension that determines a divorced and/or widow woman's good reputation significantly reduces her to her sexuality, which is seen as a threat to society, as she can cause damage to her family and society through her sexuality. For this reason, divorced and widow women can be labelled with a bad reputation with a simple rumor concerning that they behave against the socially accepted norms.

Furthermore, a woman's marital status causes distrust in the society because it is considered that uncontrolled sexuality of her has possible seductive behaviors. As Gerstel (1987: 180) points out "the married feel uncomfortable, even threatened by them, and act as if divorce, as a "social disease," is contagious. Or divorce poses a threat because of the desired freedom and sexuality it (perhaps falsely) represents." In a study of Cohen and Savaya, the accounts of women show that they were considered as "broken glass" which cannot be completed again and treated as if they are open to any sexual affairs with men (Cohen and Savaya, 1997). According to Cohen and Savaya (1997), divorced women tried to prove that they can preserve their chastity and take care of their children. Al-Krenawi and Graham (1998) also argued that divorced Arab women in Israel deal with problems such as social surveillance, lack of liberty and the loss in their social status. In their study, Katz and Pesach (1985: 769) focus on the social attitude in Israel toward divorced women: "Divorced women often are considered a 'hazard' to intact families." Moreover, they add that divorced men suffer much less from "the image of potential 'family breakers.'"

Therefore, after marital dissolution, divorced and widow women face society's restricting controls more than men do. These rules do not only define the relations between men and women but also they dominate the perception of a society. Mernissi (2003) discusses that there is a different perception of sexuality

for men and women in patriarchal societies which shapes the perception of honor, which is linked to men while shame is linked to women.

Moreover, Moghadam (2000) discusses the relationship between man and woman is characterized through men's decisions and patriarchal social norms which limiting his wife's behavior and controlling her being in the public sphere. Barakat (1993: 105) claims that the logic behind the worry to control women in order to protect family honor can be the attribution of women not only to be responsible for their own immoralities but also to be responsible for those of men, husbands, fathers or brothers, etc. Additionally, one of the many responsibilities mediated to women in this system is the maintenance of family honor. In societies in which honor is significant, Paulusson (2013) argues that women's attitudes and how they handle with traditional norms affect the family honor (Husseini, 2009; Mansur et al, 2009). The norms, beliefs, values and stereotypes imposed by society give rise to expectations of proper behavior for women on the basis of their marital status (Kavas, 2010). The new marital status of divorced and widow women leads to the implementation of restrictions on particular issues as the times of travel, places of travel, communication with certain people, dress codes and etc. Honor is considered to be something which can be lost or gained. When women disobey the unwritten rules, shame is brought upon the family. Behavior that is appropriate for a morally good woman is, for example, chastity, having no sexual relations out of marriage, dressing in appreciated way, knowing the responsibilities determined according to traditions (Erez & Berko, 2010, Kardam et al., 2005). If women behave outside of these norms, they must be punished. Thus, the fear of punishment prevents women from making their own choices about their own lives, which causes restrictions in everyday lives of women (Mansur et al, 2009). This includes maintaining their virginity until marriage. Virginity issues are then related to a larger system of honor that is part of the kinship structure of family. The unmarried woman's role in maintaining family honor is most often achieved by her loyalty to accepted sexual behavior and by protecting her virginity until marriage. Any

behavior violating appropriate norms and values by women is observed as a threat to the honor of man, family and society (Kandiyoti, 1987: 322).

While divorce/widowhood is a personal matter, it can spill over into the workplace making it a public affair. The separation of the divorced and widow women from the married ones is also apparent in the work place. Therefore, attitudes of colleague may be based on their new found marital status Arıkan (1990). As time passes, the divorced may have difficulties to answer the same questions about why they divorced. Thus, Kavas (2010: 57) claims that they can create divorce stories because attitudes and perceptions of people at the work place may affect more than their social networks. As a result of this questioning, divorced women may seek the ways to make people “like” them by creation post-dissolution stories. However, by doing this, divorced women reproduce the idea that women are supposed to be married. They “subscribe to the very rules they have broken” (Becker, 1963: 3, cited in Gerstel, 1987). In doing so, divorced and widow women sustain the existing patriarchal social order. It is not surprising that many divorced and widow women try to remarry. It may be that remarriage can be seen as a coping strategy to escape from the social pressures emanating from stigmatization. By remarrying, or telling them post dissolution stories, they conform to the patriarchal social norms that women are supposed to be married. It is a way to be accepted in the society.

The status of divorced and widow women in a patriarchal society is determined in cultural norms and values and is supported by legal and cultural institutions in society. These cultural beliefs prescribes different roles in the society to divorced and widow women. Thus, if the divorced and widow women do not behave according to the prescribed roles, men are not only entitled to but felt to sanction these women. The sanction of men and social control are supported by family members and justified by patriarchal norms and values, patriarchal discourse of politics and religion (Joseph, 1993; Moghadam, 1993).

To sum up, after marital dissolution, the patriarchy in society restricts women's decisions, and their mobility because of their new status as being without a male partner (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 1999). These problems are related to the social construction of femininity which further complicates the women's lives after marital dissolution. Cultural practices in patriarchal societies emphasize men's control over women (even after marital dissolution) to preserve the female virginity and expect men to defend family honor and reputation (Al-Krenawi et al., 2004). Women in the Arab and Middle Eastern world may be killed in order to protect family honor since women are perceived to represent the honor of a family. For instance, in Turkey, in terms of divorced women, there has been a new type of honor killing (Kav, 2014). Kav (2014) expressed that "Now we are facing modern murder. Women want a divorce, and the families aren't adjusted to it."

2.1.3.1. Coping Strategies for Honor Related Difficulties

The labeling of divorced and widow women as deviant and the negative effects on them are defined as stigmatization. Stigma has many levels. On the one hand, single parents, especially divorced women, are blamed of not keeping their men. On the other hand, single mothers families are considered deviant since single women and not the men are the head of the family. Stigmas towards divorced and widow women are based on patriarchal norms, beliefs, values, and gendered stereotypes that are commonly shared by members in the society. In a patriarchal understanding, the meaning of a "good woman" is one who accepts the role of wife and mother. This patriarchal understanding idolizes the image of woman as mother, at the same time fearing the woman who fails to conform to prescribed roles. After a woman is married, her work in and outside the home and social status is usually closely supervised by the husband. Divorced and widow women who head their own households, on the other hand, stand in stark contrast to married women. Thus, divorced and widow women have difficulties in performing these prescribed

roles. The negative attitudes toward women arise from an idealized type of married women and the family unit. Because a woman becomes an ex-wife or widow, the cultural meanings of these categories have an impact on experiences of these women. "A divorcee" (sexually available), "a widow" (bad luck on family), "a single parent" (failed mother), these classifications make it difficult for women to gain adequate social and financial support. Even when they get support, they get it with pre-conditions since they do not have a "head" in the family. Tietjen (1985: 493) points out in her study that single women in Sweden felt themselves as framed with never ending gossips of their neighbors who generally avoid the single mothers in the same neighborhood. In Western societies, stigma can cause gossip but in Middle Eastern societies, stigma causes killings more than just gossip. Stigma leads to the surveillance of divorced and widow women's lifestyles. As a result of this public surveillance, men and other women may constantly test the chastity of divorced and widow women. The single women in a study in Israel express that they regain a social status in the society when they proved that they were no longer a treat to the society and passed the tests by resisting inducements (Cohen and Savaya, 1997: 8). In a way, divorced and widow women "censure" their lives and behaviors and censure for what others see (Gerstel, 1987). For example, women in the study of Cohen and Savaya (1997: 7) talk about their coping strategies as censoring their femininity, behaving like a man, dressing up only for family affairs.

To escape the patriarchal norms and gendered codes of the society, basically in terms of honor, single women may present themselves as "still married" (Tejero and Torrabadella, 1997: 12). Another way women deal with stigmas is strategically avoiding being in places where they expect to encounter stigmatizations (Reissman, 2000: 123). This auto censure is described as a strategy to avoid the demands and expectations of other people as to how a good and honorable woman is supposed to be. Above all, the divorced and widow women may stop to communicate with people who have reacted negatively to them in order to escape from being exposed to stigma. Although these coping strategies can cause isolation, dealing with stigma forces women "to control and to resist the criticism" (Reissman, 2000: 124).

As one strategy, they involve in "preventive disclosure" which can be considered as a type of "instrumental telling" in order to what other think about themselves (Schneider and Conrad, 1980: 40). Nevertheless, in order to deal with stigma, these women construct "developing the story," the "account of the divorce" (Weiss, 1975: 15) or "sad tales" (Goffman, 1963; cited in Gerstel, 1987). In this way divorced women justify why they divorce. By offering "accounts" of their actions, the divorced can share the blame with their ex-husbands (Gerstel, 1987: 177). Thus, these "accounts" created by divorced women, are used to put pressure upon old friends to take sides when the marriage ends. While these strategies may remove the blame from the women, these stories put the blame to the ex-husbands. In a similar way, sad tales of widows can be used as a way to test reliability of old friends.

Stigmatized people can learn "practical survival strategies from others' experience" (Schneider and Conrad, 1980: 37). The self-censure, "of what the putatively stigmatized think others think of them and "their kind" and about how these others might react to disclosure" (Schneider and Conrad, 1980: 35) is another important point in coping with stigma. Divorced and widow women have in mind an idea of what a divorced and/or widow woman is. Not telling others about their marital status is one possible strategy. This weakens the risk of stigmatization, and it is thus easier to be in the public sphere by maintaining a socially accepted identity. In employment, for example, women also use this strategy because they think there could be stigmatization or discrimination if their employers subsequently learned of their marital status.

To sum up, honor, distrust and shame are closely linked concepts and they are the parts of cultural and patriarchal definitions of womanhood and manhood in society, which determines what an honorable man and a shameful woman is. The major emphasis of this construction and definition is on women's sexuality. If the public is aware of sexual activities of divorced and widow women out of marriage, violence or stigma can occur. Therefore, a public accusation/rumor against women who are assumed to be responsible for family honor by bringing shame to it can

also cause stigma. As a result, in order to protect family honor, a great social control is constructed without caring women's lives (Awwad, 2011). Hence, a system of control of honor by using violence may occasionally be employed. The emphasis on women's chastity causes legitimate basis to form violence against women. This is why divorced and widow women create extreme coping strategies to prove that they are not doing anything to harmful their honor when they face with pressure in the society.

This study look into manifestation of patriarchy in post dissolution experiences of divorced and widow women. The present study investigates how patriarchy plays a role in explaining differences and/or similarities of post dissolution experiences of divorced and widow women in Turkey. I will discuss patriarchy as a social construction that adjusts itself across time and place in societies.

2.2. Single Mothers Trapped in between of State, Market and the Family

A country's welfare regime determines how to share the welfare needs of individuals offered by services in the state, the family and the market between the three institutions. Esping-Andersen emphasizes the significance of welfare regime as "deliberate policy intervention by the state in social polcies" (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Hence, Yumaklı (2011: 4) emphasizes that rather than socio-economic and cultural conditions in a certain country, the state has a significant role in changing the relation between family and work for women by its social policies. Because of the crucial impact of the states on single mothers, it is worth examining this dimension of social policies.

Since the societies change, major transformations and changes took place in the family in industrialized countries. Family size has changed from extended to nuclear to single; marriage has become less popular and single parent families are increasing. However, welfare state is constructed over the assumed ideal family

type in the society. This ideal family type is supposed to include a married couple of man and woman, male breadwinner, woman responsible for children and home. Moreover, for this family, it is considered that employment status of man and his wage is the major provider for the social and financial security for woman and children in the family. In this model of welfare states, two main principles are significant: the first one is the full male employment and the second one is family stability provided by a division of labor within the family (Gonzalez, et al. 2000: 7). The traditional role of the family is maintained and it is assumed as “the primary aspect of social protection, regardless of the individual’s relationship with market and the recognized rights of individuals provided by the welfare state” (Bimbi, 2000: 72).

Feminist researchers have highlighted the gendered nature of welfare states and focused on the gendered division of labor. According to Costa (2014), gender division of labor in the welfare state transform the following three areas: care, women’s access to labor market and being able to have autonomous life.

Gender bias in the welfare state assumes to maintain the traditional gender roles, the traditional division of labor and women’s economic independence on social security benefits of men. In this sense, we need to examine divorced and widow women in order to see gender biased structure of the social policies since we may not be aware of these bias while women are considered as mothers, daughters and wives of men in the family. The attitude of welfare regime towards single women reveals the gender bias in the welfare regime since there isn’t a man whom the state depends on for the social welfare and security of women. In this sense, in analyzing the single mothers, Orloff’s theoretical approach will help me examining relations between women and marriage/family, gender division of labor, inequalities in the labor market. When we consider the conditions of divorced and widow women for this study, after marital dissolution, Orloff’s focus on mainstream welfare state regime in which it is considered only way to access to welfare state benefits and services depends on male employment status. Being employed as a condition to receive welfare state services leaves many women out of system when

it is considered that very little number of women who are formally employed with social security benefits or many women do not have a male member who are entitled to formal paid work. Hence, Orloff's criticism states that mainstream welfare state regimes are based on the idea of the women depended on men in the family and in the society. By this approach, I plan to examine gender bias in social policies and their implications for divorced and widow women.

This section aims to describe and interpret the particularities of the single parent families and market-state-family relations within economic and social context. I first scrutinize the theoretical discussions linking policies and single mothers. The discussion about this link is important to evaluate the complexity of the relationship between social policies and single mothers. But more importantly, it also helps us to analyze the gendered assumptions behind the existing relationship between state, family and market. To simplify the discussion, I initially focus on the impact of social policies on single mothers.

2.2.1. Single Mothers' Access to Paid Work and the Dilemmas of Social Policies

In general, though, welfare refers to socio-economic wellbeing. Examining mainstream welfare state theories and the changes in the family from the feminist perspective have provided us to perceive and examine the welfare regimes in a new and comparative way. Orloff (1993) and other feminist scholars (Sainsbury, 1994, 2001) provided us new perspectives about inequalities in the labor market and social welfare policies. They have pointed out that the focus of welfare state analyses should also include relations between work and care (Sainsbury, 1994). With gender concerns, feminist studies have resulted in different typologies of welfare states.

This re-analyzing of mainstream welfare state research from the point of gender has led the studies to focus from the labor market to the interaction between the labor market and the family. Hence, one of the main focuses of

researchers became social policy which has crucial role in shaping gender. Social policies are crucial for women's participation into labor market because they ease the way to labor market for women with family programs, providing necessary social services. In recent years, there have been various studies about the effect of welfare state structure on women, families and children (Bryson et al. 2007; Orloff, 2009). It is also argued that social programs combined with specific family models and gender relations that did not always reflect the experiences of single mothers (Lewis, 1992). Social policies have a significant effect on families. Among those effects, social policies define and determine conditions of employment, access to welfare benefits, health services, and parenthood. Gauthier (2001: 1) pointed out that social policies define and determine family life and life of single mothers by creating opportunities, causing constraints, promoting certain types of family structures, and providing incentives to marry, divorce, and to have children. Many social policies encourage traditional family values and set the patriarchal norms, stigma, and sanctions in order to receive benefits (Gauthier, 2001).

As a result, there are different combinations of labor market regulations, different family policies and different implementations and impacts of state. These variations can help women to form and maintain autonomous households¹² (Orloff, 1993) with different consequences for different groups of women. In this context, as wives and widows, women have often been considered as deserved group to have social and financial benefits through their husband's employment status (Sainsbury, 1996). But single mothers disappear from the analysis as soon as they disappear from the labor market as Lewis (1992) put it. One of the dilemmas a state seems to have when preparing a policy regarding single women is whether single women should be included into the social policy as mothers or as paid workers (Stoltz, 1997). In the study of Lewis (1997), a distinction was made between the Northern European countries and English speaking countries in terms of single mothers. In Northern European countries, single mothers are not considered as a

¹² Autonomous households mean "the extent of women's freedom from compulsion to enter or stay in marriages in order to obtain economic support" (Lister, 1993: 323).

specific policy issue but rather they are treated within the context of the family. As a result, single mothers are integrated into social policy issues such as child welfare, childcare and the employment of women. According to Lewis (1997), in the English speaking countries, single mothers issue becomes more complicated because single mothers are not only examined in terms of social policies but also in moral terms with stigmatization. A male breadwinner model of welfare state is used in these countries. As a result, single mothers are treated as either workers or mothers. For example, Lewis (2001) points out that in the UK, if single mothers want to get benefits from welfare state, they are required to register for work. These countries, in logic of male breadwinner model, treated single mothers as mothers. However, after the 1990s, the same countries changed the logic and treated single mothers as workers rather than mothers. Those discussions show us that in those countries single mothers are encouraged to work to be able to construct autonomous households to perform their own lives in their ways.

Researchers have identified common trends in the way in which policies dealing with single mothers have changed in recent years. Until the 1990s, single parents were given assistance on the basis of their maternal status, as long as they take care of their children (Daly, 2011: 10). Different from the old policies in which it was the welfare state's obligation to provide assistance to its citizens, with recent changes in the structure and the ideology of the state's policies, welfare states have started to give up providing a safety net for those who fall outside the labor market such as single parents. It is considered that there is a change of perception about what a social policy should do. Hence, many researchers stated that there has been a shift from male breadwinning model to adult worker model which emphasizes that all adults should be participate in the labor market (Rowlingson and Millar, 2002: 210).

Orloff (2006) argues that welfare states have shifted from a materialist policy model in which women were considered full time homemakers to a model of "employment for all" in which women are also expected to enter labor market. This does not mean that "motherhood" has lost its cultural meanings. It was not

considered to change the gender division of labor in the family, changing assumed roles for women as full time caregiver, altering cultural norms, but to provide opportunities for women to enter into labor market (Orloff, 2006; Jenson, 2006; Mahon, 2005; Coakley, 2005). Paid work is seen as the key to participation into public sphere and social inclusion and as a way to get out of poverty (Coakley, 2004; Perkins, 2007).

In addition, there is a debate among feminist scholars regarding the implications of “the farewell to maternalism” (Orloff, 2006). Single parents are incentivized to enter into the labor market by giving up some benefits such as public care and or “accepting low-wage, dead-end jobs that fail to lift them out of poverty” (Cioffi, 2006: 233). Additionally, for single parents who have been outside of the labor market for a period of time, it is difficult to sustain a job. When they find a job, it generally becomes low-paid, part time, and insecure. These same features are considered as “poor quality” jobs (McCollum, 2011). Single parents need to find flexible work and/or payment for childcare. According to Orloff (2006: 4), working can be considered one of the significant ways to provide autonomy for women and to help women to get rid of dependence on the family or a breadwinning man. However, it can also cause the elimination of social rights or reduce public services. For example, if the single woman has a male partner like a boyfriend, she can lose the right to access the salary of her dead husband. Another problem with this shift is that access to benefits is provided on the condition that single women were either seeking work or working. Thus, welfare benefits or services being given on condition causes people to behave in a particular way and/or forced to behave according to predefined regulations and cultural norms (Standing, 2011: 27) in which all single mothers had to participate into the paid labour market (Lewis, 2002). In addition, conditionality creates a distinction between the deserving and undeserving (Standing, 2011: 35) such as divorced women or widow women. As Orloff (1993: 315) pointed out, single women, especially divorced women, deserve the right of welfare benefits while wives or widows receive social security since they

are tied to a breadwinner through a marital bond. They are treated as “right bearers.”

However, although this shift has been experienced in many countries, their social policies in terms of how to achieve these aims are different (Millar and Evans, 2003). In the Southern Europe countries, for instance, the employment rate of single parent families is high. In these countries, because of the lack or limitation of family policies, single parents already need to work and need to access paid jobs, but they generally find low paid jobs. Although social policies and welfare states change their perception about single mother to welfare to work, in Turkey, it can be claimed that there has been a change to welfare to family. Hence, when women’s marriages end via divorce or death of husband, single mothers are trapped in between of state, market and family. Moreover, analyzing social policy regimes from the point of single mothers present us a framework to search for whether the alternative types of families are promoted by social policy or not. This allows us to examine the patriarchal society and the state and to understand if women are able to establish autonomous families free from the coercion of and dependence on marriage and the men (Orloff, 1993).

This rise in single mother families has obvious social and economic consequences. The single mother may choose to find a job. However, economic well being for the family is not always provided by the paid employment. Consequently, single women may experience financial problems while they try to head the family on their own.

Knowing the important emphasis on the divorced and widow women’s economic situation as an important post dissolution experience, in following section I examine the financial difficulties women faced after marital dissolution. Gender roles within marriage are related to the gendered division of labor. Women’s place is considered to be in the home, which is separated from labor market. In contrast, men’s place is primarily oriented to the outside world as the breadwinner. Women are considered economically dependent on their husbands. Reliance on the wages

of male breadwinners in families, constructed by the gender division of labor and the assignment roles of women such as child care means that the loss of the husband has substantial effects on the economic situations of women after marital dissolution. It should be noted that not all women face equal difficulties after divorce or widowhood.

2.2.1.1. Financial Problems after Marital Dissolution

When a marriage ends by the loss of the husband either by the divorce or the death of a spouse, male dominance constructed in control of economic resources severely limits divorced and widow women's opportunities for independent income. Thus, divorced and widow women often forced to find employment after marital dissolution and are disadvantaged by discontinuous work histories as a result of domestic chores and child-rearing; or child care responsibilities constraining current job opportunities (Kamerman, 2000), low wages resulting from occupational segregation, or discrimination at the workplace (Quinn and Allen, 1989).

In their scrutiny of different sources of income in mother-only and two-parent families, Garfinkel and McLanahan (1986) classified possible factors of low income in single parents a) the low earning capacity of the mother, b) the lack of child care, c) the inadequate benefits provided by the state. Women, who have no male to depend financially, have to sell their own labor and face with a market that is highly gender restricted, requiring low wages or unemployment. Divorced and widow women left without a sole or primary breadwinner are forced to earn a living while also caring for children. This division of labor, I argue, has profound consequences in a context characterized by inequalities in wages, and also women's full time responsibility for child care. Holden and Smock (1991: 69) emphasize that "the crucial point is that whatever is the source of their [women] lower earnings potential, when thrust into the role of primary earner, formerly married women are unlikely to match the earnings of the deceased or former husbands."

The immediate economic difficulty starts with leaving from the dual career/worker family, starting a separate household and going through all the economic expenses of a house alone. Moving away from a joint family income can reduce the general standard of living for both women and their children, and cause additional financial difficulties. Holden and Smock (1991: 71) claim that one of the main reasons of economic difficulties experienced by single mothers is their loss of the share in the earnings of the husbands; thus, loss of husband's earning forces women to deal with already existing barriers in order to replace the income of husbands with their own income.

Kurz (1995: 77) argues that because of economic decline after marital dissolution, many divorced women with children have to live in vulnerable conditions which are also below the formal poverty level. According to Thibos et al. (2007), single mothers appears to be one of the groups who can experience the feminization of poverty because social policies and benefits are not effective to provide necessary conditions for women to be out of poverty. Among others there is an increasing research of female headed households considering that these households suffer from the burden of poverty and vulnerability (Buvinic and Gupta, 1997, cited in Klasen, Lechtenfeld and Povel, 2011: 3). Thibos et al. (2007) claim that divorced women with children need to reconcile house works including raising children and paid labor. Moreover, many single mothers couldn't receive their deserved child supports and this also causes women's poverty. Another dimension is the violence. According to Thibos et al. (2007: 3), women may easily fall into poverty when they run away from their abused husband since they may have health problems which prevent them to find work. Moreover, there are a number of practical barriers identified by divorced and widow women, which may prevent them from getting work.

Occupational segregation is one of those barriers that the labor market is divided into a "primary" and a "secondary" sector.¹³ The work done by women,

¹³ Primary labor market offers high salaries, steady employment, and career ladders. The secondary labor market offers low wages, few or no benefits, and unstable employment.

pink-collar work¹⁴ is generally considered to be a part of the secondary sector. As Amott (1988: 102) argues, historically white men have had greater access to primary sector to maintain “family wages¹⁵.” Despite the increasing number of women working in paid jobs, the overwhelming majority of women continue to do “pink collar” jobs. Amott (1988: 100) points out that “single mothers are more likely to be service providers than are all female workers.” Due to the discrimination against them and their need for flexible hours, most women can’t get out of these jobs. It can be claimed that lack of educational or work related qualifications and time by single women (Sanik, & Mauldin, 1986) leads that single women are employed mostly in the secondary sector.

Child care and its costs also pose a barrier. Women commonly remain the primary child caretaker when are divorced or widowed. While women with husbands can share responsibilities of their children by making use of “shift-parenting arrangements” (Sinno and Killen, 2011), single women often must look to other sources of childcare. Few divorced fathers ask for or are pushed to take the custody. Holden and Smock (1991: 71) add that “child custody practices severely constrain the time women have available for market work. The lack of affordable child care increases the constraints children place on greater market work.” Women still are considered as responsible for care and domestic labor. This leaves the gendered division of labor untouched. Thus, these policies may provide women’s access to paid work, but they ignore their caring tasks (Orloff, 2009). As a result, the question of which models of gender, family and care will be promoted by social policy pop ups (Knijn and Kremer, 1997; Lewis, 2001). The welfare state has the possibility to weaken or to strengthen the division of labor through social policy, family policy, or wage policy.

¹⁴Jobs like secretaries, phone operators which are generally assumed as women’s work (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/pink-collar>).

¹⁵ Family wage is offered to men as an opportunity to support home, women and children.

Bettio and Plantenga (2004) have compared care strategies for children and the elderly in different EU Member States. They examined both formal and informal care, and policy instruments such as leave arrangements, financial provisions, and social services. Five distinct care strategies were identified in the EU; one of them was the Southern Europe strategy which focuses on informal care, whereas formal care arrangements for children and the elderly are inadequate. In Southern European countries, single mothers have difficulties to balance the family and work since there aren't enough child care services for infants or there aren't quality child care services which also are suitable for time schedules of single mothers ((Quinn and Allen, 1989; Naldini, 2006).

Southern Welfare States use mostly family as the "subsidiarity" institutions and the burden of responsibility of the state was transferred to the family. However, in terms of single mothers, it is still a problem because there is a lack of structured system of social services and state provisions (Saraceno, 2003). As a result, single mothers in Southern Europe countries develop "family strategy" (Moreno, 2002: 8) constituted by the informal help of kin and grandparents. The care obligations rely on the mothers or the grandmothers (Ejrnæs and Boje, 2008). The insufficient support for women's employment and lack of affordable child care in many South European countries limit single mothers' preferences: going back to the labor market while the children are under age or being full time child carer (Trifiletti, 1999; Tavoro, 2012). This means that in southern countries work is less compatible with childbearing and child-raising. There is little available childcare provision in the society (Amato, 2000).

In most Southern European countries, family formation means the withdrawal of the mother from the labor market. According to Grütjen (2007: 20), women in the Southern European countries are considered in terms of traditional family roles; thus they stay as unprotected. As a result, in the case of economic necessity, many women have to work under severe conditions without security, but also they are expected to accomplish their traditional roles in the family (Trifiletti 1999). Moreno (2006) argues that although there is a high rate of women's

participation into the labor market, there has not been change in cultural definitions of gender roles in the society and in social policies. Thus, Moreno (2006) claims that so-called “superwomen”¹⁶ emerged in Southern Europe.

The literature indicates two aspects of the issue: time sufficiency for childcare responsibilities and individual perception of childcare difficulties. In the conditions of single mothers, employment status of single parents and their time sufficiency for childcare responsibilities are very much related. In the study of Lee (1999: 151), she concluded that “single parents working full-time were the worst off, whereas home-making single parents generally found time to be relatively sufficient for child-care responsibilities.” Sanik and Mauldin (1986) conducted a study in the US on the time use of single and married mothers and they concluded that working single mothers were the most overburdened. They even sacrifice time for personal activities, such as sleep and rest, in order to provide the needs and demands of their families. In a similar way, according to Lee (1999: 150), “single parents have, on average, less time to perform child-care tasks than couples in dual-parent families.”

Furthermore, the long distances to work or to social networks cause difficulty in the child care. This difficulty becomes even more critical when the single parent lives in a neighborhood where public transport is not working efficiently, and/or when she has no driving license or car.

Consequently, single mothers do not fit into the male breadwinner framework (Lewsi, 1997); in addition, no special provisions were made for them as a group. Yet, the general lack of childcare makes it difficult for them to be employed or to construct the life in the way they wanted to be. When single mothers have paid work, they need institutions other than family such as public or private services. This needs the organization of the distribution of care between the state, the market, men, and women (Knijn and Kremer, 1997).

¹⁶ Superwomen is a woman who has to simultaneously deal with both the tasks of their Professional jobs and demands/needs of their own family (Moreno, 2006: 4).

2.2.1.2. Coping with Financial Hardship

In recent years, the economic consequences of dissolution have been the topic of various research (Brandwein, et al 1974; Weiss 1984; Arendell 1987; Duncan and Hoffman 1985; Gerstel 1987; Holden and Smock 1991; Amato, 2000). Financial difficulties are standing situations that most of the single parent families experience. They are forced to shoulder the responsibilities of their (ex) husbands; it becomes difficult to meet the major needs of children and maintain the previous standard of living. Given their financial situations, divorced and widow women use various strategies to overcome financial difficulties. The most prevalent strategy is getting a job and help from their family (and kin) or formal support. To cope with their economic circumstances, the divorced and widow women try to assemble a “resource package¹⁷” consisting of a) informal help resources, b) formal help resources (Mulroy, 1988: 22).

One coping strategy is to seek out sources of income. Single parents get income from three main sources: the family, the market and the state. In order to meet financial needs, mothers start work for the first time, or they may take on a second job. Studies have stated that employment is an important way against economic deprivation (Poortman, 2000; Dewilde, 2006). In this sense, the family of origin, kin ties or children may help. Older children may help by becoming employed; however, this may result in dropping school (Caple, 1988: 93).

A second coping strategy is to seek out help for childcare. According to Kröger (2003: 5), every care arrangement is constructed due to personal conditions of women which are determined by the restrictions in the labor market and social services provided by the welfare state regimes. The majority of working single parents is constantly trying to balance work and care. Hence, in order to set up childcare arrangements, parents rely on informal networks (grandmothers or

¹⁷ Knijn et al. (2005: 97) use a similar concept of “care packages” which are the combination of formal and informal resources used by mothers in order to keep their jobs.

relatives). By this way, they facilitate the reconciliation between work and care since formal childcare facilities are not efficient or inadequate. Although institutions like schools or kindergartens are supposed to be one of the key strategies for women's employment problems, in fact they are not. Most schools and child care facilities do not consider that many mothers have a job which does not have suitable time schedule. Tobio (2001: 359) in her study of mothers' strategies of balancing work and employment in Spain pointed out that the public schools and crèches start later than most people's jobs. She also added that afternoons are also a problem for working single mothers since this time school finishes earlier than job (Tobio, 2001: 359).

The significant dimension of using informal childcare is grandparents who helping with childcare (Raeymaeckers et al., 2008: 125). Nelson (cited in Allen et al., 2011: 1158) examined that "single mothers *do families* by relying on their own mothers as placeholders for an absent male partner/father, who they hope will one day join them in creating a traditional home." Grandmothers play a fundamental role in women's economic and social activity. Tan et al. (2010: 993) claim that grandparents have always been major support provider for the families, especially in times of marital dissolution. Grandparents are seen as the "family watchdogs" (Troll, 1983 cited in Tan et al. 2010: 995) or "substitute mothers" (Tobio, 2001: 348); they take care of basic needs of children while women are away to work. According to Tobio and Trifiletti (2005: 90), "the traditional ideology on women and 'sacrifice' might also be related to their commitment to taking care of their grandchildren while their daughters are at work."

Grandchild care can take several forms. One of these forms is "residual" childcare (Raeymaeckers et al., 2008: 125). Among many ways in which the extended family system may help divorced and widow women, co-residence with grandparents may be particularly important for children of these women. Either grandmother starts to live with single mothers or these women move back in with their own parents. In this form of arrangement, according to a traditional gender division of labor, fathers and brothers generally provide financial assistance while

mothers and sisters help with childcare (McLahan et al. 1981: 604). The importance of moving back to family of origin also provides security for women who experienced domestic violence or whose husbands were drug or alcohol addict. The second form is that grandmothers take care of children either at their own home or at their daughter's. Tobio and Trifiletti (2005: 88) claim that "the contradiction between new roles in the labor market and old roles in the family is partly solved by the help of the preceding generation of women who take care of their grandchildren while their daughters are at work."

However, there can be negative consequences of getting help from the native family and relatives. According to Kitson et al. (1992: 229), when divorced women received support, divorced and widow women are less able to reciprocate these services, and "exchange may be broke down" (Kitson et al., 1992: 229). Moreover, divorced and widow women feel obliged to "justify their lifestyle to the support supplier" (Kröger, 2003). Additionally, the family of origin, which provides financial and child care support for the mother, may also lead to her isolate from outside world and new social experiences (McLahan et al. 1981).

Apart from informal help, divorced and widow women may receive formal help. Among sources of formal help are alimony, child support, welfare help such as foods and financial assistance for single parent families. There can be more institutional arrangements that may influence the economic condition of divorced and widow women such as taxation measures, and parental leave arrangements.

Child Support

After divorce, practices of raising children changes in both a societal and a legal perspective (Kelly, 1994: 121). In their study about family ties after marital dissolution, Seltzer, Schaeffer, Charng (1989) pointed out that the amount of child support are determined by the economic resources of noncustodial parent and children's needs.

Alimony

An assumption of the certainty of alimony may help women to be taken care of after divorce. Weitzman and Dixon (1981: 148) claims that “after no-fault divorce arrangement, notion of alimony was established on a new norm of *self-sufficiency*.”

2.2.2. Single Mothers in the Gender Division of Labor

Market based societies have had a gender division of labor that is based on the institutions of marriage and family. Welfare state programs were constructed on the same basis, designed to reinforce those institutions. Moreover, both state and market regularities highlight this type of families discussed above. In Northern European countries, there is an understanding of the social state in which public services are a priority. On the contrary, in Southern European countries including Turkey, there is a welfare regime in which many responsibilities of public services are met by the family. Welfare regimes in Southern European states have offered “support for single mothers to stay at home to care for their children” (Orloff, 1996: 43). The main reasons for this is the gender division of labor which regards women as the main responsible for all the caring at home, women’s low wages in the labor market, inadequate affordable and accessible child care facilities, and double burden of women both in the paid job and in the family. Hence, the well-being of single mothers and their children depends on single mothers’ interaction with family, the state and the market.

Examining single mothers in terms of gender division of labor is significant in order to reflect the gendered structure of social policy and welfare regimes which affect single mothers’ income packages and other sources to survive after marital dissolution. Gender division of labor creates assumptions about family. Consequently, the status and well-being of single mothers are based on those assumptions in welfare regime of a country. These regime types prioritized the strict division of labor in which women are mothers and wives and men are the

heads of the households and breadwinners. This policy logic has impact on the treatment of single mothers.

Men are accorded the right to be the "head of the household." If the husband is present, regardless of their relative income, power, or status, women are not accorded the right to be the head of the house. Mothers and children are expected to be under the protection of, and dependent upon the man of the family. Hence, when a marriage ends through divorce and/or the death of the spouse, a woman's status is defined in terms of her ex or dead husband; she is denied any status of her own in the family. From this traditionalist perspective, the loss of a father leaves the family without authority. Consequently, divorced and widow women need to re-form the family life after the loss of the spouse.

2.2.2.1. Reforming Division of Labor in the Changing Family

Marital dissolution can have effects on the family. First of all, marital dissolution can remove the problematic relation between mother and the children (Lazar et al, 2009). According to Amato and Booth (1996), parents' marriage can cause problem about children. Thus, when the marriage ends, the divorce or death of the spouse may not cause problems between the mother and child. On the contrary, by ending the problematic relations between parents, mother-child problems can be solved or reduced (Brenner and Hyde, 2006: 95). In addition, divorce may help to separate children from abusive father and to provide a better relation with mother and children. In the study of McLanahan, the accounts of divorced women show that they could construct a better communication with their children; thus, they can talk to their children about private or personal issues (McLanahan, 1994). Moreover, the literature suggests that the death of a loved one is often associated with change in social relationships, sometimes in a positive direction, sometimes in a negative direction. For example, study of Umberson (1995: 710) points out that the structure of the family and the relations within the

family also change after a death in the family. After the death of a family member, survivors may have more close relations.

Secondly, parental dissolution is a difficult life event that may result in change in parental authority. In this respect, parental authority can be defined as responsibilities and the right of parents over their children's care, safety and physical and mental development, construction their personality (Lazar et al, 2009: 357). Parents do not necessarily stop being involved as parents simply because they do not live together as a married couple. Their parenting role may continue. However, parents often find themselves overwhelmed by the contradicting nature of parental authority. Moreover, Lazar et al. (2009) argues that parent who have the custody experience difficulties to re-form the family discipline and parental authority because of traditional norms and ascribed roles to women or the lack of time (Sanik and Mauldin, 1986).

In regard to maintaining authority at home, one important concern may be sharing the authority with grandmothers. While responsibilities about caring for the child(ren) in the marriage are shared by women, after the divorce or death of the spouse, the solidarity is constructed between women and their families. The significant involvement of close family members in daily childcare arrangements has its advantages and disadvantages. Interestingly, while on one hand, single mothers may find their mothers helpful when it comes to sharing the care of the children; on the other hand, they may have difficulties in conceding their authority to their mothers. As a result of this situation, "double mothering" occurs (Kröger, 2003). In other words, in single mothers' families, the role of the grandmother is more supportive than substitutive role. Another disadvantage rises from the resulting dependence on their native family which may force the single parents to "justify their decision about parenting" in order to the support providers.

More difficult than dealing with the childcare is dealing with the absence of the father. There are two major problems; first one is finding a proper male role model that will enable the healthy personality development of the children, and

second one is keeping the sense of family alive in their children's minds. Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) pointed out that "half of the single mothers found it difficult to assume the role of disciplinarian, especially for the older boys. Older boys were commonly the special responsibility of the father, who tended to play a dominant role in setting standards and enforcing discipline" (cited in Lee, 1999: 143). Second one is keeping sense of family. When a marriage is ended by divorce or death, it is still important to give them that sense of family. The sense of family creates a strong sense of solidarity that enables a family to withstand difficulties after marital dissolution.

2.2.2.2. Gender Division of Labor between Noncustodial and Custodial Parent

The changing in the structure of family causes changing in the parenting relations between mothers and fathers. According to Smyth and Wolcott (2004: 3), although there have been changes in the parenting; we still know less about the contact between former parents. Divorce does not prevent fathers from being involved in their children's lives. Understanding the aspects of father involvement after marital dissolution is important. Involvement of fathers is significant for financial reasons and parental responsibilities (Arditti and Keith, 1993: 699). When fathers live together with their children, they feel responsible to give time to their children and to provide social and economical supports for their children (Seltzer, 1991: 82). However, when they live apart from each other after divorce, financial support of fathers and their communication with their children may weaken and children fail to establish a close relation with their fathers (Kurz, 1995). According to Faci (1997: 4), when emotional connection with their children weakens, fathers may feel hesitation to perform their financial responsibilities. As a result, many divorced mothers were left without the benefits of economic support after the fathers left (McLanahan and Sandefur, 1994).

As important as understanding the effect of the noncustodial father's involvement on the children is, his impact on the children's mother is also equally important. The relationship between two individuals does not end after divorce but it is transformed (Elkin, 1982, cited in Arditti and Kelly, 1994). Keeping relations with the noncustodial father is possible, and relations between custodial and noncustodial parents have more effects than one's appearance in the house (Amato, 1987). However, there can be negative results of the relationship with ex-husbands. There are two main ways of the former husband has a negative effect on residential mothers. Ex-husbands can use children as a mean to utilize control on their ex-wives (Wuest et al., 2003: 602). It is pointed out in the study of Arditti and Kelly (1994) that after marital dissolution, ex-partners keep on using impact on the former partner directly because s/he is paying the child support, and/or indirectly by using children (Arditti and Kelly, 1994; Wuest et al, 2003).

Contact with children: Naturally, the parent who has custody of the child is the one who makes decisions. However, they must consult their ex-spouse and obtain their agreement for all the important acts (such as regarding education). After divorce, the fathers' relations with their children are determined according to custody decisions. The relationship with the former husband is linked to custody negotiations, child support provisions, and the living arrangements of the ex-partner (Wuest et al., 2003: 601). Moreover, as a result of the fathers' contact with their children, mothers may keep experiencing conflict even after divorce. According to Hardesty and Ganong (2006: 555),

Common sources of conflict with former husbands included disagreements about general parenting (e.g., different household rules, discipline styles), daily care of the children (e.g., exchanging the children, sharing the children's belongings), and bringing children into the middle of parental conflicts (e.g., sending messages through the children, criticizing the other parent in front of the children).

Fathers can gather information about the family and their ex-partners from the conversations with their children or during the visitation hours. Moreover, they can use this information to exercise power and control on mothers. Smart and

Neale (1999) noted that sustaining contact, “even indirectly through children, was unbearable and completely distorted their [women’s] efforts to make a new life for themselves” (cited in Wuest et al., 2003: 602).

Custody blackmail: Existing researches (Arendell, 1995) show that fathers try to control mothers even during custody negotiations and influence women's decisions during the divorce process. Women, who are afraid to lose children, may reduce their demands about child support, alimony because Fox and Kelly claims that demands and needs of parents are also linked to their own priorities and own incomes (Fox and Kelly, 1995: 694).

2.2.2.3. Coping with Parenting Issues

All single parent families move through transitions. One of these transitions is restructuring the parent-child relation. When one parent leaves the family, the relationship between the remaining parent and children will obviously undergo some change. One of the coping strategies of single mothers is restructuring the roles and responsibilities in the family. Weiss discussed that children in single parent families may grow up fast (Weiss, 1979: 101). Decision making about family issues which was previously done by the spouse might be shared between the children and mothers. In the case of concern with parental authority, the children may help in partnership with the mother by sharing responsibilities as household chores and caring for younger kids (Caple, 1988). In a single parent family, the older child may be treated like an “adult” rather than a child (Allan and Crow, 2001: 144). They can be seen as “junior partners” (Weiss, 1979) by giving them authority and also new responsibilities.

Another way of coping is substituted authority. Informal networks appear to be helpful in providing material support, but also interfering with the parenting styles of single mothers (McLahan and Booth, 1989: 561). Kurz defines this process as “being a child again” (1995: 98). In addition, relatives and family members can

interfere in the divorced women's attitudes and decisions about parenting and financial issues. Grandparents not only help the mother to care for the children, but they may also perform as an authority figure in the family. They can become "substitute authority figures" (Kavas, 2012). Moreover, in the study of Kavas, grandfathers are seen as substitute authority to compensate fathers and present an adult male figure for children. However, there may be confusion about the boundary of authority and role ambiguity¹⁸ in the family.

2.2.3. Centrality of the Family-Marriage and the Life of Single Mothers

In the new socio-economic welfare society context, the relations among state, market and family have to be re-discussed. In this context, the role of the family has become more important since the crisis of the welfare state has deepened and the impact of market oriented approaches has become more evident and stronger. From this perspective, it is considered that the Southern European welfare state - including Turkey - have different relations between state, market and family than other welfare state (Ferrera, 1994). Italy, Spain, Turkey and other Southern European countries have been seen as an example of the traditional model of family in the world. Many researches points to "familism" as a key dimension to explain the distinctiveness of Southern European welfare and social policy structure (Jurado and Naldini, 1997; Reher, 1998; Moreno, 2002, Ferrera, 1996; Guerrero and Naldini, 1996). This makes an analysis of the single mothers in these countries especially interesting.

The importance of Southern European welfare regime for my study is that the researchers examining the basic features of Southern European welfare countries since 1990s have underlined the place and the role of family in the society and at the state level in order to increase the welfare of the people. Authors

¹⁸ Boss (1987: 709) described the concept as a condition in which family members are not certain about which roles and tasks within the family will be performed by whom.

pointed out common features are familism and clientelism (Ferrera, 1996). This distinct structure of this welfare regime, which is also seen in Turkey, is crucial for single mothers in order to provide a life that they want after marital dissolution.

Family support system/ Subsidiarity role of the family:

There are countries where families and family ties are relatively “strong”, whereas in others it is “weak” (Reher, 1998: 203). Both Central and Northern Europe, including the USA, are considered as having “weak family links,” and the Mediterranean/Southern Europe countries are considered as having “strong family ties” (Moreno, 2006: 75). While there are not adequate social policy families and services in the Southern European states, peculiar coping strategies are developed such as intra family relations, informal employment (Grütjen, 2007). Gough et al. (2004) claims that “informal-security regime” exist in these societies and an essential role is played by the family and the community in order to provide welfare. Turkey, Spain, Italy and Greece are included in this welfare regime, where the presence of familism in family relations (Ferrera, 1996; Naldini, 2003; Saraceno, 2003) and in public policies. Thus, this familism approach differentiates them from the welfare states in countries like Germany, Austria and Netherlands (Moreno, 2006).

According to Moreno (2002), family is regarded as the most important institution in the lives of Southern European families, despite the fact that they embraced individualistic life styles. These families are accepted as an effective (informal) safety net: a social “shock absorber” (Ferrera, 2005) for childcare, unemployment, care for the elderly and the disabled, or housing (Moreno, 2004; Naldini, 2003). Furthermore, the extended household provides support for the members of family in terms of difficult times, and the solidarity ties among family members is still much stronger than many other societies in Europe. Naldini and Jurado (2008) summarize the family structure in those countries as following

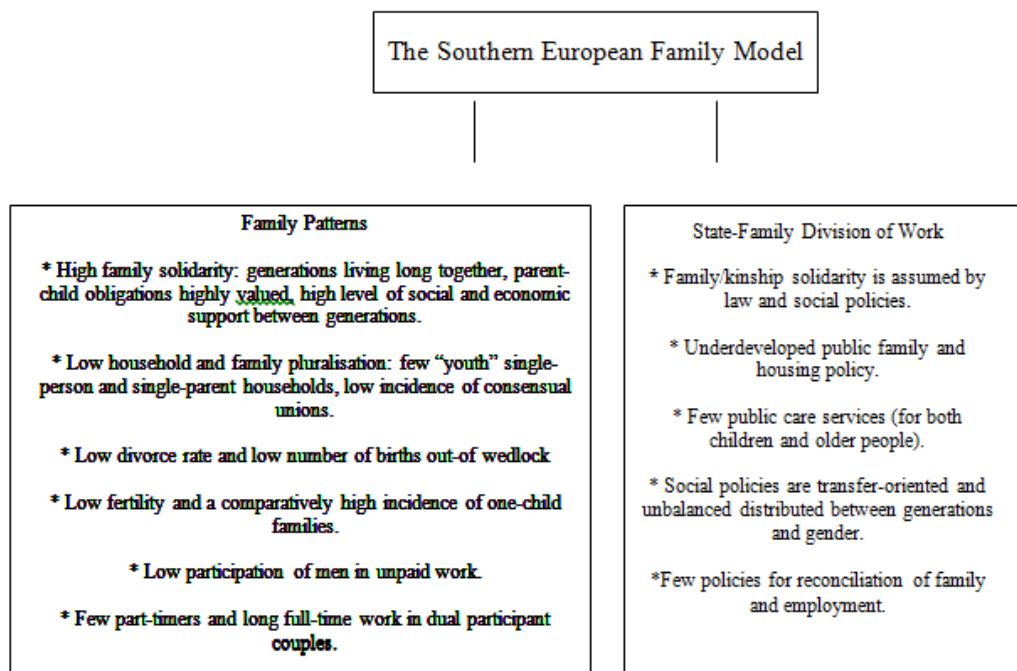


Figure 1: Typical Dimensions of Southern Family Model 1980-2005

Source: Naldini and Jurado (2008).

2.2.3.1. Living with Family or Living Alone?

Marital status is one of the dimensions to study living arrangements because according to De Vos and Schwartzman (2008), a married couple is expected to live together, and this form of marital unity is preferred in many societies. When marriage ends because of the death of a spouse or divorce, existing living arrangements change. Not only marriage, but also the end of marriage usually causes a change of residence. Living arrangement after marital dissolution reflects the relation between husbands and wives, as well as issues related to the custody of children (Plaut and Plaut, 2014). One of the problems that divorced and widow women have is residence problem. Residence problem generally includes two factors: housing and living arrangements.

When the marriage is ended, a woman must make some decision about where to live. Helderma (2007) found out that years between 1981-2001, the reason behind the moving from owned house to rented house was divorce/separation, especially for women. Feijten and Van Ham (2007) pointed out that in the Netherlands after marital dissolution, frequency of changing the residency of divorced women are more often than people in other living arrangements. Dewilde (2008) reviews changes for divorced families in twelve European countries. She claims that movement from ownership to rental housing is common for such families. According to Sweet (1972: 143-144), single mothers' residential changes can be depend on decision of whether they will live alone (but with their children) or move to residency of their own families or relatives. However, marital status is important for housing as De Vos and Richter (1986: 11) express that unlike divorced or separated women, widows may feel closer to an extended family. Divorced women may need help from natal family or other family members because of combination of financial needs and childcare responsibilities (Shin, 2008). However, living arrangements can influence many aspects of a person's social, economic, and work life. Sigle-Rushton and McLahan (2001) point out choosing where to live is also related to probable economic and social well being of people. In a similar point, Symon (1990) discussed that after marital dissolution, women could change their living place to start a new life or to move back to their families' places to escape from the interventions of ex-husband and his family. However, Dieleman and Schouw (1989) describe the housing solutions of divorced people as "non-permanent" since they move to friends' or parents' houses.

One of the effects on marital dissolution on single mothers is housing problem. Most researchers state that there are various studies about housing mobility after marital dissolution (Booth & Amato, 1992; Dewilde, 2008). In their study about housing behaviors of divorced women, Feijten and van Ham (2013) explain that divorced people move to lower quality houses and in a distanced place from their previous dwelling. According to the study of Israeli divorced and separated women by Plaut and Plaut (2014: 217), the main reason behind the

residence change is individual salary which provides possibilities to possess their own home for divorced and separated women. Costs of residence and maintenance or finding a new house is one of main difficulties experienced by single women after marital dissolution. Thus, to move to more affordable housing may be the first change after marital dissolution (Mulroy, 1988). When divorced and widow women do not have any support to afford the costs of housing, displacement occurs. Mulroy defines displacement women's forced move from residency because of conditions out of her control (Mulroy, 1988: 31). According to Feijten and van Ham, marital dissolution has an effect on the reasons to move after divorce are different than reasons to move because of other life events (Feijten and van Ham, 2013: 406). Although living arrangements always cause negative outcomes for divorced and widow women, their children may be affected by a change of house.

As a result, McLahan and Booth (1989: 568) claim that "mother only families are more likely to live in economically and socially isolated neighborhoods." In this respect, Ahrentzen (1985) talks about "residential fit" (cited in Cook et al., 1994: 64). This means that people generally resident where their needs and desires are accommodated by the environment. However, according to Ahrentzen (1985) female headed families experience less residential fit (cited in Cook et al., 1994: 64). Housing conditions after marital dissolution are also related to financial conditions because after marital dissolution, women experience financial problems. Mulroy (1988: 31) points out that "since single women experienced shift from middle to low income status, they are left house poor in suburbia.

2.2.3.2. Coping with Living Arrangements Difficulties

The end of a marriage causes changes in the composition of family because mostly the fathers move out. However, studies show that after the end of marriage, mothers and their children experience residential mobility as well. In a study of Rein, it was found that "only widows and fathers with custody of their children are

likely to remain in the same home three years after change in marital status” (cited in Mulroy, 1988: 24). When the marriage ends, women have two statuses: homeowner or renter. The homeowners women during marriage couldn’t afford to keep the house because of financial and social difficulties after marital dissolution. High cost of housing causes divorced (and/or widow) women to attempt alternative living arrangements and residence. One of these alternatives is to live with their relatives or their natal family. Women may use these coping strategies in two different ways: a) co-residence with extended family members b) direct financial transfer from non-resident family members which I discussed above.

In order to deal with the problem of living arrangement, single parents can share the house (Seltzer and Friedman, 2013) or in other words, they can construct “extended households” (Cohen, 2002). Although members of extended households can help to deal with economic difficulties, benefits of this strategy may be conditioned by the extended household (Cohen, 2002). According to Sweet (1972: 144),

In order to move in with relatives it is necessary to have accessible relatives. Young women are more likely to have living parents. Older women are likely to have adult children with their own households. In addition, it is necessary that the relatives have enough space and that they are willing to have the woman in their household. To the extent that the relatives share their resources with the woman, it is necessary that they can afford.

Furthermore, parents or relatives may be more willing (and perhaps more able) than others to provide affordable or free housing. They also may live with a co-residence like a mother. For example, in her study of working class women in the Mexican city of Guadalajara, de la Rocha (1994) found out that the female headed households in her sample had at least one additional extended family member living with them. Co-residence or shared housing is economically valuable. Shin (2008: 54) points out that “co-resident family members may not only bring income into the household but may also provide childcare and other support for female heads allowing them to work.”

The woman may have two different coping strategies. One is that she can move to an extended family headed by someone else. Second one is that she may re-construct a household including extended family members. Another way is to leave the family of origin and have one's own place. While single mothers often live in relative poor quality housing, single mothers still give importance to have a separated place that they can call "home" (Allan and Crow, 2001). In that sense, apart from the help of family, single mothers can depend on welfare state.

2.2.3.3. Living out of Marriage as a Single Mother

Upon marital dissolution by death or divorce, women face a change in their social networks. As a result, divorced and widow women often find themselves outsiders of social relations which were constructed while married. As Milardo (1987: 89) points out, patriarchal socialization makes women dependent and makes them internalize that their one and only responsibility is domestic work and the care of children. Because of different roles of husbands and wives in the marriage, the work of "kin keeping" generally depends on the efforts of wives (Gerstel, 1988: 210). Women's kin-keeping role is a result of their gendered roles in the family; caring for members of the family. In addition, Gerstel (1988: 210) points out, "in marriage, children serve as integrators into kin networks." However, after marital dissolution, continuing the relations with kin needs the time of mothers and they do not have enough time to construct further friendships. Moreover, in traditional marriages, the husband's friends become the couple's friends (Milardo, 1987; Gerstel, 1988). Sometimes, the divorced and widow women's friendships before marriage is transformed into couples' friends when they got married (Shamgar-Hendelman, 1990 cited in Albeck and Kaydar, 2002: 114).

The end of marriage changes the relationships and social networks surrounding marriage. Terhell et al. (2004: 21) point out that after divorce, not only the relationship between man and woman change, but also the social networks

consists of family, in laws, friends, and acquaintances change. When a marriage ends upon divorce, divorced couples split their friends and relatives as they split the assets they own during marriage. As Gerstel (1988: 343) points out, man and woman have their own friends during marriage and treat them as if they are their properties after marital dissolution. One of the reasons for this can be that some friends become defined as “his” or “hers” (Kitson and Holmes, 1992: 224). Also, friends sometimes keep distance to divorced people because they may have “a conflict of loyalty” (Rands, 1981; Cohen & Levenberg, 1994; Shamgar-Hendelman, 1990, cited in Albeck and Kaydar, 2002: 114-115). Their relations with their married friends may also end (Gerstel, 1987: 178).

While divorced women were married, these women may have feel that they belonged to a social network. Although these women may continue to keep on relations with their old friends, do the same things as they did during marriage, but this time, they do without their husbands; however, they may feel that they are hangers-on (Gerstel, 1987). Song (1991: 226) emphasizes that divorced women may feel themselves as a third wheel among their married friends since they used to be among those friends as a couple. Married friends may perceive divorced women to be a threat to them as if divorced women are after their husbands, or husbands may think that they will encourage their wives to get divorced.

On the other hand, O’Bryant and Nocera (1985: 404) claim that different from divorced women, widow women faced with the difficulties of living alone unprepared. Loneliness can be considered one of the greatest difficulties of widowhood. The experience can be quite different for widows and divorcees. Widows generally experience an unexpected, irreversible and uncontrollable loss. Loneliness can be considered one of the greatest difficulties of widowhood. The widow women still identify themselves as their husbands’ wives (van den Hoonaard 1999). Whether a result of divorce or the death of a spouse, as Lee (1999: 140) claims, single women experience various losses such as social status, social networks, a life companion, income and residence. When marital dissolution occurs, the social network and relations, their social world (past and future) in which these

women define and identify themselves change. Rossiter (1991: 149) points out that “loss of the spouse is also fundamentally a loss of self as well.” Suddenly she is an ex-wife, a single parent or a widow. The meanings she gave to herself also change. For example, she may define herself as an ex-wife, a failure, deviant, and a bad parent. According to Rossiter (1991: 148), “in the first few months of the separation, and this usually coincides with the most intense symptoms, is loss of identity.” Van den Hoonaard (1997: 537-538) defines this process as “identity foreclosure.” According to Van den Hoonaard (1997: 537), identity foreclosure has three levels: (1) changes in definition of their own self; (2) changes in meaning of who they are for their social networks; and (3) difficulties about their place in the society.

1) Although a widow is still a mother, she may have to be both mother and father; but not be sure how to performance the familiar role. Thus, they no longer know how to performance or what to expect in previously familiar situations. As a result, they foreclose on their identity to themselves.

2) As these widows try to hang on as discussed above, they may experience their friends beginning to treat them differently. Moreover, these widows may not be invited into social organizations, since they are not considered as a part of couple club. However, this is reciprocal. It is not only that widows’ friend excluded them from social network, but they excluded themselves because they feel as if they now have a lower status.

3) Stigmas towards widow women are generally based on gender norms, beliefs, values, and stereotypes which are deepened in the society. Thus, with the labeling of what they are - widows - and what they had been, causes identity foreclosure.

2.2.3.4. Coping with Being without Husband

As well as dealing with economic difficulties, single parents also experience social and emotional difficulties as a result of being a single parent, and being

stigmatized. To cope with loneliness, many of the widow and divorced women use existing friendship networks. Social support is a way to cope with the loneliness after the end of marriage (Carstensen, Graff, Levenson, & Gottman, 1996).

Widow women deepen old ties rather than make new ones. Some relatives and old friends are tested; they become "true friends" as if they remain loyal and caring after the death of their husbands. On the other hand, divorced women keep more open network. Hetherington, Cox and Cox (1977) found that, "following divorce, women experienced less frequent contact with old friends" (cited in Tietjen, 1985: 490). With custody of children and reduced income, these women have fewer opportunities or time to develop bonds with old or new friends (Milardo, 1987: 90).

Because of responsibilities of women both in the family and in the work place, these women can use all kinds of support to meet the family's needs. Sometimes, support from outside the family such as advice from friends may be more helpful for single mothers (Milardo, 1987). Above all, divorced and widow women may feel more comfortable to take advice from friends rather than their own families. In addition, the divorced and widow women may feel comfortable to talk about their problems to their friends.

To sum up, in the case of Southern European countries including Turkey, family policies, the labor market and the state have had an impact on the maintenance of the male breadwinner model determined by relations within the family (Minguez, 2008: 7). As Lewis and Ostner (1994: 7) point out, the reason for this condition is that where social protection is provided for women due to their marital status, the case of single mothers remains vulnerable since the social policy and welfare system is based on nuclear families, and a rigid gender division of labor within the family and the society.

