

POST DIVORCE EXPERIENCE OF HIGHLY EDUCATED AND
PROFESSIONAL WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

POST-DIVORCE EXPERIENCE OF HIGHLY EDUCATED AND PROFESSIONAL WOMEN

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Based on life-story interviews with women this dissertation analyzes post divorce experience of highly-educated and professional women. Economic, social, psychological well-being of divorced women; specifically, how they manage to adapt to their new lives after legal dissolution were examined. As is shown in our research while divorce caused various difficulties including financial, social and parenting problems, it, on the other hand provided relief, for the participants. The participants developed wide range of survival strategies in the face of difficulties and challenges they experience which attested to their agency during and after the divorce process. To the study, while an urbanite, educated and professional woman's termination of a failing relationship itself can be considered as liberation on her part, it will be an overstatement to say that women are enjoying their independence and start anew, just as men do. In this connection, this study searched for insights into the question: How does act of divorce affect these women with respect to their empowerment? Feminist theory is used over the duration of this study.

The study scrutinized on the emergent themes such as societal attitudes, single parenting, remarriage, intergenerational and intra-family transmission of divorce, financial consequence, and women's varying coping strategies as well as many other common themes emerged.

Studying post-divorce experience of women, which is an unexplored area in Turkish context, employing qualitative method and dwelling on grounded theory approach as an inductive way of data analysis, this study intends to be a considerable contribution to the literature.

Key words: Post divorce experience, feminist methodology, empowerment, highly-educated and professional women, life story interview.

ÖZ

EĞİTİMLİ VE ÇALIŞAN KADININ BOŞANMA SONRASI TECRÜBESİ

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Yaşam öyküsü mülakat tekniği ile yapılan çalışmada, yüksek tahsilli ve çalışan kadının boşanma sonrası tecrübesi çalışılmıştır. Katılımcıların boşanma sonrasında yaşadıkları ekonomik, sosyal, psikolojik durumları ve genel olarak boşanma sonrası adaptasyonları incelenmiştir. Çalışmanın sonuçlarında da gösterildiği gibi boşanma ekonomik zorlukları, sosyal ve psikolojik yıpranmayı beraberinde getirirken, diğer taraftan evlilikte yaşanan sıkıntıların sona ermesi ve rahatlama ile sonuçlanmaktadır. Katılımcılar yaşadıkları zorluklar karşısında yaşam stratejileri geliştirmekte boşanma sürecinde pasif teslimiyetçi bir yaklaşımdan ziyade aktif ve mücadeleci bir tutum geliştirmektedirler. Eğitimli, çalışan ve şehirli kadının boşanması kadının liberasyonunun bir göstergesi gibi algılansa da ataerkinin yoğun biçimde yaşandığı bir toplumda, hangi sosyo-ekonomik bağlamda olursa olsun kadınların pek çok açıdan hayatları sınırlanmakta ve toplumun boşanmış kadına negatif yaklaşımı kadınların yaşamlarını önemli ölçüde etkilemektedir. Bu bağlamda bu tez boşanmanın pek çok yönden güçlü kabul edilen eğitimli ve çalışan kadınların hayatlarını nasıl etkilediğini incelemektedir. Çalışma sürecinde teorik yaklaşım olarak feminist teori, data analizi ise Grounded teori kullanılarak yapılmıştır.

Data analiz neticesinde ekonomik zorluklar, toplumun boşanmış kadına karşı tutumu, tek ebeveynlik, yeniden evlilik, boşanmanın kadınların benlikleri üzerine etkisi, ebeveyn ve kız kardeşin boşanma tecrübesinin katılımcıların boşanma

sürecine etkisi ve kadınların tüm bu zorluklar karşısında ürettikleri yaşam stratejileri temel kategoriler olarak belirlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Boşanma sonrası tecrübe, feminist metodoloji, kadının güçlendirilmesi, eğitimli ve çalışan kadın, yaşam öyküsü mülakat tekniği.

To my husband, Huseyin
and to my parents, Nazifer and Musa...

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

TDHS	Turkey Demographic and Health Survey
TURKSTAT	Turkish Statistical Institute
SIS	State Institute of Statistics
DMA	Divorced Mothers' Association
WWHR	Women for Women's Human Rightst

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation focuses on post divorce experience of highly educated and professional women; it examines post divorce experience of these women in a broader perspective and looks into areas where women face with difficulties and challenges as well as areas where women gain relief and independence in the wake of divorce. The study also searches for answers to the question whether act of divorce has an inhibitory effect on women's empowerment at large. The main argument of this dissertation is that while in some areas women experience relief and independence, due to the cultural context they live in some other areas women go through difficulties and challenges which may put them in a vulnerable position. However this study shows that women devise survival strategies through which they find ways to mitigate restrictions and challenges which attest to their agency in the aftermath of divorce.

In recent years one of the major social trends in family life has been observed in the rising divorce rates. In the US near the middle of the 19th century, only about 5% of first marriages ended in divorce, however, in contrast demographers estimate that about half of first marriages initiated in recent years will be voluntarily dissolved (Amato, 2000: p., 1269).

In Turkey, which has a traditional structure compared to the West but which is at the same time situated among the developing Islamic countries in the world, the divorce rate has not risen as dramatically as it has in the Western countries (Sirvanlı-Ozen, 2005: p., 142). Although the figures are not at alarming level compared to western countries, still when considered in relation to past decades, there is a marked increase in divorce rates; for instance while during 1990s divorce rates fluctuated around 0.46 ‰ and 0.52 ‰, as of 2001 a great rupture of 1.35 ‰ was seen in divorce rate, the rates rose steadily since then, peaking around 1.40 ‰ in 2008. As Yılmaz & Fisiloglu (2005) states despite being a striking part of the social landscape in Turkey, studies on divorce are few to give knowledge about the whole portrait of

cultural norms and psychological features concerning Turkish people's post-divorce experience. Moreover, in the light of the literature survey it has been established that research on women's post divorce experience, a significant social phenomenon with immense impact it has on the various domains of the divorced women's lives in Turkey has almost become an untouched area except for a few studies.

In this thesis the post divorce experience of women is scrutinized. Couples after legal dissolution are considered to be more vulnerable and economically and emotionally deprived. Divorced women's economic, social, psychological well-being is examined looking into how they manage to adapt to their new lives after legal dissolution; how the distress is overcome; and how economic and social problems are coped with. In particular, such emergent themes as financial strain, single parenting after divorce, divorced women's self evaluation of life and divorce, changing social relationships and the societal attitudes they faced are pored over. As well, women's attitudes toward remarriage is explored, in fact, the sample of this study also includes remarried women therefore their experiences are also investigated. It is important to note that, the study examines post divorce period in a broader framework and looks into their mental transformation, attitudes, feelings and view of future.

Moreover, women's family roles are affected by the life events they are going through and when they undergo marital separation and divorce they face "the monumental challenge of making sense of their lives within a context of multiple losses and transitions" (Bisagni, 1999: 23). Therefore, as Lopata (1987) stresses further research is needed to scrutinize on areas in which each of major roles of women in family are influenced by the change in family form, social mobility, and removal of family members through separation, divorce and death and the effect of household compositions on all roles. We need to look into women's struggle to juggle between her newly found status and work life she has to do even better now to survive.

Therefore this study departs from the fact that post divorce experience of professional women is an unexplored issue in Turkey and uses a sociological

perspective. It searches for answers to the question whether act of divorce has an inhibitory effect on women's empowerment at large. An urbanite, educated and employed woman's termination of a failing, or abusing relationship itself can be considered as a sign of empowerment on her part; however, in a patriarchal setting where the concept of unmarried women is deemed as a threat to society's moral order, it will be an overstatement to say that women are enjoying their independence. Even if a woman keeps her economic independence after divorce and experience some positive outcomes which makes divorce an experience of relief, this may not be true for her social life, she may have to develop strategies to overcome informal social challenges and the grief emanating from these difficulties. So, as Gahler rightly pinpointed, "to divorce is to die a bit". In this regard, how does divorce affect women in terms of empowerment is a question this study underscores. In this connection, this study seeks insights into the following research questions:

- (i) How do women heal from divorce process during the post-divorce period? How should we evaluate the act of divorce in terms of women's empowerment in general sense?
- (ii) What are the areas where professional women face challenges and difficulties as well as relief and independence?
- (iii) How do they cope with day to day problems of single parenting, financial challenges and informal social sanctions? What sort of survival strategies do they develop?
- (iv) How does marital disruption affect professional women's notion of self? How do divorced women handle intense feelings of betrayal and abandonment, violence, husband's financial irresponsibility, emotional estrangement as they emerged as the divorce grounds of the participants?

1.1. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework informing the analyses of post divorce experience of professional women is embedded in feminist perspectives, socialist feminist theory in particular. Feminist theory opens us venue to comprehend better women's suffrage and resistance particularly at divorce because women's experiences provide us with a more genuine and in-depth knowledge for women's real condition. It is highly probable that non feminist and mainstream approaches problematize science, social life and politics in accordance with their perspectives, which may amount to distorted, incomplete knowledge. As Hesse-Biber (2007: 3) states "feminists bob and weave their threads of understanding, listening to the experiences of the "other/s" as legitimate knowledge". With this line of reasoning hardships women confront within the family are handled not by taking women's specific condition into account but with their wider implications to family and society. In this juncture we confront with the need for an alternative theory to focus bona fide on women's suffrage. In the words of Sandra Harding (1986), a prominent feminist who writes extensively on the essential role of feminist theory to bring an alternative gaze in problematizing issues:

Existing research norms have been constructed primarily to produce answers to the kinds of questions men ask about nature and social life and to prevent scrutiny of the way beliefs which are nearly of completely culture wide in fact cannot be eliminated from the results of research by these norms, a reliable picture of women's worlds and of social relations between sexes often requires alternative approaches to inquiry that challenge traditional research habit and raise profound questions which are no longer marginalized.

Using feminist perspective not only provides a theoretical framework for the study, it also offers an opportunity to identify ways in which women cope with difficulties or inhibitions but how they empower themselves through multiple survival strategies to live in the society. As feminist perspective does not only advocate critical analysis of the traditional family patterns where women are assigned subordinate roles, it also propels researchers to act in ways that will help create remedies. Therefore the analysis made in this thesis is embedded in context where challenges women go

through in the face of marital dissolution are revealed along with their active resistance against constraints and strategies. By doing so, this study attempts to contribute to the family studies in bringing a feminist perspective to by examining a family distress, an unexplored issue in Turkish context, through the lenses of women.

Moreover, families are changing in Turkey and across the world, and there are enormous challenges to traditional patterns of family such as delaying marriage, rising divorce rates which are highly related to increasing possibility of women's access to education and employment. The new trends and changes, in this respect, also call for feminist perspectives to analyze changes in women's perceptions.

1.2. Methodology

In this thesis, life story narrative interview was employed as the principle data collection technique. 31 professional women were interviewed in Istanbul, Ankara, and two respondents came from Denizli and Elazığ to participate in our study¹. Women's stories about their life and their post divorce experience in particular constituted the principal data for the study. The rationale for using narrative interviews in this study is that they provided us with a chance to see the larger context women experience divorce and its aftermath. in line with feminist perspectives, it is important to use non-exploitative, empowering research methodology, and for knowledge to be non-oppressive, it must emerge through

¹ Istanbul is the largest city in [Turkey](#) and [fifth largest city proper](#) in the world with a population of 12.8 million. It is the cultural, economic, and financial centre of [Turkey](#). The city covers 39 districts of the [Istanbul province](#) and is located on the [Bosphorus](#) extending both on the European ([Thrace](#)) and on the Asian ([Anatolia](#)) sides of the Bosphorus. Ankara is the [capital](#) of [Turkey](#) and the country's [second largest city](#) after [Istanbul](#). Centrally located in [Anatolia](#), Ankara is an important commercial and industrial city. It is the center of the [Turkish Government](#), and houses all foreign embassies. Denizli is a [province](#) of [Turkey](#) in Western [Anatolia](#) which is famous for its touristic attractions quite populous and moderately well to do city. Elazığ is a small province in Eastern Anatolian region. With respect to socioeconomic level the city is considered to be less developed when compared to western provinces in Turkey.

Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Istanbul>

dialogue with the researched (Mies, 1983; Smith, 1987). Even though both qualitative and quantitative research are used to achieve this end, for the most part feminist researchers opt for qualitative research methodologies since “qualitative methods adept at capturing symbolic meaning, ideology and subtle interaction” (Thompson, 1992: 8).

To analyze the data, the study dwells on grounded theory approach as an inductive way of data analysis. In this theory building method analytic categories derived from the interview data, categories are built, and theoretical concepts were constructed. Feminism and grounded theory concur on many levels. It is possible to enumerate the shared characteristics as follow.

First of all, “both grounded theory and feminist theory respect participants experience as a source of knowledge”, in other words, feminist theory derives information from women’s own experience, takes personal lives seriously, values everyday lives and in grounded theory researcher builds theory from the data, and participants accounts. As well, subjectivity is of paramount importance for both theoretical frameworks. And the very context women experience life events are important. In grounded theory this is provided through thick description where descriptive data are presented for the readers to draw their own conclusions. In feminist theory socio-political context where women experiences takes place is of great importance, since feminist believe that “women have certain experience because society is structured in certain ways by gender” (Ibid, p., 4) Since different cultural context and social background for the most part shows the complexities of suppression women face through understanding the very context is a significant undertaking.

Finally feminist perspective is also helpful “to avoid trying to fit the findings into a simple theory” (Noone, 2003) and all too often is inconclusive since any finding can be only a beginning to understand the results (Keller, 1983) and grounded theory advocates “developing theories from research grounded in data rather than deducible testable hypotheses from existing theories” (Charmaz, 2006: 4). Moreover feminists ask new questions that place women’s lives and those of “other” marginalized

groups at the center of social inquiry, they *disrupt* traditional ways of knowing to create rich meanings” (Hesse-Biber, 2007: 3).

A research conducted with feminist perspectives includes such important tenets as enumerated by Thomson (1992), it “(a) helps women connect their personal experience in families to the larger social context, (b) captures how women struggle against and adapt to family relations that nurture and oppress them, (c) provides a vision of non-oppressive family relations, (d) embraces the diversity among women and families by race, class, age (e) challenges prevailing concepts and assumptions in the discipline, including how we think about gender”.

Although this study owes greatly to feminist perspectives, it does not try to fit the findings into a specific theoretical model. Since grounded theory is employed in analyzing the data, theories grounded in data are developed. A feminist perspective guides to look at areas where women face unequal treatment and suppression as well as areas where they gain power by devising strategies to survive. At this point since “feminism will also add perspectives to consider that grounded theory may not alone consider”, at times I benefit from different feminist perspectives to gain a better sense of women’s divorce experience. I agree with scholars who states that despite divisive set of approaches feminism offers, attention to the differences can obscure fundamental points of agreement (Jagger, 1983; Tong, 1989 cited in Ferree, 1990: 866). The study specifically benefits from several fundamentals that are commonly characteristics of feminist theory: reflexivity in research and sustaining a close relationship with the research participants, to valuing subjectivity as source of knowledge, critical stance toward traditional paradigms and theories, exploring ways for women’s empowerment. (Thomson, 1992, Mies 1983, Reinharz 1992, Acker, et al., 1983)

1.3. Chapter Overviews

The dissertation consists of eight chapters including the introduction. Chapter II presents the theoretical framework and related literature review. The section begins with explaining feminist theory and the reasons for the predilection to use feminist

theory are presented. Feminist theory's evaluation of family and divorce is also treated and theoretical concepts that underlie the present inquiry are presented.

Moreover, in this section, the literature review on post divorce experience is presented. To provide a basis for the study both international and national literature on the very issue are used. Because a notable amount of research has focused on devastating financial consequences of divorce for most of the women, this issue took precedence; as well, more complex or even reverse economic outcomes for divorced women are investigated. In addition to immediate and long term economic difficulties, herein, the literature on social relationship/network after divorce is presented. According to this literature divorce women go through remarkable loss in social networks coupled with a partial loss in their social relationships. The underpinnings of this loss are examined in this section. Divorced women encounter social repercussions of their divorce more in a negative way and face disapproving societal attitudes, for, even if people become more familiar with the concept of divorce, it is still deemed as an unpleasant event that implied the failure of an individual, deviation from what is socially approved form of unity. With the literature presented, this issue and highlighted socioeconomic factors and effects of culture on shaping societal attitudes are examined. In elucidating this issue mostly the literature from Turkey is used.

In this thesis, post divorce experience is solely explored through lenses of women. Most of the literature on divorce focuses on the impacts of divorce on children, however, in this study, by way of contrast, the effects of having children on women's decision to get divorced, on her post divorce adjustment, on her future and career plans was explored. Finally, the literature review is concluded with the issue of remarriage. As no specific study examined remarriage in Turkey- except for few studies on divorce which has touched remarriage as part and parcel of their research, international literature was employed to give a picture. Statistical analysis was made by using the latest data from Turkish Statistical Institute (Turkstat) to give the overall portrait with regard to rate of remarriage in Turkey.

In the third chapter, general overview of family structure and sex roles in family are presented. Also provided here are legal and historical aspects of divorce in Turkish context, as well as statistical profile of divorce in Turkey.

In the fourth chapter the methodology of the research is discussed. The reasons for the choice of narrative interviews and the interview process are stated. Additionally, methodological discussions broached by feminist researchers are referred and drawing on the research experience of this study, the views as to such issues as women-to-women interviewing, issue of objectifying and subjectivity are given. Furthermore, the different experience of interviewing professional women and the distinct unfolding they provided us with are specifically discussed. How my interviews with participants at times were like academic conversations where we make sociological analysis of many issues related to family and women's condition in society; how they negotiated the social norms; how they talk on sensitive issues such as domestic violence and marital rape are presented.

Data analyses are presented in two different chapters. I explored the areas participants presented themselves as active agents of divorce process as well as sites where they came across hardships and challenges thwarting their mobility and empowerment. Chapter five discusses how women became active agent of divorce process divorce by looking into two important areas that concerned women most right after divorce; financial consequences of divorce and single parenting. Here how women go through this difficulty; what coping strategies they choose, how much downward mobility is case for the women in this sample, how we should understand family help in view of women's empowerment were elaborated. Also, following from the accounts of women, in this chapter, single parenting experience is discussed. In the study sample majority of the participants (24 women) were single parents. Majority of them were living on their own with their children except for three women two of whom were single parents living with their families at the time of our interview. Since all of them were working they either had paid child care or got family/ relative support. A number of themes emerged with respect to the question: How does single parenting affect women's lives? The emergent themes include positive aspect of single parenting, challenges and difficulties, handling the

absence of father in their children's lives and stigma attached to children from single parent homes.

Chapter six looks into areas where women faced challenges and hardships in the post divorce period, a while after divorce process. Here I also examine strategies the women interviewed devised in order to survive. And the over all implications of those strategies on their empowerment are discussed. The chapter depicts social stigma toward women and their social relationships. It is clear that in Turkey disapproval of divorce has declined over the years. The divorced do not feel marginal; nor do they receive outrage as their elders do decades ago. However, this does not mean that negative attitudes disappeared and the divorced are free of blaming and judgmental approaches. As will be seen in the quotations that indicate that individuals still feel that they are held accountable and blamed for their divorce, divorced women, in particular, feel under control and excluded. The experience of stigma at varying levels render them keep a distance in their social relationships, therefore, the divorced women in a way lose their married friends and thus narrow their networks. In this chapter, how women go through social repercussions of their divorce and what type of strategies they devised are discussed.

The chapter then discusses issue of self esteem. How the women participated in this study go through the healing process is delved into. How the feeling of being divorced, the feeling of rejection- or abuse in some certain cases-affect one's sense of self esteem and how the process of reconstructing an identity independent of marriage and ex-husband come about are discussed. Quotations reveal that many women after divorce attempt to redefine their identities and work toward reinstating their self-esteem. The association between the meaning of the work for women and source of sense of self they derive from work is also investigated. Finally the findings are evaluated in the light of their relation to women's empowerment.

Finally drawing on the recounts of the narrators seven of whom are remarried the impact of remarriage on the wellbeing and empowerment of women is discussed. Here I also talked to single divorcées about their attitudes to remarriage. With regard to remarriage some themes such as issue of trust in men and trust in marriage as an

institution; having children as a motive or deterrent element; emotional gratification; financial security and instability in remarriage were identified. There are some issues that are not categorized under different titles but embedded to the emergent themes; sexuality treated in methodology is an example of it.

In the seventh chapter, thinking that each case contributes to the overall frame of the thesis, I also include a unique case titled Intergenerational and Intra-Family Transmission of Divorce and its effects on the post divorce experience. Here, intergenerational transmission of divorce with respect to its impact on the post divorce experience of women is investigated.

Chapter eight provides discussion. It revisits high points drawn from the data and brings an interpretive perspective to the results presented. Also discussed here are main research questions posed above.

All in all, studying post divorce experience of women, which is an unexplored area in Turkey and employing a qualitative feminist research method and sociological perspective, this study intends to be a considerable contribution to the literature. As Nunez (1999) rightly denotes the prevalence of divorce and the great impact it appears to have on the various domains of the divorced person's life renders it a variable worthy of study. Before providing a more detailed depiction of the research we need to discuss the conceptual and methodological frame that informs this dissertation. We will review the literature that provides the background for this present study in the following chapter. A caveat in this sense is that over the duration of this thesis in line with the feminist theoretical perspective that I benefit greatly, I will be using the first person singular (I) to depict myself in my researcher role, and my agency in it.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

Many theories have been used to bring a different perspective and insight to divorce and its effects. The theories used thus far include Feminist theory (Carbonne, 1994), attachment theory (Hazan & Shaver, 1992), attribution theory (Grych & Fincham, 1992), symbolic interactionism (Orbuch, 1992), systems theory (Emery, 1994), the social capital perspective (Teachman, Paasch, & Carver, 1996), and the life-course perspective (Amato & Booth, 1997) (all cited in Amato, 2000) as well as grand theories such as Functionalist theory of Talcott Parsons. In this dissertation as theoretical framework feminist theory is used in an attempt to analyze post divorce experience solely through the experience of women. This predilection results from my assumption that the agents of change in the private sphere are women in Turkey, as elsewhere. This is due to the conflict women encounter in their relationship to men. It is a basic fact that conflict inevitably paves the way for change and who suffers more from the conflict strives more for the change, whom in this sense is woman. In almost all the societies where patriarchy exists with varying degrees, man is the beneficiary of the family; they gain in marriage, at divorce, in post divorce period at the expense of women. Therefore, backed by patriarchy men may find it hard to come to terms with women's demand for equality in public and private life; in an effort to secure the private domain they may chastise any challenge to it.

Another pertinent concern we should pinpoint is that public and private life is interwoven, that is, any transformation in private domain will have its repercussions in public sphere as well, in that sense the change in private realm can be embryonic state of a far reaching transformation. This brings us to an assertion that by challenging patriarchy which is an immemorial reality endemic to all societies

women have been leading the historical social changes at large which deserves special attention.

As was stated above existing research norms are limited in giving answers to the questions posed by women. Feminist research encompasses women's subjective experience and knowledge deciphering the actual experiences in place of distorted "with a grounded understanding of everyday existence" (Smith 1987; Thomson 1992; Baber and Allen 1992) Therefore, I expect feminist theory to open me venue to comprehend better women's suffrage and resistance particularly at divorce. Deeming existing form of scientific research as incomplete and 'male-stream' feminist theory attempts to examine science, history, nature and social life with a new perspective by involving women experiences.

This thesis benefits greatly from feminist perspectives by moving women's experiences to the center of attention, and aims to examine the divorce experience for women by revealing areas they face suppression and at the same time stress the power and empowerment of women. According to Feminist sociologist, Bisagni (1999) feminist research not only situates women's predicament and suppression at the center of research, it also looks into women's diverse means toward self-empowerment. Making women's experience center of our attention helps us to gain a better sense of "what women do for families as well as what families do for women" (Glenn, 1987).

Addressing family as an important dimension of feminist research and policy agenda came to fore more with the second wave feminism² where wide array of issues

²Feminist movements are categorized as First wave, second and third wave feminism according to the chronology of events that pushed different currents in these waves. First wave feminism emerged in 1850's as an organized feminist movement in Britain. A group of middle-class women, led by Barbara Bodichon (1827-91) and Bessie Rayner Parkes (1829-1925), met to discuss issues and publish the English Woman's Journal (1858-64). The key concerns of First Wave Feminists were education, employment, the marriage laws, and the plight of intelligent middle-class single women. They were not primarily concerned with the problems of working-class women, nor did they necessarily see themselves as feminists in the modern sense (the term was not coined until 1895). 'Second Wave' feminism on the other hand was coined by Marsha Lear, and refers to the feminist movements occurred in America, Britain, and Europe from the late sixties onwards. The movement is usually believed to have begun in 1963, when "Mother of the Movement" Betty Friedan published her bestseller, *The Feminine Mystique*. The slogan 'the personal is political' gives clear indication that in addition to extending the range of social opportunities open to women, Second Wave Feminism focuses on the spheres of reproduction, sexuality and cultural representation, change in

ranging from family, sexuality, de facto inequalities and reproductive rights and many other neglected topics were subjected to scholarly exploration. Feminist thinkers realized that “social science thinking about the family has been male centered, the paradigms used to model the family have been framed in male language and reflect male thought, thus distorting women’s experiences and disguising the gendered nature of family experience” (Glenn, 1987). Moreover, in conventional research “not only are women devalued as members of families, but also the discipline of family studies marginalized, particularly because it is seen as primarily a study of women (Baber and Allen, 1992). Therefore, feminist researchers came to fore to change the nature of studies and theories built in family field. Moreover, the interest in scrutinizing family and related issues continued until recently, indeed a recent study, assessing the place of feminism in family studies, found that feminist thought became more visible in family studies journal (i.e. Journal of Marriage and the Family, Family Issues and Family Relations) since 1972, and “from 1992 to 2002 almost 1 out of 4 articles appeared to be influenced at least minimally by feminist scholarship” which moved the trend “from almost no feminist scholarship at the beginning of second wave of feminist to having just under 25% of articles with feminist and gender content in 2002”(Wills & Risman, 2006). “Feminist thinking now informs some of the best research on violence in the family, on single-parent families, on the relation between employment and family life, and on the impact of public policy on families” (Ferree, 1990: 866), in fact it is safe to claim that feminists have changed what family scholars study . For example, “in the past two decades, feminist researchers have explored housework, combinations of wage work and family, wife battering, mother- daughter bonds, care giving, intimacy, and so on.” (Thompson, 1992: 4).

It is important to note that rather than concentrating on bringing a clear cut definition to family or taking family as a “unit of analysis” they focused more on

domestic and private lives. Different feminist schools ranging from Liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, Socialist feminism and Radical feminism voiced out aspects of private lives that are suppressing women. Second Wave Feminism did not just make an impact upon western societies, but has also continued to inspire the struggle for women's rights across the world. Sources: Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second-wave_feminism,WavesofFeminism, http://www.georgetowncollege.edu/Departments/ws/1st,_2nd,_3rd_wave.htm,

underlying structures in relation to family (i.e. sex roles, motherhood, socialization in the family) (Thorne, 1992). Challenging the dichotomy between private and public, family and society feminists reject the idea that family is an isolated unit, rather they stress that there are strong connections between families and wider networks like “organization of paid work, state-organized welfare, schools, day-care centers, and other institutions”(Ibid, p., 5), by emphasizing this, feminists were able to bring up important questions regarding the conflicting relationship between family and women’s employment, caring, and the market.

2.1.1. Feminist Schools and Feminist Accounts of Family and Divorce

In this section feminist schools and their accounts of family and women’s condition in family are examined. Although there are numerous feminist schools with numerous different perspectives, it proves helpful to limit our view to major feminist schools such as liberal, Marxist, Radical and Socialist feminists. At the end of this section the main theoretical orientation of this thesis is discussed.

Liberal feminism as the earliest feminist school represented by Mary Wollstonecraft, John Stuart Mill and Betty Friedman, a more contemporary figure, strives for women emancipation more within the political sphere. Encouraging women to transgressing the traditional roles that limit their potential to achieve their ‘personal wholeness’ and to strive toward more meaningful goals like attaining a stable position in the labor force, the liberal feminists demanded equality of opportunity in the workforce, education and politics to lay the foundation for these developments and create policies to facilitate them. Given their emphasis on the political aspect of emancipation, suffrage movements can be considered as the earliest strive toward women emancipation. This school believes that to be able to vote is to be in a position not only to express one’s personal views but also to change those systems, structures, and attitudes that contribute to one’s own or other’s oppression (Tong, 1998: p.20). The main goal is to create a just society in which equality of rights and freedom can grow, so this school does not necessarily foregrounds women’s benefit as the sole aim but emphasizes a better end for society and humanity as a whole. In

Mill's words (1910), if women were recognized as fully rational and worthy of the same civil liberties and economic opportunities as men, society would reap benefits: public-spirited citizens for itself, intellectually stimulating spouses for husbands, a doubling of the mass of mental faculties available for the higher services of humanity and a multitude of very happy women.

Liberal feminism has a reformist stance to gender problem and patriarchal structure as opposed to the stances of Marxist and Radical school of feminism. They are less interested in changing the position of women by dismantling ingrained economic and traditional foundations. To illustrate, instead of challenging the underpinnings of Sexual division of labor they promote have it all, do it all, be it all attitudes, which may exacerbate women's difficult conditions. Moreover, the ideal that women should be man's equal led them to lose sight of the issue of foregrounding women's difference from man and women's gaining a self, an identity independent of man. Because of their adherence to political and legal rights, such popular and mind probing questions as whether there is a homogeneous women with the same experience and condition, whether the concept of motherhood is simply a domestic role or a complicated, symbolic or emotional one (Elstain,1981: p.253) are also left unanswered.

Due to its emphasis on reforming the very economic, legal and social system without challenging or examining their underpinnings, liberal feminism is criticized for not delving into the very structures that created disadvantageous condition for women both in family and in society. Moreover their remedy for women's empowerment by calling for greater involvement in employment, in political and education is deemed insufficient:

Even liberal feminists of the second wave in the US (such as Betty Friedan) who pushed for women's engagement in the public sphere did not challenge the role of men in the private family sphere, nor did they push for men to be fuller partners in housework and childcare (Budig, 2004: p., 416).

Although they emphasize reforms for making women's career life more compatible with their domestic responsibilities, it will not be fair to say that they overlook the fact that it will help establish domestic works including child care as the primarily

women's duty. A liberal feminist, Kay (1987), states when both parents are available neither should become the primary nurturing parent. Men should be able to draw an important aspect of their self esteem and identity from their parental roles and that women, like men, should be able to lead productive, independent life outside the family.