When we consider the conditions of divorced and widow women for this study, after marital dissolution, being employed as a condition to access to welfare state services leaves many women out of system like women who are not formally

employed with social security benefits, or do not have a male family member who has a formal paid work. Hence, Orloff's criticism points out that mainstream welfare state regimes are based on the idea of the dependence of women on men in the family and in the society.

In this structure of the welfare state regime in Turkey, women who do not have access to any form of social security and social services face with both economic and social difficulties when they are divorced and widowed. Özar and Yakut-Çakar (2013) point out that until recent policy changes, divorced and widow women were not the part of social policies or they were ignored in the general setting of welfare social policies. Within this context, as it is seen in Southern Europe welfare regimes, crucial social welfare services and responsibilities are completed or taken over by the family which has a male breadwinner. In the social setting in which marriage and family are sacred and are considered as the basic unit of society, marital dissolution is not considered or examined in terms of possible problems of divorced and widow women in the welfare systems. Moreover, public policy makers and public authorities do not take into account of needs and problems of divorced and widow women because these women are considered to be taken care of a family.

In the case of marital dissolution through divorce or the death of the spouse, conditions of single mothers with children are related to the family support to compensate the loss of welfare state benefits and support. However, this support is not regular and does not provide a decent life for women after marital dissolution. Because of the importance of the family in the society, economic conditions as well as patriarchal norms and values constructing family and marriage cause difficulties for divorced and widow women. My aim is to demonstrate the gender biased structure of welfare regime, additionally; to demonstrate the patriarchal construction of norms and values that causes attitudes against divorced and widow women in Turkey.

CHAPTER THREE

DIVORCED AND WIDOW WOMEN IN TURKEY

Single women's inability to maintain a living after marital dissolution is related very much with the relations between state, family and the market which is based on the gender division of both paid and unpaid work in societies. It is also related with the peculiarities of the welfare regime in the society. My basic assumption is that the causes of why divorced and widow women in Turkey cannot maintain a decent living after marital dissolution are to be found in the interaction among the market, welfare state and the family.

This study is an effort to scrutinize this interaction between labor markets, welfare states and family and its impact on single women's lives. I will try to discuss gendered dimensions of social policies in Turkey in next chapter. I argue that this interaction has impact on forming divorced and widow women's lives after marital dissolution. There are various studies which discussing different dimensions touching women's lives in Turkey. However, this study will concentrate on the interaction between welfare state, labor market, family and single mothers. The gender division of labor which assigns to women a primary role in the family and the secondary position in the market is reflected in the structure of the state; hence, inequalities and difficulties single mother experience after marital dissolution can be reflected in the patriarchal relations between the society/family and the state.

To grasp women's experiences in a more broad way, it is important to study the social and cultural context of the families. Therefore, I will not discuss family in a comprehensive frame since it is beyond the scope of this study. I will only touch on the relevant parts which will help us to understand the experiences of divorced and widow women after marital dissolution.

3.1. Impact of Sacred Family Understanding on Divorced and Widow Women in Turkey

There are some studies examining the gender dimension of social policies in Turkey, although they do not provide an explicit link between social policies, labor market and single mothers. In addition, the familistic character of the welfare regime in Turkey is highlighted in many researches (Buğra and Keyder, 2006; Yazıcı, 2008). According to Öztan (2014: 178), during the 1980s, Turkey's effort to integrate into global economy lead to changes in the role of the welfare state to facilitate care in the family. Buğra, in her article *Poverty and Citizenship: An Overview of the Social-Policy Environment in Republican Turkey* mentions three different periods in the history of the Republic in terms of social policy (Buğra, 2007). The first of these periods is the "authoritarian" period of the early republic that aims at "keeping poverty confined to the countryside and dealing with urban poverty by appealing to voluntary initiatives, which nevertheless remained under state supervision" (Buğra, 2007: 36). The second period of social policy corresponds to the 1950s and the first multi-party rule in which the "moral economy" of the state is based on supporting informal networks. Buğra gives the example of clientalist relations by indicating to the fact that the state gave people state land to build houses on. For the purposes of this dissertation, the third period, which is after the 1980s, is of crucial importance. From this standpoint, Buğra and Keyder (2003; 2006) state that domestic labor of women in nuclear families and the familism characteristic of conservative welfare system became significant during the neo liberal transformation which called for a minimum role to state and supported new partnerships between the state, family and private actors such as NGOs to provide welfare benefits and responsibilities. From this point, Öztan (2014: 180) claims that familism has been one of the major dimensions of welfare politics in Turkey. Since the 1980s, although there has been an increase in participation of women in the labor market, major political parties conserved the traditional family structure and gender division of labor with their policies.

After AKP (Justice and Development Party) came to rule in 2002, the main approach of the government was based on the family-based welfare state (Bugra and Keyder, 2005). In the 2000s, the AKP government's main orientation was to re-establish the traditional support mechanisms between state, society and the family. According to Buğra and Keyder (2006), this orientation can be seen in the government's documents such as official program of the party.

In the booklet of AKP's 2023 vision¹⁹, the emphasis on family is about empowering the family in terms of neo liberal labor market risks. The naturalization of the gender division of labor is sustained in the case of women by reassuming their primary roles as mothers and wives. Moreover, women are only linked with reproduction both in this 2023 political vision document, and in the main policy understanding of AKP. In the government program, it is stated as "If Turkish society is still intact after so many problems that have been experienced recently; we largely owe it to our strong family structure"²⁰ (cited in Buğra and Keyder, 2004: 17). In order to deal with the problems and issues related to social care, the family is assigned as the best agent to ease the "social burden" on the state (Yazıcı, 2012).

3.1.1. Marriage-Divorce and Family in Turkey

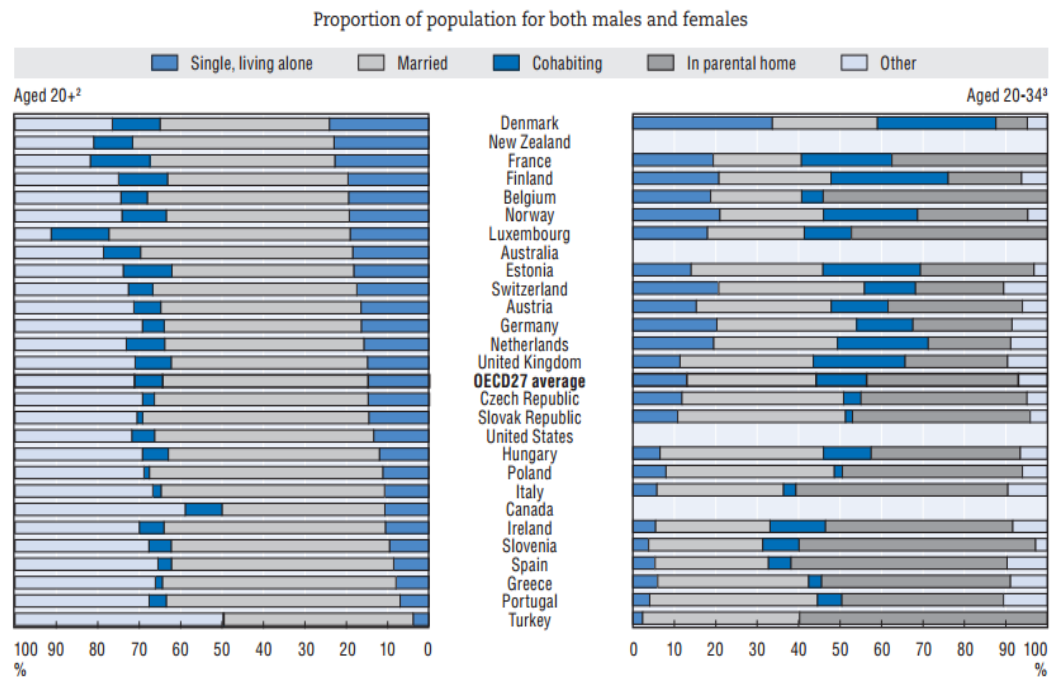
Report of World Bank states that it is "difficult to overstate the importance of marriage, family and extended family ties" in Turkey (World Bank, 2003: 33). Despite the changes in structure, the family still has an outstanding position in society in Turkey. Because of the role of family as the central welfare institution, crisis situations are easily overcome like unemployment times when people are more in need of financial support in the absence of formal social security benefits

¹⁹ See, "2023 Political Vision", <https://www.akparti.org.tr/english/akparti/2023-political-vision>, accessed in 17.01.2015.

²⁰ Presented in Parliament by Former Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, 59th government Program.

(Buğra and Keyder, 2003: 9). Similar to Southern Europe, the institution of marriage and family is still fundamental in Turkey as it is seen the table below.

Table 1: Marriage remains the most common form of partnership among couples, 2000-07.



Source: OECD (2011)

In the study of Kavas and Thornton (2013), *Adjustment and Hybridity in Turkish Family Change*, it is said that there have been demographic changes in Turkey such as changes in the marriage age, reducing rate in fertility, increasing rates in divorce. However, as we can see in the following figure, there is a centrality of nuclear family in Turkey.

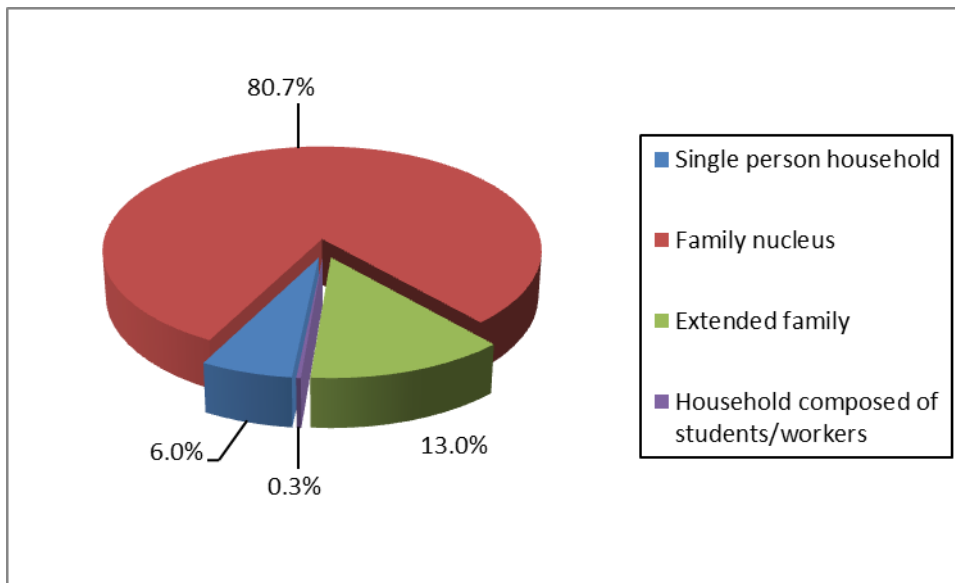


Figure 2: Family Structure in Turkey

Source: Turkstat, Family Structure Survey, 2006.

Furthermore, family in Turkey as in Southern Europe welfare regime has been an essential supporter of the welfare regime of Turkey (Buğra and Keyder, 2006: 212). Extended family has still significant impact on support within the families (Kongar, 1976). In other words, although people live in separated households, families are expected to provide financial and social support to its members in times of financial difficulties. Social and financial needs are copped with the help of family based on the strong sense of solidarity within the extended family to provide the functioning of welfare state. Thus, social pressure on the state about the care responsibilities is reduced with the help of strong family networks.

The size of households in Turkey is significantly larger than in other European countries. According to family statistics of TurkStat, there are 19,842,850 households in Turkey, with average size of 3.7 persons. According to family statistics of Turkish Statistical Institution (TurkStat, 2013), in Turkey, in 2012, this rate increased to 20 220 578. The rate of one person households increased to 8.6% while the rate of one parent households increased to 8.1%. In 2012, the percentage of couples with children is the 54% of households while the percentage of couples

without children is 15.8% of households. Moreover, it is 13.5% consisted of extended families that include three generations.

According to the same statistics, in Turkey, the proportion of one parent families with mother was 84.9%.

Table 2: Family structure across 25 OECD countries (Chapple, 2009: 16)

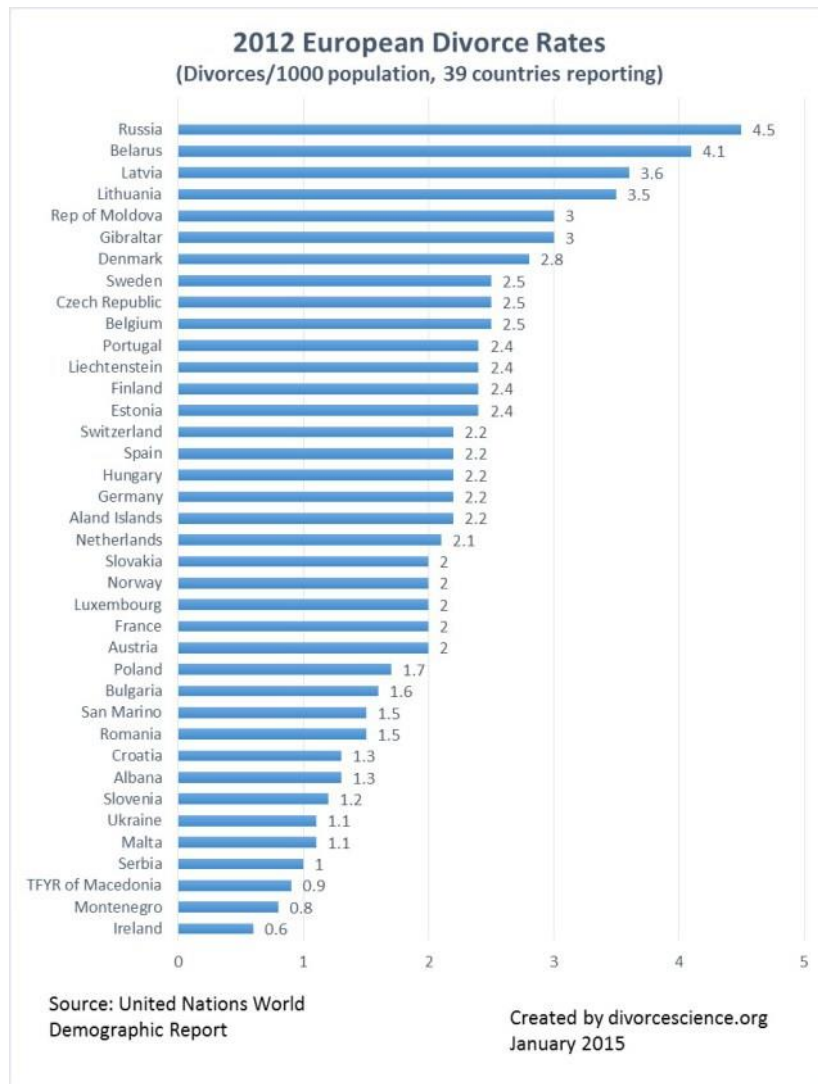
Country	Both parents	Sole Parent	Step-family	Other
Italy	87	9	3	1
Greece	86	11	2	1
Turkey	85	11	1	3
Slovakia	84	11	5	0
Spain	84	11	4	1
Poland	83	12	3	1
Portugal	82	10	6	2
Ireland	81	13	5	2
Netherlands	80	12	7	1
Switzerland	79	12	8	1
Austria	76	14	8	1
Luxembourg	76	14	8	2
Belgium - Flemish	74	14	10	1
Germany	74	15	9	1
Hungary	74	16	9	2
France	73	14	11	1
Norway	73	16	10	2
Sweden	73	14	12	1
Finland	71	16	13	1
Czech Republic	70	16	12	2
Iceland	70	15	12	2
United Kingdom - England	70	16	12	1
Canada	69	18	11	3
United Kingdom - Scotland	68	19	12	1
Belgium - Walloon	67	17	14	2
Denmark	66	19	12	3
United Kingdom - Wales	66	19	13	3
United States	57	24	14	4
OECD average	75	15	9	2

Source: HBSC 2005/2006: These are the proportions living "primarily" with each family arrangement. "Other" includes foster homes or non-parental family members.

Since family is a sanctified unit of society in Turkey, according to 2013 results of *Life Satisfaction Survey* (TurkStat, 2013), the proportion of people who indicated that proper family life is one of the major reasons of having respectful status in the society was 45.6%, as 27.9%. Those people indicated that moral lives have the primary significance in the society of Turkey. Proportion of young people in the same statistics was 50.1%. Getting married as an important part of forming a unity as 7.89‰ is shown as crude marriage rate and crude divorce rate was 1.65‰ (TurkStat, 2013). In 2011, the percentage of households with widowed women 85.7 percent; but, this number dropped to 84.9 percent in 2012 (TurkStat, 2013).

The social fabric is formed by combinations of families connected by marriage and blood. Based on this approach, divorce could be constructed as a violation of the proper order of the society. Demircioğlu (2000: 36) points out “divorce is not welcomed.” Additionally, in a study about problematic sexual relations between married couple as a reason of divorce in Turkey, divorce is defined as the “dissolution of the institution of marriage and the family, causing significant social and psychological conditions, [and] is a social problem” (Abalı, 2006). It is resulted as if there is no other choice, a couple can divorce. As Demircioğlu (2000) said, in Turkey, because family is the only approved life style, something that threatens the family unity becomes a social problem. Keskin (2007: 24) stated that “although divorce is a solution for unhappy couples, it means damage and ruin of family.” Despite these approaches, like many other countries, in Turkey, there is an increase in divorce rate. However, when compared with other countries, this rate is still low. According to TÜİK (Turkey Statistics Institution) reports, the divorce rate increased to % 0.52 in 1997, % 1.33 in 2005 and % 1.59 in 2009. Compared to the rest of Europe, as it can be seen in the following Table, there are countries like Slovenia (1.1 in 2011) and Greece (1.2 in 2009) which have relatively low crude divorce rates (Eurostat, 2013: 22).

Table 3: Divorce rate in Europe.



Source: <http://divorcescience.org/2015/01/19/updated-european-divorce-rates-2012/>

Table 4: Marital status across age groups and by gender.

	Single/never married		Married		Divorced		Widowed	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
15-19	99.5	93.1	0.5	6.9	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0
20-24	88.6	57.3	11.2	41.7	0.2	1.0	0.0	0.1
25-29	48.2	23.9	50.6	73.2	1.2	2.7	0.0	0.3
30-34	19.4	12.1	78.0	83.2	2.6	4.1	0.1	0.6
35-39	8.9	8.5	87.4	84.9	3.6	5.2	0.1	1.4
40-44	5.1	6.7	90.3	84.8	4.4	5.9	0.2	2.6
45-49	3.3	5.4	91.9	84.2	4.4	5.6	0.4	4.9
50-54	2.6	4.2	92.2	81.7	4.5	5.6	0.8	8.5
55-59	1.9	3.5	92.7	77.4	3.9	4.7	1.5	14.4
60-64	1.5	3.0	92.3	70.0	3.4	4.0	2.8	23.0
65+	1.1	2.6	82.6	42.0	2.3	2.8	13.9	52.7

Source: TURKSTAT, 2012.

Because of the sacred perception of family, in Turkey, there have been “marriage schools” in order to prevent divorce (Sürerbiçer, 2008: 43). Within the scope of premarital education programs in Turkey, in 1998, the University of Istanbul organized first marriage school with support of the Department of Educational Sciences. In 2001 and in 6 - 10 December 2004, second marriage school took place. The content of the programs was the family life cycle, pre-marital relationships, marriage preparation, and new married couples living processes, marriage, power in the family, harmony in the family, balance between marriage and work life, sex life and problem-solving, relations between mother and their baby, early childhood developmental characteristics, the mother-child relationship, the developmental characteristics of adolescence, family management, communication, conflicts and listening, effective communication skills and decision making (İşmen and Yavuzer, 2005).

The General Directorate of Family and Social Research also prepared a Family School Program, with subtopics of marriage, mate selection, the importance of relations between the spouses, coping with problems during the establishment of the family, counseling, compliance with the essential requirements of life, the power and love relations, and respect for the parents. Moreover, the content of

program considered including functions of the family, family communication, and family life (the General Directorate of Family and Social Research, 2004: 13, 17, 18, www.aile.gov.tr).

The Provincial Directorate of Social Services in Eskisehir and the 80th Anniversary Zehra Kemal Aksoylu Community Center, between 15.11.2007-24.01.2008, opened another "Marriage School" with the participation of 36 women. In the course, why people get married, marriage preparation, dating and mate selection, marriage, psychology and mental health, marriage, communication, conflict and problem-solving techniques, sexuality, fears to being parents, consanguineous marriages and divorces information was given (www.hurriyet.com.tr/kadin/7724673.asp).

Briefly, marriage programs are constructed to provide marriage skills in order to help couples increase marital happiness, improve their relationships, reduce conflict, improve communication, and increase parenting skills and marital stability. It is because the family is very significant for the state that marriage enrichment programs are receiving more financial support from the government.

Another example of the importance of strengthening the family life is the plan to establish the University for Maternity. The Ankara Metropolitan Municipality in cooperation with the University of Gazi started the "University for Maternity Project." In the opening ceremony of this project, Emine Erdoğan (the wife of the President of Turkey) (2013) stated out:

I believe the Expansion of the program will provide significant benefits to our country as well as mothers. Motherhood is not an area of study, it is said. This is true in a way because motherhood is God-given. Motherhood, with hundreds of connotation in our hearts, consists of an indescribable feeling. A mother is the main stone of the house; a mother is mercy; a mother is shelter; a mother is compassion; a teacher, guide, confidant, companion, mediator. No matter where in the world, this is a strong sentiment, it is a universal emotion, so there is no school in the sense of motherhood. But, in the constantly changing world, mothers need to acquire new knowledge, new experiences and skills (<http://www.akademikpersonel.org/anasayfa/ankaraya-anne-universitesi-aciliyor.html>).

A similar example is the project of “an imam for every family” (*her eve bir imam* projesi) which was discussed in Samsun. Because of the increase in divorce and domestic violence the Provincial Mufti of Samsun made a proposal; the family imam was considered to act as a family doctor. The Mufti's office established a "Family Bureau" for couples experiencing domestic violence and in the process of divorce, which started working to eliminate problems and working for the continuation of marriages (<http://haberlink.com/haber.php?query=84456#.UotwGsQW0iz>). The reason for choosing an imam for this project is an example of conservative approach of the government. It characterizes AKP's gender policy, which can be defined as neoliberal conservative patriarchy.

In a similar logic, a recent project of the AKP government is the “protecting marriages plan” supported by “*Aile Sosyal Destek Programı*” (ASDEP, Programme of Social Support for Family) with the initiative of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies and the Ministry of Justice (http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/10843/iste_devletin_evlilik_kurtarma_plani.html). According to this plan, to reduce the divorce rate, couples who want to divorce, are asked to go to social services centers for four sessions, each lasting 90 minutes. They will be interviewed by psychologists and sociologists. The project is scheduled to save 20 thousand marriages.

As a complementary plan, the Protection of the Family and Dynamic Population Structure Program, which was announced by Prime Minister A. Davutoğlu in January 2015, includes monetary help to the family soon after the birth of children, the state's financial contribution to the family if the families save money for the children, maternity leave, and part-time working opportunity for women to provide mothers' role in their child's care. This program is also based on the logic of earlier program called “Family Social Support Program” which each family shall be assigned a family counselor.

The program covers the years 2013-2018 and includes the objectives for the five-year period: premarital education program for 175 thousand people, 175 thousand people in the family education program, 40 thousand families in family counseling program, 600 thousand people in bad habits and addiction alleviation programs, 30 thousand single parents in family education program, 165 thousand families in financial literacy training program.

However, this plan was criticized as not being a Career Plan for women and an initiative to increase women's labor market participation but it is considered as a Motherhood Career Plan for women²¹ based on the government's woman and family understanding. While the policy makers try to shape the fertility rates, they ignore the needs and wishes of the women who bear these children, raise them and look after them. Women's lives are determined by arguing family morals and tradition. Trying to increase fertility without providing necessary facilities for women means increasing burden for women. In Turkey, care services are imposed on women and such plans deepen the discrimination between men and women. Without public childcare, eldercare and disabled care services, increasing fertility doubles the burden of caring the household that women will be responsible for. Thus, their ability to participate into labor market outside home will be less. Moreover, this plan that provides to use flexible work / flexible care leave (prolonging the period of maternity leave) only to mothers and that ignores paternity leave. Thus, this will cause the discrimination against women that is already present in the labor market. On the other hand, flexible work causes women having lack of social security.

To sum up, as it is discussed above, there is centrality of 'the family' in Turkey. In order to protect the family and prevent divorce, while the aforementioned examples are put in use; on the other hand, social services for

²¹ "KEIG (Women's Labor And Employment Initiative Platform) reviewed the plan: 'Encouragement Plan to Motherhood' <http://www.keig.org/gundem.aspx?id=147>, accessed 17.01.2015. "Protection of Family Plan could protect the children?" <http://www.bianet.org/biamag/cocuk/161599-ailenin-korunmasi-programi-cocugu-ne-kadar-koruyor>, accessed 17.01.2015. Social Policy in between family and employment" <http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/gorus/annelik-ve-istihdam-kiskacinda-sosyal-politika>, accessed 17.01.2015.

children in Turkey are inadequate. This condition is also related to the socio-economic role of the family in Turkey. In terms of family arrangements, it can be argued that in Turkey divorced and widow women with children have vulnerable positions.

3.1.2. Welfare to the Family Approach in the Patriarchal Route of AKP

When we consider about the context of Turkey during AKP government, AKP government's conservative family discourse is related to "AKP's version of patriarchy" as discussed in the study *New Grounds of Patriarchy in Turkey? Gender Policy in the Age of AKP*. Coşar and Yeğenoğlu stated that there is "a new mode of patriarchy exemplified in AKP's gender policy" (Coşar and Yeğenoğlu, 2011: 557). In other words, while there are legal adjustments about women's issues, AKP has also continued to persist on the conservative approach to women in terms of the familial sphere. To cope with all major socio-economic problems in Turkey, the strong Turkish family is served as a primary solution (Yazıcı, 2012: 112). According to Coşar and Yeğenoğlu (2011), it is presented that the natural sphere for women is in the family by AKP's version of patriarchy and has a "hostility towards feminist activism."²² Additionally, AKP's patriarchy emphasizes the importance of women's participation in the labor market, but also reminds women of their familial responsibilities. The outcomes of Coşar and Yeğenoğlu (2011) shows us that in this context, women might be asked to participate in the labor market and also to stay at home. They are expected to adjust to flexible working conditions without neglecting wifehood, motherhood and domestic chores as discussed in previous section.

²² In 2010, former Prime Minister Erdoğan invited representatives of women's organizations to the Dolmabahçe Palace in Istanbul and confessed: "I don't believe in equality between men and women." On International Women's Day in 2011, Erdogan talked about violence against women and statistics stating that so-called honor killings had increased 14-fold in Turkey from 2002 to 2009. But that, he said that it was only because more murders were being reported, and that there are basically few acts of violence against women.

Familism in the period of AKP is also important to justify the political rule of the party. Family does not only have socio-economic significance but also is important as a tool to justify ideology based moral and religious discourse (Coşar and Yeğenoğlu, 2011; Öztan, 2014). As it is seen in the discourse of AKP such as “we are all Turkey,” “we are a big family,” these are all examples of AKP ideological line in terms of moderate Islam, conservatism and nationalism. Based on this ideological approach of AKP, it is argued that AKP defines itself as the protector of this big family, society and nation. Moreover, during AKP governments, family has been focus point of arrangement of social policy and welfare system. The traditional family consisted of a man and a woman is not only important for social policy but it goes beyond for the AKP. From this perspective, family based on marriage is accepted while a relation out of wedlock is unacceptable²³.

Marriages are considered as important for the society in order to raise children who respect traditional and religious norms and values. The former Prime Minister requests from women to give birth to at least three, preferably five children.²⁴ Moreover, during the setting of cabinet, it was announced that since “we are a conservative democratic party,” and “the family is important to us”, the Ministry of Women and Family Affairs was dissolved and replaced with Ministry of Family and Social Policies. The ministry’s new policy orientation was also based on the idea that the family is the ideal place for care, whether for the disabled, the elderly or children.

²³ An example of the discourse can be seen in former Prime Minister R.T. Erdoğan’s comments on gender mixed houses of university students. Erdoğan commented about the issues in student residences, especially on students’ accommodation options of “gender-mixed” apartments. He said he was totally against this type of accommodation since it was against family values and life in Turkey. Additionally, he reminded previous practices on funding newly wedded couples, segregation of student residences, annulment of student loans in the case of marriage during education and free housing for married couples if they agreed to stay in different buildings (Bianet, 2013).

²⁴The former Prime Minister, current President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s emphasis on three kids is basically based on two approaches. First approach is about the belief that Turkey is getting older and to protect the population she needs young generations. Second approach is about women’s issues in terms of the woman’s essential role of “bringing up the next generations and ensuring happiness in the family” (Coşar and Yeğenoğlu, 2011: 565).

Although AKP has made some regulations for and adjustments to the women's social and economic situations, its policies are based on the gender approach of the party; hence, these policies set the women to the home and make them only responsible for childcare. For example, the policy of "female work at home" (Bugra and Yakut-Çakar, 2010: 533) is supposed to facilitate women to work without leaving the home, and paralyzing their housework and caring responsibilities. In this way, the government puts its own responsibility –public care, child care supports- on the women without spending from the state's assets. Hence, women are forced to depend on the family by social security policies in Turkey which are also gender-neutral policies. However, aims of these policies do not include the change patriarchal norms and gender division of labor in the society.

On the other hand, on International Women's Day on March 8, 2012, in order to point out the violence against violence, a law was passed, called as "the Law for Protection of Woman and Family Members" which aimed to protect women against violence. Although the former Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stated that "the new law was a present to all the women of our country", the law exclude certain women such as divorced women. Moreover, "Law for the Protection of Woman and Family Members" was transformed to "Protection of Family and Prevention of Violence against Woman" by the governing party AKP. This change is no limited with the name. The main logic behind this change was that violence can be ignored if it occurs out of the family. It is emphasized the protection of family, not woman who experienced violence. For example, there are not many examples that a protection order against violence was given to a divorced woman against her ex-husband.²⁵

In 1990, the General Directorate on the Status of Women (KSGM, *Kadının Statüsü Genel Müdürlüğü*) was established. Moreover, "Status and Problems of Women Department" was named to this directorate and affiliated to the Prime

²⁵ In Ankara, in one case, because of former husband's violence against women and children, the ex-partner and child protection measures were implemented (The Turkish Law Site, 2008. <http://www.turkhukuk sitesi.com/showthread.php?t=27552>).

Minister. Main purpose of this institution is to help women in terms of social, economic, cultural and political issues. From the establishment of the directorate, it has been constantly reconstructed. The first adjustment was done in 2004. The Law No 5251 was passed to plan “the Organization Structure and Duties of the General Directorate on the Status of Women”. Secondly, it was restructured as a national mechanism to “carry out activities aiming at the protection and development of women’s human rights, improving women’s social, economic, cultural and political life, and ensuring women enjoy equal rights, opportunities and possibilities” (<http://www.kadininstatusu.gov.tr/tr/>).

However, the word “woman” was dropped from the title of the ministry and the “Ministry of Family and Social Policies” became the new name following the June 2011 elections during AKP government. Besides, the scope of the ministry changed to work on the issues about women's rights and the family. Some of the issues that the new ministry will work on are children, the aged, the disabled, and the families of soldiers who die in armed conflict. The General Directorate of the Status of Women, the General Directorates of Family and Social Services, of Children Services, of Services for Disabled and the Elderly and of Social Aid are added to framework of the new ministry. The new name of the ministry reflects the traditional view about the assumed place of women which is the family. Thus, the aim of the new ministry is to protect the family rather than individual woman. In other words, conservative approach of the government limits the place of women with only the family and women are left without any chance to free themselves from the family. Acuner (2011, cited in Belge, 2011) points out that

The establishment of the Ministry of Family and Social Affairs is an indicator for abolishing women policies. The KSGM is the only official mechanism in charge of making policies to strengthen gender equality. It now becomes an ineffective unit without authority under the new ministry as a result of the application. After this, it will be very difficult to access sufficient monetary and human recourses to carry out efficient work. This means that women policies are being erased from the state's agenda.

The change in the Ministry of Women and Family Affairs and including the the General Directorate on the Status of Women into the framework of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies eliminates the efforts to provide gender equality.

In summary, different from the approach in the international literature as discussed in chapter II, in Turkey, there has been welfare to family rather than welfare to work understanding. According to Grütjen (2008), there is a high level of familism in Turkey as similar to Southern Europe countries. In the case of Turkey, in the persistence of the male breadwinner model, a normative family model is taken as a reference source in the social security regime in Turkey in which women and unmarried daughters are dependent on the status of the male breadwinner in the labor market. Re/marriage is also encouraged with the help of financial support by the state in Turkey. Hence, the family and the marriage is considered as a safety net for women (Kılıç, 2006).

Moreover, the focus on “strong family, strong society” has consequences for divorced and widow women because underlining the family as a problem solver, removes the “burden” of the state and defines the major role of the state as the protector of the family (Yazıcı, 2012). Insisting on the strong family ignores the marital dissolution, or people outside the family. This family discourse hence indicates dissolution of marriage as the primary cause of major “social problems.” In order to solve these social problems, it is focused on the idea of “protecting and strengthening the family” (Yazıcı, 2012). This aim is also reflected in the statements of President Erdoğan as a method to overcome social crisis and to have a stable social order. Hence, according to Kardam et al. (2005: 32)

Women are kept under the control of men in order to protect family, social norms and traditions. (...) Honor is a destructive concept because the freedom of human beings, especially the freedom of women, is restricted as a result of keeping it under the control of men not only in the family but also in society.

This approach indicates common attitudes toward both divorced and widow women. For example, Kardam et al. (2005: 32) points out that a married woman’s willingness to divorce or leaving her husband is considered to be a behavior

contrary to chastity that deserves punishment. Single woman is considered as a serious threat to social order. Moreover, significance of marriage and the role of women in keeping marital bonds can be seen in the sayings as “a good woman is a sacrificial mother for her family” (*kadın dediğin ailesi için saçını süpürge eder*) and “a good woman keeps her man” (*kadın dediğin kocasını elinde tutar*). In Turkey, family constructed by marriage is highly central and stable institution. The conditions of women in Turkey are determined by the centrality of family and marriage. Additionally, marital status of women still defines divorced and widow women’s womanhood/sexual life, social networks, employment process, parenting, coping and bargaining strategies.

3.1.3. Gender Division of Labor in Turkey

The *2013 Turkey Demographic and Health Survey* conducted by Hacettepe University in Ankara highlights that in Turkey the main source of child care is either the mother or the female relatives. According to the survey, in the 27 percent of cases, mothers are the main carers. This result indicates that women are either taking children to the work or they are working at home. Survey results indicate that in Turkey, for working women, the main care giver for children under age six is grandmothers. It is reported in the survey that women’s mothers in law and their own mothers are the caregiver for 16 percent of mothers. One of the obstacles for overcoming the low trend of the female employment rates in Turkey is the inadequacy or lack of social services about the care policies for the children, elderly and disabled people (KEIG, 2008: 66). As a result, women are forced to perform all these care issues and they internalize these care issues as a part of their family responsibilities.

Table 5: Persons responsible for the care of children between the age of 0-5.

	Total	Urban	Rural
Mother	92.1	91.3	93.9
Father	0.5	0.4	0.8
Sister	0.3	0.1	0.7
Grandmother	1.5	1.8	0.7
Paternal grandmother	1.8	2.0	1.3
Close relatives	0.6	0.7	0.4
Babysitter	1.5	1.6	1.1
Crèche	0.9	1.2	0.2
Other	1.0	0.9	1.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: TURKSTAT, 2006.

An important aspect of the gender division of labor in Turkey is the lack of the public provision of care (Ecevit, 2012). Since public care provisions relieve the family from care and provide other options for caring, they are significant for women to reconcile family and work (Ecevit, 2010). The study about public care in Turkey pointed out that public provision of childcare in Turkey is almost non-existent (Boğaziçi University Social Policy Forum, 2009). Formal early childhood care services are supposed to be provided by the Directorate General for the Social Services and Child Protection Agency (Sosyal Hizmetler ve Çocuk Esirgeme Kurumu–SHCEK) and the coverage is very limited (UNICEF, 2012). The aim of the provisions provided by the Social Service and Children Protection Institution in Turkey was to take care of children of poor families at home; rather than institutional care provided by the state (UNDP, <http://issuu.com/undpturkiye/docs/socialassistancereports/17>). Based on the outcomes of this research, we can claim that the rate of children in creches and kindergardens in Turkey is very low level. Furthermore, it is difficult for not only working married women but also working single mothers to access the childcare services unless the state itself finances childcare services. As a result, not only

married women but also single women give up the willing to work when they couldn't find a place to trust for childcare (Ecevit, 2010).

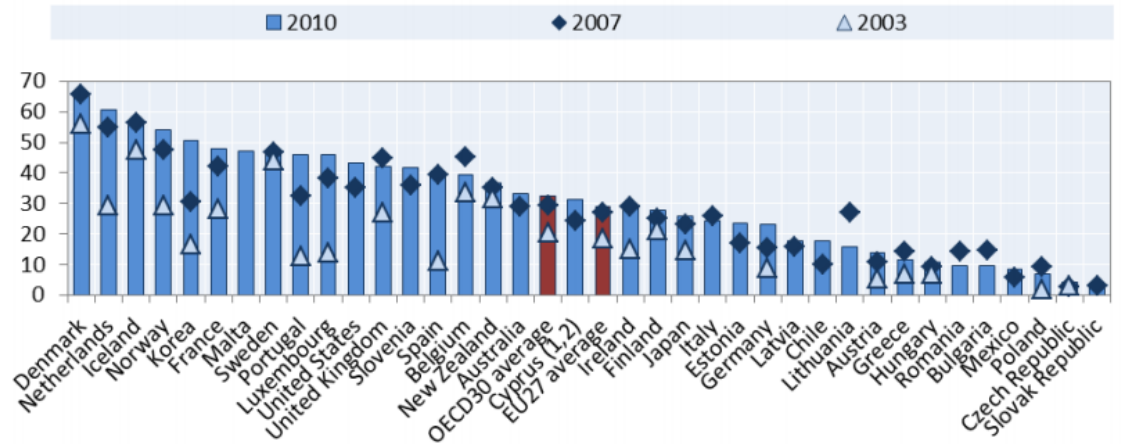


Figure 3: Average enrolment rate of children under 3-years of age in formal childcare.

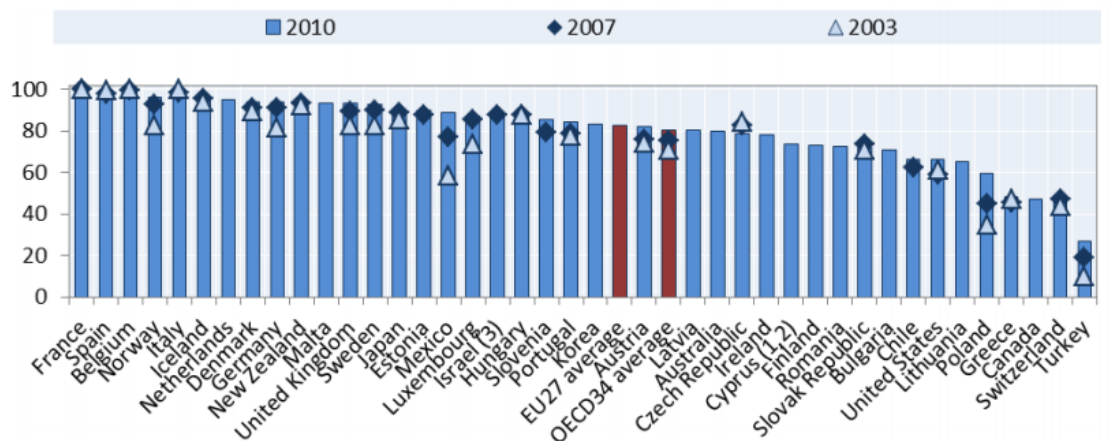


Figure 4: Average enrolment rate of children aged 3-5 years of age in pre-school educational programmes.

Source: Participation rate in childcare and pre-school services among children aged 0-5 years, 2010 (OECD Family Database, 2014).

The overwhelming majority of children of pre-school age are cared for at home in Turkey, usually by their mothers or, if the mother is working, by other informal care-givers like the paternal grandmother (25%) or maternal grandmother (11%), an older sibling (6%) or another relative (5%) (Boğaziçi University Social

Policy Forum, 2009). According to Kavas and Hoşgör (2012), grandparents also become the major caregiver of their grandchildren because of women's employment and lack of social services for childcare. For instance, in the study of Ecevit on women in manufacturing sector, it was found that 79 percent of childcare activities were served by grandmothers or other women in the family (Ecevit, 1986: 314). In the case of single mothers in Turkey, grandparents, especially grandmothers, compensate for the absence of a father. However, this situation causes authority ambivalence or role ambiguity in single mothers' families. Kavas and Hoşgör (2012) discuss that in a family in Turkey, parental involvement and control is common and children are expected to obey the parental authority even after they got married or divorced. In the family, parental authority is given to the father as a dimension of a proper family. Hence, when the marriage ends through divorce or the death of the husbands, single mothers have to reform the authority in the family. Single mothers "do family" (Sarkisian, 2006) by giving the role model to grandfathers, while, because of the lack of institutional care services, grandmothers become the major caregiver. In this sense, role ambiguity occurs between grandmothers and single mothers (Kavas, 2010).

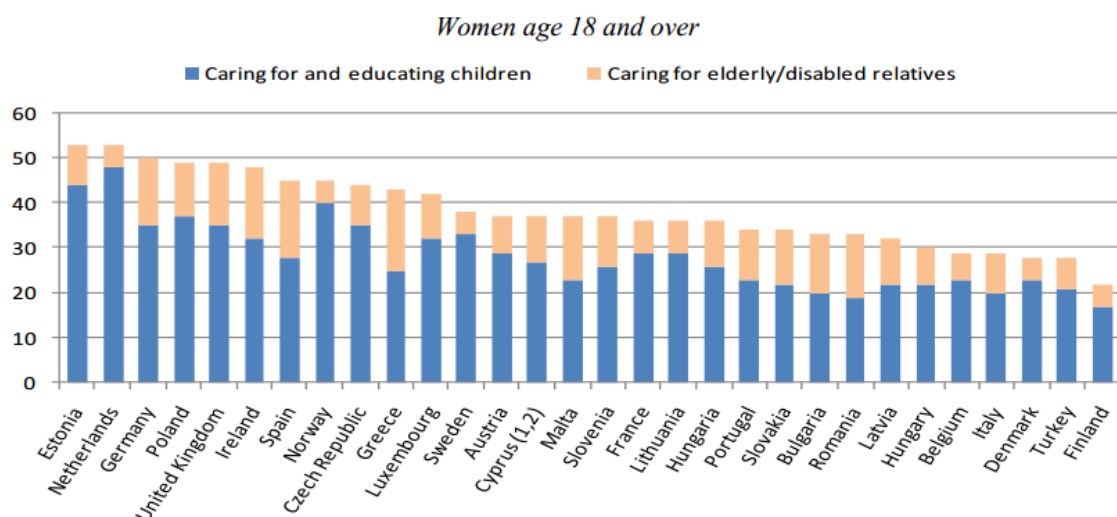
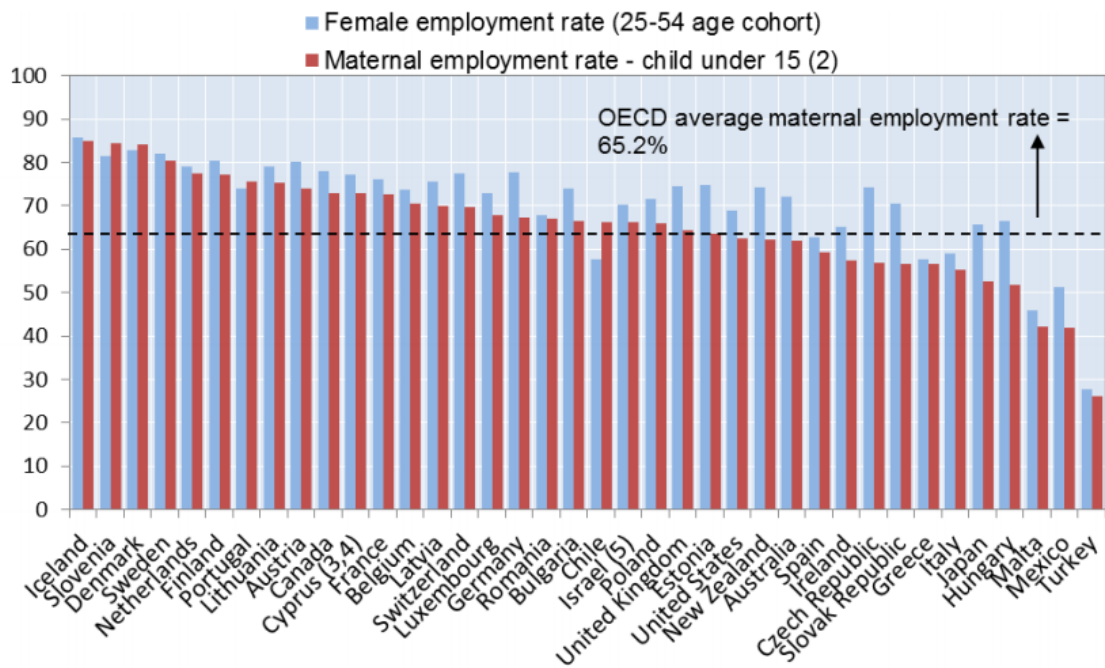


Figure 5: Average weekly hours allocated to care activities

Source: OECD Family Database

The problem is that there is a lack of funded childcare for working married and single mothers, making it difficult for women to work and care for their children at the same time. The government cannot assume that single women can handle both working and raising children. According to TÜİK research, *2006 Yılı Zaman Kullanımı Anketi* (Survey for The Use of Time in 2006), women in Turkey spend 5 hours 17 minutes for household care, child care, washing clothes, ironing. On the other hand, based on the gender division of labor in the family, 51 minutes were spent by men for construction and repairs. When employed women are compared with unemployed women, there are not many differences. Another study of TÜİK (Turkish Statistics Agency) states that while unemployed women spend 5 hours 43 minutes for house work and household care, employed women spend 4 hours for the same activities (cited in Özar et al., 2011: 25).

Moreover, according to recent work of Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu (2012), *Family, Job and Gender in Turkey*, less than half of the respondents (42%) in the research consider that the man's job is to make money and that the woman's job is to take care of the home and children. The majority think that the role of women in life is to be housewives. More than half of respondents (55%) consider children's mother should not work. However, when children are the school-age children, ideas about the mother's participation in working life varies considerably. In this case, 38% think a woman should stay at home; the 19% think a woman can work full-time. However, the same research points out that in Turkey women should not work. Respondents in the research claim that women should be sitting at home as a housewife.



Source: Maternal employment rates compared to female employment rates, 2011 (OECD Family Database, 2014).

These findings point to the fact that Turkey has the lowest employment rate for women with children among all the countries. The data shows that family status may have significant impact on the female employment in Turkey. Moreover, the family set up and the conditions of women in the family have changed with the increasing industrialization in Turkey (Kavas and Thornton, 2013). The mother who stays at home and takes care of children, and does housework, is idealized to be a good woman, but because of difficult living conditions, the idea that a woman should contribute to the household income is recognized. As a result, the superwoman described by Moreno (2006) for woman in Southern Europe countries as discussed above also occurs in Turkey. Moreover, women's responsibilities based on the gender division of labor have significant impact on women's low level of labor market participation (Ecevit, 2010, 2012; Özar and Çakar, 2013). Furthermore, it is also accepted that solely women should give up their jobs to care for children, not men. For single mothers who cannot afford to pay for childcare or do not have informal family connections after marital dissolution, having a child can mean the end of employment for the mother. Single women face many more struggles in

terms of working in comparison to married women. Part of the problem is that most of the single women lack of working history to have well paid jobs because they got married or gave break to their jobs during marriage. They may be stuck with low-paying jobs mostly at informal sector. This places them outside the social security system, making them more financially vulnerable and dependent on men. Thus, they cannot gain necessary qualifications to break out from their dependency on male breadwinners.

Figure 6: Sole mothers and partnered mothers aged 15 to 64 in paid employment, 2011

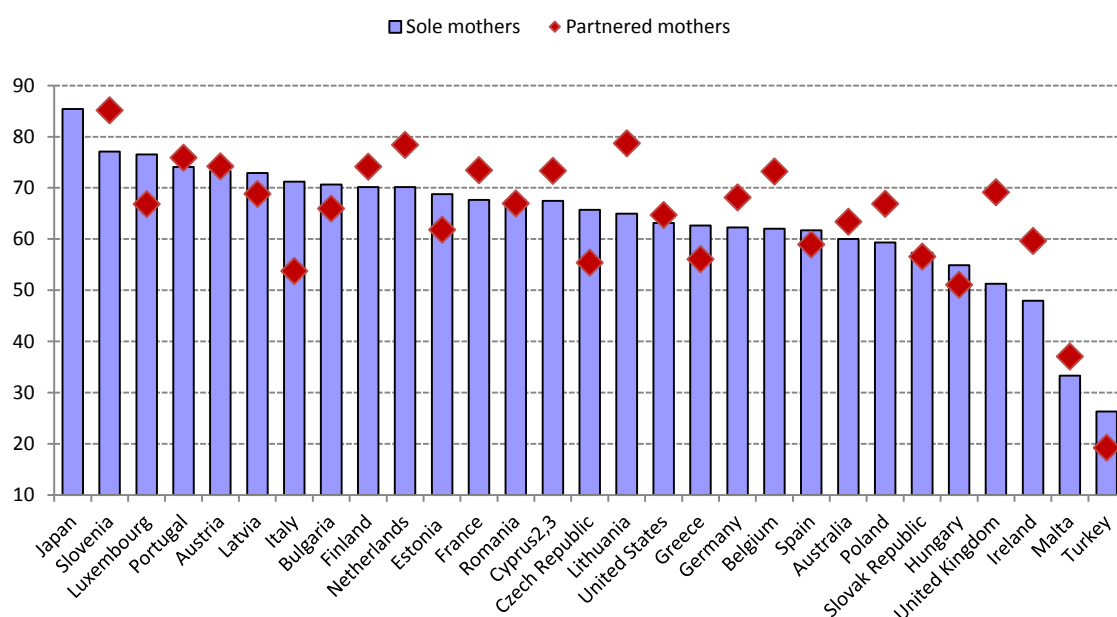


Figure 6: Sole mothers and partnered mothers aged 15 to 64 in paid employment, 2011

Source: OECD Family Database

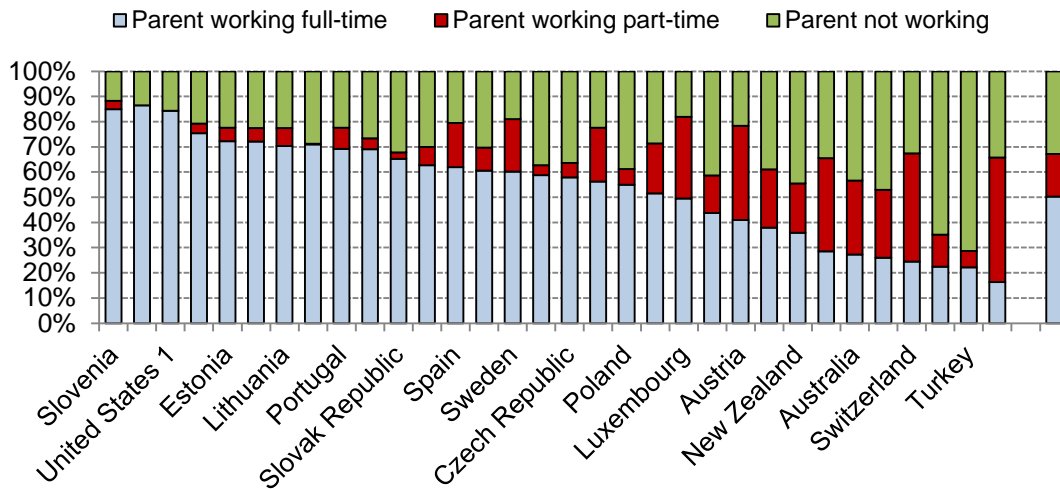


Figure 7: Employment patterns among sole-parent families with children aged 0-14, 2011.

According to Korkut and Elsen-Ziya (2011: 408), one of the major barriers for women to participate in the labor market is the lack of formal supports and institutions to help women reconcile the family and work. Men on the other hand are seen as the breadwinners not only for the patriarchal culture in Turkey and but in various other cultures around the world. Various statistics display this gender segregation. For example, Turkey ranked 125th out of 134 countries in the *2014 Global Gender Gap Index* that assesses countries on how they divide resources and opportunities between men and women. Korkut and Eslen-Ziya (2011: 408) believe that the logic behind the low rates of women's formal employment is very much related to the conventional ideas on gender relations. In a similar way, research done by the World Bank (2009) states that there are also cultural barriers to women's formal employment in Turkey.

Related to this issue, because of the gender division of labor in the society, more than half of female workers are not covered by the social security system, while this figure is 35.6% for men (TurkStat, 2012). Moreover, Özar and Çakar (2013) point out that being an unregistered employee in Turkey, in other words working at informal sector, makes women dependent on men. There is a gender specific treatment for the widow women. More specifically, both survivor benefits

and health insurance rely on the “dependent” status of a spouse or children. It is defined due to women being considered dependent on the male breadwinner or marriage to receive survivor benefits and healthcare (Kılıç, 2008). Thus, only widow women whose husbands achieved requirements of the social security system can have the salary of the deceased husbands.

To sum up, family based social policies are pronounced as an institutional change in the welfare regime. Thus, this change can be seen in the AKP government’s desire to impose the government’s conservative attitude into these reforms (Bozçağa, 2013). In addition to insist on the strong family idea, social security system in Turkey intervenes in gender relations in the society and in the labor market. Thereby, these interventions reduce women’s participation into the market, but at the same time combining their caretaker roles by implying their “dependent and weak status” (Bozçağa, 2013: 186). This is because the existing system does not problematize the gender stereotypes in the society but deepens the caring responsibilities by transferring them to women. In a family based social system, women are dependent on the male breadwinner, which reinforces women’s role as caregiver and wife. Also, social security policies take the traditional gender roles into account on the discussions or adjustments about the issue of labor market. Despite some adjustments which added gender-neutral components into the current social security system, it is still gender-biased, as discussed above. After the 2011 adjustment, there is minor progress toward gender oriented family policies; thereby there is an increase in the expected roles and duties of the family in terms of its care responsibilities.

The family based social policies implicitly leave out single mothers and mostly focus on married or widow women. Under those discussions, it can be argued that the welfare state regime in Turkey is not advantageous for single women and that this can have significant impact on women’s economic well being. In a system which takes into account of idealized form of family in terms of social security and care excludes the single women and their needs are not seen in the social policies. Furthermore, policies, which are constructed with the aim of

strengthening the family and reducing the responsibilities of the state, weaken the already vulnerable families like single women who get out of circle of idealized family and need the state's support to survive.

In conclusion, the place of women in Turkey, the role of marriage/family and divorce, and the gender division of labor, access to formal paid work with social security reinforces gender bias. This results in constructing women as dependent on the husband or a working male in order not to suffer during marriage or after marital dissolution. Hence, this family/state/market formation in Turkey reveals how women are defined and determined by gender roles, values and norms.

3.2. Divorce and Widowhood in Turkey

3.2.1. Divorce in Turkey

Divorce has always been an issue in Turkey. In the Ottoman Empire, divorce was implemented by Sharia law and a Muslim judge (kadı). After the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, the practice of divorce was changed and was transferred to The Civil Code founded in 1926. Then, reforms related to women's status were discussed. Sheri'a law was dismissed and a secular civil code, which was reconstructed from the Swiss civil code in 1926, was put in use. Polygamy was banned and monogamy was encouraged. The inequalities in the law regarding divorce, property, custody of children were determined and adjustments to provide a more equal treatment were prepared (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1986: 485). Therefore, in 1926, divorce became a matter of the Law Courts and provided rights for women to seek for divorce. Marriage ceremony changed from religious to civil ceremony. Women were also accepted as legal guardians of their kids and achieved equal rights in terms of property ownership.

In 1965, the Law on Family Planning, which made dissemination of contraceptives and medical abortion legal, was passed. Abortion was legalized in 1983. In 1988 no fault divorce was accepted. The “Directorate of Family Research” was founded in 1989 and “Social Research” was added to its name in 2004. The need for permission of husband to work outside the home was implemented until the change in article 159 of the Civil Code in 1990. In 1998, the Law on the Protection of the Family was passed. Between the years 1998-2001, there have been important changes in the Civil Code and these changes are named as the “New Civil Code” in 2001.

A new approach to the family and the women within the family was presented in the new civil code. Based on this new approach, there had been several changes. The husband’s role as the head of the family is adjusted and equal partnership which is based on equal rights on decision making in terms of family and the marriage²⁶. However, according to Erdem-Akçay (2013: 84), head of family logic still exists under the name of “household head” in the civil code. In the section titled “Household Order” Article 367 states that “if a community composed of more than one individual living as a family has a household head determined by law, agreement, or customs, the right to administer the household belongs to that person.” Another example, Article 23.2 of the code on population requires that the registry of the woman be carried from her father’s registry over to that of the husband’s family upon marriage. Equal rights over the family dwelling²⁷ between spouses were put in use. The children born out of wedlock were defined as “illegitimate children”. The usage of this concept was abolished. Moreover, the custody of children out of a marriage was given to their mothers²⁸.

²⁶ Article 186 of the Civil Code.

²⁷ Article 186 of the Civil Code.

²⁸ Article 498 of the Civil Code.

An important change related to divorce in the new civil code is the property regime.²⁹ With the new civil code, there are two types of property regime. First one is the legal property regime (Ownership of Acquired Property).³⁰ With this change in the property regime, each spouse can have equal share in the property acquired during marriage. Second one is the division of shared property regime.³¹ With the help this change, each spouse can have the goods after marital dissolution if those goods are registered under his or her name. Moreover, after legal dissolution, man and woman can have the goods which they bought before the marriage.³² The legal property regime will be put in use if spouses do not decide to use a different regime before and after they got married³³. In order to use this specific property regime, couples should prepare a contract in which they declare their decision under the notary control.

The Civil Code in Turkey requires that the goods of the family should be divided equally between the spouses if there is not any other property regime. However, this principle can be applied for the marriages which are settled after the enforcement of the very Code, dating 01/01/2002. According to the "participation on the Acquired Assets Principle", properties, which were owned before marriage, should be labelled as personal property and these properties should not be included to the equal division. However, this law can not be used for the cases before the issues in 2002. All in all, property regime can be considered as a positive implementation for women to improve their economic conditions after divorce.

Another significant change applied in the new civil code in terms of divorce is alimony. The spouse who is faultless or at least not faultier compared to the other

²⁹ Articles 202, 203 and 205 of the Civil Code. Although the new property regime protects the rights of women, the society, including the women, it still has not grasped that it is the right of a woman to share the property acquired during marriage equally even if she does not work outside the home.

³⁰ Article 202 of the Civil Code.

³¹ Article 242-243 of the Civil Code.

³² Articles 242-243 of the Civil Code.