Likewise regarding issue of divorce, proponents of liberal feminism deem reforms essential:

Adequate and affordable day care, more flexible hours, maternal leave and greater provision for interrupted and part time employment without assessment of a substantial career advancement penalty would contribute to greater recognition and support for the care giving role (Carbone, 1994: 12)

In view of no-fault divorce liberal feminists question its economic outcomes in the aftermath of divorce, because in fault based divorce the innocent partner in a way is awarded by alimony and specifically for unemployed women this alimony means survival, however in this type of divorce this is no longer the case, so it may be disadvantage for women. While criticizing this on one hand, the liberal feminists find no-fault divorce as emancipating women on the other hand. According to Singer (1989: p., 67) known with her liberal feminist perspectives, the fault system constitutes 'a double edged sword' that reinforced the value of a woman's domestic activities in ways that restrict women's options outside the home and risk hurting women in the long run by suggesting that the causes and cures for inequality lie solely in the domestic sphere.

Feminist scholars, coming from a Marxist tradition, evaluated family as an institution in relation to state, economy and politics. Their approaches owe to Engels conceptualization of family as a site where first class opposition that appeared in history started, with the antagonism between man and women in monogamous marriage took place: "family is a cellular form of civilized society where the nature of oppositions is active" (Engels, 1884). Heidi Hartman emphasizes family's relationship with capitalism and patriarchy:

Our present social structure rests upon an unequal division of labor by class and by gender which generates tension, conflict, and change. These underlying patriarchal and capitalist relations among people, rather than familial relations themselves, are the sources of dynamism in our society (368).

Further, they argued that this dynamism is pregnant with conflict which has been going on for so long, Hartman (1981) in her work, *The Family as the Locus of Gender, Class, and Political Struggle: The Example of Housework*, criticizes family historians overlooking conflict of interests in the family:

The family is generally seen as a social entity that is a source of dynamic change, an actor, an agent, on a par with such other "social forces" as economic change, modernization, or individualism. Such a view assumes the unity of interests among family members; it stresses the role of the family as a unit and tends to downplay conflicts or differences of interest among family members. Despite the spread of capitalism and centralized, bureaucratic states, and their penetration into more and more areas of social life, people in households still manage to retain control over crucial resources and particular areas of decision. Family historians have helped us understand the strength and endurance of family units and their retention of power in many areas. The family historians may not have been sensitive to power relations within the family, but they have focused on another aspect of the same phenomenon—the interdependence of people within households and their common stance as a household against the incursion of forces that would alienate their resources or their control over decision making (393).

So the family hosted the first division of labor, the first inequality, and the first oppression. Like liberal feminists, more emphatically than them, Marxist feminist theorists criticize division of labor within family; they make the historical analysis of this division which not only benefits the husband but also the whole economic system. To them before industrialization family itself was the economic unit where production was carried out, however, with industrialization production moved to factories while families were left as non productive private spheres where women are the sole responsible agents. Because the works done in the domestic sphere did not yield immediate profits to recycle in the market, capitalist came to view it as unimportant, not worthy of payment which is termed in Marxist feminist literature

as ‘trivialization of women’s work’. Accordingly the ground for the unequal treatment of gender therefore was founded.

In order to change this condition some Marxist feminist theorist like Margaret Benston suggest socialization of domestic labor by which domestic works like child care, cooking, cleaning move to the public sphere and done by workers as the ‘real’ work.

Women particularly married women with children, who work outside the home simply do two jobs; their participation in the labor force is allowed if they continue to fulfill their first responsibility in the home. Equal access to jobs outside the home, while the preconditions for women will not in itself be sufficient to give equality for women as long as work in the home remains a matter of private production and is the responsibility of women. They will simply carry a double work-load, to introduce a woman to the public industry without simultaneously socializing the jobs of cooking; cleaning is to make her oppressed condition even worse (1969: 21).

Marxist tradition identified patriarchy in its relation mode of production, in other words capitalism. Since they stress that subordination of women cannot be isolated from the other forms of exploitation, they emphasized women’s unpaid domestic labor and its capitalist exploitation (Dalla Costa 1972). They find capitalism unwilling to change women’s position in private sphere, because, this condition per se helps the system to gain more. The capitalist benefits from unpaid domestic works because the workers meet their domestic needs through their wives which otherwise was to be provided by the capitalist himself. Concerning this, Maria Rosa Della Costa and Selma James (1972, p. 34) propose wages for housework. Gender inequality manifest itself in the work place as well; women get lower wages as compared to those of their male counterparts in labor force and do the jobs like nursing, teaching in accordance with their sex roles. Because they constitute the cheap labor of work force they form what Marx called ‘reserve army of labor’. Furthermore, in most cases the woman rather than man will be the one to quit work and retreat from public world back into the private world (Tong, 1999: p.111) Moreover, patriarchal nature of relationships renders women vulnerable in the face

of family stress, say divorce, since their primary duty is considered to be care they do not commit themselves to their works and careers.

It is important to note that Marxist Feminist theory treats family more from a critical angle not only because family recreates sexual division of labor but also because families are functional for capitalist system to proceed on. Consumption taking place in families help capitalism to recycle itself, makes women dependent on men and men dependent on labor market. Margaret Benson, one of the prominent Marxist feminist theorists denotes that since the production, which is done at home, is paid by the husband his earning, his ability to withhold labor from the market is much reduced (Holborn and Haralambos, 1995: p., 329)

Marxist feminists challenge the idea that families are becoming more and more egalitarian and love and affection are basic tenets of family. They try to shed light on what is lurking behind this perfect picture indicating how authoritarian the families are and how the violence is perpetuated in the family. Nevertheless, it would be overstatement to say that families are totally ruled out in Marxist feminist vision of future, Rosemarie Putnam Tong, referring to Engel's statements below emphasize that Marxist criticism of family is directed toward family as an economic unit, not as an emotional unit (Tong,1999: 115):

What we can now conjecture about the way in which sexual relations will be ordered after the impending overthrow of capitalist production is mainly of negative character, limited to the most part to what will disappear. But what will there be new? That will be answered when a new generation has grown up: a generation of men who never in their lives have known what it is to buy a woman's surrender with money or any other social instrument of power; a generation of women who have never known what it is to give themselves to their lover from fear of the economic consequences. When these people are in the world, they will care precious little what anybody today thinks they ought to do; they will make their own practices and that will be the end of it.

Radical feminism, another major feminist school, views family as the “linchpin” of women’s unequal treatment and gender injustice (Okin 1989), family is a site where patriarchy is procreated and reinforced. They also stressed sexual domination, reproduction of women and violence in the family (MacKinnon 1989). In fact Radical feminist were the first to make visible the ways in which women’s sexuality is controlled by offering careful and insightful analyses of sexual harassment, women battering, marital rape, date rape, contraceptive laws and practices. Violence against women is manifestation of male domination and female submission which also construct the whole concept of sexuality (i.e. Catharine McKinnon, 1992). To McKinnon (1992), the construction of sexuality on the basis of male domination is basis of other forms of male domination be it political, economic and religious. To this school of thought the discourse of separate spheres disguises women’s suppression and renders the governments to be reluctant to interfere in private matters like domestic violence. In fact, radial feminists are considered to contribute greatly to the scholarship particularly in two ways; (i) by delineating the ways that men attempt to control women’s bodies and (ii) by articulating the ways that patriarchy construct female sexuality to serve men’s desires and self interests (Budig, 2004: p., 424). What is particular about radical feminist theory is that it is essentially a theory of, by and for women’s and therefore sees no need to compromise with any existing perspectives and agendas. For here the qualifier does to point to some other area of theory or politics but rather enhances its solitary pride in independence (Lovell, 1996: p., 310).

Sexuality, women’s reproduction and human biology are some of the issues they deem are the basis of gender inequality and therefore are of great concern to them. Unlike what Marx stated that class inequality is the foremost oppression, proponents of radical feminism depict that gender inequality is the immemorial and universal one and the primary agent causing this oppression is male power. In this connection Shulamith Firestone, the leading radical feminist, in her controversial book, *The Dialectic of Sex*, applies Marx’s dialectic materialism and comes up with sex class in lieu of class structure of Marx as the driving force of history and contradictions within society. Just as the goal of communist revolution is in a classless society to

obliterate class distinctions, the ultimate goal of feminist revolution is, in an androgynous society to obliterate sexual distinctions (Tong, 199: p., 73).

To radical feminists, the confrontational sex classes emanates from so called Biological differences. Kate Millet emphasizes this point and writes extensively how this difference is prevalent in our lives ranging from culture to language:

Patriarchal ideology exaggerates biological differences between men and women, making certain that men always have the dominant or masculine roles and women always have the subordinate and feminine ones. This ideology is so powerful that men are usually able to secure the apparent consent of the very women they oppress, they do this through institutions such as the academy, church, family each of which justifies and reinforces women's subordination to men resulting in most women's internalization of a sense of inferiority to men (Millet, 1970).

In an effort to reveal the basis of patriarchy Millet treats issues like Physical force in the form of violence against women, educational and economic inequalities that confines women to stay in private sphere, socialization in the family, media and culture's contribution to that with a certain image of women in addition to sexist language. What's worse is that thanks to these mechanisms women interiorize patriarchy's teachings.

Like liberal and Marxist feminists they disparage the sexual division of labor at home and at work, specifically women's double-day work as a result of the allocation of domestic labor to them. They placed greater emphasis on women's reproduction and delved into the psychological and sociological underpinnings of mothering. A leading feminist, Ann Oakley, challenged the notion of 'maternal instinct' that is, the idea that woman cannot part with reproduction, their biology needs this. To her this is just a 'social construction', 'a myth with an oppressive purpose'. Women may desire mothering because they are grown up with this ideal as their ultimate goal. Another related question is, whether mothering is really feminine task. Radical feminist theories definitively negate this assumption that only

women can mother believing that “Patriarchal society teaches its members that the women who bear a child is best suited to rear him or her” (Tong, 1999: 80)

Men have convinced women that unless a woman is mother, she is not really a woman. Indeed until recently, the forces of patriarchy most women that mothering is their one and only job. This view of course very restricting, it denies women access to the public realm of culture it also denies women the right to have and fulfill their own wants and needs, good mothers are not supposed to have any personal friends and plans unrelated to those of their families (Rich,1994)

Another related question is, whether mothering is really feminine task in the first place. Radical feminist theories definitely negate this assumption that only women can mother. Patriarchal society teaches its members that the women who bear child is best suited to rear him or her (Tong, 199: 80).

This issue is frequently raised particularly in the framework of child custody at divorce. The common sense wisdom that takes women as the primary caretaker has its implications for divorce policies. Except certain circumstances like abject poverty or mental illnesses the custodial parent of a child is always mother. Radical feminist emphatically reject the attribution of observed differences to women’s true preferences; they maintain that it is impossible to know what women would prefer in the absence of the patriarchal system which now exists (Czapanski, 1991: 1415-81). Moreover the taken for granted belief that in all circumstances it’s only woman who can mother a child exacerbates women’s situation specifically during and after divorce. Smart and Neale, in their research conducted with an in-depth interview to sixty divorced couples, conclude that when mothers see themselves as responsible and more experienced in childcare, then they go through the period of transition to post divorce parenting in a very painful way, they realize that they are expected to relinquish this feeling of responsibility to someone who usually did not actually share it during marriage and who might be inept at physical care work, let alone emotional one. (1999: p., 50)

So they denounce this role which is denoted as handicap on the way to career path and liberation of women, because the more they spend time on reproduction, childcare the less they get their share from the market and for human capital.

Socialist feminism is an influential feminist school that differs in its view of what constitutes women's oppression in our contemporary era. It criticizes Marxist feminism for it does not pore over the underlying reason of capitalism's treatment of gender inequality sufficiently and that they deem patriarchy as an extension of capitalism. Namely, capitalism oppresses women more than men yet, how come this process is so easy and what lies the ground for this process are not delved into as such by the Marxist feminists. The priority given to the workers' emancipation before that of women leads Socialist feminists to conceive Marxist thinking as sex blind. To them Marxist feminism does not really highlight how patriarchy interacts with capitalism.

Although socialist feminists agree with Marxist feminists that women's liberation depends on the overthrow of capitalism, they claim that capitalism cannot be destroyed unless patriarchy is also destroyed and that people's material or economic relations cannot change unless their ideologies are also changed, women must fight two wars, not one, in order to be liberated from the forces of oppression (Tong: 1998, 119-120).

Moreover, these two concepts are reinforcing, procreating each other; what women go through in capitalism is not aloof from patriarchy. Heidi Hartman in her article *Capitalism, Patriarchy and Job Segregation by Sex* bluntly depicts this symbiotic relationship:

Job segregation by sex is primary mechanism in capitalist society that maintains the superiority of men over women, because it enforces lower wages for women in the labor market; low wages keep women dependent on men because they encourage women to marry; married women must perform domestic chore for their husbands (1990: 146)

In their view of what constitutes women's oppression socialist feminism takes neither capitalism nor patriarchy, per se, as the core reasons, instead they pose 'capitalist patriarchy' as the term they devised under the rubric of 'dual system theory' defined by Marshall (1994:84) as relatively autonomous yet mutually supportive and interrelated systems of domination for the analysis of women's suppression. By so doing they in a way combine patriarchy and capitalism and places more weight on the interrelation between the two. As Alison Jaggar (1983:3) put, they attempt to synthesize the best insights of the radical and Marxist traditions. Prominent socialist feminist Zillah Eisenstein, in her article *Constructing a Theory of Capitalist Patriarchy and Socialist Feminism* goes one step further and states how she uses Marxist class analysis as the thesis, radical feminist patriarchal analysis as the antithesis and that from the two evolves the synthesis of socialist feminism.

Socialist feminist theorists understand women's oppression and exploitation in a different vein and draw a fine line between the two. Exploitation in their understanding refers to the economic reality of capitalist class relations; oppression on the other hand calls attention to power within patriarchy-somewhat different from Marx's view that oppression and exploitation are equal. This understanding also includes a criticism against Marx that equating the two as a matter of fact is reducing oppression to exploitation:

I believe that women's oppression is rooted in more than her class position and that one must address as well her position within patriarchy both structurally and ideologically to fully understand women's oppression (Eisenstein, 1990: 130).

Contrary to what liberal feminists approve, socialist feminists are not satisfied with the reforms done to ameliorate women's condition. Juliet Mitchell (1971) illustrates this point by stating that despite widespread availability of safe, effective and inexpensive reproduction-controlling technologies, women fail or refuse to use them, as a result the causal chain of maternity, family and absence from production and public life, sexual inequality continues to bind women to their subordinate status. So, conscious raising is the true revolution for them; women should be cognizant of the inequalities surrounding them:

In Mitchell's understanding patriarchal ideology which views women as lovers, wives and mothers rather than as workers is at least as responsible for women's position in society as capitalist economic is. Even if a Marxist revolution manages to destroy the family as economic unit, it will not make women men's equal, because of the ways in which patriarchy has constructed men's and women's psyches. Women will continue to remain subordinate to men until their minds and men's have been liberated from the thought that women are less than men's full equals (Tong: 1998, 121).

In line with this cognitive liberation Alison Jaggar (1983) puts forward 'alienation', another revised concept adapted from Marxism. To her, due to their sexuality and motherhood women are alienated from their body. In their attempt to be attractive and sexual, women adorn themselves by keeping fit, making up all the time, augmenting the breast, etc., and they do all these extra loads to please the men, their body turns into an object for themselves and for the men. Also to her, mothering is no dissimilar; in societies where childbearing is encouraged women are pressured to bear as many children as they can, in a similar fashion, there are circumstances when children are deemed as economic burden in that case women are discouraged from childbirth, so in both situations someone else decides her childbirth not her, which alienates her from her body.

Socialist feminist view of family rests on criticism of the unequal structuring of human activity in the household which produces the sexist system for the benefit of capitalism and patriarchy. Ehrenreich (1990: 267) sums up the concern they have around family:

The discovery of the importance of women's domestic work put some flesh on the abstract union of capitalism and patriarchy. First it gave patriarchy which had otherwise had a somewhat ghostly quality (stretched as it was to include everything from rape to domestic slovenliness) as material base in a man's control over women's labor power. Second it revealed a vivid parallel between the private sphere where patriarchy was still ensconced and the public sphere where capital called the

shots. In the public sphere men labored at production and in the private sphere women labored at reproduction (not only physical reproduction but the reproduction of attitudes and capabilities required for all types of work). Finally it showed how essential patriarchy was to capitalism: most capitalist institutions produced only things but quintessential patriarchal institution, the family, produced the men who produced things-thanks to the labor of women.

This line of reasoning also indicated that the works women performed in family ranging from cooking, homemaking, childrearing, etc., were not recognized as production whatsoever, let alone accepting them as reproduction, which was a serious 'oversight'-as Margaret Benson came to name. Socialist feminist's solution to this oversight was variegated, ranging from industrialization of housework to socialization of child rearing, women's entrance to market economy, and wage for housework. However, even if the proposal for "wage for housework" was fulfilled, women's underrepresented position would continue as long as they were confined to domestic sphere, Juliet Mitchell (1974) elaborates on this:

Men enter into the class-dominated structures of history while women (as women whatever their actual work in production) remain defined by the kinship patterns of organization. In our society the kinship system harnessed into the family-where a woman is formed in such a way that that is where she will stay. Differences of class, historical epoch, and specific social situations alter the expression of femininity; but in relation to the law of the father, women's position across the board is a comparable one.

Being aware of what postindustrial era has brought, socialist feminist theorists criticize Mitchell's analysis saying that it no longer speaks for the reality of women in present era, because now more women than ever before have places in labor market. In this juncture socialist feminism diverted their interest to patriarchy to trace the underpinnings of inequality, yet soon they have realized that patriarchy and capitalism are overlapped and should be addressed for an all embracing analysis:

The division of labor embodied in women's identification with private sphere and men's with public sphere was a theoretical construct having as much applicability to the present as to the past; yet in truth such a division arose historically with

capitalist industrialization, when work was transferred to the factory (Philipson and Hansen, 1990: 20)

Another critique in regard to division of labor in family concerns motherhood. They stress mystification of motherhood which implies that mother alone can build their children's lives and they are responsible for the vicissitudes of their children's lives which inundates women with more task than they can bear. It reduces mother to one dimension, ignoring the fact that they have activities, interests, needs and relationship apart from mothering. (Glenn 1987: 361). Moreover, regardless of the "complexity of motherhood" (Oakley, 1979) women are given the task of mothering "but are deprived of the power to determine the actual conditions of mothering, they also criticized increasing control of these conditions by male professionals and "experts" (Ehrenreich and English, 1978 cited in Glenn 1987: 361). And an important implication of role allocation in the family is that individuals feel overly inundated with the urge to live up to the assigned roles. Because "centrality of family roles for women is taken for granted, despite current trends in labor force participation, rising age at first marriage, delayed childbearing, and current low fertility rates" (Lopata, 1987: 381). Moreover being in need of money, many women had to continue paid employment after marriage and motherhood, so overwhelming women by prompting them to live up to the assigned gendered roles creates not only conflict in the family but it also render women to go through distress, or rather trauma. Again due to socially determined sex roles, women are always to blame when they fail to conform to the social expectations.:

By blaming parents especially women, the social, economic and political factors that underlie poverty, unemployment, crime, deviance, single parenthood, and educational failure and so on are ignored. The answer to all society's ills is seen as reconstituting the patriarchal nuclear family, not reforming society. Nor should state help and support parents in their roles (Abbot and Wallace, 1992: 136)

They also challenge right wing policies which reinstates patriarchal nuclear family setting as the universal and most rational setting. Socialist feminist theorists Abbot

and Wallace in their study where they criticize New Rights policies in England respond to these policies thus:

Sociological research in Britain and United States also challenges many of the arguments of the new Right. Satisfaction with family life has probably increased in recent years, and this appears due to greater affluence resulting in higher living standards. Men spend more time at home, and families are increasingly child-centered. higher divorce rate may cause temporary distress and disruption but on balance have probably added to the improvements in the quality of married life, as people no longer feel compelled to stay with someone for whom they no longer care. The evidence of the effects of divorce on children is contradictory, but on balance it suggests that they suffer no longer-term psychological damage. The idea that broken families are responsible for raising children without a strong morality also does not hold up to close scrutiny. It seems that it is the quality of family life not the presence of both parents that is the key factor in influencing childhood and adolescent development. This is mainly determined by the family's overall income and the availability of social and economic support. The problems of single-parent families are caused by poverty rather than the absence of a father. (Abbot and Wallace, 1992:139)

So they challenge traditional roles assigned to women, expect women to acquire true independence from patriarch; with these ideas in their minds they watch state policies and are critical of reforms which try to reinstitutionalize patriarchal nuclear family, "The new right view of the family ignores not just the dark side of family life-wife assault, wife rape, child assault and child rape-but also the domination and exploitation of women in marriage" (ibid:139).

The sexual division of labor which handicaps women to enter the labor force and public sphere also makes them disadvantaged during and after marriage. A sizable number of studies show how women are prioritizing their family's needs to their work and career achievements which puts them in very disadvantages positions after the divorce. (See citations given in above section), since being inexperienced, women may have difficulty to adapt themselves to the workforce after divorce.

Also, socialist feminists are critical of the transformation in labor force for it does not really help women. Although there has been a large scale increase in mothers' labor force participation, there has been no corresponding increase in fathers' domestic contributions and women continue to bear the overwhelming responsibility for child rearing. Therefore, it turns out that in all the societies where patriarchy exists with varying degrees, man is the beneficiary of the family; they gain in marriage, at divorce, in post divorce period at the expense of women.

Regarding child custody joint-custody is offered as a solution. This regulation, they believe, help dismantle the common belief that mothers are the sole caretakers:

Unlike the neutral best interest test or 'primary caretaker' presumption, these rules promote the affirmative assumption that both parents should and will take important roles in the care and nurturing of their children which is essential to any realistic reshaping of gender roles within parenthood (Carbone, 1994:p., 197)

Hartsock (1986), in this juncture, cautions us as to the pitfall deriving from women's adaptation to her new role that a redefinition of self might affect each areas of her life. Because women are socialized to think that that their primary role is to attend others need so upon martial dissolution they might face an in limbo situation where they feel worthless. And it may take a long while to gain sense of sense.

2.1.2. Theoretical Orientation of the Thesis

For our study we will draw on Socialist feminist theory when analyzing the interwoven relationship of patriarchy and capitalism. In our case to what extent patriarchy and to what extent capitalism suppresses women is blurred, at times it sounds it is the economic system which has the bigger role, however, patriarchy impedes women's empowerment even though they have a stable place in work force. Hosgor-Gunduz & Smith (2007) in their study, *Variation in Labor Market Participation of Married Women in Turkey*, where they explored the role of paid

work in women's empowerment conclude that "the cultural factors that restrict women's possibilities to be active in the public domain still play a major role in Turkey".

Moreover, it is important to bear in mind that in Turkish setting even the republican ideology reproduces patriarchy by entrenching women's mothering and nurturing role since it is deemed essential for women to take over the mission of inculcating republican ideals and transmit them to the next generation. Therefore socialist feminism in its contention that the relationship of capitalism and patriarchy is more complex and interwoven will help us to unravel this conundrum. As we said the real change started with women's changing attitudes, which lends support to socialist feminist assertion that the real liberation will be in the minds of women.

Another reason for the usage of socialist feminism in this study is its emphasis on class. In this study, middle class women, highly educated and employed, will be the main focus. As supported by a growing body of literature that there are many devastating financial consequences for women after divorce (Brandwein, et al 1974; Corcoran 1979; Weiss 1984; McLindon 1987; Arendell 1987; Devillier and Forsyth 1988; Weitzman 1981, 1985; Duncan and Hoffman 1985; Gerstel 1987; Grella 1990; Holden and Smock 1991; Smock 1994; Amato 2000; Moorefield, et al 2007; Arıkan 1990, 1992, 1996; Tor 1993; Demirci 2000), and it is hard reality that divorced women face economic hardships more than men, face a dramatic downward mobility (Grella, 1990:41) and fall into a different socioeconomic class status. It is hard to say, though, that there is a vast array of literature particularly on the class analysis of divorced women. One possible reason for this understatement as depicted by Brandwein, et al (1974: 502) is that, the assumed social class status of divorced women demonstrates the assumption of female dependence built into the concept of class by "routinely measuring a divorced woman's status in terms of her ex-husband or her father, thus denying that she has any status of her own". In this study analysis of women's socio-economic condition as part of women's post divorce experiences is incorporated. Women's reduced economic condition, downward mobility or upward

mobility for that matter are looked into. As stated before middle class professional women are sampled in this study and their socioeconomic standing are determined by sociological indicators such as annual income, years of education and type of neighborhood participants reside.

2.2. Overview of Two Theoretical Concepts: Patriarchy and Empowerment

In this section I discuss two central concepts patriarchy and empowerment that inform the present research. Since patriarchy has been talked above with respect to feminist schools, here I will limit the discussion to controversies over patriarchy and how I use the concept in this study. Next I talk about empowerment as the central concept of this dissertation.

2.2.1. Some Reflections on Patriarchy

The concept of patriarchy has been utilized in feminist theory to explain underpinnings of male dominance and women's suppression and in fact "feminists of a variety of different persuasions have seized on the concept of patriarchy in search for an explanation of feelings of oppression and subordination and in the desire to transform these feelings of rebellion into political practice" (Beechey, 1979). Specifically with second wave feminism since the late 1960s patriarchy has been carried back into popular and academic currency (Pateman, 1988:19). In the feminist scholarship patriarchy came to be analyzed by two main approaches materialists and ideological (Littlewood, 2004). Although numerous feminist concurred that patriarchy had a material basis they diverged over its basis, some (Hartman 1979) stressed men's control over women's labor, some stressed the interrelation between capitalism and patriarchy in addition to the emphasis on material base of it (Mitchel 1974), others (McKinnon) stated control over sexuality, "almost all (feminist schools) however agreed that it was not biological and could therefore be changed". (Ibid, p., 81).

Although the concept of patriarchy is marker of feminist perspective, it is important to note that there were common discussions over patriarchy's conceptualization and

usefulness. Wide range of questions was vented as to the universality vs. historicity of patriarchy, along with the question of its real place in family vs. society. Further Sylvia Walby summed up the major criticisms that the term patriarchy “cannot explain the differences between forms of gender equality at different times and places, nor with the diversity of experiences of women” this was particularly in relation to class and ethnicity. More importantly, some thinkers went so far as to suggest abandoning the concept totally (Pateman, 1988). Since it is beyond the scope of this dissertation I will not delve into these theoretical discussions which should better be treated as a different dissertation topic. However it is important to state that these discussions got many feminist scholars to revisit the concept and come up with reformulation which came handy for us the researchers to examine gender inequalities taking place around us more in a subtle ways. Socialist feminist Gayle Rubin (1975), first raised her hesitation finding it unsettling to label all societies with the same concept regardless of their specific condition. Rubin’s analysis inspired other feminist scholars to reflect on the very concept and presented various conceptualization and formulations. The common criticisms were revolving around the concepts being too general or at times too vague to analyze (Littlewood, 2004). Reiterating the fact that “the desire to produce a powerful theory has been tempered by the problems of catching the specificity of women’s experiences” (1989: 229) Sylvia Walby, among the others, attempted to raise a formula to come up with an answer to all criticism against the concept of patriarchy. To her criticism of patriarchy for being “necessarily a historic and falsely universalistic” could be remedied through a more comprehensive model which encapsulates six structures patriarchal mode of production, patriarchal relations in wage labor, the patriarchal state, male violence, patriarchal sexuality, and patriarchal culture which all forms patriarchy (Walby, 1989). Walby rest her analysis on two major forms identified as private and public patriarchy both of which accommodates these six structures. She further states that in different times and places some the structures are more important than others and that elimination of one unit of these structures does not necessarily lead to the demise of the system entirely:

Two main types are public and private patriarchy. Private Patriarchy is based on the relative exclusion of women from arenas of social life apart from the household with a patriarchy

appropriating women's services individually and directly in the apparently private sphere of the home. Public patriarchy does not exclude women from certain sites, but subordinates women in all of them. In this form subordination of women takes place more collectively than individually (1989: 228)

2.2.2. The Patriarchy (ies)

Importantly, patriarchy is a universal phenomenon it takes variety of forms in different societal settings while Caldwell a famous demographer used to the term "patriarchal belt" to refer to the forms of patriarchy that took place in Middle East, North Africa, South Asia and East Asia. The patriarchal belt informs us as to the nature of patriarchy which manifests itself on the male domination, son preference, restrictive codes of behavior for women, and the association of family honor with female virtue. Kandiyoti (1988) on the other hand, extended the term and suggested Classical Patriarchy in a geographical area that includes North Africa, the Muslim Middle East (including Turkey, Pakistan, and Iran), and South and East Asia (including, India and China). Classical patriarchy to Kandiyoti is characterized by the senior man's authority over everyone else as well as the younger men, and women's being subordinate not only to all the men but also to the more senior women, particularly the mother-in-law. The main mechanism that procreates this form of patriarchy is patrilocally extended household, where newlywed couples live with husband's family. Moreover, Moghadam (2000) introduced "patriarchal gender contract" when she is referring to non-agriculture, urban based family relations in the Middle East, where husband is the sole breadwinner and women is the homemaker, caregiver. The nature of relationship is particularly characterized by men's entitlement to exercise his marital authority "by restraining his wife's movement and preventing her from showing herself in public"

2.2.3. Patriarchal Women

Although the concept of patriarchal women seems an oxymoronic term, interestingly recent feminist writings and analyses on patriarchy delineates that as well as men, women can also be contributing to the perpetuating of patriarchy across time and place. What's more this has not necessarily related to "false consciousness"

(Kandiyoti, 1988). While Johnson (1983) in his work, *Women, the Family and Peasant Revolution in China*, conceptualizes this mode of behavior as “female conservatism” where women became participant in male control by preferring to manipulating it in an attempt to receive “limited security” in return, rather than eradicating it totally.

In another example, Kandiyoti (1988) in her famous work, *Bargaining with Patriarchy*, adroitly identifies how women finds coping mechanism “strategize within a set of concrete constraints” to handle suppression under the rule of different forms of patriarchy.

Different forms of patriarchy present women with distinct "rules of the game" and call for different strategies to maximize security and optimize life options with varying potential for active or passive resistance in the face of oppression...Systematic analyses of women's strategies and coping mechanisms can help to capture the nature of patriarchal systems in their cultural, class-specific, and temporal concreteness and reveal how men and women resist, accommodate, adapt, and conflict with each other over resources, rights, and responsibilities (1988:274-285).

Kandiyoti also draws our attention to the fact that when the systems break down, women even resist for fear that they may lose the limited security they carved out for themselves which entails another set of strategies. To Kandiyoti, after all, “patriarchal bargains are not timeless or immutable entities, but are susceptible to historical transformations that open up new areas of struggle and renegotiation of the relations between genders”.

Over the duration of this dissertation, I will use the most broadly conceived definition of patriarchy as a “material and ideological system of male domination over women” (Glen, 1987: p., 364) and I will treat patriarchy as a social construction and immemorial reality which existed before capitalism but interacts with capitalism to a great extend and a universal phenomenon transforming and adjusting itself across time and place, and again that in all the societies where patriarchy exists with varying degrees, man is the beneficiary of the family; they gain in marriage, at divorce, in post divorce period at the expense of women.

However, patriarchy gains a variety of forms in variety of settings therefore as Beechey (1979: 80) states it is “wrong to assume that domination assumes the same form in all social formations and in all kinds of social institutions within a society” .Thus, I will give credit to the fact that while looking into a specific context the forms of patriarchy that operates in that particular context, in that particular social institutions should be explored adopting a more *flexible concept of patriarchy* as Walby came to suggest:

We need a set of theoretical tools to deal with the continuities as well as historically and cross culturally variable forms of gender inequality. A more flexible concept of patriarchy is the means to do this (Walby, 1989: p., 230).

More importantly, in this study what I am primarily preoccupied is women’s reaction to patriarchy, as Hartman (1981:387) points out “The argument about the significance of patriarchy in women's lives revolves around whether or not women perceive patriarchy as oppressive” at this point, Sylvia Walby will guide me to look for patriarchy in its complex, transformed and specific forms and Deniz Kandiyoti will help me to explore how women understand, conflict and accommodate patriarchy by creating strategies “to maximize security and optimize life options with varying potential for active or passive resistance”

2.2.4. Empowerment

Empowerment which is used frequently in development studies as both the process and outcome of development interventions such as poverty eradication, micro-credit self help groups, livelihood generation; education etc., is defined in different ways by researchers, policy makers and funding agencies (Ranadive, 2005). In feminist theory, however, empowerment is identified as process that “challenge patriarchal ideology to transform the structures and institutions that reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and social inequality” (Ibid, p., 3). Feminist of materialist orientation emphasize more women’s access to employment and stability in the job market and feminists of cultural persuasion stress sexism in the society and women’s reproductive freedom, however, all feminist thinkers believe that empowerment can

only be achieved when all aspect of women's suppression are eliminated. Namely all different schools of feminism concur that unless equal access to education and labor market coupled with equal responsibility in domestic chores and childcare achieved, unless decision making autonomy, self determination and women's control over their body are gained, women cannot be considered as empowered.

The goal of empowerment in feminist thinking is to challenge existing power relations and gaining greater control over women's own lives. Women's empowerment is a linchpin of feminist theory. For the theorists it is of great importance for women to gain control over economic, social and private domains of life. Molyneux (1985) in her work, *Mobilization without Emancipation? Women's Interests, the State, and Revolution in Nicaragua*, enumerates complete equality with men, control over reproduction, and greater personal autonomy and independence from men as "Lowest common denominator of interest" that might be seen uncontentious and of universal applicability.

For women's empowerment economic autonomy is considered to be the basic requirement As Juliet Mitchell (1971) underscores "Any emancipation movement must still concentrate on the economic element", therefore to develop the capacity to have a voice in familial relationships, to be able to leave an abusing relationship and to successfully resist exploitation and control women should have economic independence (i.e. Hartman 1981; Mitchel 1974; Jaggar 1995; Chafetz, 1990; Okin 1989; Moghadam 2007). In addition to material security work provides for women, it also helps them to build a sense of purpose in life and challenges in different ways, which help them to build a life of their own:

Working provides both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards that women are unlikely to forgo to return to more traditional roles. Women work for the same reasons that men do-economic survival, financial rewards, personal fulfillment, a sense of identity and opportunity to interact with others and have ones efforts acknowledged (Baber and Allen, 1992: 180).

Moreover economic autonomy of women is conceived to be the onset of liberation that would be followed by achievements in other domains of women's lives. It is

contended that women's wage work will enhance their bargaining power in the family and will provide some financial independence from men, promote independence and self-esteem, give women more decision making power in the home, promote more sharing of household chores, and prepare the way for class consciousness and collective organizing among women (Gordon, 1996). Because capitalism is conceived to be the important pillar of women's oppression, specifically for feminists of materialist orientation, change in job market is deemed as another factor that would open venues for empowerment:

The most important single factor contributing to this channeling is probably sex segregated job market, which keeps women in low paid and low status jobs. In these circumstances, childrearing appears to be the only kind of fulfilling work available to them. In order to take this option, however, a woman is forced economically to find a man who will help support her and her children. Because of men's economic privilege in the market, it is usually impossible for women to support the family while men stay at home with children. Their economic situation thus tends to push women into childrearing, regardless of whether they have unconscious drives toward mothering (Mitchell, 1971: 303).

So even though economic autonomy is *sine quo non* of women's empowerment feminist thinkers are cautious about the nature of market that might impede empowerment and draw our attention to inequalities in labor market and the quality of work that will be unrewarding for women.

The brutal economic realities of globalization impact everyone across globe but women are affected disproportionately. Displaced by the rapid economic changes women bear a greater burden of labor throughout the world as social services have been cut, whether in response to structural adjustment plans in the third world or to so called welfare reform in the United States. Women have been forced to migrate, are subject to trafficking and are the proletarians of the newly industrializing countries. On top of all this, they continue to be subject to sexual violence and in much of the world are not allowed to control their own process of reproduction (Holstrom, 2002).

Empowerment for feminist thinkers does not only mean economic autonomy, rather it is a notion that would be deficient without such elements as reproductive

freedom, autonomy in decision making in the family, freedom from unpaid labor in domestic sphere and self determination; as Baber and Allen (1992) ask “otherwise how can a women with little control over her work environment and lack of adequate, affordable childcare get ahead in a male dominated system at home and at work?”. Alison Jaggar (1995), who considers women’s liberation possible through totally new modes of organizing all forms of production and the final abolition of “femininity” (299), gives us a comprehensive portrait of feminist framework for empowerment. She emphasizes reproductive freedom, shared domestic chores and wage equality as milestones on the way to liberation.

Jaggar defines Reproductive freedom, a as means of control over whether and in what circumstance women bear and rear children:

Women’s release from compulsory motherhood will allow them to develop their capacities in many other areas. On a deeper level many socialist feminist theorists believe that equal involvement of men in infant and childcare is the key to eliminating the gendered structure of the unconscious mind (302).

Moreover for her, challenging reproductive freedom is tantamount to challenging broader structure, traditional sexual division of labor. Part of the feminist conception of reproductive freedom is to challenge the traditional sexual division of labor in procreation:

So that childcare comes to be shared between women and men, if this goal were achieved and if the community as a whole came to assume responsibility for the welfare of children (and mothers), then the birth or non-birth of a child would affect that community in a much more direct and immediate way than it does at present (302).

Juliet Mitchell (1971), on the other hand, cites four structures-productions, reproduction, sexuality and the socialization of children- that cause women’s second sex status and contends all four to be transformed for women to be liberated, “for there to be *unite de rupture*”; she nevertheless gives precedence to women’s role in economic sphere and stating that “Any emancipation movement must still

concentrate on the economic element- the entry of women fully into public industry and the right to earn a living wage”.

However, when women’s empowerment is considered another recurrent theme that rises to prominence is women’s mental liberation:

Women will continue to remain subordinate to men until their minds and men’s have been liberated from the thought that women are less than men’s full equals (Tong: 1998, 121).

So even if there are gains achieved on the way to empowerment if the women are not conscious as to the process and the outcomes then the result may not become a true empowerment:

It is not only the participation in the labor market but also how this participation is culturally constructed and how it is individually perceived by the women that matter in women’s empowerment. Unless women perceive their work as a source of empowerment their contributions would not make enough of a difference in challenging gender inequality (Erman, et al, 2002; p, 396)

Another dimension of empowerment is the elimination of gendered characteristics of relationships in family and in society at large. As is known traditional patterns of family which are characterized by patriarchal relations do not serve to women’s and children’s best interest. In such a framework even if women have access to employment this is nothing more than “double shift” for them (Hochschild, 1989) Moreover, patriarchal nature of relationships renders women vulnerable in the face of family stress, say divorce, since their primary duty is considered to be care they do not commit themselves to their works and careers. More importantly, one thing that is quite related to these structural power relations is the question how are the selves influenced from all these relations? It is clear that unequal relationships makes women feel dissatisfied with their lives. There is no doubt that the elimination of gendered characteristics of society will enhance women’s lives both in family and in society at large. When gender is reduced to a notion that would have no relevance to opportunities, responsibilities and roles, “in such a society

knowing whether someone was a woman or a man would tell you nothing about that person's life or responsibilities" (Baber and Allen, 1992: 228).

Feminist sociologist Michel Bisagni (1999) in her work, *Women's Personal and Collaborative Knowledge within the Divorce Context: a Feminist Inquiry*, draw our attention to women's self definition and social network as a source of empowerment. She describes empowerment with two key patterns: personal voice and relational empowerment. To her empowerment is achieved with women's discovery of own distinctive perspectives through which they view the world, as well as an ability to clearly articulate their selves and identity to speak one's innermost truth. And relational empowerment can be acquired with "the surge of a shared spirit of strength, solidarity and support and an augmented, amplified, and critically aware sense of wisdom and voice within a female community and caring and connection" (Ibid, p., 13) . In her unique study Bisagni further explains how women can go through empowering experiences like profound redefinition of self after they come to term with their divorce and start a new life. Moreover, the informal support network which includes mothers, sisters and close friends provide them connections where they can gain "spirit of solidarity within a still soberingly sexist society". This is further supported by another research (Baker, 1984) that women's networks tended to aid them with variegated benefits ranging from emotional support to material ones that they cannot easily access to under the formal socio-structural means.

2.2.4.1. Questions to Address Empowerment

Although feminists are quite rigorous in identifying empowerment, when it comes to measuring it there are variations. at this point, Valentine Moghadam's(2007: p., 7) set of questions that provides universal measures of women's status and empowerment stands out as all encompassing formulation. In this study, Moghadam's formulation, which, as she claims, can be applied across cultures, religions, and political systems and portrays women as actors will help us to address issues capturing women's empowerment:

In order to delineate the level of empowerment in a certain context Moghadam ask variety of questions beginning with political expression. She asks what rights women possess formally, how they are involved in political process, if they express their dissatisfaction with regard to their political or social movements. In regard to work and mobility she ask how women fare in labor force, how well they are paid, how their jobs are ranked, if any policies exist to help women balance work and family.

More importantly in the family domain she further asks at what age women do marry, if they can choose their partners, and if they can divorce. She inquires the status of single women and widows in a society and if they have enough freedom of movement. And finally, she poses questions if the family laws empower or disempower women. As to education Moghadam asks if the women have access to education at all levels. Furthermore, if the curriculum is the same for them as for men and whether or not the girls' schools are adequately resourced. In regard to health and sexual control she draws our attention to women's control over their own fertility. As well, she poses questions as to existence of laws to prevent or punish violence against women. Finally, she underlines chance of cultural expression of women. She asks what the images of women in the society are and how much these images reflect reality.

2.2.4.2. Feminist methodology: an Empowering Experience

Another important dimension of empowerment in feminist vision is conducting research in a way to explore ways for women's empowerment. Reflexivity during research process, sustaining a close relationship with the research participants, valuing subjectivity as source of knowledge, and having a critical stance toward traditional paradigms and theories which are characteristics of doing a feminist research (Thompson, 1992, Mies 1983, Reinharz 1992, Acker, et al., 1983) will give women chance to express themselves and make sense of the world around them. As Reinharz (1992) states it is an important asset, for it constitutes "an antidote to centuries of ignoring women's ideas or having men speak for themselves" (p. 19).

Many other researchers avows how research process may give participants venue for empowerment by way of providing them with a chance to interpret, challenge and see the ideological mechanism that render them subordinated and it helps them to gain self worth, be more vocal about their problems and be more visible social actors (Opie 1992; Reinharz 1992; Aisenberg 1994; Scheyvens and Leslie 2000; Chase and Reinharz 2001). Therefore, research per se helps them gain power, because “when qualitative research incorporates the voices of marginal and hence previously silenced groups into the text it can become subversive along a number of fronts” (Opie, 2008: 369).

In their editorial introduction researchers Marcia Millman and Rosebeth Moss Kanter (1975), adroitly, tell us the difference of feminist research- that it brings fresh, unadulterated perspectives- from conventional knowledge building with the story of emperors’ new clothes. In their own words:

Everyone knows the story about the Emperor and his fine clothes: although the townspeople persuaded themselves that the emperor was elegantly costumed, a child, possessing an unspoiled vision showed the citizenry that the Emperor was really naked (cited in Hesse-Biber, 2007: 5)

Additionally, feminist research may also strengthen participants through the therapeutic effect it may potentially offer; Birch and miller (2000) for instance characterize interviewing setting as a therapeutic opportunity for women “to come to understand their experiences in different ways”. Furthermore, as Lather (1988) posits it might help change their situation during research process. As well, since interviews directly relate them, the meeting with the researcher helps them relieve “Because the interviews were responsive to individual preoccupations, there was an inbuilt therapeutic dimension to the process which can be characterized empowering” (Opie, 2008: 369).

Since narrative interviews are empowering feminist methodologies (Riessman, 1990: Bisagni 1999) it is possible for a research itself to be an empowering practice.

Feminist perspectives carry messages of empowerment that challenge the encircling of knowledge claims by those who occupy privileged positions. Feminist thinking and practice requires taking steps from “margins to center” while eliminating boundaries of division that privilege dominant forms of knowledge building, boundaries that mark who can be a knower and what can be known (Hesse-Biber, 2007: 3).

Finally, in this study Juliet Mitchell’s (1971) conception of empowerment that entails four structures-production, reproduction, sexuality and the socialization of children- to be transformed for women to be liberated, will be enlightening us in our analysis of women’s divorce experiences and its impact on their empowerment. Moreover, using a narrative interview for data collection, this study attempts to involve in research practice which is imbued with empowering characteristics.

2.3. Literature Review: Post divorce Adjustment

2.3.1. Post divorce Adjustment

Divorce is a financial catastrophe for most women: in just one year they experience a dramatic decline in income and a calamitous drop in their standard of living. It is hard to imagine how they deal with such severe deprivation: every single expenditure that one takes for granted-clothing, food, housing, heat-must be cut to one-half or one-third of what one is accustomed to (Weitzman, 1987; 339).

A good amount of research has focused on devastating financial consequences of divorce for most of the women irrespective of their socio-economic classes (Brandwein, et al 1974; Corcoran 1979; Weiss 1984; McLindon 1987; Arendell 1987; Devillier and Forsyth 1988; Weitzman 1987; Duncan and Hoffman 1985; Gerstel 1987; Grella 1990; Holden and Smock 1991; Smock 1994; Amato 2000; Moorefield, et al 2007) the literature from Turkey is no dissimilar (Arıkan 1990, 1992, 1996; Tor 1993; Demirci 2000). Even if they work, women face an economic hardship following divorce;

Handicapped by a gender-stratified labor market, lack of affordable and adequate child care facilities, and disproportionate responsibility for child-rearing expenses, women after divorce rarely have disposable incomes equal to those of their ex-husbands, and what they do earn is often inadequate to support a family (Grella, 1990:42).

The immediate economic difficulty commences with falling from the state of dual career/worker family, forming a separate household and going through all the economic expenses of a house alone. As depicted by Brandwein, et al., they lose the economic strength of dual career status:

The higher income of two parent families' result in part from the fact that both parents may be working, this economic strength of the two-parent family is denied both single mothers and fathers (1974: 500).

Legally, under the old family code, women were not entitled to receive properties they saved during marriage unless they are registered under their names, however, after 2001 a new law went into effect and thanks to the revisions property and assets are now divided equally. Though with the new code, the 50-50 rule on property applies only to assets acquired after January 1, 2003, it nevertheless is a progress on the part of the women (WWHR, 2002).

If they are custodial parent, women also face the economic difficulty of bringing up children (Kitson & Morgan 1990 quoted in Moorefield, et al 2007). In Turkey more often than not women receive child custody and they barely get enough child support payments from their ex-husbands. Upon our interviews and talks to legal practitioners, we found out that through legal tricks men display a lower income and pay accordingly, thus child support is not a real support in the Turkish context.

2.3.2. Who fares worse?

It is important to state that the extant literature (Weiss, 1975; Colleta, 1979; Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980;L'Hammedieu's 1985; Arıkan 1990; Demirci 2000) differentiates middle class professional women from lower class women with

respect to adverse financial conditions they may experience. Robert Weiss in his classical work, *Women in Transition*, where he compares the financial situation of divorced working class and divorced middle class women, points out that in middle class professionally oriented situations, the economic problem may not be so great, but with low income families the struggle to maintain a household is difficult.

Moreover, L'Hammedieu's, (1984) in his work where he specifically examined this discrepancy between two classes' financial experience commenced the study with the expectation that women in the working class would have considerable financial difficulties as compared with the women in the middle class, and his study lent support to his initial supposition.

Several of the working class women had no money or job at the time of the divorce and wondered how they would be able to feed their children. In contrast, the middle class women had professional positions; however, some of the women felt the salaries would not be sufficient while other women in the middle class concerned about the equitable division of property....further emotional involvement was experienced by the working class women when they were forced to apply for welfare. They described the application process as humiliating. Although many of the middle class experienced a reduced standard of living they did not describe humiliation as reaction to that reduction....still another area of difference was seen in child support by the husbands of both groups. In the working class the women were confronted with having to petition the courts for support while middle class women received it immediately (106)

Another research from Turkey (i.e. Cigdem Arıkan 1990), on *Social and Psychological Problems of Working Class Divorced Women*, pinpoints the same reality that divorced women at very low income levels were more affected by dismal financial conditions. According to findings of the study economic problems comes as the most frequent problem respondents indicate in the questionnaires.

Because child support payments are either not fulfilled or in short of supply, women are either unemployed or have lower earning power, not having insurance, lack of support from the close relatives or inadequate help from family intensifies women's economic hardship after divorce(145)(*My translation*)

Even before divorce Women from lower class takes economic consequences as the primary concern, (Levinger, 1970; Morgan 1989), which may prevent them from acting autonomously.

Still other research from Turkey (i.e. Nevin Demircioglu, 2000) indicates that although financial difficulties are more of an issue for women from low paying occupations, it still is a major concern for women from all occupations in her sample. In the words of Demirci:

Among the women who are maids the percentage of women who stated financial difficulties as foremost difficulty is 45%, it drops to 40% among the clerics and 28% among the teachers and finally 23% amount the self employed(163).(*My translation*).

So, even though they did not reveal profound economic hardships upon divorce, middle class women have financial difficulties to a varying degree that affected their life prospects. For reasons we touched above, most of the women irrespective of their socio-economic classes experience this hardship either in the form of financial devastation as seen in lower class women or reduced standard of living, or downward mobility as we observe in middle class divorce women.

2.3.3. Downward mobility

So even if they are middle class, due to insufficient child support payment and housing expenses, women confront what is called downward mobility, an abrupt displacement from a woman's previous social class (Grella, 1990:2) during the course of adaptation to their new state. What Devillier and Forsyth (1988) stated for divorced women in America holds true for Turkish context that erratic or nonexistent child support payments, as well as wife's subordination of career to child rearing, contribute to the widespread phenomenon of downward mobility after divorce.

This abrupt change manifests itself primarily on consumption:

The effect of downward income mobility among divorced mothers is similar to the effects among any family. Lowered income means not only a drop in consumption within the home, but often a change in housing to poorer accommodations in a poorer neighborhood (Carter and Glick, 1970 cited in Brandwein, et al., 1974).

Downward mobility has its social and psychological distress that adds to women's stress, with help of data we derive from our interviews we will examine how they respond to downward mobility later in the subsequent sections.

In addition to the poverty of many mothers prior to divorce, a large number of previously non-poor wives and families suffer downward mobility following divorce...much of the downward economic mobility among divorced mothers can be viewed in terms of economic discrimination against women. A mother at every class and income level is expected to depend for the major part of her and her children support on the income of her husband, and economic opportunities for a woman without a husband are limited as a result...the assumption that women should or should not support a family provides justification for these low wages. Low wages in turn make it extremely difficult for most mothers alone to support a family (see Kreps, 1971 cited in Brandwein)

Another important yet understudied issue regarding downward mobility of divorced women is women's self evaluation of their situation. Christine Grella (1990) in her study, *Irreconcilable Differences: Women Defining Class after Divorce and Downward Mobility* explored the meanings of social class for American women who experienced downward mobility after divorce. In the light of her interviews to 40 women she came to a conclusion that divorced women in her sample experienced social class as a process of negotiation, and subjective elements often predominated over objective criteria. In the study via her findings she also supported the contention (Rapp's 1982; Therborn 1983) that "class' is not a static place individuals inhabit" but is a process.

It is important to note that there is one more complexity regarding women's socio-economic situation, underrepresentation, which was severely criticized by Socialist

feminist theorists. According to Margaret Benston (1969) under representation is due to the fact that classes are generally defined by their relation to the means of production and women are not supposed to have any unique relation to the means of production, since they work at home; outside of the money economy which determines the use value. Women's class position is examined through their husband and father's socioeconomic status.

The ebb and flow of social class identification for women is tied to the social organization of gender woven through the social organization of work and family. While assuming the status of head of household after divorce, many divorced women are prevented from fully realizing economic self-sufficiency by the structural limitations of the labor market. Underlying their conflicted social class identity is their continued dependence on others (such as family of origin, ex-husband, or the state) for survival (Grella, 1990).

So it appears that the biggest change takes place in downwardly mobile divorced women's lives, for they change not only their marital status but also their socioeconomic status. In a study of 60 suburban middle- to upper-middle-class divorcing women Wallerstein and Kelly (1980 cited in Grella, 1990) found that women from higher socioeconomic classes were the most psychologically devastated by their decline into a lower standard of living.

2.3.4. Gender Matters

Due to bleak financial situation or to regain their self affirmation, many women after divorce need to work, however, being inexperienced, women may have difficulty to adapt themselves to the workforce after divorce. Departing from this fact, we can assert that divorce affect the well-being of women and men in a different way, while men experience higher income and improvements in their standard of living which is also accompanied by lower level of distress, women face decline in income and in standard of living and higher distress (Gahler, 2006; Carbone, 1994; Smock 1994; Becker, 1992; Weitzman, 1987; Wallerstein and Kelly 1980) so it is a hard reality that divorcing women typically incur clear financial and lifestyle disadvantages relative to their male counterparts

One research study denoted that although men and women have similar per capita incomes before separation or divorce, women's postdisruption per capita incomes are just 55% to 66% of those of their male counterparts (Smock, 1994:258). Lenore Weitzman, in her classic work, *The Divorce Revolution: the Unexpected Social and Economic Consequences for Women and Children in America*, enumerates the reasons that help explain the strikingly different economic consequences of divorce for men and women:

Since judges do not require men to support either their children or their former wives as they did during marriage, they allow the husband to keep most of his income for himself... in contrast the gap between the husband's income and needs narrows, while he loses the benefits of economics of scale and while he may have to purchase some services (such as laundry and cooking) that he did not have to buy during marriage, he is, nevertheless, much better off because he has so much more money to spend on himself...the final explanation lies in the different earning capacities; marriage gives men the opportunity, support and time to invest in their own careers. Thus marriage itself builds and enhances the husband's earning capacity. For women, in contrast, marriage is more likely to act as career liability even though family roles are changing, and even though married women are increasingly working for pay during marriage, most of them nevertheless subordinate their careers to their husbands' and to their family responsibilities. This is especially true if they have children (1987; 341-342).

2.3.5. Status Loss and Social networks

Women does not solely confront with material loss upon divorce, the role change they experience, from "wife" to "head of the household" as Kohen (1981 cited in Grella 43) stated exacerbates their distress. Given what society expects from a wife, divorced women can be considered to lose much of their status. Women serve to family to an enormous degree through reproduction, childcare, domestic works, stabilization of the family and sexuality. With all these significant undertakings women gain a status in the family and society. However upon divorce women no longer fulfills these vital tasks; the legal process may change her prospects totally; if she does not gain full custody she may lose child; from societal aspect she is not

expected to have access to non-marital sexuality which also impedes her chance to have more children; from familial aspect she no longer has the central place in family as mother, wife, organizer of domestic sphere, etc.,. When they choose to live with their parents instead of living in a separate household, they feel the status loss more (Demirci, 2000:161). So the issue of status loss unearths how patriarchy treats divorce to the detriments of women.

Divorced women encounter social repercussions of their divorce more in a negative way. In a society where social order is organized around married couples, men and women face difficulties when they are not in a union deemed *proper* in that order. (Arıkan, 1990: 36 emphasis mine) 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*, where she conducted questionnaires to 120 divorced women, 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.

After divorce losing the existing networks come as an inevitable process, since divorced women no longer belong to the same marital status like their married friends do. The common interest between a divorced and married women decreases which results in loose and less intimate friendships, as a result divorced women may be reticent to continue the relationship (Arıkan, 1990: 36) In addition to diminishing common interest, married women may deem divorced women as a threat to their marriages (Milardo, 1987) this implicit thought, reinforced by society's approach to the divorce as a deviation from a norm, may produce reservations in both sides' relationships following divorce.

One possible reason that may impede women's involvement in social life after divorce is their increased reliance on family following divorce. Turning to family to live from then on, overcome adjustment problems through their help may discourage women to form new social relationships or apply to professional help. As Demirci (2000; 171) maintained living with family may even give way to the determination of social relations by the family. This fact is criticized by socialist

feminist theorists for it hinders women to be active participant in shaping their own destinies (Tuana and Tong, 1990:24). In Turkey divorced women prefer to live with their family for a period or permanently. According to the findings of a research conducted in Turkey (Hacer Tor,1993) study 49% of women returned to their family instead of hiring a separate flat, again to her findings 63% of divorced women get help from their families when they have any problem be it financial or social.

There are considerable distinctions between men and women in experiencing the character of relationships with kin and friends upon divorce;

For men, cultural traditions that prescribe the duties and obligations of husbands are thought to encourage the development of personal friendships while simultaneously encouraging independence, thus insulating men from the possible benefits of social support following divorce. For women, the duties and obligations of wives as they are traditionally defined encourage women to accept responsibility for "kin keeping" during and after marriage while simultaneously discouraging bonds with friends. These circumstances are thought to isolate women from the unique benefits of personal friendship and ensure networks that are dominated by kin, which typically are high in exchanges of both social support and interference. (Milardo, 1987: 78)

In similar fashion, a study conducted on the support networks and social support with 148 divorced women concludes that women experience a significant decrease in network size and social support; however, the primary members of their networks—family and friends—remain stable (Duffy, 1993: 19-24).

2.3.6. Societal Attitudes

Divorce is one indicator of Turkey's complexity of social change process. The attitude to divorce is still in an ambiguous state. While it may be deemed as a solution to a failing marriage, a right of an independent, liberal individual to terminate a marriage when he/she feels so. Keeping up marriage is an essential social norm. It is not easily sympathized when individuals do not conform to this norm through act of divorce. People conceive divorced individuals as "failed" and incompatible, in some families, members of family feel ashamed at their relatives

divorce and they prefer not to tell the others anything about divorce (Arıkan, 1990: 68). It is still deemed as an unpleasant event that implied the failure of an individual, deviation from what is socially approved form of unity. Cigdem Arıkan (1996) in her study *Attitudes toward Divorce in Turkey*, where she measured societal attitudes toward divorce with a sample of 500 individuals from lower (48%), middle (32%) and upper class (20%) families, delineates that Turkish people do not have totally opposing view to the phenomenon of divorce, almost all the respondents (92.4%) affirmed the possibility of divorce as a solution *when necessary* (emphasis in original). However, to her findings, people tolerate divorce up to a certain extent, when it is the last option; after the couple tried all their best to keep up the marriage. While women (85.5%) indicate clash of ideas and personality differences as possible divorce cause, men (99.1%) state cheating as definite divorce cause. From Arıkan's findings it can be concluded that people in Turkey are not as puritan or narrow-minded as to reject divorce under all circumstances, nor they are as liberal as to accept it on the ground of an individual choice. Divorce is not tolerated unless the cause is socially recognized such as violence, extreme incompatibility and cheating. The attitudes can be summarized as "neither banned nor encouraged" as 93.6% of respondents in Arıkan's study stated.

While it is good that people do not show a downright rejection to divorce we cannot say that divorced couples specifically women enjoy this tolerance. Because even if people theoretically sympathize with divorce, since they act under the influence of patriarchal beliefs they cannot easily realize in action what they seem to accept in their minds, as implied in Arıkan's study that while people have no reservation toward a divorced friend, most of them (63%) do not have any divorced friend (Arıkan, 1996; 268). It is for this reason that divorced women cite societal attitudes as one of their biggest problems after divorce. Hacer Tor (1993) in her study where she conducted questionnaire to 660 divorced women found that one of the issues that concerned divorced women most was societal attitudes. While 20 % women in the sample thought financial difficulties and 43% chose where to live as problems vexing their minds, 30 % of women chose societal attitudes as the most devastating problem that concerned them most, even before other basic problems. In similar fashion, Tor denotes that women restrict their lives for fear that society will

stigmatize them, so to her question many women state that in order not to draw attention of people they do not go out often, limit their visits to their families or friends and try to be more reserved in their manners, dress and speech (146).

Naomi Gerstel in her study, *Divorce and Stigma*, where she analyzes how stigma attaches to the conditions surrounding divorce rather than to divorce as a general category by drawing on interviews with 104 divorced women and men, gives support to the complexity of attitudes we came to notice in Turkish context. To her, the conditions associated with the experience of disapproval vary for women and men reflecting a gender-based ideology of divorce-and marriage; while a man can be blamed for being “cavalier home-wrecker”, a woman can be expected to sacrifice to prevent separation. In her own words,

A decrease in statistical deviance, a relaxation of institutional controls by church or state, or a decline in categorical disapproval is not the same as the absence of stigmatization. Although a majority of Americans claim they are indifferent in principle to those who make a "personal decision" to leave a "bad" marriage, this indifference does not carry over into the social construction of private lives. The divorced believe they are the targets of informal relational sanctions-exclusion, blame, and devaluation. If we understand stigma as referring not simply to the realm of public sanctions but rather see it as emerging out of everyday experience, then we can see that the divorced continue to be stigmatized....Such disapproval is, however, not categorical; it is contingent on the particular conditions of the divorce. The experience of devaluation attaches to the cause or circumstances surrounding the divorce rather than to divorce per se (1987:183).