³³ Articles 202, 203 and 205 of the Civil Code.

side, and who has possibility to experience poverty, is allowed to alimony. Alimony is not limited for a particular time, yet it can be rearranged by the Court in case the conditions change or disappear. The amount of the alimony can be decided and changed in accordance with the economic situations and the living conditions of each spouse.

Child custody in the new civil code emphasizes the responsibilities of each spouse. According to the report of the EU (Secretariat General for EU Affairs),

The new Article 328 stipulate that both the mother and the father are responsible to take care of the child until the age of maturity and that this responsibility continues until the child completes his or her education even after the child reaches maturity.

Following divorce, it is still forbidden to remarry within 300 days for women.³⁴ The logic behind this implementation is that women may be pregnant from their ex-husbands. However, legal permission can be provided if the child was born during the divorce negotiations or if they legally prove that they are not pregnant. After the divorce, the woman can decide to which surname she is gonna use; surname before marriage or her husband's surname but the judge approval is needed (Kılıçoğlu, 2004).

There are also modifications in terms of the causes of divorce. For example, as a cause of divorce, severe insult has also been included. In the old civil code, insult was covered under the title of maltreatment and it was not accepted as a specific reason to divorce. This amendment can be considered as a positive development for women since mistreatment towards a woman's self esteem or personality is recognized as a reason to divorce in the civil code. Leaving the home for three months without warning as a reason to file divorce was extended to six months.

³⁴ Article 132 of the Civil Code.

3.2.2. Widowhood in Turkey

According to social security program in Turkey, widow women can take advantage of social benefits but there are conditions to receive these social supports. First of all, widow women can apply for those benefits if their husbands are eligible for the requirements of disability pension or an old-age pension. Secondly, those benefits are given to widow women whose husbands were pensioners when they died. Thirdly, the widow women can get the benefits if their husbands finished payments of insurance for at least at least five years or had paid provisions for 900 days (1,800 days for civil servants and self-employed persons).

Not only widow women but also children younger than age 18 can use these benefits. There is also an option that a son aged 18 or older who is disabled or unemployed, an unmarried, widow or divorced daughter of at any age who is not insured or receiving any social security benefits can get those benefits. If widow women get remarried, they will not be able to receive those benefits. The widow women can only have the benefits of only one deceased husband's pension.

Survivor pension: The widow woman can have the 50% of the deceased pension. However, if the widow woman does not have children, is not working or receiving another pension, 75% of the deceased pension is given to her.

Orphan's pension: Children of deceased can have the 25% of the deceased pension. If there is one child, s/he can get 50% of the deceased pension.

Other eligible survivors: If there are dependent parents, they can also receive the 25% of the deceased pension.

If both widow's parents and widow's spouse have passed away, both of which is a higher salary, widows can choose. They cannot currently receive for both. The amount of the salary depends on widow's spouse or widow's father premium payment days, the premium amount.

After recent amendments, the ministry officials' income assistance amounting to 250 TL per month³⁵ is paid to women whose husbands have died. This is an important measure to reduce the poverty and to overcome the financial difficulties after marital dissolution. However, as criticized by Özar and Yakut-Çakar (2012), there is a gender differentiated treatment between divorced and widow women even if they both have similar difficulties or problems. Because of the stigmatization of divorced women, they are considered as not deserving. It is thought that if the divorced women are given this financial assistance, the ideal family structure can be damaged. Since this payment is given only to widow women, this implementation creates an economically advantageous position for widow women when it is compared with divorced women. Özar et al. (2012) claim that

Constructing the government's projected income support program as including only women whose husbands passed away is a totally political choice. As a result, from the beginning this social policy discriminates many women. We believe that this is not because of budget gap, but rather this is the attitudes of government against divorced women.

In addition, this support program has a precondition that if the widow woman is living together with her boyfriend or if the widow woman is seen with a man, she cannot benefit from this payment. This precondition reflects the traditional belief that the man is the breadwinner who provides economic safety for women. Özar and Yakut-Çakar (2012) claim that by the new social security policy implemented in 2008, women are only ensured Social Security benefits by maintaining their relationship with their spouse, fathers or a particular man with paid work. Hence, this kind of policies strengthens the traditional approach of family and leaves no room for women outside of marriage.

To sum up, with regards to survivor pension, the classification of the welfare regime in Turkey clearly shows that Turkey fits the Southern European model. According to Grütjen (2007: 80), there is an occupational core and low safety net in

³⁵ In the research of Kurnaz, it is discussed that the amount of assistance is determined as 250 TL. For 73,718 widow women, 18.429.500 TL was allocated (Kurnaz, 2012). However, according to the same research findings, 20 thousand divorced women also were stated in the same economic condition with widow women. Nevertheless, divorced women were excluded by the ministry of social support programs.

terms of social assistance in the social security system in Turkey. The most common characteristic of both Turkey and Southern Europe is the significant place of the family in the social security system as a major supporter of the welfare regime.

According to Kılıçoğlu (2004:13) the new code aims to protect family by providing the couples more opportunities to reconcile the work and the family. KAGİDER's (Kagider- Türkiye Kadın Girişimciler Derneği- Women Entrepreneurs Association of Turkey) research (2012) about status of women in Turkey points out that in theory there has been studies to provide gender equality in Turkey; but in practice, policies and reforms are completely put in use. Because of the conservative approach of the political actors, there is not full commitment to gender issues. Thereby, the inequality between man and woman still exists. Despite the reforms aiming to gain gender equality, in Turkey, traditional patriarchal structures of the family, state and the market are still barriers for empowerment of the women (Müftüler-Bac, 1999; Kavas, 2010).

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

I adopted a feminist methodology in this thesis. There is no standard agreement over what makes a research feminist research. The only agreement among researchers is the diversity and this diversity provides us different knowledge to be presented. According to Brooks and Hesse-Biber (2007), doing research is a process that involves an ongoing series of decisions and choices. What makes a research feminist research is that it is structured within feminist vision from deciding the topic of the research to examining and analyzing the data (Cook and Fonow, 2007). Hesse-Biber (2011) states that feminist research begins with examining and criticizing androcentric approaches within the different disciplines and aims to challenge those disciplines to include gender as a category of analysis. Feminist research is carried out not only to examine women's lives and experiences but also to actively advance them. This view is often expressed as research *for* women, *not just on* women (Harding, 1987; Fonow and Cook, 1991).

In her book *Feminism and Methodology*, Sandra Harding (1987: 1) rejects the idea that there is a "distinctive feminist method of research." She (1987: 6) asked

What are the characteristics that distinguish the most illuminating examples of feminist research?" and examined three things. First, feminist research examines its problematic from the point of women's experiences. Second, feminist research looks for the ways that women "want and need.

Finally, feminist research "locates the researcher in the same critical plane as the overt subject matter" (Harding, 1987: 8). Hesse-Biber (2007: 16–17) describes feminists' research in her study, *Handbook of Feminist Research* as "going beyond correcting gender bias in dominant research studies." In a similar way with Harding (1987) and Mary Margaret Fonow and Judith A. Cook (1991), Hesse-Biber (2007) focuses on issues of power and reflexivity in the research. The main concern of

these approaches is that feminist research is more than just adding the women. Feminist research is significant in terms of those two things: how the research is done and what is done with the research.

Based on their different approaches to feminism, feminist researchers will construct and use different methods and prefer different techniques to study women. In other words, Landman (2006: 430) says that

Feminist methodology is specifically concerned with how, or whether, knowledge produced about social life can be connected with the social realities of women in the context of any methodology that is dominated by men and that neglects consideration of the gendered nature of social life.

Feminist methodology is not considered as a strictly framed methodology. Rather, based on the discussions of Harding and Reinharz, Hekman, there are a set of common themes that exist in feminist research. Standard surveys, statistical calculations, statistical information are also used to picture the issues regarding different positions of women and men. According to Wadsworth (2001) “other researchers will concentrate on directly hearing the stories of women by using in-depth interview or ethnographies.”

Feminist methodology considers the personal lives and experiences of the researcher and the researched as a part of research (Naples, 2007). Hence, feminist methodology makes room for the researcher to be self-reflexive in the process of evaluating and writing the data. The implications and understandings of these emphasized aspects enable the researcher to critically investigate and transform various aspects of experiences of women. In a feminist study, there is “the acknowledgment of the reciprocal sharing of knowledge and experience between the researcher and the researched” (Shields and Dervin, 1993: 67). The feminist research process will include not only interviewing with women, but also participants can be integrated into the each phase of the research process by explaining the aims of research and sharing information with them. As a result, the characteristics of feminist research, focusing on experiences of women, the scrutiny

of gender, and reflexivity, are significant ways in study of women's post dissolution experiences.

4.1. Research Design and the Story of the Fieldwork

While searching for a thesis topic, one of my aunts divorced and I witnessed what she lived and experienced. The stigma and violence she faced compelled me to study divorced women, and I started to question whether widow women are in a more advantageous position than divorced women because contrary to divorced women, the widow women I have known so far were shown great respect. I believe that this experience was very helpful in conducting the fieldwork, providing me with significant insights into the experiences of divorced women.

When I reached this moment, I decided to change my angle and explore life courses and experiences of divorced and widow women. In this sense, I concentrated on examining women's accounts of post dissolution, that is, how they perceive and relate to the change from being married with a husband to being divorced/widow without a husband; and, of equal importance, how they interpret and narrate their experiences. In this regard, my early interest has resulted in me writing a thesis on how women experience challenges and difficulties which may put them isolated positions, or more simply, how they cope with consequences of their new marital status; and relating their experience of being single woman without a husband in daily life.

4.1.1. Characteristics of Participants

Within the scope of the research, I interviewed thirty six women: nineteen divorced women and seventeen widow women. The most prominent characteristic common to the divorced and widow women was that they got married once. While

conducting pilot interviews I also interviewed some remarried women, married and divorced twice or more to see if it was possible to expand the field of research; however as the profile of the population seemed to be quite mixed, I decided not to include those women. Moreover, I interviewed divorced and widow women who had lost their husbands at least a year ago and at most ten years ago. By focusing on women who have been widowed or divorced for particular time, I hope to talk to women who will not overdramatize negative consequences of marital dissolution. Women who have just recently gone through a marital dissolution have had the possibility to overemphasis on negative dimensions of marital dissolution. Indeed, according to Sev'er and Pirie (1990), there are studies which are conducted shortly after dsissolution of marriage. When these studies are scrutinized, it can be seen overemphasis on the negative aspects of divorce. Thereby, these studies dominate the related literature about divorce or marital dissolution. In order to examine personal experiences of these women, I exclude those very recently divorced or widowed and remarried women. I chose this criterion to eliminate individuals who are in the initial reaction or adjustment stage of divorce or widowhood.

In this sense, the age of the respondents served as another determining factor in the selection of the research subjects. According to Morgan (1992: 56), "differences in age among widowed, separated, and divorced women may translate into different choices and behaviors, regardless of the way in which their marriages ended." Hence, in this study I interviewed women who were approximately the same ages, on the average. With the age restrictions of the sample, the sample differences were much smaller. By limiting the age range I planned to limit the variation due to age. While doing my field work, I sought to interview women between the ages of twenty five and fifty five. During the pilot interviews I was able to observe that interviewing women older than a certain age may cause difficulties to provide clear answers. During these interviews, the women over sixty have often had difficulty in remembering their past, or had problems to understand what is asked for.

In the case of the women in this thesis, the selected women are also determined by the dynamics of class. The women interviewed were generally from lower middle class families. By lower middle class, women with an income level that is substantially not above the nationally established poverty line are meant.³⁶

The majority of them had attained a similar type and level of education, elementary and highschool graduated.

I interviewed women with at least one child. The selected women in this study are either living alone or living with their families but without a male partner.

4.1.2. Participant Selection Process

I identified respondents mostly through informal networking activities. I used the snowball technique, that is, almost every divorced and widow woman whom I talked to led me to another divorced and widow woman she knew. I contacted women by phone or face to face, and then explained the purpose of the study. The participant selection process brought surprises. I didn't have much difficulty reaching divorced women. Before the recent change³⁷, if divorced women couldn't get her alimony determined by the court, they could ask for the alimony from their ex-husbands by the way of levy. They need to come to office of directorate of execution to get their alimony payments. One of my father's friends was the execution office manager at directorate of execution. I got in contact with her and explained to her that I would like to get an appointment from her in order to introduce myself, my research study and look for assistance to reach the divorced women. She warmly welcomed me when I arrived to her office. In fact, she was not on her own; she had divorced women asking for advice. I was lucky to see those people together, and had the chance to find out what those divorced

³⁶ For the socio demographic profiles of interviewees, look at appendix I.

³⁷ According to the adjustment in 2014, divorced women do not need to come to Office to get their alimony. They can get their alimony payments through bank.

women's main problems were, how they were thinking about the amount of alimony, and so on. I was able to arrange a few appointments with divorced women to interview.

Moreover, it was a bit difficult to reach and convince widow women to participate in the interview. It seemed that the widow women were a bit afraid of taking part in a study and they thought that it was time consuming. The process of looking for widow women to interview also provided me information about widow women's experiences and stigma against them. Since I did not know widow women between the age of twenty five and fifty five, I asked people to look around for widow women who I could talk to. My father is a retired soldier and he is the member of association of retired sergeants in Ankara. I requested that my father ask his friends if they could find widow women whom I could explain my research to. Meanwhile, my father's friends started to make jokes: "Well, Cemil? Why are you looking for *dul*³⁸? Are you looking for the second [wife]? Or what do you need? (here his friends implying sexual relations)" On the other hand, my mother's women friends generally expressed that "Darling, what will she [widow woman] do, she lost her husband. She was at home taking care of her kids and home. Without husbands, what will she do?"

At the end of this selection process, I could interview thirty six women. In the following section, I will explain how the interviewing process occur, what difficulties I faced with and how I deal with them.

4.2. Talking Women-to-Women

In this study, I have used qualitative research techniques to examine and elaborate on women's post dissolution experiences. The empirical data is based on information derived from my observations and semi-structured interviews. Those

³⁸"Dul" is a Turkish word referring both divorced and widow person. Since there is no masculinity and femininity in Turkish language, "dul" is generally used to describe divorced and widow woman.

who agreed to participate were interviewed at a time and place most convenient for them. The interviews mostly were conducted largely in the respondents' homes or places of work. There was no third party during our interviews but occasionally their kids were present. The interviews were conducted generally during the late morning or early afternoon.

The participants were informed about the researcher's marital status, institutional affiliation, and the motive for the study; that it is, a doctoral dissertation for Middle East Technical University. I told participants that their involvement was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. In the interests of confidentiality, the women's identifying information was altered and their locations were hidden.

I was able to record most of my interviews on my voice recorder. I explained my purpose of research and sought the permission of each interviewee for recording. The audio recorder became invisible after we started conversation and it did not pose an obstacle for the interviews. I was able to get the consent of my interviewees except for five widow women. They refused to be recorded on tape. Their common reason was that they were living alone in a conservative neighborhood and they didn't want to be stigmatized. I did not try to persuade them for the voice recording. Instead, I took notes during the interviews. In order to keep the privacy of the respondents, I changed their names.

During the interviews, I was listening to experiences of participant women and headed these women through particular issues and not others. I tried to decide about which issues I should focus on and which to ignore. I was headed by my research questions and tried to focus on particular themes, my own comments and women's their own points of views. Moreover, with each interview, during and after each interview, I restructured new ideas or approaches, and revised my interview questions.

I transcribed most of the interviews. I tried to make use of this process doing all the transcription myself and taking analytical notes but I got help from

two gender-sensitive sociology master students. The transcription took eight to ten hours for each participant. Sometimes, it was difficult to understand the accounts of women. In order to prevent this problem, I transcribed the tape right after the interview. In this way, I was able to fill the missing points from memory since I remembered the conversation. As I transcribed the interviews, I focused on the meaning of each respondent's accounts, and their intersection with other participants' accounts. Quotations from women's accounts were used to support the analyses. In the light of literature review and research questions I identified key titles related to post dissolution experiences of divorced and widow women. Since it would not be useful to provide each individual case analyses of 36 participants, I focused more on themes or patterns that cut across the cases.

4.2.1. Pilot Interviews

Seven pilot interviews (four divorced women and three widow women) were conducted with structured questions that examined all specific topics that were planned. At the end of the pilot interviews, I discussed the issues arising from them with my supervisor and the members of my thesis committee. It turned out that asking questions and waiting for certain answers was not the healthy way to explore the themes in my mind because women whom I talked to give me closed answers without details. Moreover, during the pilot interviews, the questionnaire paper was staying in front of me. Although I didn't read the questions from paper, I noticed that this caused a tense atmosphere between me and the women.

After the discussion with my supervisor and committee members, it turned out that semi-structured interview was a more suitable way for the nature of this study. It would be more suitable for divorced and widow women to express their experiences in a conversational atmosphere. Thus, in this way, an interaction between the researcher and the participants was expected. This method was also significant to establish a safe and comfortable environment for interviewees to

share their personal experiences. Many researchers like Denzin and Ryan (2007) focus on the flexible nature of qualitative interviews. Therefore, after pilot fieldwork, I used a flexible interview guideline rather than a stable question form, I asked new questions, sometimes changed the order of the questions due to the atmosphere of the interview, or occasionally reformulated the questions.

4.2.2. Field Experiences: Challenges, Misunderstandings and Blurring the Boundaries

As a student, I was worried about the reactions of my interviewees. I would be asking them about the hardest time of their lives, and the most private issues related to those times. My anxiety about interviewing divorced and widow women was based mainly on the possibility that I might cause further harm to persons who are normally considered vulnerable because of the grief about losing their husbands and because of the violence they might have experienced during and after marriage. During the interview, I tried to ensure that the interviews would in no way place women at any risk. Moreover, talking about violence can be stressful for women recalling the experiences. For women who have experienced domestic violence, this often means recalling very disturbing experiences, a process which was quite difficult for several of the women interviewed. At such times, I gave break to the interviewing process and stopped recording since some women had difficulties to speak about their experiences. I experienced a contradiction when participant woman ended up crying (sometimes I cried with them). At such moments, on the one hand, as a researcher I need to elicit information, and even clarification of why she was crying. On the other hand, as a woman, my inside voice told me to stop conversation and ease the pain. I believed I handled those situations well. My solution was to smooth the pain and give a break by talking about different issues. In that sense, Kirsch (2005: 2169-70) highlighted that

We must respect those participants who lack time or interest, who change their minds, and who fall silent when we hope they will engage in dialogue. We need to come to terms with the fact that we will not establish

meaningful relations with all participants (although that should not keep us from trying) and that, despite our every effort; we will occasionally cause our participants discomfort or emotional pain when we interview them.

Another worry in my mind before conducting the interviews was the objectification of the interviews. To talk about their stories to a stranger, to create time to do this could not mean anything for their part. Hence, I was in a dilemma whether I was using their private life stories for my own career path or if this interviewing process was mutually beneficial for me and the participant women. After pilot interviews, I came to realize that interviewing process was also helpful for participant women. For instance, while answering my questions, some women in my study expressed that comparing their conditions before and after marital dissolution provided them a chance to evaluate differences between being married and being divorced/widow. One of the participants, for instance, expressed this,

Aslı: I gave you a headache, I guess. I can't believe myself. Once I started to talk, I couldn't stop myself.

Interviewer: At the beginning, you told me that you were the wrong choice since you didn't have stories to tell. However, what you told were really significant for my research.

Aslı: Really? Yeah, talking was also good for me. This talking made me take one step back and I could see what I actually experienced as a woman.

Although the women whom I talked to felt upset at certain parts of the interview, they expressed that the interview itself was not upsetting. Rather, remembering the past caused them some stress. Many of them stated it was a need to talk at what happened in order to overcome the issues. After each interview, I spent almost an extra hour with women. This period became more casual conversation. I believe with these extra hours after the interviews, women had the chance to respond to what had been recorded, to add related information that they thought they forgot to mention. I gave my phone number to women in case they needed to talk more. One woman called me a few times and we talked about

mostly her children's current problems such as failing in math and needing teaching assistance.

Talking woman to woman provided a chance for participant women to express their experiences through discourses of marriage, divorce, motherhood, work, parenting in the society. This provided me a chance to understand how they negotiated with these discourses and social norms in the society. For example, Sibel stated what working means for her

I was raised in the belief that man works and woman cooks. I left the school to be married and when I was engaged, I stopped working. When your father, your family told you this was right for a woman, you start feeling the same, you feel that's right. After divorce, I experienced severe economic problems. I found a job and I really like the feeling of standing on my own feet. I realized that women should not listen to those who were telling "but you were a woman." I'm a woman and I can do whatever I want to do.

Their accounts were challenges to the cultural values and social norms. Listening to women's challenges with cultural values also framed me to examine the cultural context and values that formed perceptions in the society. Thus, the interview of divorced and widow women was enlightening in order to recount the society.

One of the important issues for the interviewing process is to evaluate and respond to participants' reactions during the interview. Respondents, generally, spoke at length about their feelings and experiences. During a few incidents, I intervened, and guided the interview session in a particular direction. Generally, respondents were allowed to lead the sessions according to their own accounts. I realized that in most cases interviewees were willing to talk about various issues during interviews. While the interviews lasted one and a half hours on average, off-the-record talk sometimes extended this duration. The narratives of these people proved to be an interesting case to show how personal narratives interact, overlap or contest with traditional family, marriage and being a divorced/widow woman, a mother and wife discourse in the society. In this context, it was also difficult to construct a framework which I could place my findings since there is not much

literature about divorced and widow women in Turkey. While I was researching the literature, divorce was mostly identified as a social problem and a negative effect on both children and society. Moreover, there is not much literature dealing with the consequences of widowhood in Turkey.

The interviewees were open to sharing their stories with me. Generally, interviews with divorced women were longer, mainly because their responses were more detailed. During the in-depth interviews, divorced women mostly spoke about their own lives. I mostly preferred to leave them to make their own connections between events, experiences, feelings and grief. Giving women the chance to articulate themselves extensively enables me to observe contradictions, subtleties and unexpected challenges. Their narratives mostly involved what they took to be their private lives, which were connected to their new marital status, being divorced, to their socio-economic lives and changes of perspective. By comparing and compiling the similarities and differences between understandings and inputs of the divorced and widow women I was given access to detailed information. In the course of the interviews, the divorced women tended to be more open and were less hesitant in speaking about family affairs and relationships than their widow women, who regarded such issues as private.

After I ended asking questions, almost every divorced woman set the table and served me food and pastry although I insisted on them not to do so. They invited their close neighbors to their home and introduced me to their friends as someone who came to all the way to listen to them. I realized that for the divorced women whom I talked to, coming there and asking about what they lived, what they felt made those women feel special and prestigious in the eyes of their close friends. Off the record, I had long chats with both the women whom I conducted the interviews with and their neighbors. I also had a chance to observe the divorced women's social networks and relations with other divorced and married women. Moreover, I observed how both divorced women and their neighbors were talking about other divorced women. I tried to attend most of those invitations. I took

notes of my daily observations during such events. I used to transfer all my notes and organize them on my laptop when I came back home.

Widow women were inclined to give me macro information. As it is said in the Turkish proverb “*kol kırılır yen içinde kalır*”³⁹ (the arm gets broken but stays in the sleeve), the widow women tend to keep the experiences of the family hidden from the outsiders, who may disturb them, in order to protect the family. I did find out about how perfect their marriages were, how they were loved by their husbands, and how the conditions of their children are ok, but not with references to their own personal thoughts and experiences. Then I realized that the family was still there for widow women and I changed my point of view. Additionally, I started to ask my questions through asking about the family and then widow women expressed their personal experiences since their personal lives were interlinked with their family lives. At first, the widow women I interviewed drew a picture of a good and harmonious family aside from minor problems which can be seen in every family; however in the subsequent phases of the interview, it was revealed that the situation was quite different, as they spoke of a quite troubled and turbulent family environment, especially due to the pressure of being without a husband. In similar cases to this example, a widow mother revealed information regarding the untouched stigma issues; and in another example, while the widow women had said that she stopped working voluntarily after marriage, after I changed my questioning style, she expressed that she had to stop working because of her husband. It is significant that in both examples given here, widow women adjusted more or less what and how much they told me to not be disrespectful for the family.

Throughout the process I reflected on my position as a university student, a single woman, with no experience of marriage, divorce, death or violence in an intimate relationship; both an “insider” and “outsider”. The notion of insider/outsider isn’t clearly dichotomous. Merriam et al. (2001) remind that researchers can be regarded as both insiders and outsiders by interviewees during

³⁹ It means incidents are kept (and should be kept) in the family without revealing to the outsiders.

the research process. This uncertainty increases the pressure on researchers. In addition to the fact that being insider and being outsider cannot be fixed, it cannot be said that there are definite benefits and disadvantages of being in one of these two positions. The researcher gains the trust of the interviewer, becomes familiar with the context of the participants, and gains easy access to information because of being an insider. Being an outsider, predictably, leads to researchers often being treated with suspicion. The interviewer could have to implement self-censorship.

It is important to note that the interviewees were generally of Ankara origin and have lived in Ankara for their entire lives. Only two interviewees had lived in different cities due to their husbands' occupations. I thought that Ankara would have some advantages for me since I have been living here for 15 years. Firstly, I would not experience the difficulties of being in a city I have never known, and secondly, I would have a commonality with the people in the area that could facilitate the relationship we would have. However, as Wolf said, common understanding cannot always be established between interviewer and the interviewed because of common or shared location constructed by race, class, gender, and nationality (Wolf, 2009). The women in my study and I were living in Ankara but, because it is a city whose cultural codes of gender I know, I was afraid to step outside of the limits of the definition of an outsider.

The majority of my interviews were conducted in summer. Hence, my clothing style for summer would not fit the gender codes of the neighborhoods in which my interviews took place. The three neighborhoods - Keçiören, Pursaklar, and Sincan - are examples of relatively conservative areas in Ankara. Therefore, I always tried to wear neutral, in other words casual clothing not to block the encounters in the field.

In addition, I realized that the prevailing view was that I was an upper class, educated woman coming from ODTÜ (Middle East Technical University). I was uncomfortable about this particular label, which I associated with a hierarchical structure. During the interviews, I tried to change this perception. I helped them

cook while they were preparing a meal or I took care of the babies and changed the diapers. Subsequently, during my interviews, I didn't drive my own car to the meeting points and I used public transportation no matter how far the home which I conducted interview was.

On the other hand, during the interviews, I tried to use a casual language in order to communicate more easily with the women whom I talked to. Usually I called the respondents informally by using "abla" (big sister), or "teyze" (aunt) in the field. In this way, the respondents had impression that they were speaking to a woman like themselves and not to a strange social scientist since using "abla, teyze" eliminates the distance between the researcher and the participants. Riessman (1987: 177) refers to "an open display of the bond that is developing between interviewer and interviewee." In this regard, several participants made statements that indicated an expectation of shared knowledge between us as women. For instance, divorced and widow women were talking about their relations with their (ex) husbands. They said "well you know men already." The use of the phrase "*you know what men are like*" proves how I became an insider because of the expectations about my gendered experience.

However, as Riessman (1987) claimed that gender alone does not create shared conditions or differences. Thus, Simmel's (1921) study about the "stranger" can offer us a starting point to clarify being an outsider among the divorced and widow women. Some of the benefits of outsider status can be seen that "members of the group confide in the "stranger" in the ways they would never with each other" (cited in Collins, 1999: 156). In a similar position with Simmel's stranger, divorced women in this study confided in me about their experiences.

Collins' "outsider within" concept (1999) is an improved version of Simmel's stranger. The position of being an outsider within means that the researcher becomes an outsider in a group because of other identities and is never able to become "native" in the group. In a similar position of being an outsider within, I experienced difficulties with widow women. For the widow mothers, speaking to a

younger woman who is not even married and not even a mother, who had come to them to hear stories of their life experiences, it was a relatively difficult situation. They positioned me as outsider as they narrated the stories of their marriage. Wolf (2009: 387) claimed although they are not married, some feminist researchers tell the participants that they are married. I didn't tell the women whom I interviewed that I am married, but I talked about two situations of mine that I thought would make us connected and make them relax to talk.

The first one was that my own aunt had gotten divorced and I witnessed her post dissolution experiences. But I didn't specifically express that she was rejected by her own family, or that she dealt with stigmas since I thought it may have blocked the authenticity of the data, which may have lead the respondent to say what I wanted to hear. This may have conditioned them to give information that they thought would be more interesting for me, rather than their experiences.

The second one was how I raised my nephew for five years while his mother was working. We talked about the difficulties of raising a child, how it was difficult for my sister to reconcile work with the family. I told them the difficulties we experienced while I was taking care of him. When they found out that I knew all about childcare, they were relieved and they began to express their feelings more easily.

To sum up, being in the field made me examine and reconsider many points of my life, how I thought about myself as a woman, and how I related to others. This self-reflexive observation helps me to analyze my own experiences about interviewing process. Reflexivity helps me to see my prejudices and feelings about the existing social norms, roles, values and structures and their implications for gender, women and family relations. This process also helped me understand and negotiate my gender and status as a single woman and gave me a chance to compare my experiences with different groups in diverse ways.

4.3. Theoretical Reflections on Research Method

In this section I will explain the theoretical background of this methodological perspective, along with the necessities of its application in this kind of research, based on a qualitative data. In order to acquire intimate details of the women's lives in this study, I decided to use in-depth interview within the qualitative method. I consider the importance and necessity of experience based qualitative research in examining women's lives from their own viewpoint. In this sense, I address how women's accounts of post dissolution experiences can be analyzed, underlying the peculiarities of personal narratives.

Feminist qualitative researchers discussed the difficulties theorizing the "muted voices" of women's lives (DeVault, 1990; Smith, 1987). Holland and Ramazanoğlu (1994: 133) make a similar point when they note that:

Feminists have had to accept that there is no technique of analysis or methodological logic that can neutralize the social nature of interpretation. Feminist researchers can only try to explain the grounds on which selective interpretations have been made by making explicit the process of decision-making which produces the interpretation, and the logic of method on which these decisions are made.

From this perspective, Mauthner and Doucet (1998) argued in their study, *Reflections on a Voice-Centred Relational Method of Data Analysis*, that two fundamental principles of feminist research can cause a contradiction: "the commitment to listen to women on their own terms and the recognition that it is the researcher who ultimately shapes the entire research process and product." They claimed that this contradiction, in a way, in feminist research is helpful to balance three different standpoints:

(i) the multiple and varying voices and stories of each of the individuals we interview; (ii) the voice(s) of the researcher(s); (iii) and the voices and perspectives represented within existing theories or frameworks in our research areas and which researchers bring to their studies" (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998: 144).

In other words, research is a process in which these three perspectives must be evaluated in order to pursue critical shifts between these three perspectives. Thus, as a feminist researcher, I located myself within the feminist standpoint approach with an aim to examine women's lives from their viewpoints as well as their differences. Women's experiences are considered to be the main method of analysis from feminist standpoint because it is thought that precise accounts of women's realities are perceived in this way (Harding, 1986; Oakley, 1981; Smith, 1987). In particular, in conducting research, examining the lives of women would make the visible issues such as domestic violence and wife abuse which are generally invisible (Swigonski, 1994). Wormer (2009: 109) discussed that it is significant to provide empowerment and the understanding of the gendered nature of power relations in the society by women's own accounts. As Mauthner and Doucet claims, the experience based feminist standpoint method represents an attempt to analyze data by "exploring individuals' accounts in terms of their relationships to themselves, their relationships to the people around them, and their relationships to the broader social, structural and cultural contexts within which they live" (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998: 126).

In-depth interviews are frequently used in qualitative research and this method allows women to share their experiences with the researcher. I decided to use semi-structured interviews as I thought that this would provide the opportunity for me to adjust the questions, and provide me opportunity to collect many details of women's lives (Oakley, 1981). However, data analysis is difficult to examine because interpretation process can cause dilemma for researchers. While researchers interpret the accounts of women in some way, the accounts of the respondents could be interpreted in various ways. In this sense, participants' interpretation of their own experiences, which can be seen in the accounts of them, has a crucial role since they become a bridge for researchers to the social world. On the basis of this view, I formulated the interviews in such a way that post dissolution period can be told in parts tracing the routes of changes in the respondents' lives from their marriage to dissolution. I attempted to determine

what kind of cultural norms and social values they had been subjected to in various stages relating to the manners of being divorced and widow women, in their lives after marital dissolution. In this way I was able to examine the specific parts of the women's lived experiences of marital dissolution. This provided a more clear perspective of the personal opinions and feelings of the women studied, and more importantly, allowed me a glimpse into the ongoing conditions in their life stories of how these women cope with their situations.

At the beginning of the interviews, some general questions regarding the participant's age, number of children, education status, history of her family, how she decided to marry, etc. were asked. Having this conversation with the women constructed a comfort atmosphere in which they became relaxed before talking about the stressful and difficult parts of their lives. Later, participants were asked questions about experiences during marriage such as whether theirs was a love married or an arranged marriage, and how their marriage was. Or what made them to decide to divorce? How did the husbands of widow women die? After each interview I was packed with stories of oppression and subordination of women and I went to the new interviews with this load. On this point, I should admit that for me the most important difficulty of this study emerged when I tried to analyze their narratives. For one thing, I had to leave many parts of the interviews unrepresented in this study; especially those that were related to how they experienced violence, since including these stories into the analysis would cause to exceed the scope of this study. I ended field research when the basic trends were repeated and convincing that following interviews will replicate formers.

The significant issue in qualitative data analysis process is how to reflect the participants' perspective. There are two main principles about qualitative data analysis. First it is an ongoing process. Second, as Westbrook (1994: 245) said "whatever theory or working hypothesis develops must grow naturally from the data analysis rather than standing to the side as an a priori statement that the data will find to be accurate or wanting." For feminist research, it is considered that

knowledge is shaped and re-shaped between researcher and the researched (Oakley, 1981). Moreover, this knowledge producing process is “situated” in particular contexts (Haraway, 1988; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2007). As I mentioned above, feminist researchers use and adopt particular methods specific to themselves. Mauthner and Doucet (1998) emphasize that the researcher’s academic settings, the social and cultural environment in which they live in, as well as differences in their own intellectual, personal, political and theoretical profiles, all are effective on the decision making of which methods are used. The fact that I come from a position of theoretical and methodological pluralism, that I have degrees in political science, international relations, and sociology is also an influence. My ‘mixed’ position constructed through my interest in socialist feminist approach is combined with my later interests in feminist standpoint approach. From this perception, I am aware of how my ‘mixed’ position affected and guided my research, and how this position headed me to particular ways of examination and interpretation during my data analysis processes. My purpose to focus on the women’s accounts is also related to my desire to criticise mainstream understanding I came across in the literature, in which single mothers are devalued. I was influenced by feminist standpoint approach and became interested in listening to and giving voices to the groups who are muted like single mothers since it is especially crucial for understanding more private, invisible issues and social contexts. As a result, I believed I could express the voices of women in this study, “their” stories and accounts of their lives by enabling respondent women to speak for themselves.

To sum up, in this study, I presented my perception of interviewing divorced and widow women. By presenting the various accounts and comments that I gathered from the women whom I talked to, I tried to discuss different experiences of divorced and widow women and what I learned from them when I interviewed them. I applied a feminist approach in this study. My main purpose was to fill the gap in existing researches which are inadequate in giving a voice for the experiences of divorced and widow women. Moreover, I aimed to give women a chance to

express the issues that had great impact on their lives after marital dissolution. In a patriarchal society in which marriage and family were sacred, it is not easy for women to talk about their own experiences. Giving a chance to these women to talk created a chance for me to reveal untouched information. Furthermore, with semi-structured interviews conducted in a conversational way allowed me realize contradictions, conflicts and challenges in women's accounts.

CHAPTER FIVE

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, PARENTING ISSUES and LIVING ARRANGEMENTS AFTER MARITAL DISSOLUTION

As I discussed in the previous chapter, marriage and family is interpreted as a strongly important social relationship founded on the gender division of labor in which men are considered to be the breadwinner while women are considered to be the homemaker. The gender division of labor in the family is strongly related to the gender understanding of the state. This understanding of gender reinforces the assumptions regarding families and women's place within them, and in return defines the norms and values of the family and the structure of the labor market. First and foremost, the patriarchal understanding of the welfare state in many countries continues to place women in an economically dependent role within the family. This dependency, with its roots in the labor market and the state, considers that woman's place is in the home, insulated from the economic market. Moreover, it also creates the circumstances in which women rely on their husbands for financial support. Although more and more women have started to participate in the labor market, the notion that women are economically dependent on their husbands has survived in both the formal and informal sphere in the society (Weitzman, 1983).

Formally, the presumption of women's dependency is reflected in the family, social security and labor/employment policies that continue to present the gender division of labor and traditional roles (Morgan, 1991). Due to their presumed economic dependency, the social security system fails to reward women in paid and unpaid work. In addition, women have been encouraged to take on jobs that will balance with their "primary tasks" as mothers, which often have lower salaries.

Informally, women have continued to be socialized to place family first and their involvement in paid work second. According to Morgan (1991), women are socialized to share the wages, benefits and job security engendered by their husband. This understanding suggests that because of remaining inequalities in the labor market, welfare state and gender roles, the family becomes the only means of ensuring income security for women and their children.

Formally or informally, the family and the marriage are interpreted as protective of women, limiting their job's choices and also encouraging them to bear and rear children. However, this means that once marriage ends, former wives are left outside the facilities provided within the marriage. For these women who are financially dependent on husbands, the ending of their marriages presents difficulties; the loss of the earnings of the husband upon death or divorce causes financial strain on women.

In this regard, this chapter consists of three parts in which I will compare divorced and widow women's experiences. The first part is about financial consequences of marital dissolution and how these consequences affect the lives of divorced and widow women after marital dissolution. In the second part, I will examine how divorced and widow women deal with being a single mother. In the final part, I will discuss the living arrangements of divorced and widow women.

5.1. Only One Pair of Hands: Ways Divorced and Widow Women Deal with Economic Consequences

As I discussed in the introduction, like divorce and death of the spouse itself, post dissolution is also a process. As respondents reveal, most of the difficulties faced after marital dissolution consists of coping with new financial conditions and managing the difficulties that derive from setting up a new life. According to the participant women's accounts, it turned out that the first thing that concerned them most was their financial situation. By far, the most difficult aspect of their

divorce and the death of the spouse, said the mothers studied, was living on a reduced income and managing as a single parent. A good number of studies have addressed financial devastation after marital dissolution as I discussed in chapter II (Brandwein, et al 1974; Weiss 1984; Arendell 1987; Duncan and Hoffman 1985; Gerstel 1987; Holden and Smock 1991; Amato 2000).

In this section, firstly financial difficulties will be discussed and the answers to the questions of why divorced and widow women face economic difficulties, whether there are any differences between financial conditions of divorced and widow women and why these differences occur will be examined. Women's financial situation after divorce and the death of the husband will be investigated. Secondly, whether the marital dissolution can be a empowerment for divorced and widow women will be explored. Finally, how divorced and widow women cope with economic difficulties after marital dissolution and where they turn to for help will be analyzed.

5.1.1. Financial Strain upon Marital Dissolution

This section analyzes the factors behind the financial strain that divorced and widow mothers face after marital dissolution. Because divorced women in Turkey are believed to break up and damage the sacred family, on the formal and informal level, they are seen as an "economic burden" by the family, the society and the state. Even if divorced women have economically stable families and relatives prior to the divorce, they may suffer from economic challenges after divorce. Many of the participant divorced women illustrated this pervasive tendency about their counterparts in Turkey. The economic situation of these women tells us a lot about the problems of divorced mothers. When these women could not get financial help from their own family members or relatives, or the state, they have to rely on their own earnings. However, to find paid work with social security benefits is really

difficult for divorced women because of many obstacles surrounding women's employment in Turkey.

On the other hand, when we consider the widow women in this study, even though they have lost their husbands, there is an "ongoing perception of family existence." Hence, both their own family/relatives and the state try to financially compensate the loss of the husband. Unlike divorced women, widow women are perceived as unwilling to experience the end of the marriage. Parallel to the sanctity of family in Turkey, in the case of the death of the breadwinner, the unity of the family is still considered intact. Widow women's experiences vary depending on their different class positions. In this study, lower middle class women are studied. The accounts of these women confirm the results of Lopata (1996). According to Lopata (1996: 39), "upper-class widow women [are] much less dependent on the family. (...) But lower class widow women in Turkey are embedded in support systems. They manage to develop a female network of friends and relatives, while depending on male family members for economic support." If widow women are unable receive their deceased husband's salary because he did not complete the social insurance provision prior his death, the families keep a distance from these women until they have become economically stable. Subsequently, like divorced women, widow women also have to rely on their own income.

First, a key factor in the difficulties the divorced mothers face in maintaining their lives was that they had not worked before or that they had quit working when they got married. To explain the economic consequences of a marital dissolution, researchers (Holden and Smock 1991; Amato 2000) have stated that women are often financially dependent on their husbands because of a retreat from the labor force during marriage, particularly when there are children in the household. Many divorced women in this study also declared that they gave up working when they married or even when they got engaged.

Nurhayat (divorced, 23 years old, with two children) told me why she needed to work even though she had worked neither before nor during her marriage.

I didn't work when I was married. No I didn't. Because I am living in my brother-in-law's place now, I have started to work so I won't be a burden on them. (...) I had many difficulties, you know, financial difficulties. Now I am washing the dishes in this cafe. I give what I earn to my sister's husband.⁴⁰

Elif (divorced, 30 years old, having one child) stated that

No I wasn't working outside. He would never allow such a thing. I didn't do any sewing or needlecraft at home either. I didn't do such work in any way. He would not even allow that, either. He was a bit of a jealous man. He would not let me work, they [her husband and her family] wouldn't allow me if I were to get a job now. Even now, they would all object to this.⁴¹

The accounts of divorced women in this study show that based upon the gender division of labor in the society, the male income is seen as the only proper way to make a living for a family. Thus, many women in this study left work when they got marry, some even when got engaged. In this sense, this study confirms the findings of Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu (2012) in which the majority of the people stated that the man's job is to make money and that the woman's job is to look after the home and children.

The second problem is that even if divorced women found a job, they earned low wages. Their jobs failed to provide them with enough income to maintain an adequate standard of living after marital dissolution. They found themselves in "women's work". Women's job options are limited. Women mostly work as secretaries, nurses, or sales clerks, and parallel to the perception that women should be mothers, assistants, cleaners, nannies and maids. Because of

⁴⁰ "Evliyken çalışmıyordum. Ben evliyken çalışmıyordum. Şimdi ben eniştemgilin yanında galdığım için hani onlara sıkıntı olmamak için çalışmaya başladım. (...) Bir sürü sıkıntım falan oldu. Hani maddi yönden falan. Bu cafede bulaşıkçılığa başladım. Aldığım ne varsa enişteme veriyom işte."

⁴¹ "Yok çalışmıyordum. Zaten kesinlikle böyle bir şeye asla izin vermezdi. Evde, hani dikiş nakış. Yok, hiçbir şekilde öyle bir iş yapmadım ben. Zaten ona bile müsaade etmezdi. Kıskaç bir adamdı biraz. İşte çalışmama falan müsaade edebilecek bir tip değildi. Asla etmezler. Şimdi bir işe girip çalışıyım desem. Şimdi bile hemen tepki gösterir."

those limited job opportunities, in order to survive financially, divorced women frequently change their jobs.

Another woman, Fatma (divorced, 43 years old, having three children), said,

First, I got a job at a pharmacy warehouse as a secretary. After that, I worked in Migros shopping center in the perfume section, in Diyarbakir without insurance and for a very low wage. Nobody ever warned me. I worked full time. I made laces and sold them. I worked at Oriflame. I mean, I sold make-up products.⁴²

Nihal (divorced, 43 years old, one child) stated that

I had worked in Ege Pen before I got married. I cleaned the place and cooked for the personnel. I carried documents etc. Then, I quited when I got married. But now [after divorce] I'm working as a caregiver in a special hospital. I change the linen of the patients and keep their rooms clean. I clean the patients, etc. It's for minimum wage but I have insurance.⁴³

Related to this issue, there is a difference between divorced women who worked before and divorced women who have never worked. As I will discuss in following chapter, divorced women need a reference person to apply for a job because of stigmatized stereotyping related to their new marital status. In order to find job, some divorced women who worked before use previous bonds. However, because of their inadequate working experiences, limited skills and education level, these divorced women generally started to work at pink color jobs. On the other hand, divorced women who have never worked before do not know where to start and couldn't easily find reference people. Moreover, some of them are only graduated from elementary school. Because of this, many of them could only find jobs at informal sector.

Another thing causing economic difficulties for divorced women is that many women do not have any professional skills. Thus, after marital dissolution, the only

⁴² "Önce bir şeye girdim, ilaç deposunda sekreterlik yaptım. Sonra Migros alışveriş merkezinde parfümeri reyonunda çalıştım Diyarbakır'da. Yani sigortasız. Kimse beni uyarmadı. Full time çalıştım. Dantel yapıp satmışlığım oldu. Oriflame de çalıştım. Ben daha doğrusu makyaj malzemeleri sattım."

⁴³ "Evlenden önce Ege Pen'de çalışmıştım. Ortalık temizle, yemek yap. Evrak getir götür ama şimdi hasta bakıcılık yapıyorum özel bir hastanede. Hastaların çarşaflarını değiştir, odayı temiz tut. Hastaları temizle falan. Asgari ücretli ama sigortam var."

skill they have is being housewife meaning cleaning, washing dishes or cooking. When the women are in the labor market, they are mostly employed in the informal sector or female jobs. Vasfiye Ayşe (divorced, 48 years old, with three children) stated that she started to work at a café: “Of course, because I had no occupation and I was only a housewife, I got a job at a cafe and I was dealing with coffee and tea orders, as well as washing the dishes. I was working for 20 TL a day.”⁴⁴

Although many divorced and widow mothers wanted higher paying jobs, they encountered a variety of barriers to obtain these jobs as discussed in the second chapter. Because of their new marital status as divorced, the employers did not want to give jobs to these women. Hence, these women could find a job with a reference from someone they knew. Several women expressed that one of their family friends or their relatives helped them. They recommended them to the employers.

Moreover, as discussed above, many of the divorced women whom I talked to had to quit work when they got married or when they had children. In addition, women’s work experiences in terms of education and work status is often lower than men’s, and they decline even more when they stay at home to do housework and care for the children. This situation causes discrimination for divorced women in the labor market. Nihal (divorced, 43 years old, with one child), for instance, explained how her work choices changed before and after marriage and the divorce.

I had been working before I got married yes. In a pharmacy. I had been studying in a two-year vocational high school, attached to Suleyman Demirel [University] when we got engaged. Before that, I had worked in the past. I graduated and before that I had been working in a pharmacy when I was a student (...) After I got divorced, I applied for jobs in pharmacies but no one hired me. I didn’t want to stay at home, then I found this job, I have been working at a hospital as a caregiver.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ “Tabi hiç mesleğim olmadığı için, ev hanımı olduğum için bir kafeye girdim. Orda çay kahve bulaşık gibi seylere bakıyodum, günlük 20 milyona çalışıyodum.”

⁴⁵ “Evlenmeden önce çalışıyordum evet. Eczanede. Zaten iki yıllığı kazandım ben. Süleyman Demirel’de okuyordum nişanlandığımızda. Ondan önce geçmişte de bir çalışmışlığım vardı. İki yıllığı

Majority of divorced women in this study prioritized their family's need during marriage and ignored their own career achievements. Since the patriarchal nuclear family structure is prioritized in the society, this approach reduces the women to be mother and wife and ignores the fact that women have interests and needs apart from the family. As a result, since being inexperienced, women experience difficulties because of their disadvantaged positions in the labor market. In that sense, this study confirms the argument of Kavas (2010: 30) research which claims that "man is the beneficiary of the family; they gain in marriage, at divorce, in post divorce period at the expense of women."

Thirdly, due to discrimination and their need for flexible hours, most women cannot break out of these jobs categories. They are not able to compete for other jobs because of the difficulties of combining work and single parenting. The presence of children has a negative impact on women's chances in the labor market. The experiences of these women are examples of "child-penalty" which divorced women need to divide their limited sources between children and work since they do not have a partner to rely on (Gornick, Meyers, & Ross, 1998). Since child custody is based on the presumption about women's being the primary caretakers rather than best interest for children, women deal with reconciling work and parenting alone.

As I discussed in chapter two, many studies look for the answer of whether the structure of the welfare regime has impacts on the single parenthood and their employment opportunities (Rowlingson and Millar, 2002; Orloff, 2009; Jenson, 2006; Mahon, 2005; Coakley, 2005). These studies recognize that single mothers have a dilemma between child-rearing and bread-winning because of the structure of the welfare state. For the women I conducted interviews with, this dilemma can be seen. Thus, they had not chosen a job they were particularly interested in. It was just a job that gave them a much needed income and time for their family. Since the

bitirdim gene eczanede çalışıyordum okurken. (...) Boşandıktan sonra eczane aradım, eczane bulamadım. Sürekli böyle kendimi dışarıya atma isteği duydum. Bu işi buldum, hastanede hasta bakıcıyım."

social policy in Turkey is family based and supports the idea of traditional strong family, unlike widow mothers, divorced mothers are considered as deviant or family breakers and also not financially supported by the state. Based on the approach of turning back to family in Turkey, it is believed that women should be responsible for child care. Thus, as a result when a woman with a child divorced, she has difficulties to find affordable childcare in order to participate in the labor market. Because divorced mothers couldn't reconcile between work and child care, they either move back to their families or depend on their families in terms of child care or they remarry for economic reasons. They worked because of financial necessity. Sibel (divorced, 34 years old, with two children) was complaining about school hours: "My working hours do not go with the children's school hours. If it hadn't been for my family's help it is almost impossible for me to work."⁴⁶

Similarly, Nurdan (divorced, 39 years old, with one child) talked about how trust becomes an issue when the children get sick and one cannot leave the job: "My child is sick and I have to take the day off and not go to school. This is because I cannot entrust my child to anybody. I guess you discovered the biggest problem. Distrust."⁴⁷

On the other hand, some divorced women indicated that if they had a chance, they would prefer to be at home raising their children. As a result, many women with children remained unemployed in order to take care of the children. They lived on alimony or municipality help. Aslı (divorced, 30 years old, with one child) explained that she personally chose to be unemployed:

Since I was going to get married, I quit my job. Not after the engagement but when they came to ask my family for marriage. (...) I am always taking care of my child; I do not do anything else. I do not consider working since

⁴⁶ "İş saatlerim, çocukların okul saatlerine falan uymuyo. Annemler olmasa çalışmam çok zor."

⁴⁷ "Çocuğum hasta ve yarın izin alıp okula gitmemek zorundayım. Çünkü onu her kapiya bırakamam. İşte en büyük sorunu keşfediniz sanırım. Güvensizlik."

my daughter is very attached to me. It is better for me to be with the kid when she gets sick.⁴⁸

Esma (divorced, 45 years old, with two children) explained why she chose to be unemployed:

I was not working when the children were very young. There was nobody to take care of them. I took care of them while they were growing up. When I first started working, one of my children was at secondary school and one was at high school. We were suffering financially so I had to seek new solutions.⁴⁹

As Walby discussed that women are culturally in secondary positions in social life, many divorced mothers in this study were raised in the belief that man works and woman raises children. Hence, they considered themselves as housewives. They were told that they should be in control of their husbands. Like neopatriarchal societies, in Turkey, women are expected to be in control of a man both because of honor issues and male breadwinner approach. Hence, to work outside home makes them confused and vulnerable. They had difficulties to adopt to working life, to be employed and because of this reason, they preferred to be unemployed and be with their parents who they feel secure with in terms of economic well being and honor. Moreover, the accounts of those women confirm the patriarchal gender contract approach of Moghadam (2000) in which relationship between man and woman are constructed in a way that enables man exercises his control on woman by limiting her access to labor market and public sphere.

Fourth, divorced women's economic difficulties arose from their financial relationship with their husbands during marriage. One of participant women (Sibel) had invested all her family savings in a joint business that they started together with

⁴⁸ "Ya ben evlencem diye. Bir de nişandan sonra değil. İsteme olayında bıraktım ben işi. (...) Evde sürekli evde çocuğumla ilgileniyorum. Onun haricinde başka bir şey yapmıyorum. Kızım bana çok düşkün olduğu için düşünmüyorum. Hastalandığında falan çok üstüne düştüğümüz için benim o an cocugun yanında olmam benim için uygun."

⁴⁹ "Ben o zaman çalışmıyodum, çocuklar küçükken. Bakacak kimse de yoktu zaten. Ben baktım büyüttüm benim çalışma hayatına atıldığım zaman çocuklardan biri ortaokul biri lisedeydi. Artık maddi sıkıntılar başlayınca, yani arayış içine düştüm."

her ex-husband, however, after marital dissolution she had to start over again since all the contracts were in her ex-husband's name.

After we separated, he stole the store and the goods in the store. So I ended up in heavy debt. Of course, I had to work; however, for two years I had so many difficulties that I could not work. I mean it took a very long time for me to get rid of that psychology.⁵⁰

Pınar (divorced, 28 years old, having one child) stated that

I never left my home. Our property was confiscated. They issued a fake contract of 10 billion TL with his friend. I was at work and my mom was at home, she called me and told me that officials were at our house for confiscation. After that, well, I went home, a confiscation or something like that was taking place, without a warning paper sent beforehand, the officials came. They took all of our furniture, only my bedroom and living room were left to me. They collected everything and left, they liquidated the contract and took everything back. He took all the stuff himself, and started a new life with his new family.⁵¹

Many other women had serious financial difficulties because they paid off their ex-husbands' debts while they were married. Another participant, Nurdan (divorced, 39 years old, with one child) similarly had severe financial difficulties because she paid off the credit debts that her ex-husband had used while they were married:

The reason why I was obliged to leave home was my husband's addiction to gambling and alcohol; he was taking my money to pay off his debts but he was gambling again with that money, so making me dependant on support. I have nothing but my salary despite having worked for 15 years because I have been trying to clear his debts for three years. For seven years the debt was deducted from my salary. I paid his credit card debts since he had opened the accounts in my name and all were distrained. I

⁵⁰ "Eşimle ayrıldıktan sonra dükkânı kaçırdı, içindeki malı kaçırdı. Beni bayağı bi borclu bıraktı. Bıraktıktan sonra tabiki mecburen çalışmak zorunda kaldım ama iki sene tabi ben de bayağı zorluklar yaşadım, çalışmadım. Yani o psikolojiyi atmam uzun sürdü."

⁵¹ "Ben evimi hiç terk etmedim. Eve haciz geldi. Arkadaşıyla sahte senet düzenlemişler on milyarlık. Ben işteydim annem evdeydi işte, haciz memurları geldi diye beni aradı. Ondan sonra, eee, gittim eve, işte, haciz mi oluyomuş, ne oluyomuş, eve kâğıt gelmeden direk haciz memurları geliyomuş. Bütün eşyaları topladılar, sadece yatak odam ve oturma odası kaldı bana. Topladılar gittiler, bozdurmuşlar senedi, almış eşyaları geri. Yok, hayır, bana gelmedi. Kendisi almış eşyaları, ailesiyle yeni bi hayat kurdu orda."

paid the last of his bank bill debts yesterday. My 15-year efforts went down the drain and I lost my health.⁵²

Because of patriarchal mode of production as Walby discussed, within the family and the marriage, the husband is supposed to deal with economic issues and he is the one controlling money in the family. In this patriarchal logic, the role of the private patriarch (father before marriage, husband during marriage) in the family causes subordination and dependence of those protected, paradigmatically women and children. The patriarchal society expects fathers, older brothers or paternal uncles to control economic and social responsibility of women. Since women are kept dependent for protection and care, socially and economically, as Joseph said in the second chapter, divorced women are bounded and "locked" to family. Because of the gender division of labor in the family, women do not deal with such economic difficulties. This condition may cause women to be depended on a man or their own families after marital dissolution because they are unable to find well-paid jobs to pay the debts of their ex-husbands.

Another woman on the other hand was working for their own accounting office with her husband, so by divorcing she also divorced from their work place. Neriman (divorced, 48 years old, with two children) explained that

I was lonely when I first started to work but after we met and got married, we enlarged the office together. Our customers knew both of us. While I was dealing with the paper work at the office, he was dealing with the meetings. After we got divorced, I lost the office, too. At first, I also lost my customers. After that, I started everything from the very beginning, I got a new office, here, one floor below my flat, and then I called my old customers one by one. I only had credit cards. I paid all of them. In the previous office, the phone bills were in my name so he did not pay any of them, I paid them all. Things like this.⁵³

⁵² "Evimi terketmek zorunda kalmamın nedeni eşimin kumara ve alkole olan tutkusu. Kumar borçlarını kapatmak için benden aldığı paralarla yine kumar oynaması ve beni yardıma muhtaç hale getirmesi. Onbeş yıllık çalıştığım karşılık maaşımdan başka hiçbirşeyim yok. Çünkü üç yıldır bana yüklediği borçları temizlemeye çalışıyorum. 7 yıl icra maaşımı kesti ve geçen yıl bitti. Kredi kartlarını benim üzerime çıkarttığı ve hepsini icralık duruma düşürdüğü için ben ödedim. Açık senet borçlarından sonuncusunu da dün ödedim. onbesyılım yok ortada sağlığım da gitti."

⁵³ "Bu işe başladığımda tektim ama tanışıp evlenince ofisi beraber genişlettik. Müşterilerimiz ikimizi biliyordu. Ben ofiste evraklarla uğraşırken, görüşmeleri o yapıyordu. Boşanınca biz. Ofis de gitti."

Fifth, some women have to escape from their husbands without taking anything. In this study, two basic reasons for this escape were: domestic violence and drug addiction of their husband. Women who came from marriages in which their husbands had addiction problems faced extra financial problems. One woman's ex-husband was a drug addict. After marital dissolution, because she wanted to escape from her husband, she left the house and everything in it and moved back to her family. Since she left everything including her savings, her belongings, her clothes, she had no money and nothing to live on her own. Some women who experienced domestic violence also had to leave their homes because of the fear of their husbands' violence or death. One woman had to move out of her house with everything in it to escape from her ex-husband. Her ex-husband refused to leave the house. Gül (divorced, 45 years old, with one child), for instance,

It happened like this: I said to Hasan that it was not working so I opened a case for divorce. By then the physical violence was so intense, he was getting so angry and going mad; and then he was regretting it. But it is only me who knows the fire coming out from his eyes; what's interesting is that nobody would believe he could do this, they'd say it's impossible for Hasan to do this. He is tender, calm and cheerful. But there are these hypocrites, whatever the strangers say, it's often the case in that family. Sure I left the house, my huge house and the car to come here. Through that process, I still had the car and the house on me because the loan was on me, I had the car and the house in my name.⁵⁴

The accounts of the divorced women picture that to run away from their violent or drug addicted husbands may ease these women to fall into poverty trap.

Müşterilerim de başta gitmişti. Sonra her şeye sıfırdan başladım, yeni ofis kurdum, burası evimin alt katı, sonra eski müşterilerle görüştüm tek tek. Sadece kredi kartlarım vardı. Onların borçlarını ödedim. Benim boşalttığım ofisimde telefonlar benim adımaydı, onları kullanıp ödememiş, onları ödedim. Bunlar gibi."