Given the patriarchal nature of Turkish society it should not come as surprise that the attitudes vary with respect to the gender of divorcing individuals. There is a certain proclivity to hold women responsible for a failing marriage, such sayings as “man make houses, women make homes” (yuvayı disi kus yapar), “a good woman is a sacrificial mother for her family” (kadın dediğin ailesi için saçını süpürge eder), “a good woman keeps her man” (kadın dediğin kocasını elinde tutar) manifest the social expectations from women. So, similar to Western cultures, the primary gatekeeper was accepted as mother in Turkish culture (Yılmaz and Fıskıoğlu, 2005). Since “the preservation of the ‘sacred’ family is vested in the moral conduct of

women” (Erturk, 1991) upon divorce, women are blamed for not keeping up the marriage and causing the moral decay in society:

The breakdown of the family, the selfishness of women who want to have paid employment, or who do not want to remain in a relationship or who feel that the only way that can become adults is to have a child are blamed for society’s ills and specifically for adolescent criminality and high welfare-state spending (Abbot and Wallace, 1992; 139).

As Bora and Ustun (2005; p., 104) state even though both genders’ subjectivities are damaged through obstruction and social pressures, social pressures abate as men grow to become adult, yet for women the pressures continue throughout their lives. Therefore, it is quite expected that upon divorce women are subjected to society’s restricting controls more than men are. Breaking the bond of marriage a man can be treated as a single person, however, a woman after divorce is conceived as a ‘divorced woman’ in society and a certain dignity is expected from her, therefore divorced women go through hardships to act in accordance with society’s attitudes and have reservations concerning their appearance in public sphere, in their manners and behaviors. However, attitudes toward divorcing men are not as negative as those toward women. Unless a man perpetrates a dishonorable or deplorable crime or act, he is not disapproved as much as women are (Arıkan, 1990; Tor 1993).

So even if a woman keeps her economic independence after divorce, this may not be true for her social life. So, as Gahler rightly pinpointed, “to divorce is to die a bit”. It is like society is punishing women for her disloyalty to her *natural duties* of keeping their marriages intact, by devoting themselves to the provision of their husbands and family’s needs constantly which give supports to the conventional thinking that women are expected not to divorce but to sacrifice, as Carol Smart (1984) rightly stated “she is the answer” to all possible problems:

She can prevent delinquency by staying at home to look after the children; she can reduce unemployment by staying at home and freeing jobs for men; she can recreate a stable family unit by becoming totally economically dependent on her husband, so that she cannot leave him. She is the answer (136)

Being aware of societal expectation from women and their low bargaining power in domestic sphere men may act with no reservation which results in reducing the quality of marriage as an outcome. Even if there is an inequity and related tension in marriage men do not prefer to break up the relationship for it is men who benefits from marriage in all circumstances. As raised by one of the lawyers we talked, Att.Ulku Tasdemir, “it is when women no longer conforms to the existing structure and related tensions that marriage breaks up; men are most of the time happy with the relationship irrespective of its quality”.

In a patriarchal setting like Turkey, as well as the extant sex discrimination that is prevalent everywhere in the world, there is also a discrimination of age among women. Women who are above middle age receive a certain respect due to their status as an “elder”; they face less discrimination in comparison with younger women. This may be partly because an elder woman is conceived as less feminine thus they confront with less sexist attitudes from society. This has its impact on post divorce adjustment, Yılmaz & Fİsikoglu (2005) in their study where they investigated perceived power/control over child related concerns and its effect on post divorce adjustment in Turkey, elaborates on this factor thus:

As people are getting older in Turkey, the cultural pressures on them generally decrease; in other words feelings, thoughts, behaviors, that is to say, lifestyles of younger individuals if divorced can be much more under investigation and/or control by society than those of older divorced people who are relatively free in nearly every domain of the social interaction in the Turkish cultural structure (100-101)

According to these researchers, the sex roles allocated to women gradually withers away as they grow older is valid for both sexes and this fact enables older people to have greater post divorce adjustment than do younger people.

Socioeconomic Factors in Societal Attitudes

Societal attitudes are not uniform, not in standardized fashion though. Arıkan in her study, *Social and Psychological Problems of Working Class Divorced Women*

denotes distinctions in attitudes among socioeconomic classes. To her a woman's socioeconomic class position, the place she lives, her neighborhood change people's attitudes (1990:69).

Professional women living in urban neighborhoods may meet disapprovals or blaming attitudes relatively less than urban women living in areas where community living overwhelms. For professional women, in particular, even if they do not live in affluent, upper-class districts because they spend most of their time at work and it is quite likely that most of their friendships are connected with work life, thus, they may encounter less social reaction or attitudes from their neighborhoods. Moreover, urbanization promotes more individual lives rather than living in community, specifically due to apartments that are like pigeon holes people do not even see each other.

We assume that socioeconomic classes of women's families will also have their positive or negative effects on the attitudes to divorcing women. According to Demirci (2000; 162) middle class families that are, educated and economically self-sufficient are more tolerating and less conventional and protective than working or lower class families in Turkish context. What is of significance here is that a family's attitude influence women's status in the family; in families where divorce is disapproved, women are devaluated in terms of family status (Ibid, 162).

Attitudes at work place are also of significance to divorced women. Colleagues' perception and comments related to women's divorce may be more exacerbating than those of neighbors (Arıkan, 1990; 30). With her changing marital status a woman can be conceived as an eligible candidate by her male colleagues (ibid, 30); even if it is not the case she can become oversensitive as to what possibly people around may think of her and as a result she may be more reticent and reserved in her manners. All these tensions may deteriorate her work performance, she may feel reluctant to come to work, and feel estranged which may even lead to her resignation from her position. On the other hand, she may receive positive or respectful attitudes as well; therefore, friends and work itself may also serve as back up or relief for the part of divorced women.

Patriarchy, Religion, or Both?

While evaluating societal attitudes toward divorce and its ensuing effects on post divorce adjustment, it is essential to take the specific cultural context into account since there may be significant differences and that “the ingredients of adjustment to divorces are apt to be affected by the encompassing culture and society” (Cohen & Savaya, 1997; Kitson & Morgan, 1990 cited in Yılmaz and Fisiloğlu, 2005)

Looking into the specific cultural context may give us insights into the underpinnings of societal attitudes. In Turkey where the majority of population is Muslim, religion has determining effect on people’s attitudes. In Islam, divorce is allowed, yet not encouraged, as it is overt in the often cited saying that “divorce is the least liked of all permissible acts”.

Islam considers marriage to be a legal contract; and the act of obtaining a divorce is essentially the act of legally dissolving the contract. According to Sharia law, there is a required waiting period before a divorce is considered valid. A man must announce his intentions, effectively "divorcing", three times over a period of three months - during which time he may change his mind and renege. If he completes the three-month period, still intent on separating from his wife, then the couple are not allowed to remarry each other without first entering other relationships to help determine the cause of their original separation (Wikipedia encyclopedia).

Even if divorce is permitted, the fact that it is not encouraged and disliked may have its impact on the social attitudes toward divorce. However in Turkish case to what extent religion shapes the perceptions remains to be explored; for, patriarchy seems to flirt with religion to a great extent.

While Mernissi states that patriarchy is inherent in Islam (1987), there are scholars deeming these two as separate, what is more, there are contentions concerning patriarchy’s utilization of the religion, which is indicated by the way religion is understood and applied in daily life and by many practices demanded in the name of Islam (Badran, 1985; 15).

We should bear in mind that religion has power to emaciate or strengthen patriarchy, as illustrated in one of the study conducted in Turkey, *Muslim Women's Everyday Life Experience 'Veiled', Married, and Professional Women in Turkey at the 1990s*, where Muslim women's daily life practices were explored, it turned out that veiled professional women in Turkey are looking for more participation in modern capitalist society, but are legitimizing their way of doing this by using religious/Islamic discourse (Oztimur, 2001). In a similar fashion, as stated above patriarchal mindset utilizing religion may deprive women of liberation. According to Erturk (1991; p., 316), however, neither religion nor patriarchy per se but "the corporate identity of patriarchal-islamic culture which imposes standards by which the moral and structural positions of women are defined" is worth scrutinizing as the main mechanism determining women's condition in Middle Eastern context.

Chastity as a control mechanism over female body and sexuality in general is maintained through family and society at large. This outlook constitutes the underlying mindset toward divorced women. Single women's sexuality poses a serious threat to social order:

Even though a rank of professional women coexists with men in public sphere, men still dominate over the "liberated" women in terms of her personal life, for example a single woman living on her own is dangerous to the community in which she is living, especially in middle class neighborhoods. The reason is basically that she is not abiding the rules set by the male dominant system, which requires that she be married. An unmarried, independent women living on her own is regarded as an anomaly. Thus even the educated male has tendency to view an unmarried, therefore, masterless women as fair game (Muftuler-Bac, 1999; 310).

Moreover in our case, to assess religion's emphasis on divorced women, we need to draw a fine line between women who are committed and who are not; because for many of the professional women in Turkey religion has no such reference point. Taking committed and noncommitted women as vantage points to examine the effects of patriarchy and religion dyad on women will give us insight into the societal attitudes.

2.3.7. Presence of Children

One more thing that accompanies women's- custodial women in particular- post divorce adjustment, in positive or negative way is children. Upon the decision of divorce the immediate concern is raised regarding who will take the custody. As we mentioned above in Turkey women are primary custodial parent, Studies on divorce in Turkey also reflects this fact; Arıkan (1990) in her study she conducted with 160 women found that 77% of the women are custodial parents, another study (Demircioglu, 2000) with a sample of 120 women reports that 72% of women receive the custody, again a study (Tor, 1993) relates that of the women interviewed (N: 640) 84, 6% stated that they received the child custody, which is one of the main criticisms of socialist feminist thinkers:

By virtue of their place within sexual division of labor, women are disproportionately responsible for childcare and family health, and they are particularly concerned with housing and food provision (Molyneux, 2002:250).

As a corrective, Diane Ehrensaft (1990), in her chapter to *Women, Class and Feminist Imagination*, offers shared parenting by mother and father instead of female dominated child rearing.

While the recurrence of women's becoming custodial parent may be associated with maternal feelings of women, it also reveals a concern regarding men's reluctance to demand. Despite growing value of children in Turkey for the last three decades accompanied with emotional interdependence in family and closeness between generations with weakening patriarchal and patrilocal family patterns particularly in urban setting (Kağıtçıbaşı & Ataca, 2005: 334), it is mind-probing to understand men's tendency to leave custody to women most of the time, specifically, given father's protectionist treatment of their children during marriage. One speculation may bring us to think that presence of children may cause men to be less advantageous in marriage market. Parting with the child contributes to remaining "single" after divorce. As Diana Pearce put it, the typical outcome of a marital break up for a family with children is that the man becomes *single* while the woman becomes *a single parent* (1982; 12 quoted in Abbot and Wallace, 1992: 139,

emphasis in original) It seems clear that the concept of father withers away when the family breaks, when *the ties that bind*³ tear down; individual concern comes to fore for the part of men that leads us to think that the concept of father is contextual, without the context of family it tends to lose ground. Arditti (1999), drawing on his qualitative study denotes that as with fathers, co-residence seems to provide an important context to provide support and be involved with one's children, even though nonresidence did not inevitably lead to disengaged relations as evidenced by one of his respondent who had described close relationship with her nonresidential mother, he further refers to a speculation that nonresidence is less of a factor in determining closeness for mother child relationships than for fathers (116).

Moreover, as jointly rose by the legal practitioners during our interviews to them, when husbands want custody they do it for the purpose of provocation most of the time, in order to punish women and make her suffer more, specifically when she is the initiator of separation.

In our study we examine the issue of children with respect to women. As was stated earlier, most of the Turkish literature on divorce focuses on the impacts of divorce on children (Arıkan, 1990), however, in our study we want to explore the effects of having children on women's decision to get divorced, on her post divorce adjustment, on her future and career plans.

Children's effect on the women is two way; during marriage and after divorce. Married women with children find it harder to come to a decision to divorce, giving one more chance or waiting for a while are common behaviors. As can be seen in the following graph children having children has a determining effect on the decision to divorce.

Following divorce women may find it hard to adjust to their new conditions; they have to find ways to cope with economic problems which is aggravated with child's expenses. Pamela Smock elaborates on this thus:

³ Carol Smart's expression, see bibliography.

Children are likely to have a negative effect on postdisruption per capita income, even controlling for predisruption human capital. Although this is probably true for both men and women who continue to live with at least one of their children, prevailing child custody patterns suggest that this variable could account for much of the gender difference in post disruption per capita income (1994: 248).

The parent who actively takes care of the children face variety of problems including overinvolvement in their family roles, parenting problems toward children and economic hardship (Arıkan 1990, pp 42). trying to be both a father and a mother, the custodial mothers take over too much load, at times they may live role confusion, by shifting the boundaries and may end up behaving like an authoritarian father, which makes their single parenting experience all the more difficult. Mc lanahan (2001) on the other hand draws our attention to insufficient parenting or low level of parental involvement in child related matters. Depending on the findings of a sizeable literature she depicts the fact that due to their increased responsibility upon divorce the mothers are not able to monitor their children's education lives, moreover, they may not involve in their important decisions like marriage. As one study in Turkey denotes:

In the context of parenting styles, divorce leads to a decrease in the acceptance/interest the children perceive from parents and to an increase in the control/discipline dimensions (Sirvanlı-Ozen, 2005; pp 144).

The non-custody parents may equally face difficult experiences. Facing the fact that they have to see their children by following a visitation schedule from then on, they may feel depressed for feeling themselves like a stranger in their children's lives (Tepp 1983).The effect of children is not straightforward though, it may have positive impacts on women's post divorce adjustment as well, they may support the mother's life and make them more determined to pull together and find energy.

However as difficult as single parenting may seem most women report that they prefer single parenting to being in an unsatisfactory marriage (Hunt and Hunt, 1977 quoted in L'Hommedieu, 1984)

2.3.8. Remarriage

In the international context including Turkey family lives are becoming more and more multifarious; single parent families, step families, visitation arrangements all make family variegated. As Bumpass, et al (1990) suggests recent trends in divorce and remarriage have greater role in diversity in the family life course;

Indeed remarriage has become as common as first marriage-half of all recent marriages in the US involve at least one previously married partner (747).

For some researchers remarriage renders fundamental change in marriage patterns as well as in families:

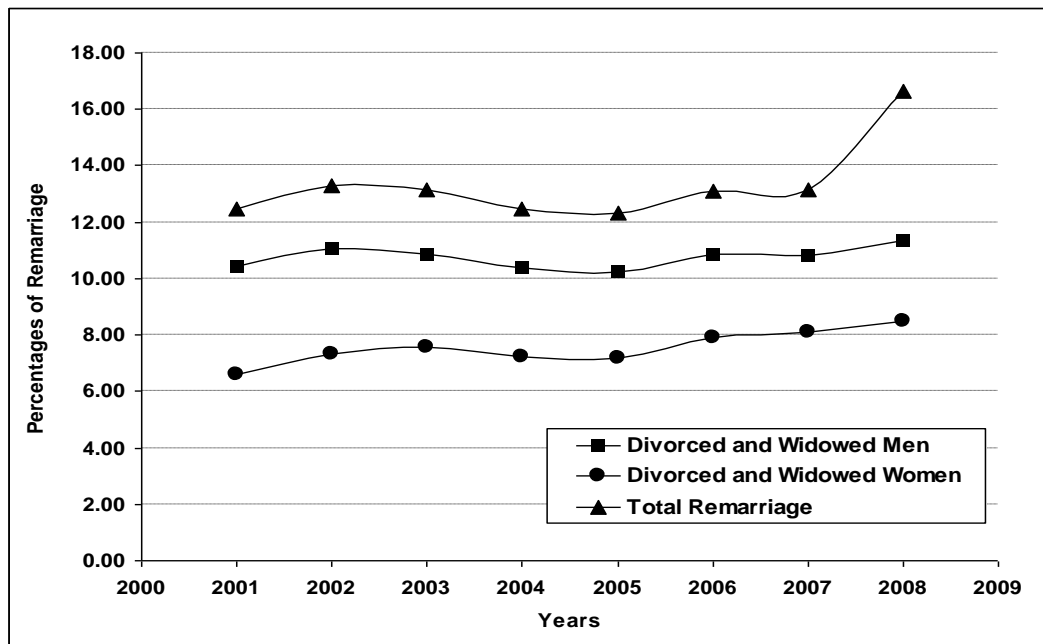
The shift from dominant pattern of lifelong marriage to one of serial marriage punctuated by periods of being single represents a fundamental change in how adults meet their needs for intimacy over the life course (Amato, 2000; 1269).

We can say that remarriage is an understudied topic in the sense that so far, no specific study has portrayed the phenomenon of remarriage in Turkey, except for a recent study on Marital satisfaction in Turkish remarried families (Bir-Akturk and Fisiloglu, 2009) and few other studies on divorce which has touched remarriage as part and parcel of their research. Drawing on their findings we maintain that remarriage is not a remote possibility for divorced women (Demirci 2000; Arıkan 1990). In Arıkan's study, *Social and Psychological Problems of Working Class Divorced*, 37% of divorced women stated that they may remarry while in Demirci's study where she conducted questionnaires to 120 divorced women from different occupations, 70% of women expressed that they think positively about remarriage.

By using the most recent raw data from Turkish Statistical Institute (Turkstat) we made statistical analysis and we saw that remarriage is an increasing proportion of all marriages. As we see in the figure 1, while between 2001 through 2007 the remarriage rate was waving between 12 to 13 percent, in 2008 the total remarriage rate rose 16.6 percent of all marriages. Poring over the statistics soon we realize the

gender gap in remarriage; 8.5 % for women, 11.3% for men in 2008. Namely, men remarry at higher rates than do women, which is consistent with the international literature (Bumpass, et al; 1990; South, 1991; Glick and Lin 1986).

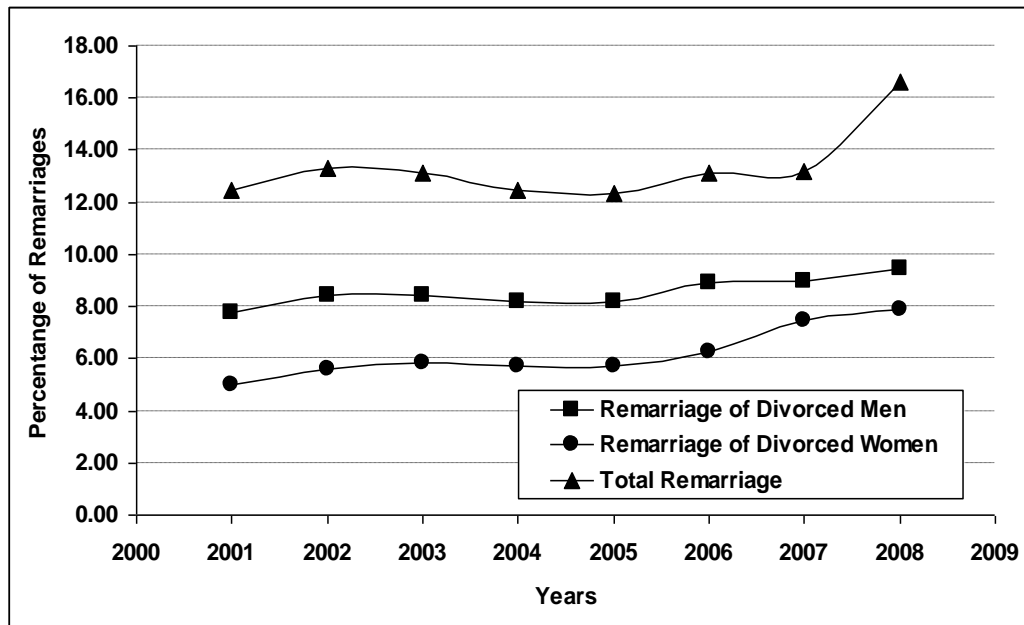
Figure 2.1: Percentage of Remarried Families, Remarriage of Divorced and Widowed Men and Women



Source: Turkish Statistical Institute, 2008 marriage and divorce statistics.

However, when we singled out remarriages of only divorced individuals in our statistical estimation, we came to notice that the gender gap in remarriage is closing. While 9.4% of divorced men made their second or higher order marriages, as high as 7.9 % divorced women remarried in 2008.

Figure 2.2: Percentage of Remarried Families, Remarriage of Divorced Men and Divorced Women

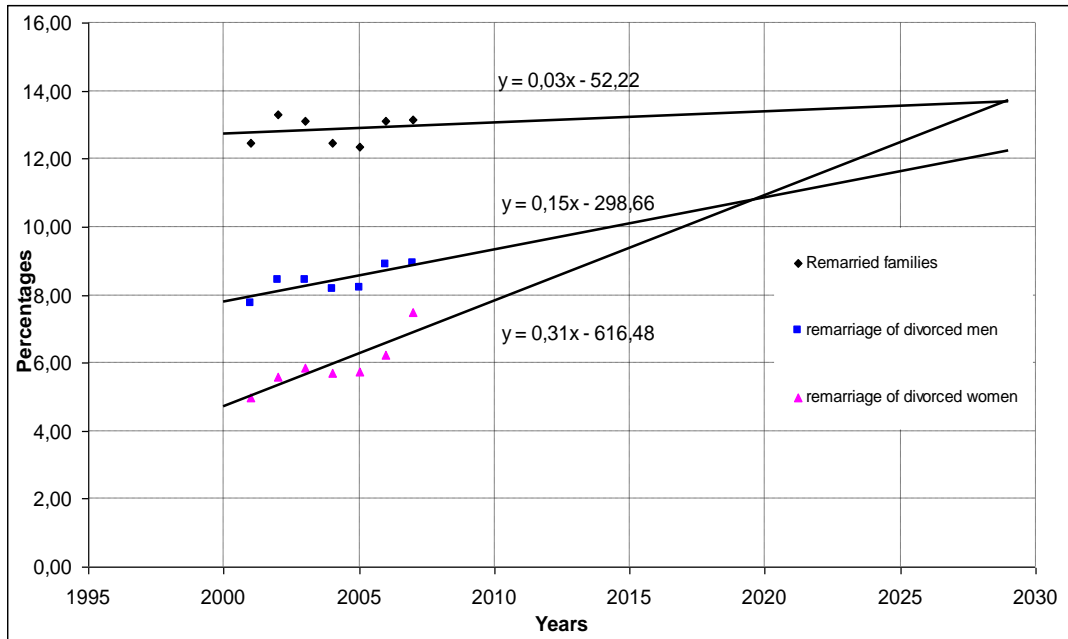


Source: Turkish Statistical Institute, 2008 marriage and divorce statistics.

Moreover, we also noticed that while the rate of divorced men remarrying to never married single women was higher-4.5%-than divorced women remarryied to never married single men-1.6% for the last seven years according to 2008 data, however, the rate of divorced women remarrying to never married single men is increasing

According to our statistical calculation we predict that if the current trends continue, by 2020 the gender gap with respect to remarriages will be offset by striking increase in divorced women’s remarriage, which is expected to prevail over that of men by 2030. The Rate of remarried families, on the other hand, is predicted to increase over 16 %.

Figure 2.3: Projection of Percentage of Remarried Families, Remarriage of Divorced Men and Women for the next Twenty Years



Source: Turkish Statistical Institute, 2008 marriage and divorce statistics.

At this point having a glance over the trends in the US and some other Western countries briefly will help us to comprehend the trend in Turkey fully. Approximately half of the marriages in the United States represent a remarriage for one or both partners (Bumpass, S. & Martin, S; 1990). Most divorced persons remarry- about two-thirds of the women and three fourths of the men. According U.S. Census Bureau' s Survey of Income and Program Participation Reports in 2004 with 59.252 couples, 28.9 % of the current marriages constitute second and higher order marriages, women 20.8% women; men 21 %.⁴ On the other hand in the western context, the divorced tend to cohabit either as a precursor of remarriage or permanently (Cherlin 1992; Cherlin and Furstenberg 1994; Bumpass et al 1991, 1995). A recent survey conducted by UN summarizes the trend:

⁴ The percentage are calculated depending on the table which includes only people who are married spouse present. Source: 2004 data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation Reports via the U.S. Census, http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/marrdiv/2004detailed_tables.html

Many women and men choose to remarry after divorce or widowhood. However, the interval between marriages seems to be lengthening, perhaps due to couples choosing to cohabit before committing to a new marriage. In much of the European Union the number of remarriages has grown significantly. Remarriages are most prevalent in Denmark and the United Kingdom, where almost 30 per cent of marriages are second marriages for at least one partner. In contrast, remarriages are almost nonexistent in Ireland and are relatively rare in Italy and Spain. ...even with increase in the number of remarriages, the rate of remarriage after divorce has been decreasing since the 1970s, following the same trend as first marriage. Today, many divorced people postpone remarriage or cohabit with a new partner without legalizing the union. In 1965 the probability of remarrying after divorce was around 60 to 70 percent in Western Europe and 55 percent in Nordic countries. Twenty years later these percentages had each decreased by at least 20 percent. In France between 1980 and 1996 the rate of remarriage after divorce had decreased by 25 per cent. In Italy the rate of remarriage after divorce decreased between 1980 and 1990, especially for men (Women's World, 2000).

Even though remarriage rates are higher among men than women, studies conducted on remarriage patterns suggest that implications of remarriage are particularly profound for women in two related respects; most obvious is the growth in mother only families and the marked poverty experience of such families (Bumpass, et al; 1990; 754).

While women's remarriage is contingent on certain circumstances like their age, having children or not, her former marriage's duration (Arikan, 1990; 218); there are not firm grounds for men to consider before second or further marriages. As the literature suggests men are more likely to remarry than women, but those who do not, seem to suffer greater social isolation and ill health (Bumpass, et al; 1990; South, 1991). More specifically, according to the studies divorced women are less likely to remarry when they are older, have more education, employed and have fewer children (Coleman, Ganong & Fine, 2000; Simmons & O'Neill, 2001).

With children remarriage gains a different aspect, it also involves step parenting which concerns couples most, thus, may play deterring role on the decision to remarry. As Buckle et al. (1996) depicts children lower the likelihood of remarriage

for both men and women but the impact of children is greater on women's probability of remarriage (cited in Coleman, et al. 2000)

Societal attitudes also shape the circumstances for women's second marriage. Paradoxically while marriage is the most approved form of unity, the fact that attitudes that deem divorced women ineligible discourages women to involve in forming a new unity. Age and presence of children lower women chance for a second marriage. Moreover, in Turkish context not being virgin also adds to divorced women's disadvantaged position in the marriage market, As ioglu (1997) states "The modernization of women's lives has not diminished the highly charged nature of virginity in Turkish society" Moreover, the social recognition of remarriage also plays significant role in shaping individual's mind as Bir-Akturk and Fişiloğlu (2009) denoted being an Asian country "where remarried families experience more stigma than they do in western countries", in Turkey there are social pressures and fewer extra familial supports for the remarried families. Divorced women's own attitudes to a new relationship may hold them back to initiate marriage as well. Going through such a stressful event, women may feel "failed" and lose confidence in men; therefore they may have some reservations to enter a second marriage (Arıkan, 1990; 221).

It is important to note that financial security is a major concern in motivation toward remarriage. As we stressed above divorce result in reduced economic standards and financial difficulty, remarriage, in this sense, can be considered an economic recovery and security for divorced women. As Cherlin (1992) states "remarriage has been a traditional answer to many of the problems faced by single parents" (p 80). As well, the literature suggests that women who remarry typically experience increased economic status and reduced economic distress (Coleman, Ganong & Fine, 2000; Duncan and Hoffman, 1985; Folk, 1992). As Folk states (1992) "remarriage is the surest way to raise their family's income for most divorced mothers and is their most common route out of poverty".

However when we interpret financial security with regard to women's empowerment, it becomes obvious that remarriage makes women dependent on husband.

Reduced salary and childbearing are especially important for creating a marital context of financial dependence and placing women in need of marriage for financial security (Vogler, 2005 cited in Moorefield et al., 2007)

Women enter into the cycle of what Juliet Mitchell calls four structures; production, reproduction, sexuality and the socialization of children which procreate women's second sex status. Heidi Hartman further explains this dependence thus;

With the previously established patriarchal division of labor the interdependence of men and women that arises out of the division of labor by gender was also maintained (1978; 109).

Another significant dimension of remarriage is the issue of stability. Researchers generally found that remarriages dissolve at a higher rate than first marriages (Bumpass et al. 1990; Booth and Edwards 1992; Amato 2000) two important causes of fragility of remarriages are enumerated by Booth and Edwards as lack of social support and clear norms to follow and that remarried couples are more likely to see divorce as a solution than people in first marriages. We lack data regarding the dissolution rate of second marriages in Turkey. With respect to the marital quality, however, Bir-Akturk and Fisiloglu (2009) in their studies where they compared marital satisfaction among those of different marital statuses such as first-married, post divorce married and post bereavement married stated that "despite the greater potential complexity of marital roles and problems that remarriage implies, remarried individuals report levels of satisfaction close to those reported by their first-married counterparts".

CHAPTER 3

WOMEN, FAMILY AND DIVORCE IN TURKEY

In this chapter the general profile of divorce will be provided, however, to grasp women's post divorce experience in a more comprehensive fashion, it is significant to know socio-cultural and familial context. A brief introduction can be helpful in providing a background to the following sections of the study; therefore, I will not treat family in an exhaustive framework and will only touch on the relevant parts. Given this, in the first section I will describe the current condition of Turkish family with its dynamics and structure- as well as changes it went through with statistical data from Demographic Health Survey 2003 and 2008, Turkish Statistical Institute (Turkstat) and Family and Household survey. In the second part of the section I will give some information as to women's social and familial roles in Turkish setting. And the remaining section of this chapter will provide a brief information concerning divorce in Turkey.

3.1. Family in Turkey: a Brief Introduction

From its inception onward Turkey has gone through massive changes in family structures and values. Governmental reforms within the framework of Kemalist modernity project⁵, that promoted such values as secularism, nationalism and modernity and incorporated westernization into society (Kabasakal, et al; 2004) and industrialization triggered the changes; however, the urbanization process from the 1950s onward must be the most important underpinning of the change in family.

⁵ In an attempt to make Turkish Republic a modern state Mustafa Kemal and his friends have made some efforts, changing women's status being the leading of these efforts. They brought a civil code (Swiss Civil Code) in 1926 and banned polygamy; introduced gender equality in marriage, divorce, inheritance; established secular schools and closed religious schools (madrasa), and made schools accessible specifically for women. Moreover the reformers removed the Arabic alphabet and replaced it with the Latin alphabet, gave political rights to women to vote and to be elected in local and national elections in 1930 and 1934 respectively. Finally dress code was emphasized, western attire instead of traditional clothing was put in effect (Muftuler-Baç, 1999).

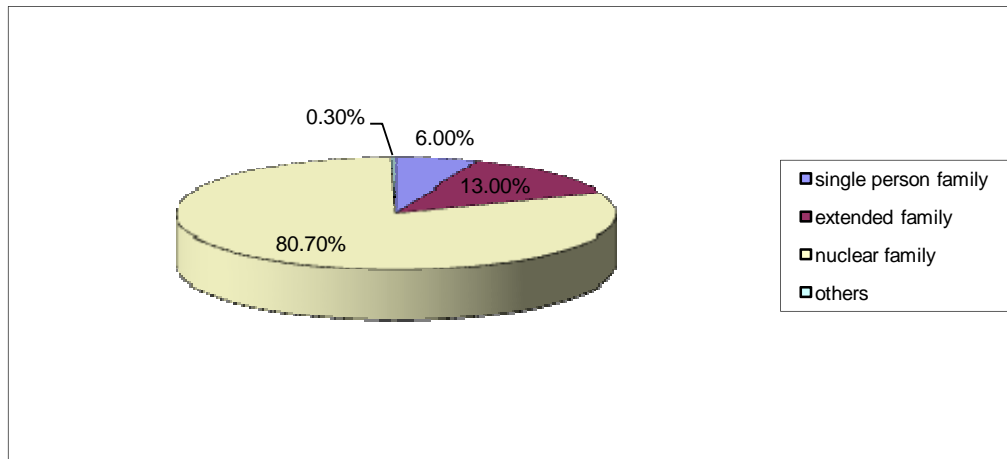
Today according to most recent census report 75 % of people live in cities. Rural to urban migration leading continuous and rapid urbanization throughout 1970s and 1980s brought about problems too; inadequate provision of services and the emergence of large areas of squatter housing in unplanned settlements around metropolitan cities are some of them (DHS, 2003). Problems related to adaptation to city life manifesting itself in identity crisis, cultural clashes are still the prevalent hardships these people face.

Although it was generally believed that family in Turkey has been nuclear in urban setting and patriarchally extended in rural areas, there are studies which presents contradictory findings, according to these researchers the extended family structure was not pervasive in Turkey (Ortaylı 2001; Duben 1982; Kağıtcıbası 1982; Kongar, 1976). Moreover, according to Kağıtcıbası, the family structure in rural setting was in transient form; the typical pattern of change in rural family followed the life-cycle below, in her own words:

The rural family involves first the newly married couple living with the husband's parents as a valued pattern and due to economic necessities (patriarchally extended family), then moving out as the young man gains more income and autonomy (nuclear family) and then later on, the aged parents moving in again for protection in old ages ("transient extended") (1982; p., 5)

Today as the following figure demonstrates nuclear family structure is the dominant family structure in Turkey. It bears noting that there are eminent structural changes in the Turkish family including a growing number of single-parents and step-families formed in the wake of divorce. We talk about implications of these family patterns in related sections in this study.

Figure 3.1. Family Structure in Turkey



Source: Turkstat, Family Structure Survey, 2006

Given the support mechanism within families, it could be said that the elements of an extended family are fulfilled in a way (Kongar, 1976). In other words, even though they live separately, family members are expected to give material or emotional support to each other, especially when a member of family is in an economically difficult condition. As Cindioğlu, et al, (2008) states social mobility of a person provides improvements in the status of all family members, ‘as the upwardly mobile relative has the duty to come to the aid of the family’. It must be due to this support mechanism that migrants coming to urban areas without sufficient resources somehow find ways to survive. As well, Cindioğlu, et al (2008) underscores that this support mechanism is not necessarily due only to economic difficulties and did not change in the present era:

There appears to be no loosening of family ties, but perhaps even more withdrawing into the family circle as a means of coping with any difficulties associated with social change. Kinship and neighborhood relations are powerful forces in the lives of urban families—both those newly arrived as well as the upper classes (p. 28).

Observing urban families we can confront with practices that illustrates elements of an extended family, one example in this sense is dependence on mothers or mother-in-laws for childcare help. The reason for this trend is that “institutionalized childcare is scarce, privately-run crèches are expensive and private sector employers

are often reluctant to provide these services for their employees (Ecevit, et. al., 2003)”. According to the most recent TDHS-2008, in Turkey the main source of child care is either the mother or the relatives, the percentage of institutional child care is around 7. Therefore, today in urban families we see modern spouses opting for having their mothers or mother-in-laws over during their childbearing period particularly for critical period of time which-we may consider- lend itself to a shift in the set ups of modern families, that is to say, a shift towards extended families (Kavas, 2006; p., 40)

Respect for age and authority is an important and persistent family value both in rural and urban setting. According to Kağıtçıbaşı (1982) loyalty and respect within family, kinship and the community extend most thoroughly to those in the established positions of power, in the family it is father, in the rural community age and wealth. “A culture encompassing family values and a sense of community regards mutual aid and family solidarity as more important than the success of a person independent of his or her family” (Cindoğlu, et al, (2008). However as Kıray (1974) denotes in rural areas at least this is subject to change with the advent of agricultural technology and mobility of people. Namely, fathers’ controls over their sons and respect for the elderly weaken. Kağıtçıbaşı and Ataca (2005) in their study where they scrutinize value of children (VOC) and family change in Turkey find that with increasing urbanization and socioeconomic development the individuals in Turkish families have been taking over the characteristics of an autonomous-related self “which is different from both the (autonomous) separate self typical of Western individualistic family pattern and (heteronymous) related self typical of the traditional collectivist rural family”.

Since family is a sanctified unit of society, getting married is accepted as an important part of forming a unity, and in Turkey as the following figures indicate marriage as an institution is quite pervasive. According to Demographic Health Survey (2008) conducted in 81 provinces in 10,525 households, the majority of women at childbearing age are currently married (65 percent), one-third (31 percent) are never married, and the remaining 4 percent are either divorced, separated or widowed. Moreover, Four percent of women in their late thirties have never

married, and only 0.1 percent of women age 45-49, who are approaching the end of the reproductive years, have never married. Importantly, marriage rate in Turkey is increasing; the most recent crude marriage rate is 9.3 ‰ (Turkstat 2008). According to Turkstat's Family Structure Survey (2006) civil marriage with additional religious ceremony is common, 86.9%; however, a number of couples practice religious ceremony 3.7% or civil ceremony alone 9.7%.

With respect to mate selection, the findings of Turkstat's Family Structure Survey reveals that in the sample of 24.647 adults 55.4% of women and 67.1% of men marry through both parents and couples involvement in the decision making process (with either couples' choosing their prospective spouses and getting their parents consent- 27.4% of the women and 35.2 % of men stated so or parents' choosing who their children will marry together with the couples' own consents -28 % of women and 31.9 % of men stated this. On the other hand 36% of women and 24.8% of the men marry through arranged marriages without their consents. The average age at first marriage is, 22.9, for women and 26.2 for men (Turkstat-Marriage Statistics, 2008).

In regard to marriage there are some practices on the decline yet still appears rarely, in rural areas in particular. Receiving bride price paid to the bride's father by the groom's father before marriage is one of them, 'it is valued as a symbol of chastity and for the economic gains it brings in exchange for the loss of labor of the girl' (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1982). The rate of families paying bride price, however, is %16.8 in Turkey (Turkstat Family Structure Survey, 2006). Unequal inheritance right is another practice that happens in rural areas, though Turkish civil codes resolves it establishing equal sharing as a rule. The new civil code enacted in 1926 also banned polygamy, in fact, during the reign of Ottoman empire, polygamy was rare- neither approved nor rejected by only practiced by a small population of an urban rich (Ortaylı, 2001;89). Today we can say that it is a rare incident happening mostly in the rural areas of south eastern part of the country, 11 % (Cindoğlu, et al, 2008)

As for fertility rate, as Kağıtçıbaşı and Ataca (2005) states a demographic transition is underway, total fertility rate in Turkey has decreased gradually, while in 1978 it was 4.3 per woman; it decreased to 3 births during the late 1980s and, to

2.6 births in the 1990s, and finally to 2.23 in 2003 (TDHS, 2008). The most recent total fertility rate is 2.16 per women in 2008 - 2.00 in urban areas and 2.68 in rural areas which is almost exactly at the replacement level. Moreover as the rates demonstrates the urban rural gap in fertility levels appears to be closing (TDHS 2008). Therefore, today what Kagıtcıbası and Ataca (2005) name two-child norm is prevalent. Moreover, women with secondary or more education have an average of 1.7 children (Aytaç, 1998 cited in Cindoğlu et al, 2008).

With respect to daily lives, it is commonly observed that in Turkey despite overwhelming pressure to efface tradition, tradition is somehow persists and flirts with modernity. Modernity and tradition overlaps each other and we can grasp its repercussion specifically in every day life of the modern individual (Kavas, 2006; p., 38; Kabasakal; 2004). As one study depicts cohabitation of modernization and traditionalism manifests itself through some prevalent practices:

In Turkey in addition to official marriage ceremony people also opt for religious ceremony (imam nikahı), which is not registered or valid legally. In fact even the Islamic scholars announce that because the country is not ruled with Shari'ah rules, the wedlock is unregistered and thus religious ceremonies are not in use for they do not safeguard the rights of spouses following the inception of Republic and now that they do not function formally in the society even the religion does not warrant them. However, modern individuals sometimes for religious sensitivity, sometimes conform to the customs maintain this practice. What is surprising is even the atheists for one reason or another follow this practice (Kavas, 2006 p., 39).

3.1.1. Sex Roles: Women between Family and Work

When studying women's familial and social roles it is imperative that we should decide which women we are studying, as profile of women in Turkey posits a stark contrast between rural and urban context as well as among different socio-economic class differences. It is frequently stated that Kemalist reforms that provided women with educational opportunities and legal rights did not reach out to the women in rural areas, specifically in Eastern side of Turkey (Erturk, 1991). As a result, as

Gunduz-Hosgor (Forthcoming) puts forward in the following, the women in the East and Southeastern areas live through unfavorable living conditions:

Women in Eastern and Southeastern regions benefit from the legal regulations in a limited way. For example, whereas getting married only through religious marriage ceremony is almost a rare incident in Western and Northern side of Turkey; in Eastern and Southeastern side of Turkey, on the other hand, one third of all married women are married only through religious marriage ceremony and are deprived of the legal rights and regulations a civil wedlock can provide them with. With respect to their access to basic education and census registration, these women's statuses present a stark difference with those of men (P., 1)
(My translation)

As such, the same contrast goes within urban context, as Kandiyoti (1982) states “it is impossible to discuss women in urban context without explicit reference to urban stratification”, for urban setting ranges from lower class squatter (shanty towns) to upper middle class districts. Gunduz-Hosgor and Smith (2008) in their study where they “explore the role of paid work in women's empowerment by analyzing the variation in employment status and occupational position of Turkish women according to socio-economic and geographic background characteristics, characteristics of their marriage, and gender role attitudes” designates three major category of women with different lifestyles; at the upper end of society small elite of educated women occupying stable and high class occupations; migrant women mostly occupying low-paid work in informal economy or in labor intensive formal industry and finally rural women.

Women's labor in rural side is unpaid and is not recognized as a work because what they do -farming, childcare and housework- does not require special training or fix schedule “ it is rather a total lifestyle”(Kağıtçıbaşı, 1982; p., 13). Moreover, she has little or no control over her production; her husband or her father conduct financial transactions or marketing that require physical mobility (Cindoğlu, et al., 2008). Women's status is evaluated in terms of age and childbearing (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1982; p.,

11). Patriarchy is particularly endemic to rural setting. Men control not only power and property but also women, especially in Eastern Turkey. Women additionally are oppressed by the extended family structure (Cindoğlu, et al., 2008). It is typical that once getting married, the couple lives with the husband's family either permanently or for a certain period of time until he gains more income. During this time newly married women are expected to serve to the family members as well as their own husband and children. Women also play an intermediary role between fathers and sons and daughters; in times of crisis, according to Kıray (1982) by doing so women not only preserve the authority in the family but also help reinforce the patriarchal system.

What is also named as low class women in Turkey are no different from the women in rural setting in view of the level of oppression they face. Most of these women are migrant women mostly occupying low-paid unremunerative work in informal or formal economy. Even though coming to the urban area and working give them a certain level of independence, because they have to struggle against the harsh economic realities of city life in addition to their familial roles, these women do not enjoy the comforts they expect to live in urban life as such. Moreover, growing up in villages where they lose the education opportunity, they cannot find stable jobs and cannot adopt to the modern values they face coming to city (Gündüz-Hoşgör and Smith, 2008). According to Kandiyoti (1982) main motivation for work for the low class women in Turkey is economic necessity, it is not surprising given the fact that they work in unskilled occupations and do not have chance to promote due to their low level of education and training.

3.1. 2. Republican Ideology and Professional Women

A relatively small number of highly educated lower or upper middle class women with stable jobs in urban areas of Turkey constitute the third category. This category of women in Turkey first became visible through Turkish Republic's modernity project since its inception in 1923. Since status of women became one important dimension of modernization and westernization efforts (Muftuler-Bac, 1999; Gole, 1996; Bora 2002), women were granted social, legal and political rights within the

framework of this project. Coming from middle or upper class family background which helped them to benefit from the governmental reforms these women enjoyed professional jobs and relative independence in society (Oncu, 1982; Bora, 2002). As Öncü (1982) claims their access to education and professional jobs at great number which is almost equal to highly industrialized countries in 1970s can be explained with class inequality and state recruitment within the framework of modernity project.

Although Kemalist reforms being part and parcel of modernity project of newly established republic paved the way for women's access to education, employment and politics, it will be an overstatement to say that it transformed women's status and familial roles at the same time. First of all, while reforms has been significant among middle-and upper-class families, their influence has been only partial among lower socioeconomic groups and in rural areas (Kabasakal, 2004; p., 273), and more importantly male domination stayed intact and as Bora (2004) stated Kemalist reforms imposed a certain mission for women who will serve to the modernization objective of the reforms:

It is important to bear in mind that in Turkish modernization the mission to enlighten the country was defined as a political struggle and in this struggle middle class educated women acted as the natural allies of official ideology of modernization and the state as modernizing subjects (pp., 108). (My Translation)

This image was far from challenging the prevalent family ideology which assigned carer and domestic roles to women and breadwinner role to men (Ozbilgin & Healy, 2004; p., 366) Today despite the fact that the reforms have lost its intensity we can venture to say that the mindset has not changed as such, except for a small number of an urban elite generally women consider their caring role as their primary roles, in the words of Kabasakal, et. al:

Despite significant attempts at the modernization of women, some conflicting and traditional roles are simultaneously present in Turkish society, even among middle and upper classes as part of Middle Eastern culture. These traditional roles promote

segregation of gender roles, the role of women as mothers and wives and traits that are considered to be feminine (2004; p., 274)

Therefore, as a sizeable literature suggests women's employment do not change the patriarchal system as such (Kağıtçıbaşı 1982; Kuyas 1982; Kandiyoti; Gunduz-Hosgor & Smits 2008). The underpinnings of this outcome presents different trajectories; in the case of rural women since women's work is underestimated and women's status is evaluated within the framework of her domestic roles, we can only expect male dominated system to be perpetuated. Nilufer Kuyas in her study where she treats female labor and power relations in the family, points out that moving into labor market does not necessarily bring about changes for more liberal values in domestic sphere and this is also true for middle class employed women as long as women identify themselves with their homes, husbands or children. Due to the entrenched division of labor which renders women to the domestics sphere, even if women holds professional work, still they are expected to fulfill their domestic roles. (Ecevit, et al., 2002) in their study, *Women in Computer Programming Occupations in Turkey: Reconciling Work and Family Obligations*, where they compared high status and low status women in computer programming profession regarding how each group reconcile their professionalism with their marital status presented findings no dissimilar to what Kuyas encountered in her study. Interestingly this study found notable differences between two groups of women; while the women in low-status job continue to fulfill the dual demand of work, both at home and work place; women in high status job refuse to conform to the traditional gender roles by either not marrying at all or simply delaying it. Moreover among those who marry, divorce rates are very high and they have only one child. So, the attitudes of both groups indicate that traditional gender roles and values continue to rule family relationships, in the words of Kandiyoti:

Even in the case of professional women the strains inherent in combining work and domestic responsibilities are seldom allowed to reflect on men who continue to be sheltered from new role demands. This shelter is secured through the help or exploitation of other women who acts as buffer absorbing the effects of change for couple; these women range from maids and nannies to poorer relatives and mothers...the male role seems to have been least

affected by change, bolstered as it is by socialization practices, ideology and structural change (1982; p., 117).

Therefore, women may see marital roles as barrier on their advancement in careers. Kabasakal and Bodur (2002) in their studies where they compared cultural practices and norms in Middle Eastern context put forward that 50% of women stated marriage as a hindrance on their career while no single men stated the same. Another study (Ecevit, et.al, 2003) on Professional women's work experience in computer programming occupations in Turkey finds that to be able to pursue their careers successfully, women develop various strategies such as "working hard, postponing marriage or not marrying at all, and managing marriage without a radical redefinition of their marital roles". In this study, 50 % of women in their sample are never married. What is more, the percentage of divorced, separated or widow women in their sample is 14.5 % pointing to the level of conflict these women live in reconciling marital roles and career. Thus, as Kuyas (1982; p., 191) pinpoints many conditions must be fulfilled in addition to mere employment "in order to be able to speak of a positive move towards more economic and psychological freedom for women in family".

Today the participation of women in the active labor force is 24.9% (Turkstat Family Structure Survey, 2006) In fact It has been on the decline; in the 1950s around 70 percent of women were in the labor force, but by the mid-1990 the rate had dropped to around 30 percent (Cindoğlu, et al., 2008) the decline is explained with high rate of rural-to-urban migration. Because majority of women in villages work in agriculture however with migration to the cities they become unemployed due to the lack of education and training. A sizable number of women, thus, mostly involve in informal economy- which is not reflected as women's market labor-engaging with unofficial mobile and/or home based economic units, if they can, they also work in labor-intensive formal industry like in garment sector (Gündüz-Hosgor, 1997; Kabasakal; 2004; Erman, et al, 2002). They work in adverse conditions without social security and legal protection (Kabasakal; 2004). Moreover, even thought they contribute alto to the family budget still their income is assessed as secondary and spent in daily expenditures not for investment, in most cases they

hand in what they earned to their husbands and receive allowance in return (Erman, et. al., 2002).

The rate of women occupying professional jobs is 29% (WWHR, 2009) -35087 between 2006-2007 (Turkstat, 2009). The percentage of doctors and lawyers who are women in Turkey are 15% and 18.7 % respectively (Narlı, 2000) again, the percentage of women at universities are particularly high constituting 34% of all academic staff, 23% of them being professors. Ozbilgin & Healy (2004) in their study where they treat the gendered nature of career development at Turkish universities relate these relatively high percentages to the legacy of representation of women in public sphere which is left from republican ideology which promoted women's entry to professional jobs. When it comes to decision making positions, however, the percentages go down remarkably, for instance, while 44 % of women are teachers there are only 8% female school principals, which, to Kabasakal, et. al, is the insignia of the existence of glass ceiling phenomenon in Turkish context:

Women's representation in managerial position is low in respect of their numbers as employees, there is a sharp decline in percentages as one goes up to managerial hierarchy in both public (only 7.6 per cent of general managers and 2.1 per cent of general secretaries of ministers are women) and private sector. The number of women in senior executive positions is particularly low pointing to the existence of the glass-ceiling phenomenon (2004; pp., 282)

The same disproportion is true for women entrepreneurs in Turkey. In 1990 "only 0.2 per cent of economically active women were in the position of employer and 7.3 per cent were self employed" (ibid, p., 285).

The issue of Glass ceiling is not the sole problem women face in work force, patriarchal mindset manifesting itself in job segregation (Tekeli, 1982), Wage disparity (Ecevit, et. al., 2000), lack of social security, unequal chance for hiring and promotion emanating from women's maternal leave and familial responsibilities (Kardam & Toksoz, 2004) are some of the prevalent problems. These discriminatory regulations are expected to be resolved since Turkey signed The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women" (CEDAW) in 1985.

3.1.3. Women's political Participation in Turkey

As for women's education and political participation in Turkey, the literacy rate for women is 80.4%. 17 % of women graduated from at least high school (TDHS, 2003). Women's political participation commenced with Kemalist reform in 1934. In 1935, for instance, the proportion of women members in the parliament was 4.6% (Narlı, 2000). From then on the rate of women members in the assembly followed a waving fashion, today the female participation in politics is one of the controversial issues, to promote women's entry into the politics special measures are taken, some political parties, in this sense, are applying quota system to increase women's seats in the parliament. Despite the recent increase from 4% to 9.1 % in 2007 elections, the outcome is not deemed as satisfying. According to Narlı (2000) the underpinnings of women's low level of participation can be accounted for socioeconomic disparity manifesting itself on education and employment rate; male dominated family structures; traditional values reinforcing strict division of labor and customs that impedes women's control over her sexual and reproductive rights. However, it bears noting that although women's participation in formal politics is low, they have active involvements in political movements, "they have played significant part in less conventional politics activities: ad hoc actions, community actions, industrial action, revolutionary, nationalist and even "terrorist" politics from the mid-1960s" (ibid, 2000).

3.1.4. Impact of Reforms Implemented in the context of integration to European Union

The status of women in Turkey has been enhanced with the reforms done within the framework of integration to European Union. Before reforms patriarchy was immanent to labor laws, penal and civil codes, even if the women were educated and involved in public sphere still they were vulnerable because of the laws regulating their lives, so, in the process beginning with integration into EU specifically with the help of women movements far reaching efforts were made and many reforms were

realized (Kavas, 2006; p., 45). The most significant regulations were in Turkish Civil Code and Turkish Penal Code. The new Turkish Civil Code enacted in 2002 abolished the supremacy of men in marriage and thus established the full equality of men and women in the family. According to the code the husband is no longer the head of the family, rather spouses are equal partners, jointly running the matrimonial union with equal decision-making powers; they have equal rights over property acquired during marriage and equal rights over the family abode (WWHR, 2005).

In addition to the changes in the Civil Code, there occurred amendments in the Penal Code as well, in 2004. The amendments bring progressive definitions and higher sentences for sexual crimes, criminalizes marital rape, brings measures to prevent sentence reductions granted to perpetrators of honor killings, eliminates previously existing discrimination against non-virgin and unmarried women, criminalizes sexual harassment at the workplace and considers sexual assaults by security forces to be aggravated offences, provisions legitimizing outdated rare practices like rape and abduction in cases which the perpetrator marries the victim have been abolished (Ibid, 2005). So with help of the changes above women's legal and social statuses were relatively ameliorated though there are still remaining demands for further transformation (Kavas, 2006; p., 45).

3.1.5. Summary

Despite ongoing changes since the inception of the republic, and further ensuing challenges within the framework of westernization, it is important to note that the family as an institution preserves its significant place in society in Turkey. The findings of the most recent Demographic and Health (TDHS 2008) give support to this finding. According to the study the universality of marriage persists, children outside of marriage is low and divorce and separation are not encouraged and are at lower rates when compared to its western counterparts.

Given the increasing rate of marriage and divorce accompanied by a decrease in fertility rate and the changing structure in the face of modernity, urbanization and

globalization, Turkish family can be considered to be in transition. It, however, is pregnant with contradictions, paradoxes and challenges along the way:

The tension between modern practices and traditional worldviews certainly affects family life and family structure in Turkey, however the path that families will take in their attempt to harmonize traditional values with the threat perceived by modernity with its strong equipments such as media, technology and communication apparatuses will probably lead the family structures in Turkey to develop a hybrid-like structure. That is new meanings, resistances and new practices will continue to develop through the tension between tradition and modernity (Cindoglu, et. al., 2008).

In regard to status of women, as we briefly stated above, status of women have always been an important component of social change in Turkey since the foundation of the Republic. Recently, European Union accession criteria came to be driving mechanism for the reforms and policies that aim further amelioration in women's status. Thanks to these reforms women now have more access to education and employment, however, although socioeconomic developments and increasing urbanization have contributed to women's entry to public sphere, male role on the other hand did not manifest any corresponding change, which cause women to cope with the double burden. According to Gunduz-hosgor (2009) this very situation can be referred as one of the underpinnings of declining fertility both in Turkey and in many developed countries. As a corollary to this situation, Gunduz-Hosgor (2009) implies that men's resistance to stand aloof from domestic sphere evinces the fact that patriarchy persists by adjusting itself to changing conditions.

Moreover, with respect to families' well being, namely, kids success at school and marriages' being satisfactory, etc. women are held accountable. It is solely woman who are expected to keep family together under all circumstances. In similar fashion in single parent and a step family structure, as well, we see women bearing the brunt of all familial burdens. As is also substantiated by our study, when adjusting to new conditions or at the time of familial crises women are expected to sacrifice or strategize. Therefore, the common saying that "men make houses women make home" persists in Turkish context.

3.2. Divorce in Turkey

Divorce has always been existent in Turkey, before the foundation of republic in 1923 it was practiced in the Ottoman Empire within the framework of Sharia law by Muslim judge (kadı). With the foundation of Turkish Republic, the practice of divorce within Islamic law was replaced by The Civil Code instituted in 1926.

3.2.1. The Turkish Civil Code

The Turkish civil code translated and adapted from the then Swiss Civil Code forbade polygamy, gave equal rights of divorce to both partners, and granted child custody rights to both parents. Although it can be deemed as progressive in its time the civil code needed several amendments that would help ameliorate women's condition particularly during and in the wake of a divorce. It was criticized to include articles that attribute secondary position to women in the family such as defining the husband as the head of the family (Article 154), making husband's consents essential for women to work (Article 159), proffering unequal rights over family property. According to Muftuler-Bac (1999) these articles incapacitated women to gain a strong ground in family and in public sphere, for example defining man as the head of family leads to overlooking all the families in which the head can be a single mother; for example, divorced or widowed mothers with children. In her work where she examines Turkish women's condition in the face of prevailing patriarchy, she touches on implications of husband consent for women to work and refers to a Report on Domestic Violence (1995) by Prime Ministry Family Research Institution, which revealed that 40 % of all Turkish women do not work outside of home because of their husbands objections (311, 313).

Since the time it went into effect Turkish Civil Code of 1926 has been subjected to many legal regulations. In the legal domain, the first effort to reform it to the advantage of women took place in 1951, since 1951 there have been numerous commissions formed by the Ministry of Justice and several proposals prepared by them aimed at a comprehensive reform of the Civil Code; but until 2001 none had succeeded, the new code enacted on January 1, 2002, however, is accepted as a

major accomplishment towards establishing gender equality in Turkey (Anıl, et al; 2002). It brings many reforms ranging from removing the designation of the husband as head of the household to removing the terms “wife” and “husband” with “spouses”, outlawing husband’s consent for women to work in public places, offering equal rights over family property, abolishing the term “illegitimate children for children born out of wedlock”. Since the amendments in general are beyond the scope of my analysis here, I will concentrate more on amendments on the divorce-related laws.

The most significant change in the new civil code is property regime; in the former civil code division of property was essential which cause a lot of controversy until it was removed. With the new civil code two types of property regime were designated: legal property regime (Ownership of Acquired Property) (Article 202), which gives each spouse equal share in the property acquired during marriage; and division of shared property regime (Article 242-243), which states that each party is the owner of the goods if they are registered in his or her name. After divorce, both parties retain the goods that they owned prior to the marriage or in their name during the marriage (Articles 242-243 of the Civil Code)⁶. This article also addresses personal or business related properties that the other spouse can not claim to have (like tailor’s knitting machine or women’s jewelry) in this case each spouse can keep his/her belongings (Baspinar, 2003; 89 *my translation*). Before or after marriage officially couples are supposed to choose one of property regimes that new civil code determines; however if they do not choose any of the determined regimes then by default they are assigned Acquired Property regime as the legal regime (Articles 202, 203 and 205). To choose another property regime, spouses are supposed to sign a contract officially with the help of a notary or state their choice when they apply for authorization to marry (Ibid, 87). Even though legal practitioners and women activists have some reservations regarding the fact that this law does not cover cases before the enactment of law in 2002, it is a fact that property regime is a positive

⁶ The property acquired by one of the spouses after the establishment of the Division of Shared Property Regime and used jointly by, or for the benefit of, the family, or investments which have been invested for the future economic benefit of the family or corresponding assets shall, in the event of the termination of the property regime, be shared equally between the spouses. For property related to a business, economic unity will be taken into consideration during the division process (Articles 244-255 of the Civil Code) (Anıl et al, 2005; 31)

development for women's empowerment in terms of economic prospect after divorce.

This new property regime provides for an equal division of property acquired during marriage, giving equal credit to each of the spouses for it, irrespective of how and where they work. Thus, the contribution of women's hitherto invisible labor to the well being of the family household is recognized and assigned an economic value....This is an achievement in terms of the economic empowerment of women. Married women now have good reason to feel economically stronger as equal partners. This will increase their self-esteem and self-confidence (Anil, et al; 2002).

Another significant amendment in new civil code regarding divorce is alimony. Previously, women could ask for alimony from men, while for men it depended on wife's economic wellbeing, the article used to say "However, for the husband to apply for alimony from the wife, the wife must have adequate financial means". This law has been removed. The party who finds him- or herself in a financially difficult position on account of divorce, may, provided that he or she is not at greater fault, claim alimony from the other side to meet his or her living costs for an indefinite period of time, the only provision is financial ability of the partner (Ibid, 2002). This new law again is taken as a step toward gender equality.

With respect to child custody the new civil code highlights joint parenting and regulates amendments accordingly, in the words of Moroglu's:

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; with the article 329 either the mother or father who actively takes care of the child may file for an alimony suit against the other. The child may also file this suit, provided that he or she has the capacity for discretion. In this provision, no age limit has been introduced and the possession of the capacity for discretion is deemed to be sufficient for the child to file a suit. These provisions ensure the effective protection of the child (Article 330). Also, the provision that the child must be of "a minimum age of sixteen" in the former Article 397 on the inspection of accounts held by the guardian on behalf of the child who is placed under guardianship by a judge is no longer in force. In accordance with the provisions of the

Convention on the Rights of the Child, the child is required to have the capacity to “form and articulate his or her views.”

Moreover, formerly the father used to have final say when there is an controversy over children; however, in new civil code both the mother and the father are responsible to take care of the child (338), which provided both couples with equal ground in this important decision.

With the amendments another difficulty, the place of court to file for divorce, came to an end. The authorized court is determined as the court in the region where one of the couples live or the couples’ neighborhood during their marriages (Article 168).