⁵⁴ "Şöyle oldu: artık Hasan hani bu böyle gitmiyecek dedim boşanma baslattım. Ondan sonra fiziksel siddeti o kadar öfkeleniyodu ki o kadar gözü dönüyodu ki, sonradan pişman oluyodu. Ama o esnada gözünden çıkan atesi bi ben bilirim ve işin ilginç tarafı dışardan biri görse imkânsız der. Hasan böyle bi şey yapamaz. Mülayim sakın güleç yani o ikiyezlüler vardır ya el ne der o ailede zaten o çok var. Tabi evi bıraktım, kocaman evimi arabayı bıraktım geldim yani. Şimdi o süreç daha bak ev de araba da benim üstüme çünkü kredi benim üstüme çekildiği için ev de araba da benim üstüme."

Untill now, I have discussed divorced women's economic difficulties. But in order to compare the conditions of being divorced and being widow after marital dissolution, I should also examine the different experiences of widow women. When we consider the widow women whom I interviewed, there is an ongoing perception of family existence even though they lost their husbands. Hence, both their native families and the state try to compensate for the loss of the husband. One of the signs of this perception of widow women is their wedding rings. Many divorced women in this study took off their wedding rings right after the divorce - if they didn't need the ring to protect themselves from social stigmas. On the other hand, almost all of the widow women were still wearing their rings as a sign of commitment to their love and families. Moreover, the widow women consider themselves as still married. One of my participants, Bedriye (widow, 55 years old, with one child) described her marriage after the loss of her husband as: "We are still married and a family. He is dealing with other world's business in his grave and I am dealing with this world's business. This is our new division of house chores."⁵⁵

When I asked whether they were wearing the wedding ring or not, Hacer (widow, 43 years old, having two children), for instance, answered "I still wear it. How I can take it off, he is still my husband, my family."⁵⁶

Another sign of this ongoing perception of family existence was how these women call their husbands. While divorced women referred to their husbands as ex-husbands or just "he", widow women still called them "my husband", as if their husbands were still alive. Divorced women stated that they were aware that their former family had ended. They had a new family consisting of themselves and their children. On the other hand, widow women still considered their husbands were there, among them. For example, one widow women said that when she sets the table for dinner, she still leaves a chair for her husband. On the other hand, divorced women changed their surname and left their husbands behind.

⁵⁵ "Hala evliyiz biz ve bir aileyiz. O öbür dünyanın işleri ile ilgileniyor ben bu dünyanın. Bu ev içinde yeni iş bölümümüz."

⁵⁶ "Hala takarım, yok çıkarmam. Nasıl çıkartabilirim. O hala benim eşim. Ailem"

Widow women's quotations in this study present that in a patriarchal society, woman is trapped in the middle of the family and the marriage and above them as an umbrella frame, a man stands. As I discussed in chapter two, family is regarded as the most important institution in the societies of Southern European countries including Turkey. The quotations show that gender division of labor is internalized by widow women.

Widow women whom I interviewed were caught financially unprepared for death of their husbands. For these women, financial self-sufficiency had not been a part of their future plans, and the ending of their marriages through the death of their husbands came as a shock. Emine (widow, 46 years old, with two boys) stated that "No Esra, no he did not say such things at all. He did not mention death. He never spoke about money."⁵⁷

Hamiyet (widow, 46 years old, having three children) said that

No, no such thing happened. Well, you know, "there is some money here, save up some money here" and like that. He never ever told me such things, never ever. He did not tell me anything. You know, nobody knows that he/she is going to die, maybe I'll die tomorrow, and I don't know that. It's because he didn't know he was going to die.⁵⁸

In a patriarchal relationship in the family, there are spheres of men's control such as money, home, and sex. The default position for men is to work outside the home. It is still believed that a man, husband, is going to take care of women. The accounts of widow mothers confirm the argument of Joseph (2000, 2001) that relationship between men and women is in a way that women will be financially supported by the men. Patriarchy is rooted in this family structure. The quotations from widow mothers show that there is the social expectation that husbands should always be the breadwinner. Even some of the widow mothers were working during

⁵⁷ "Yok, Esra, yok hiç öyle şeyler söylemedi. Hiç söylemedi ölümü. Hiç konuşmadık para olayını."

⁵⁸ "Yok, hiç öyle şey olmadı. Yani işte, şurda para var, işte şuraya para biriktir şey yap. Hiç hiç öyle demedi hiç hiç. Hiçbir şey demedi bana. Ya hani, insan öleceğini bilemez ki yarın belki öleceğim ama bilemiyomki yani. Öleceğini bilemediği için."

marriages, earning money is not the same as controlling income. It is significant who is in charge of spending the money. Women's labor force participation does not mean the access to money. In marriage, couples generally invest in husbands' career. While the husband's career develops, the wife's career is ignored. Thus the patriarchal structure of marriage can be responsible for different adjustments for men and women after marital dissolution. The reason why death of the husband is financial problem for women is that the division of labor in which women have invested in such as child care are not transferable after marital dissolution.

For widow women, there are two possible financial outcomes to lose their husbands. Firstly, if the widow women do not have their deceased husband's retirement salary or a job, the native families of widow women supports them financially in honor of their deceased husband until these women could maintain a living for themselves. Hamiyet (widow, 46 years old, with three children), for instance, mentioned how her relatives helped her financially until she got a job,

Soon before my husband died said to my little son: 'look, I didn't let your brother and sister go to the private preparatory courses for the university exams, you're lucky, I'm waiting for results.' And he said okay, 'I'll give you results.' We talked one day before we were going to pay for the first instalment, and he passed away one day later. We couldn't pay the instalment. Think about it! Later on we were going to take him out of the training center. His grandmother said "let him go to courses that I'm going to pay". His grandmother paid for his courses for two years.⁵⁹

Consequence of this situation is that women get out of one dependency and enter into other one. In other words, as Walby claims, private patriarchs continue in the changing forms-from family to husband, from husband to family.

⁵⁹ "Babası da dedi ki bak abini ablanı dedi ben dersaneye vermedim sen çok şanslısın karşılığını isterim. Bu da tamam bana karşılığını vercem dedi. İlk taksidi ödeyeceğimiz gün, bi gün önce konuştuk, bi gün önce de vefat etti. İlk taksidi ödeyemedik. Düşün ya. Ondan sonra biz bunu dersaneden alacaktık. Babaannesi dedi almayın okusun dedi. Ben ödiycem dedi. İki sene babaannesi gönderdi dersaneye."

Secondly, if the native families of widow women are not financially well-off, they put financial distance between themselves and the widow women, as happened with the divorced women. Ayşe (widow, 46 years old) said that

No-one. There are of course people coming and going, we're gathering as women friends, we see each other and stuff, but nobody helps financially. At first, people came for condolence. There are loving people around me but if you're not doing okay financially, they start to see you as a burden, my dear. It is as if when I look at their faces, I'm asking for something.⁶⁰

Ükrüş (widow, 47 years old, having two children) expressed that

No they didn't even open my door. They didn't even look at my face. As you come, they change their faces; even your siblings don't knock on your door. I suffered a lot. I suffered a lot. My son passed the university exams but I couldn't pay for his education. He is a high school graduate. My daughter entered the university, I couldn't pay it. Before my husband died, my children had been very well, very well. After my husband died, nobody knocked on my door for five or six years. What could I say? Nobody! Now for the last five years, thanks God, they knock on my door, they call me.⁶¹

When the native family couldn't support the widow women financially, the men in the family started to work. For my participant widow women, the eldest sons started to work. Ükrüş (widow, 47 years old, with two children) said that "There I told you; my son went to school during winters and worked as a construction worker during summers. He worked with his uncle; he worked with people doing instalments. He sold mayflower. You know mayflower? He sold them a lot."⁶²

⁶⁰ "Yok. Gelen giden oluyor, gün falan yapıyoruz, görüşüyoruz ama hani öyle maddi olarak kimsenin şeyi yok. Başta baş sağlığına giden gelen oldu. Seveni edeni ama sonra maddi gücün yerinde değilse seni yük olarak görüyorlar yavrum. Hani sanki baksam bir şey istiycekmişim gibi."

⁶¹ "Yok, kapımı bile açmadılar. Yüzüme bakmadılar. Sen gelirken yüzünü değiştirirler, kardeşin dahi olsa kapını çalmaz. Zorluk çok çektim. Darlığı çok çektim. Oğlum kazandı okutamadım onu. Oğlum lise mezunu. Kızım kazandı eylemedim. Eşim ölmeden yavrum çok iyilerdi, çok iyilerdi. Eşim öldükten sonra beş altı sene kapımı çalanım olmadı. Ne diyim olmadı. Tabii şimdi beş seneden beri Allah razı olsun kapımı çalıyolar, arıyolar."

⁶² "İşte diyom ya ne olduysa ona gitti. Benim oğlum kışın okudu yazın inşaatlara gitti. Dayısının yanında çalıştı, tesisatçının yanında çalıştı oğlum. Oğlum alıç sattı. Şu alıç var ya, onlardan çok sattı."

Meral stated that “My son went to a two-year college. He’s working as an office administrator and public secretary. But now he couldn’t finish it, of course, since his father to this day. He has gone to work. He has to work a bit for his own allowance; I’m not giving him any allowance.”⁶³

Experiences of these widow mothers show that both labor market and social welfare structure do not accept the female breadwinner. The patriarchal structure of family and the labor market based on the control of men on women’s labor, body and reproduction is not suitable for single mothers. Hence, when the male breadwinner, like husband, dies, breadwinning position of the family is filled with the sons in the family, not by wives or other women in the family.

When I asked whether their oldest daughter started to work or not, widow women expressed that they did not let their daughters work. Because their daughters were not protected by a father, the widow women were afraid of damaging the daughters’ honor (*namus*). The accounts of these women picture that patriarchal control of women’s body and sexuality causes stigmatization towards not only widow women but also their daughters. Since a married woman’s status is defined through her husband and his monopoly over her sexuality, a widow woman’s sexuality becomes a threat to the social order; therefore, it is in need of control and is socially suppressed. Because of the fear of damaging their honor, women put sanctions on their daughters. Social stigmas towards women often oppose women’s labor market participation, especially when it is outside the home or it needs to work with men and male customers. Hence, widow women and their daughters’ ability to work outside the home depend on their families’, in this case their fathers’ or their sons’, permissions.

If the children are small and the women, both divorced and widow women, can’t find a paid job, they work in the informal sector doing work such as needlework, or in a family business, without social security. When we consider the

⁶³ “Oğlum işte üniversitede iki yıllığı okuyordu, büro yönetimi ve kamu sekreterliği yapıyo. Ama şimdi biraz bitiremedi tabii. Babasından bu yana mecbur işe gitti çalıştı. Mecbur ufak tefek kendi harçlığını çıkartıyor ona ben hiç harçlık vermiyorum.”

conditions of home-based work, its income and regularity are unstable. Thus, for these women, home-based work couldn't provide a secure and regular income. In this situation, women couldn't maintain a living and cover the costs of home and children. That's why they started working at two jobs. In this case, the care of the children becomes a problem. Ükrüş (widow, 47 years old, with two children), for instance, said that

I make ravioli, I knit clothes when I'm at home. I knit jumpers and I sell them. I go to make ravioli. If my children were all grown up, why wouldn't I go to work outside? If there were somebody to take care of them... My children, they were very little, my eldest child had just turned 14 year-old by then. He was only a 13 year-old, they couldn't take care of each other yet. How could I trust them and leave the house, how could I just leave and go? They could burn the house, God forbid. So I had nobody to count on. At times, I used to lock the door while they were inside; sometimes I used to tell my neighbor to take care of them for five minutes as I went to my mom's place.⁶⁴

As I discussed in the second chapter, for single mothers, reconciling childcare and work is a big problem because of the inadequacy of most childcare services. Work is less compatible with childbearing and child-raising in the case of single women. According to AKP's definition of family, the main focus is to strengthen the Turkish family structure which was defined as the appropriate place of women. Solidarity serves as the basic characteristic of the Turkish family which is defined as "social security institution" (Coşar and Yeğenoğlu, 2011: 565). Hence, the state relinquishes its responsibilities of childcare to the family, especially to the women in the family. Moreover, the welfare system in Turkey looks for flexibility in the labor market that will not disrupt women's familial responsibilities. In other words, the approach in the welfare system of Turkey focuses on the continuity of women's traditional roles. Thus, women are expected to submit to a heavy schedule for their lives. In the case of single mothers without the back up of a partner, to

⁶⁴ "Mantı yaparım, örgü yaparım evdeyken. Kazak örer satarım. Mantı yummaya giderim. Çocuklar büyük olsaydı dışarıya işe gitmez olur muyum? Belki bakacak biri olsaydı uşaklarım hani küçük küçüktü, en büyük çocuğum on üçü bitirdi on dörde gidiyordu ya. On üçe gidiyordu. Çocuklar evde birbirlerine bakamazlardı. Ben nasıl güveneyim gideyim, ben nasıl vereyim gideyim? Evi yakarlar, Allah vermesin. Onun için güvenecek kimsem yoktu. Üstüne kapıyı kitlerdim, bazı komşuya derdim anneme gidiyorum beş dakika bakın diye."

reconcile this daily schedule and work becomes impossible if there isn't any help from the state. According to Coşar and Yeğenoğlu (2011: 567), "social solidarity and moral goodness" was presented as a way of dealing with poverty and economic difficulties in the speeches of AKP politicians and in their policy proposals. The main aim could be observed as the integrity of the family. To achieve this aim, the working conditions of women who have children are being arranged as flexible, part-time and home-based work in the new Labor Law, which "changed welfare to workfare" according to Coşar and Yeğenoğlu (2011: 567). However, this condition leaves two options for single women: "to work under insecure conditions or to stay at home as dependents" (Coşar and Yeğenoğlu, 2009).

5.1.2. Marital Dissolution as an Empowerment

Marital dissolution might also have a positive impact on women's empowerment. A significant number of women in the sample stated that they felt an economic relief and wellbeing following the divorce. The reasons for this statement vary, such as the ex-husband's unstable economic situation or financial irresponsibility. Neriman (divorced, 48 years old, with two children), for instance, explained how irresponsibly her ex-husband spent their joint business capital;

Because he was taking money from me each and every day. He also used to do this: when he went to the client, he would say "I couldn't pay for gasoline, I am stranded, give me this much money etc." Whenever a client paid me, I realized that I just got half of what s/he had to pay. They told me he paid visit to them came and took the rest of it. Therefore I wasn't able to make my payments. And this was always the case that, in winter time, we could not even afford to purchase gas for house heating.⁶⁵

Aslı (divorced, 30 years old, with one child) similarly was living with her daughter and her family. She said that her ex-husband was using all their income to pay for drugs. "In addition to this, he took the pocket money that my family had

⁶⁵ "Çünkü o benden her gün para alıyordu. Bir de şunu yapıyordu, müşteriye gittiği zaman işte benzin param yok, yolda kaldım, bana şu kadar para verin. Ben müşteriden bir ay ne kadar para toplayacaksam, bakıyorum, yarısı kadar alıyorum, çünkü. Abi geldi aldı diyorlar. Ve dolayısıyla ödemelerimi yapamıyorum. O kadar çok böyle kış günü bir de bizim doğal gaz saatimizin şekilde oluyordu filan."

given me since he was caught short to buy weed.” When asked about her economic situation after divorce she told me the following:

Of course, if I was married, my daughter could not grow up in such wealth and financial comfort. If my marriage had gone on, it certainly would have in really hard conditions. I live in great comfort here. When I moved to my family’s house, it was like I moved out of poverty to wealth. My conditions were worse when I was with my husband; none of my wishes were realized even though I didn’t want much. There were some days that I couldn’t find anything to eat for breakfast, believe me, but I don’t have such problems now, with my family. ⁶⁶

There is also difference between divorced mothers who started to work outside home and divorced mothers who financially depended on their own families. The accounts of working divorced mothers show that they took control of their income and financial lives. They became empowered because of financial independence they gained after marital dissolution. As the quotations pictures, although divorced mothers moderately educated and no or less working histories, they seemed to have positive feelings about control over their lives. Moreover, to work outside of home provides those women an opportunity to have a social life outside of the family. Thus, this situation creates an opportunity for some working divorced mothers in this study to have autonomous lives after marital dissolution. Many divorced women’s main approach to working as “I like being in control of money and spendings by myself. Stand on my own feet makes me feel strong.”

Another participant woman told me how marriage itself was an economic burden for her because she was the one who bore the financial load the most. Gül (divorced, 45 years old, with one boy), for instance, described her new life as: “I make my living easily. Well, I buy whatever I want. My first goal is to invest. Since I

⁶⁶ "Tabi ben evli olsaydım benim kızım bolluk içinde rahatlık içinde mümkün değil büyümezdi burda çok rahat. Evlilik sürseydi kesinlikle çok zorluklarla sürerdi. Ben burda çok rahatım. Ailemin yanına geldiğimde resmen bi fakirlikten zenginliğe gitmiş gibi oldum. Eşimin yanındayken daha kötüydü durumum hiçbir isteğim olmuyordu ki benim hiç çok çok fazla özel isteğim olmadı. Kahvaltı bulamadığım günler oldu öyle söyliyim ama ben ailemin yanında öyle sorunlar yaşamıyorum.”

want my son to be financially comfortable during his school years, I put some money aside. But I keep feeding my tastes."⁶⁷

Selvi (divorced, 45 years old, with one boy) implied that "Pardon me for the language but it was as if you hired a jigolo with your money. The man doesn't provide, just eats and drinks, and sometimes expects from you to perform your wifely duties wifely."⁶⁸

When asked about the husbands withdrawing from financial help and neglecting children's expenses, the participants complained a lot about this issue. Participants interpreted it as a deliberate behavior because the women chose to get divorced. Candan (divorced, 42 years old, with one child) stated that "my husband told me why should he have to give money to a woman whom he couldn't use for anything [including sex]."

Moreover, although those divorced women experience economic difficulties, to be able to leave violence intensive marriages make these women feel relief and empowered. Leaving the violence intensive marriages and trying to stand on their own feet and to make future plan both for themselves and their children are significant steps for women's autonomous lives. For example, Sibel (divorced, 34 years old, having two children) left her husband, who committed violence against both to her and her children, and decided to graduate from university and now she is a primary school teacher. Being able to survive with an adequate living outside of marriage is clearly an advantage to women who would otherwise remain trapped in failing marriages.

These accounts of divorced women reveal a divergence from the approach of the centrality of marriage because the economic relief the divorced women felt shows us that dependence on a man in a marriage is not the only way a woman can survive in society. Moreover, the quotations above are a challenge to the results of

⁶⁷ "Çok çok rahat geçinebiliyorum. Eee, her istediğimi alıyorum. Benim öncelikli amacım işte geleceğe yatırım yapmak, hani oğlumun okul hayatını rahat bi şekilde sürdürmesini istiyorum o yüzden, birikim yapıyorum. Ama hani hiçbi şeyden de geri kalmıyorum."

⁶⁸ "Afedersin paranla kendine jigolo tutuyorsun. Adam evi de geçindirmiyor, yiyor içiyor, bi de bazen karılık bekliyor. "

the recent study of Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu (2012) that a woman should be at home in charge of the children while a man should be a breadwinner. For these divorced women, male breadwinning meant suffering, while being the head of the family meant economic relief.

5.1.3. Coping Strategies: Alimony, Family, Formal Help and Remarriage

For divorced and widow women employment may not be the only way to overcome financial difficulties after marital dissolution (Duncan and Hoffman, 1985). First of all, they may receive welfare benefits. Second, some of them can have other income sources such as rent from their properties, their deceased husband's salaries and private transfers. Third, they may remarry or can have financial support from their parents I think all these alternative income sources help to decrease women's post dissolution financial difficulties.

The participants, who experienced financial difficulties after marital dissolution, came up with several strategies to alleviate their financial worries: a) alimony/deceased husband's salary or benefits from deceased husband's business, b) family help: economic and childcare, c) formal help (welfare benefits) d) remarriage.

5.1.3.1. Alimony:

In theory, in addition to income from paid work, alimony and child support should also be available to divorced woman. However, very few women in this study received alimony. Among the participants, while ten divorced women received alimony, twelve did not. Only one of these women paid alimony to her ex-husband.

Name	Receiving Alimony	Paying Alimony	Amount of the Alimony
Elif	Yes		300 tl
Esmâ	No		
Fatma	Yes		250 tl
Kerime	No		
Neriman	No		
Selvi		Yes	250 tl
Aslı	Yes		450 tl
Sibel	Yes		300 tl
Nihal	Yes		100 tl
Vasfiye	Yes		500 tl
Gül	Yes		500 tl
Pınar	Yes		300 tl
Nilgün	No		
Nurhayat	No		
Candan	No		
Zeynep	Yes		100 tl
Mihriban	No		
Şöhret	No		
Nurdan	No		

When I asked if the alimony was paid regularly or if they had any problems regarding the payment, many participants responded that their husbands didn't pay alimony regularly or didn't pay at all. In some circumstances they had to file a lawsuit to family court again requesting that the alimony be paid regularly. Elif (divorced, 30 years old, with one child), for instance, explained her alimony process:

The alimony was determined as one and a half billion liras by the lawyer; 750 for me and 750 for my son. They [judges] made it 300 million, and we're not getting any for the last three months now. *Me: 300 to you and 300 to him?* It's 300 in total, what else? My lawyer went to his house for the compensation. He was told that we could get the property, we could

foreclose. I was getting my alimony regularly up until the last 6 months, with God as my witness. They started to give my alimony when I sent foreclosure to their house. *Me: Did you apply for execution?* Yes I did, and the goods of the house were foreclosed. The next month I started to get my alimony regularly, until the last 6 months, I received it just fine for 4 years. It was interrupted for the last 6 months; they're not paying although I have told them to do so. I sometimes say am I bound to their money?⁶⁹

Another woman, Gül (divorced, 45 years old, having one child) said

The alimony was granted as 300 million liras. He showed his salary to be very low. He's paying the alimony. He didn't pay it, in the first months, and in December when the things got clear and we got divorced, then he started to pay 400 or 500 and so, but I still have a lot to get. He owes me.⁷⁰

The accounts of divorced mothers show that despite the mothers' need for alimony, an adequate system has not been achieved. There is not an effective enforcement of alimony payments. As a result, under this condition, divorced mothers remain in a vulnerable and dependent position.

Aslı (divorced, 30 years old, with one child) told me how her ex-husband committed fraud in order to not pay alimony

He didn't want to pay, so I'm getting it through confiscations, he wouldn't pay if it were up to him. There was fraud, whatever is taken through confiscation is cut from his salary; it is not due to his will. He even made a deal with the manager in order to not pay my alimony, saying that he had debts, for seven months or so. He was working at a school. He said to the principal of the school that he had a lot of debt, that he was paying the credit card, and he provided some documents to the principal of the school, he told me this and that he didn't want his salary to be cut for a couple of months so that he could pay for his debts. He didn't give me

⁶⁹ "1 buçuk milyarlık nafakayı 750 bana 750 oğluma olarak açmış avukat, onu 300 milyona indirdiler, biz şu son 3 aydır almıyordum. Ben: 300 size 300 ona mı? Toplam 300, neyine olucak. Tazminat için evine gitti avukatım. Eşyayı falan alırız, haciz getirebiliriz dedi. Nafakamı da son 6 aya kadar çok düzenli alıyordum, Allah var şimdi. Evlerine haciz gönderdikten sonra nafakamı yatırmaya başladılar. Ben: İcraya verdiniz mi? Verdim evin eşyalarına el konuldu. Ertesi ay benim nafakam düzenli bir şekilde, geçtiğimiz son 6 aya kadar, 4 sene düzgün aldım. Son 6 aydır kesintiye uğradı, vermiyorlar, söylediğim halde vermiyorlar. Bazen diyorum onların parasına mı kaldım."

⁷⁰ "Nafaka 300 lira bağlandı. Maaşını çok düşük gösterdi. Nafakayı veriyö. Nafakayı vermediği aylarda baslarda vermedi. Aralıkta ne zaman kesinleşti sey artık boşandık. Ondan sonra böyle 400er 500er falan veriyö ama hala alacağım var bi sürü. Alacağım var."

alimony for seven months. We asked for a confiscation with a lawyer from the bar. We hired a lawyer and got the alimony through confiscation.⁷¹

As the quotations picture, women do not receive alimony because their ex-husbands can avoid paying it. There are reforms to address this problem like income withholding which is also put in use in Turkey. However, the experiences of these women in the study indicate that even with income withholding, women couldn't get alimony because their ex-husbands still avoid the system. The experiences of divorced women in this study indicate the problems with the social policy system and how the system protects the man in both the marriage and divorce while puts women in vulnerable positions. Additionally, fathers avoiding the payment is also examples for the approach that men both care and control the women. Even after the end of marriage, the husbands try to control women by controlling the women's access to money. The male authority in the marriage still continues after the divorce.

Many divorced women whom I interviewed also stated how the alimony payment turned into a disadvantage for them because their husbands were using it as leverage to press their demands and interfere with their lives and relations with their children. In Sibel's (divorced, 34 years old, with two children) case, her ex-husband filed a lawsuit to get alimony from her after she started to work:

I opened a case for alimony and I won it. After I won it, my son didn't come here but stayed with his dad saying that he was going to school and he had friends there. My husband proved it so we had the alimony with my daughter, an alimony around 300 TL. At that time I was paying for my son's school, it didn't matter. He opened a case against me. He opened a case for alimony and do you know what is it for? They are six people in one house, they're working, she's coming home late, she's not taking care of the children, isn't the money I'm paying for enough? She shouldn't work, she should live on the money I'm paying.' I'm paying 300 liras only for rent. He's opening a case for me so irrationally, and you wouldn't believe, he

⁷¹ "Ödemek istemedi tabi ben icra yoluyla alıyorum kendine kalsa ödemez. Hatta kandırılma olayı da oldu bu icra yoluyla alınan kendi maaşından direkt kesiliyor kendi isteğiyle değil yani. Hatta kaç ay yedi ay civarında benim borçlarım var diyerek müdürle resmen anlaşma yapıp benim nafakamı ödemediler. Okulda çalışıyor. İşte benim borcum çok, ben kart ödüyom diye öyle belgeler sunmuş çünkü biz müdürle babası diyaloga geçtiğinde müdür bunları söyledi yani işte bi kaç ay kesmeyin de ben borçlarımı falan ödeyim demiş. Yedi ay ödemedi. Biz icra yoluyla avukat istedik barodan. Avukat tutup icra yoluyla aldık."

won the case, you know? At the first hearing of the court the lawyers gave the custody of my children.⁷²

Vasfiye Ayşe (divorced, 48 years old, with three children) also stated that although she filed a lawsuit to increase the amount of the alimony, her ex-husband started threatening her:

After the case he threatened us here and came around to the house. Because my daughter supported me, he even attempted to beat her. Then there were a lot of threats and stuff, so we ended up in a court. After the court he told my oldest daughter to come over, he had an open-heart surgery but he has been messing with me since then, telling me that he will open a case against us to decrease the alimony that he won't let us live on it. There was no increase. It has been 500 million liras for the last 5 years. I opened a case. The court assigned a lawyer paid by the state. Thanks to our lawyer for not caring at all. Documents have come and gone since we opened the case in 2011 or so, the case ended but we still haven't received the documents, I complain about this.⁷³

While most divorced women did not speak of trading alimony for custody, 35 percent of all participant women stated that they were fearful during divorce process. These women's fears are because of the intensive violence during marriage.

Five of the participants relinquished all their savings to their husbands or they gave up alimony and child support so as to make the divorce process easier and smoother. Neriman (divorced, 48 years old, with two children), for instance,

⁷² "Nafaka davası açtım, nafaka davasını kazandım ben. Kazandıktan sonra şey zaten oğlanı almadım oğlan gelmedi, buraya okulda okuyorum arkadaşlarım var diye. Onu ispatladı. Kızla ikimiz aldık nafakayı. 300 milyon işte nafaka bağladılar. O arada oğlanın masraflarını da ben görüyorum zaten fark etmiyo. Beni mahkemeye veriyo. Nafaka davası açıyo ve nafaka davası açtığı olay ne biliyo musunuz? Bi evde 6 kişi yaşıyorlar, çalışıyor eve geç geliyor, çocuklarla ilgilenemiyor. Benim verdiğim para ona yetmiyo mu? Çalışmasın benim verdiğim parayla gecinsin. Ki benim ödediğim kira 300 lira. Yani o kadar mantıksız bi şekilde dava açıyo bana ve inanmazsınız davayı da kazandı biliyo musunuz? İlk celsede avukat şey verdiler çocuklarımı."

⁷³ "Mahkemeler bittikten sonra buradan bizi tehdit etti evin onune geldi gitti. Kızım bana destek çıkıyo diye onu dövmelere kalktı. Bu arada bayağı bi tehditler falan mahkemelik olduk. O davalar bittikten sonra adam ortaya çıktı benim büyük kızıma gel dedi. Açık kalp ameliyatı geçirdi ama o günden beridir benimle uğraşıyo. Ben mahkemeye vericem o nafakayı düşürtücüme size yedirmiycem. Artis olmadı. 5 yıldır 500. Mahkemeye basvurdum. Mahkeme avukat verdi devlet tarafından. Avukatımız da sagolsun hic ilgilenmiyo. Kağıtlar gidiyo geliyo gidiyo geliyo 2011 senesine mi ne attık davayı, dava bitti hala kağıtlarımız gelmedi ben ondan çok şikayetciyim."

explained why she didn't ask for alimony: "I didn't want alimony, he cannot maintain it anyway, and I thought if I want it he will be a thorn in my flesh. I just focused on getting rid of him."⁷⁴

Nilgün (divorced, 40 years old, with one boy) also talked about how her ex-husband made it easier to divorce if she didn't ask for alimony: "I took nothing, nothing, because he was well-off. Then I got divorced in one a session, I didn't ask for alimony. He didn't want to get divorced at that time."⁷⁵

Esma (divorced, 45 years old, with two children) told me that "I didn't ask for anything, I asked for nothing. I want to let it go, I want to get over it, I don't care about the money."⁷⁶

The experiences of these divorced women are examples of the gendered structure of social policy and society in Turkey. Thus, married women should be supported by their husbands, unmarried women by their father but single women are considered to be an economic burden. The social security system in Turkey is not structured in a way to include every group of women since it is family-oriented and many of the social responsibilities of the state, such as care for children, ill and old people, are transferred to the family. Moreover, the social rights of divorced women are shaped by gender-biased and family-oriented laws. Thus, divorced women's legal battles, such as alimony, are left unresolved.

Only one of the participants paid alimony to her ex-husband. Selvi's (divorced, 45 years old, with one child) experience was an interesting one:

Yes, at that time that ignoble man told he wouldn't get divorced and I was so sick and tired that I was very hurt because I had his last name. I mean, I didn't want my name next to his. I told him to give me the child and some money, and that was two hundred and fifty million liras, that was all. This ignoble man became a specialist at the finance office, think about it, he

⁷⁴ "Nafaka istememiştım, zaten verecek durumu yok. Onu da istersem dedim bana sarar. Ben kendimi kurtarayım."

⁷⁵ "Hiç hiç bi şey almadım çünkü durumu çok iyiydi. Ondan sonra işte boşadım bi celsede anlaşmalı nafaka talep etmedim. Boşanmıyodu o zaman."

⁷⁶ "İstemedim hicbi sey istemedim. Gitsin, kurtulayım da parasında değildim."

used to earn a lot. He said he wouldn't. I told him, if you don't, I will, take the kid and care for him. Take the boy and look after him; he was stunned. And I said, with the judges and lawyers, thank to my friends. And I said like in life, let him fail in being a real man, too. I told him that he is even more inferior than his wife. He couldn't be a man, not even a woman. I told him that I'm giving him the child and an amount of alimony.⁷⁷

5.1.3.2. Deceased Husband's Salary or Benefits from Deceased Husband's Business:

Different from the divorced women in this study, many widow women are keen on their husbands' salaries in order to manage financial difficulties after marital dissolution.

Name	Death Pension	Amount
Ayşe	Yes	770 tl
Bedriye	Yes	1000 tl
Emine	Yes	500 tl
Meral	Yes	860 tl
Nazlı	No	
Mahmure	Yes	375 tl
Hamiyet	Yes	600 tl
Hacer	No	
Ükrüş	Yes	330 tl
Eda	No	
Zeynep	No	
Meryem	Yes	500 tl

⁷⁷ "Evet, o dönem şerefsiz boşanmıyacam dedi ve ben artık o kadar bıktım ki o adamın soyadını taşımaktan zaten hep rencide oluyorum. Yani onunla adım geçmesin diye. Çocuğu bana ver dedim şu kadar para ver, o da iki yüz elli lira ya çok bi şey değil yani. Bu şerefsiz bi de uzman oldu yani maliyede düşün dünyanın parasını alıyo. Veremem dedi. Ben de dedim ki, veremezsen dedim ben sana veririm al çocuğu bak dedim. Ben dedim ki o zaman çocuğa sen bak. Bunu duyunca şok oldu. Ben dedim hani hâkimlerle zaten avukatlarla da arkadaşlarımız sağolsunlar. Dedim hayatta da olduğu gibi dedim yine dedim erkeklikten de kalsın dedim. Sen dedim karının da aşşasında bi mahlûksun dedim. Erkek olamadın garı da olamadın dedim. Çocuğu sana veriyorum dedim şu kadar da nafaka veriyorum dedim."

Sultan	No	
Hatice	Yes	800 tl
Hamide	Yes	800 tl
Zuhal	Yes	550 tl
Türkan	No	

The majority of widow women in this study received survivor benefits from the deceased husband, and a few continued to receive resources such as income from a business, following the death of their husband. Ayşe (widow, 46 years old) described her financial help as

Yes, he was already retired. After that, I took his retirement salary, after he passed away. My mom has a different job. She is a Bağkur attendant. There are people in towns wandering as a Bağkur attendant. I was taking 200 TL from her Bağkur retirement salary as well as the orphan alimony because my dad also passed away. That's it, and nothing else.⁷⁸

Zuhal (widow, 39 years old, having two children) explained that

My husband was selling water before he passed away. He began from the scratch, later he had cars, he enlarged the business. After he passed away, my son and I sold the cars. First we paid for the insurance and we having been living on with the remaining money.⁷⁹

As a result of social policy structure in Turkey which provides protection women through her husband, women may not be allowed to work outside the home or they may not have a chance to develop skills for work even if they want and/or need to work. Hence, when they lose their husbands, they are still depended on their husbands to survive. The women's statements confirm that the breadwinner is still considered to be the male in the society.

⁷⁸ "Evet, emekliydi zaten. Ondan sonra işte ben aldım o öldükten sonra. Başka bir işte annem tarım bağkur hizmetlisi, köylerde bağkurcu dolandır. 200 falan da annemden alıyorum, yetim aylığı onu bağladılar. Başka da yok."

⁷⁹ "Eşim ölmeden su satıyordu. Sıfırdan başlamıştı sonra arabaları oldu, işi büyüttü. Vefat edince işte biz oğlumla arabaları sattık, sigortasını tamamladık önce sonra kalan para ile de işte geçindik, geçiniyoruz."

5.1.3.3. Family Help:

Family help was another mechanism these women drew on, at least until they recovered financially. Although many divorced women were seen as an economic burden to their native family, a few divorced women whom I interviewed received substantial financial help from their families, even after being divorced from their ex-husbands for five or more years. Many relied on their parents for child care. 42 percentage of divorced women in this study returned to their parents' home and received extensive help from them. Furthermore, income sources, including relatives' money transfer or earnings of children, also become a much more important part of the household income for widow women after their husbands' death. Emine (widow, 46 years old, having two sons) expressed that both her own family and her family in law compensated for the loss of her husband:

For instance my mom brings 100-200 liras or so, during the Ramadan. My sister also brings me money. She gives me money to buy stuff secretly, for the children not to hear, I used to use that as pocket money or so. I used to spend it on myself. My mother-in-law helped me a lot each month, financially and emotionally, God bless her. My sister has a husband; mybrother-in-law. I used to tell him when I need money, or something happens, explaining the situation.⁸⁰

Many of the women interviewed indicated that combining their work with family and house responsibilities is really difficult. One participant, Elif (divorced, 30 years old, with one child), who was not working at the time of divorce, was able to manage the financial difficulty of divorce period via her father's support because the parents did not want their daughter to work again for the fear that she will suffer from societal attitudes toward divorced women in society. In return, Elif looked after her ill mother and explained that as "I have my salary because I was taking care of my mother. I was paid 700 TL for residential care by the state."

⁸⁰ "Mesela annem falan Ramazanda olsun, şöyle böyle olsun 100-200, ablam getirir. Bir şey al diyerekten bana verir, çocuklar duymasın diye, kendim harçlık yapardım onu hani. Kendim harcardım. Her ay yani kayınvalidem çok yardım etti, Allah razı olsun. Maddi manevi, ablamın kocası var, eniştem var. Ona şey yaparım mesela bir para ihtiyacım olunca, bir şey olunca, böyle böyle diye."

The majority rely on their own mothers or their relatives to take care of their children when they are at work. This is because of the inadequate provision of day care. Many divorced women relied on their parents for childcare. These women spoke of both positive and negative benefits of this assistance. Many divorced women repeated that "Because of my mother, childcare is not a problem. I'm lucky." In terms of childcare, women receive enormous help from their families. Kerime (divorced, 45 years old, with one child) said that

My mother took care of my child but she was also uneasy. When my sister entered college, my mother, father, me and the child moved with her. So that my sister wasn't alone and when my mother fell short, my sister took care of my son. I continued working. We got along on my salary, on my parent's salary.⁸¹

Nilgün described how her mother helped with childcare and she could work easily after marital dissolution:

My mother was a big support to me; she came during the winters and let me to use her salary. When I first got divorced from my husband, I had a son and my mother with me, all together. She was in Çorum during the summers and here during the winters. I mean I was living with my son and with my mother in winter. There were no problems.⁸²

One of my participants told me that with the help of babysitting and daycare from her family, she was able to have the job she wanted:

If I didn't have my mom to babysit I wouldn't have succeeded. My children stay over there after school, sometimes overnight. It's better than any babysitter I could get. I wish I didn't have to work but since I do, this is best. Alimony is not adequate to make get by on. If I didn't have my mom, I couldn't have worked at the job I wanted.⁸³

⁸¹ "Annem baktı ama annem de huzursuzdu. Kız kardeşim üniversiteyi kazanınca, tayin isteyip annem babam ben ve çocuk onun yanına taşındık. Hem o yalnız kalmadı hem annem, annemin yetmediği yerde kardeşim oğluma baktı. Ben de çalışmaya devam ettim. Benim maaş, annemlerin maaşı çevirdik evi"

⁸² "Annem çok büyük destektir, annem geldi kışları, onun maaşı. İlk zaten, hani, eşimden ayrıldım, bi oğlum var, annem yanımda, annemle birlikte, annem yazları Çorum'da kışları buradaydı. Yani oğlumla yaşıyorum, annem yazları kışları buraya geliyo. İşte olmam sorun olmadı."

⁸³ "Eğer annem çocuklara bakmasaydı, başaramazdım. Okuldan sonra yatılıda kalırlar bazen. Herhangi bir bakıcıdan daha iyi. Keşke çalışmak zorunda olmasam ama elimden gelenin en iyisi bu. Nafaka geçinmeye yetmiyor ki. Annem olmasaydı, istediğim işte çalışamazdım."

The accounts of these women confirm Ecevit's (2012) study that facilities and services for early childhood care are clearly inadequate in Turkey. Because of domestic responsibilities, divorced women can not enter into the labor market. However, the determining factors hidden the women's participation of labor market is not limited with domestic responsibilities. The education level of women and inadequate public services for child care are also significant barriers for women as I discussed in chapter two. Moreover, existing patriarchal social structure expect women to be at home. Family oriented social policies in Turkey focus on importance of motherhood, marriage and family which reproduce women's traditional roles.

As a consequence of this gendered division of labor, the full custody and care of children during and after marriage belongs to women. Thus, many divorced women couldn't find time to develop their labor market skills or to look for a job or even to work at a job if they do not get child care help from their mothers. Even if they got a job, because of occupational segregation, they earned lower wages and were not promoted. This hinders women's access to efficient care facilities because they can not pay for child care facilities.

Since many mothers believe that children get better care in the hands of relatives, many women either live in the same building with extended family members or live a short distance away from them in order to find a job. Due to the issue of trust and the costs of childcare, they prefer their mothers or close relatives rather than hiring child minders. When they found a job, many of the participants mentioned that they didn't have to worry while they were working because they knew that the children were in the hands of relatives not strangers. With this help, they were able to work during the day and on weekends as well. Family help, therefore, turned out to be better help than what they could get from childminders.

On the other hand, women who couldn't get help from their family had to find solutions to keep their children safe when they were working. Generally, they started to work in the informal sector and without social security. Nazlı (widow, 49

years old, with three children), for instance, was cleaning apartments for a low wage without social security,

I cleaned buildings with a friend of mine. I cleaned buildings for years and looked after five babies, I had no other income. I started working with a recommendation from a friend. We went together; she told me how to do it. She showed me and I started doing it. After that I started going on my own. 3-4 buildings. I locked my babies inside the house, what could I have done, there was no one to look after them. All alone. We used to go to nearby buildings.⁸⁴

Türkan (widow, 35 years old, with one child) cleans houses. Her kid's school hours do not match her working hours and she doesn't have anyone who can take care of her children.

It depends on the house that I go for housekeeping. Sometimes the kid comes with me, and does his homework in a corner. Sometimes I tell the neighbors and he stays at home alone. There's nobody to look after him. What do I earn to give to a babysitter?⁸⁵

Being employed at informal sector implies increasing income insecurity and vulnerability of the women. Women without income of their husbands couldn't provide sustainable livelihoods and they do not have the social protection of the state.

Another woman, Nurhayat (divorced, 23 years old, with two children), had to leave her children to social service in order to work:

My two daughters are staying at the care home. I'm staying at my sister's. The guy (ex-husband) isn't paying money. Since they're taking care of me, I give my income to my brother-in-law. How can I take care of the children? We are a home within a home, so I cannot bring them with me.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ "Arkadaşla beraber bina yıkadım. Uzun yıllar bina yıkadım 5 tane de bebeye baktım. Başka gelirim yoktu. bi arkadaşım tavsiyesiyle girdim. Beraber gittim o böyle böyle şöyle yapacaksın dedi. O öyle gösterdi ben de yapmaya başladım. Ondan sonra zaten kendim devamlı gittim. 3-4 bina. Bebeleri eve kitliyodum. Napam, bakan yok. Bir başına. Yakın binalara giderdik"

⁸⁵ "Temizliğe gittiğim eve göre değişiyor. Bazen bebe de benimle gelir, bir köşede ödevlerini yapar. Bazen komşulara tembih ederim, ben gelene kadar evde kalır tek başına. Bakacak kimse yok. Kendim ne kazanıyorum ki bakıcıya para yetirem."

⁸⁶ "Bakım evinde kalıyor çocuklar. İki kızım. Ben ablamgilde kalıyorum. Herif para vermiyo. Bana bakıyorlar diye aldığım parayı enişteme veriyom. Çocuklara nası bakam. Zaten ev üstünde eviz bebeleri alamıyorum yanıma."

As Saraceno (2008: 2) said:

Welfare State policies are not only policies of age and of obligation between social generations. They are also forms of regulating obligations within family generations, through measures concerning maternity and parental leaves, child benefits, and access to education.

In Turkey, divorced and widow women's experiences in caring are results of family based social policy since there has been "back to the family" structuring in Turkey. The new policy orientation in Turkey is based on the idea that the family is the ideal place for care, whether for the disabled, the elderly or children, and it can be seen in the experiences of divorced and widow women.

5.1.3.4. Formal Help:

Fourty percentage of divorced and widow women in this study relied on social welfare assistance. They gave reasons for going on welfare. Divorced and widow women have always faced difficulties managing the combination of family obligations, earnings and public supports. Many women in this situation use public support.

During interviews, I realised that many of my participants were not aware of the financial help given by the public institutions or municipalities. When I asked whether they [both divorced and widow women] were aware of the financial help that they can get as a single woman, they either answered that they didn't know or told me that they were informed by their relatives who were working as civil servants. Some of the widow women said that although they knew about financial support given by municipalities they had not applied for it since they thought that they were good enough to survive and someone else could use that help. Ayşe (widow, 46 years old) stated that

I have never looked into that. We have a widow neighbor living one floor above our house. We went to the mukhtar with her, everybody was getting benefits. She said we are also widows, we should go there, too. I went there and it turned out that our mukhtar was a friend of my deceased husband. He told me, "Ayşe sister, you have a house and a wage, forget

about it". What are you going to do with the benefit such as food and coal help, let the needy take it. You don't have any kids. After that, I never tell anybody even the fact that I am a widow, unless he/she is someone I know well.⁸⁷

Nazlı (widow, 49 years old, with three children) told me that "I went to the municipality for a green card by myself, for instance, upon the advice that came from our apartment, they applied, and some men came and talked to me."⁸⁸

On the other hand, divorced women expressed that they also need financial aid but the state didn't give them the right to apply for the economic aid that widow women have access to. Selvi (divorced, 45 years old, with one boy) stated that

Which state? Which state? The state is hindering me. The state that stopped all the child benefit when he went away from me, his insurance was also on me and these all stopped. They go to the father of the child. Of course it is impossible that there is such an opportunity, because you know, I worked, there are rules for getting the wage, it automatically stopped because I worked. But we have a right from TOKİ, if I was to get a house from TOKİ⁸⁹, I am supposed to have priority. Because I don't have a house and because I am divorced, widows have such rights but I don't really think that I would go into that, because when someone is working she would be deprived of that right too, we saw that too in the state's laws: a working woman always ends up a loser, but if you are a total victim, a housewife, the state hires a free lawyer for you and finds a place for your children, and a job for the woman, but if you're working, no, it's after you have everything, you have a full pocket, etc. There I say, thank God, my God helped me come out smelling of roses. Now, thank God, especially since the last 6 months I feel better, thank God, both morally and materially.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ "Hiç araştırmadım. Bir kere bizim yukarda bir dul abla var. Onunla muhtarlığa gittik, herkes yardım alıyormuş. Biz de duluz gidelim dedi. Bir de gittim ki muhtar da bizim eşimin arkadaşıymış. Ya Ayşe abla, evin var, maaşın var, boş ver dedi. Sen ne yapacaksın, ihtiyacı olanlar alsın. Çoluk çocuk yok çocuk yok dedi. Ondan sonra bir daha kimseye, dul olduğumu bile söylemem kimseye tanıdık olmayınca."

⁸⁸ "Yeşil kart için kendim gittim de belediyeye mesela binamızdan gelen tavsiye üzerine, onlar başvurdular, adamlar geldi benlen konuştular."

⁸⁹ Toplu Konut İdaresi, Housing Administration office of the state in Turkey.

⁹⁰ "Ne devleti ne devleti devlet bana köstek oluyo. Devlet işte çocuk benden gidince bütün çocuk yarımı vardı mesela cocugun sağlığı da benim üstümdeydi onlar falan kesildi. Onlar cocugun babasına gidiyo. Zaten öyle bi imkan olamaz ben çalıştım ya maaş bağlama kuralları var ben çalıştığım için

Vasfiye Ayşe (divorced, 48 years old, having three children) said that

When I got divorced, before the divorce, too, I got it, for 2 years or so, our house had a coal burning stove, we had coal etc. too, but this is only food benefit. You know, there was this thing for under a certain level of financial situation, now I'm also living with my daughter. She is paying for the rent and the contract etc. is on her name, I'm living with her. It's not possible, the rent is 320 TL and it's going to rise to 345 TL till we move this month. In all ways, electric, this or that, the bills and so, make 200 TL and during the winter we need gas. For instance, the first period, when I got divorced and had the accident, my daughter got off work and she couldn't work, I went to the district governorship. I struggled a lot, I went to meet the district governor, a very young gentleman, I showed him all the stuff, I had no chance even to lift a bucket because of sutures. I showed him the documents, he didn't care at all, eventually I opened and showed him, I'm like this, I mean, you should help me during my hard times, in my situation, I don't already want because there are people with lower situations, worse situations. Then they sent out a recon to our home, they say the house had natural gas, if I stay in 'gecekondu', I already love 'gecekondu', it's more beautiful but I cannot lift a bucket during the winter, I can't. Therefore I had no benefit from the district governorship but I get support from the municipality.⁹¹

Policies make important distinctions in terms of whether the marriage ended by divorce or the death of the spouse. In the case of both widowed and divorced

otomatik kesiliyo. Ama TOKİ'den bi hak var TOKİ'den eğer ev alabilirsem bana öncelik tanınır. Evim olmadığı için boşandığım için dul kadınlara öyle bir hak varmış ama gene de ona gireceğimi sanmıyorum çalışıyorsun diye. Onu da mahrum ederler, devlet kanunlarında öyle bi şey gördük biz. Çalışan kadın her yerde zararlı çıkıyo ama çok mağdur ol ev hanımı ol devlet sana ücretsiz avukat da tutuyo, cocuguna da yer buluyo, kadına da iş buluyo ama çalışıyorsan hayır. Sen her şeyin cebin dolu olacak paran olacak ondan sonra. Sana ev mev de vermiyor. Öyle kira yardımı falan da yok. Ben iste diyom ya elhamdulillah rabbim yardım etti de bu işten alının aklıyla çıktım. Şimdi de çok şükür özellikle son 6 aydır kendimi elhamdulillah daha iyi hissediyom hem maddi hem manevi."

⁹¹ "Ayrılınca, ayrılmadan önce de aldım bi 2 senedir o zaman evimiz sobalıydı o zaman kömür falan da oluyodu ama bu sadece gıda yardımı. Simdi hani belirli bi şeyin altında vardı ya maddi durumu iyi olmayanlara bi de ben kızımın yanında oturuyorum su anda. Kirayı veren o kontrat falan hep onun üstüne ya ben onun yanında oturuyorum. Mümkün değil 320 kira zaten bu ay tasınana kadar 345 olacak. Nerden baksan elektrik şu bu faturalar 200 falan da o buluyo kışın da gaz oluyo. İlk dönem iste mesela ayrıldığımda kaza gecirdiğimde kızım da isten çıktı çalışmadı kaymakamlığa gittim. Çok uğraştım ama kaymakamın yanına çıktım gencecik bi beyefendi bütün yani şeylerimi gösterdim benim kova kaldırma imkânım yoktu yani dikişlerden. Ondan sonra bütün belgeleri gösterdim hic umursamadı en sonunda actım gösterdim ben bu şekilde yani siz bana dar günümde yardım edin benim durumumda ben zaten istemem daha düşük olanlar daha kötü olanlar var. Sonra eve bi kesif gönderdiler neymiş evin içi doğalgazlıymış ya ben zaten gecekondu otursam ben seviyorum gecekondu daha güzel ama kova indirip bindiremem ya kışın yapamam. O yüzden kaymakamlıktan falan öyle bi yardım olmadı ama belediyeden alıyorum."

women, policies and support systems have been conditional on woman's role as a caregiving parent. Thus, what my participants experienced is societal protection from the consequences of widowhood. The loss of a woman's spouse and the termination of the economic bargain he made to provide for her are not viewed as widow's fault so she deserves benefits from both society and the state. The adjustment in the social security system to provide monthly help to widow women reflected this orientation. This modification formally recognized the economic dependence of women and children on a man who might die.

5.1.3.5. Remarriage:

To cope with the financial consequences of marital dissolution, remarriage and employment are the main strategies discussed in the related literature (Mortelmans and Jansen, 2010, Kavas, 2010, Ozawa and Yoon, 2000, Schmiede et al., 2001). Both strategies are expected to affect the post-dissolution financial condition of divorced and widow women positively, although this does not have to be the main reason to use them, especially not in case of remarriage. People may remarry for a variety of reasons such as interest in a partner, social pressures encouraging the "married" life in social life and in culture, falling in love, or to provide financial security. Sweeney (2002: 410) points out that "In addition to providing a source of emotional support and affection, remarriage restores economic stability for the many women and children who experience substantial drops in family income upon divorce." An economic reason for setting up a household with a new partner is economic security and the financial gains associated with marriage.

During the interviews I noticed that for divorced and widow women, who can't get on by themselves economically, remarriage becomes an alternative coping strategy. According to Morgan (1991: 125), "if women experience difficulty in supporting themselves or their offspring once their marriage ends, a new husband

may be seen as one of the few avenues available to ensure economic security.” When I asked whether they think about remarriage, divorced women generally mentioned it positively. On the other hand, widow women had hesitations about marrying again since they did not feel that first marriage had ended. Although widows were less likely to remarry than divorced women, it is not the age that creates differences between divorced and widow women. The widows in my study were more traditional in their views about marriage or they thought it unlikely to find a husband who compares with their late husband. When asked about their thoughts on remarriage, 13 of the participant women said yes while 22 of the participant women said no to remarriage and five of the participant women said maybe to remarriage.

For both divorced and widow women considering remarriage, the meaning of marriage varies. When I asked them what their criteria and expectations from the marriage were this time, the common answer was having an economically strong and peaceful marriage life. Şöhret expressed (divorced, 43 years old, having two sons), for instance, her reason for a second marriage as:

Oh I made one of them rich, I cannot make the other. I want to relax. Now, I... Well why I liked the doctor, I liked the doctor, I don't know why. I had a couple of doctor friends abroad. In the USA or something. I mean, people with high education, their life views and behavior and stuff are all more pleasant. I mean, that's my style. I understood that. I mean I don't want someone ordinary. Why not, if someone like that comes my way.⁹²

Pınar (divorced, 28 years old, having one child) stated that

Financially, I want someone with a good financial situation of course, I don't want to suffer. But I don't think I should have this or that. I did not think of marriage for a long time. If I had such an intention, I would look for it, maybe I would see what he has or does not have. I wouldn't live a life of a lover anymore. I think whoever comes, comes with such an intention

⁹² “Ya bi tanesini zengin ettim, ikinciye edemem, rahat edeyim diyorum. Şimdi ben. Şey niye hoşuma gitti doktor, doktor işi hoşuma gitti benim bilmiyorum neden. Böyle yurt dışında felan bi kaç doktor arkadaşım oldu. Amerika’da bilmem nerde. Yani böyle eğitimi yüksek olan insanların hayat görüşleri, davranışları şeyleri filan çok daha hoş. Yani benim tarzım o. Onu anladım. Yani ben sıradan böyle, birini istemiyorum. Öyle biri çıkarsa niye olmasın.”

[sexual intention]. I wouldn't have a lover. If I am to see someone, I'd just do it for marriage.⁹³

For the participant divorced and widow women, although the reasons for marrying in their first marriages had been different, the meaning of the second marriage was mainly financial. 23 of the women had had arranged marriages, 13 of them had had love marriages, and two of them were forced by their husbands to get married.

Aslı (divorced, 30 years old, one child) mentioned that

I mean, for me age is very important; I cannot marry someone who is 40 years old. I've set an age limit. I don't want anybody over 35 years old. Apart from that, we cannot know people, for instance we cannot know the people who come, even if we talk for a time and he's good looking from outside, we cannot know the character, temperament, habits etc. We need to know. Financially, of course he should be well off. I have a kid and I have to think of my kid before myself.⁹⁴

However, when we interpret financial security with remarriage, it becomes obvious that remarriage makes women dependent on a husband. When we consider the barriers on women's participation in the labor market, divorced and widow women do not have any choices other than going back to their family or remarrying since welfare benefits are not adequate and apply only to particular widow women.

The second common reason the participants mentioned for remarriage was the belief that a woman should be with a man. The women who wanted to remarry believed that marriage provided a better way of life than they had at that moment.

⁹³ "Ben maddi yönden, illaki durumu iyi olsun isterim tabii sıkıntı çekmek istemem. Ama şu olsun bu olsun, hiç düşünmedim. Zaten evliliği çok düşünmedim. Öyle bi niyetim olsa bakarım belki de hani yani neyi var neyi yok. Bir sevgili hayatı yaşamam ben artık. Gelen de o niyetle gelir diye düşünürüm. Yani sevgilim olmaz. Biriyle oturup görüşürsem de evlilik niyetiyle görüşürüm."

⁹⁴ "Yani bi kere benim için yaş çok önemli 40 yastaki bi insanla evlenemem ki yas sınırı koydum ben. Resmen 35 yaş üstü olmasın diye. Onun haricinde yani tanıyamıyoruz ki insanları mesela gelen insanları tanımıyoruz. Biz çok konuştuk görüntü olarak düzgün ama karakteri huyu husu nasıl bilmiyoruz. Tanımak lazım. Maddi olarak tabiki de durumunun iyi olması gerekiyor ki benim bi cocugum var. Kendimden çok cocugumu düşünmek zorundayım."

Aslı (divorced, 30 years old, with one child) explained why she wanted to remarry: "I want to remarry, yes of course. I'm young. I want a family. I don't want to be alone, well, I shouldn't be."

Nihal, (divorced, 43 years old, with one girl) told me that "I want a marriage. I don't want to live alone. I want order in my life. A man should be in charge."

Ayşe (divorced, 48 years old, with three children) stated that "Of course I would think of it, if tomorrow or so, he dies, my alimony will be cut, he's constantly hassling me for the alimony. Who is going to feed the home?"

The marriage has always been at the center of life in Turkey. Families constructed through marriage are the major social security sphere for the elderly, sick or disabled people. Marriage does not only provide economic benefits but also provides cultural status and recognition. Moreover, marriage is considered as the main way for social approval. When it is considered stereotyping of *dul* women in Turkey, remarriage is also an important way to regain the prestige in the society. In a patriarchal society like Turkey women are raised to internalize secondary position in the society while men are supported to be a breadwinner. Since women are not regarded as breadwinners, women consider remarrying to be counted as "completed" in the society. Because there is wide spread belief in Turkey that at a certain age men and women should get married and establish a family, the divorced women in this study feel that "something is missing in their life," or they feel "incomplete". Both widow and divorced women expressed that it would be better if they were be guided and protected by a man.

These women's statements reflect the fact that while divorce is more acceptable than the problematic marriage, many women consider that remarrying is the surest way to obtain security and care. However, the interviewed women mentioned the fact that being divorced/widow decreases their bargaining power in marriage market. In the society of Turkey, there are some certain expectations in terms of marriage; the first and the foremost is virginity. Hence, I asked these women what the marital status of new husband candidates was now. They

answered that mostly a person who either went through bereavement or divorce wanted to remarry with them, or their relatives and families found a widower or divorced man with/out children. As I discussed in chapter two, patriarchal cultures define honorable woman and expects virginity and sexual purity from her at all ages. Control of the virginity and sexual prurity of woman also related to man's honor. Because of the stigmatization about sexuality of divorced and widow women, the men who want to remarry with them are not generally single men.

In the study of professional divorced women, Kavas (2010: 221) found out that for women who were positive about remarrying, a second marriage is not "repeating the traditional pattern of marriage but envisioning more democratic companionship." However, the findings of this study do not concur entirely with what Kavas presented. Accounts of the participants show us that they are still bound to traditional values about husband and marriage. The difference between my study and Kavas' study is because of the different class position of the participant women in our studies.