The 300 day waiting period for women, however, is still enforced in the reformed civil code, following divorce woman may not legally remarry within 300 days (article 132), the logic being that they may be pregnant from their former marriage, however court permission can be obtained if the women give birth before this period come to an end or if they prove that they are not pregnant. This article is severely censured by the women activists for it is out dated and discriminatory:

In our view, this stands as a discriminatory and humiliating provision which violates women’s basic human rights and freedoms with the sole aim of establishing fatherhood which, if requested by the involved parties, could easily be established through DNA tests (Aml, et al; 2002).

After the divorce, the woman may either resume the last name she had before the marriage or continue to use her husband's last name if the judge approves (Kılıcoglu, 2004; 15).

Although the most effective amendments in Civil Code were made in 2001, there were some sporadic reforms as well, introduction of no-fault divorce with amendment of the article 134 of old civil code in 1988, for instance, was a crucial revision. With the article divorce by mutual consent was allowed for the marriages which had at least one year time- span. If there is severe breakdown of family life that the continuation of common life may not be expected, either spouse may sue for a divorce, thus, even the spouse who caused the breakdown of the marriage had the

right to request a divorce-the spouse less at fault may, however, object to such a divorce unless the request for the divorce is not considered to be a misuse of the right (Ansay, 1988).

In addition to reforms in civil code, some other important steps were taken aiming at more contemporary provisions; the establishment of family courts in 2003 to deal with the family related cases like divorce, permission to marriage, in districts with a population of more than 100.000 inhabitants is a case in point. We have also the law on the Protection of the Family (No. 4230), in 1998. To this law, women and children who have been subjected to domestic violence could apply court with an official complaint. The Law also provides for the enforcement of precautionary measures initiated by the Attorney General to ensure the protection of the victims, this law was a positive step in dealing with issues of violence against women, which is predominantly committed within the family⁷. Additionally, the Turkish Constitution by amending article 41 added an expression that “the family is based on equality between spouses” which foregrounds gender equality in the family.

All in all, even though the Civil Code instituted in 1926 received severe criticisms and called for several amendments, according to Ned Levine it was one of the most permissive divorce laws in the world (1982:325), and in the late 1960s there were already signs that women in one region of western Turkey were exercising their full legal right to sue for divorce to protect their personal reputation and their claims to

⁷ Before the adoption of this law, cases involving domestic violence were considered under the general provisions of the Criminal Code. This posed difficulties in the determination and punishment of such crimes due to the fact that the private sphere of family life remained largely outside of the regulatory mechanisms of the existing legislative framework. Whereas, the new law concerning domestic violence has opened up matters once perceived as private to public concern whereby the offender is subject to various punitive measures. Such as; forcing the offender to abandon the house, confiscation of arms owned by the offender, payment of temporary alimony, ban on disturbing the family through the means of communication devices, and prohibiting the destruction of the possessions of other family members. Violation of these measures would be penalized from 3 to a maximum of 6 months of imprisonment. The law is applicable upon a complaint submitted to the police by the victim or any other person. The Directorate General on the Status and Problems Women has prepared a brochure introducing the provisions of the law and disseminated it nationwide. It also monitors the implementation of the law (British Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on 29 October 2004).

property (Moghadam, 1993: 54). With the no-fault divorce law in 1988 a notable increase in the application for divorce observed;

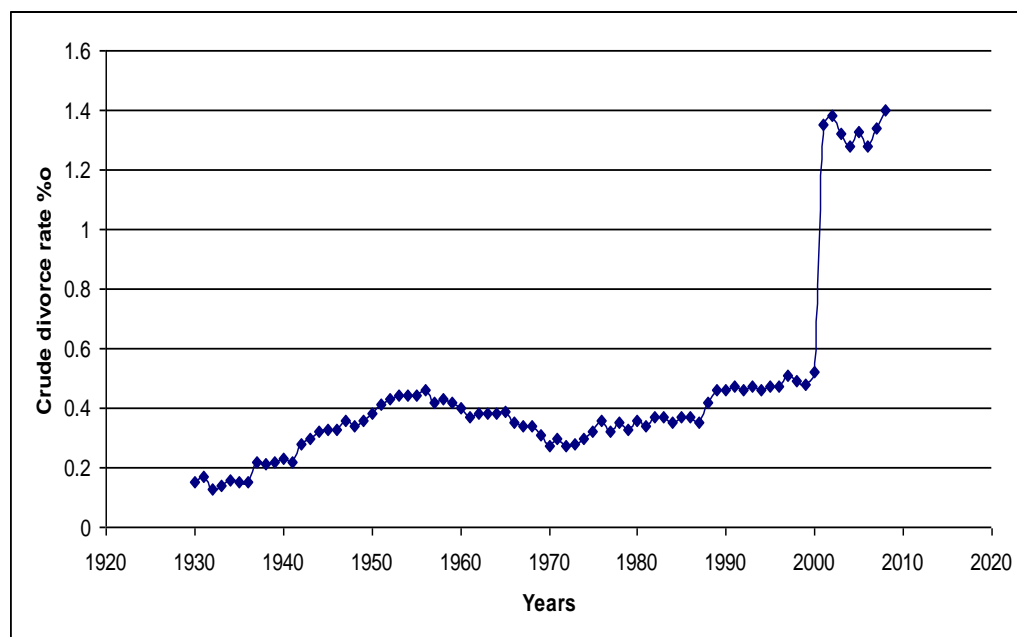
While there were 60.140 divorce applications to the court in 1987, after no-fault divorce law, in 1988, the number of applications increased by 187% and reached 141.322 in a decade (Yıldırım, 2004; 65).*(My Translation)*

3.2.2. Statistical Features of Divorce in Turkey

It would be an overstatement to say that divorce rates are rising at an alarming degree specifically when we compare divorce statistics of Turkey with those of European countries.

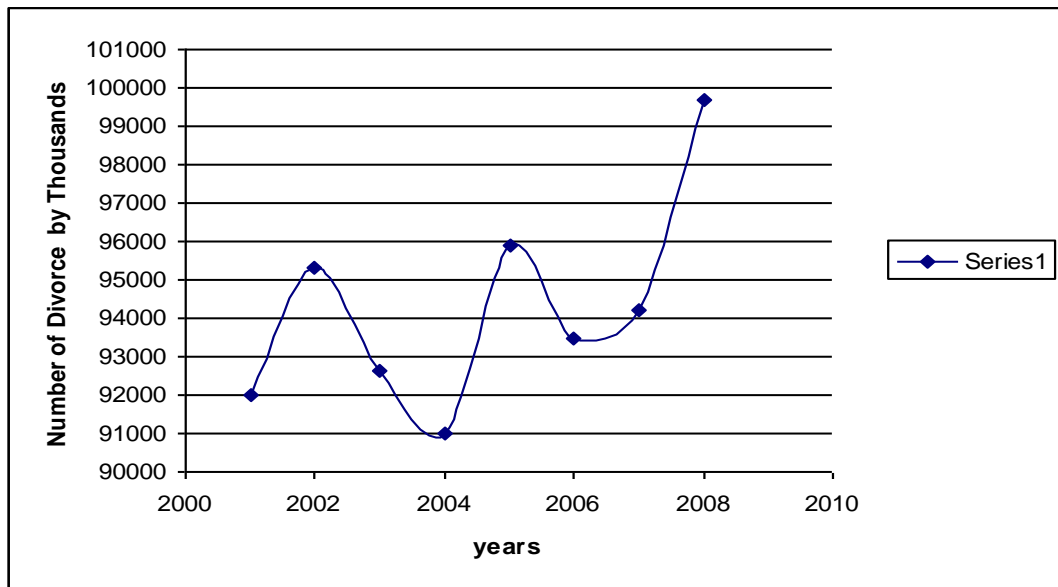
When compared to a decade ago, there is a marked increase in divorce rates; in 1999 the crude divorce rate was 0.49 per thousand which is actually quite low when compared to international divorce rates, and much lower than those of Europe. While during 1990s divorced rates fluctuated around 0.46 ‰ and 0.52 ‰ as of 2001 a great rupture of 1.35 ‰ was seen in divorce rate. In 2008 however, we observe the highest crude divorce rate of 1.40 ‰.

Figure 3.2. Crude Divorce Rate in Turkey, between 1930 -2008



Source: the raw data were taken from Turkish Statistical Institute demographic databas

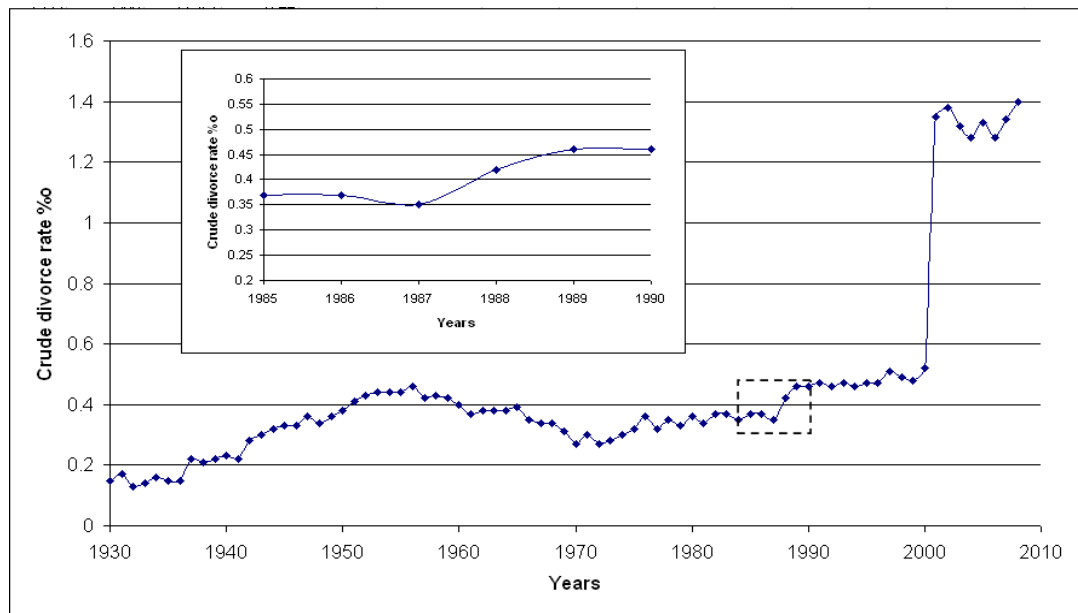
Figure 3.3. Number of Divorce by Thousands, 2001-2008



Source: the raw data were taken from Turkish Statistical Institute demographic database

Although crude divorce rate between 1950s through 1980s fluctuated between 0.3 ‰ and 0.4 ‰ as of 1988 a notable increase was observed and divorce rates from then on kept increasing as is seen in the Figure-VI below. It is possible to relate the notable change to the introduction of no fault divorce law which facilitated divorce legally by allowing divorce by mutual consent.

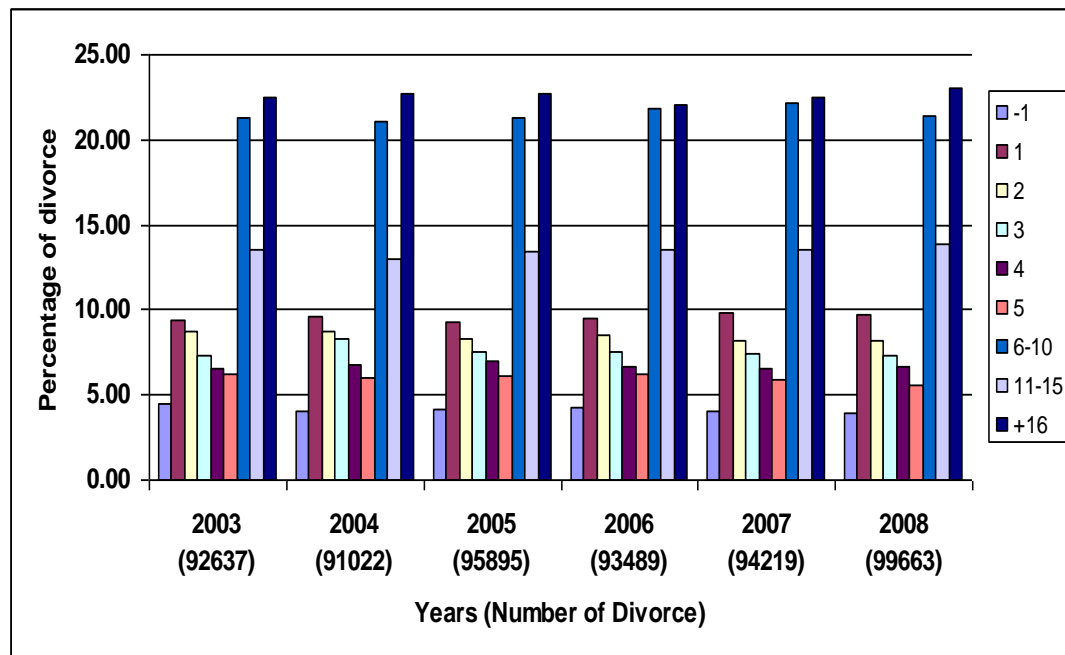
Figure 3.4. Increase in Crude Divorce Rate as of 1988



Source: the raw data were taken from Turkish Statistical Institute demographic database

Examined from the duration of marriages, as we see in the Figure- VIII below, in Turkey most of the divorces occur in the first five years of the marriages, and the percentages between 2000 and 2008 are almost exactly the same. The next high percentage of divorce is found at the marriage duration of 16 years and more. We should note that the high percentage must result from the fact that this category also includes all marriages lasted more than 16 years.

Figure 3.5 Divorce rates by duration of marriages



Source: Raw Data was taken from Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT)

The effects of children on divorce seem quite straightforward in that it shows the deterrent effect of having children on divorce when examined number of divorces by number of children. The statistics speak for themselves; 43 percent of couples do not have children, while 23 per cent have one child, 19 per cent two and 8 per cent three (SIS, 2002).⁸ Moreover, the number of children has strong impact on the rate of divorce; as the number increases, divorce rates decrease (Demircioglu, 2000). In Turkey- as in elsewhere- women are primary custodial parent. As stated above the new civil code highlights joint parenting and regulates amendments accordingly,

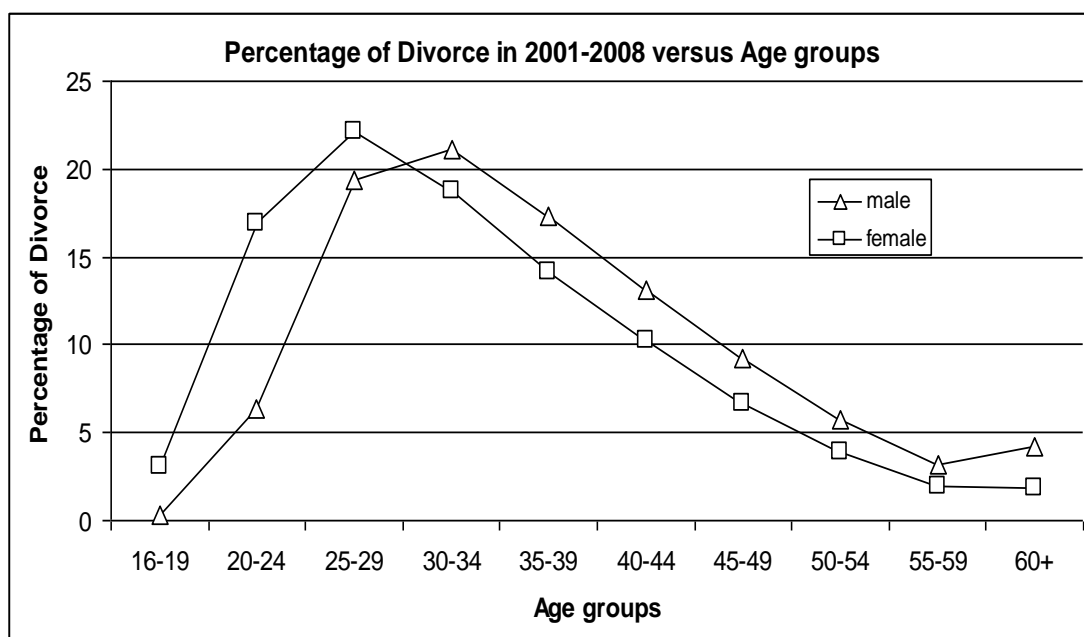
⁸ Socio economic indicators like education level, profession and presence of children are provided by SIS 2002 divorce statistics book. Presently the information related to divorce events gotten from MERNIS databases are published by TURKSTAT. Because TURKSTAT does not gather data concerning socio economic indicators between 2003 and 2006 we are bound to draw on SIS 2002 data.

The new Article [328] deems both the mother and the father are responsible to take care of the child until the age of maturity and while one parent is actively taking care of the child the other spouse is to provide alimony.

According to the statistics of divorce rate by completed education levels for males and females for the years 2000-2002, the lowest divorce rate occurs among illiterate men and women. While most women who have completed primary school get divorced, among men those who have the highest divorce rates are high school graduates. Both sexes of higher education have low divorce rates. The findings of a recent study conducted in 2009, under the auspices of Prime Ministry Directorate General of Family and Social Research corroborates these results. According to the study carried out through face to face interviews to 1200 participants, 40 % of all divorced individuals were high school graduates (women 40 %; men 39 %). Moreover while participants with no more education than primary school were the second most notable divorcing group 19% (21.5 % for women; 16.6 % for men), university graduates (14% for women; 20 % for men) and post-graduate graduates (2.6 % for women; 1.1 % for men) divorce at a very low level. Looking into these findings, we can contend that for women there is a negative correlation between divorce and education; as the education level increases divorce rate decreases (Demirci, 2000: 115), whereas the relationship is not linear as such among men. Low divorce level of university and post graduate individuals can be explained with the positive effect of education as well as late marriage.

In Turkey as is seen in the Figure-3.6 below the most risky age for divorce is 25-29 for women and 30-34 for men.

Figure 3.6. Average divorce percentage by age groups 2001-2008



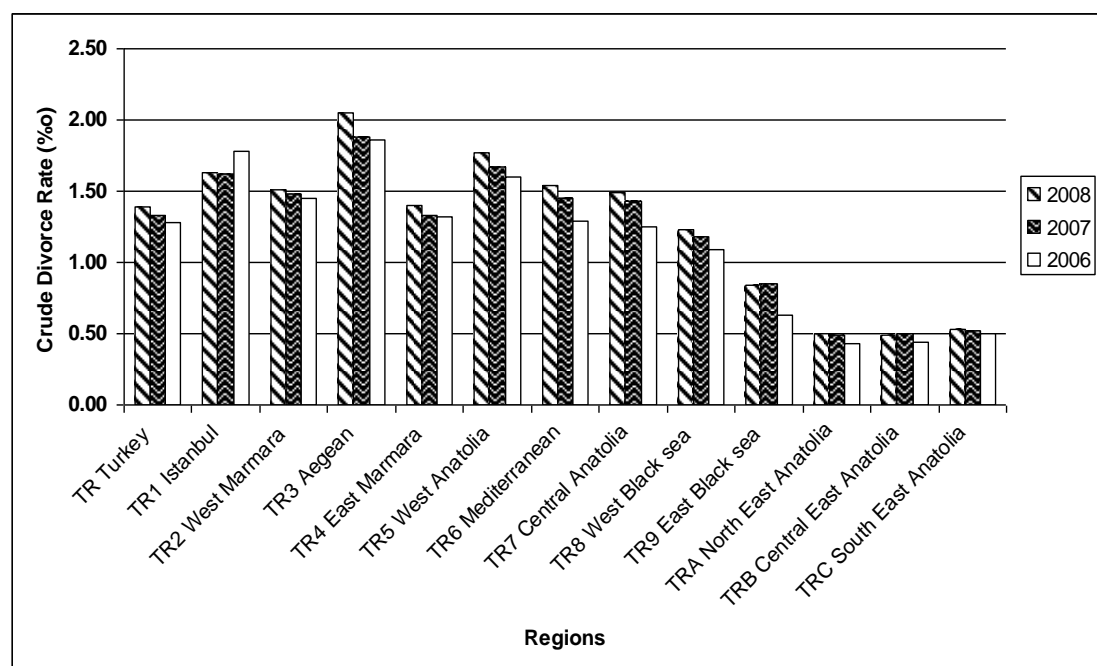
Source: Raw Data was taken from Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT), 2008

In Turkey generally women file for divorce, although there is shortage of statistical record that will substantiate this; we learn from individual studies that women initiate divorce. According to a study in 150 of the 240 court cases women were found to have filed for divorce (Bilka, 1998). However in rural areas this is not the case, in rural area it is men who files for divorce. This discrepancy can be considered to be the result of women's lack of education, lack of involvement in social life and more social control that controls women more than men in. These factors not only suppress women but also make the phenomenon of divorce a marginal concept in rural context. In Turkey, particularly regarding divorce the gap between urban and rural women is wide. In rural area where family is an economic unit and traditional family structure is a norm, divorce comes as a social phenomenon rather than an individual decision (Demirci, 2000: 36) besides women's infertility is the major intolerable reason for a family to break up, even in this situation men may prefer polygamy rather than getting divorced, so as we can see in Figure IX below the divorce rate in rural areas in Turkey is quite low as to manifest a marked discrepancy between urban side of the country (Balaman, 1984; Levine, 1982; Tor 1993; Demirci, 2000)

With the statistics on divorce by occupation provided by SIS, it does not seem safe to make a conclusive statement regarding the relationship between occupation and divorce, for, the categorization of occupations are not clear cut. Nevertheless, according to SIS 2002, we can briefly state that majority of divorced women (45.374)-being statistically in the same category- are housewives, retired women and students. Women working in labor market as workers follow them (2115). Women working as top managers (23) and those working as agriculture worker divorce the least (92).

When estimated by regions, Aegean region has the highest divorce rate of ‰ 2.05 while the central east Anatolia has the lowest rate, ‰ 0.49 Turkstat, 2008). While there is an increase in all the regions in 2008, surprisingly Istanbul seems to be an exception. We looked into population increase that would offset any increase in numbers of divorce; we noticed that an increase in population was not a factor to offset an increase, so the decrease should be explained with other factors. Similarly in the Aegean regions notable increase in the crude divorce rate cannot be explained with population decrease or increase since there is not a notable change in the population.

Figure 3.7. Crude Divorce Rates by Regions in Turkey, in 2006, 2007 and 2008



Source: Raw Data was taken from Turkish Statistical Institute, 2008 divorce statistics

Ned Levine (1982) in her study *Social Change and Family Crisis: The Nature of Turkish Divorce* related the differences to Turkey's dual economic structure, namely, the western part of the country is more developed, whereas the east is less developed. So, there is a positive correlation between the level of economic development and the divorce rates. In similar fashion, Levine also associates high divorce rate with changing gender roles within a particular context, in her own words:

Virtually all provinces with higher divorce rates have gone some ways toward demographic "transition" these provinces generally have lower fertility and mortality rates, smaller household sizes and lower infant mortality rates. These provinces also have higher literacy and education for women. The social and economic base underlying the traditional female role has changed considerably and is widespread throughout the western part of the country, the non-industrialized areas as well as the urbanized, industrial areas (1982:330).

To him, economic development frees women of the burden of large families and encourages them to play more active social roles, change in women's roles is a move toward women's liberation; at the same time, though, and it poses more conflict within the families (Ibid, 336). Moreover, level of economic development help women gain more education, decrease fertility level, become independent from husband by acquiring a position in the money economy and come to a decision to terminate a failing marriage (Arıkan, 1990:63) these indicators change their life prospects immensely, as stated by (Hosgor- Gunduz & Smith, 2007) there is a positive association between women's autonomy, their characteristics of marriage and their employment in labor market (17). Economic development may enable women to make such a decision; however, to what extent it transforms patriarchy and empowers women in the mean time remains to be explored.

The studies conducted thus far concerning divorce in Turkey are congruent with our statement that there is a strong relationship between marital stability and economic condition of couples; divorce denotes changing economy and couple's vulnerability in the face of this changing structure (Levine, 1982; Arıkan, 1992; Tor, 1993, Velidedeoglu,1976; Uğurlu, 2003; Abalı, 2006) Since the inception of

industrialization, Turkey has gone through economic instabilities many times, they all had their negative impacts on the families, migration to the big cities exacerbated economic hardships and marriages became more vulnerable as a result, Ned Levine in her work (1982) pinpoints this relationship. To her, starting from mid-1950s when Turkey underwent rapid industrialization the divorce rate rose, in 1960s until 1970 however due to recession divorce rate dropped accordingly. From the beginning of the 1970s to the mid-1970s another period of expansion was accompanied by a rising divorce rate. Although she avows that the fit between changes in the economy and the divorce rate is loose and no one index predicts it with precision, drawing on housing, consumer price indexes and modern economic sectors she underscores that during economic recession divorce rates drop. However, contrary to what she predicts, in the lights of current statistics we can contend that specifically in 2000s divorce rates follow a reverse pattern and are facilitated more in economic crises. When we examine crude divorce rates of the years between 2000 and 2006, in 2001 we see a rupture, 20% increase compared to the previous year, when Turkey underwent a serious economic recession. In the following years till 2008 this rupture proceeded without any notable drop. The Prime Ministry General Directorate of Family and Social Research lend support to our contention with a recent report, according to the report, it is stated that domestic violence, growing unemployment rates and uneasiness- aggravated more by 2000/2001 economic crisis- had their devastating impacts on family structures. 2000/2001 economic crisis had negative impact on families, particularly families suffering from economic hardships constitute fragile families which are more likely to be subjected to disharmony and thus dissolution (Divorce Statistics Report, Prime Ministry General Directorate of Family and Social Research, 08.09.2007).

Even though divorce rates are increasing since 1988, it should, nevertheless, be noted that the crude divorce rate in Turkey is lower than those of Western societies. The reasons behind low divorce rate (in comparison with Western countries), however, are enumerated as country's development level, women's limited access to labor market thus their dependence on their husbands economically, unregistered religious marriages of 3.7% (Turkstat, 2006; Divorce Statistics Report, Prime Ministry General Directorate of Family and Social Research, 08.09.2007), society's

negative attitudes toward divorced individuals and traditional values about family life that are more prevalent in rural areas (Levine, 1987; Arıkan, 1990; Tor 1993).

3.2.3. Causes of Divorce

In the Turkish Civil Code, the grounds for divorce are stated as adultery, maltreatment, threat to life, severe insult, committing a crime or living a dishonorable life to the point of degrading the honor of the other party, deserting home without a sound reason, mental illness and incompatibility as the most common ground for divorce. The main rationale behind a divorce decree is irretrievable termination of marriage for any of the reasons cited above. The rule is that applications for divorce are filed by the party who has less responsibility for the collapse of the matrimonial union against the party who has the greater responsibility. Therefore, if the party at greater fault files the case for divorce, and if the other party does not want to get divorced, the case may be dismissed, provided that the defendant can prove his or her relative or total innocence for the failure of the marriage. However, if the couple are not reconciled and have not begun to live together within three years of the application for divorce, the matrimonial union is considered to have irretrievably broken down and the court rules in favor of a divorce upon the request of one of the parties (Article 166 of the Civil Code cited from Anıl, et al, 2002).

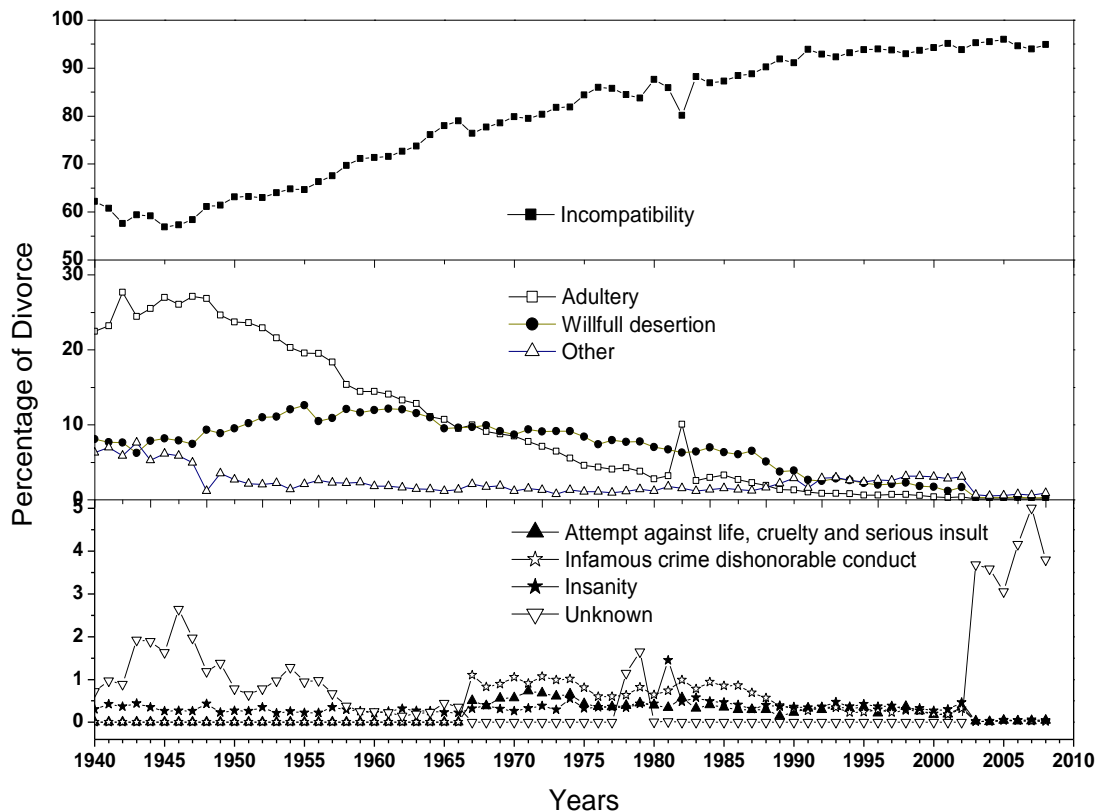
New Civil Code has brought some new regulations with regard to the causes of divorce; “severe insult” has also been cited as divorce ground. In the old civil code maltreatment used to cover severe insult and it was not recognized as a distinct divorce reason in and of itself. We can accept it as a positive development, for it means that the new code also recognizes misbehavior toward one’s self identity and self-esteem. Moreover deserting home for 3 months without a sound reason was subjected to revision and the duration before filing divorce was prolonged to 6 months, now if one of the parties deserts home and does not return for at least 6 months without a sound reason without taking no notice of the Judge's warnings, then the deserted spouse may file for a divorce. According to Kılıcoglu (2004:13) the new code aims for the protections of family by giving the couples more chances

for reconciliation, for in Turkish society thanks to the strong family ties relatives and even close friends may interfere in the mean time and help couples to end the conflict.