By contrast, those divorced women who didn't want to remarry said that they liked being in control of their own lives. Several women mentioned that they didn't want to remarry because they wanted to protect their children from new partners who may not understand the needs of their children. On the other hand, for widow women in this study, it is based on more cultural reasons. 13 widow women mentioned that they didn't want to remarry since they were bound to their husbands no matter how young they had become a widow. Mahmure (widow, 58 years old, with two children) stated that

No, I wouldn't get married. If I were younger, I wouldn't get married. Our family line was like that, look for instance, my grandmother used to say, I was deprived of a mother at five, I was deprived of a father at nine, I was deprived of a husband at 23. My grandmother didn't get married, look she was deprived of her husband at 23, what does it mean, it's too young, too young. I had my son at my 23, for instance, I got married at 22, for

instance. But I mean, no, there is no such thing, our family line is such that, it values the spouse.⁹⁵

Hacer (widow, 43 years old, with two children) told me that “I am committed to my husband till I die as long as he is in my mind in that sense. I’m self-sufficient. All I want is to start the families of my children.”⁹⁶

Emine (widow, 46 years old, having two boys) stated that

No I have never taken it off. I mean, for example, I will never think of getting married till I die. I wouldn’t do such a thing. I get angry at whoever says it. For example, my sister-in-law says, I have a sister-in-law who is also widow, her brother died in a train crash. She says, “aunt, I wish you had left, you shouldn’t trust your children.” Oh, I said, “I am well-off morally and financially”, really. If not, I would go begging, still I wouldn’t get married. Absolutely. I mean, I love the deceased very much. I mean, I don’t want to. Esra, in our tradition, you don’t get married.⁹⁷

This study proves to us that divorced and widow women have developed working strategies to overcome economic difficulties. Formal legal institutions are useless for divorced and widow women. Hence, they base their strategies on relations with family and relatives.

5.2. Presence of Children for Divorced and Widow Women in Turkey

In the current study, single parenting was one of the dominant issues after marital dissolution that we talked about with the participants. I asked if they have any regrets about having a child and whether they ever wished they hadn’t,

⁹⁵“Yok, evlenmezdim. Daha da genç kalsam evlenmezdim. Bizim sülalemiz o şekildeydi. Bak mesela, anneannem şey yapardı. Derdi ki, efendim beş yaşında anneden kaldım, dokuz yaşında babadan kaldım yirmi üç yaşında kocadan kaldım. Hiç evlenmemiş anneannem, bak yirmi üç yaşında kocadan kalmış. Ne demek, çok genç, çok genç. Ben yirmi üç yaşında oğlumu kucağıma aldım mesela, yirmi iki yaşında evlendim meselâ. Ama yok yani, öyle yoktur, sülalemiz o kadar yani şeydir, değer verir eşine şeyine.”

⁹⁶ “Ölene kadar eşinize bağımlıyım. O anlamda zaten aklımda olduğu sürece. Kendime yetiyorum. Tek istediğim çocuklarımın yuvasını kurmak.”

⁹⁷ “Yok, hiç çıkarmadım. Yani ben öyle ölene kadar ne evlenmeyi düşünürüm mesela, ne bir şey ederim, ne, söyleyene de kızıyorum. Mesela eltim diyor ki, benim eltim var, o da dul, abisi öldü işte tren altında. Diyor ki “keşke yenge gitseydin, çocuklarına güvenme” diyor. Ay dedim “benim maddi manevi durumum çok iyi” dedim, gerçekten. Olmazsa dilenirim, gene evlenmem. Kesinlikle. Çok seviyorum yani rahmetliyi de. Yani istemem. Esra, bizde evlenilmez.”

how they re-arranged their family and how they deal with authority issues with both children and grandparents.

Firstly, I will look at re-forming strategies of the family after marital dissolution. I will discuss how the mothers and their children re-form the family life, and how this process affects the children. Secondly, I will discuss the issues of authority and how the divorced and widow women reconstruct discipline and order in the family when their children see only their father as the authority figure. Finally, I will examine relations between the children and their fathers after marital dissolution. Custody issues, relations between mothers and nonresident fathers will be analyzed, and how mothers deal with the absence of the father and maintain the family life will be understood.

5.2.1. Re-Forming a new Traditional Family

When one parent leaves the family either by death or divorce, the relationship between the remaining parent and children will clearly go through some change. One of the changes after marital dissolution is the restructuring of the family. Many divorced participants in this study believe that growing up in a divorced family has a negative effect on children. Many women mentioned that although their family life was a disaster before they got divorced, making a decision to get divorced had taken as long as a few years because of this belief. Many divorced mothers in my research mentioned that they were hesitant about living alone with their children. Many of them repeated that they questioned whether they were good mothers or whether they were going to harm their children by divorcing. Indeed, the idea that two parents can raise children better than one mother was common and was supported by their relatives and their own families. But when those mothers decided to divorce, their children became the reason to keep going. Zeynep (divorced, 48 years old, two children) described her regrets about decision process:

Being different is puts huge pressure on a person, deciding to divorce and ending up destroying the family, and to dare to do this, and I did it but the man didn't. I mean, daring to do this as a woman, just think about it, destroying taboos. That was the thing I had the most hardship with. After that, I eased up. I thought this way: the reason I decided to divorce was that Arda was also affected so deeply. Since he was affected negatively, I thought his personality would be affected negatively, also. Of course I made the decision for myself but I also made it for Arda.⁹⁸

Neriman (divorced, 48 years old, having two children) told me that

Well, before the divorce, I had already decided to divorce. Well in the first one and a half or the second year of my marriage, I decided to divorce. My only fear was this: If I cannot raise my children properly, my family and kith and kin will say "If you were not divorced, your children would have fewer problems and would be raised better." I was afraid of not being able to raise them well, and of having such reactions. Generally, children with divorced parents tend to be problem children. What if I had had such problems, what if my kith and kin say these things to me? Interestingly, we never had those kinds of problems.⁹⁹

In patriarchal societies, the family form is considered as heterosexual partners and kids. In the patriarchal setting, family is considered as the building block of the society. To break the family bond damages the next generation because of the loss of family values. According to this patriarchal structure, it is believed that for the sake of well being of children, they should be raised within two parent families. In this family form, women are kept responsible for child care and motherhood is considered as sacred. Hence, when a woman decides to divorce, they may feel that they failed to raise their children and they failed to be a good mother.

⁹⁸ "Farklı olmak insanın üzerimde çok büyük bi baskı. Bosanma kararı vermek ve ailenin hani onu yıkıyo olmak, ona cesaret etmek ve ben yapıyorum bunu erkek de yapmıyo. Cüret etmek. Yani düşünsenize bi kadın olarak buna cüret ediyosunuz. Bütün seyleri yıkıyosunuz tabuları. O yani benim en çok zorlandığım oydu. Sonrasında ben çok rahatladım. Yani seyi düşündüm. Su bunun için zaten bosanma kararı vermemin sebebi de Arda'nın da çok icddi etkileniyo olmasıydı. Arda'nın olumsuz etkilendiginden karakterinin olumsuz etkilenecegini düşündüm. Biraz da tabiki kendim için verdim ama Arda için de bu kararı verdim"

⁹⁹ "Yani boşanmadan önce de aslında ben boşanmaya karar vermişim. İşte evliliğimin bir buçuk ikinci yılında filan aslında. Kesinlikle kafamda boşanmayı kararlaştırmışım. Ben şu korkuyu yaşadım sadece, çocuklarımı ben iyi yetiştiremezsem ailemden ve yakın çevremden 'boşanmasaydın bu çocuklar daha az problemlili olurdu, daha iyi yetiştirebilirdi' diyecekler. Onları iyi yetiştirememekten ve çevremden böyle bir tepki almaktan korktum. Boşanmış ailelerin çocuklarında problem çıkıyor genel olarak, bu tip problemler yaşarsam ve çevre de bana bunu böyleyse. Asla böyle bir şey yaşamadık ilginç olan."

Esma (divorced, 45 years old, with two children) mentioned that she was trapped in a bad marriage because of her children:

I don't have any support. I don't have a strong family behind me. You have to bear things as much as possible. After a certain age I worked and participated in society, that really gave me self-confidence. The kids are grown up, they graduated from university. When they started to support me financially, I decided to end the marriage. Maybe at least five years I continued the marriage, waiting for my children's graduation. So that they wouldn't be affected, so that they wouldn't have any obstacle for their future.¹⁰⁰

For the divorced women whom I interviewed, in the beginning, having children put pressure on these women. Many of them mentioned that it would have been easier to get divorced if they had not had kids. However, almost all of them told me that they didn't regret having kids. Although they mentioned how difficult it was to raise a child alone, they said that their children made life worthwhile and gave them a motivation to keep going after marital dissolution.

Nilgün (divorced, 40 years old, with one boy), for instance, told me how she moved on for her boy:

Having a child is a very beautiful feeling, I don't know how to say it, I love my son very much, that's quite another story but I didn't say I wish I hadn't had children. When I was not enough, I thought that I shouldn't have had children. You think such things, but then your conscience becomes uneasy, and you say "come on!" We are friends, we are like friends. I am so glad I have him. If I had not had him, I would have probably let go and not fought. Those were very hard days. All my efforts were to make him better, make him live better, make him not feel his father's absence; I really made hard work of it. Of course it tires you out, it is not easy but for him, you stand lots of things.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ "Küçük bi destegim yok arkamda güçlü bi ailem yok mecburen gideceğini yere kadar cekiyosun cekiyosun belli bi yastan sonra biraz calıstım biraz topluma girdim insan özgüven kazanıyo gerçekten. Çocuklar büyüdü üniversiteyi bitirdi ondan sonra çocuklardan da destek alınca evliliği bitirmeye karar verdim. Yani belki en az 5 senede ben evliliği çocukların okulu bitsin diye sürdürdüm. Çocuklarım etkilenmesin mesela çocuklarımla ekmegine geleceğine mani olmayım diye."

¹⁰¹ "Ya çocuk çok güzel bi duygu, hani söylerken insan bunu nasıl söyler bilmiyorum, çok seviyorum oğlumu o ayrı bi şey de, demedim ya. Yetemediğim zaman, ha düşünüyosun, onu düşünüyosun, tabii ki içinden onları insan düşünüyö ama sonra tabii vicdan olarak huzursuz. Hani şu an arkadaşız biz onla, arkadaş gibiyiz. İyi ki var evet. Belki o zaman kendimi daha çok bırakçaktım bu kadar mücadele vermiyecektim. Çok zor günlerdi. Hani hep onun için daha iyi olsun daha iyi yaşasın, eksikliğini

Gül (divorced, 45 years old, with one boy) said how her boy has a significant place in her life after marital dissolution:

Sometimes I think that if I hadn't had a son of course it would be easier. I would be able to manage everything by myself. But now, I am dependent on him. For example, I think fifty times before I go somewhere. I keep thinking that I left him alone. I thought the same when I was coming here, "am I a bad mother?" But, during the divorce period, if it had not been for my son, I would definitely have killed myself.¹⁰²

Sibel (divorced, 34 years old, having two children) stated that

Of course I had very hard times. I really did, for example, my children's expenditures when I was unemployed. I said this but I wish I hadn't because they are a blessing to me now. They are the only reason I hold on to life. Otherwise, I would let myself go. Moreover, I would say does it really matter whether I live or not? But now I say I have two children; I have to stand on my two feet so they look up to me. For example, I don't let them see me cry, I never shed even a teardrop when I am with them. They know me as a strong mother.¹⁰³

As I discussed in previous chapter, many studies in Turkey examine the divorce in terms of its effects on children. However, in this study, I tried to scrutinize the effects of having children on divorced women's experiences after marital dissolution. The effects of children on the post dissolution process are positive for many divorced women. In other words, with the help of their children these women determined to survive and to stay strong. The accounts of these women confirm the

hissettirmemek için babanın da. Daha, bir yapman gereken yerde beşi yapmaya çalışıyorsun. Ha bu biraz seni yıpratıyo, bu kolay bi şey değil, ama tabii ki onun için de bi sürü şeye katlanıyorsun."

¹⁰² "Bazen düşünüyorum, oğlum olmasaydı illaki daha rahat olacaktı. Her şeyi kendim yönetebilecektim. Ama şimdi bağımlı olduğum bi şey var. Mesela bi yere giderken bile elli kere düşünüyorum. Onu bıraktım gittim diye sürekli düşünüyorum. Buraya gelirken de öyle düşündüm ben kötü bi anne miyim ki filan diye. Ama şey, ayrıldığım dönemde, o olmasaydı, kesinlikle intihar ederdim."

¹⁰³ "Çok zorlandığım zamanlar oldu cunku benim de. Gerçekten oldu. Hani bu ilk çalışmadığım dönemler mesela çocuklarımla masrafları. Bunu söyledim ama keske söylemeseydim cunku onlar benim için bi nimet su anda. Benim tek herhalde hayatta tutunma amacım onlar su anda benim. Su duruma gelme sebebim tek amacım benim çocuklarım. Yani yoksa ben kendimi salıverirdim. Hatta yasasam nolcak yasamasam nolcak derdim. Ama diyorum ki benim iki tane evladım var ben dimdik ayaklarımla üzerinde durmalıyım ki onlar beni örnek almalı. Mesela ben yanlarında ağlamam bile, yanlarında bir damla gözyası bile dokmem. Hep beni şey bilirler dik bi anne güçlü bi anne bilirler beni."

findings of Yılmaz and Fıfıloğlu (2005) which examine post divorce process in terms of children.

On the other hand, widow women didn't know what to do with their children soon after the death of their husbands. Many widow women mentioned that in the first year, they were so mentally exhausted that they didn't take care of their children. During this year, many women were treated psychologically and their children were taken care of by close relatives and their own families.

Emine (widow, 46 years old, with two boys), for instance, told me her situation

I cried a lot. After one or two months everyone went back to their homes. I cried a lot, I thought I could not stand this pain. I didn't eat. Once, I prepared all different kinds of dishes for my children, but I wouldn't sit at the table. Then I started to neglect them, I didn't want anything. Then my mother-in-law died. They buried her next to Kazım. I cried a lot, "why have you buried her next to him, I was going to be buried there." They said "you'll be buried on the other side." After she passed away, I felt like they were looking after her. His father lying on her side and Kazım lying next to him. Then I felt relief. But Esra I swear, sometimes I cried 6-7 times a day. I can never forget it. Then finally I went to see a doctor, I explained my condition and told him that I could not stand it anymore. He gave me medicine, now I am taking it.¹⁰⁴

Hacer (widow, 43 years old, having two children) also told me that

I used medicine for one and a half years after my husband passed away, and I used pills too. I realized that I had to gather myself up, I had two children, I had to stand on my feet. I looked at the people around me, I said if something happens to me, who will look after my children or who can I entrust my children to? I could not. I tried to stand on my feet. I am so glad

¹⁰⁴ "Ben çok ağladım. Herkes dağıldı işte bir iki ay sonra herkes evine gitti. Ben çok ağladım, ben dayanamam da şöyle de. Sofraya oturmazdım mesela, çocuklara her çeşit hazırlardım. Onları unuttum, canım bir şey istemedi. Ondan sonra kayınvalide öldü. Kayınvalidem ölünce, Kazım abinin yanına gömdüler. Ben çok ağladım, "niye onun yanına gömdünüz, ben yatacaktım oraya" diye. Dediler şu tarafa da sen yatarsın. Kaynanam öldükten sonra, sanki ona bakıyorlarmış gibi geliyor. Bir tarafta babası, onun yanında Kazım abin. Ondan sonra biraz ferahladım. Ama Esra yemin ederim günde 6-7 kere ağladığım gün oldu. Hiç unutamıyorum. Artık doktora gittim, anlattım böyle böyle ben dayanamayacağım diye. Bana hap verdi, kullanıyorum şimdi. "

I had them, if I didn't have them; I would probably have gone out of my mind, killed myself and gone to his side.¹⁰⁵

As the quotations show, widow women also mentioned that their children were the reason to keep on going after the marital dissolution. The accounts of widow women state that having a child causes personal growth for them. After the death of their husbands, having a child is expressed as an advantage for them.

In addition, after marital dissolution, divorced mothers mentioned that they were able to re-form a better relation with their children in the family. Many mothers stated that the divorce had a positive impact on the relation with their children since most of these women and their children experienced violence in the family. Two words were highlighted in the accounts of divorced mothers in this study: "relaxed" and "better." They talked about how their children were much "better" and their relations were more "relaxed." Especially mothers and children who were abused by the husband and by the father re-formed their family in a better way. After the divorce, the chaotic atmosphere in the family ended and they started to talk to each other and had a better mother and child relation.

Neriman (divorced, 48 years old, having two children), for instance, talked about her relations with her daughters

We have always been good but now we have a more relaxed relationship. We always used to chat with the children during the dinner, talk, joke with each other and so on. We have been all together, and we go on together. I always made promises for what I could do. My mother was complaining "you haven't bought this yet, done this yet, etc." When my elder daughter said this, I really became happy: "Don't worry grandma, if something needs to be done, my mother does it in the right time, you don't have to remind her." They knew that.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ "Ben aldım, eşim vefatından sonra bi buçuk yıl aldım, ağır haplar da kullandım. Kendimi toparlamam gerektiğini, iki çocuğumun olduğunu, ayaklarımın üzerinde durmam gerektiğini fark ettim, etrafımdaki insanlara baktım, bana bi şey olursa çocuklarıma kim bakacak ya da kime emanet edicem? Onlar edilmez. Ayaklarımın üstünde durmaya çalıştım. İyi ki vardılar, onlar da olmasaydı ben kafayı sıyrır, herhalde intihar eder onun yanına giderdim."

¹⁰⁶ "Çocuklarla yemekte hep sohbet ederdik, konuşurduk, şakalaşırdık filan. Hep beraberdik, gene beraber de devam ettik. Ben onlara hep yapabileceğim şeylerin sözünü verdim. Bir gün şunu söylemişti kızım, o zaman çok mutlu oldum; annem 'şunu daha almadın, yapmadın' gibi bir şey söylüyordu bana, büyük kızım dedi ki anneanne, annem gerekli şeyleri uygun olduğu zaman yapar sen merak etme, bir kere şöyle yeter dedi. Bunu biliyordu onlar."

Selvi (divorced, 45 years old, with one boy) stated how they reshaped their relations after the divorce: "Recently, thank God, our relationship is on the right track, it wasn't like this before. We always paid money to the glassmaker since everything was destroyed."¹⁰⁷

Şöhret (divorced, 43 years old, two children) stated that

At first, it seemed as if she felt a relief because he had been exposed to violence so she didn't want it anymore. Every night he used to wake up crying, every night. I have learnt the term "night terror" recently, that was what he was living. He was experiencing night terrors every night, the kid in the sixth-grade was crying every night. He wasn't aware of that, when he woke up in the morning he didn't remember anything. Now we can talk, we are better.¹⁰⁸

The accounts of divorced and widow women confirm Nelson's (2006) perspective about doing family. As Nelson (2006) claimed, society defines the appropriate definition of the family in which single mothers' family form is ignored. Hence, single mothers try to perform the family by adopting traditional family norms in their family after marital dissolution. The cases of divorced and widow women show us that family ambivalence and authority problems occur because single mothers do not fit the traditional family model. Moreover, issues such as relations with nonresident fathers and grandmothers cause problems in the new family after marital dissolution. In the following section I will deal with one of these problems; the question of authority.

¹⁰⁷ "Son dönem elhamdülilah ilişkilerimiz daha rayına girdi önceden böyle değildi. Evde cam kalmazdı çerçeve kalmazdı durmadan camcıya para öderdik kırıyor çünkü her yeri kırıyor."

¹⁰⁸ "Bi rahatlama oldu gibi geliyo baslarda onda da cunku cok siddet falan gördü ya artık istemiyodu. çocuk her gece ağlayarak uyanıyodu her gece. Bu gece terörü diye bi sey varmış ben yeni öğrendim adını yeni öğrendim yani o zaman çocuk yasıyodu ama adını bilmiyodum. Terör yasıyodu çocuk her gece 6. sınıftaki çocuk her gece ağlıyodu. Ve kendini bilmiyodu ve sabah kalkatığında hicbi sey hatırlamıyodu. Şimdi konuşabiliyoruz daha iyiyiz."

5.2.2. Authority Problems in the Family

When we consider the predominance of the idea of the male breadwinner in society, it is really hard for divorced and widow women in this study to be the head of the family. When we consider the traditional family structure in Turkey, fathers are expected to be strict and distant; they are the authority in the family and primary disciplinarians. On the other hand, in this family structure, mothers are expected to be warm and patient (Kagitcibasi, 1982: 12). When their marriages ended through the divorce or death of the husband, the women had to (re)gain the authority in the family. However, for the children who used to accept and respect only the father as the authority figure in the family, accepting the mother as the head of the family was really difficult. Many women complained about authority issues after marital dissolution. Emine (widow, 46 years old, with two boys), for instance, mentioned:

Of course since they are boys I had to follow them about. If they had a father, everything would be different. They didn't listen to me, they did whatever they wanted. They bought a car, had an accident, this and that, I had a lot of problems. I was all alone. I couldn't establish any authority. Over the last year, I managed to put them on the right track. It has been six years since my husband died. We have been in peace for one year. They returned from the army and did things. They keep themselves to themselves, they don't bother me but it is very hard Esra.¹⁰⁹

Zeynep (divorced, 48 years old, two children) stated that she had to balance the relations between her two sons since her bigger son didn't accept her as the head of the family, and blamed her for damaging their family. On the other hand, her little son got used to her being the head of the family: "The little son understood the situation, I have the parental right anyway. We live together but the

¹⁰⁹ "Tabi erkek çocuğu, peşlerinde çok dolandım. Babaları olsaydı daha bir farklı olurdu. İster istemez dinlemediler, dediklerini yaptılar. Araba aldılar, kaza yaptılar, şu, bu yani sorunlarım çok oldu. Tek başıma. Yani bir otorite kuramadım. Ondan sonra işte şimdi bir senedir rayına otutturdum. Eşim öleli 6 sene oldu. Bir senedir rahatız, askerden geldiler şey yaptılar. Kendi hallerinde, bana bir sıkıntılarını yok ama çok zor Esra."

elder son got cross with me, he is very angry with me. He lived with his father then moved to Germany.”¹¹⁰

Meral (widow, 43 years old, having two children) expressed that

My son wore me out a bit; after his dad passed away he let go of everything altogether. He used to sit in front of the computer, without getting up. Somebody needs to buy bread, “go get us some bread, son,” he wouldn’t. Somebody needs to take out the trash, “go take out the trash, son,” he wouldn’t. I mean, he wouldn’t get up. He was sitting around all the time. He would say he was hungry. He wore me out so much. I couldn’t stand it; I had a nervous breakdown and fainted. It was seven or eight months after my husband. I fainted.¹¹¹

The accounts of these women confirm the findings of Kavas and Gündüz-Hoşgör’s study (2012) which interaction in single mother families in terms of the theory of boundary ambiguity. As the quotations show, there is a strong adherence to traditional sex roles. Thus, members of the single parent family can resist the new structuring of the family.

In addition, many divorced and widow women highlighted that their biggest son took over the role as breadwinner after the loss of their fathers. Esmâ (divorced, 45 years old, with two children), for instance, said:

After I got divorced, my elder son started to work, because he didn’t want me to work. He said “I have the responsibility of the house, leave it to me. You will no longer need anybody’s help.” He warned my ex-husband not to interfere again. He said “Don’t disturb my mom, talk to me.”¹¹²

Fatma (divorced, 43 years old, with three children) also stated that her son became the breadwinner of the family after the divorce:

¹¹⁰ “Küçük oğlan anladı durumu, velayeti bende zaten. Birlikte yaşıyoruz ama büyük oğlan küstü bana, kızıyor hem de çok. Babaylan yaşıyordu sonra almanyaya taşındı.”

¹¹¹ “Oğlum biraz bunalttı tabii babası vefat ettikten sonra o da tamamen bıraktı her şeyi. İnternetin başında otururdu, kalkmazdı. Ekmek alınca, git oğlum ekmek al, gitmez. Çöp dökülcek, oğlum kalk şu çöpü dök dökmez. Yani hiç bi kalkmaz. Otur durur. Karnım aç der. Yani o kadar bi bunalttı ki. Artık dayanamadım, sinirlerim boşaldı. Bayılmışım. Eşimden işte yedi sekiz ay sonrası oluyo. Bayılmışım.”

¹¹² “Bosandıktan sonra oğlum ise başlamıştı çalışmamı istemedi yani. Sen evi bana bırak. Evin sorumluluğu bundan sonra bende. Kimseye muhtaç olmayacaksın dedi. Eski kocama da oğlum annemi rahatsız etmiyeksın dedi bizle görüşebilirsin dedi.”

My son is very... He is more, I mean, not like his father. He is already the head of household. You are not a father, and when the father doesn't fulfil his duty of being a father, then the duty is yours. It is the duty of a father to know what's needed, what's to be done, how to do it and where to go. The duty was too heavy for him, of course. When my mom gets divorced, do not think that we'll get something, I can live without you, I say. I can work beside you and you let me do my own business.¹¹³

To compensate the loss of father, children also experience adjustments. Although women use some coping strategies to deal with the loss of father, children took the breadwinning role. Moreover, findings of my study also confirms another study conducted in Turkey. According to Kavas' (2012) study, divorced women families create "substitute authority figures" (Kavas, 2012) since the female head of the family is not accepted in the society.

Nazlı (widow, 49 years old, with three children) talked about how her son took over his father's role:

My daughters always got it from the boy, his compassion. They were so little. My son was being a dad to them, and he also made their weddings. Somehow he also faced people; he made conversations, and tried to be supportive.¹¹⁴

Although they stress how family helped to support them to a great extent, the divorced and widow women who I interviewed mentioned some disadvantages. I was curious regarding any negative effects emanating from dependence on the family. I encountered that the parents of the divorced and widow women involved themselves in their daughter's parenting styles. Many divorced and widow women mentioned the problem with respect to women's social and familial status. Many of the women stressed experiencing the conflict about their motherly authority and being overshadowed by their own mother in the

¹¹³ "Çok şeydir oğum, daha şey çocuk, yani hiç öyle babanın oğlu gibi değil. Evin reisi o zaten. Sen baba değilsin, baba babalık görevini yapmayınca sana kaldı. O bu işe başladığında ne ihtiyaç vardır ne yapılacaktır, ne edilcektir, nereye gidilecektir baba görevidir. Bu ona ağır geldi tabi. Annem boşanınca bi şey bize kalır diye düşünme sensiz hayatımı idam ettirebilirim diyorum. Senin yanında çalışırım bakarsın kendi işimi de yaparım ben diye."

¹¹⁴ "Kızlarım hep şeyini oğlandan aldılar. Şefkatini. Çok ufaklardı. Yani babalık görevini de gördü düşünlerini de yaptı oğlum. İyi kötü ellen alemlen de karşılaştı yani sohbetini de yaptı düşünlerine de gitti dal kol olmaya çalıştı."

eyes of their children. The mothers in my study stressed that they were afraid of losing both their roles as the head of family as well as control over their children. The main concern was sharing the authority with their mothers. Although divorced and widow mothers were pleased about their mother's help in sharing the care of the children, they also emphasized their concern of handing over their authority to their mothers. Nurdan (divorced, 39 years old, with one child) highlighted her fear of her own mother:

She is always nagging and grumbling. Sometimes swearwords come out of her mouth. And I, as a mother, didn't want my daughter to lose her self-confidence. I wanted her to know her mother as noble, strong and proud. When my mother swore at me, my daughter was devastated. You may be surprised but I was frightened of my mother. She was the authority at home. I did whatever she said about the home, about the kids.¹¹⁵

Sibel (divorced, 34 years old, having two children) stated

My mom was more interfering, like... I am, as I said, stricter with this issue, since I have to have the authority over my children to make them more decent even if I'm not with them because of the environment and living conditions. And since I'm a strict person, sometimes I'm stricter than I should be, I know. My mother is more relaxed, she says she's looking after them, and tells me not to worry. "Why are you doing this? Don't get angry. When you get angry, just don't." And I say to my mother "okay, but I need to keep my authority." This is what happens. My mother is always on their side, not mine.¹¹⁶

Nilgün stated how her mother spoiled her son

She interfered a lot, like... He wanted my mother very much to come; he loved his grandmother, really. He was much more spoiled with her, it was impossible to keep him under control. He was like 'grandma, grandma' when he was alone with me, and when his grandma was there, he is more

¹¹⁵ "Dırdır vırvır. Bazen ağzından küfürler de çıkıyor. Ben de bir anne olarak kızımın özgüveni eksikliğine uğramasını istemiyorum. Annesini asil, güçlü ve gururlu bilsin. Ben annemden küfür yerken kızım perişan oluyor. Şaşıracaksınız belki ama ben annemden korkuyorum. Evde otorite odur. Hep o derse onu yaptım, evle, çocukla ilgili olsun."

¹¹⁶ "Annem söyle daha çok hani söyle karısıyo. Ben dedigim gibi biraz otoriterim bu konuda cunku ister istemez cevreden dolayı yaşam şartlarından dolayı çocukların basında duramasam bile otoritemi sağlayayım ki en azından onlar biraz daha düzgün. Ve ben otoriter bi insan olduğum için ben mesela sıkıyorum bazen, bazen gereğinden fazla da sıkıyorum bunu ben de biliyorum. O konuda annem daha rahat ya diyo ben bakıyorum sen karışma, ben bakıyorum. Neden böyle yapıyosun hani kızma kızacağın zaman kızma. Ben de diyorum anne tamam kızmam ama ben de otoritemi koruyum. Hep böyle tarzlar oluyo annem daha çok onların yanında benim yanımda değil."

untidy, since grandma would always clean everything up anyway. He wanted things I would never do from my mother. My mother could never refuse him, she couldn't resist her grandchildren but this one was even more privileged. He doesn't have a dad, and he is being raised alone, blah blah. My mother, may she rest in peace, sulked when I got angry at him, saying that "when you get angry at him, it means you get angry at me." For instance when he wanted money and I said no, my mother gave him the money.¹¹⁷

According to care and control paradigm of Joseph, women are subordinate not only to all men but also senior women in the family. This mechanism of control of women reveals gender contract of Moghadam (2000) where the husband is the sole breadwinner and the women is the caregiver. Therefore, when the loss of the husband occurs, because of his labor at home, becoming the head of the family is not given to mothers. However, the control is given to other men and the senior women in the house. Thus, this causes role ambiguity in the divorced women's newly formed families as Kavas and Hoşgör claimed (2012). When they lived with their families, they cannot be considered as empowered.

Women also mentioned that they were tired of being the disciplinarian in the family. They expressed that for their children, "the grandmother and the father mean enjoyment, and the mothers are disciplinarian." These women complained that "the father is not the disciplinarian. Children feel that they can do anything with him. However, I'm the mean one." Sibel (divorced, 34 years old, with two children), for instance, said:

He takes them shopping for toys and clothes, to dinner, etc., but he never fulfills his fatherly duties. But when my son and daughter come home in the evening, I have to remind them of their homework. We have some

¹¹⁷ "Çok karıştırdı, şöyle. Çok isterdi annemin gelmesini ve çok seviyodu anneannesini gerçekten. Hani onun yanında çok daha şımarık oluyodu, zapt etmek mümkün değil ve hani anneannem var anneannem var, anneannem var, benimle normalde evde yalnızken, meselâ annem var diye daha dağınık olup gidiyodu, nasılsa anneanne topluyo. Benim hayatta yapmayacağım şeyleri annemden istiyodu. Annem hiç kıyamaz, hiç dayanamaz torunlarına ki buna çok ayrı davranırdı, baba yok, işte tek başına büyüyö bilmem ne. Küserdi annem rahmetli ben buna kızdığımda niye kıziyosun, işte kızma ona kızdığın zaman bana kıziyon. Meselâ para istedi hayır dediğim zaman annem çıkartıp veriyodu."

rules in the house since I have to work and things should be done according to rules. If our routine changes, everything collapses.¹¹⁸

Gül (divorced, 45 years old, having one child), for instance, stated that

No he doesn't react much, he generally complies with the decisions I make but I had many problems with my little son. I didn't have any issues with the elder one since he knows everything, but unfortunately we have problems with the little one. We had serious issues in the beginning; he saw the leniency at his daddy's place, he went there and felt very comfortable. When he came back there were rules and he started to reject them.¹¹⁹

5.2.3. Ex-Husband or Dead Husband? Relations with Children

For divorced women, the custody of their children created conflicts with their ex-husbands that arose during the negotiations for custody. Nearly all of the participant women had sole custody of their children. The main reason why the women got the custody of their children was that both the women and their husbands believed that it was "natural" that the children should be with their mothers and not with their fathers. This belief reflects the gender division of labor in the society. Many divorced women mentioned that they and their husbands believed that it was the mothers who knew how to take care of the children. In addition, there was a common statement: "my ex-husband didn't want to deal with the children because he doesn't care." In addition, these women highlighted that ex-husbands didn't want the responsibility of the children.

Several women mentioned their ex-husbands' abuse, drug and alcohol use as the reason why these women struggled to get the custody of the children. Many women mentioned that they got custody because "the ex-husband was not a fit

¹¹⁸ "Gelir yemeğe oyuncak alışverişine falan götürür ama babalık yapmaz. Oğlumla kızım akşam eve geline, onlara ödevlerini hatırlatan ben olurum. Evde bazı kurallarımız var ben çalıştığım için. Her şey kurallara uygun olmalı, çalıştığım için. Rutinimiz değişirse her şey mahvolur."

¹¹⁹ "Yo genelde öyle çok fazla tepki göstermiyo, genelde aldığım kararlara uyuyo ama onun haricinde küçük çocuğumla çok fazla sorun yaşadım. Büyükle yaşamadım büyük her şeyi bildiği için ama küçükle yaşıyoruz maalesef. İlk zamanlar baya bi yaşadık, babadaki rahatlığı görüyo, gitti orda çok rahat etti. Geldi evde kurallar vardı, o kuralları reddetmeye başladı."

parent.” Many expressed that they didn’t even negotiate for custody. They just took the children and left.

Aslı (divorced, 30 years old, one child) stated that

All he cared about were drugs. He thought that the kid would keep me in this family. But he didn’t take on any responsibility. He was usually high. I took my daughter for her good and her future. I certainly wanted my daughter to stay with me.¹²⁰

Another issue expressed by most of the divorced women in this study is “custody blackmail.” These women stated that their ex-husbands used the custody of the children as leverage in the negotiation of custody, alimony and child support. Some women feared that they would lose custody of their children, so they reduced their demands. These women experienced the same threats from their ex-husbands: “If you don’t give me this and this, I’ll take away the children.”

In one case, a divorced woman lost legal custody of her children against her will. When the father petitioned for custody, the judge awarded the two children to the father. According to this woman, the judge asked the children how the mother treated them, and where they wanted to live. According to the mother, her son lied about his experiences in order to escape from her authority. She stated that

They gave the children at the first hearing. That’s because a pedagogue came in. Talha repeated the same things; they’re beaten, not given food and made to starve, they’re kicked out of the house and not let in again, the report of the pedagogue was already full of these statements. He took Nisa and came here. Nisa was saying, you know, I read with her sometimes at night. I hit her hands, telling her to do it right. And Nisa said my mom doesn’t beat me but she hits me when I study. So they took my children from me at the first hearing. Without reading the file, only based on the pedagogue’s report. I was already sending the children to him on weekends; there was no hassle about that. I had no possibility of not sending them; each time I sent them their aunts would buy them clothes, shoes and stuff like that. And they told them “if you come here we’ll buy you even more beautiful things, we’ll take care of you even better.” They

¹²⁰ “Uyuşturucu onun derdi. Çocukların beni ailede tutabileceğini sandı. Ama hiç bir sorumluluk almadı. Kafası leyladır genelde. Kızımın geleceği ve iyiliği için aldım yanıma. Kızım kesinlikle benle kalsın istedim.”

were brainwashing the children, that's how they got into Talha's head, too.¹²¹

The absence of the father is another issue divorced and widow women had to deal with in order to keep the sense of family alive after marital dissolution. The absence of the father has had different results for the divorced and widow women with whom I conducted the interviews. Divorced women expressed that their male and senior female family members and relatives control their children. However, "*sahip çıkmak*"¹²² was the common expression used by widow women in this study.

For divorced women, the absence of the father creates pressure from the relatives and their own families on these women because it is believed that fatherless children will end up badly. Hence, relatives of divorced women try to watch out for the children of divorced women, because they think the children will harm the family. Since the notion of single mothers is not common in Turkey, women who lived alone with their children are not welcomed in society. According to Kavas and Gündüz-Hoşgör (2012), women were considered to be responsible for a failing marriage. Because it is believed that women are the homemakers, upon divorce, women are considered guilty of not keeping up the marriage, and, therefore, damaging society. Hence, these negative attitudes toward divorce have an impact on the children of divorced women. Many participant divorced women experienced negative attitudes towards their children. Sibel (divorced, 34 years old, with two children), for instance,

All of the family, from my relatives, to my uncles and aunts, they all said to give them to their father, that I'm young and can get married. I said that as

¹²¹ "İlk celsede çocukları verdiler. O da seyden dolayı pedagog geliyo. Talha oraya söylediklerinin aynısını söylüyor. Zaten iste dövüyorlar, ac bırakıyorlar, yemek vermiyorlar şeklinde. İste beni evden kovdular, eve almadılar gibi şeylerle zaten pedagog o şekilde bi tutanak. Nisa'yı da aldı buraya geldi Nisa'da sey diyo hani okuma gösteriyorum ya ben aksamı bazen. Sey yapıyo eline vuruyorum bak böyle düzgün yap diye Nisa da diyo ki annem beni normalde hic dövmüyo ama ders çalışırken vuruyo. Ve ilk celsede benim çocuklarım elimden alındı. Ve dosya hic incelenmeden direk pedagog raporuyla bu. Ki çocukları o arada ben hafta sonları falan gönderiyorum o konuda hic sıkıntı yok. Göndermeme gibi bi olasılığım yok gönderiyorum her gönderdiğimde halaları falan bi şeyler alıyolar üst baş kıyafet ayakkabı. Ve diyorlar ki buraya sen gel biz daha güzel şeyler alıcaz sana biz sana daha iyi bakıcaz. Ya cocugun zihnine hep bu şekilde giriyorlar Talha'ya da o şekilde girmişler."

¹²² To attend to, to look after someone, to support, to help someone.

long as they are with me; I was willing to not get married. “Let the father take care of them. Children without a father will cause problems for you, you can’t handle the boy, what if the girls are raised without a father?” They said things like this and asked me to give up the children.¹²³

Kerime (45 years old, having one child) said that

They always excluded us because I was divorced and my son is without a father, but they also always gossiped about the Abdulhalim’s naughtiness. They gossiped that I wasn’t able to take care of him, that he would become bad because he’d no father, that he would become a good-for-nothing. They always thought this way. All rumours then ended as a warning to me. “Be careful about your son, he is going to be a young man, he might follow someone, go and control him.” As if I didn’t know, as if I were ignorant.¹²⁴

Some divorced mothers stated that their children experienced no particular problems related to the absence of father because the divorce took place when their kids were so young that they didn’t remember life before the divorce. There were common statements regarding this such as: “My son was so young, he didn’t know his father”; “We divorced right before my kid was born, she doesn’t remember us together”; “He doesn’t know a different way of life, he was born into this.” Many divorced women commented on the fact that their husbands were never there during the marriage. Fathers were not emotionally involved during the marriage. The common reply was that “their father was never there. They didn’t know each other,” “He wasn’t around when the children were growing up.”

Although their children didn’t remember living with their father, several divorced and widow women mentioned that they had to deal with the questions from their children about their family situation. Aslı (divorced, 30 years old, with one child), for instance, stated:

¹²³ “Tüm ailem akrabalarım kadar dayılarıma kadar teyzelerime kadar yani dediler ki ver babaya ver gençsin evlenirsin. Ben sey dedim benim yanımda olsunlar ben evlenmemeye de razıyım. Babası baksın. Babasız çocuk sonra başına iş açar, baş edemezsin erkek çocukla. Kız babasız büyürse ne olacak? Diye dediler ver çocukları.”

¹²⁴ “Ben dulum diye oğlum babasız diye bizi hep dışladılar ama her fırsatta da abdülhalimin yaramazlıklarının dedikodusunu yaptılar durdular. Ben bakamıyormuşum, babasız olduğu için kötü yola sapacak, serseri olacak diye düşünürler hep. Laf döner dolaşır bana uyarıya gelir. “aman oğluna şöyle dikkat et, aman oğlun genç adam oluyor takılır birinin peşine gider, control et.” Sanki ben bilmiyom, cahilim.”

They had activities in kindergarten and some of them were about fathers. These activities were much more difficult for me. Or she called her grandfather "father" which I didn't let her anymore. Because she started to ask me nonsense questions, for example she called her uncle "brother", she asked if my uncle was married to my sister Burcu, my grandmother was married to my grandfather, why aren't you married to my grandfather? I said "you will not let her call her grandfather father, she asks me nonsense questions." Then, she knew that I wanted to divorce but didn't know why. When she asks me why I say that we couldn't get along; then she says "let's find you someone you can get along with."¹²⁵

Ükrüş (widow, 47 years old, having two children) stated that

My little daughter cried a lot when she was in the first grade, asking why she didn't have a father while everybody else had one, she used to tell me to buy a father for her. I'd reply that we had no money. She used to say "don't you have money coming from your allowance, they're giving you twenty lira and fifty lira banknotes and some changes too, here are the changes, go buy me a father!" When a father and child played together, I fell into pieces. So my daughter is hard to deal with.¹²⁶

Hatice told me that "Sure we go through these things; she is constantly drawing her father's pictures at school. Sure she constantly draws pictures of her father and mother; if she had a father, I think my daughter could have been different."¹²⁷

For divorced and widow women, to compensate for the father, the grandfather was seen as a role model that the participants used frequently as a strategy. In many cases, when nonresident fathers did not function as an authority figure in the family, either the grandparents stepped in, or the big

¹²⁵ "Ana sınıfı etkinlikleri vardı baba ile alakalı seyler oluyordu. Ben burda daha çok zorluk cektim. Ya da dedesine baba diyordu ben ona izin vermedim sonradan. Çünkü bana çok sacma sorular sormaya başladı o zaman iste abi diyo dayısına, dayım Burcu ablamla evli, anneannem dedemle evli, sen dedemle neden evli degilsin bu tarz sorular soruyordu. Bir daha dedim cocugun dedesine baba dedirtmiyeceksiniz, bana çok sacma sorular soruyo. Ondan sonra ben hani zaman zaman anlatıyordum benim ayrıldığımı biliyordu ama neden olduğunu bilmiyordu neden ayrıldın diyo anlasamadık diyorum o zaman sana anlasabileceğin birini bulalım diyo."

¹²⁶ "Benim kızım birinci sınıfta çok ağladı anne ellerin babası var da beni babam niye yok baba satın al diye çok ağladı küçük kızım. Kızım paramız yok dedim. Anne niye aylıkta çok paran yok mu eli elli yirmilik yirmilik veriyolar ya bozuk paralar var ya aha bozuk paralar burda ya git de baba satın al diye... Babasıyla çocuk oynayınca mesela bunlar içim kopuyor. Zor kızım yani."

¹²⁷ "Tabii onları yaşıyoruz, okulda sürekli baba resimleri çiziyor. Tabii sürekli mesela anne baba resimleri çiziyor, babası olsaydı benim kızım daha farklı olabilirdi diye düşünüyorum."

brother took over the role of the father. As discussed in chapter II, the grandparents and the older son became substitute authority figures in the newly formed families of divorced women. Moreover, grandparents became both a major source of childcare and the grandfather became a male figure in the absence of the father. Elif (divorced, 30 years old, with one child), for instance, stated:

I, my mom and my sister remained here. She is married, too. She has got a kid. She'll be here, you'll meet her. God bless him, my father was never inadequate. We didn't lack anything. He was being a father to my daughter. My daughter took him as father. She was calling him father in the beginning. She fears him, she looks up to him. She's got no father, whom shall she call dad? Her father didn't care that he had a daughter, he never visits her.¹²⁸

Fatma (divorced, 43 years old, having three children) told me that

When the father didn't fulfill his fatherly duties, the duty was up to my elder son. He brought home money. He took care of the shop. He found a job for me. He took care of his siblings, claimed them, protected them, fretted over them at times. He got angry when it was necessary.¹²⁹

According to Kavas and Hoşgör (2012: 16), "grandparents in this specific context do not solely act as support for childcare, they also function as a substitute authority figure, acting as compensation for the absence of fathers in these newly formed families."

Eda (widow, 33 years old, having one child) stated that

Hüseyin is very afraid of his grandfather. He never minds me, he never minds me, but he's very scared of his grandfather. No because I cannot say anything, I mean I don't. For instance, Elif gets cross with someone and she leaves. She takes the child, locks herself in the room but I don't get cross with my father, I mean. Because he should enforce some authority. I mean my child is really in the wrong. I mean I know it but for example, something happened recently. I have found out that my child was right. Because, then

¹²⁸ "Burada annem, ben, kız kardeşim kaldık. O da evli, çocuğu var. Birazdan gelir, görürsün. Babam Allah razı olsun, hiçbir zaman eksik etmedi. Boğazımızı hiç kesmedi daha doğrusu. Kızıma baba oldu. Kızım onu baba bildi. Başlarda baba da derdi zaten. Çekinir ondan, sayar onu. Babası yok ki kime desin baba. Gelip gitmez de kızı varmış yokmuş."

¹²⁹ "Baba, babalık görevini yapmayınca, büyük oğluma kaldı. Eve para getirdi. Kardeşleri ile ilgilendi. Bana iş buldu. Dükkânı çevirdi. Kardeşlerine sahip çıktı, korudu, kolladı. Gerektiğinde kızdı."

Hüseyin was right, he was slapped for no reason. For that I felt very sorry but I still couldn't say anything. My son always tells me this.¹³⁰

A more common method of dealing with the father's absence was ensuring that he was around as much as possible. In this situation, two possible results were mentioned by the divorced women I conducted interviews with. First of all, the divorced women complained about how their ex-husbands interfered with decisions about the children and with the women's lives by using the children. These women complained that their ex-husbands attempted to check up on them and harass them. However, the fathers were not interested in the economic well-being of the children, nor did they pay alimony which was needed for the costs of childcare. In addition, divorced women added that although their ex-husbands didn't help economically with their children, they interfered with the decisions about the children such as which school the children should go to, or whether the children should have a mobile phone.

Elif (divorced, 30 years old, having one child), for instance, expressed how her ex-husband used her daughter as an excuse to interfere her life and make her uneasy: "He was calling to speak to his daughter. He was insulting us, swearing at us. He was coming to our door saying he was going to see his daughter, and he would knock on the door, saying he was going to take me away. He would assault my dad."¹³¹

Fatma (divorced, 43 years old, having three children) said that

He bought a cell phone for the boy. He didn't pay alimony, but bought a cell phone. I said the boy was just 11; it's too early for him to use a cell phone. But he said he didn't want to speak to us but to him directly. I said okay, but please send me a message or something even if you can't speak

¹³⁰ "Hüseyin dedesinden çok korkar. Hüseyin beni takmıyor, kesinlikle beni takmaz ama dedesinden çok korkuyo. Yok, çünkü ben sesimi çıkaramam çıkarmam yani. Mesela Elif küser gider. O çocuğunu alır, odaya çekilir ama ben küsmem yani babama. Çünkü otorite koysun yani benim çocuğum gerçekten haksız yani ben bunu biliyorum ama mesela geçen de bi olay oldu, ben çocuğumu haklı buldum. Çünkü o zaman Hüseyin haklıydı, boş yerde tokat yedi mesela. O yüzden ona çok üzül müştüm ama ben yine de sesimi çıkarmam. Benim oğlum hep der bana."

¹³¹ "İşte telefon ediyordu kızım ile konuşucam diye. Hakaret küfür ediyordu. Kızımı görücem diye gelip kapıyı çalıp seni alıp götürceğim diyordu. Babamı tartaklıyordu."

about an issue and let's make decisions together. Would he listen to me? Of course not. He was expecting to get news from the kid.¹³²

Neriman (divorced, 48 years old, having two children) stated that

I didn't mind but I was actually stressed. He was coming to our door. When he learnt something from the kids, he would come. The children didn't actually say anything about us to him but when he learnt something by chance he tried to put pressure on me through it. And at half past nine, he would take the children away, the children were absent, but they were supposed to go to school, they were the morning shift. I called the children. And by the way, he bought cell phones for the children. I was not going to buy them cell phones until they got to secondary school. I had talked to them, and they'd accepted it. The reason why he bought cell phones for the kids was that he thought I got laid at night, and expected the children to tell him about it when they saw such a thing, in order to rescue the children in such a case. When the children told me this, I was shocked. The children said this to me, they said their father had said that this was why he bought them cell phones.¹³³

Men's control over women and children in the family continue after the marital dissolution since they are still fathers of the children. However, the male breadwinner approach leads these men to control over women even if they are divorced. The experiences of these women confirm the characteristic of patriarchal belt societies as Cadwell called. The accounts of these women show that male domination over children takes place because of restrictive codes of behavior for women, and the association of family honor with female virtue even if they are not married anymore.

¹³² "Oğlana telefon almış işte. Nafaka vermez, telefon alır. Ben dedim 11 yaşında çocuğun cep telefonu kullanması için çok erken, ama işte ben sizle görüşmek istemediğim için direk onla dedi. Tamam, okey ama dedim lütfen bi şeyi konuşamıyosan mesaj çek bi şey yap birlikte karar verelim. Dinler mi dinlemedi tabi. Çocuktan alacak haberi güya."

¹³³ "Ben aldırmiyorum ama geriliyorum tabii. Kapiya geliyor. Çocuklardan bir şey öğrenince geliyor filan. Çocuklar gerçi ona bizimle ilgili bir şey söylemiyor ama hasbelkader bir şey öğrendiğinde de onun üzerinden bana sürekli baskı yapmaya çalışıyor. Bir de saat 9 buçuk, çocukları alıp götürüyor, çocuklar yok ortada, sabahçılar, okula gidecekler. Aradım çocukları. Bu arada çocuklara telefon aldı, ben onlar ortaokula gelmeden cep telefonu almayacaktım, onlarla da konuşmuştum, kabul etmişlerdi, etraftan görünce filan istiyor çocuklar ama ben böyle daha uygun olacak diye konuştum onlarla. Çocuklara telefon almasının nedeni, ben gece eve erkek alıyormuşum, çocuklar bunu görünce babalarına haber verecekmiş, o da gelip çocukları kurtaracakmış. Ve bunu bana çocuklar söylediğinde ben şok olmuşum. Bana çocuklar söyledi, babaları öyle demiş telefon almasının nedeni olarak."

Second, a few divorced women were worried about the possibility that their ex-husbands would try to kidnap the children and run away. Some women mentioned worrying about their ex-husbands' drug or alcohol abuse. Although divorced women wanted their children to spend time with their fathers, they felt worried until the fathers brought the children back home. Since the divorced women I conducted interviews with were aware of the fact that many divorced women in Turkey were killed by their husbands, and they were threatened by their husbands many times, these women were afraid of losing the children during the visitation hours.

Elif (divorced, 30 years old, having one children) explained this fear like

Before the divorce and in the process of divorce, there was already violence and threats, and after we divorced, he still came to our door sometimes. Getting drunk and shouting in the streets? Threatening my dad? He did them all. Could such a man be a father? I was frightened when he said he wanted to see his daughter. I always kept the phone in my hands.¹³⁴

Pınar (divorced, 28 years old, having one child) explained her fear as

There is this fear, what if he doesn't bring him back after he leaves. What would I do if I lose him? I worry for four hours when he goes and I don't want to send him. Anyway, my son does not understand, because he comes once in six months, I mean once in every four or five months.¹³⁵

Interestingly, only one of the participants gave the legal custody of her boy voluntarily to his father despite that fact that the son continued living with her so that "he feels himself responsible and cares for him."

A few divorced women stated that their ex-husbands were not visiting the children as much as they had agreed to. These women told me that when their ex-husbands came to visit their children, their ex-husbands had to take responsibility

¹³⁴ "Zaten boşanmadan önce, boşanma süresince hep şiddet ve tehdit gırla olduğu için boşandıktan sonra da kapımıza geldi zaman zaman. Sarhoş olup sokakta bağırmlar mı dersin, babamı tehdit etmeler mi? böyle bir adamdan baba olur mu? Kızı görmek istiyorum dediğinde hep yüreğim ağzıma geliyor. Telefonum elimde hep."

¹³⁵ "Gittiğinde de ya getirmezs korkusu oluyo. Onu kaybedersem n'aparım, dört saat boyunca beynimi kopartıyo gidiyo ve istemiyorum onu göndermek. Zaten hani oğlum da anlamıyo, altı ayda bi geldiği için, yani dört beş ayda bi geldi için."

for making the visitation work. They felt annoyed because they were already dealing with parental responsibilities. In that sense, divorced women mentioned that their children started to reject their fathers.

Kerime (45 years old, having one child) stated that

I wanted them to see each other with the father for him to get some love but I cannot push it if the man doesn't want to see him. For my son, it's his grandfather. He doesn't consider his father to be his father. He hasn't seen him, how can he see him as his father.¹³⁶

Selvi (divorced, 45 years old, with one boy) stated that "He hates him right now. The kid hates his father, since he was the one who got us in this situation."

Vasfiye Ayşe (divorced, 48 years old, with three children) told me that "It was only my elder daughter who said maybe he would get better, but the other two girls never ever see their father since the day we divorced."

The accounts of these women show that the care of the child is considered as natural duty of woman. Hence, custody of children is given to women based on this maternal thinking based on gender division of labor. When a marriage ends, a man is considered as single, while a woman is considered as a single parent. As a result, while women taking care of the children; men may not be interested in the caring of the children.

The unintended consequence of the relationships between children and fathers is that these divorced women had to deal with the negative feelings and bad memories when the fathers came to take the children. Several women had experienced extensive violence during their marriages and arranging visitation with the man who caused the pain was a source of emotional burden on them. Fatma (divorced, 43 years old, having three children), for instance, said that

My little son adores his father. He is his hero. The little one looks forward to seeing his father. When the younger one is angry at me, he says "I'm

¹³⁶ "Babasıyla görüştürmek istedim biraz da sevgi görsün diye ama adam görmek istemeyince ben zorlayamam ki. Oğlum için baba dedesi. Babayı baba olarak saymaz. Görmedi ki saysın."

going to live with my dad.” Whenever he says this, I take it personally and remember my past with his dad. I drown into tears.¹³⁷

On the other hand, in the family of widow women, the father’s absence was compensated by their relatives who considered the children to be a remembrance of the deceased father. Different from divorced women, widow women didn’t feel pressure from their relatives, rather their relatives tried to care for the children of deceased loved one after marital dissolution. The widow women mentioned that their relatives economically compensated for the absence of the father by paying the fee of the private courses, buying the school equipment, or taking them on summer holidays. The widow women stated that their relatives try to help the children so that they don’t feel loss of the father.

Meryem (widow, 45 years old, having two children), for instance, said that

They liked the deceased. He always kept his nose clean. He was very charitable. He used to try to help, and used to speak with anyone. When he passed away, everyone was very sad. God bless them, they also didn’t let the children be alone. Their uncle helped them in the training center. When they are to go on a vacation or to picnic, they also ask me my permission for them to take the children. They give pocket money on Ramadan. Like this, well, I am thankful to them.¹³⁸

Ayşe (widow, 46 years old) stated

To be fair, they never think badly about my children. They knew how the deceased raised them. Nobody talked behind their backs, and I wouldn’t let anybody anyway. When they want to do something with their children, they also come to us. Altogether, I mean. They don’t make a distinction between them. When their cousins buy something for themselves, they also buy it for my children. We eat and drink together. We take care of

¹³⁷ “Benim küçük babasına bayılır. Onun kahramanı o. Babasını görcem diye dört gözle bekler. Bana kızdığı zaman babamla yaşıcam ben der. Bunu ne zaman dese, üstüme alınıyom, babası ile olanlar aklıma geliyor. Bakmışım ağlamaya başlamışım.”

¹³⁸ “Severlerdi rahmetliyi. Zaten etliye sütlüye karışmazdı. Çok yardımseverdi. Herkesin yanında olmaya çalışır, konuşurdu. Ölünce böyle herkes çok üzüldü tabi. Sağ olsunlar çocukları da hiç yalnız, boynu bükük bırakmadılar. Amcaları dershaneye yardım etti. Tatile, pikniğe gidecek oldular mı bana da sorarlar. Yenge çocukları da götürelim izin ver diye. Ramazanda falan harçlık falan verirler. Öyle işte kızım sağ olsunlar.”

each other. And after he passed away, they cared even more. They were like ‘do you need anything?’, ‘we’re with you.’¹³⁹

Hamiyet (widow, 46 years old, having three children) told me that

Well, it’s actually like this, for instance, my sister-in-law lives here. She has a daughter. She is going to school, and she is very successful in class. And there’s Emre, my younger son. He wasn’t studying well, always playing with his friend. And later on he was like “hey mom, I don’t have internet.” We don’t have computers and such yet. “Let me go to sister Zeynep.” And she was like “why did you leave the homework until this late hour?” From his father to Emre, not pity but they worry about him; they don’t want him to be sad. But nobody feels pity for him.¹⁴⁰

Different from divorced mothers, widow others are still kept within the family. Since they were the only parent, the relatives and the families were trying to keep close relationship with children to compensate the loss of the husbands. In other words, not only widow woman but also children are protected by the relatives or native family. However, like divorced women, compensating the parenting of the husbands deteriorate the authority a mother is supposed to have.

Consequently, by creating authority figures or pushing non-resident fathers to be more active in the family, these women were “performing families” (Sarkisian, 2006). By doing family, these women were trying to re-create the family form by providing cultural expectations about being a family in which single mothers’ family is not considered to be a family (Nelson, 2006). In this way, the divorced and widow mothers whom I talked to didn’t feel appropriate as a breadwinner because of appropriate behaviors for women and men in society. Without the support of a

¹³⁹ “Allah için hiç kötü düşünmediler çocuklarım hakkında. Rahmetlinin nasıl yetiştirdiğini biliyorlar. Arkalarından konuşan olmadı, konuşturmam da. Kendi çocuklarına bir şey yapacak oldular mı, bize de gelirler. Hep beraber yani. Ayırmazlar. Kuzenleri kendilerine bir şey aldı mı benim çocuklarıma da alır. Yeriz içeriz beraber. Kollarız birbirimizi, hele rahmetliden sonra daha çok sorar oldular. Bir şeye ihtiyacınız var mı? Yanınızdayız? Gibisinden.”

¹⁴⁰ “Şimdi varya şöyle mesela, burda görümcemgil oturuyorlar. Onun kızı var mesela okula gidiyo derslerinde de çok başarılı. Emre de var ya işte küçük oğlumun adı Emre. O da geliyor ders çalışmıyor arkadaşıyla oynuyor. Mesela sonra ‘aa anne benim internetim yok.’ Bizim bilgisayar falan olayımız yok daha. ‘Zeynep ablama gidiyim ben zeynep ablama.’ Kız da diyo ki mesela ‘niye bu saate kaldı senin ödevin? Emre’ye babasından, acıma değil de Emre’ye üzülyolar kıyamıyorlar Emre’ye yani çok. O öyle yani kimsenin acıdığı falan da yok yani.”

partner, many divorced and widow women create and enhance limits about their families; who will be in, who will be out or who will perform which roles, since these women chose to behave differently by getting divorced. As Kavas (2010) claimed, they tried to rebuild their families based on traditional gender roles. Moreover, it was unexpected for me to see women's acceptance of cultural constructions of women. In terms of parenting, many of them accepted the traditional allocation of men and women into different duties in the family which is justified by biological differences and the division of labor.

5.3. Getting a Roof over My Head is Enough

Among the various problems faced, the question of housing was brought up frequently by women. Problems related to housing such as rent were also mentioned as vital problems affecting their daily lives. Moreover, housing is also significant for women's working opportunities and establishing social networks. Firstly, I will look at whether a residential change occurs. If there is a residential change, its reasons and outcomes will be analyzed. Secondly, if divorced and widow women have to move into a new house, the housing conditions, neighborhood and adjustment to the new social environment will be explained.

When her marriage ends, a woman has to decide where to live. Her residential decision may consist of living alone (with her children) or moving in with family or relatives. Most women may prefer to return to the family home. Moreover, women working outside the home may be facilitated by living in the family home in terms of available childcare and less of a need to spend time on housework.

5.3.1. Moving Back to Origin of Family

When the marriage ends through the divorce or the death of the husband, the women left behind, especially the divorced women, have to deal with keeping the house. For divorced women, there are two outcomes of divorce on living arrangements after marital dissolution. The first one is that they couldn't afford the rent of the house because of the financial difficulties they experienced after marital dissolution. Divorce changed their life financially; they could not afford the costs of the house that they lived in during marriage. Selvi (divorced, 45 years old, having one child), for instance, stated that

In the house there, I got out because I was irritated with the landlord, because he didn't even get a combi boiler for the house; I couldn't even get gas in the house, let alone connect to the kitchen. And I said, I said I don't want to pay rent to this man anymore. Because I don't have a house and because I am divorced, widows have such rights but I don't really think that I would go into that, because when someone is working she would be deprived of that right too.¹⁴¹

The second one is that because of domestic violence and the addiction problems of their ex-husbands, these women leave their house and moved to a new one. The majority of the participants live with parents until feeling self-sufficient financially or until arranging a separate residence to get help in childcare. Moreover, although many of the participants prefer to live on their own with their children, several women chose to live with their own family as a coping strategy. Vasfiye Ayşe (divorced, 48 years old, having three children), for instance, stated that

I left that house and came here. This house is rental. I took as much as I could from the dowry of my daughter, and then sold everything in that house. He crashed the door hole by an adze, not to allow them in. Actually, we had lots of fights with the children. To prevent them. And the children

¹⁴¹ "Oradaki evde, ev sahibine gıcık olduğum için çıktım çünkü adam bir eve kombi yaptırmadı gazı eve bile aldırmaı mutfağı bağlayım. Ben de dedim, ben dedim bu adama daha fazla kira ödemem dedim. Evim olmadığı için bosandığım için dul kadınlara öyle bir hak varmış ama gene de ona gireceğimi sanmıyorum çalışıyorsun diye onu da mahrum ederler."

stopped me, said to leave his belongings. And I took the dowry of my daughter, and found this place.¹⁴²

Nilgün (divorced, 40 years old, having one child) said that

I rented a house after I divorced. It was a rental. That is the house. And then my mother moved in. We lived together. I had to work. The boy was little and she was taking care of him. We indexed the mother's wage to the rental, and my wage was enough to live on. Three months ago, we lost my mother.¹⁴³

Pınar (divorced, 28 years old, having one child) told me that

I didn't think of going somewhere else, because, my son was already very young and my mother takes care of him. Also, I'm working in the private sector; my wage is not very very good. Actually if I was to move to another house now, it would be enough for me but I want to save some money for the future of my son. So I live with my family. They already pay for all my expenses.¹⁴⁴

The accounts of these women confirm the Ahrentzen (1985) "residential fit" argument. Since there are stigmatizations about women living alone without a husband or a male protector, many working divorced women in this study prefer to live in the neighborhood close their own families. In this study, divorced women who are not working generally lived with family or in the extended households in a similar way Cohen (2002) and Seltzer and Friedman (2013) claimed in their studies.

In addition, their "new marital status" hinders these women from renting a house without a man. Kerime (45 years old, having one child) stated that

And we didn't have enough money because of that. We rented the place for two months, and I don't know if they thought we're naive or warm-

¹⁴² "Evi terk ettim bu eve geldim. Bu ev kira. Zaten alabildiğim kadar kızım cehizini aldım hepsini sattım o evdeki eşyaların. Girmesin diye kapının deligini keserle ezmiş anahtarı sokup girmesin diye. Hani kavga gürültü olmasın diye çocuklarla çok bayagı bi kavgamız oldu. Çocuklar da engel oldu anne bırak esyası kalsın diye. Bi kızımın cehizini aldım direk bu evi bulduk yani."

¹⁴³ "Boşandıktan sonra kiraya çıktım. Kiraydı. O ev de işte. Sonra işte annem geldi yanıma. Beraber yaşadık. Ben çalışmak zorundaydım. Oğlan küçüktü, oğlana baktı. Annemin maaşını kiraya endekslemiştik. Benim maaşla da geçinmeye çalıştık işte. Annemi tabii üç ay oldu kaybettik."

¹⁴⁴ "Başka bi yere gitmeyi şöyle düşünmedim, oğlum küçük zaten annem bakıyo, bi de, özel sektörde çalışıyorum çok çok da iyi değil maaşım. Hani şu an ayrı bi eve çıksam bana yetecek ama ben oğlumun geleceğine yönelik birikim yapmak istiyorum o yüzden ailemle yaşıyorum, her şeyimi zaten onlar karşılıyo."

hearted, but they suddenly raised the price to three hundred. Then, not to give that three hundred, we moved and we spend 300 more doing so. We moved to seven different places, once every three months, so that happened. I mean, where's the father, everybody ask for the husband, they're saying she has no husband, we shouldn't give her a house. If they gave me one accidentally, the people around gossiped. I told them to keep it a secret, to my mother and father, to tell everybody that he's in the military service, or abroad.¹⁴⁵

A strategy to rent a house is to keep their "new marital status" a secret or to move in to a familiar neighborhood with a close relative. Şöhret (divorced, 43 years old, two children) told me that

We divorced in March. On the 15th of March we divorced, and I moved in here on the 15th of April. I stayed one month. With my brother. I used to stay in a separate house with my brother. We decided to rent this house, but I didn't tell them I had divorced. We didn't tell it to anybody for a long time, since my sister was living just across. One of my siblings is a teacher, the other is chemist, and I found a house for them. Since they know her here, nobody knows whether I'm married or not, we two sisters rented a house, and had no problem.¹⁴⁶

Divorced women moved back to the native family as a strategy. However, some disadvantages occur because of this. Several divorced women mentioned that they felt as if they were a "child again." Aslı (divorced, 30 years old, one child), for instance, mentioned that

My mother is like my mother and the mother of my children at the same time. In the family, my father also makes decisions, my mother does too,

¹⁴⁵ "Tabi ondan da paramız yetmiyordu. Şimdi iki aylığına giriyoduk bunlar bizi saf mı iyi kalpli mi görüyodu neydi, birden üçyüze çıkarıyolardı biz de üçyüzü vermemek için bilmiyoduk ev değiştiriyoduk, bi üçyüz de o zaman harcıyoduk. Üç ayda bi üç ayda bi yedi tane ev değiştirmişiz. Tabi o oluyodu. Hani babası nerde herkes kocasını sorar. Bunun kocası yok buna ev vermeyelim diyorlardı. Kazayla bi ev verdilerse hemen etraf bi şeyler söylüyodu, ben diyodum hani gizli tutalım, annemle babama diyodum işte askerde diyelim, yurt dışında diyelim."

¹⁴⁶ "Mart'ta boşandık. Mart'ın 15 inde boşandık Nisan'ın 15 inde buraya geldim. 1 ay kaldım. Kardeşimle beraber, kardeşimle ayrı bir evde kalıyorduk. İkimiz beraber bu evi tutmaya karar verdik ama boşandığımı söylemedim. Uzun süre hiç kimseye söylemedik, çünkü ablam da çaprazımda oturuyordu. Bir kardeşim öğretmen, diğer kardeşim kimyager, kardeşlerimle ev buldum. Onu tanıdıkları için burada, evliyim bekârim kimseye, iki kız kardeş ev tuttuk, sorun yaşamadım ben."

and so do I, but sometimes decisions conflict because we live in the same house. But in the end, my mother's decisions count.¹⁴⁷

When these women moved back to their parents' home, they had to obey the rules of their own fathers/brothers again. Their fathers/brothers decide when they leave or return home. These women and their children had to settle into a room of the house. Consequently, these women lost the comfort and freedom of their own house when they were married. This leads to "no private life" for these divorced women. Nihal, (divorced, 43 years old, having one child) said that

Of course, I always felt uneasy. I wanted to be alone, I like being alone very much. During my university years, I was living alone. I didn't let anybody live with me. Of course there were difficult problems. I mean, I felt anxious. If I was in my own home, I could live as I wish, but with the family, no matter how free I was, it's still my family, but up to a point. For instance, I didn't take care of my daughter when I came home, and while she was doing something, had to do try to do things too. I couldn't do nothing when I came home, but if it were my own house, I could say okay, that can stay for another day to be washed, or the mothers generally wash it by hand, so not to be idle, I do something too. I say, for example, I shouldn't go to sleep at a night so I could do the ironing, for instance. It would be better if it were my own house. I am still thinking of renting a separate house.¹⁴⁸

Nurdan (divorced, 39 years old, having one child) explained the difficulties of living with her family again

Four years ago I left the house and took refuge at the police station, and opened a divorce case the next morning. I took refuge with my mother and father. My mother didn't want me, she kicked me out but I each time I endure my mother because I couldn't take the risk of standing alone on my own feet with my daughter. I am still taking refuge with my sister. And I will keep on doing so until I find a small place. Still, I want the house to be close

¹⁴⁷ "Annem hem benim annem hem çocuğumun annesi gibi yani evde babam da karar verir, annem de karar verir, ben de karar veririm ama aldığım kararlarla böyle çatıştığı oluyo tabii çünkü aynı evde yaşadığımız için kararlar oluyo. En son annemin kararı kabul ediliyor."

¹⁴⁸ "Tabii, huzursuzluk hissettim sürekli, yalnız kalmak istedim ben yalnızlığı çok severim. Ben üniversite de yalnız kaldım tek başıma hiç kimseyi de yanıma almamıştım. Tabii zordu sorunlar oldu. Yani bi boşluğa düştüm hani, kendi evimde olsaydım ben kendi kafama göre özgürce hareket edebilirdim ama ailenin yanında ne kadar çok özgür de olsam kendi ailem diyorum ama bi yere kadar. Mesela eve gidince ne kızım ile ilgileniyorum ne işte o bi şeyler yaparken ben bi şeyler yapmak zorundayım mutlaka çabalıyorum. Yani eve gidince boş durmuyorum ama kendi evim olsaydı işte bu kalsın da bugün makineye atayım veya işte anneler çoğunlukta da elinde yıkarlar, bi şeyler işte boş durmayım, iş yapayım... Aman diyorum mesela ben gece uyumayım, ütü yaparım diyorum mesela. Kendi evim olsaydı daha iyi olurdu. Hala da ayrı eve çıkmayı düşünüyorum."

to my mother. The biggest danger for divorced women and their children is the wolves looking for prey. The children might become rape victims. My advice for divorced women is to live close to their families. I got the biggest support from my aunt. Not only because of what my mother did, but I also want to live in a separate house for myself. With a big portable cushion in hand, laying a bed in living room, fixing it in the morning, storing the children's clothes in a plastic drawer, my clothes being stuck on back of the doors, hanging on coat racks, I don't want to live like this. I want to have my own order, my own kitchen, my own armchair where I put up my feet, and my own TV, I want to have my own order in my own home.¹⁴⁹

The accounts of these women picture that identity of women in Turkey is constructed through dependency: dependency of a man or a family which is headed by a male breadwinner. This situation also confirms the argument of Kurz that calls this process as "being a child again" (1995: 98). Thus, relatives and family members can interfere in the divorced women's attitudes and decisions about parenting and financial issues.

When I examine the situation of the widow women, there is a different picture. The majority of the widow women in this study owned the house that they were living during the marriage. These women either bought the house with their husbands' death pension after marital dissolution or, their husbands bought the house before they died. Ükrüş (widow, 47 years old, having two children) stated that

I was a tenant when my husband passed away. I couldn't deny my brother-in-law's proposal. I have a little brother-in-law, he is so nice. I asked him to come here urgently because my daughter got sick. They always wanted money from me before I had it, and I thought I should save it up

¹⁴⁹ "Ben 4 yıl önce evimi terkederek karakola sığındım ve sabahında boşanma davasını açtım. Anneme ve babama sığındım. Annem beni istemedi hep kovdu ama her defasında yalnız başıma kız çocuğumla ayaklarım üzerinde durmanın risklerini göze alamayarak anneme katlandım. Şu an hala ablamın yanında sığıntıyım. Küçük bir ev alana kadar da sığıntı kalmaya kararlıyım. Ev alırsam yine de anneme yakın bir yer olsun tercihim. Boşanmış kadınları ve boşanmış aile çocuklarını bekleyen en büyük tehlike etrafımızdaki av arayan kurtlar. Çocuklar tecavüz kurbanı olabilir. Boşanmış kadınlara tavsiyem akrabalarına yakın olmaları. Ben en büyük desteği teyzemden gördüm. Sadece annemin davranışları için değil kendim için de ayrı bir evde oturmak istiyorum. Elimde bir seyyar minder salona yatak sermek, sabah toplamak, plastik bir çekmecedan çocuğun çamaşırları, benim çamaşırlar kapı arkalarında askılıklarda, poşetlerde böyle yaşamak istemiyorum. Kendi düzenim, mutfagım, oturup ayağımı uzattığım koltuğum, kendime ait bir televizyon kumandam, evim düzenim olsun istiyorum."

somewhere instead of being mean. My brother-in-law came. I was so young, with my husband dead, and asked him to help me find a house. We looked at several places with him. Finally we saw this place, and bought it. My sister-in-law helped, too. And I've been living here since then.¹⁵⁰

Nazlı (widow, 49 years old, having three kids) told that "This place is mine. When my husband passed, they bought it together with the tractor. We also sold the tractor that he had an accident in. We bought this place for one billion and six hundred. I came here, my daughter, we have no guarantee reaching the house."¹⁵¹

Ayşe expressed that "This house is ours. I didn't look for a rental after my husband passed. No, I didn't. I went and bought this place from the government."¹⁵²

5.3.2. Housing Conditions of New "Home"

When the divorced and widow women became economically secure, they started to live in their own house. However, as a result of moving to a new house, the participant women experienced the following consequences: a change of neighborhood and a change of living standards.

Because their income was not enough to have a proper life with their children, the divorced women had to change their neighbourhood. In addition, widow women had to change their old neighbourhood in order to take care of their ill husbands staying in the hospital for treatment. Since many hospitals were in the city center, commuting between the hospital and their homes posed a challenge for

¹⁵⁰ "Eşim öldüğünde kiradaydım. Kaynımı kıramadım. Benim bir küçük kaynım var, kaynım çok iyi. Kaynıma dedim ki abi dedim kızım hastalandı acil buraya gel dedim. Ben parayı almadan hep para istediler benden birkaç kişi paramı verip de kötü olmadansa bunu bi yere koyim dedim. Kaynım geldi hani abi dedim eşim öldüğü için dul olduğum için gencidim daha çok genç idim, abi dedim bana yardımcı olsan bana ev arıyacağım. Onlan birkaç yere baktık. En sonunda burayı gördük, burayı aldık görümüm de yardım etti ondan burada o gün bugündür oturuyorum."

¹⁵¹ "Burası kendimin. Eşim öldüğünde traktörüyle aldılar burayı. Kaza yaptı traktörü de sattık. Bi milyar altıyüze burayı aldık. Şuraya geldim yavrum eve varacağımıza garantimiz yok."

¹⁵² "Bu ev bizim. Eşim vefat ettikten sonra hiç kira aramadım. Yok aramadım. Gittim devletten burayı aldım."

the women. Moreover, the care of children and the cost of the transportation were other factors that contributed to the already difficult situation. Hamiyet (widow, 46 years old, having three children) emphasized those days

I was staying in Golbasi. My 10-year-old son was there. I was with my husband in the hospital. He was so uneasy there with the neighbors. After all, he was a 10-year-old kid, alone in a very big city. Thank God, the neighbors didn't do anything. My sister-in-law was here, she said "leave the hospital, move in here". We got this place 15 days before my husband died, and we moved in here.¹⁵³

Türkan (widow, 35 years old, having one child) mentioned that

He was staying here in Gazi. Our house was in Sincan at the time. I was staying in the hospital. The kid was staying at home; they were visiting but couldn't stay overnight because of school. Anyway, only one person is allowed to stay. Thanks to them, the neighbours and relatives were helping but still I was always worrying about my son. How many people can I split into? And it's not cheap to go and come, the distance is very far. And with all the things on my mind, that ride seemed to never end. Then we moved closer, here, to Etlik.¹⁵⁴

Another problem about a change in residence for divorced and widow women who need to work is the locality of the new house. As a result of the distance to the city center, women who deal with economic difficulties are left with three income options: remarriage, family business, and insecure, informal jobs as I discussed previously. Distance also means using transportation or their private cars. However, these women couldn't afford to spend so much on transportation since to get to Kızılay from Sincan means using three different buses or two different subways. In other words, one third of their salaries were spent on transportation.

¹⁵³ "Ben Gölbaşı'nda oturuyodum. Gölbaşı'nda, orda benim 10 yaşında oğlum vardı. Ben hastanede kalıyodum eşimin yanında, o orda komşuların yanında çok şey oluyodu rahatsız oldu. Hani çocuk yani 10 yaşında çocuk tek başına bi' şehirde, koskoca bi' şehirde. Komşulardan Allah razı olsun hiç şey yapmadılar ama burda görümcem vardı o da dedi ki 'Sen hastaneden kalk bizim yanımıza taşın.' Eşim ölmeden 15 gün önce burayı tuttuk buraya taşındık."

¹⁵⁴ "Burda Gazi'de kalıyordu. Bizim ev Sincan'da idi o zaman. Refakatçi kalıyorum. Çocuklarda evde kalıyor, geliyorlar ziyarete ama okul var falan akşam kalamıyorlar. Zaten bir kişinin kalmasına izin var. Sağ olsun konu komşu akraba yardım ediyor ama benim aklım evde kalıyordu. Kaça bölüneyim. Git gel de ucuz değil, git git bitmez. Hem aklında o kadar şey varken o yol hiç bitmiycekmiş gibi gelirdi. Sonra yakına etlik'e geldik işte."

When we consider the economic conditions of these women, this expense was considered a waste by divorced and widow women.

Moreover, several women chose to move into a place close to their own family in order to care for children, to feel safe and to protect themselves from the stigmas. Elif (divorced, 30 years old, having one child), for instance, expressed that expressed that “I came here directly. He is safer with my father. Since my husband isn’t a normal person, it’s been four years since we moved in here, he let us be.”¹⁵⁵

Sibel (divorced, 34 years old, having two children) stressed that

I said to my brother, “if its not working then let’s separate the houses together. So of course, based on my brother’s assurance, I tried to rent a house. So I said let’s aeparate the houses together, you’re working and I’m working. Let’s rent a house close to mother together. He said okay, this way we won’t be a burden on mother too much; and he said he would take care of me, in the sense that I wouldn’t worry. But when we decided to get a house together, I heard that my brother was attempting to reunite with my sister-in-law, and there were meetings. And then the tenant in this house moves out; my brother said he might reunite with his wife, and might be before the eyes of my mom, he was making such plans but I hadn’t known. I was in the hope of renting a house together with my brother. I came home, he said Sibel, we rented you a house. Where? The flat just across, etc. I didn’t know anything but they planned everything, and rented the house for me. So, the house was rented.”¹⁵⁶

Many divorced and widow women had to move to places far from the city center like Sincan, or Polatlı because rents are cheaper there and squatter houses are available. Many women live in houses with poor living conditions because they cannot afford the rent of houses with better conditions. Selvi (divorced, 45 years

¹⁵⁵ “Direkt buraya geldim. Babamın yanında daha güvende. Eşim biraz normal bir insan olmadığı için, biz bu eve taşındığımızdan beri 4 buçuk sene oldu, bu evde rahat bıraktı beni.”

¹⁵⁶ “Abi dedim olmuyosa söyle yapalım birlikte ayrılalım evi. Tabi abimin güvencesiyle ben ev tutmaya kalktım. O zaman dedim birlikte ayrılalım sen de çalışıyorsun ben de çalışıyorum. Annemin yakınlarında yine bi ev turalım birlikte oturalım. Dedi ki tamam dedi hani öyle yapalım anneme çok yük olmayalım. Hem ben de basında olmus olurum hani gözüm arkada kalmaz amacıyla. Biz birlikte ev tutmaya karar verdik ama şöyle bi duyum var abim o arada çocuklarından baskalarıyla yengemle birlesmeye kalkıyo görüşmeler falan ama. O arada bizim burda kiracı çıkıyo iste abim diyo ki esiyle barısacak ya belki annemin gözü önünde olur diye planlar yapıyo ama benim haberim yok. Ben abimle ev tutucaz diye düşünürken ben aksam eve bi geldim. Sibel sana ev tuttuk, nerde işte karşı dairede falan. Ya dedim benim haberim yok onlar evi tutmuşlar planı projeyi her şeyi yapmışlar. Ev tutulmuş yani.”

old, having one child) indicated that “It really came to a standstill, I mean, the comfort and luxury level between now and the old times are a hundred percent different. Because I, we stayed in two different houses, one is three plus one, but with a size of four plus one, very beautiful.”¹⁵⁷

Sultan (widow, 42 years old, one child), for instance, was living in the basement floor of an apartment building where she was also working as a cleaner without social security.

In a similar job, Ayşe (widow, 46 years old) was also living on the ground floor of an apartment building which often flooded and had no proper windows.

Residence policy of the state is also closely related to the familism approach in Turkey. The right to affordable housing is only provided to particular groups such as relatives of martyrs, or the widows of the Soma mine disaster. The accounts of divorced women confirm this tendency. Moreover, the right is based on certain conditions such as not living with or having a relationship with a man, since it is believed that the man takes care of the woman. Hence, very limited groups could benefit from this right. A change of neighborhood causes adaptation problems and creates conflict in the relationships of mothers. When they changed the place they live, the social networks of the mothers also changed. In addition, a change of neighborhood also means a change of friends. In the following chapter, I will analyze this change.

¹⁵⁷ “Baya sekteye uğradı yani benim önceki hayatımla şu anda benim yaşadığım hayatın arasındaki lüks konfor yüzde yüz farklı diyebilirim. Çünkü ben, iki tane evde oturduk bi tane ev üç artı birdi ama dört artı bir büyüklüğündeydi çok güzeldi.”

CHAPTER SIX

STIGMATIZATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

The family in Turkey is found in different forms, such as the extended family, the nuclear family, and the single headed household. However, the notion of the ideal family sets the standards for its members. In society in Turkey, the family, as mentioned before, is still considered a central unit despite economic, social, and political changes. The family is viewed as a highly important social (and sometimes economic) institution whose unity and cohesiveness should be maintained. Moreover, the family still plays an important role in supplementing assistance received from formal services in areas such as children's education, socialization, mutual support and protection, well-being, employment, and so on. Every family member is usually considered responsible for the family as discussed in chapter III. Furthermore, the importance of the family is also legally constructed. The constitution and society in Turkey treat the "family" as a private domain and accepts the family as the core social institution, as the basic unit of society. Hence, when alternative family types occur, the society sees divorced and widow women's families as deviant and behaves them differently. For divorced and widow women, this situation gives rise to extra difficulties which deeply affect their social lives and social networks.

In this chapter, the social relationships and stigmas that emerged through analysis show us how women are faced with unexpected difficulties. Moreover, in this chapter the coping strategies of the women interviewed developed in order to mitigate hardships and the overall implications of these strategies on their experience will be examined.

6.1. Social Stigmas Experienced by Divorced and Widow Women in Turkey

“Bacağını kaldıran kadın bir daha indirmez.”¹⁵⁸

Kurbağalar¹⁵⁹

Many people, most social institutions and society believes that the traditional heterosexual, married, two-parent family is the only acceptable family form. This causes problems and stigmas on alternative family forms such as divorced, widow or single woman headed families. In a patriarchal culture, a “good woman” is one who conforms to the role of wife and mother. The image of a woman as mother is idolized, while at the same time the woman who fails to conform to prescribed roles is feared. After a woman is married, her work and status is usually closely supervised by the husband as discussed in neopatriarchal societies in chapter II. The situation of widows and divorced women who head their own households stands in stark contrast to that of the married women. Thus, divorced and widow women have difficulties to perform these prescribed roles. The negative attitudes toward women derive in part from idealized version of married women and the family unit.

Although the frequency of divorced has increased in Turkey, this has not changed negative attitudes against the divorced and they do not escape approaches that blame and judge them. In a similar way, widow women are also affected by being unmarried. I argue that there is a perception of the stereotyped “*dul*”¹⁶⁰ woman in Turkey which is constructed on patriarchy and honor in Turkey. This

¹⁵⁸ This is a catchword from the movie *Kurbağalar*. This statement approximately means that when a woman had a sexual relationship with a man in a marriage, after that man died, it is believed that she looks for (or needs) another man since she became sexually insatiable. After the main female character became widow, neighbor women get concerned about her sexuality, because they believe a widow woman's sexual insatiability attracts other men and so it is a threat for other marriages.

¹⁵⁹ *Kurbağalar* is a famous movie of Şerif Gönen who was a director in Turkey. This movie is about a woman who became a widow at a young age and tries to earn her life as a “widow” woman for her children by picking up frogs with the men in a village in Turkey and she is stigmatized by former female friends (<http://www.sondakika.com/haber-kurbagalar-filmi/>).

¹⁶⁰ Concept of *dul* in Turkish is used to refer to both divorced and widow woman.

stereotype of divorced and widow women cause stigmatizations. Hence, these stigmatizations limit, define and determine the lives of divorced and widow women after marital dissolution, and in turn, the stigmatization of divorced and widow women in Turkey make these women invisible in the public sphere and state.

6.1.1. Public Gaze upon Divorced and Widow Women in Turkey

The first thing I encountered with the divorced and widow women whom I talked to is that both divorced and widow women stated: “I’m not the kind of woman you are looking for, for your research”. They stated this although I didn’t define any characteristics for divorced and widow women for my research. The majority of divorced and widow women with whom I conducted interviews, believe the stereotype image of being a “*dul*” woman¹⁶¹ in Turkey. Since they have that picture of such a woman in their mind, the first thing they told me was a rejection of being that stereotyped woman. Neriman (divorced, 48 years old, having two children) expressed her feeling as:

Before we start, actually I’m not a divorced woman that complies with your criteria. I’m not a woman like that, I didn’t go through such a process but I hope I can help.¹⁶²

Şöhret (divorced, 43 years old, two children) said: “No no. Well, I’m not a good example. Neither my family nor my friends.”¹⁶³

As will be seen in the quotations, during the interviews I tried to understand whether divorced or widow women feel that they are treated differently because of

¹⁶¹ From literature to cinema, in the society, *dul* woman is generally pictured as if she is ready to have sex with any man whom she can get benefit from. She is sexually open, liar and ready to damage families for her own sake.

¹⁶² “Başlamadan aslında ben sizin kriterlerinize pek uyan boşanmış bir kadın değilim. Öyle bir kadın olmadım, o süreçlerden geçmedim ama umarım yardımcı olabilirim.”

¹⁶³ “Yok. Ben iyi bir örnek değilim yani. Ne ailem ne de arkadaşlarım.”

their new marital status. The majority of women expressed that they feel a sense of being treated differently or stigmatized because of their new marital status. Although the widow women also felt stigmatized, the divorced women were more likely than the widowed women to feel this way. Nurdan (divorced, 39 years old, having one child) expressed her feelings about stigmatized as such:

Being divorced is like having a criminal record. It's like a feeling of guilt inside. Being divorced is like being a student coming back home with a school report that says she has failed the term. It's a feeling of failure like a plowed student. Being divorced is like not having one leg. The other leg carries the whole burden. Being divorced is like surviving an earthquake or a fire. I mean, you could only save your life, but you lose everything else.¹⁶⁴

Kerime (45 years old, having one child) expressed her feeling as

Relatives were backbiting me, and did not support me. No one tried to understand me. Their look was rather pejorative since I was divorced. They often even used to make fun of me, calling me and mentioning I was a divorce. Only I knew what happened to me.¹⁶⁵

Many divorced women experienced stereotyping from the beginning when they decided to divorce and talked about this decision with their families. In particular, their own mothers warned them about being a divorced woman in Turkey. Esma (divorced, 45 years old, having two children) explained the first reaction of her family about the divorce decision: "Many relatives and my family said why are you divorcing? Well, you should have a husband. Well, whether he is bad or not but you should have a husband. Alone, a single woman? Not acceptable."¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ "Boşanmış olmak sabıkalı olmaya benziyor. Yani suç işlemişsiniz gibi üzerinizde suçluluk duygusu. Boşanmış olmak bir öğrencinin sınıfta kalıp kaldı yazan karnesiyle eve dönmesine benziyor. Yani sınıfta kalmış çocuk gibi başarısızlık duygusu. Boşanmış olmak bir bacağı olmamaya benziyor. Yani öteki bacağınıza biniyor bütün yük. Boşanmış olmak depremden yangından çıkmışa benziyor. Yani sadece canını kurtarabilmişsin. Herşeyini kaybetmişsin."

¹⁶⁵ "Akrabalar arkamdan konuşur falan işte. Bana destek vermediği halde. Kimse beni anlamak istemedi. Böyle boşanmış gözüyle, böyle aşalayıcı bakıyorlar. Hatta birbirlerine telefonda çoğu zaman damatlar birbirlerine telefon ederekten "işte dul kadın, alalım mı?" şakadan derler. Ben kendime yapıldığını biliyorum."

¹⁶⁶ "Niye boşandın. İste bi kocan olsun yani kötü olsun bi kocan olsun. Tek başına kadın olur mu? diyen çok oldu."

Neriman (divorced, 48 years old, having two children) stated that

Unfortunately, in our society, there is something like this. They blame divorced women. My mom didn't want to tell relatives for a long time that I'd been divorced. I used to meet people, and they were asking me to say hi to him [ex- husband], and they were asking if he's fine. I used to say "OK" to slide over. I mean, in a way, you lie people. Like this, my mom was seeing that as a shame.¹⁶⁷

Sibel (divorced, 34 years old, having two children) said that

Of course she told me you have two kids, give your marriage a try again. I said ok, I will. I returned back home but everything relapsed into bad within less than a month. This time I said, it does not work, we go through the same things, nothing changes. My mother said no, I do not want you to come in no way. What will people think about us, two single women with children? Of course other people's thoughts are another factor because we are well-known family; we have been living here for 40 years.¹⁶⁸

These quotations indicate that the logic behind this stereotyping might be the fact that keeping up marriage is an essential social norm and it is not easily sympathized with when women decided to break their marital bond. In the study of Arıkan (1990), she pointed out that divorced women and men were seen as "failed" and "incompatible", additionally; family members feel embarrassed by this situation and prefer not to tell others and their relatives anything about the divorce. In a patriarchal society, where men's control over female sexuality and the strong societal norms that pressure women to be married is predominant, Muftuler-Bac (1999: 310) points out that "a single woman living on her own is unacceptable to the community in which she is living because she is against the patriarchal system which requires that she be married" (cited in Kavas, 2010: 59).

According to Kardam et al. (2005: 24),

¹⁶⁷ "Maalesef bizim toplumumuzda şey olayı var. Boşanmak çok ayıp sayılıyor. Benim annem uzun süre benim ayrıldığımı akrabalara söylemek istemedi. İnsanlarla karşılaşıyorum. Benim eşime selam söylüyorlar. Tamam diyorum. Nasıl diyorlar, 'iyi' filan diyorum, geçiriyorlar. Yani şey oluyor, bir şekilde yalan söylüyorsunuz insanlara. Annem böyle bunu utanç gibi gördü."

¹⁶⁸ "Aynen öyle iste iki çocuk var tekrar bi dene falan diye. İyi dedim ben tekrar gidiyim. Gittim aradan bir ay gecmedi gene aynı şekilde. Bu sefer dedim ki hani olmuyo yapamıyorum cunku sürekli aynı seyleri yaşıyoruz bir ay gecmeden hala devam ediyö falan. Annem sey dedi hayır dedi kesinlikle istemiyorum gelmeni dedi. tek başınıza iki çocuklu kadın millet ne der falan? Tabi onlar da var yani onlar da etkili cunku burda 40 yıldır oturan bi aileyiz yani hepimiz çok iyi tanırız."

Women are kept under control of men in order to protect family, social norms and traditions. (...) Honor is a destructive concept because freedom of human beings, especially freedom of women, is restricted as a result of keeping it under the control of men not only in the family but also in the society.

This outlook constitutes the underlying attitudes toward both divorced and widow women. For example, Kardam et al. (2005: 32) points out that “a married woman’s willingness to divorce or leave her husband is considered a behavior contrary to chastity and one that deserves punishment. Single women’s sexuality poses a serious threat to the social order.”

In Turkey, the dominant social norms tell women that they belong in the home, married, economically dependent on and subordinate to a male breadwinner.¹⁶⁹ Thus, women need male protection and control which establishes a women’s femininity, her womanhood, and her respectability. Her honor-*namus*¹⁷⁰ is closely tied to the male protection. Women without the defense of men can be left extremely vulnerable as sexual targets. Hence, when individuals end the marriage through divorce, they may not be sympathized with.

In Turkey, Abalı (2006: 37) claims that “Women who have lost their virginity through marriage are considered to be used as a ‘worthless commodity’. If you are divorced, this is seen as “tried-and-failed” or “tried and been kicked thrown”. According to society, the divorced woman is available for intercourse outside of marriage. For women in Turkey, to live under the surveillance of a man is legal and social norm. If the woman breaks the authority of man, she is considered as “free and comfort” and her sexuality is considered to be open to everyone. Turkey as a

¹⁶⁹ There is incentive payment for young people in order to encourage them to be married. Moreover, there are statements of former Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s advising for women “Don’t play down the issue of marriage. Make your decision when you find the one in your destiny. Don’t be too picky. Or you will get empty-handed out of the flower garden!” (*Evlilik olayını geri atmayın. Nasibinizi bulunca kararınızı verin. Çok seçici de olmayın. O zaman gülistandan boş çıkarsınız!*) (http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/koseyazisi/96255/_Yeni_Turkiye_nin_Vizyonu___Secici_Olma_.html?vhfihfkldeihvocv) and recent tweets of Ministry of Family about how damaging is to be alone for the country (<http://www.haberartibir.com.tr/gundem/bakanliktan-evlilik-tesvikli-yalnizlik-afisi-h18327.html>) accessed 13.09.2014.

¹⁷⁰ The concept of “namus” is roughly translated as “honor.”

patriarchal society has a “restrictive code of behaviors and associate[s] family honor with the female virtue which is protected by men” (Offenhauer, 2005: 10). Kavas (2010: 59) argues that “in Turkey, chastity as a control mechanism over the female body and sexuality in general is maintained through the family and society at large.” Outcomes of this study confirm this understanding. Thus, divorced and widow women in this study expressed the feeling of a “third eye”, a “public gaze” upon them after marital dissolution because of the stereotyping of what a divorced/widow woman is. This third eye or public gaze was felt in three areas of their lives: a) in the family, b) the public sphere, c) the working place.

Stigmas Encountered in the Family

In most of the cases, women themselves worry about stigmas, and the parents reminded them of the societal expectations and sanctions. Families also put some restrictions. Parents warned these women that from now on they are a divorced/widow woman and that they should be more dignified. The families and relatives of the widow women whom I talked to were expecting them to freeze their lives after the death of their husbands. The women’s existence and their reason for living are thought of as being dependent on a husband, so when the husband died, the woman’s life was considered to have come to an end. Eda (widow, 33 years old, having one child) stated that

Relatives, family and people around all had the same view: “You are a widow now; you can’t do this; you can’t do that.” For instance I wanted to have my hair dyed. I asked fifty people. They told me not to do it. They said wait for two or three years. God! They said don’t wear trousers, for instance. But I did this myself, too: For instance, for a period, I used to stay with my sister at my home. She was staying one or two days. One day I was going to dentist. I had a blue trousers. Should I wear it? I wore it, then I took it off. I did that myself, but my sister told me the same, too. Don’t wear it now, you would wear it in summer. People say like that: Oh, her husband died, she shouldn’t wear this or that, shouldn’t do makeup.¹⁷¹

¹⁷¹ “Akrabaların, ailenin, etrafındaki insanların bakış tarzı, dul, artık sen dulsun, onu yapamazsın, bunu yapamazsın. Mesela ben saçımı boyatmak istedim. Elli kişiye sordum. Boyatma, iki sene geçsin, üç sene. Allah’ım... Pantolon giyme, mesela... Şunu kendim de yapıyodum ama. Mesela ben bi dönem evimde kaldım küçük kız kardeşimle beraber işte kalıyoduk bende bi iki gün. Dışçıye gidicem mavi bi pantolonum var benim. Giyiyim mi giymiyim mi... Giydim, geri çıkardım. Mesela bunu kendim de

Emine (widow, 46 years old, having two boys) mentioned that

We had a relative, sister Ayşe, let me tell you what she said to me. She said “if your husband was mine, I would lie by his tomb; I would be wasted.” And I felt offended. Well, if that’s something I could, I’m in, but life goes on, sister, and I have to go on. I asked why she was talking in that way. She said that my husband had been very good, and I should have waited by his tomb. Am I to wait in the village for whole day? I visit his tomb each holiday already. She asked me why I was living, proposed me to do the thing. She said I lost my husband and my life was then meaningless. When someone, for instance my sister, brought me a blouse, I didn’t wear. I had red dresses but set them aside. That’s all to prevent someone to say I dress like that after my husband died.¹⁷²

The widow women whom I interviewed performed the family life as if they were still with their husbands. Main reason behind this preventive behavior of widow women is the fear of stigmatization and the socially constructed gender roles attributed to women such as being a wife and a mother. The marital status of being married gave also a social status which enables women to be in the public sphere. In the eyes of their relatives, families or friends, everything is under control of the women’s husbands. When the husband dies, the social life of the woman ends because there is no more control of a man. Trkan (widow, 35 years old, having one child) stated that

Well, sure, surely! You dress more carefully. My mother was always telling me, I have skirts for instance, not to wear them. She used to say I was a divorced woman then. I always said that, making my friends laugh each time, I hated the word divorced. It has three letters [in Turkish]; I asked if I am a three-lettered¹⁷³. She didn’t understand, asked what that was. Well,

yapıyorum ama mesela kardeşim de diyo, abla hani řu aralar giyme, yazın giy. İnsanlar öyle diyo mesela onu giyme, kocası ölmüş kadın, kolu řurdan giyme, makyaj yapma...”

¹⁷² “Senin kocan gibi kocam olsaydı” diyor, “ben mezarın yanına yatardım, kurda kuřa yem olurum” diyor bana. O da benim çok zoruma gitti yani. Hadi olunacak bir řey olsa olayım ama hayat devam ediyor ablam, mecbur yani. “E Ayşe abla niye öyle diyorsun” dedim, “Senin kocan çok iyiydi, sen niye mezarı beklemiyorsun” diyor. Sabaha kadar dedim ben köyü mü bekleyeyim. Gidiyoruz ziyarete her bayramda falan. Öyle laflar benim çok zoruma gidiyor. Sen niye yaşıyorsun, sen de řey yap diyor. Öyle kocayı bıraktın diyor, yaşasan ne yaşamasan ne. Birisi mesela ablamlar bir bluz getirse giymedim, kırmızı bluzlarım vardı hep kaldırdım mesela. Kocası öldü şöyle giyiniyor böyle giyiniyor demesinler diye.”

¹⁷³ In Turkey, the concept of three-lettered is used to call jinnee. It is belived that if you call “jinnee”, it appears. Hence, people call three-lettered when they need to talk about jinnee.

three-lettered, divorce, I mean. Since I didn't like the word, I called it three-lettered.¹⁷⁴

As I discussed in the previous section, for divorced women in this study, stigmas started from the moment they decided to divorce. Moreover, when these women officially divorced, families and relatives began to control and surveille their activities. Sibel (divorced, 34 years old, having two children) explained how her family controlled her activities after divorce

I got divorced and came back to home. The day after the people at the home asked me where I went, why I went and with whom I went. They started to ask those questions and I was surprised. Then my brother said: "You are now a divorced woman. How could I know what you will do when you go out?" For instance, sometimes friends took me home by car. I came and told every detail, like this is my friend who takes me by their car, to let them know. When I first said that to my brother, he asked if the reason why I told him that is because any of his friends had seen me.¹⁷⁵

In the study of urban poor woman in Turkey, Murakami (2009: 13) pointed out that "If a woman does not get support from her husband, people would be worried that she has no choice but resort to other men for a living." In other words, she would lose her *namus* (honor) when she remained without a man. The major reason behind this fear about divorced and widow women is the fear of *adın ıkması* as being under threat of damaging her *namus*.

Stigmas Encountered in Public Sphere

For the divorced and widow women whom I talked to, public surveillance was also felt on their daily activities in the public sphere. Although there isn't any written rule for divorced and widow women about how they should dress, behave and talk, divorced and widow women used auto control on themselves and limit

¹⁷⁴ "E tabii ki tabii ki, daha dikkatli giyiniyorsun. Yani annem hep derdi eteklerim vardı meselâ, bu eteklerini giyme. İşte bak sen artık dul bir kadınsın. Ben hep buna şey derim çok güler arkadaşlarım, dul kelimesinden nefret ediyorum. Ü harfli. Anne ben ü harfli miyim falan derdim önce anlamazdı o ney derdi, hani ü harf ya, yok anne dul demek ü harfi var ya, sevmiyorum ona ü harfli diyorum."

¹⁷⁵ "Boşandım eve geldim. Ertesi gün evdekiler "Nere gidiyon? Neden gidiyon? Kiminle gidiyon?" diye sormaya başladılar. Ben böyle saf şaşkın şaşkın bakıyorum, abim pat diye demez mi: "Sen artık dul bir kadınsın. Ben nereden bilecem sen sokağa çıkınca ne yapacaksın?" Mesela arkadaşlar bırakıyordu arabayla. Geliyodum söylüyodum: "Bak bu arkadaş beni bıraktı. Hani haberiniz olsun". Abim onu ilk söylediğinde bana sey demişti: "Arkadaşlarımdan biri mi gördü seni o yüzden mi söyledin sen bana."

their actions, dressing style and speech in the public sphere. For instance, Fatma (divorced, 43 years old, having three children) told that

I liked to wear low necked for instance. It was not very revealing but my shoulders and so weren't covered. But then I gave up dressing that way. I got into a kind of on-guard mood, in case anyone says something, does something or so. And there are people who checks who come in to and go out from your place. And my daughter had a boyfriend. They asked how come I allowed that kid to come in to my house when I was a divorced woman. They asked what others would say? They were warning me, I mean, others used to warn me. The people around. After I thought if I were to take guard. They told like that, and I was asking if I really shouldn't have allowed Mustafa in that house.¹⁷⁶

Ayşe (widow, 46 years old) stated that

For instance we had that artisan friend. We used also to talk to his wife. Later she said "Ayşe, you always wear t-shirt, now you wear long sleeves, what a pity!" But really, that happens. You cannot wear what you wore when you were married. For instance I went out to buy bread like that. But now I fold up; it is what happens. You want to go out two times, you cannot. God bless them, they always ask why two times, making me feel uneasy. I couldn't go out frequently. Where does she go? She just went, why the second time? They always ask. I buy new things but I didn't have the aspiration. If something is beaded, you say let me not buy this one, let me buy a simple, black one. When your husband dies, life stops. Could it be like when he's alive? I was careful not to let anyone say anything. But then if I existed or not doesn't matter. I go out, my eyes directed towards the floor, and like that until I get back to home.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ "Ben mesela açık yakalı giyinmeyi çok severim yani çokta açık değildir de omzum felan açıktır. Ama sonra bıraktım o tarzı. Bir temel koruma girdim hani biri bi şey der. Biri şey yapar tarzında. Evinize giren çıkanı kontrol eden de oluyor. Benim kızımın erkek arkadaşı falan var. Sen dul bi kadınsın o çocuk buraya nasıl gelir? Elalem sana ne der? Onlar daha çok şey yapıyo. Etrafımızdaki insanlar. Yani başkaları beni uyarıyor. Etrafımdakiler falan. Korumalı mıydım acaba kendimi diyorum sonrasında. Hani böyle söylüyolar ya. Gerçekten acaba diyorum. Mustafa bu eve girmemeli miydi?"

¹⁷⁷ "Mesela bizim şey var, esnaf arkadaşımızı işte. Yani eşiyle de görüşüyoruz. Zaten ondan sonra der "Ayşe abla sen hep yarım kollu giyerdin, şimdi bütün kollu giyiyorsun, yazık oldu sana." Hep öyle şey etmişti yani. Ama gerçekten, oluyor. Önce eşin olduğu zaman giydiğini giyemiyorsun. Mesela böyle sokağa falan çıkıyordum, ekmeğe gidiyordum. Ama şimdi, bağlıyorum, kapatıyorsun. İki kere gitsen, gidemiyorsun. Allah razı olsun sorarlar naptın ne ettin diye, sorunca da tedirgin oluyorsun. Çok sık evden çıkamıyorum. Nereye gidiyor, şimdi geçmişti yine nereye gidiyor. Yeni şeyler alıyorum ama çok da özenilmiyor. Bakıyorsun "a bu boncuklu, bu olmaz, siyah alayım" diyorsun. Eşin ölmüş ise artık hayat duruyor kızım. Eşinleykenki gibi olur mu? Eve girene çıkana laf eden olursa diye tabi dikkat ederim de varlığımla yokluğum bir. Evden çıkarım kafam önde eve gelene kadar da öyle."

Furthermore, three of the participant women expressed that they had had hesitations about applying to social funds, the police or NGOs for assistance. I asked these women if they had applied to any state institutions and they said that “We [divorced women] hesitate to apply because there are male officers and they would misunderstand if they ask for help. They would consider that they can take advantage of them.” When I asked what their hesitation was about, the women said that they were afraid that men would ask them to have sexual relations since they are *dul* (divorced and/or widow). Neriman (divorced, 48 years old, having two children) related the police harassment she experienced when she complained about her ex-husband’s threats.

I called the police, since my ex-husband always came and went. Do you know what policemen said to me one day? He asked if any male person from my family was there. I replied no. I replied if it is a must for a male person to be present here. He said that way he might have been menaced. Well, then, what do the police stand for? He said they couldn’t do anything for that. I asked if the law of the jungle is effective here. He replied yes, unfortunately. And one time, I called the police again. A policeman came, asked me if I was an accountant, since there was a signboard indicating I was an accountant. And there was a shrub in a flowerpot, which he asked questions about. He was approaching to me that way, and I scolded him. So, the police was like that, too.¹⁷⁸

Meral (widow, 43 years old, having two girls) stated that

They begin speaking in a different way once they learn you’re widow. I was once asked out in a government office where I went after my husband died. Our home was still that house in Eryaman. Since we couldn’t get the occupancy permit, I was constantly going to the meetings, albeit not speak. One day I couldn’t resist and called the president. He said he was in Kızılay then and asked me to meet him a day after in Ulus. I went. I talked about the thing, and then he asked me out. He knew. He also knew about my husband. I never got impolite. Since I was already going to the meeting, I pretended not to understand. I mean, I wanted him to know like that. I said

¹⁷⁸ “Polisi arıyorum, eski kocam sürekli geliyo gidiyo. Bi gün polis bana ne dedi biliyo musunuz, şey dedi, “ailenizden erkek kimse yok mu burda?” Hayır, yok dedim. Illa ailemden biri mi olması gerekiyo dedim. “Erkek biri olsa ona şöyle bi gözdağı verseler” falan filan. Peki dedim güvenlik gücü ne oluyo dedim. İşte dedi bi şey yapamıyoruz biz buna. Orman kanunlarının mı geçerli olması gerekiyo dedim. “Geçerli maalesef” dedi. Ve bi tanesi de yine artık böyle çağırmıştım. Buraya geldi işte, e siz, benim o zaman burda tabelada asılı, mali müşavir. “Siz mali müşavir misiniz?” Evet. Bi de şey almıştım kapının orda şey vardı bodur ağaç saksıda, bu ne falan, böyle şey yapıyo yaklaşmaya çalışıyo falan. Ben de ters ters cevap verdim. Yani polis de öyle.”

no, thanked him, and went after saying I had something to do. Well, I experienced such things. I don't say I'm a widow where I don't have to. They know me as married.¹⁷⁹

Nilgün (divorced, 40 years old, having one child) mentioned that

When I went to a state office, the officer working there, he knows my phone number. Let's say you're divorced and get something done. He immediately gave his number to me, asking me to call him at that phone number in order to get things done easily. Well, you're troubling with the wage things there. It is really so inappropriate and wrong. How dare you, how come you think of such a thing? Or let's say I called you, what will happen next? Is it that simple? Then let's sleep right away.¹⁸⁰

As the studies in the literature report women can experience conflicts as a result of relying on parents for help, and that relying on parents or relatives can make socially more difficult for divorced and widow women to create a new life for themselves after marital dissolution because of honor issue in the society. The experiences of the women in this study do not challenge the traditional view about the honor (*namus*) of women. The dominant approach to honor, divorce and widowhood fail to take into account how women experience divorce and widowhood. Further, they mask inequalities and divert attention away from the other issues such as unemployment, male dominance. Moreover, the accounts of women show us that women's attitudes after their divorces are related to attitudes of other people in the society.

¹⁷⁹ "Dul olduğunu bilince başka türlü konuşmaya başlıyolar. Bu devlet işlerine eşimin vefatından sonra gittiğim bi yerde bi yemek teklifi aldım. O kadar yakinken acım tazeyken yemek teklifi aldım. Evimiz hala o Eryaman'daki evimiz iskân raporunu alamadığımız için sürekli görüşmelerine gidiyorum, konuşamıyorum. Bi gün içinden çıkamadım aradım başkanı. "Ben şimdi Kızılay'dayım yarın işte Ulus'tayım gelin sizin işinizi de görüşelim" dedi. Gittim, konuştuk işte işle ilgili. Sonra bana yemek teklif etti. Biliyo, eşimi de biliyo. Ben de hiç bozmadım kabalaşmadım. Çünkü ben zaten o toplantıya gitcem. Anlamamazlığa vurdum. Yani o onu öyle bilsin. Yok dedim, teşekkür ederim, benim işim var dedim kalktım gittim. Yani böyle bi şey de yaşadım. Yani söylenmicek yerde söylemiyorum. Evli biliyolar."

¹⁸⁰ "Bir resmî daireye gittiğimde, oradaki memur, "e telefon numaran?" Sen boşanmışsın işlem yaptırıyorsun ya meselâ, hemen kartını verdi telefonunu yazdı verdi. İşte "sen bundan sonra hani ara beni ben burdan hallederim" bilmem ne. Ha işte hani bi de şöyle, boşanmış orda maaş işlemleri için uğraşıyorsun. Bu çok yanlış ya çok ters bi şey. Yani sen ne cüretle, ne şeyle düşünebilirsin? Ya da sen telefonu niye, hadi aradım seni ne olacak? Bu kadar basit mi bu işler yani. O zaman hemen yatalım."

Stigmas Encountered in Work Place

Because of the financial difficulties after marital dissolution, divorced and widow women need to work for adequate income in order to survive as I examined in chapter V. However, as discussed, they are faced with various barriers. One of the barriers is their new marital status and stigmas related to this new status. If the divorced and widow women whom I talked to do not have a referral to help them get a job, they hide their new marital status. In order to come to term with their new marital status in a working place where marriage is the socially approved form of unity, the women created strategies in order not to be stigmatized as being immoral because of the public surveillance. Some common behaviors are not telling people about their new marital status. Sibel (divorced, 34 years old, having two children) stated that “At my workplace, everyone is married but for instance when I first got the job, I didn’t tell them. I told them I was single. I could not tell I was divorced with kids.”¹⁸¹

Türkan (widow, 35 years old, having one child) expressed that

I was widowed at a very early age. Never had worked before. After my family home, I was in my husband’s, and then to my kid. Since he passed away, I couldn’t get his wage, either. I began working as a housekeeper. But I got frightened, since we know what happens sometimes, on TV and so. Could something happen to me because I am a widow? Could somebody harass me? God forbid no husband to save me. Or what if someone thinks wrongly and doesn’t let me in? Well, in the end, you’ll go in and out someone’s house. Maybe the woman will not want a young widow woman in the house. Then I didn’t tell them; I told them my husband was OK, that he was working, when they asked. But I didn’t tell too many things about him.¹⁸²

Zeynep (widow, 38 years old, having one child) told me that

¹⁸¹ “Çalıştığım yerdeki tabi bütün hepsi evli ama mesela işe başladığımda ben sakladım söylemedim. Tabi bekârım dedim. Yani ben dedigim gibi çocukluğum esimden ayırıym diyemedim.”

¹⁸² “Ben, ben çok genç yaşta dul kaldım. Daha önce hiç çalışmadım. Babaevinden kocaya sonra bebeye. Şimdi rahmetli ölünce maaşını da alamadık. Temizliğe gitmeye başladım ama korktum şimdi duyuyok, televizyonda izliyok neler oluyor. Dulum diye başıma bir şey gelir mi, sarkan olur mu? Allah muhafaza koca yok başta. Ya da yanlış düşünürler eve almazlar mı? Sonuçta başkasının evine girip çıkıcan, kadın istemez belki evinde dul kadın hem de genç. Söylemedim yani kocamı sorduklarında iyi, çalışıyor dedim çok şey anlatmadım.”

The state didn't give me the wage of my husband. They said a count hasn't been reached or so. They asked for money. Which money? We hardly fed ourselves. I got a job as a dishwasher-cook at an office. But they told me it's all men in the office. I know myself, but there are such widow women doing many things with men. I got anxious about if they thought about me like that. And no one stood behind me to say that I was a good girl, and that I had no interest other than my home and my work. And I told them I was married. What else was there to do?¹⁸³

One of the participant women, Neriman (divorced, 48 years old, having two children), stated that in order to not face any stigma or any implications of sexual availability, in an attempt to protect herself, she did not tell her customers that she was divorced. Moreover, she stated that she stopped going out for meal with her customers. She explained what happened when her customers learned of her divorce:

Male customers. Now, you're free, then, men think: You're divorced and free to do anything. They push your limits. They always imply something. And you have to play dumb then. You pretend as if you didn't hear. You pass on to something else, but playing dumb really hurts one's pride. When I get out of the place, I talk to myself, I say I don't want to work with him but I need money now. And that psychology is what wears you out.¹⁸⁴

Those divorced women who told truth about their new marital status in work place have to deal with questions. The divorced women whom I talked to expressed that people ask so many questions to understand why a woman would end her marriage. Candan (divorced, 42 years old, having one child) stated that

That process is like that. Once you get a bit closer to them, people start to ask. And that thing used to annoy me. In the IDs, it's written whether you're divorced or widowed. I have the one which first indicates that. When you go to some place then, you abstain to turn your ID back if it's a

¹⁸³ "Kocadan maaşı vermedi devlet. Sayısını mı ne doldurmamış. Para verceniz dediler. Nerde? Karnımızı zor doyurur olduk da. Bir ofise bulaşıkçı yemekçi girdim. Ama ofiste hep erkekler var dediler. Ben kendimi biliyom da nice dul kadınlar var erkeklerle neler yapıyorlar. Onlar da dedim beni böyle bilirler mi ki? Ee biri de durmadı ki arkamda bu kız iyi kızdır, delikanlı kızdır, evden işe işten evedir diye. Ben de evliyim dedim napam."

¹⁸⁴ "Erkek müşteriler. Artık şey, siz bossunuz ya, erkeklerde de öyle bir şey var. Dulsunuz ve her şeye müsaitsiniz. Sınırlarınızı zorluyorlar. Bir şeyler ima ediyorlar, siz o arada aptalı oynuyorsunuz. Onu duymamış gibi davranıyorsunuz. Başka bir şeye geçiyorsunuz, ama o aptal rolü oynamak o kadar onuruna dokunuyor ki insanın. Oradan çıktığımda şey diyorum, bu adamla çalışmak istemiyorum ama şu anda bu paraya ihtiyacım var. O psikoloji de sizi yıpratıyor."

man who will do your job. Well, to think what he will think about me, and so. You know, they did lots of things to me, I mean, harassing me. Their look was annoying to me, but it's actually not important at all.¹⁸⁵

In the work place, people want to know the cause of the divorce and the "dissolution" of the family. The cause of the "breakdown" of the family is attributed to the fact that women and men do not give importance to the traditional marriage. Hence, when they have a problem within the marriage, they just simply leave each other. The cause of family breakdown is also particularly attributed to the behavior of women. Divorced women in this study said that people question whether the reason to divorce is legitimate or not. Selvi (divorced, 45 years old, having one boy) stated that

Those who are in the office learnt that I got divorced. They were talking. Why did you get divorced? Death is a matter of fate but why divorce? Well, divorcing is also a matter of fate but you have a choice there. Since God gave you a brain, you should use it not to get divorced. That's what they said.¹⁸⁶

Esmâ (divorced, 45 years old, having two children) told that

There were people telling me well done, and there were others blaming me. They told me even a bad husband was good. And there're lots of them asking why. We couldn't make it and divorced, I said. Then they recommended me to have endured, since there's also a kid. They believed everything would go well. Some also recommended making a third child to get the husband more committed.¹⁸⁷

While answering the questions of their colleagues, these women tried to persuade their colleagues that they did not divorce casually, or for trivial reasons.

¹⁸⁵ "O oluyo o süreç, biraz samimi olduktan sonra artık insanlar başlıyo sormaya. Bi de şey beni rahatsız ediyodu. İlk kimlikte eskiden boşandı yazıyolardı. Dul ya da boşandı. İlk yazdığı var. İşte böyle bi yere gidince, çevirince falan çekiniyorsunuz. Karşınızdaki erkek işlemi yapacaksa. İşte ne düşünür hakkımda falan. Onlar beni çok şey yaptı yani ya. Hani rahatsız ediyodu ara sıra. Ne gözle bakacaklar. Hâlbuki hiç önemli değil aslında yani."

¹⁸⁶ "Ofistekiler boşandığımı öğrenmiş, konuşuyorlar. Neden boşandın? Ölüm Allah'ın emri ama boşanmak? Tamam, boşanmak da Allah'ın emri ama hani Allah sana beyin vermiş yani onu kullan ki boşanma yani. Allah niye verdi bunu bize, kullanmamız için verdi, dediler."

¹⁸⁷ "Valla iyi yaptın diyen de oldu hata yaptın diyen de oldu. Niye boşandın iste bi kocan olsun yani kötü olsun ama bi kocan olsun. Nedenini kurcalayan çok. Anlaşamadık boşandık diyorum. Bu sefer de dayansaydın, çocuk da varmış düzelirdi diyorlar ya da üçüncü çocuğu yapaydın eve bağlardı diyen var."

Divorced women created a “story” to make justify themselves. For instance, Fatma (divorced, 43 years old, having three children) said that “In fact, if I do not let them they cannot ask anything. If I tell them what happened, I do it to ensure that they will acknowledge me to be right. I realized that about myself.”

Elif (divorced, 30 years old, having one child) explained her divorce by telling the story of how her husband became violent: “There was no violence at the beginning. We were in love. Then, he started to become violent. He broke my rib. We had violent fights. I divorced because I was afraid of that he was going to hurt my kid.”