Another divorce ground frequently applied in Turkey is no-fault divorce; if the marriage has lasted for at least one year and a joint application for divorce is made, or a court case opened by one spouse is accepted by the other spouse, the marriage is considered to be impaired. The Judge examines the couples' agreement particularly their agreement on children and financial issues and terminates the marriage if he does not detect anything improper (Article, 166).

In Turkey, according the court records, incompatibility comes as the most leading divorce cause that covers many other private grounds. As seen in the Figure 3.8. below, while incompatibility is growing there is a marked decrease in the other causes of divorce.

Figure 3.8. Causes of Divorce in Turkey, 1940-2008



Source: Raw Data was taken from Turkish Statistical Institute, 1923-2005 statistical indicators

As seen from the Figure, in Turkey though specific grounds for divorce are not required to be filed during a divorce proceeding, incompatibility covers nearly all causes of divorce. Since there is shortage of comprehensive statistical data as to the specific causes of divorce; we draw on individual studies to fill the gap. A recent research (Yurtkuran-Demirkan, et al., 2009) on the reasons of divorce conducted under the auspice of the Prime Ministry directorate general of family and Social Research with 1200 divorced individuals chosen randomly from all walks of life provided us with an enormous insight into the underlying reasons that are disguised in incompatibility.

According to the study leading reasons that render couples to divorce are lack of communications 69%; financial problems (credit card debts, financial mismanagement, lack of care in financial duties, going bankruptcy, etc.) 34% of the participants stated having quarrels over credit card debts; and child related problems as stated 29.8 % of the participants. Moreover to the study, many couples as a matter of fact started having problems during the initial stage of marriage process yet expected the problems to be solved after marriage which- as is the case for the majority of people in the study-got worse let alone getting any better. They also emphasized the couples' families' involvement to the degree of interferences as frequently occurring reason for couples to separate.

In the light of their findings the authors comment on other emergent motives for divorce specifically for women who are employed. According to them, due to the double work load employed women have to undertake and the men's resistance to change their demands from their wives, the couples go through gender role clashes. Also the traditional male dominance in the family persists which channels contradictions in the marital union.

Another research *on Psycho-social and Economic Conditions of Divorced Women in Turkey*, conducted by a questionnaire technique to 660 divorced women, who live in one geographical location, Ankara-Turkey examines the reasons that makes up incompatibility in Turkey-at the time of the study (1993) the rate of incompatibility

among other divorce causes was 86%. According to the study for those who file divorce on the ground of incompatibility 20% states husband's alcohol addiction and gambling as root cause of their divorce; 16% reports domestic violence and jealousy; 14% states financial problems and 13% states family/relatives interference with the marriage. Far less likely, but pronounced causes of divorce include disagreement on child-rearing issues, 6% of women stated that. Others include 4.6% husband's unemployment, 3.25% not having children, 3.25 % education gap between partners.

A final study (Demircioglu, 2000), *The Effects of Divorce on Professional Women's Status and Sex Role*, examines divorce causes by occupation and marriage duration. To the study conducted by questionnaire technique to 120 divorced women in İzmir-Turkey, most women (25.8%) in the sample wanted divorce because they suffered from personality conflicts and unmatched expectations. Alcohol addiction coupled with domestic violence or gambling ranked the second with a 20% which is parallel to the finding of above-mentioned study done in 1993. While 12.5% stated husband's pressure and jealousy; 10.8% enunciated family interference with the marriage.

Moreover, the study also finds significant relationship between duration of the marriage and divorce causes. To the findings of study, those who sue for divorce within the first five years put forward personality conflicts and cultural differences as their reasons for divorce- 43.5%. For those who want divorce within the six to ten years of their marriage stresses alcohol addiction and domestic violence (30%), and half of the women who were married 16 for years and more pronounced deception of their husbands as their main divorce cause. Nevin Demircioglu, the writer of the study analyzes the findings thus;

Incompatibility drawing on family and parents interference in marriage becomes more of an issue within the first five years of marriage, when the expectations from marriage is not fulfilled then the partners feel disappointed which thwarts compromise and agreement between partners...while alcohol addiction and domestic violence could be tolerated for a while it becomes a definite divorce reason after five years (139)(*my translation*).

According to the account of Ayla Ozdogan (Interview, Feb 2007) a legal practitioner and chair of Divorced Mothers Association, the reason for majority of divorce taking place within the first five years in Turkey is related to children. For the first five years women either do not have children or at least have one children so they feel relatively at ease to give the decision. Not having children or having one makes divorce process and aftermath of divorce relatively easier which is in line with the recent statistics that majority of couples either do not have children (43%) or one children (23%) at most (SIS, 2002).

Finally as well as gaining knowledge regarding divorce ground from actual divorces, we can also be informed from ordinary people's approaches toward possible divorce causes. A recent survey, the Family Structure Research, conducted by Turkstat in 2006 with a sample of 24.647 included this as part of the research and asked people about their opinion in regard to a possible divorce grounds. According to the findings of the survey the most possible reason that may channel couples to separation is cheating. 60.6 % of men and 57.5 % of women find husband's cheating on wife as a number one reason for filing for divorce. To the study the second most important divorce reason is alcoholism and gambling, 70.4 % of men and 71 % of women states so. While maltreatment ranks the third, men's failure to provide family economically and women's neglect in domestic responsibilities occupies the fourth category. Moreover in the study couples' not getting along with their spouses' families (around 13% of women and 14 % men stressed this) and infertility are cited as divorce grounds. 7.2% of women and 8.7% of men finds men's infertility something that cause divorce likewise 13 % of women and 12.7 % of men deems women's infertility as ground for terminating marriage.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

An individual life, and the role it plays in the larger community, is best understood through story. We become fully aware, fully conscious, of our own lives through the process of putting them together in story form. It is through story that we gain context and recognize meaning. Reclaiming story is part of our birthright. Telling our story enables us to be heard, recognized, and acknowledged by others. Story makes the implicit explicit, the hidden seen, the unformed formed and the confusing clear (Atkinson, 1998; 7).

In this study to explore women's post divorce experiences, life story interview was employed as the principal data collection technique. As qualitative research method life story is an interactive interview in the narrative form where interviewer ask open ended, short questions awaiting long and detailed answers:

The life story as a narrative form has evolved from the oral history, life history and other ethnographic and field approaches. It is a qualitative research method for gathering information on the subjective essence of one person's entire life. It begins as a recorded interview, is transcribed and ends up as flowing narrative, completely in the words of the person telling the story. It uses a methodology that is transferable across disciplines and from one researcher to another (Atkinson, 1998; 3).

Due to the unstructured nature of interview life story interview help us unearth hidden realities, complexities of people's lives and explore many sides of an issue. For as Geertz (1973) stated, quantitative approach to understanding emotions is "experience-distant" whereas the qualitative approach is "experience-near" focusing on the immediacies and vernacular of the individuals themselves (cited in Riessman 1990). Therefore, it is of great significance to use an "experience near" technique given the aim of an explorative nature of the present study.

We have probability statistics on marriage, divorce, sexual behavior and much, much, more; but they tell us nothing of the flesh-and-blood women and men who make up the numbers. Therefore we need...qualitative studies that can capture the fullness of experience the richness of living (Black and Champion, 1976; 25 quoted in L'Hommedieu, 1984).

In this study divorce is not conceived as an isolated event, in and of itself, but rather deemed as associated with other events in women's lives; in fact, divorce may be an end product of many other events connected to each other. The aim in employing life story interview is to learn the divorce experience in a context and to get a good sense of how and why the different parts of women's lives are connected. According to Weiss (1975) who is known with his seminal contribution to divorce literature, by developing accounts and stories of what they have gone through during their marriages, the divorced individuals in a way find a way to come to grips with their divorces. As Portelli, (1998:67) denotes "oral sources tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did".

In addition to its convenience for the explorative nature of our study, the chief reason for exploiting narrative interview technique in our study emanates from its applicability to feminist research and the setting it provides to listen to muted voices of women.

The unstructured and narrative form of life story interview that turns interview into a conversational flow made me form a friendly atmosphere that enabled me to elicit more data. Because Women's speech is considered to be rich, relational (Riessman, 1987) and "cannot be shaped into answer size pieces" (Graham, 1984: 114) it is more convenient for women to express themselves in an unstructured interview setting.

Given women's conventional relational orientation, it is not surprising that they often report preferring storytelling over more detached modes of assessment (Chovanec, 1993 cited in Bisagni, 1999:100)

In this study I also had a chance to conduct women-to-women interview which is given a lot of consideration in feminist theory. Woman-to-woman talk is quite different from talk in mixed groups because women speakers are more likely to listen to seriously to each other and that it affords opportunities for women to speak more fully about their experience (Devault, 1990:98).

In this study I intent to operate from a feminist standpoint. The premise for analysis in feminist methodological practice is that the researcher's motive is the application of contextualized methods to explore meaning and reveal patterns but not to predict or control (Reinharz, 1983 cited in Paterson, 1996; 89). Therefore, I hope to give women chance to articulate themselves by addressing a topic of great importance to them. In a heavily patriarchal society where language and culture are shaped by male power, it is not so frequent to see women talking about sensitive issue, in this sense listening to them will give me unadulterated data

Despite their advantages narrative interviews have some limitations that one should be cautious about such as the problem of generalization and representativeness of the of the participants "since most of the time sample cannot be selected randomly and subject to bias" (Hosgor-Gunduz, 2000:330). However, in our study I do not expect to face these limitations. Because of the explorative nature of this study I search for in-depth and authentic knowledge rather than data for generalization. Moreover, regarding representation, because a qualitative technique with a grounded theory data analysis was employed, data saturation in lieu of representative sample was aimed.

Another major criticisms posed against narrative form of interview is the issue of 'subjectivity'. It is a fact that subjectivity of the participant is more evident in life story interview, as is the case other qualitative research techniques. However, in these techniques, after all, subjectivity is what the interviewer focuses on, for he derives the in-depth meaning from it. As Meese (1985) stated, meaning is regarded as subjective and as negotiated within a relational context, as well as grounded in cultural and historical discourses.

In this study subjectivity was the centerpiece of our data collection, for, what was sought was women's perception of their own status as divorced women in society, their feelings, and adaptive strategies they devised to cope with problems. Since as Passerini (1989:197) states "All autobiographical memory is true and it is up to the interpreter to discover in which sense, where, for which purpose".

As a way of meaning making, identifying life influences, and interpreting experiences, there may be no better method than the subjective narrative of the life story to help the researcher understand a life from the insider's point of view ... it is after all this subjective perspective that tell us what we are looking for in all our research efforts..... This is what constitutes the tellers reality of his or her world. The storytellers are the first interpreters of the stories told. It is through the personal construction of reality and the story told about it that we, as researchers, learn what we want to from our subjects (Atkinson, 1998; 13-5).

In addition to life story interview, demographic questionnaire as part of informed consent form was utilized to collect initial data. This form included 16 demographic questions about participant's age; education; occupation etc., as well as those of her parents and her husband (see Appendix-2). Moreover I benefited from online discussion forum of Divorced Mothers Association (DMA) when they discussed about being divorced in Turkish society, single parenting concerns, remarriage and so forth. In collecting data, this study had two endeavors to follow; first to collect authentic data from women's own account and second to examine the period before and after divorce to analyze the whole process; the reasons that lead to divorce, the marriage itself and socioeconomic status of women throughout their lives starting from their childhood, in a nutshell, to see the context where the women experienced divorce particularly its aftermath:

If we want to make memory itself the subject of study as Frisch stated our interviews must be carefully contextualized, with attention to who is speaking, what their personal and social agenda is and what kind of event they are describing (Sangster, 1994:88)

An interview outline which is a list of specific topics and themes covered in the interview was developed. In particular, the followings were explored:

- (i) General questions about women's life stories: Including their family lives, school and work lives, decision to marry, etc.
- (ii) Questions about their marital lives: What type of experience was marriage?
- (iii) Questions about divorce: how they decided to get divorced, main ground for divorce, the decision process, legal process, family intervention at this point, etc.
- (iv) Questions about post divorce experience: To what extent are their personal lives affected from divorce economically, socially and emotionally?
- (v) Do they experience negative societal attitudes after divorce? If so, what types of strategies do they employ to cope with these tensions? How are their social networks shaped with divorce?
- (vi) How does divorce affect self-perception? Do they feel independent, comfortable, relieved, or the contrary; worthless, lonely or failed.
- (vii) Questions about single parenting experience- if the interviewee is a mother: How does it feel to be a single parent, what are the advantages and disadvantages of bringing up a child alone? Does it contribute to the women's well-being or exacerbate the hardship they faced through in the aftermath of divorce?
- (viii) Questions about her feelings about future: Whether or not they consider remarriage, if they have work plans, plans related to children, etc.

4.1. Participant Selection

At the initial phase potential participants were sought by snowball sampling technique. In this technique the researcher finds the subjects through "people who know people who know people who know what cases are information-rich, that is, good examples for study, good interview subjects" (Patton, 1990 cited in Weiner 1995). In the current study, the researcher didn't have any difficulty reaching out "good interview subjects". Because the focus was on middle class, highly educated

and professional divorced women, only women who have these traits were asked to participate. Friends and family members were excluded from sample pool.

Additionally, theoretical sampling was used as the study progressed. In addition to selecting participants purposefully rather than randomly, in grounded theory, theoretical sampling gains somewhat different role; namely, theoretical sampling means seeking more related data to develop or process your emerging theory:

The main purpose of the theoretical sampling is to elaborate and refine the categories constituting your theory....Initial sampling in grounded theory is where you start, whereas theoretical sampling directs you where to go. For initial sampling, you establish sampling criteria for people cases, situations and /or settings before you enter the field you need to find relevant materials for you study whether that leads you to sampling people, settings or larger structures such as government agencies or organizations. (Charmaz, 2006: 96-100).

In the study, theoretical sampling was adopted when I noticed that no childless women were interviewed. From then on, childless professional divorced women were sought to interview, which enabled me to make more comprehensive analyses comparing divorce experience of divorced women with and without children. In general, first contacts with the participants were done through telephone call where the women's interest in participating was rated and time and place for the interview were scheduled. The participants were informed about the researcher's identities, institutional affiliation, and the motive for the study that it is a doctoral dissertation for Middle East Technical University. They were assured of confidentiality and told how and why they were chosen for this study, their rights to skip any question they did not want to answer and their rights to withdraw from the study if they wanted to. Informed written and signed consent was taken from all participants before interview started, the consent form also included demographic questionnaire form (see Appendix B).

The sample size was determined by the principle of data saturation- when new data did not add meaningful contributions to the theory being developed (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The common use of the term saturation refers to nothing new happening. 'I kept finding the same patterns'... Categories are "saturated" when gathering fresh data no longer sparks new theoretical insights, nor reveal new properties of these core theoretical categories (Charmaz, 2006:113).

The duration of interview spanned over two year time; all the interviews including 4 pilot interviews were completed between June, 2007 and September, 2009. Participants' identifying information and data were not disclosed to anyone except for dissertation committee and thesis advisor. Pseudonyms were used instead of real names, and identifying characteristics will be changed for any published material.

4.2. Sample Characteristics

31 divorced women were interviewed in two year time. The sample characteristics of women are presented below (Table 4.1). As is seen in the table below, except for three women, all the women were at least university graduates. While eight women had master's degree, two women had PhDs. They had full time professional jobs holding wide range of various employment positions. The average age of the women participated in the study was 38.4 (Ranging from 29 to 58). They had been divorced no less than one year, and divorced only once- apart from one Participant who had been divorced twice and married three times. 24 women in the sample had at least one child with them, the average number of children they had was 1,5 (ranging from 1 to 3).

The women chosen were middle class, financially self sufficient, highly educated, professional women. By middle class, women with an income level that is substantially above the nationally established poverty line are meant. Their (annual) salaries ranged from 12000TL to 96000 TL. Majority of women, 24 women, came from middle class families, and four have upper middle class background, and three women grew up in working class family. They and their husbands at the time of their marriage were members of middle class. Except for four who grew up in small cities in western and central part of Turkey, all the other participants came from urban background.

The participants were born between late 1960s and the 1970s and their experiences of marital problems fall between 1990s and 2000s. Life story interview provided opportunity to scrutinize the context they grew up, confront the political and social life surrounding them.

Looking at their timing of marriage the participant could be considered to delay marriages, the average age at first marriage was 24.4, (ranging from 17 to 37) which was above the average age, 22.8, for women at first marriage in Turkey (Turkstat, 2008). Because the women were all highly educated and employed, the reasoning behind relatively later marriages may have been their concern for completing their education and career. Except for two, all the women in the sample were employed before they married.

As noted before 42.6 per cent of divorces occur in first five years of marriages and there is constancy when we examine the statistics from 2000 onward. The sample in this current study reveals somewhat different results; the average number of the duration of marriage the women have is 7 years (ranging from 1 to 26 years) slightly above the statistics.

Table – 4.1. Sample Characteristics of women

Partici Pants	Age	Edu	Inc. (TL)	Job	Child	Mar. dur (yrs)	div. date	Re- marriage	Initiator of Divorce
Aysun	38	PhD	6000	Project Manager	2	7	2001		Participant
Tulay	39	MA	2000	Instructor	2	3.5	1996	remarried	Husband
Emine	33	BA	2000	Quality Manager	1	4	2008		Participant
Deniz	41	HS	1000	Marketing Assistant	1	15	2002		Participant
Filiz	36	BA	1500	Sales Executive	1	2.5	2006		Participant
Zerrin	41	BA	7000	Assistant Manager	1	2	2003	remarried	Participant
Sevda	40	HS	2400	Real Estate Agent	1	3	1999		Husband
Fulya	42	BA	4000	Training Manager	1	1	2003		Participant
Esra	42	BA	2000	Lawyer	1	2	2004		Participant
Burcu	40	MA	2000	Instructor	3	16	2008		Joint decision
Isik	39	PhD	1500	Assistant Professor	1	5	2003		Participant
Evren	37	BA	3000	Lawyer	1	10	2005		Participant
Nurgul	45	BA	4000	Journalist	1	10	1993	remarried	Joint decision
Mehtap	58	HS	1500	Administrati ve Assistant	2	26	2001		Joint decision
Perihan	38	MA	1600	Public Relations Expert	3	10	2003	remarried	Joint decision

Yasemin	41	BS	4000	Accounting Manager	1	16	2008		Participant
Macide	50	BA	8000	Finance Manager	2	8	1995		Participant
Nergis	41	BA	2000	Teacher	3	5	1997	remarried	Husband
Selma	43	BA	6000	Bank Branch Manager	1	12	2003		Participant
Merve	31	BA	2400	Nurse	2	7	2007		Participant
Raziye	31	BA	2000	Self Employed	1	13	2007		Participant
Hulya	37	MA	3000	Instructor		5	2005		Participant
Rezzan	34	MA	2000	Teacher		2	2003		Participant
Ayla	31	BA	3000	Lawyer		5	2005		Participant
Asiye	29	MA	1600	Administrati ve Assistant		3	2002	remarried	Participant
Belkis	39	BA	1000	Accountant	2	12	2006		Husband
Meryem	44	MS	2400	Instructor	2	10	2008		Participant
Arzu	36	BA	1000	Administrati ve Assistant		3	2005		Participant
Cisem	33	BA	4000	Lawyer		3	2008		Joint decision
Tugba	31	BA	2000	Instructor	1	1.5	2002	remarried	Joint decision
Neriman	30	MS	1500	Teacher		1.5	2007		Husband

Pilot Interviews

Four pilot interviews were carried out with open ended questions that would cover all the themes to be explored. At the end of the pilot interviews, it turned out that semi-structured interview was confining for the exploratory nature of this study. Asking question and expecting certain answers did not seem to provide in-depth, authentic data; because women's speech is considered to be rich, relational (Riessman, 1987) and "cannot be shaped into answer size pieces" (Graham, 1984: 114). Therefore, it would be more convenient for women to express themselves in an unstructured interview setting. So in a narrative form, providing conversational flow that would enable the researcher to elicit more data through friendly atmosphere would be better fit for the current study which in this case was life story interview.

4.3. The Life Story Interview Process

Before the interview, participants were informed about the nature of the study. They all signed the consent form. All but four participants agreed on the use of audiotape recorder. The places for interview varied. 13 interviews were conducted in the participants' offices at work; 7 participants invited me to their homes; upon my invitation, one participant came from Elazig to participate in the study and the interview was conducted at my house at three separate sessions on different days. The rest of the interviews were done at coffee shops participants chose near their work places, i.e. Starbucks. By and large, the participants were comfortable with the interview places, except for one case-it was a rush hour and the café was close to the business centers and was crowded a bit, yet fortunately, it did not have any significant impact on the taping process. It is important to note that conducting interviews at women's offices were more convenient, to observe their business relations and to have idea about professional women's work lives.

The interviews initially were aimed to be conducted at several sessions, however, not all participants agreed on meeting more than once, therefore with only seven participants the interview was carried out in two to three sessions. The duration of interviews ranged from one and a half hours to eight hours. One participant invited

me to her summer house where I had chance to have several sessions and plenty time to listen to her story which altogether lasted for 8 hours. An unstructured interview guide was developed based on the literature review and the pilot interviews, during the interviews, however, it was important to remain “free to build conversation within a particular subject area to word questions spontaneously and to establish conversational style” (Patton, 1990 cited in Weiner 1995). The opening inquiries consisted of some general questions regarding participant’s family, her place of birth, history of education, the stage she made the decision to marry, etc. Participants then asked questions about experience of marriage and divorce with such questions as “could you please tell us about your experience of marriage?” Or “could you describe us your feeling before divorce”, “could you tell how it feels to be a single parent”. Due to nature of narrative interview direct questions were avoided; most of the time issues are just broached and participants were expected to tell their stories. When there is a need to clarify things, then the researcher intervened and ask questions such as “What do you mean by ..?”, “What exactly it means”, “Could you clarify that” or “Could you give me an example of that?”, again, when the participants did not give information regarding a specific aspect of their experience, they were asked questions related to that specific area. Sometimes the initial talks before the interview were helpful, however, on occasion; they shared a very important detail after the tape recorder was turned off. for instance one Participant stated her reason to postpone working for a long while after divorce that she had a deal with her father that she would postpone working until the people in her surround got used to her new marital status and so that she would not face any negative attitudes. She told this important detail while she was seeing off the researcher.

The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Because “the process of transcription puts the researcher in intimate contact with the words of the informants and allows for continual thematic speculation” (Spradley, 1980; Ely, 1991; cited in Paterson, 1996), I tried to make use of this process doing all the transcription myself and taking analytical notes.

Additionally, in order to get further insight in to the post divorce experience of women several meetings were arranged with lawyers and two associations dealing processes before and after divorce were visited. One of them, Divorced Mothers Associations, is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving lives of children and mothers supporting effective parenting during and after divorce. This association emphasizes the importance of going through the process without much conflict and tension, which they think is important for children and couples' well being. Family Mediators Association, an organization that helps couples in dispute, particularly those going through separation or divorce, to deal with arrangements for their future is another organization that I benefitted from during the study. In contrast to Divorced Mothers Associations, Family Mediators Association is a for-profit organization where couples can discuss parenting issues and finances together in the presence of a trained and impartial mediator who can help them consider all the available options by giving them legal information about the effects of separation and divorce on their children.

Confidentiality

There are also ethical concerns revolving around data collection techniques, confidentiality being one of them. In a research, the participant should be assured of confidentiality. In our sample in order to protect their confidentiality the participants' names were replaced with fake names. Moreover, while giving their demographic profile I tried not to give much identifying information about their lives.

Another concern is informing the participant regarding the nature and content of our interview techniques. In this study this was provided in two ways. Initially when participants were first contacted to ask for their participation, they were given detailed information about the nature of the study, permission to use audiotape recorder was requested and also their further questions were answered at this phase. Once interview was scheduled, they were provided with an informed consent form where the content and purpose of the study were explained. This form also included a signature section assuring the participants that their participation in the study was

voluntary. Moreover, the setting and the timing of interview were arranged according to the participant preferences; they were assured that their information would solely be used for the research purposes.

Verification

In a qualitative study as verification technique the concept “trustworthiness” is often preferred as an equivalent concept to reliability and validity. In fact it is concept that has been commented on by leading qualitative researchers (see for example Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Catherine Riessman, 1993; Lather 1986a, 1986b; Denzin and Lincoln 1994). Although Catherine Riessman (2002; 706), a prominent writer and narrative analyst, stresses that there is no canonical approach to validation in interpretive work, many other theorists suggest different research tools to be employed in order to provide trustworthiness and authenticity in a qualitative research. Two principal techniques are generally used to provide trustworthiness in a research; member check and triangulation (multiple data source).

Member check is researcher’s ongoing practice of verification of her understanding of portions of participants’ accounts with the speakers themselves by reflecting back on an encapsulated version of their statements (Bisagni, 1999, p, 119). It is desirable, as a general rule, to take work back to the individuals and groups who participated in the study (Riessmann, 1993; p, 66). Such member check was used in our data collection process by conducting follow up interviews through meeting once more or phone calls to clarify things that seemed blurred. Moreover, after transcribing the tape-recorded interviews, the transcripts were sent to the participants to check if everything was correct and if they wanted to add or omit something.

Additionally, attending one of the meetings of Divorced Mothers Association where some of the Participants were members, I presented some of our findings to the Participants; I wanted to share common themes that emerged from the data with them. Here the intention was to solicit their comments and insights into the themes derived from the data.

As well, over the duration of the study, my thesis advisor and committee members commented on the emerging themes which helped me to revisit categories and supported the verification process. Moreover the transcribed data are available for verification of the analysis-thought at present it will not be included into the thesis due to the confidentiality issue and due to the size -444 pages- of the transcripts.

A second strategy for strengthening trustworthiness is triangulation, using multiple data source to approach to the subject matter with diverse tools. In this study this is provided first through demographic questionnaire comprised of 16 demographic questions about participant's age, education, occupation etc as well as those of her parents and her husband as part of informed consent form to collect initial data. Secondly, becoming a member of Divorced Mothers Association, I attended some of their meetings and organization (picnic days), and followed their online discussion forum where they discussed about their divorce experience, single parenting concerns, remarriage etc. Some of their commentaries were incorporated into quotations in related chapters.

Moreover, Johnson remarks that data collection and verification overlaps and as the interview proceeds on verification can be achieved in the mean time, in his own words:

In the early stages of research project, in-depth interviewer may feel relatively ignorant about what he or she is studying. After several interviews, however, the interviewer begins to build stock of knowledge about the research questions, and in most cases feeds some of this information back to the informants in subsequent interviews, after those same questions have been covered. This information exchange becomes part of the complementary reciprocity so necessary to the continued building of intimacy and it also begins the process of verification in the research process....the later interviews of an in-depth interviewing project are usually more focused on specific probes and verification of what has been learned in earlier interviews (2002; p, 112).

In the study, each interviews provided me with comfort and ease to be more experienced for a next interview, and soon I came to realize repeating patterns in

talks of women in other words recurrent themes and unique cases were designated as further interviews were conducted. Therefore, verification is assumed to be attained partially as the interviews progressed.

4.4. Data Analysis: Grounded Theory

To analyze the data, grounded theory approach as an inductive way of data analysis was utilized. Deriving analytic categories from the interview data categories were built and theoretical concepts constructed. The goal of grounded theory research is to generate social process theory directly from data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) it is in a way a guide to analyze and derive meanings that people attributed to the phenomena from qualitative data.

Grounded theory methods foster seeing your data in fresh ways and exploring your ideas about the data through early analytic writing, by adopting grounded theory methods you can direct, manage, and streamline your data collection and moreover, construct an original analysis of your data (Charmaz, 2006:2).

The method was devised by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss. They first used it in their study in a hospital where they explored how it felt to die in a hospital in 1967, a period when positivist approach and quantitative techniques abound. So it is commonly understood that sociologists Glaser and Strauss (1967) developed this particular approach to qualitative research in reaction to positivism, or logical empiricism (Malia, 2005:23)

Because the method dwell on information from the participants, it resorts to their answers regarding a process or a situation, researcher visits and revisits data as theories and themes emerge to determine whether or not the conclusions drawn may be reasonably assumed to explain or relate to the actual data, to do this researchers bring to bear their training, reading, experience, and explicit theories and allow these to interact with data (Paterson, 1996: 90) In particular, it is convenient for research needing in-depth responses. For this particular reason it is especially appropriate for understanding family processes (Weaver & Marilyn, 2005:481).

The specific reason why this study opted for grounded theory for data analysis rests on its flexibility in gathering data, which seems quite in line with data collection technique, life story narrative interview and the feminist theoretical frame work, the study at hand is employing.

When combined with insight and industry, grounded theory methods offer sharp tools for generating, mining, and making sense of data. It can give you flexible guidelines rather than rigid prescriptions. With flexible guidelines, you direct your study but let your imagination flow (Charmaz, 2006: 15).

4.5. The data analysis Process: Reducing the Data through Coding, Memo Writing and Raising Common Themes

The data analysis process begins with a researcher's interest in substantive general areas; the researcher gives way to relevant themes to come out from the data. Data analysis adhered to the constant comparative method, which encourages the researcher to compare concepts with previous incidents in both the same and different groups of analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990 cited in (Hallman, 2005: 19) These themes then are interrelated so as to formulate more complex conceptual interpretations (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Coding and memo writing are essential in grounded theory analysis.

Writing successive memos throughout the research process keeps you involved in the analysis and helps you to increase the level of abstraction of your ideas it catches your thoughts, capture the comparisons and connections you make and crystallize questions and directions for you to pursue (Charmaz, 2006:72-73).

Coding on the other hand is sort of labeling, fragmenting and connecting the data. Through the help of memo writing we achieved crucial themes from data and code them under variety of categories. Theory-building is achieved through coding procedures that help research analysts simultaneously be systematic and creative in managing masses of unstructured data and considering alternative meanings of phenomena while identifying, comparing, discarding, delineating, refining, and

relating properties and dimensions of categories and themes conceptualizing phenomena of interest (Glaser, 1992)

The interviews produced 444 pages of transcribed data; the data were transcribed by me by recording verbal and nonverbal cues like pauses, crying, laughing, etc., to capture the meaning associated with the participants' responses, moods and attitudes.

Following the guidelines of grounded theory, the interviews from audiotape were listened several times, verbatim transcripts were perused carefully, and, preliminary comments and memos were reviewed to come up with emergent themes. Recurring themes from interviews were chosen as categories to be analyzed. Quotations from narratives were displayed to support the analyses. In addition to common themes, unique ideas raised from single interviews were also taken into consideration for their distinctive contribution. The individual case summaries were briefly provided (see Appendix-1) for the readers to understand the context and provide "thick description"-presentation of descriptive data that allows the readers to draw their own conclusions. (Patton, 1990 cited in Weiner 1995) In the light of literature review and general aspects of research questions I identified key themes related to post divorce experience of professional women for cross-case analyses. Since we it would not be practical to provide individual within case analyses for 31 participants, I opted for cross-case analyses-which focuses more on themes or patterns that cut across the cases (Huberman and Miles, 1994). Though the discussion section takes interpretive bend, I, nevertheless, provided interpretations at the end of each chapter.