These women try to convince people who asked about the divorce that they were justified in their decision. To do this, they put forth reasons such as drugs, and infidelity, which they didn’t use in court in order not to affect their children’s future. In this study, 70 percent of divorced women experienced violence in the marriage. However, divorced women explained that for some people around them even violence in the marriage was not considered to be a valid reason to break up a family. The divorced women in this study expressed that they experienced violence such as things being thrown at them, being pushed, slapped, kicked, beaten up, and threatened with a knife. Two of women (Selvi and Elif) said that there was “serious” violence that leads to their physical injury; their family didn’t consent to the divorce. Only when these women were beaten to death did their own family allow them to divorce. Still their colleagues didn’t seem to think that such kind of violence was enough to end a marriage and they commonly advised divorced women that “he is your husband. Your husband both beats and loves you. It doesn't matter if he is worth a fly as long as he is there for you. Even if he's a bad husband, you should be grateful to have one.” By creating stories, the divorced women shared the blame with their ex-husbands. While it may remove the blame from the self, it attaches blame to the ex-spouse. On the other hand, widow women in this study are also questioned about the reason of the death of their husband; but, they are not questioned with the intention of putting blame on the women. Their answers are

clear: cancer, or a heart attack, etc. They do not need to justify their present conditions.

To sum up, these cases show us that notions of honor are still operative in the lives of divorced and widow women in Turkey. These divorced women's accounts reconstruct the traditional understanding of women's and men's role in the society. They show us that there are honor related restrictions in the everyday life of divorced women and that these restrictions include various rules and limitations on how to dress, with whom to speak, or where a woman can go and what she can do on her own. These cases tell us that for a divorced woman, to secure her livelihood, she must pay attention to protecting her body, sexuality and her *namus*. For families and their relatives, it seemed that to protect women's sexuality is significant; however, the women expressed that they could protect their *namus* by themselves. It is likely that these women are practicing auto control in order not to be stigmatized as being immoral because of the public surveillance on them. In the following part, I will discuss coping strategies of divorced and widow women to protect themselves.

6.1.2. Testing the Honor: Divorced and Widow Women's Own Ways to Protect Themselves from Stigmatizations

In this part, I examined women's everyday acts and decisions in the face of stigmatization. Through this analysis, I was able to elucidate how the family and honor norms produce those acts and decisions, and how women's lives are constructed as the result of these effects of family norms, focusing on norms of *namus*. Divorced and widow women in this study developed coping strategies to protect their body, their sexuality, and their *namus*. I argue that because of the stigmas divorced and widow women are faced with, they became *ladette*¹⁸⁸. Moreover, they

¹⁸⁸ It means "a young woman whose social behaviour is similar to that of male adolescents or young men" (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/ladette?s=t>).

became masculinized or asexual. As a result, they became more invisible both in their private and public lives.

In a way, those coping strategies are utilized to pass the honor test. During interviews, I noticed that divorced and widow women felt as if their honor was being tested. When they passed this test and convinced people that they were not the “typical *dul*” woman, they felt relieved. In order to pass the test, divorced and widow women in this study have two main coping strategies. The first one is that divorced and widow women became masculinized and became *ladette*. The second one is that they behave asexualized and become more and more invisible.

Firstly, divorced and widow women whom I talked to mentioned that they had become more like a man. They had started to swear like a man, and they had become less emotional. Negative feelings about divorce and being a widow can be seen in women’s accounts. They looked for ways to avoid being exposed stigmas. This ranged from gaining a masculine pose to being very careful while talking to men. One participant, (Ayla) for instance, told how she was polite but that after the divorce she changed that and started to swear often. Zuhale (widow, 39 years old, having one child) said that

When your husband is with you, you don’t have to show off your cards, since there is already your husband. You have to make yourself clear against men. And when they feel you’re strong, men respect you. But if you’re wussy, I mean, if you’re timid, they think that you’ll not react or tell anyone even if they harm you, so they may push your limits. But you should make them afraid of you. If you behave like them, if you are rigid, they couldn’t see you as prey.¹⁸⁹

Elif (divorced, 30 years old, having one child) stated that

You have to fall short of your womanhood. I mean, how to say it... I became a bit of man, of course, I mean, let me give you an example. When I went to my sister’s home, sometimes I go to my sister’s home to see the girls. The neighbors of my sister were always saying the same thing after I left.

¹⁸⁹ “Kocan yanındayken tavrını belli etmen gerekmiyor. Kocan var ya başında elleşmiyorlar. Erkeklerle karşı tavırlarını daima belli etmeli. Yani güçlü olduğunu hissettikleri zaman, erkekler çekmelerini düğmelerler. Ama sen biraz eziksen ee yani ürkeksen, diyelim ki bu nasıl olsa kimseye söylemeyecek, nasıl olsa yutucak diye, yani kötülük yapabilirler, üzerine gelebilirler. Ama erkekler senden yılsınlar. Sen de onlar gibi olursan, sert olursan seni av olarak göremezler.”

They said, in a praising tone, that I was a geezerbird whose eyes were directed to the ground. What a sulky woman! She didn't behave coquettishly at all. I received that kind of comments. But I also felt that I became mannish. To prevent my child, my dad, my husband or his family to hear any bad word about me.¹⁹⁰

We can read women's coping strategies as a way to readapt to the social norms that they broke once. In the accounts' of divorced and widow women, I sensed the traditional views and stereotypes of the divorced and widow perception. They changed their behaviors and ways of lives in accordance with society's expectations to keep their *namus* safe and not damage it. For instance, Sibel (divorced, 34 years old, having two children) stated that

It took a really long time in the first place to trust but now I feel no distress, it was only in the beginning. I told them look this is my friend, they took me here, I am not this or that, just to let them know. I mean, I introduced my friends to them in that way. I brought my co-workers home. I introduced them one by one to let them know I was going out with those friends. And I gained their trust by doing that.¹⁹¹

Second way is asexualization, in other words, being invisible like a ghost. Although some divorced and widow women do not believe that their relatives or friends disapprove their marital dissolution, still they are worried that people may be influenced by the discourses about divorced and widow women. To make sure people did not to comment on their divorce, they tried not be seen. Another interesting point was a need to dress and behave more modestly to protect themselves from possible gossip. The stigma makes divorced and widow women feel useless and threatened so they changed their words, gestures and life styles.

¹⁹⁰ "Kadınliğinizdan biraz daha kısmak zorunda kalıyorsunuz. Yani nasıl denir. Erkekleştım tabii yani mesela sana ben şöyle bi örnek vereyim. Kız kardeşimin evine gittiğimde, bazen kız kardeşimin evine giderim böyle, kızları görmek için. Kardeşimin komşuları, hep şey diyorlarmış arkamdan. Kafası yerde geliyor, yerde gidiyo. Yani ne kadar asık suratlı. Yani maşallah hani hiç fındırmıdiyo sağda solda, onla bunla gibisine. O tarz tepkiler alıyorum. Ama erkekleştım tabii bunu hissediyorum. Hani çocuğım içim diyorum ya ben hani babam için, kendim için ya da ne bileyim kocamın kulağına, ailesinin kulağına laf gider diye."

¹⁹¹ "Tabi basta güvenmeleri bayagi uzun sürdü ama su anda bi sıkıntı yaşamıyorum önce çok yaşadım. Geliyodum söylüyodum bak bu arkadaş beni bıraktı hani su degilim haberiniz olsun. Mesela yani o sekilde arkadaşlarımla tanıştırdım, çalışma arkadaşlarımı evime getirdim. Tek tek tanıştırdım hani bu arkadaşlarımla geziyorum bu arkadaşlarımla kursa gidiyorum bu arkadaşlarımla geliyorum. O şekilde yapa yapa zaten güvenlerini kazandım."

During the interviews, some women indicated that they tried to be unseen. No matter whether they are working or staying at home, these women's lives became more isolated. If they are not working, they shut themselves into the home. Their outside chores such as paying the bills and shopping are taken care of by other family members. If they are working, their outside lives are restricted to home and work.

Zeynep (widow, 38 years old, having one child) stated that

I'm working. So, I have to go out; but, when I'm out, I'm not there actually. I leave the home and come to work. Then, in the evening, I leave work and come home. No talk, no other occupations. As if I do not exist. There is no Zeynep after my husband.

Hamide (widow, 48 years old, having three children) told me that

I am at home, lad, I don't go out. It's hard if you have no husband. How am I supposed to go out now? Sometimes I go out with friends, but I always look at the ground. I try not to attract any attention. Makeup? No way, I don't even wear colorful clothes. "Oh, look at the woman; she's a widow but still puts on lipstick!" That's what they say. I heard it myself. Because you don't have the right to do so! You're a widow, it means you cannot wear flashy, you will not make up, you will be dull and retiring. Greys, browns, the colors which don't attract attention... Not to mention any garnish.¹⁹²

Nihal (divorced, 43 years old, having one child) explained that

I think to myself sometimes what if I put a fake moustache and go out like that. I go and come quietly and retiring though. I don't have the whim for adornments and so, either. No lipstick, no makeup. My only aim is to maintain this household, to set up a good future for my daughter. No one is to know if I ever existed or not.¹⁹³

An interesting finding relates to women's strategies to avoid people's reactions. Trying to come to terms with their new marital status in a society where

¹⁹² "Evdeyim kızım. Sokağa çıkmam, beyin olmayınca zor. Şimdi nasıl gezem, tozam. Arkadaşlara gidiyom bazı bazı ama kafam önde gider gelirim. Dikkat çekmemeye çalışırım. Makyaj mı? yooook, renkli bile giyinemiyorum. "Aaaa kadına bak, hem dul hem ruj sürmüş!" dediler. Kulaklarımla duydum. Çünkü böyle bir şeye hakkın yok! Dulsan, gösterişli şeyler giymeyeceksin, makyaj yapmayacaksın, mat ve silik olacaksın, griler, kahveler, göze batmayacak renkler, süs-püs hak getire."

¹⁹³ "Bazen diyorum, böyle bıyık falan mı taksam gitsem sokağa. Gerçi sessiz sessiz gider gelirim eve. Takı makı hevesim de kalmadı hiç. Rujmuş, makyajmış yok. Benim tek derdim evi geçindireyim kızıma iyi bir gelecek bırakayım yeter. Kimse bilmesin ben varmışım yokmuşum."

marriage is the only socially approved form of unity, women created strategies to cope with emotional distress and demoralisation. Some common behaviours emerged, including not telling people about the divorce, distancing themselves from male friends particularly those who are married and dressing or behaving more conservatively.

6.2. Being without a Husband

Single mothers tend to suffer from a feeling of rootlessness and lack of identity after divorce/widowhood. This is especially true of women whose identity was formerly associated with that of their husband's. In spite of very different reasons for their situations, divorced and widow women share many of the same problems such as a feeling of loneliness, and loss of identity. This chapter will analyze problems faced by single mothers and the strategies adopted to overcome loneliness, and whether they developed a critical perspective of their own situation.

6.2.1. Loss of the Husband: From Being Wife to Being Single

Research examining the question of how marital dissolution affects women's lives are usually based on the psychological wellbeing of divorced and widow women. Many studies discuss the mental health problems of divorced and widow women. In order to move beyond these studies, it is significant to know what divorced and widow women think about their marital dissolution. Some divorced women in this study were positive about the increased independence they gained at divorce. On the other hand, widow women continued the traditional values and norms of family and marriage and were upset about the ending of their marriages.

As these women's accounts show, their reactions to divorce are linked to their conditions after divorce and also to their views of their marriages.

Furthermore, the reactions of many of these divorced women point to a strong consciousness of their subordinate position in marriage and in the larger society.

Empty Side of the Bed:

Loss of the husband by death has a deep impact on the widow women's life after marital dissolution. When a woman loses her husband, her identity construction based on being someone's wife is changed. Participant women expressed that right after their husbands, they had felt lost. Hence, 60% of the participants experienced deep grief due to the sudden death of their husbands, 50% of the widow women whom I talked to were shocked when they learned about their husbands' unnatural deaths, and 3% of the respondents stated that they were waiting for this situation due to continued illness of their husbands. Many widow women whom I talked to pointed out that they felt helpless and hopeless. The majority expressed that they suffered from loneliness and felt a lack of identity. They mentioned that their life was no longer meaningful after the death of their husbands. Ayşe (widow, 46 years old) expressed her feelings about the loss of her husband, "I was very frightened when he died. He had a heart attack. I was shocked. I lost myself when he died. I fell apart."

Eda (widow, 33 years old, having one child) stated that "My husband had an accident but couldn't recover from the coma. He passed away two and a half years ago. He was lying there as if he'd died, and that didn't mean anything."

Hacer (widow, 43 years old, having two children) told that

Loneliness. You want someone near you. After my husband passed away, I couldn't enter the bedroom since it was our room, and I was overwhelmed. What distressed me was actually to work after I was 35. Because I was old, I didn't know the life, I didn't know what was what. For some period, I was like I was lost.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁴ "Yalnızlık. Birinin yanında olmasını çok istersin. Eşim vefat ettikten sonra yatak odasına giremedim çünkü orası bizim odamızdı ve ben kendimden geçtim. Ben kendim rahatsız olduğum şey, bana 35'ten sonra çalışmak bana biraz zor geldi. Çünkü yaşlıyım, hayatı bilmiyorum, neyin ne olduğunu bilmiyorum, bir süre kaybolmuş gibiydim."

Widow women whom I talked to expressed feelings of sadness about losing their husbands. These women said that they continued to love their husbands and wished they were still married. These women's words reflect the difficulty of being a single woman because they believed the appropriate role for woman is to be married. They expressed ambivalent feelings about being a widow. Because of the loss of the husband, these women stressed that they were not the wife of someone anymore. Women who were ambivalent stated the difficulties of being widow and living on their own. Ükrüş (widow, 47 years old, having two children) said that

I've been held back by the death of my husband. If we were still married, I would have a more clear life. I would know who I'm. Sometimes you are alone. I don't know what I would do. I have my children and the Quran. It's really scary making decisions on your own, trying to develop a way of life. My husband decided what we should do. You are alone; your bed is cold and empty.

These views reflect that the society in Turkey still offers no alternatives to marriages as the place for the women to find economic and social wellbeing and the place for raising children. Hence when a marriage ends, women lose not just a partner, but also a secure life.

Taking her Name Back:

On the other hand, for many divorced women in this study, marital dissolution means relief. Although they complained about loneliness, they did not regret getting divorced. 83 percent of all divorced women felt positive about being divorced. Many divorced women mentioned that they took their name back: "I'm me now. I'm not somebody's wife anymore. I got my name back." Candan (divorced, 42 years old, having one boy) stated that "In the past there were wedding and circumcision feast invitations. You know, on the envelope, it reads "Mr. Ahmet and his family" or so. So, you're always in that "his". Now I look, it is me, Candan, and Candan only, under no one's shade."

Divorced women's accounts reflect that they were able to be independent for the first time in their lives and to begin creating their own identities. Elif (divorced, 30 years old, having one child) expressed expressed her feelings

After the divorce, I was alone. Yes, my family was with me but I was alone. I have learned a lot since then. I'm stronger. I didn't know that I could be strong. I give worth to myself more than I did before. I learned that I don't need anybody. I can depend on myself. My life is better now.

Şöhret (divorced, 41 years old, having one child) stated that

I was, as I said, very blind, I mean, I didn't draw any border at all. That's how I learnt from family. You know how those villager women behave; they behave as someone tells them to. I was, well I was educated but still blind. Now I see it. And it interfered me more and more in all fields. In economical, moral and material, every aspects... Now I know my borders. I know what I can do myself. When I was married, I always saw myself attached to him. Like a dam, you know, when you open it, it gets emptied, that's what I thought, but no, I am stronger now.¹⁹⁵

Fatma (divorced, 43 years old, having three children) stated that

They raise women so that they believe they cannot do without a man standing behind them. If you get divorced, you should marry again and suffer in another family. I thought for 30 years for nothing that my family got my back if something happens to me. After, I said all was just wasted time. I mean, if no man is controlling or saving a woman, that woman may save herself, too.¹⁹⁶

These accounts of women show us that some women in this study reread the traditional norms about marriage and gender roles. This represents similar perception of what Cherlin (2004: 848) points out:

¹⁹⁵ "Ben de dedigim gibi cok körmüşüm yani sınırlarımı hic bi zaman koymadım aileden öyle görmüşüm. Ben o işte köydeki kadınlar nasıldır birileri bi sey söyler bunu yapar ya, ben iyi okumuş felan ama daha açılmamış gözleri ben öyle görüyorum su anki halimle görüyorum yani. Sürekli hani alanıma daha fazla müdahale etmeye başladı her türlü alanıma. Ekonomik maddi manevi fiziksel her türlü alanıma. Şimdi sınırlarımı biliyorum. Neler yapabileceğimi, kendim yapabileceğimi. Evliyken kendimi hep ona bağlamışım onu görüyorum. Baraj gibi kapakları açarsın içi boşalır ya öyle olurum sanıyordum ama hayır şimdi daha güçlüyüm. Kendim istediğimi biliyorum. şimdi daha güçlü hissediyorum ya da o zaman kendi kararlarımı alamıyordum ama şimdi kendi ayaklarımın üstünde duruyorum."

¹⁹⁶ "Yani işte kadınları öyle bir yetiştiriyorlar ki başında bir erkek olmadan ayaklarının üzerinde duramayacağına inandırıyorlar işte boşanırsan yeniden evlenmek zorundasın ve de işte böyle bir ailenin yanında başkasının yanında çekersin. 30 yıl boşuna ben annem babam arkamda başıma bi şey gelirse diye beklemişim. Ziyan etmişim dedim yıllarımı. Yani bi kadını bir erkek kontrol etmiyor onu korumuyor. Bir kadın da kendini başına koruyabilir."

When social change produces situations outside the reach of established norms, individuals can no longer rely on shared understandings of how to act. Rather, they must negotiate new ways of acting, a process that is a potential source of conflict and opportunity.

Although some women in this study started to question the meaning of being a woman in the society and increasingly, married life, and although they started to feel more justified in leaving an unhappy marriage, they still believe in marriage as a traditional institution. The women interviewed brought a traditional element to marriage, even though they view it more from a cost-benefit perspective. As I discussed in previous chapter, divorced women continue to consider that a woman at a certain age needs to be married in order to survive because of gender division of labor in the labor market. Although these women started to give more importance to their own lives and desires after their divorce, they still give much weight to the thoughts of others in terms of stigmatization, as I discussed in the previous part.

In this study, although they started to criticize what the meaning of being a woman in the society in Turkey is, some divorced women whom I talked to preferred being married. However, this critical outlook has changed their view of traditional marriage where husband and wife are assigned certain roles in the family and male breadwinner is the norm. After marital dissolution, divorced women reread gender norms and rethink the male breadwinner role. Zeynep (divorced, 40 years old, having two children), for instance, stated that

I had been working before I married. I left the job after I got married. And then there were the kids. Kids, housework, those became my business. Where to pay bills, where to buy something, where the money goes, I knew nothing about. And I didn't ask even once where that money went. And then that ignoble man who happened to be my husband left me, my things and my kids. And when we got divorced, I had to make a living for myself. I had that college degree but what is it for, nothing when you're headless. I suffered a lot with the kids, but I learnt a lot, too. I took the decisions at home, and I was the breadwinner who pays the bills. Everyone finds it strange, though. They say a woman shouldn't work. They believe a woman isn't sufficed to manage everything at home. And if they say something about me, I would take my stance against them and ask. I learnt it so late, but you shouldn't let anyone take advantage of you because you're a

woman. Woman or not, one can manage. Look, now I stay in this apartment. Where were we when that man was the head of the house? We were groveling in basement houses. There is no such thing as men or women. You will deserve and get it, and then you may do anything. You may raise children and manage household.¹⁹⁷

In a society where marriage and family is sanctified, the efforts of divorced women to be the decision maker and sole breadwinner in the family can be considered to be a challenge to the existing family approach.

6.2.2. “Sex? No Way! After all, I Have Nothing to Do with Having Sex”

Another issue related to the loss of the husband is sex life after marital dissolution. The majority of the women whom I talked to lost their husband at young ages. While interviewing these women, rarely did the conversation come to the issue of sex. When they really felt comfortable to talk about their sex life after marital dissolution, their first reaction was as following: “Sex? No way! After all, I have nothing to do with having sex.”

When I asked divorced and widow women whether they missed sexual relationships after marital dissolution, they said that they did not need sex after all. Many of them responded by explaining that there were a lot of problems, especially financial problems; sex was the last thing on their minds. Kerime (divorced, 45 years old, having one child), for instance, stated that

¹⁹⁷“Evlenmeden önce çalışıyordum. Evlenince işi bıraktım. Sonra çocuklar oldu. Çocuklar, evin işi onlarla uğraştım. Fatura nere yatırılır, alışveriş nereden yapılır, para nereye gidiyor hiç bu kararlar bana kalmadı. Ben de bir gün dönüp de dememişim. Para nerelere gidiyor diye. Sonra bu kocam olacak aşağılık herif bir gün beni, eşyalarımı ve çocukları kapının önüne koydu, sonra da boşayınca iş başa düştü. Ablam bak üniversite diplomam var ama neye yarar kafasız olunca sen. Neler çektik çocuklarla ama çok şey öğrendim. Evin içinde kararları ben alıyorum, eve ekmek getiren de benim faturaları ödeyen de. Herkes garipsiyor tabi, kadın kızmısı çalışır mı, evin her şeyi ile uğraşabilir mi? Bana laf gelirse karşlarına dikilip hesap sorarım da nedir yani. Geç öğrendim ama kadın diye kendini ezdirtmeyeceksin. Kadınsa kadın yapabiliyormuş bak. Bak şimdi evime apartman dairesinde oturuyorum. O herif evin resi idi de ne oluyordu, bodrum katlarından çıkamamıştık. Erkeği kadını yok. Hakkınla kazan her şeyi yaparsın ablam. Çocuklar da büyür ev de gider.”

I said I didn't think of marrying again and blunted that thing. I erased such a thing as sexuality from my mind. I don't feel such a thing for anyone anymore. And I try not to. No, it wasn't hard at all for me. I conditioned myself against that, and I got repelled. It doesn't even come to my mind.¹⁹⁸

Nilgün (divorced, 40 years old, having one boy) told that "Well, this isn't so big deal. You experience such troubles that when you live them, you cannot even think such a thing. If you really want, you may marry."

Ükrüş (widow, 47 years old, having two children) said that "Never. It never crossed my mind. Believe me. God is my witness. By my kids... Their smell, or whatever... When I smell the boy, he becomes the father."

Meral (widow, 43 years old, having two girls) stated that "No, I didn't hear. There was none, and they didn't even cross my mind, really. Maybe if someone is hooked, she may marry, but not me. It never even came to my mind; I got no problems in that respect. Only his absence, his yearning and love."

Moreover, the accounts of these women show us that there are additional difficulties for women. Among them is the fact that they are full time single mothers. Because of stigmas and the fear of damaging their honor, these women felt that a lot of men are looking only for sex, or "one night stands." These women's words reflect that sexual relationship outside of marriage is currently not acceptable. Many women believe that getting married is the legitimate way to have sex or they repeated that sex was not a need for a woman. Since there is a fear in the society of sexuality of divorced and widow women, these women oppressed their desire for sex after marital dissolution. In contrast, 65 percent of their ex-husbands were either remarried or dating a woman.

¹⁹⁸ "O kısmını ben artık evlenmeyi ölene kadar düşünmüyorum dedim körelttim. Öyle bişey artık cinsellik kafamdan sildim. Öyle bişeyi artık kimseye hissetmiyom ve hissetmemeye çalışıyorum. Hayır hiç zorlamadı beni. Ona kendimi şartlandırıdım ve soğudum iyice. Aklıma bile gelmiyo."

6.2.3. Being Single Again Is Like an Infectious Disease

After marital dissolution, change can be expected in divorced and widow women's social networks, or in fluctuations that may occur in the social support available to them as a result of these changes. Because of changes in employment, residence, and stigma, divorced and widow women may add or drop individuals from their social relationships. During the interviews, how networks change after marital dissolution and its implications for a divorced or a widow mother was explored.

In the present study, I found out the social networks of divorced mothers were largely composed of new friends. The social networks available to these mothers was tied largely to the number of new friends in the network, current patterns of interaction at work, and the mothers perceived as similar to themselves. After divorce, it seems that almost all the mothers experienced some changes and networks with an extensive history together were likely to experience a turnover. Moreover, the divorced women ended their relations with married couples. Part of the reason for this rests with married women's attitudes toward divorced women and divorced women's own attitude of avoiding any pretense for gossip. For example, Fadime (divorced, 41 years old, having one child) stated that "I feel uncomfortable in some situations. For example, I don't want to be alone with my married friends' husbands. Not because they behave improperly but because I am not as comfortable as I used to be. Nevertheless, I avoid participating in such occasions."

Aslı (divorced, 30 years old, one child) said that

We see each other. I don't have many friends. I see some people, though. But there are also such things: Our neighbor, don't let my mom hear this, I don't even talk to her husband, maybe just a hi when I see him on street. She took me and said "take your hands off from my husband. Nothing

happens to me, but you're a divorced woman. You could get a bad name. You should be concerned about it. Then I don't come and go much.¹⁹⁹

Divorced mothers dropped people who were not supportive, or kin just seemed to "rally around." Moreover, as if they were splitting the furniture, they split the friends after marital dissolution. For example, Devrim (divorced, 35 years old) stated that

My school friends, old school friends. Or my relatives. I don't see any of them [ex-husband's relatives]. Not even family. They meet each other due to me. As I got divorced, they divorced, too. So, there are no relative, no hometown. Just like splitting property, we split friends and relatives.²⁰⁰

This study has demonstrated that the contextual factors of employment and cultural factors of stigma influence women's social networks. If divorced women start to work, they establish a new social network mostly including single and/or divorced women. It might be that working liberates divorced women to make new friends. In that sense, getting a divorce was considered to be a relief. Pinar (divorced, 28 years old, having one child) stated that "Most of my close friends are divorced already but they don't have any children. We understand each other better after having deep conversations but I also have single friends especially from my work place and we visit each other."

Sibel (divorced, 34 years old, having two children) stated that

It's because I didn't feel alright. There are friends who want to see me but the thing is you can't do it after a while. You have this divorced stamp on you, the stamp showing you got divorced. So you don't fit in any climate. The people around me now, for example, are all either single or divorced.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁹ "Görüşüyoruz. Benim de çok fazla arkadaşım yok zaten. Görüştüğüm insanlar da var. Ama şöyle olaylar da oluyor. Karşı komşumuz, annemler duymasın, kocası ile görüşmem etmem yolda görmüş selam vermişimdir belki. Çekti beni kenara kocamdan uzak dur. Bana bir şey olmaz sen dul kadınsın adın nasıl çıkar sen düşün dedi. O nedenle çok da girip çıkmam artık."

²⁰⁰ "Okul arkadaşlarımla, eski okul arkadaşlarımla. Akrabalarımla falan. Onlardan hiç kimse ile görüşmüyorum, aile ile de. Benim sayemde karşılaştılar, tanıştılar. Ben boşanınca onlar da boşandı. Yani akrabalık yok, bir memleket şeyi yok. Mal mülk ayrılır gibi arkadaş, akraba da ayırdık."

²⁰¹ "Ben rahat edemediğimden dolayı. Var hani görüşmek isteyen arkadaşlarım da var ama yani şey yapamıyorsunuz belli bi süreden sonra. Hani o dul damgası var ya esinden ayrılmışlık. O yüzden o

On the other hand, if divorced women were not working, they expressed that they did not have a social life. Since they did not develop social relationships other than their family and kin, after marital dissolution, they couldn't invest in friendships and thus they became lonelier and more isolated. There were various reasons for isolation ranging from not wanting to go anywhere without husband, to the family's restriction on women to visit friends. Vasfiye Ayşe (divorced, 48 years old, having three children) expressed that

No husband. Where to go by yourself? There are bad people around. And if you go somewhere, who is to take care of the babies? Take the babies, OK, but how to look after them? So I never think about going to and coming from other people because they would gossip about. To prevent them saying I was looking for a husband, I don't go to other people.²⁰²

Upon divorce they go through an abrupt change in their social networks and support. Nevin Demirci, in her study *The Effects of Divorce on Professional Women's Status and Sex Roles*, conducted questionnaires with 120 divorced women and her findings gives supports to this fact. According to her findings 59% of women reported to have gone through remarkable loss in social networks, while 30% reported partial loss in their social relationships. One possible reason that may impede women's involvement in social life after divorce is their increased reliance on their family following divorce. Turning to their family to live from then on, overcoming adjustment problems through their help may discourage women from forming new social relationships or applying to professional help. However, this was not the case for the women in this sample, since they were employed outside of the home and already had their social networks. Moreover, being employed outside of domestic sphere gives them a chance to have a life outside of the family context and have a social network.

ortamlara fazla giremiyorsunuz. Yani su anki iş çevremde mesela benim hep bekârdır arkadaşlarım ya da ayrılmış arkadaşlarım var.”

²⁰² “Koca yok. Bir başına nereleri gezicen? İti var kopuğu var. Bir de sen gezmelere gitsen, bebeklere kim bakıcak? Bebeleri alsam, nasıl sahip çıkıcaktım ki. Sonra laf ederler diye hiç düşünmedim başka insanlara gidip gelmeyi. Koca arıyor demesinler diye.”

On the other hand, widow mothers' social network relationships included their old friends. Kin were likely to be the most supportive following the death of the husband. In this study, I found that widow mothers moved towards denser, more kin-filled networks after marital dissolution. Perhaps an interesting finding for me, some widow women expressed that they kept old friends if they passed the test in some way. Relations and attitudes of their old friends after the death of their husbands are the basis to decide whether widow women would continue to be friends with them or not. Widow women in this study decide to get in touch with their old friends in terms of their support after the death of their husbands and friends' efforts to keep in touch. Meryem (widow, 45 years old, having two children) stated that

After my husband had passed away I did not care about anyone even my children for months. Then I started to socialize, but you know what, I was always ready to run away. I had visitors then. I observed who is faithful, who visits me, calls me or stands by me; I never touched chit chat with a ten-foot pole. I wrote off the frivolous ones.²⁰³

The reason behind this situation is similar to that of divorced women. Widow women also use auto control not to be stigmatized. Zuhale (widow, 39 years old, having one child) stated that

Now I check everyone going to and from the house. I don't have a husband, so I cannot go to old friends' houses so frequently. Maybe not my friends but others would gossip about me. They would cause perturbation. After the funeral of my husband, there are lots to come and go, but now I'm single. Whoever knocks my door, and whoever asks me if I'm OK, I just talk to them.²⁰⁴

I found out that some divorced and widow women prefer religious communities or municipalities' associations. The motivation to join communities

²⁰³ "Eşimin vefatından sonra aylarca gözüm kimseyi görmedi, çocuklarımı bile. Sonra yavaş yavaş insan içine çıktım yeniden ama nasıl biliyor musun, bir kış dese geri kaçıcam, kuş gibi. Eve gelen giden oldu o sıra. Baktım kim vefalı, kim geliyor, arıyor soruyor ya da yanında oturuyor, öyle kakara kikiri yapanla işim olmadı. Yol verdim hepsine."

²⁰⁴ "Eve giren çıkanı control ediyorum artık. Benim kocam yok, eski dostların evine öyle sık gidemiyorum. Arkadaşım laf etmese başkası laf eder. Aklını karıştırır. Kocamın cenazesi sonrası gelen gidenim çok oldu ama şimdi bakarım kapımı çalan kimler, hatırımı soran kimler? Ona göre konuşurum onlarla."

vary, while some simply look for others like them with whom they can share the difficulties of living without husband, some look for relief which they couldn't find at therapy. For others it is an opportunity to socialize, as well as entertainment for children. Two women, however, said religious communities were not helpful because people tried to counsel them to reconcile with their husbands.

To sum up, given the economic difficulties that most divorced women experienced, it is surprising how many women feel positive about being divorced and the life after marital dissolution. Many women expressed looking forward to establishing new social networks, more independent roles for themselves. Their accounts suggest that many women view their marriages as being restrictive. They speak as if they now understand more clearly what being a woman means in Turkey. These women's accounts call into question the conclusion that women leave marriages because of lack of commitment or that a divorce is a sign of decline. These women's comments reflect that they could begin to create their own identities with the people they chose. On the other hand, some women feel more restrictive because of being dependent on their families and stigmatizations in the society. Some women feel that being a single woman is overwhelming that they feel very alone and isolated. These women's accounts expand our understanding of divorce and help explain the contradictory dimensions of divorce as both negative and positive. As these women's experiences show, their reactions to divorce are tied to their circumstances after divorce. Further, the reactions of many divorced women show a consciousness of their subordinate positions in marriage and in the larger society.

In contrast to divorced women, widow women expressed negative feelings about being widow woman. Most of the women focused on the loss of their husbands and the difficulties of their lives. The losses shaped their lives as widow women. Women spoke of the difficulty of being single. What was so hard for women was having been left alone by their husbands. After the death of their husbands, they tried to do family as they did while they were with their husbands. These women said they continued to love their husbands and wished they were still

together. Because of ongoing family perception, they did not change their lives, friends and relatives after marital dissolution. They tested their friends and then kept the old ones because they were afraid of being rejected by people because of the stereotyped widow woman stigmatizations. These views reflect that when a marriage ends, women lose not just a partner, but a life. Those women cannot replace the old life with a new one, with new friends. Their comments reveal how social networks of women in Turkey are tied to the institution of marriage.

Because many economic and social resources in Turkey are distributed through marriage, divorced and widow women have various changes after marital dissolution. Almost all of these women had economic difficulties, while they felt inferior social positions in the society. At the same time, many divorced women felt positive about being divorced and were glad to end their marriages. The majority of widow women still believes in the marriage and would like to be married. It was not economic position, but cultural stigmas that influenced those women's outlook on their widowhood.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

“Do not get divorced; pray for will of God for your husband.”²⁰⁵

In this study, unlike the various researches which has studied more on the influences of marital dissolution on children, family, and society, experience of divorced and widow woman was explored exclusively by taking the women into the center. Divorced and widow women’s economic, social, parenting, housing and network conditions were examined by examining how they cope with their new marital status after marital dissolution, how they cope with economic and social problems; how they rearrange their families between their newly statuses and new lives to explore changes and continuities in patriarchy in experiences of women. In this study, I have examined the key dimensions that determine the conditions and limitations the opportunities of divorced and widow women. The experiences of women in this study challenge the main approach used to describe the marital dissolution experience. Those refer to the weakening tradition which is believed that marital dissolution is the reason of “family breakdown” in a society. In order to encourage family values with the belief that these values will keep marriages, divorce is labelled as a social problem. The accounts of women in this study led us to see important realities of how women experience after marital dissolution.

The argument of this study is divorced and widow women in Turkey are trapped between the state, that family and the market and the patriarchal social system, the state and the labor market structure could not provide conditions for

²⁰⁵ “Boşanmayın, kocanızın ölmesi için dua edin.” This is a statement of one of the divorced women in this study. I found it significant in terms of the outcomes of this study. This statement is like a summary for conclusions of the current study. It refers that being a widow woman is a more advantageous than being a divorced woman in Turkey.

those women to reconstruct their lives in the way they want after marital dissolution. Thus, the research questions are, “how do divorced and widow mothers experience marital dissolution? How should we evaluate their experiences of “new” marital status in terms of patriarchy?” “To what extent consequences of marital dissolution change for women in terms of how the marriage ended? How do widow women differently experience social and economic positions relative to divorced women?”

In order to elaborate the research question, this study is based on the feminist methodology in order to tell the women’s personal experiences and the oppression in their lives and in-depth interview technique is used to achieve in-depth information on the women’s experiences after marital dissolution. The concept of patriarchy is used as a theoretical tool to analyze the characteristics of male dominance, women’s oppression, and gender relations after marital dissolution. In order to understand divorced and widow women experiences in a patriarchal society, I examined the structure and practices of the patriarchy in that society.

To begin with, findings of this study revealed that Moghadam’s neopatriarchal state is seen in the new mode of patriarchy exemplified in JDP’s gender policy in Turkey. The neopatriarchal state model in Turkey is built on conservative morals, sanctity of tradition and family values.

My findings showed that understanding the dynamics behind the experiences of divorced and widow women also leads to make sense of how women are shaped in marriage, family and in the social policies in Turkey. I took experience of divorced and widow women as a mean to examine patriarchy which has both financial and social roots and in which men control women. The material control is preserved by eliminating women’s existence from economic issues and the labor market, and by controlling women’s sexuality. The essential parameters of women’s unequal position in the families and the labor markets are set by the patriarchy in that society by ignoring gender inequality, violence against women

and justifying different wages in the labor market. The socio-cultural base of patriarchy is the dependence of women on men, which is one of the key detrimental factors after marital dissolution.

Diverse Economic Consequences

As depicted in the sections, the rise in single mother families has obvious social and economic consequences. Gender roles within marriage are related to the gendered division of labor. Women's place is considered to be in the home, which is separated from labor market. In contrast, men's place is primarily oriented to the outside world as the breadwinner of his family. Women are considered economically dependent on their husbands. Dependence on the wages of male breadwinners in families, constructed by the gender division of labor and the assignment of childcare responsibilities primarily to women means that the loss of the husband as a key source of income has significant effects on the economic situations of women after marital dissolution.

As quotations from women's interviews demonstrate, the findings of the this study provide that the new marital status determines the lives of divorced and widow women's lives in different ways. First of all, the evidence from this study indicates that there are differences between divorced and widow women's experiences after marital dissolution in terms of economic conditions. This difference can be explained by the patriarchal perception of the family and the marriage. After divorce, many women and children experience a drastic reduction in their standard of living although their economic situation was relatively better during marriage. The first thing divorced woman encountered is a financial difficulty. Women had severe worries about financial difficulties after the marital dissolution, which locked them in the failing marriages although majority of women in this study decided to divorce. It was clear that less working history or being never employed caused them, among all other things, financial problems after the end of their failing marriages. Thus, when the women divorced, their own family and the state perceive them as economic burden and many divorced women experience

financial distance with their own families after divorce. Divorced women have to support themselves and their children by working at wages that are considerably lower than those of their former husbands. Further, due to the childcare responsibilities, some women remain at low paid jobs as discussed in previous chapters. As a consequence, setting up a new home on their own outside of marriage is difficult for most divorced women in this study. Therefore this study contributes to the literature about financial difficulties after divorce (Brandwein, et al 1974; Duncan and Hoffman 1985; Gerstel 1987; Holden and Smock 1991; Amato 2000).

Moreover, unexpectedly some participants told me an economic welfare was felt upon divorce. The experiences of divorced mothers in this study show that the control over money and freedom of the decision making for where to spend money provide relief for divorced mothers. In this connection this study's finding is in line with the feminist literature arguing that women can have a voice in the family and in the public sphere when they have economic autonomy (Moghadam, 2007; Kavaz, 2010). All these experiences can be considered as a starting point for empowerment. However, after divorce, because of stigmatization, honor related problems, and cultural/patriarchal context in which these women live, they are framed with new sanctions of the family, colleagues, employers, relatives and/or the neighborhood. Although these divorced women started to control on money, they also started to control their own behaviors, speaking and dressing styles because of existing stereotyping of *dul* women in Turkey. Although they are not considered as traditional family included male breadwinner, wife and children, after divorce, these women are controlled by other men in the family. Hence, there exists a never ending family around the divorced women. I do not claim that these women are victimized after marital dissolution, but they find themselves in vulnerable positions because of cultural and patriarchal context they live in.

One of the interesting findings of this research is that unlike divorced women, financial pressure was not a concern for the majority of widow women in the study because of the ongoing perception of family. The state, the native families

and families in law try to compensate the loss of the husband economically. By helping only to widowed women, the welfare state and the family structure in Turkey remain to assigned roles of women within the family and discipline other women that break the marital bond. According to the findings, for widow women's ability to have financial opportunities are very much related to centrality of marriage in the society and patriarchal forms in welfare state. Specifically, their new status after marital dissolution is also shaped by their roles and positions in the family. This patriarchal structure is rooted in the structure of the welfare regime by assuming women dependent on men. Additionally, the socio-economic status of husband also affects the experiences of widow women after marital dissolution. The attitude of both families and the state towards widow women in terms of economic assistance do not construct a contradiction with the approach considering the family as the main provider of welfare in Turkey. Furthermore, the attitude of the current government towards widow women still has a familialistic character that aims to maintain the coherence and stability of the family while considering women in that family as the main carer for the welfare of the family members.

The experiences of divorced and widow women confirm that the social system in Turkey has traditionally been based on a patriarchal family model in which women and unmarried daughters rely on the male breadwinner as passive beneficiaries. Because of this patriarchal family model, the ideal type in the society is considered as male breadwinner model which is also effective in the social policies of welfare state in Turkey. The findings of the study confirm the study of Grütjen (2008) in which Turkey is characterized as a high level of familism and a low level of defamilialization as similar to Southern Europe countries. This discussion leads me to argue that Moghadam neopatriarchal state as a patriarchal gender contract exists in Turkey. According to this approach, there is justified access to men to be in the public sphere of markets and the state, and the right to concentrate on women's being in the private sphere of the family. In that sense, the accounts of divorced and widow women make visible the taken-for-granted gendered structures between woman, state, market and family.

Moreover, the participant women developed some coping strategies to get by on their low incomes. In the case of divorced women, they need to find a permanent job since they do not get financial help from their own families. Since the social system in Turkey fails to support women outside of marriage, this study shows that divorced mothers with inadequate job training and working history couldn't get jobs which provide social insurance for themselves and their children or enable to live on their income.

In that sense, as a result of financial strain, when the native family couldn't support the widow women financially as happened in the case of divorced women, the men in the family started to work different from divorced women being had to find a job. As an alternative and a solution these widow women were being supported by their sons after marital dissolution. In return those supports these women guaranteed not being alone.

Additionally, findings of this study show that marital status of women still defines divorced and widow women's womanhood/sexual life, social networks, employment process, parenting, coping and bargaining strategies. In most cases, divorced and widow mothers bargain within this new patriarchal structure. The accounts of women suggest that there is any change in raising women's autonomy in terms of honor issues. For example, for some divorced or widow women, the control of women is transferred from husband to husband's family again and/or her initial family. The coping strategies of the women in this study confirm Kandiyoti's argument that in classical patriarchal societies, women bargain with the existing patriarchal system. The accounts of the divorced and widow mothers in this study showed that women use and manipulate the patriarchal features to maximize their survival and gains from the limited opportunities available to them in the system. Hence, the findings of this study state that divorced women's ways to cope with stigmatization can be considered as a way to reproduce to the cultural norms and values that they confronted by getting divorced.

The findings of this study show that patriarchal expectations of women's role in the society have not been changed. Since the patriarchal structure of the social life is not arranged for single women and the gender division of labor is the case even outside of the marriage and the family, women have financial problems. The jobs they find are, therefore, the continuum of the domestic labor which depends on the gender division of labor. The other option is to work in informal labor market when there isn't any financial support from their families or the state. Thus, for these women, informal sector couldn't provide a secure and regular income. In this situation, women couldn't maintain a living and cover the costs of home and children and begin to consider the remarriage as an option to survive.

Although the formal supports (such as financial and social aids and child-care benefit) should be based on individual rights, in Turkey they depend on "deserved rights." Since the gender perception and gender division of labor in Turkey determines the criteria of deserve rights, the women whose marital statues are labeled according to these social perceptions have difficulties. On the other hand, because of the current family oriented social policies, the deserved rights are not identified based the needs of divorced women considering their individual rights, instead, they are identified based on certain topics as ending poverty or protecting the family. In other words, divorced women are deprived of the rights which help them to shape their life after their own hearts.

As we can observe in the accounts of divorced women, the roles of the women both inside and outside of the family are far from providing the basis for the women to lead their life alone or with their children. Although women are capable of standing on their own feet, they become deprived of being able to provide their lives, and if any, their children's life in the absence of their husband. The women who are encumbered with the family care or are not allowed to work, thus, cannot enter upon a career, become dependent on others after divorce. The government policies, which pursue a more egalitarian attitude in terms of the domestic status of men and women, even in the eye of the law, adopts a different attitude towards women who are out of the family institution. Exclusion of women from the family

institution occurs by not getting married legally, widowing or divorcement. While widowing is an unintentional situation caused by the death of the spouse after marriage, divorcement refers to exclusion of the woman from the family. In contrast, widows are considered as they are in need of protection and deserve to be protected within categorical poverty. Although the man of the house has died, in a sense, the family remains. However, the divorced women, who have gone beyond boundaries of man's domestic authority, are punished and ignored. By ignoring them, their right to get divorce is ignored. There is a fear that the situation of women who have divorced are supported by public policy will increase the divorcement rate and encourage women to build up autonomous houses. This not only indicates that the social security system is insufficient, but also represents the public attitude towards women who are dependent on men. In conclusion, the situation of the divorced women I try to describe in this study demonstrates that the three constituents of Turkey's welfare regime -state, family and market-reproduce, support and reinforce the discriminatory and unequal attitude towards divorced women.

From Being a Mother with a Husband to Be a Single Mother

Single parenting was another aspect of experiences of divorced and widow women which has several positive and negative dimensions. The disadvantage for single parenting in Turkey is that it is not compatible with the economic and social structure in Turkey. Some believe that divorce creates many problems for children and has a generally negative impact on their well-being. As discussed before, in many patriarchal cultural contexts, including Turkey, when a man ends a marriage, he is assumed to be single again. However, for woman, after marital dissolution, she is called as divorced/widow mother.

The patriarchal construction of womanhood in the society can be obviously seen in the practices of custody issue in Turkey. Mainly custody of children after marital dissolution rests solely with the mothers if father of the child do not use custody as leverage during the divorcement process. Moreover, the findings of this

study also address that the fear that their children could be taken can lead women to reduce their demands and they can limit their lives because of this fear and their ex-husbands' continuing control after divorce. The findings of research show that gender division of labor also exists in the custody practices. For the cases in this study, there isn't joint custody. There is sole custody of women. Therefore, women's facing the parenting problems alone confirm that division of labor continues even after marital dissolution.

Another difficulty divorced and widow women face is that they have to deal with the absence of the father in order to keep the family sense alive. Women created some strategies to compensate the absence of the father. Firstly, because of the belief that a child should be raised with two parents, divorced women invite their ex-husbands into their lives. Friends, relatives, and their own families consider that without a father, children will get out of hand. However, this causes the intervention of ex-husbands into the divorced women's lives. Through children, men continue to control and restrict the lives of their ex-wives. These results indicate that in examining experiences of women after marital dissolution it is not taken factors related to father. Even if fathers leave the family, they may disturb family life. As this study shows, many fathers use visitation as a way to harass their ex-wives. Findings to emerge from this research show that strict patriarchal relations and control on women still continue after the divorce in a similar line with Joseph's study of care and control of men over women in Middle East societies.

Secondly, divorced and also widow women need grandfathers to provide a role model for children as substitute authority figures. However, this results in different situations for divorced and widow women. This study shows that male relatives, senior female family members control children of divorced women while children of widow women are looked after since their fathers died. Relatives of divorced women try to watch out for the children of divorced women, because they think the children will harm the family. This also shows us while the divorced mothers were trying to construct a new family; they reconstruct the traditional family approach by letting grandfathers to be authority figure in the family. The

findings of this study is line with the studies (Cherlin, 2006; Sarkisian, 2006) in which alternative families such as divorced and widow women families are defined by the family ideal. Moreover, the substitute authority shows us that the male breadwinner model still exists even though the marriage ends with divorce and women construct female headed households.

Therefore, although, divorced and widow women could find jobs and have income, since the house chores do not change but increase upon being the head of the family, they have difficulties in balancing home with work. The findings of research shows there is not significant change in patriarchal expectations of grandmothers in the child care. The findings of the research are in a similar line with Ecevit's (2012) study which expresses grandmothers are a major source of childcare. Additionally, the findings of the research show the grandfather became a male figure in the absence of the father. Women who get childcare support from their mothers experience patriarchal control. Moreover, this study indicates that there is ambivalence in maternal authority after marital dissolution if the grandmothers take care of children. While grandmothers are taking care of the children, they also control mothering of divorced women. Divorced women have difficulties in conceding their authority to their mothers. In other words, divorced women feel obliged to "justify their decision about parenting." This issue is not much studied in Turkey. Thus, this study contributes the literature in Turkey.

Social Attitudes Toward Divorced and Widow Mothers

Single women living in patriarchal societies like Turkey where the family and marriage are sacred are considered as a threat to the social structure and norms. A woman devoid of a man's protection is perceived as a threat to the married couples and social order in terms of sexuality. Therefore, single women have to live a limited and isolated life, paying attention to their behavior, what they wear and with whom they have social interaction. The women I interviewed restrict their life to avoid any "damage" to their "honor." This situation is one of the examples of how honor and shame is connected and constructed over women's body and sexuality. My findings

indicated that what Kandiyoti and Sirman told about relationship between sexuality, control, duties, femininity and masculinity in the Middle East. In the line with the literature about honor issues, my findings also confirm that femininity is equaled with roles, duties and obligations which make divorced and widow mothers weak and limit their options of changing their own lives.

This study shows that stigma exists for all divorced and widow women. In this study, among those interviewed almost all the participants stated that they concerned about possible stigma toward their new marital status and looked for ways not to be exposed to those behaviors. The accounts of divorced and widow women in this study confirm the patriarchal forms of control over women. Moreover, divorced women were afraid of the “breakup” the traditional family because they would be seen as a threat to the society and social order. Thus, many divorced women in this study postponed their decision to divorce.

Since marriage is socially accepted and sacred institution in Turkey, when a woman ends the marriage through divorce, she is considered out of norm. The accounts of the divorced women picture that women’s sexuality is a basis for examining the social perceptions regarding divorced women’s status in workplaces. The experiences of divorced and widow mothers confirm my argument that new marital status of these women affect other people perceptions about these women. For instance, divorced women who work, especially with men, are considered as if these women are making clear statements about their sexuality even though they do not have this intention. Divorced or widow women who enter into labor market by economic necessity, are also entering new situations and face with the belief that they broke the traditional boundaries and as a result, sometimes they are inevitably characterized as loose women despite their continuous care and strict loyalty to various social gendered codes. The findings of this study report reflect many of these perceptions divorced and widow women who participated in public sphere or workplaces were often sexualized despite their strict auto control and performance to avoid these accusations.

Divorced and widow women developed coping strategies for stigmas they faced within the family, public sphere and work place. Not only their families but also they put restrictions on their own lives after marital dissolution. They changed their social networks, clothing styles, speaking manners. For women in this study there are two basic coping strategies: One is asexualization and the second one is masculinization. Because of the stereotype of “dul” woman in Turkey, after marital dissolution, divorced and widow women try to be unseen, invisible. These women stop wearing makeup or colorful clothes. For widow women, it is expected to stop the life after the death of the husband as if there is only possible way of existence for women to be married and wife.

Secondly, to prevent the negatives effects of marital dissolution, they, especially working divorced women, mentioned that they masculinized and behaved more like men. In this study, compared to widow women, divorced women are more in public sphere. Thus, they faced with stigmas more frequently. This study shows that those coping strategies of divorced and widow women conform the patriarchal expectations about women in the society. On the other hand, those strategies hinder women to live the autonomous life in the way they want. On the other hand, individual coping strategies to handle stigmatization can be read as Kadiyoti’s bargaining with patriarchy. In order to create a secure sphere for themselves, these women create strategies within the patriarchy by not challenging the patriarchal social structure.

Stigmatization towards divorced mothers causes a contradiction about empowerment of women. Thus, when these women left the unhappy or violence intensive marriages, this can be considered as a challenge to the patriarchal sturucture of the family and the marriage and gender norms in those structures. However, self control of divorced women to conform the social expectation hinders women to establish autonomous lives after marital dissolution.

From Being Wife to Be Single

As it can be seen in previous chapter, since these women interiorize their situation as “deviant,” they do not feel comfortable any more when they are with their old friends, and since they move to another home because of economic reasons their social circle and solidarity networks also change. Because of the image of widowed and divorced women in patriarchal societies, it becomes more difficult for them to find new friends. Support of relatives and families limits their life and behavior. They are expected to behave and live in accordance with the advices and the requests of their relatives and family in return. They become obliged to behave and live in accordance with the advices and the requests of their relatives and family. In other words, the patriarchal society and family structure make the family and social circle fill the void of suppression left by the husband’s absence.

Findings of this study revealed that there is difference between divorced and widow women reconstruction of social networks after marital dissolution. Widow women state that they are not happy to be out of marriages since they considered they lost the status of being a wife in the family and in the society. They in a way were compensating these losses by strengthening their relations with their families, relatives and old friends. Furthermore, women also derived meaning and felt lost in the society. On the other hand, it is striking that many divorced women are positive about being divorced, given the economic conditions and stigmas after they left the marriages. Some of the divorced women were glad to leave the hard living and violent conditions and some divorced women have developed critical consciousness about being woman in the family, in the marriage and in the society. At the same time, the majority of widow and divorced women remained committed to marriage. However, for divorced women, meaning of the marriage changes. Their expectations from marriages and men change after marital dissolution. They expressed that marriage does not let women be equals with men. Moreover, they couldn’t realize how dependent they are while they were married. Many were afraid of being suppressed in another marriage as they had been in the first one. Thus, the findings of this study shows that divorce does not causes the decline of

family values and these women do not fit the idea that couples leave marriages to pursue their own goals at the expense of their spouses and children. They wanted more equal marriages.

Living Alone or Living with Family?

When marriage dissolves because of the death of a spouse or divorce, existing living arrangements change. Not only marriage, but also the dissolution of marriage usually entails a change of residence. The accounts of the divorced women in this study confirm the study of Feijten and Van Ham (2007) in which it is argued that divorced people move often after marital dissolution. Different from widow women in this study, divorced women stated that they move to rental housing. Moreover, findings of this study also confirm the Ahrentzen (1985) “residential fit” argument. Since there are stigmatizations about women living alone without a husband or a male protector, many working divorced women in this study prefer to live in the neighborhood close their own families. In this study, divorced women who are not working generally lived with family or in the extended households in a similar way Cohen (2002) and Seltzer and Friedman (2013) claimed in their studies.

Different from divorced women in this study, widow women continue to live in the same houses after marital dissolution. This is also related the patriarchal division of assets during and after the marital dissolution. The economic control of money and assets are considered as it belongs to husbands or men in the family. Because of the ongoing perception of family for widow women, after the death of husbands, they do not need to change residence unlike divorced women who need to divide the assets. However, in a similar way, like divorced women, they also created extended households. The findings of this study confirm the findings of De Vos and Richter in which it is claimed that widows may be closer to an extended family than divorced.

Finally, the findings of the research are subject a number of important limitations. Firstly, the qualitative data obtained from the sample is instructive and

not generalizable to other women or other settings. It would be interesting to support this research by increasing validity of a quantitative research based in divorced and widow women without children or divorced and widow women in rural areas. Secondly, the current study has only examined the experiences of women. Men's experiences after marital dissolution from a feminist methodological perspective are in need of further investigation. Lastly, if the debate is to be moved forward, a better analysis of divorced and widow women with different class positions and ethnic identities. In this context further research needs to examine the links between class, ethnicity and gender issues.

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APPENDICES

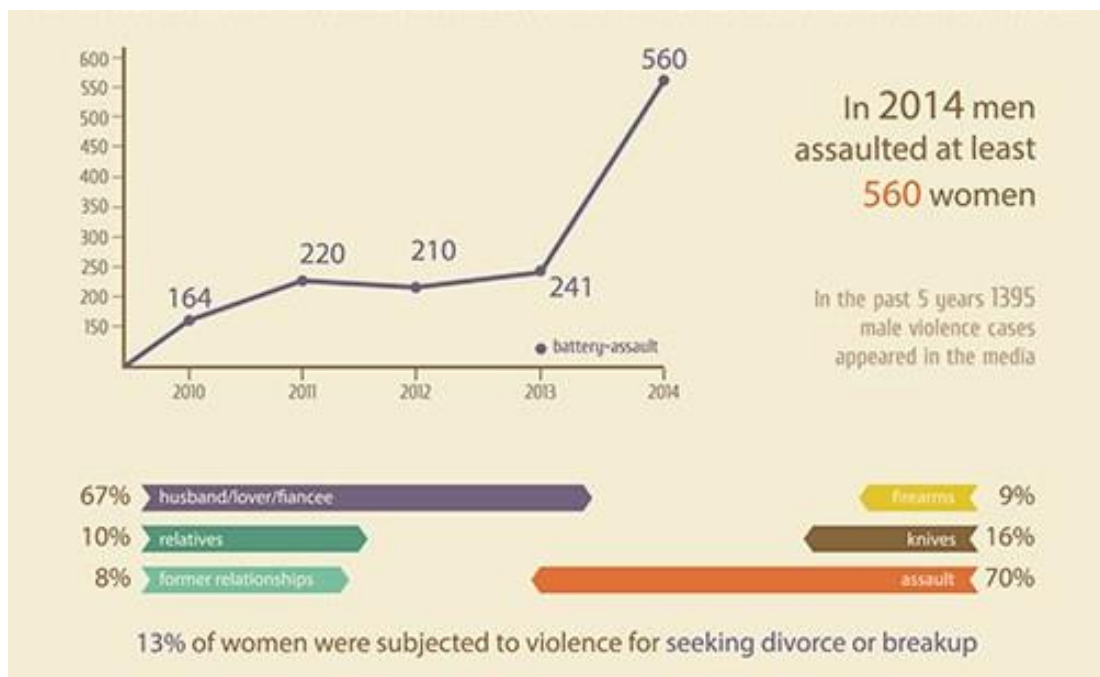
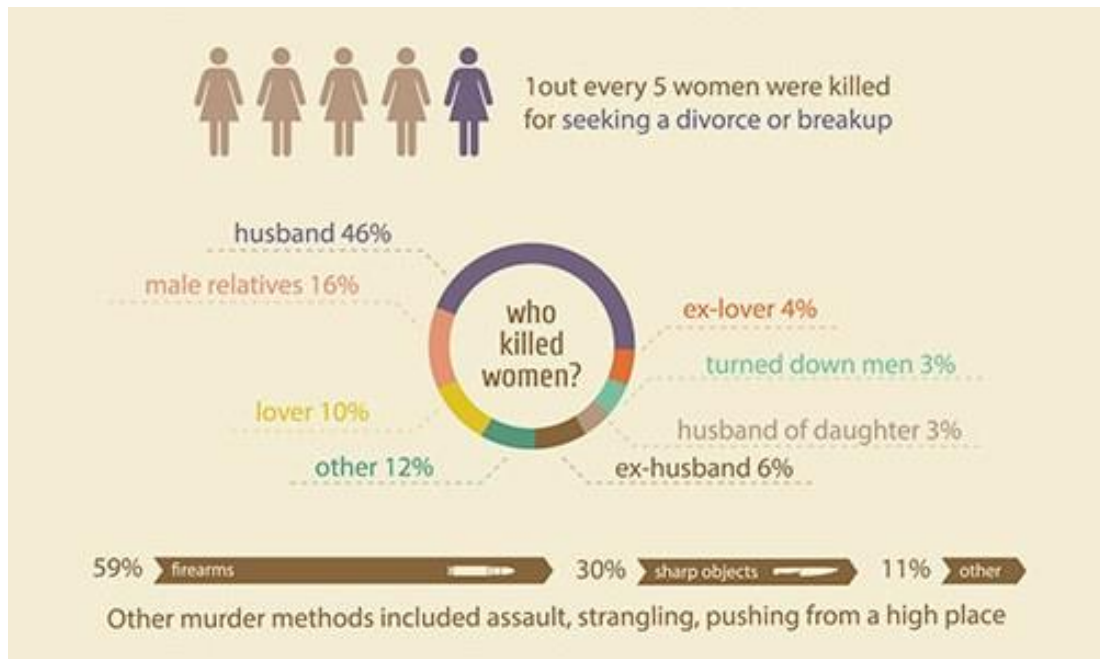
I: THE SOCIO DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF INTERVIEWEES

Name	Marital Status	Age	No. Of Kids	Soc.Sec. Status	Education Status	Employment Status	Family Structure ²⁰⁶
Aslı	Divorced	30	1 Child	Ssk	High School	Not Working	Living with family
Sibel	Divorced	34	2 Children	Ssk	High School	Working	Lived with family for 3 years, living alone now
Vasfiye	Divorced	48	3 Children	No	Elementary School	Working At Home	Living alone
Gül	Divorced	45	1 Child	Ssk	High School	Working	Living alone
Candan	Divorced	42	1 Child	Ssk	High School	Working	Living with family
Pınar	Divorced	28	1 Child	Ssk	High School	Working	Living with family
Mahmure	Widow	58	2 Children	Bağkur	Elementary School	Not Working	Living alone
Nazlı	Widow	49	3 Children	No	Elementary School	Working	Living alone
Neriman	Divorced	48	2 Children	Ssk	High School	Working	Living alone
Emine	Widow	46	2 Children	Bağkur	Elementary School	Not Working	Living alone
Ayşe	Widow	46	No	Bağkur	Elementary School	Not Working	Living alone
Elif	Divorced	30	1 Child	No	High School	Not Working	Living with family
Fatma	Divorced	43	3 Children	Ssk	High School	Working	Living alone
Kerime	Divorced	45	1 Child	Ssk	High School	Retired	Living with family
Selvi	Divorced	45	1 Child	Ssk	High School	Working	Living alone
Bedriye	Widow	55	1 Child	Bağkur	Elementary School	Not Working	Living alone
Hamiyet	Widow	46	3 Children	Bağkur	Elementary School	Not Working	Living alone
Nilgün	Divorced	40	1 Child	Ssk	High School	Working	Living alone
Nurhayat	Divorced	24	2 Children	No	Elementary School	Working	Living with family
Canan	Divorced	46	No	Ssk	High School	Working	Living with family
Hacer	Widow	43	2 Children	Ssk	High School	Working	Living alone
Şöhret	Divorced	43	2 Children	Ssk	High School	Working	Living family
Ukrüş	Widow	47	2 Children	No	Elementary School	Not Working	Living alone

²⁰⁶ The statement “living alone” refers that women live with their own children without a male partner. Moreover, grandmothers come and go although these women live alone.

Serpil	Divorced	41	1 Child	Ssk	Bachelor Graduated After Divorce	Working	Living alone
Meral	Widow	43	2 Children	Bağkur	Elementary School	Not Working	Living alone
Eda	Widow	33	1 Child	Bağkur	High School	Not Working	Living with family
Nihal	Divorced	43	1 Child	Ssk	High School	Working	Lived with family. Now living alone
Mihriban	Divorced	42	1 Child	No	High School	Not Working	Living alone
Zeynep	Divorced	48	2 Children	No	High School	Not Working	Lived family. Living alone now.
Zeynep	Widow	38	1 Child	No	High School	Working	Living with family
Zuhal	Widow	39	2 Children	Bağkur	High School	Not Working	Living alone
Meryem	Widow	45	2 Children	Bağkur	High School	Not Working	Living alone
Sultan	Widow	42	2 Children	No	Elementary School	Working	Lived with family. Living alone now.
Hatice	Widow	46	2 Children	Bağkur	Elementary School	Not Working	Living alone
Hamide	Widow	48	3 Children	Bağkur	Elementary School	Not Working	Living alone
Türkan	Widow	35	1 Child	No	High School	Working	Living with family

II: STATISTICS OF WOMEN EXPERIENCED VIOLENCE BECAUSE OF SEEKING FOR DIVORCE IN 2014



Source: Male Violence Report 2014, <http://www.bianet.org/bianet/erkek-siddeti/161582-erkek-siddetinin-2014-grafigi>, accessed 17.01.2015.

III: CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Gedik, Esra
Nationality: Turkish (TC)
Date and Place of Birth: 06 April 1982, Erzurum
Marital Status: Single
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EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
MA	METU, Political Science and Public Affairs	2007
BS	Marmara University, Political Science and International Relations	2005
High School	Kanuni Super High School, Ankara	2000

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
February-March 2015	METU, KGPO Office	Temporary Data Analyst
April-December 2010	'Urban Transformation Projects and Displacement: Implementations, Expressions, Experiences' Project Funded By Tübitak And Implemented By Bilkent University	Research Assistant
2004-2005	Fenerbahçe Çeçen Mülteci Kampı Projesi	Research Assistant
17-27.08.2003	Köy-Kent Gençliği El Ele Gençlik Projesi	Research Assistant

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English

PUBLICATIONS

1. Gedik, E. (2014). “Ölüm” ve “Şehitlik” ile Yeniden Kurulan Hayatlar: Oğlunu Silahlı Çatışmada Kaybeden Asker Anneleri, Şükran K./ Bir “Şehit Annesi” Hikâyesi. In Serdar Değirmencioğlu (der.), *Öl Dediler Öldüm: Türkiye’de Şehitlik Mitleri*, İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları.
2. Gedik, E. (2013). Security of the Nation: Why Do We Need ‘Mothers of Martyrs’ in Turkey? *disClosure: A Journal of Social Theory*, Vol. 22, Article 7.
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6. Gedik, E. (2009). Türkiye Militarizmin Üç Kadın (lık) Hali. *Birikim*, sayı 240.
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IV: TURKISH SUMMARY

GİRİŞ

“Boşanmak biraz ölmek demektir...”

(Gahler, 2006)

“Dulluk kadınlar üzerindeki bir lanettir.”

(Uprety ve Adhikary, 2009: 250)

Aile, toplumsal bir kurum olarak, üyelerinin toplumsal cinsiyet temelinde farklılaşan rolleri kabullenmeleri için sosyalleştirmesi yoluyla ataerkil pratikler için önemli bir yere sahiptir. Aile var olan toplumsal cinsiyet rollerinin yeniden üretildiği ve geliştirildiği bir alandır. Aile aynı zamanda cinsiyete dayalı iş bölümünün ve ataerkil pratiklerin kurgulandığı ve üretildiği bir alandır. Erkekler kendilerini “evin reisi” ve hane halkının başı olarak gören olarak sosyalleşirken, kadınlar erkeğe bağımlı evin ve ailenin genel bakıcısı olarak sosyalleşirler. Bu nedenle, kadınların ilk sömürüsü de aile içinde deneyimlenir ki bu ataerkil ilişkilerin toplumun diğer alanlarında yeniden üretimini de sağlar. Dahası, erkeğin aile reisi olması fikri kültürümüzde çok derinleşmiştir. Bu ataerkil yapının ikna edici doğasının bir parçasıdır ki kadın ve erkekler, ailenin olmazsa olmaz bir parçası olarak erkeği düşünecek şekilde sosyalleşirler.

Ailenin ve evliliğin kutsandığı ataerkil bir kültürde, evlilik, boşanma ya da eşin vefatı ile son bulduğunda, boşanmış ve dul kadınlar “savunmasız” bir toplumsal konumda görünürler. Dahası, böyle bir toplumda, aile içerisindeki ilişkiler katı toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri üzerine kurulmuştur ve kadınlar evden ve aileden sorumlu tutulurken, kocanın “aile reisi” olarak düşünülmesi nedeniyle, çiftlerin birbirlerine bağımlılığı çok yüksektir. İki kişilik bir aile yapısından tek kişilik bir aile yapısına (*single parent*)²⁰⁷ geçmek fiziksel, duygusal ve ekonomik zorlukları da yanında getirir, özellikle de kadınlar için. Kadınlar tek ebeveynli aile oldukları zaman, sosyo-

²⁰⁷ Bu çalışmada, tek ebeveynli aile ile boşanmış ve dul kadınların idare ettiği aileyi kast edilmektedir. Ancak, Brandwein, Brown ve Fox’a göre (1974: 498), “bir kadın pek çok durumdan biri ile tek ebeveynli olabilir: 1) evlilik dışı çocuk yetiştirerek, 2) ayrılmış ya da boşanmış olarak, 3) dul kalarak.” Bu çalışmada yasal olarak boşanmış ve eşi vefat etmiş kadınlara odaklanmak istiyorum.

ekonomik zorluklarla karşılaşır. Ataerkilliğin farklı aşamalarda varlığını sürdürdüğü hemen hemen her toplumda, erkekler aileden yararlanandır; evlilikte, boşanmada ve dulluk durumunda ve evlilik sonrasında kadınlar pahasına kazançlı çıkan taraftırlar. “Aile” ve “evlilik” ataerkil yapının başlıca alanlarındandırlar ki aynı zamanda kadınların evlilik bittikten sonraki deneyimlerini de etkiler. Ataerkil pratikler kadınların aile yaşamını belirlediği için, onların evlilik bittikten sonraki deneyimleri de ataerkillik tarafından şekillenir.

Türkiye’de evlilik ile kurulan aile oldukça merkezi ve istikrarlı bir kurumdur. Toplumsal cinsiyet temelli farklılaşma ve toplumsal cinsiyet temelli iş bölümü ise hayli yüksektir; örneğin, evli kadınlar emek piyasasına girdiklerinde bile, aileyi desteklemek için kocalarına yardım amaçlı bunu yaparlar. Dahası, Türkiye’de hala yaygın olan bir düşünce de “baba evini gelinlikle terk eden bir kadın ancak kefenle geri döner.” Türkiye’de aile merkezli toplumsal ilişkiler temelinde düşündüğümüzde, şunu iddia edebiliriz, boşanma ya da kocanın vefatı ile evliliğin sona erdiği durumlarda, kadınların bu duruma uyum sağlaması zorludur ve vakit alır.

Bu çalışma Türkiye’de boşanmış ve dul kadınların evlilik sonrası deneyimlerine odaklanmaktadır ve boşanma ya da eşin vefatı nedeniyle evlilikleri sonlanan kadınların evlilik sonrası deneyimlerindeki ataerkil tezahürleri daha geniş bir perspektiften inceler ve Türkiye’de boşanmış ve dul kadınların, “dul” ve “boşanmış” kadın olmaktan ötürü benzer ya da farklı deneyim yaşadığı alanları inceler. Boşanmış ve dul kadınların deneyimleri evlilik sonrası yeni yaşamlarına adapte oldukları alanlarda incelenir. Özellikle, ekonomik zorluklar, boşanmış ve dul kadınların değişen sosyal ilişkileri ve karşılaştıkları toplumsal tutumlar.

Bu nedenle, bu çalışma Türkiye’de çalışılmamış bir konuda boşanmış ve dul kadınların evlilik sonrası deneyimlerini incelediği gerçeğinden yola çıkar, sosyolojik ve feminist bir perspektif kullanır. Bu çalışma feminist bir çalışmadır çünkü *kadınlar içindir* ki ailenin, evliliğin ve kadınların ikincil konumunun ataerkil yapılarını ve bu yapıların kadınların evlilikleri sonlandıktan sonraki deneyimleri üzerindeki etkilerini inceler. Bu çalışma kadınların deneyimlerini merkeze alarak feminist perspektiften

faydalanmaktadır ve ayrıca evlilik sonrası durumları inceleyerek kadınların karşılaştıkları sömürü alanlarını ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Bu bağlamda Türkiye’de dul ve boşanmış kadınların içerisinde bulundukları durumları anlamak için Türkiye’de bu kadınların sosyo-ekonomik durumlarını etkileyen ve belirleyen devlet, piyasa ve aile ilişkilerine ve bu üç kurumu kapsayan refah rejimine göz atacağım. Esping-Anderson refah rejimlerinin ne denli farklılaştığını gözler önüne sermektedir. Anderson’un refah rejimi modellemesi olan Sosyal Demokrat (İskandinavya), Muhafazakâr- Korporotist (Almanya) ve Liberal (İngiltere) refah rejimi tipolojisi, Türkiye’deki durumu anlatmak için yeterli değildir. Türkiye, refah rejimi sınıflandırmalarında Ferrera’nın Güney Avrupa refah rejimi tipolojisi kapsamında ele alınmaktadır. Türkiye’de diğer Güney Avrupa ülkelerine benzer biçimde aile, refah rejimi içinde merkezi bir önem sahiptir. Devletin bakım hizmetlerinde boş bıraktığı alan, piyasa tarafından, daha yaygın biçimde ise aile içinde kadınlar arası dayanışma yoluyla doldurulmaktadır. Sosyal yardım hizmetlerinin boşluğu da aynı biçimde aileler tarafından doldurulmuştur. Kuzey Avrupa ülkelerinde kamu hizmetlerinin ağır bastığı bir sosyal devlet anlayışı mevcutken, kategorik olarak Türkiye’nin de içine katıldığı Güney Avrupa ülkelerinde istihdamda enformel kesimin yaygınlığı, kamunun sunduğu refah hizmetlerinin zayıflığı söz konusudur. Bu ülkelerde kamusal hizmetlerin eksikliğini ailenin karşıladığı bir refah rejimi mevcuttur. Aile, modern toplumda devlet dışındaki refahın ana ögesi olarak görülmüştür. Çocuk ve yaşlı bakımı ile işgücünün yeniden üretimi kadınlardan beklenmiştir. Öte yandan kadınların büyük bir çoğunluğu aile ya da evlilik statüsü (örneğin, eş, anne olmak) üzerinden kamusal refah hizmetlerine erişebilirler. Aile ya da evlilik statüsü üzerinden sunulan refah hizmetleri de, hemen hemen her ülkede düşük miktarlarda ve sıkı hak ediş kriterlerine bağlı olarak verilmektedir. Bu haliyle, kamunun sosyal politika uygulamaları kadınların toplumdaki eşitsiz konumlarını pekiştiren bir işlev görmektedir.

Ailenin tüm bakım hizmetlerini kadına yükleyen rol dağılımı, kadın emeğinin piyasada erkek emeğine göre daha düşük ücretlendirilmesi, erişilebilir çocuk bakım hizmetlerinin kısıtlılığı ve kadınların aile ve iş yaşamındaki rollerinin çatışması

boşanmış ve dul kadınların evlilikleri sonlandıktan sonra ekonomik ve sosyal sorunlarla karşılaşmalarına neden olur. Dahası, toplumdaki sosyal politika ve refah rejimi de nükleer aile ve erkek aile reisi modeline göre kurgulandığında boşanmış ve dul kadınlar gibi yalnız yaşayan anneler sorunlarla mücadele etmek zorunda kalırlar. Hükümet politikaları, aile kurumunun dışına çıkan kadınlara karşı farklı bir tutum izler. Bu saikle kurgulanan sosyal politikalar kadının evlilik dışında da kendini ve hanede birlikte yaşadığı diğer kişileri idame ettirebilecek olanaklarının varlığını kısıtlar.

Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma şu sorunun cevabını aramaktadır: Türkiye’de evlilikleri boşanma ya da kocanın ölümü ile sonuçlanan kadınlar, evliliklerinin sonlanmasından sonrasındaki yaşamlarında ekonomik, sosyal dayanışma ve sosyal ağlar, kültürel önyargılar alanlarını dul ve boşanmış kadın olarak nasıl deneyimlemektedirler ve bu deneyimler arasındaki benzerlik ya da farklılıklar nelerdir.

Çalışmanın Yöntemi ve Amacı

DeGarmo ve Kitson’a göre (1996: 983), “60 yıldan fazla bir süredir, boşanma ve eşin vefatından sonraki uyum süreci ile ilgili benzerliklerin teorik karşılaştırması yapılmıştır.” Ancak Türkiye’de boşanmış ve dul kadınların deneyimlerini araştıran pek fazla çalışma yoktur. Diğer pek çok ülke gibi, Türkiye’de de boşanma oranlarında bir artış vardır. Fakat diğer ülkelerle karşılaştırıldığında hala düşük bir orandadır. TÜİK raporlarına göre boşanma oranları 1997’de binde 0.52, 2005’te binde 1.33 ve 2009’da binde 1.59 yükselmiştir.

Yılmaz ve Fıçıloğlu (2005: 87) şöyle vurgular “Boşanma Türkiye’deki sosyal yapının çarpıcı bir parçası olmasına rağmen, çok sınırlı sayıda ampirik çalışma bulunmaktadır.” Türkiye’de, boşanmış ve dul kadınlar hakkında çalışmalar sınırlıdır ve çoğunlukla tek ebeveyn olmanın negatif sonuçları, toplumun, ailenin ve çocukların üzerindeki negatif etkileri üzerinde durmuşlardır (Şentürk, 2006; Serin ve Öztürk, 2007; Yılmaz, 1998; Şirvanlı, 1999; Şirvanlı, 2003). Bu çalışmalar bu kadınların evlilik sonrası deneyimlerinin sosyolojik özellikleri ve kültürel normların tasviri konusunda bilgi vermekte yetersiz kalmaktadır.

Türkiye’deki pek çok çalışma boşanmayı toplum, aile ve çocuklar için bir “sorun” olarak inceler. Bu çalışmalar bireylerin deneyimlerinden ziyade boşanmayı “parçalanmış” aile olarak inceler, boşanmanın ve evliliğin sonlanmasının negatif sonuçlarını analiz eder. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma evlilikleri sonlandıktan sonra bu kadınları güçlendirecek etkili bir feminist politika üretmek ve tek ebeveynli aileler hakkındaki toplumsal algıları değiştirmek için önemlidir. Boşanma ve eşinin vefatı ile tek ebeveynli aile gibi alternatif aile formları geleneksel aile yapısına karşı dururlar. Dahası, bu farklı formları anlamak ve onları tanımak Türkiye’deki aile yapısındaki değişikliği değerlendirmek için önemlidir.

Türkiye’de evlilikleri boşanma ya da eşin vefatı yolu ile sonlanan kadınların evlilik sonrası deneyimlerini inceliyorum. Boşanmış ve dul kadınların “yeni medeni halleri”nin onların ekonomik, sosyal, ebeveynlik, sosyal dayanışma ağları, kültürel önyargıların nasıl etkilediğini ve şekillendirdiğini inceledim.

Dul kavramı Türkiye’de hem boşanmış hem eşi vefat etmiş kadınlar için kullanılsa da bu çalışma boyunca “dul” kadın ifadesi eşi vefat etmiş kadınlar için kullanılmıştır.

Çalışmada yöntem olarak derinlemesine görüşme tekniği kullanılmış; 19 boşanmış ve 17 dul kadınla kendi evlerinde yalnız görüşülmüştür. Görüşülen kadınların yaşları 25 ila 55 yaş ile sınırlandırılmış, 55 yaş üstü kadınlarla görüşülmemeye çalışılmıştır. Zira Türkiye’de boşanmış kadınlar yaş olarak daha genç ve dul kadınlarsa daha yaşlıdır. Çalışma karşılaştırmalı bir çalışma olduğu için yaş durumunun denkleştirilmesi amaçlanmıştır. Alt sınıf düşük gelir grubu, en az bir çocuğu olan, bir kez evlenmiş ve bir kez boşanmış, bir kez eşi vefat etmiş, boşanma ya da eşin vefatı üzerinden en az bir en fazla 10 yıl geçmiş kadınlarla görüşülmüştür. En az bir yıl sınırının sebebi, daha yeni deneyimlenen bir süreçte biraz zaman geçmiş olmasının, görüşme açısından daha sağlıklı olmasıdır. En fazla 10 yıl sınırının sebebi ise kadınların süreci çok fazla içselleştirmiş olma olasılığı; başka deyişle kendisini artık dul ve/ya boşanmış kadın olmak üzerinden kurgulamaması/tanımlamaması olasılığıdır. Bu çalışma kapsamında farklı alt gruplar ve deneyimler araştırılmış rağmen zaman sınırlaması nedeniyle ekonomik, sosyal dayanışma ağları, ebeveynlik

ve toplumsal algılar üzerinden kadınların neleri deneyimlediklerini anlatmaya çalışacağım.

Ekonomik Sorunlar ve Baş Etme Yöntemleri

Choi'nin (1992: 39) de iddia ettiği gibi “bir eşin vefatı ya da boşanma muhtemelen bir kadının hayatında en “travmatik” olaydır. Fakat sosyo-psikolojik etkisinin yanı sıra, dulluk ve boşanma durumuna genellikle ekonomik zorluklar eşlik eder.” Morgan'ın (1989) araştırmasına göre “Dulların %40'ı ve boşanmışların %26'sı evlilikleri sona erdikten sonraki 5 yıl içerisinde yoksullaşır” (aktaran Kitson et al. 1989: 10). Dahası, Brandwien ve arkadaşları şuna dikkat çeker: “Boşanma ya da ayrılmaya bağlı kocasız annelerin yoksul olmaları ya da olmamaları onların sosyo-ekonomik geçmişleri ile ilgili değildir. Kocasız bir annenin ekonomik durumunu genellikle güncel durumlar belirler” (Kriesberg, 1970: 117, aktaran Brandwein et al, 1974). Evliliğin sona ermesinden önce de yoksul olan kadınlara ek olarak, pek çok önceden yoksul olmayan kadın evliliğin sona ermesinden sonra ekonomik sıkıntı yaşar (Brandwein et al. 1974: 500).

Evlilik içerisindeki toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri kadınların evlilik içerisindeki yerlerini belirleyen cinsiyet temelli iş bölümü ile ilgilidir. Kadınların yeri onları emek piyasasından ayıran ev içerisinde tanımlanır. Öte yandan, erkeklerin yeri öncelikle aile reisi olarak dış dünya ile ilişkilendirilir. Bunun sonucu olarak da kadınlar kocalarına ekonomik olarak bağımlı tanımlanır. Ailelerde erkeklerin cinsiyet temelli iş bölümü ile evin reisi olarak düşünülmesi ve kadının onun kazandıklarına güvenmesi ve çocukların temel bakıcısı olarak kadınların atanması demek kocanın kaybının, kilit bir etmen olarak, kadının ekonomik durumu üzerinde önemli etkisi olduğu demektir.

Bu bölümün amacı evlilikleri boşanma ve eşin vefatı ile sona eren kadınlar neden ekonomik zorluklar çekiyorlar. Evlilik sona erdikten sonra kadınların aile içerisindeki rolleri ve emek piyasasındaki ilişkilerine odaklanan ve evlilikler sona erdikten sonra kadınların ekonomik durumlarını anlamaya yönelik bazı teoriler bulunmaktadır.

Feminist teoride kadınların emek piyasasına katılımları önemli bir konudur çünkü çalışma hayatı ataerkil pratiklerin ana alanlarından biridir. Kadınların çalışma hayatındaki ikincil konumları ve düşük ücretli, düşük statülü işlerde çalışması cinsiyet temelli iş bölümü, işe girmede cinsiyet ayrımcılığı ve işverenler tarafından ücretlerde ve terfilerde uygulanan ayrımcılıkla ilgilidir.

Cinsiyete dayalı iş bölümü kadını ev içindeki işlerden erkeği ev dışındaki işlerden sorumlu tutar. Kadın ev işleri, çocuk ve yaşlı bakımı ile uğraşırken, erkek ev dışında aileye “ekmek getiren” olarak evin geçimi ile uğraşır. Bu iş bölümü yalnızca kadınları erkeklere bağımlı kılmakla kalmaz aynı zamanda da kadınları erkeklere göre daha alt bir konuma yerleştirir. Bunun sonucunda kadınlar emek piyasasına girdikleri zaman erkeklerden daha düşük ücretli işlerde çalışmaları sağlanmaktadır. Dahası bunun devamında kadınların ekonomik olarak erkeklere bağımlılığı kısır bir döngü içinde garanti altına alınmış olunur. Kadınlar evden sorumlu oldukları için düşük ücretli işlerde çalışırlar; düşük ücretli işlerde çalıştıkları için erkeğe bağımlı olurlar, erkeğe bağımlı oldukları için ev içinde ev işleri ile uğraşırlar, ev işleri ile uğraştıkları için düşük ücret alırlar ve bu böyle devam eder. Ayrıca kadınlar işe girdiklerinde belli işlerde çalışırlar ya da belli alanlarda iş bulabilirler. Genelde ev içi rollerinin devamı niteliğinde bakım ve anneliğin bir uzantısı olan öğretmenlik, hemşirelik, temizlik işleri ve çocuk bakıcılığı gibi işlerde yoğunlaşırlar.

Bu noktada, şöyle özetleyebiliriz. Önceki çalışmalar bize şunu kanıtlar, evlilikte kadınların ekonomik bağımlılığı kadınların ev işleri ve çocuk bakımı ile erkeklerin ise evin geçimi ile ilgilenmesinden kaynaklanır. Örneğin, Okin (1991) tüm kadınların evlilik ile ekonomik olarak savunmasız hale getirildiğini söyler. Bu savunmasızlığın iş yerinde cinsiyete dayalı ayrımcılık ve ücretlerdeki cinsiyete dayalı farklar gibi faktörlerle de güçlendirildiğini iddia eder. Böylece evlilik içerisindeki cinsiyete dayalı iş bölümünün kadınların meslek seçimlerini ve gelirlerini kısıtladığını söyleyebiliriz. İkincisi, evlilik ve ebeveynlik ev işlerindeki toplumsal cinsiyet eşitsizliği ile karakterize edilir (Holden ve Smock, 1991). Örneğin, kadınlar ev dışında çalışsalar bile ev işlerinden ve çocukların bakımından sorumlu tutulur. Üçüncüsü, kadınlar

çalışma hayatlarında aile sorumlulukları nedeni ile ara verebilirler. Pek çok kadın çocuk doğduktan sonra çalışma hayatından çekilirler.

Bu bağlamda, boşanmış ve dul kadınların ekonomik sıkıntıları gelir getiren bir aileden ayrılıp, ayrı bir ev kurmak ve bu evin tüm ekonomik masraflarını tek başına karşılamak zorunda olmasıyla başlar. Ortak aile gelirinden ayrılmak kadın ve çocukların yaşam standartlarını düşürür ve onlara ek ekonomik baskılar yaratır. Holden ve Smock (1991: 71) şöyle iddia eder: “Kadınların aile gelirinden otomatik paylaşımının kaybı evlilik sonrası yaşadıkları zorlukların ana nedenidir. Kocanın gelirinden sağlanan güvence kaybedildiği zaman kadınlar “önceden var olan” zorluklarla karşılaşır ve kendi iş çabaları ile kaybedilen geliri telafi etmeye çalışırlar.”

Yukarıda da anlatmaya çalıştığım gibi geleneksel aile ve çalışma sistemlerinde, koca, başlıca ev geçindiren kişi olarak düşünülür ve bu durum eşlerinin emek piyasasındaki hareketlerini de etkiler. Eğer kadın ev dışında çalışırsa bu genel olarak kocayı “tamamlayıcı” ya da aile gelirine “yardımcı” olarak kalır. Brandwein et al. (1974: 500) şöyle işaret eder “hangi sınıfsal konum ve gelir grubundan olursa olsun bir anne çocuklarının desteklenmesi için ve kendi desteğinin büyük bir çoğunluğu için kocasının gelirine bağlıdır ve sonuç olarak kocasız bir kadın için ekonomik fırsatlar kısıtlıdır.” Yaşadıkları bu ekonomik sıkıntıları çözmek için en temel yolu kadınların daha önce çalışmıyorlarsa işe girmeleri, daha önce çalışıyorlarsa çalışma saatlerini artırmaları ya da gelir getiren ek işlerde de çalışması gerekir.

Ancak kadınlar boşandıkları ya da eşleri vefat ettiklerinde çocukların temel bakıcısı olarak kalırlar. Sadece birkaç baba çocuklarının velayetini alır. Holden ve Smock (1991: 71) şunu ekler “çocuğun velayeti kadınların emek piyasası için uygun olan zamanını sınırlar. Karşılanabilir çocuk bakımının noksanlığı emek piyasasında çocukların neden olduğu bu sınırlamayı artırır.” Gadalla’ya göre (2008: 235) “kadınların ücretlendirilmeyen emekleri, özellikle çocuk ve ailenin diğer üyelerinin bakımı için, yapabilecekleri ücretli işlerin çeşidini sınırlayabilir. Çocuk bakımı gibi karşılanabilir yardım servislerinin noksanlığı yalnız annelerin iş gücüne katılım

olanaklarını da sınırlar.” Bu nedenle daha önce çalışan kadınların kocası tarafından desteklenen çocuk bakımı kocadan boşanma ya da kocanın vefatı ile sona erdiğinde kadınların çalışma hayatında zorluklara neden olur; iş değiştirmek zorunda kalabilir, iş saatlerini çocuklara göre yeniden ayarlamak zorunda kalabilirler.

Dahası, boşanmış ve dul kadınlar çocukların ekonomik olarak bakımından sorumludurlar. Teoride, “boşanmış ebeveynlerin çocukları, dul ebeveynlerin çocuklarından farklı olarak, ekonomik olarak bağımlı olabilecekleri iki ebeveyne sahiptir” (Bane 1976, aktaran Holden ve Smock, 1991: 71). Fakat gerçekte velayeti olmayan babalar çocuklarının yaşamlarına çok az ekonomik yardımda bulunurlar. Bu nedenle boşanmış ve dul kadınlar eğer daha önce çalışmıyorlarsa iş ararlar.

Bir başka nokta ise Amato ve Partridge (1987: 316) göre,

Çocuk bakımı gibi servislerin yetersizliği, kadınların yüksek orandaki işsizlik deneyimleri, kadınların işlerinin düşük ücretlendirilmesi gibi nedenlerden ötürü kadınların işe geri dönmeleri çok nadir olarak boşanma ve eşin vefatı sonrasında kocalarının kazancının kaybını telafi eder. Pek çok tek ebeveynli anne ekonomik stres yaşarlar, fakat dul kadınlar bazı sebeplerden ötürü belki boşanmış kadınlardan daha az dezavantajlı durumda olurlar: onlar [dul kadınlar] mal varlıklarını paylaşmazlar, pek çoğu sigorta ödemelerinden faydalanabilir ve pek çoğu kaldıkları evi tutabilirler. Boşanmış kadınlar eski eşlerinden çocuk yardımı alsalar da bu ödemelerin düzenli olmaması bu yardımı güvenilmez kılar (...).

Boşanmış ve dul kadınların ikisi de kocalarının ve kocalarının eve sağladığı gelirin kaybının ardından ekonomik zorluklar yaşarlar. Ancak bir kadının eşinin vefatı ve bu eşin kadına sağladığı ekonomik kazancın kaybı dul kadının suçu olarak görülmez. Böylece, yaşadığı çevreden yardımı hak eder. Morgan’ın (1991: 13) dediği gibi “dullar “haklı” olarak muhtaç olarak tanımlanır.” Öte yandan, boşanma gönüllü olarak evliliği bitirmektir. Böylece toplum onun içinde bulunduğu ekonomik durumdan onu suçlayabilir.

Sonuç olarak, boşanmış ve dul kadınlar evlilikleri sona erdiğinde ekonomik sorunlar yaşarlar; gelir kaybı, masrafların tek başına kadının sorumluluğuna kalması, kadının çalışmıyor olması ama aynı zamanda çocukların bakımından sorumlu olması gibi. Karşılaştıkları bu ekonomik sorunlarla başa çıkmak için kadınlar kendi gelirlerine

güvenirler ve iş ararlar. Yukarıda bahsettiğimiz nedenlerden ötürü iş bulmaları da kolay olmamaktadır.

Ekonomik olarak baktığımızda, Türkiye’de boşanmış kadınlara dair -formal ve informal²⁰⁸- hâkim düşünce aileyi parçaladıkları yönünde. Bu nedenle aileler ve devlet boşanmış kadınlara ekonomik yük olarak bakıyor. Boşanmış kadınların, ekonomik yük olarak görüldükleri için nafaka hakkı, çocuk yardımı hakkı gibi formal destek alamadığı, informal olarak desteklendiği durumlarda, dul kadınlara göre daha fazla sıkıntı çektiği görülüyor. Özellikle, kadın evlilik boyunca çalışmamışsa ya da çocuk olduğu zaman çalışmaya ara verdiyse, boşandıktan sonra ekonomik olarak kendini idame ettirecek koşulları sağlaması dul kadınlara göre daha zor oluyor. Her ne kadar üniversite mezunu olsalar ya da daha önce var olan özelliklerini, çalışma yetilerini kullanmaya çalışsalar da boşandıktan sonra aynı statüde işe geri alınma hakkı elde edemiyor; daha çok aile şirketlerinde, informal statüde ve sosyal güvenceden yoksun çalışıyorlar.

Öte yandan, ekonomik olarak mesela boşanmış kadınların nafaka elde etme hakları olmasına rağmen Türkiye’de nafaka büyük bir koz olarak kullanılıyor. Bu koz nasıl kullanılıyor? Mesela eski eş, boşanma süresince çocukların velayetini kadına vermek ya da çocukları kadında bile olsa çocukları kadına göstermek üzerinden nafakayı koz olarak kullanıyor. “Sen benden nafaka isteme, ben de sana çocukları vereyim veya çocukları göstereyim” diyebiliyor. Zaten çocuk yardımı çok az veriliyor Türkiye’de. Örneğin benim gördüğüm kadınlardan biri, iki-üç çocuklu, daha önce hiç çalışmamış bir boşanmış kadın 100 TL nafakayla yaşamaya çalışıyordu.

Dul kadınlara gelince, koca ölmüş olduğu halde, formal ve informal olarak devam eden bir aile algısı mevcut. Bu nedenle aile ve devlet, dul kadınlarda kocanın yokluğunu tamamlayıcı bir rol oynuyor ya da tamamlayıcı çalışmalar yapıyor. Ancak burada da şöyle bir ayırım ortaya çıkıyor: Kadın çalışmıyor ve kocadan da dul maaşı kalmayabiliyor. Kocadan maaş nasıl kalmıyor? Eşi vefat etmiş bir kadının dul ve yetim maaşı hakkını kazanabilmesi için kocasının en az dokuz bin iş günü -en az beş yıl- çalışmış ve sosyal güvenlik primlerini ödemiş olması gerekiyor. Eğer koca, bu

²⁰⁸ Formalden kastım devlet, informalden kastım da devlet dışı, aile ve yakın çevredir.

primleri ödemedenden vefat ettiyse dul kadına kocadan maaş kalmıyor ve dul kadın ekonomik olarak boşanmış kadınlarla aynı statüye düşüyor; ekonomik olarak boşanmış kadınların yaşadığı süreçleri deneyimliyor. Bu noktada aile/ler genelde dul ve boşanmış kadınlardan, kadın ekonomik olarak kendi kendine yetebilir duruma gelinceye kadar -ne yazık ki, en azından benim görüştüğüm kadınlar için söyleyebileceğim-, uzak duruyorlar. Kadınlar ekonomik olarak, kendi kendilerini yetebilecek duruma geldikten sonra, aileler dul ve boşanmış kadınların hayatlarına giriyorlar. Öte yandan, Türkiye’de devlet, boşanmış kadınlara olmasa da dul kadınlara aylık 250 TL her ay ya da iki ayda bir 500 TL olmak üzere finansal yardım yapıyor.

Ancak bu nakit yardımın yapılmasında belli hak ediş kriterleri mevcut. Bu hak ediş kriterlerine göre, dul kadınların, biraz önce bahsettiğim dul ve yetim aylığını almıyor olması ve tek başına yaşıyor olması gerekli. Başka deyişle, evlerinde yaşayan ve/ya da ona bakan bir erkek olmaması gerekli. Bu durum Türkiye’de şöyle belirleniyor: Konu komşu, mahalle etrafından bir analiz yapılıyor. Eğer dul kadın bu hak ediş kriterlerine sahipse, ayda 250 TL, her iki ayda bir 500 TL şeklinde verilen bu sosyal yardımı alabiliyor. Ancak hem boşanmış hem de dul kadınlar için toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri bir şekilde devam ediyor. Toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri üzerinden, eğer dul kadının evinde mesela sevgilisi varsa ya da eve girip çıkan bir erkek yakını varsa; bu durum otomatikman “bu kadına bakan bir erkek var, bu parayı hak etmiyor” biçiminde algılanıyor.

Dul ve Boşanmış Kadınlara Karşı Toplumsal Önyargılar

“Bacağını kaldıran kadın bir daha indirmez.”²⁰⁹

Kurbağalar filmi

²⁰⁹ Kurbağalar filmi Şerif Gönen’in yönetmenliğini yaptığı Hülya Koçyiğit’in başrolde olduğu bir filmidir. Film genç yaşta bir çocukla dul kalmış bir kadının, “dul” bir kadın olarak geçinmek için erkeklerle beraber bir köyde kurbağa toplamasını ve sonrasında başına gelenleri anlatır (<http://www.sondakika.com/haber-kurbagalar-filmi/>). Filmden alınan bu replik köydeki diğer kadınlar tarafından “dul” olarak erkekler arasında erkeklerle beraber kurbağa toplamaya gittiği için Hülya Koçyiğit’in canlandığı karaktere söylenmiştir.

Evlenmemiş, boşanmış, ayrılmış ve dul çeşitli yalnız kadın formlarıdır ve tüm bu formlar farklı yollarla şekillenir. Yalnız kalmanın nedenleri ne olursa olsun, toplum yalnız kadınlara ön yargılı davranır. Nedenlerini ve kadınların durumlarını düşünmeksizin, kadınları yalnız kaldıkları için suçlamak çok kolaydır. Eğer bu kadınların yaşamları ve deneyimleri incelersek, Türkiye gibi ataerkil toplumlarda kadınların yalnız kalmaları kolay değildir.

Türkiye gibi ataerkil toplumlarda evliliği ve aileyi sürdürmek önemli toplumsal normlardandır. Kadınların evliliği boşanma yoluyla sonlandığında, hoş karşılanmazlar. İnsanlar, boşanmış kadınları “başarısız” olarak düşünürler. Yalnız bir kadın yaşadığı ataerkil toplum tarafından kabul edilmez çünkü kadınlar, kadınların evli olmasını bekleyen ataerkil sisteme karşı geliyordur. Brandwein (et al. 1974: 499) şunu vurgular “erkeklerini ellerinde tutamadıkları gerekçesiyle boşanmış ve ayrılmış kadınlara karşı kötü tutumlar oluşur.” Ayrıca, boşanma ile kadınlar erkeklerden daha fazla toplumun kısıtlayan kontrollerine maruz kalırlar. Boşanma yoluyla evlilik sona erdiğinde, bir erkeğe “bekâr” insan olarak davranılır. Öte yandan bir kadın toplumda “boşanmış kadın” olarak tanımlanır ve ondan belli davranış kalıplarına uyması beklenir. Böylece boşanmış kadınlar toplumun davranışlara uygun davranmak konusunda zorluklar yaşarlar ve kamusal alanda görünüşlerine, tutum ve davranışlarına dikkat ederler.

Dul kadınların durumu incelendiğinde, ölüm kaçınılmazdır. Fakat kocanın vefatı kadın için pek çok sorun yaratır. Öte yandan, Goode dul ve boşanmış kadınların durumlarındaki yapısal faktörler benzer olsa da, dul kadınlar genellikle daha fazla sempati ve yardım aldıklarını söyler (Goode, 1956). Boşanmış kadınlara karşı bu tutumun ardında Gerstel (1987) iki açıklamadan bahseder. İlki, boşanma yolunda gitmeyen bir evliliği sonlandırmanın meşru bir yolu sayılsa da boşanmış bireyler onaylanmaz. İkincisi, boşanma üzerindeki pek çok resmi kontrolün etkisi azalmış olsa da, boşanmış insanlar toplumsal yaptırımla uğraşmak zorunda kalırlar.

Boşanmış ve dul kadınların en çok karşılaştıkları sorun “namus” konusudur. Türkiye, ataerkil bir toplum olarak, erkekler tarafından korunan kadının “namus”u ile aile onurunu ilişkilendirir ve katı davranış kuralları vardır. Türkiye’de kadının

vücudu ve cinselliği üzerinde kontrol mekanizması olarak “ıffet” ailede ve toplumda sağlanır ve korunur. Bu bakış açısı boşanmış ve dul kadınlara karşı takınılan tutumların oluşmasının da nedenidir. Yalnız kadınların cinselliği toplumsal düzen için bir tehdit oluşturur. Farklı ataerkil kurallar kadınların eş ve anne olarak “sadakati” ve “saflığı” konusunda birleşirler ve bu durumlara karşı olmayı toplumsal normlardan sapma olarak görürler. Pek çok diğer kültürde olduğu gibi, Türkiye’de, bu normlar kadını cinselliği kontrol altında tutulması gereken eş, anne ve kız kardeş olarak tanımlar. Boşanmış ve dul kadınlar gibi erkeğin korumasında olmayan kadınlar son derece savunmasız ve cinsel olarak hedef olarak düşünülürler. Ş. Özar bu durumu şöyle anlatır: “Dul kadın birazcık ruj sürse, yeni bir şey giyse “neden” diye sorgulanıyor! Erkeksiz bir hayat şaibeli oluyor. Yalnızsan “namussuzluk” yapma potansiyeli içinde görülüyorsun. Kadınlar bu konuda çok sıkıntı çekiyor ve bazıları da kendilerine otokontrol uyguluyorlar.” (Özar, 2011, <http://www.aksam.com.tr/aile-kurumu-ikiyuzlu--67868h.html>)

Ataerkil bir toplumda evli bir kadının kimliği kocası üzerinden tanımlanır ve kocasının onun cinselliği üzerinde tekeli olduğu için kocasından ayrı olan boşanmış ya da dul bir kadının cinselliği toplumsal olarak bastırılır ve kontrol edilmediği takdirde toplum düzenine karşı bir tehdit olarak düşünülür.

Toplumsal tutumlara baktığımız zaman, benim görüştüğüm kadınların hemen hemen hepsi ilk önce şöyle bir tutum sergiledi; “ben o kadın değilim/aradığınız kadın değilim”. Benim aradığım kadın kriteri yoktu tabii ki ama yine de ilk söyledikleri “ben o kadın değilim/ben öyle bir kadın değilim/dul kadın değilim”. Bu da bana, dul ve boşanmış kadınların, ne yazık ki en azından görüştüğümüz kadınların hemen hepsinin, Türkiye’de mevcut dul kadın algısını içselleştirmiş olduğunu gösterdi. Bu algı kuşkusuz Türkiye’deki kadın, cinsel hayat ve namus üzerinden biçimleniyor. Bu durum bana, Türkiye’de dul ve boşanmış kadınlara dair toplumsal algılar açısından hiçbir fark olmadığını da gösterdi.

Dahası, kadınlar evli bulundukları yaşamlarından daha izole bir yaşam yaşıyorlar. Örneğin hayatlarından renkleri çıkartıyorlar. İlk çıkardıkları renk de kırmızı oluyor. Daha önceki hayatlarında daha renkli kıyafetler giyinirken veya V

yakalı kıyafetler giyerken şimdi boğazlı kıyafetler giymeye başlıyorlar. Bir kısmı daha namuslu gözükme, tırnak içinde “daha namuslu gözükme” amacıyla türban takıyor. Tabii bunlar yaşadıkları mahalleye bağlı olarak da değişiyor. Burada şöyle bir durum söz konusu, en azından boşanmış kadınlar için kendi durumlarını yani kendi yeni medeni hallerini, yani aileyi, aile birliğinden çıkmış olma durumunu haklı göstermek için -kendilerine- bir hikâye uyduruyorlar. Bu hikâye de; kendi durumlarını olumlama, onaylama, suçu eski kocaya atma üzerinden kuruluyor.

Dul ve boşanmış kadınlarda şöyle bir hal söz konusu: belli bir duruma kadar sürekli bir testi geçme test edilme hali. Kadınlar, en başta ben o kadın değilim deseler de farkında olmadan ya da bilerek toplumsal cinsiyet rollerini, etraftaki namus algısını içselleştirdikleri için, böyle bir testi geçme sürecine sokuyorlar kendini. Bu süreçte ne oluyor? Şöyle iki durum oluyor; ya erkeksileşiyor ya da cinsiyetsizleşiyorlar.

Erkeksileşmeden kastım şu: Mesela boşanmış kadınlar işe girdikleri zaman boşanmış olduklarını söylemiyor; ya yüzük takmaya devam ediyorlar ya da erkek gibi küfretmeye/ davranmaya başlıyorlar. Bu tabir tartışılabilir tabii, soru-cevapta belki ne demek istediğimi daha iyi anlatırım. Türkiye’de var olan erkeklik algıları üzerinden söylüyorum erkeksileşmeyi. Bu kadınlar neden erkek gibi konuşuyor ve davranıyor? Çünkü sürekli karşılarındaki insanda, “ben senin o kafandaki dul kadın değilim, ben evden işe, işten eve, çocuğuma bakıyorum” algısını yaratmaya çalışıyorlar.

Öte yandan, cinsiyetsizleşmeden kastım da, kadınların kendilerini sanki o ortamda kadın/erkek ya da insan olarak görünmez kılma halleri. Onlar için *yaşamsal döngü, işe gidiyorum, sokağa çıkıyorum, ama orada yokum aslında, beni görmesinler* çabasını içeriyor. Burada değinebileceğim diğer bir nokta da şu, bu toplumsal algılar tabii ki Türkiye’de kadın cinayetlerine de bağlanıyor. Son dönemde çokça gördüğümüz boşanmış kadınların öldürülmesine gelirsek, şöyle bir durum söz konusu: Türkiye’de pek çoğunuzun bildiği gibi bir “Ailenin Korunmasına ve Kadına Yönelik Şiddetin Önlenmesine Dair Kanun” var. Bu yasaya dayanarak uzaklaştırma emri çıkartabiliyorsunuz. Boşanmış kadınlar, hem ailenin bütünlüğünü parçaladıkları

yönündeki algı hem de yasanın adından da anlaşılabilceği gibi, evlilik birliğinin içerisinde olmak gerektiğinden bu yasadan yararlanamıyorlar. Bildiğim kadarıyla Türkiye’de sadece iki boşanmış kadın uzaklaştırma emri çıkartabildi (eski) kocasına. Burada da pek çok kadının yaşadığı şu: Kamusal alanda mesela uzaklaştırma emri ya da diğer haklarından faydalanmak istedikleri zaman tacizlerle; özellikle polis taciziyle, karşılaşıyorlar.

Kadınlar, uzaklaştırma emrinin neden gerekli olduğunu anlamak için eve gelen polisin onlara zaten kafada var olan boşanmış dul kadın algısı üzerinden yaklaştığını; yardım karşılığında beklentide olduğunu; örneğin akşam yemeğine çıkarmak istediklerini ya da polisin onlara telefonunu verip “bir şey olduğunda beni ararsın” dediklerini söylüyorlar. Ve kadınlar bu tacizler nedeniyle eski kocanın “daha güvenli şiddeti”ni tercih ederek eski kocanın varlığına bir anlamda tahammül etmeye başlıyorlar.

Sosyal Dayanışma Ağları ve Değişen Çevreleri

Toplumsal düzenin evli çiftler etrafında şekillendiği bir toplumda, kadınlar ve erkekler evlilikleri sona erdiğinde sosyal ilişkilerini devam ettirmekte zorluklarla karşılaşır. Bu nedenle, ölüm ya da boşanma yoluyla evliliklerin sona ermesi ile kadınlar sosyal dayanışma ve yardımlaşma ağlarında değişikliklerle karşılaşır. Sonuç olarak boşanmış ve dul kadınlar kendilerini evli iken kurdukları sosyal ilişkilerin dışında bulurlar. Pek çok kadın ve erkek için, evlilik arkadaşlar, aile ve eş ile ilişkiler daimi dayanışma sistemi sağlar. Kadınlar, boşanma veya eşin vefatı ile karşılaştıkları zaman, daha önceden kurulu dayanışma sistemleri dağılır.

Evlilik boşanma nedeniyle sona erdiğinde, boşanmış çiftler arkadaşlarını ve akrabalarını evlilik boyunca sahip oldukları mal varlıkları gibi ayırırlar. Gerstel’in (1988: 343) de işaret ettiği gibi “evlilik sona erdiğinde çiftlerden her biri kendi mal varlıklarınıymış gibi belirli arkadaşları seçerler ve onları alırlar.” Dahası, geleneksel evliliklerde, kocanın arkadaşları çiftin arkadaşları olur. Böylece, bu kadınlar boşanma ile kocalarından ayrıldıklarında, daha önce sahip oldukları sosyal dayanışma ve yardımlaşma ağlarını da kaybederler. Boşanma sonrasında eski kocanın akrabaları

ve ailesi ile olan ilişkide sona erer. Bir önceki bölümde de tartıştığımız gibi boşanmış kadınlara karşı olumsuz davranışlar yaygındır. Böylece, eski kocanın akrabaları ya da ailesi boşanmış kadını, boşanmayı isteyen olsun ya da olmasın, kocasını elinde tutamamakla ve aileyi bir arada tutamamakla suçlayabilirler. Dahası, boşanmış kadınların evli arkadaşları ile de ilişkileri bitebilir. Bunun nedeni farklı yaşam stilleri olduğu gibi evli arkadaşları boşanmış kadınları yine yukarıda tartıştığımız sebeplerden kendi ailelerine ve de kocalarına tehdit olarak görebilirler.

Öte yandan evlilik eşin vefatı nedeniyle sonlandığı zaman, dul kadınların da sosyal dayanışma ve yardımlaşma ağları bundan etkilenir ancak yine de eşini kaybetmiş olmasının getirdiği farklılıklar da vardır. Kocanın yokluğu meşru görülür ve dul kadın ölen eşinin sosyal ve ekonomik imkânlarından yararlanmaya devam eder. Ancak boşanmış kadınların durumunda, kocanın yokluğu meşru görülmez ve boşanmış kadınlar eşlerinden ayrı oldukları için ekonomik ve sosyal olarak bu durumdan etkilenirler. Dahası, dul kadınların eski eşin ailesi ve akrabaları ile ilişkileri genellikle bozulmaz. Boşanmış kadınlarda olduğu gibi evli arkadaşları ile sorunlar yaşayabilir.

Sosyal ağlara baktığımız zaman, dul kadınların var olan sosyal ağlarını sürdürdüğünü buna karşılık boşanmış kadınların yeni sosyal ağlara dâhil olmaya çalıştıklarını görüyoruz. Çünkü eski sosyal ağlar genelde evlilik üzerinden kurulduğu ve boşanmayla beraber, -mal paylaşımı gibi- arkadaşlar da paylaşıldığı için, boşanmış kadınlar yeni sosyal ağ arayışında bulunuyorlar. Ya da var olan sosyal ağlarını daha da küçültüyorlar ve izole bir yaşama sahip oluyorlar.

Dul kadınlar var olan sosyal ağlarını nasıl tutuyorlar? Evliyken, sağken, koca yaşarken sahip olduğu arkadaşları gelip gidiyorlar. Ama dul ve boşanmış kadınlarda şöyle bir durumla karşılaşyoruz: Mesela evli arkadaşlarının evine aynı sıklıkla girip çıkamıyorlar. Pek çoğu “Sanki bizde bir bulaşıcı bir hastalık var da biz evli bir arkadaşımızın evine gidince sanki onun kocasını elde edeceğiz, ayartacağız.” hissini yaşadıklarını belirtiyorlar. Türkiye’deki yalnız yaşayan kadınların pek çoğunun üzerinden ya *yuva yıkıcı*, *cinsel olarak çok aç*, *benim kocamı elde edecek* algısı işliyor ya da evdeki koca, eşinin boşanmış arkadaşıyla görüşmesini istemiyor, çünkü kendi

evliliğinde, boşanmış kadının eşinin aklına boşanma fikrini sokabileceğini düşünüyor. Bu durum kadınların boşanabilmek için kendi içlerinde çok büyük bir mücadeleye girmelerine neden oluyor. Mesela boşanma kararını alabilmek için beş yıl beklediğini söyleyen kadınlar var.

Bekâr Anne (Single Mom) Olmak

Çocuk bakımına ve ebeveynlik konusuna baktığımızda; Türkiye’de kaliteli ve ucuz çocuk bakım hizmetlerinin olmadığını ve her kadının bakım hizmetlerine erişemediğini görüyoruz. Özellikle son dönemde, aile odaklı sosyal politikalar nedeniyle, çocuk ve yaşlı bakımında aileye dönüş projesi mevcut ve bu proje kapsamında ailenin sürekli kutsanıyor. Bu durum özellikle boşanmış ve dul kadınların işe girmede ya da başka türlü sosyal aktiviteleri devam ettirmede çocukları üzerinden büyük sorunlar yaşamalarına neden oluyor. Zaten biraz önce de bahsettiğim gibi informal sektörde, sosyal güvencesi olmayan işlerde çalışıyorlar. Mesela, en azından ben alt gelir grubu kadınlarla çalıştığım için öyle, kadınlar kapıcılık veya apartman yıkamacılığı yapıyor. Çocuk bakımı hizmetlerinden yararlanamadığından çalışabilmek için en yakınındaki apartmana ya da yakın çevresindeki apartmana gidiyor. Çoğu zaman çocuğu evde bırakıp, üstüne kapıyı kilitleyerek çalışmaya gidiyor. Ya da işte Türkiye’deki okul saatleri kadınların çalışma saatleriyle eş zamanlı olmadığı için evdeki en büyük kız çocuk kardeşlerinin bakımından sorumlu olabiliyor ya da en büyük erkek çocuk çalışmak zorunda kalabiliyor. Ve bu nedenle eğitimleri aksıyor.

Burada değinmek istediğim bir konu da şu, boşanmış kadınlar, çocuklarının aile ve mahalle tarafından sürekli gözetlenen çocuklar olduğunu belirtiyorlar. Başlarında bir baba olmadığı için çocukların başına bir şey gelecek kaygısıyla onların yaşamını da kısıtladıklarını söylüyorlar. Dul kadınların durumunda ise gözetleme biraz daha kollama üzerinden gidiyor. *“Bunların babası vefat etti, bunların bir baba figürüne ihtiyacı var, biz bunları kollayalım, koruyalım, ihtiyaçlarını giderelim”* şeklinde bir kolama mekanizması mevcut. Örneğin dersane masrafları ödeniyor ya da tatile gidilecekse bu çocuklar da tatile beraber götürülüyor. Dul ve boşanmış kadının yaşadığı bir sorunsal ebeveynlik ve çocuk bakımı konusunda, anneanneler.

Anneanneler informal olarak devletin bu noksan olan çocuk bakım hizmetlerini büyük şekilde hallediyorlar, bu kısmı kapatıyorlar, ama şöyle bir sorun yaşayabiliyor kadınlar; otorite sorunu yaşıyor bu nedenle. Anneanneler kendilerini annenin konumuna soktuğu için çocuğun eğitimi üzerinden ya da disiplini üzerinden annelere çok fazla karışabiliyor ve müdahale edebiliyor.

Sonuç

Bu çalışmada amacım Türkiye’de boşanma ya da eşin vefatı ile evlilikleri sonlanan kadınların evlilikleri sonrasında deneyimlediklerine bakmaktır. Bu nedenle bu kadınlarla derinlemesine görüşme tekniği ile görüşmeler yapılmış ve ekonomik, sosyal dayanışma ağlarında ve bu kadınlara karşı sosyal tutumlarda evlilikleri sonlandığında neler olduğu anlamaya çalışılmıştır. Yukarıdaki anlatılarda da görüldüğü gibi boşanmış ve dul kadınlar ataerkil aile yapısı ve aile içerisindeki toplumsal cinsiyete dayalı iş bölümü nedeniyle evli oldukları sürece evi geçindiren erkek olduğu için kadınlar evlilikleri boyunca çalışma hayatına ya hiç girmemişler ya da kesintiler yaşamışlardır. Bu nedenle evlilikleri sonlandığında kocanın sağladığı gelirden de yoksun kaldıkları için ekonomik sorunlar yaşarlar. Bunu telafi etmek için kendi gelirlerine güvenirler ancak güvenilir ve ucuz çocuk bakımından yoksun oldukları için iş bulmaları da zorlaşır ve pek çoğu bu nedenle ailesinin yanına taşınır ya da ev içi gelir getiren işlerde çalışırlar. Toplumsal hayatın ataerkil yapısı yalnız yaşayan kadınlara göre düzenlenmediği için ve cinsiyete dayalı iş bölümü evlilik sonlansa bile devam ettiği için kadınlar ekonomik olarak zorluklar yaşarlar. Buldukları işlerde ev içinde yaptıkları cinsiyete dayalı iş bölümünün devamı niteliğinde olan işlerdir. Bir başka seçenekleri de düşük ücretli kayıt dışı işlerde çalışmak olduğu görülmüştür. Buna sosyal güvencelerinin olmaması ve eski eşlerinin de sosyal güvencesinden yararlanamama ya da en başından kocanın da sosyal güvenceden yoksun olması iş bulmalarını güçleştirir ya da sosyal güvencesiz işlerde her an kovulma tehlikesi ile yaşarlar ya da kapıcılık örneğinde olduğu gibi kira vermemek karşılığında sigortadan vazgeçerler. Evlenmeden önce çalışan kadınların evlenince işi bırakmış olması evlilik sonlandıktan sonra iş bulmalarını kolaylaştırmaz çünkü evlilikleri süresince meslek eğitiminden ve tecrübeden uzak kalmışlardır.

Türkiye gibi ataerkil toplumlarda aile ve evlilik kutsallaştırıldığından yalnız yaşayan kadınlar toplumsal yapıya ve toplumsal normlara karşı tehdit olarak görülürler. Bir erkeğin korumasında yaşamayan bir kadın cinsel olarak evli çiftlere ve toplumsal düzene bir tehdit gibi algılanır. Bu nedenle kadınlar davranışlarına, ne giydiklerine ve kimle görüştüklerine daha dikkat eder bir durumda daha sınırlı ve izole bir yaşam yaşarlar. Görüştüğüm kadınlar “namus”larına bir “leke” gelmesin diye kendi kendilerini sınırlar bir yaşam sürdürmektedirler. Bu tutumlar zaten var olan ekonomik durumu daha da güçleştirmektedir, özellikle barınma konusunda sorun yaşamaktadırlar.

Yukarıdaki alıntılarda da gördüğümüz gibi bu kadınlar kendi durumlarını “norm” dışı olarak içselleştirdiklerinden kendilerini evli iken sahip oldukları arkadaşları ile rahat hissetmezler ve ekonomik nedenlerle ev değiştirdiklerinden daha önce sahip oldukları sosyal çevre ve dayanışma ağları da değişir. Ataerkil bir toplumdaki dul ve boşanmış kadın imajı nedeni ile yeni arkadaş edinmeleri de zorlaşır. Akrabaları ve kendi ailelerinden aldıkları yardımlar da çoğu zaman onları belli sınırlar ya da davranış kalıpları içerisine sokar. Bu yardımların karşılığında bu kadınlardan belli bir beklenti oluşur. Ailelerinin ya da akrabalarının tavsiyelerine ya da isteklerine uygun davranmak ve yaşamak zorunda kalırlar. Başka bir değişle kocanın kaybı ile üzerlerinden kalkan baskı ataerkil toplum ve aile yapısı nedeniyle kendi aileleri ve sosyal çevresi ile devam eder.

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