4.6. Limitation

Markedly the major limitation of this study is that participants were middle class, highly educated and professional women with or without children. Therefore, the findings of this study do not represent the divorce and post divorce experience of lower and upper class women. The limited population used for this study was chosen due to the explorative nature of the study. It was thought that larger number would

prevent the opportunity for an in-depth study and would destroy the exploratory nature of the study (L'Hommedieu, 1984:22).

This thesis attempts to analyze post divorce experience specifically through the experience of women; because I only heard from one of the two people involved in divorce, issues that requires masculinity perspectives and men's attitudes toward divorce, their post divorce experience and their relationship with their children after divorce were excluded. Future researchers should endeavor to look into these issues extensively.

The illustrative quotations from women's recounts are the researcher's translation from Turkish. A verbatim account was produced by remaining faithful to the original language used during the interview as much as possible therefore grammatical mistakes, mistaken wording, slang and insult words were left intact. Also, other linguistic components such as sighs, pause, and laughter were reflected. Yet, the quotations were translated into the standard English; the vernacular language may have been lost.

4.7. Some Methodological Reflections

4.7.1. Some Methodological Reflections or the Lessons Learned

It is crucial to provide women with flexible setting where spontaneous exchange is possible and where she can tell her story without much reservation. Just in this juncture it is important to note that the gender of researcher also plays an important role; women to women interview also contributes to the spontaneity and flexibility of interview thanks to common experiences and level of empathy.

One ethical concern that goes beyond the issue of gender is prying into someone's private life. Even though the narrative nature of life stories make it easy to turn interviews into sincere conversations, and even though women-to-women interview gave a chance to gain valuable insights, the fear of prying into someone's private life thwarted me from delving into more and searching for meaning behinds the

words. Due to the sensitive and emotional nature of the topic I was searching, I was uneasy about the possibility of causing distress during the interviews. When I asked the women to evaluate their marriage drawing specifically on positive and negative moments, some of the Participants ended up crying. At such moments I vacillated between my desire to console the Participant and my research agenda. While part of my brain was prodding me to elicit more information, ask for more clarification, sometimes even trying to analyze the meaning of crying, my heart was telling me to stop the conversation and help to alleviate the pain. The best possible approach to help soothe the pain was to change the topic or pause for a cup of tea/coffee.

It may be that the vacillation results from my level of empathy as a woman as well. Living in the same cultural environment as the women being interviewed and being well aware of what it means to be a woman in this territory, I was feeling the difficulty of reminding them of those moments which imbued me with hesitation even fear of causing uneasiness. Therefore, most of the time by my failure to cope with sensitive moments, I was unable to ask for further clarifications for points that need more explanation most of the time. Later on, when I was engrossed in listening to the recordings of interviews, I realized that part of the reason for my vacillation to ask for clarification may have resulted from the women-to-women interview conduct per se. the sensitivity grew out of the women-to-women interviews and the level of empathy which is embedded to it puts a stress, on the researcher. Feeling overwhelmed and confused, I began questioning the efficiency of women-to-women interviewing for the part of the researcher, if not for the part of the participant. Even if I believe that women-to-women interviewing has a lot of advantageous and thus I was hopeful to benefit from it during the course of my study, I am still hesitant about the efficiency of the method. While it may result in conversational flow of an interview and, as Devault underscored, and to the revealing women's full accounts of experiences, it may, nevertheless, I reasoned; impede the researcher to make use of rich potential in the language which is an important aspect in life story. As Anderson and Jack denote, the language women use can be all richer when they have ample opportunity to explain and clarify what they mean, they should have opportunity to explain what they mean in their own terms (1991; p, 17). Therefore it

seems that the sensitivity grew out of the women-to-women interviews and the level of empathy which is embedded to it puts a stress, on the researcher.

Another concern that preoccupied my mind profoundly for quite a long time was objectification during interview. Asking women to tell their private stories to a person they saw for the first time and asking them to find a time to schedule an interview given their rather hectic lives could be considered self-sacrifice for their part. It may also be considered as objectifying these women for my own career ends. Since interviews, as the data collection method, were the centerpiece of my study and therefore, they were of great significance for me; however, for the participants interviews do not have the same value. So I questioned the very situation and came to realize that, as a matter of fact, conducting research of great interest to these women reciprocates them in many ways. For instance some of the women in my sample who were members of Divorced Mothers Association tried to help change the negative approaches toward divorced women in society for the better. Because they aimed to educate people and challenge entrenched false beliefs in society, they considered the interviews as means to articulate themselves and reach larger masses of people in society. After each of my interview, they expressed their gratitude to me for conducting this research.

When reciprocity is considered it is also important to underscore the therapeutic feature of narrative interviewing. Therapeutic effect of interview is noted by feminist researchers (see for example Cotteril, 1992; Opie; 1992; Birch and Miller 2000), Brannen (1993) in her study argues that ‘The interview method produced therapeutic pay-offs through the interest and responsiveness of the interviewer, and the interviewee's knowledge that she was part of a wider collectivity’ (p. 344).As Atkinson (1998) denotes telling life story interview is not meant to be therapeutic, but it can often help the person clarify or understand something that might not have been understood as much as possible before telling (p. 12).

Three participants stressed that they felt a sense of relief at the end of their interviews. Therefore, if not for any other reason, they may have accepted to be

interviewed for the opportunity to share their feeling. One of the participants [Hulya, Instructor], for instance, expressed this in a humorous way:

Participant: I guess I talked so much.

Interviewer: On the phone you had told me that you would not talk a lot.

Participant: Yeah, now I realized that I wanted to talk (laughs)

Interviewer: you said some very important things, they relate to my research, thank you very much,

Participant: did I? Oh I am happy then.

Interviewer: I hope I did not take too much of your time,

Participant: Ahh no, no please do not say that, I should be thanking you; you know I am even paying for this! (Referring to the therapy sessions she goes to once in a while)

At this juncture, it bears noting that an interview with therapeutic implications can also be associated with an alternative counseling like psychotherapy, however, my experience of the interviews left me with a sense that, at least in this case, the relief emanated from looking at the past experiences from a different vantage point and reaching at new understandings and meanings.

Many of the other participants who were not members of any association were no dissimilar in appreciating the research topic for the recognition of divorced women as equally successful and ‘normal’ women who can bring up healthy children in society. Moreover, it may be that the title of our study, which highlights such characteristics as “educated” and “professional” reinforces their distinctive statutes in society and it may honor them, prompting them to deem participation as a responsibility to share their perspectives and to represent the distinctive status they managed to uphold despite their patriarchal surroundings. Susan Chase (1995) in her work, where she examines work narratives of one group of successful professional women, lends support to this argument. In her case the request for a work history becomes an occasion for professional women ‘to understand and present themselves as powerful and accomplished educational leaders’, deeming participating in research as a responsibility to women who are modeling them in their attempt to reach their goals (p.46).

When a Participant is too much enthusiastic to participate

Interestingly, on occasion, I encountered situations where the participant was much more willing to attend than I ever imagined. One participant's, [Tugba, Instructor], involvement in this sense was a good example. During the interview she was not simply a subject but more like an expert who was helping me by giving me data and comments. Although it was advantageous to talk to a participant who seemed to be more committed than expected, it nevertheless concerned me, for her eagerness may have impeded the authenticity of the data, which brings into picture the drawback of leading the respondent to say what we want to hear, namely, her too much involvement may have conditioned her to give information that she thought would be more interesting for me, rather than as she herself believed or experienced it, as the quotation reveals:

I was raised and educated in Britain so I am expected to be modern person, but I confess that in reality I support patriarchy to a certain extent. I know you will not like this actually, I don't know how to put but actually I may prefer my husband's being superior to me....it may be due to compensate my father's absence in my life or may be cultural instillation but yes as a matter of fact I want my husband to earn more than I do. I have this sentiment; I don't know how this may change the course of your research.

Her expressions "I know you will not like this" and her concern about the direction of the course of research upon her confession that she partially upholds patriarchy, reveal that while responding she was not herself as such, for the main concern for her was to contribute, the following quotation further emphasize her mode:

By the way my husband is 2.5 years younger than me, does this information help you?

The challenge I faced lends support to DeVault and Gross's conclusion that in the conduct of any interview research, researchers must maintain a reflexive awareness that research relations are never simple encounters, innocent of identities and lines of power but rather are always embedded in and shaped by cultural constructions of similarity, difference and significance (2007, p.181).

All in all, its difficulties notwithstanding, I believe that the hardship participants and researcher go through alike are giving way to such an undertaking that was a not only adding knowledge to the world of social science at large, but also drew attention to the ‘missing tradition’ that rendered exclusion of women in social science that Reinharz and Chase (2001) explained with the word *gnopia*⁹ and helped the social and cultural transformation toward a more democratic, tolerable and less sexist attitudes that have long been envisaged. Specifically for our case divorce in Turkish context where despite its social significance the number of studies concerning divorce is limited (Arıkan 1990; Fisiloglu, 2005), the research then becomes more consequential.

4.7.2. Talking To Professional Women: Learning From Interviewees

While on the surface it was an interview, for some cases the narratives themselves were sociological analysis of many issues related to family and women’s condition in society. Through the lenses of their personal experiences they were reflecting on marriage, divorce, motherhood, fatherhood, patriarchy, women and work and many other important issues surrounding their lives. Insights from interviews regarding social life were useful for us as researchers who are employing sociological lens when examining phenomena, as Riessman rightly states in the following:

To the sociologically oriented investigator, studying narratives is additionally useful for what they reveal about social life---culture “speaks itself” through an individual’s story. It is possible to examine gender inequalities, racial expression, and other practices of power that may be taken for granted by individual speakers (Riessman, 1993; p, 5).

At this juncture, life story interview opened venue to understand how they negotiated with social norms. Their commentaries were imbued with challenges to the cultural values, one participant, [Hulya, Instructor], recounted her friends’ insistent suggestion to remarry in a critical light questioning the need to be married.

⁹ Inability to see women. Reinharz (1985) elucidates on this term in her work *Feminist Distrust: Problems of Content and Content in Sociological Research*. See bibliography for full reference.

She was indignant with the fact that being a divorced woman, she was deemed as incomplete or aberrant:

My friends, whatever their level of education they have this, they say, 'do not worry you can marry again' I mean, Do I remarry or not? I don't know it is too early to say anything; perhaps I can remarry, but, understand what they mean? I mean you made a mistake and we can correct this by remarrying you, we can take you out from this incomplete format, and you know what happens? You start feeling the same, you feel that's right, I made a mistake now I should correct this, understand? I should remarry urgently (laughs).....I hear this very often, 'you can marry again', but do you ask me whether I want or not? Or is there an eligible man or does it have to be?

At this juncture, she also pointed to a more subtle difference that never-married single women do not face this attitude, namely, they are not impelled to 'correct a mistake':

It is interesting that I am thinking of my friends who are around at my age and never married, they are not facing this problem as such. People think that it is destiny, after all, pointing their way. That part is normal but as for mine; I made a mistake by divorcing and I am supposed to set it right, with another marriage I have to be normalized soon (laughs).

Another participant, [Ayla, Lawyer], recounted a similar experience that she had hard times when she was asked about her marital status, for divorce is not acknowledged as a marital status in society, her commentary bears implicit challenges to the existing norms:

People ascribe more positive meanings to married women, married women are presumed to have a more organized and successful life. Your family, your relatives and your friends have this belief; being married is a plus because they locate you somewhere in their mind, however, being divorced for that matter, is regarded as a failure. At the beginning I have hard time to internalize this however later on I made it.

It is noteworthy that listening to women's negotiation with cultural ideology also helped me to unravel the cultural context and values that formed their mindset and

perception. The divorce experience may have prompted them to give a thought to what they otherwise would not get engaged with and helped them realize real aspects of society. Their criticism bore traces of this realization, thus, interview to them was illuminating to read the society. So our study, in this sense, lends support to what Anderson and Jack (1991) state in the following:

A person's self reflection is not just a private, subjective act. The categories and concepts we use for reflecting upon and evaluating ourselves come from a cultural context, one that has historically demeaned and controlled women's activities. Thus an exploration of the language and the meaning women use to articulate their own experience leads to an awareness of the conflicting social forces and institution affecting women's consciousness. It also reveals how women act either to restructure or preserve their psychological orientation their relationships and their social contexts (18)

It was clear that they did not have an all or nothing approach to the cultural norms, while on one hand they were censoring customs on many levels; on the other hand they were not able to shy away from the norms and still took them as reference. The issue negative social attitudes towards divorced women was a case in point; although they downplayed and criticized stigma toward divorced women and stated that thanks to their professional position and socioeconomic status they did not face it, they, nevertheless, created several strategy to not to be exposed to it. One participant, Emine, told that after divorce for six months she did not tell anyone in her work place that she got divorced, another participant Burcu did not change her surname so that people should not know of her new marital status. Fulya, on the other hand conveyed that she did not invite her male colleagues lest neighbors should misunderstand, further examples could be presented from interviews yet what these examples show is that the participants could not get around social norms, for, after all it is the culture they live in.

It is interesting to note that as they talk about their experiences and events they enjoyed the insights they themselves made and found chance to question things again. One of the participants for instance articulated how remarkable and valuable an experience it was to recount and look at her divorce from a different lens after so

many years. As the questions tempt them they were revisiting their feelings and judgments about their ex husbands and divorce experience by so doing they were finding identity and meaning by telling stories about what they have done in their lives, their actions in history as Stivers (1993) suggested. For a participant, Hulya, for instance the interview process turned into a self discovery when she realized the tendency that channeled her into feeling 'failed', the following excerpt indicates this:

Participant: unfortunately it is a very tough emotional experience even for those who have friendly divorce, because you have certain expectation when you enter marriage and it gives me sense of failure, I mean being divorced, I mean a feeling of leaving something undone and among all other things, I have to confess that I failed my marriage, I thought I could to it but..

Interviewer – do you say 'I' failed it instead of 'it did not work out' or 'we could not make it'?

Participant: yeah, I guess I have an inclination to blame myself, I do not know, may be, that is the reason why I feel that way. Recently one of my friends said the same thing, yeah; this is something new to me, I hope, I can handle it.

So interviews for some of the participants were revisiting their deep feelings that they do not often analyze nor come term with.

4.7.3. Talking Sensitive Issues with Professional Women

Women Talk When They Want

Issue of sexuality, on occasion, surfaced during the interviews. Being an important element in the process toward divorce in the form of an intervening factor causing divorce, it would not be wise to overlook sexuality.

Within the confines of a patriarchal social context where sexuality and domestic sphere is drawn with moral boundaries and that what contemporary sociologist

Pierre Bourdieu calls 'symbolic violence'¹⁰ operates if one fails to conform to the already set rules of that system. Therefore, it was foreseeable that obtaining information regarding sensitive issues from the participants would be a difficult task. As Lee (1993; p,121) stated it is difficult to avoid the fear of being a stranger, the fear of rejection when seeking personal details about people's lives, and the fear of violating the normative standards of those being studied. however, surprisingly, the women interviewed turned out to be much more forthcoming and open than expected, some women broached sexuality even before they were posed the question, which makes one think that when studying sensitive topics the difficulty at times may result from the interviewer's own uneasiness, as Johnson and Delamater (1976) argues in the following:

The difficulty of securing cooperation and valid data so often anticipated by researcher in surveys on sexual topics probably has been exaggerated-- and the magnitude of responses effects in sex surveys probably has been overestimated (p, 181).

The sensitive questions were posed through the end of the interview. Emphatic and nonjudgmental approach was held as much as possible, which may have greater role in building rapport between the researcher and each participant.

Four participants expressed sexuality as one of the causes leading to their divorces. The issue of reinterpretation that channels women to mental transformation surfaced while they were revisiting their experiences. In this juncture, a challenge to the

¹⁰ This sociological concept of was first introduced by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu to account for the tacit almost unconscious modes of cultural/social domination occurring within the every-day social habits maintained over conscious subjects. Symbolic violence maintains its effect through the mis-recognition of power relations situated in the social matrix of a given field. When a holder of symbolic capital uses the power this confers against an agent who holds less, and seeks thereby to alter their actions, they exercise *symbolic violence*. We might see this when a daughter brings home a boyfriend considered unsuitable by her parents. She is met with disapproving looks and gestures, symbols which serve to convey the message that she will not be permitted to continue this relationship, but which never make this coercive fact explicit. People come to experience symbolic power and systems of meaning (culture) as legitimate. Hence, the daughter will often feel a duty to obey her parents' unspoken demand, regardless of her suitor's actual merits. She has been made to misunderstand or misrecognize his nature. Moreover, by perceiving her parents' symbolic violence as legitimate, she is complicit in her own subordination - her sense of duty has coerced her more effectively than explicit reprimands could have done (source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symbolic_violence)

concept of marital rape that has presently been subject to a lot of controversy was a quintessential example to reinterpretation. The following extract, from the interview to one of the participants, [Aysun, Project Manager], reveals this:

Interviewer: as to violence you stated that you went through violence repeatedly, now I want to elaborate on this, it may be a private question and you do not have to respond if you do not like to, did you ever go through sexual violence during your marriage?

Participant: Yes. Yes I am one of those who believe in marital rape. God! It is like dejavu, recently I talked about this with one of my friends, and she also asked me whether I had marital rape before divorce. well, I mean, it should not be like marriage equals to sexual abuse, because as I said women are sentimental creatures and sexuality is an indispensable aspect of marriage, but you cannot have it with a man you are quarreling all the time, that you feel irritated to see around and even cannot bear to see at all.

With the expression that ‘I am one of those who believe in marital rape’ she referred to a controversy that prevails for so long in the society as to the recognition of marital rape as a crime. As Gulcur (1999) states the controversy mainly results from the difficulty in addressing marital rape as a form of sexual violence. To her “If a stranger forces a woman to have sex, it is generally agreed to be rape; yet social norms legitimize a husband’s use of force to have sex with his wife”.

Marital rape has not been criminalized until 2004, and the reform on the Turkish Penal Code took an immense campaign by feminist and political activists. While the campaigns were underway the main discourse voiced was that ‘women should have right to have autonomy over their bodies and sexualities’ (see Ilkraracan, 2005). So Aysun acknowledged that that marital rape was a fact and she highlighted that she sided with the campaigners on the notion that women should have control over their own bodies.

Interviewer: you mean it is not that much technical issue?

Participant: Yes, it is not like saying let’s cook together, for men it can be technical, may be theirs can be just jump and ejaculate, but for women it takes a process and 80% of this process is made up of emotional satisfaction. In our case, emotional satisfaction was out of question. Never. I thought, perhaps this was because all to do with my tendency, I mean, I thought my problem was frigidity,

this may seem weird to you, I could not bear to see kissing on TV, I was feeling nausea, so I thought I had a sexual problem whatever it was, because I had no sexual desire neither for my husband nor for any other men, I had no desire for my ex-husband I mean not even in once in a blue moon.

While she was putting blame on herself for her feelings toward her husband then and diagnosing herself as frigid, she was able to figure out the real problem behind her sentiments during the interview. Narrative interview enabled her to crystallize what she lived for.

Interviewer: so when did what you called “frigidity” start?

Participant: It started as of our second year of marriage.

Interviewer: then it must be all to do with violence.

Participant: Yeah, of course, because of domestic problems and violence, after divorce soon I turned to normal, I mean not that I am sleeping with any man on the street but at least I do not feel irritated when I see a sex scene on TV, because I got over, now I feel ok it is just a normal, romantic scene. So, yeah, you come to know that you are overtly raped by your husband.

Interviewer: so you call it a rape

Participant: Yes, I call it a rape, because it is not consensual, even if you are doing it with a whore as long as it is not consensual then it is rape, because it is forced (silence for a few minutes).

By stating that sex is normal as long as it is consensual she drew our attention to the ideal form. One participant, [Emine, Quality Manager], presented a similar approach:

Oh! One more thing about our disharmony; ahmm, we had also some problems about sexuality. I mean, I had been bored having sex with him, for example now I have this fear, what if I get bored again if I remarry? For men having sex is so technical, my husband was telling me that otherwise he could go another woman, and I was saying ok go, go to another women! I may be at fault here, I know, but if I am gonna suffer from it I can accept that, because it has to be consensual, this was you know traditional, my ex-husband was very traditional especially when sexuality is concerned

The issue of consensual-sex persisted, another participant, [Burcu, Instructor] likewise, highlighted it. Similar to what the other participants stated, she implicitly referred to the ideal form that it should be consensual. As she related during our talk:

Interviewer: we mentioned romanticism during marriage, now I want to ask about sexual aspect in addition to romanticism, whether or not your sexual attentiveness was hurt all along, it may be a bit hard for you to talk about it but if you don't want to I can just skip this issue,

Participant: No, no, it is ok. I haven't had a sexual feeling for years, I mean for years, some certain things. Well in fact I don't know when I last had sexual feeling, after a certain while it turned into a mechanic duty, but when exactly it started, I don't remember.

Concerning sexual violence, Burcu drew the attention to a different form of violence, what she came to name "psychological violence" as she further described it in these words:

Interviewer: then did you go through sexual violence, I mean any coercive,

Participant: Sexual violence, well, no, not that way but by making psychological pressures, I mean not by psychical violence but in a psychological way I mean by making me feel bad about myself, by insisting or something like that, but of course that is another form of violence too.

Her account was an example of mental transformation. While going through all the sexual difficulties or may be even feeling guilty for not meeting her husband's demands she may have not been aware of what type of violence she had put herself through but now after a while over it, when she looked back she was well aware of what exactly it was and even name it as psychological violence as a form of sexual violence.

There is much to reach somewhat generalizable results in these women's account. They all stressed that sexual feelings should be bound up with love and intimacy. Examining the narratives we see certain expressions, 'technical', 'mechanical', persists during our talk to them, they used these words particularly when they

describe their husband's approach in a pejorative way and challenged established definition of true sexuality by pointing to an ideal form of it.

Regarding sexual violence the women were open in addressing what they experienced as marital rape or psychological violence. Importantly they criticized sexual violence and acknowledged it as a form of crime although coercive sex as long as it is within the sphere of marriage is socially accepted.

Here again it is important to remark that Carrying out an interview in a conversation flow assists us to make linguistic decoding, see contradictions and challenges.

Once intimate feelings are articulated to another, the teller and the Listener have the chance to reflect upon what has just been said (Birch and Miller, 2000; p, 194).

CHAPTER 5

RIGHT AFTER DIVORCE

FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES AND SINGLE PARENTING

5.1. Introduction: Common Themes and Cross-case Analyses

In the light of grounded theory analyses theoretical categories where areas divorce turned both as relief and grief emerged. These theoretical categories pointed to the areas where participants presented themselves as active agents of divorce process as well as sites where they came across hardships and challenges which thwarted their mobility and empowerment. It is important to note that the categories are not mutually exclusive, at times, women experience both grief and relief in a process. In areas such as financial experience and self esteem majority of the participants experienced more relief than grief however in areas, Single Parenting, Social Attitudes and Social Relationships and finally Remarriage the participants talked more about hardships and social restrictions than relief where they had to develop survival strategies presenting themselves as active agent of the divorce process.

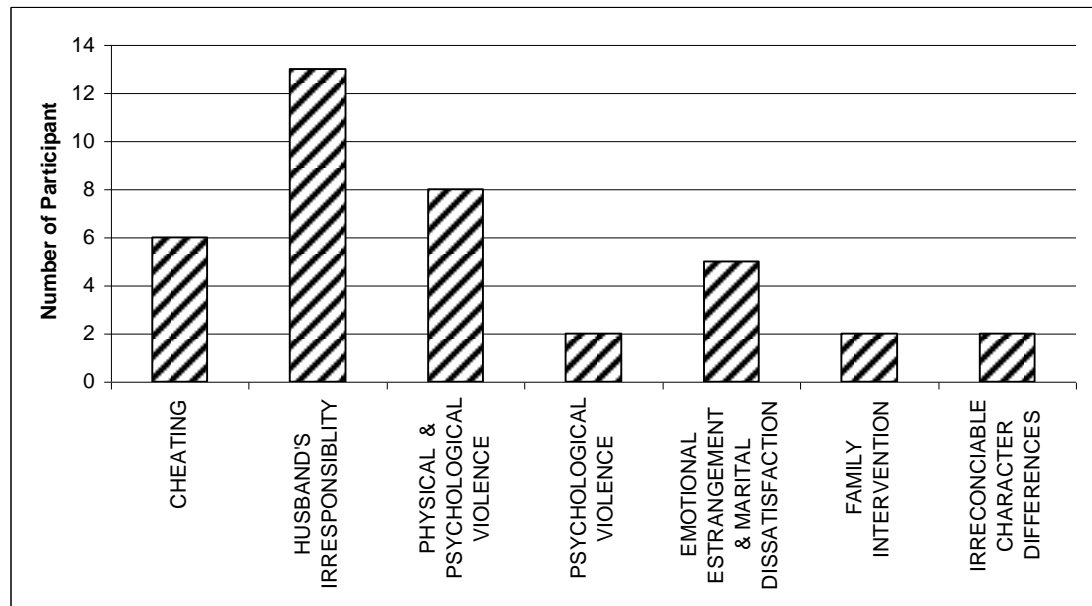
Cross-case analyses such as the comparison of women with and without children, women of middle class and upper middle class (those who have managerial position and who are living in more upper class districts of Istanbul) are embedded into the analyses of recurring themes. In addition, a unique case titled “Intergenerational Transmission of Divorce and Family help” is presented in the seventh chapter.

5.1.1. Before Divorce: Experience of Grief

Even though the main focus in this study is on the post divorce experience, in order to get a fuller picture of post divorce experience it will be helpful to give some information as to the process before divorce. Examining the recounts of the participants, it turned out that love was a prevailing theme running through women's accounts. All women in the sample chose their spouses themselves and they made their decision on the basis of love. More importantly, the marriages were terminated when love and respect were no longer characteristics of their marriages. All but two women in the sample were divorce initiators; they all filed for divorce and were involved in the legal proceedings such as child custody, child support or alimony, property division, etc.

Overall, among the reasons that channeled these women to divorce, husband's lack of interest in taking care of family, financial irresponsibility in particular turned out to be the leading one. Of all the women interviewed thirteen participants told how they were distressed by their husbands' reluctance, rather refusal to share the family's financial expenses and over all irresponsibility. According to their accounts husbands' reluctance to contribute to family expenses manifested itself in several ways. For the most part, the participants told how at the time of marriage they were paying utility bills, rents, child's expenses and vacation. While they did not have a shared investment or a budget, in some cases the women didn't even know how much their husbands were making on a month. So in these cases women in a way became the sole breadwinners. Husband's lack of interest in financial expenses and in familial responsibility also became visible when he was either unemployed or unstable in his work, changing job very often, or when the husband had credit card debts, went bankruptcy or mismanaged the shared budget by spending extravagantly.

Figure 5.1. Participants' divorce grounds



Domestic violence was the second important reason that came to fore during our interviews, eight participants related violence in physical and psychological form. Physical and psychological violence in this study are considered as intertwined in the sense that a physical abuse hurts women not only physically but also psychologically. However, in this sample psychological abuse came into play without being accompanied by a physical violence. Two participants underscored that despite the fact that they did not go through physical assault they were subject to psychological abuse in the form of humiliation, or being prompted to feel bad about themselves.

Six participants related cheating as their prime reasons for filing for divorce. In some cases cheating was not the sole reason, the participants also referred to husbands' lack of interest in family duties.

Five women told emotional estrangement and resulting marital dissatisfaction for their break up. It is important to note that three of these participants added that their

estrangement may have emanated from their early marriage and age gap between their husbands.

Family interventions, namely mother-in-law's insistence on involving in the couples' relationships was also emphasized- though not very often. Two participants emphatically stated that their marriages could have worked out well if it had been for their mother-in-laws' continuous interference with their private lives throughout their marriages.

And finally two other women stressed that irreconcilable character differences between their husbands put great strain on their marriages and became major reason for their divorces. It is important to note that, each the divorce ground is stated in a way the participants emphasize, however, in some cases more than one reason were cited as the main divorce ground (see the Figure 5.1).

It will be parochial if we relate their easy divorce decision to their economic self sufficiency, the historical and social context they were in at the time of divorce is also important. By and large, the participants were born between late 1960s and the 1970s so they came from the same age cohorts. While two respondents got divorced in 1996 and 1999, all other respondents got divorced in 2000s; the periods when the divorce rate increased following a rupture in 2002. With the increase in divorce rates, divorce news came to be heard more often and over time became relatively more normalized than before. Because people became more familiar with the event of divorce in their surroundings and in media this lessened negative approaches toward divorce, as echoed in the following quotation:

The increased rate of divorce may reflect the fact that it is easier not than in the past to leave an unhappy marriage due to increasingly tolerant community attitudes, the introduction of no-fault divorce, and the growing economic independence of women; alternatively, it is possible that the increase in divorce reflects a deterioration in the quality of marriage itself across marriage cohorts (Amato & Rogers, 1997: 1089)

All in all, before and during the divorce process the participants stressed more on the grief aspect of divorce experience which channeled them to file for divorce. While for some, violence was the main factor for the negative experiences, for others it was suffering from lack of self esteem as a result of all the tribulations they went through. Again for the majority of the participants, husbands' lack of interest in family expenses and overall irresponsibility was thwarting these women's empowerment since marriage itself was an economic burden, for they were mostly bearing the brunt of the financial load. Therefore grief was the concept that characterized their pre-divorce phase.

5.1.2. Post divorce Experience

Just like divorce itself, post divorce, too, is a process. As respondents reveal, most of the trauma has been gone through before and during the divorce when all the contradiction in varying levels is lived through. After the divorce, the trauma is mostly related to transition phase when adjusting to new conditions and managing the difficulties deriving from setting up a new life. According to participants' accounts, it turned out that participants, by and large, experienced same characteristics regarding their adjustment to their new condition. The first thing that concerned them most was financial situation which may or may not be accompanied by residential change-specifically if they move to a relatively inferior neighborhood. Some time later when they finally manage financial strain and residential change, the next strain; single parenting came to fore for women with children. This phase can be considered as the most stressful or even traumatic phase; however, after the initial phase of adjustment, the respondents talked more about positive experiences of being single parents. Over time they started thinking about their social relationships and social networks, and also evaluated societal attitudes to divorce at this phase. At this stage they also had chance to make over all evaluation of their divorces, their selves and plans for the future. Remarriage is the last phase of women's adjustment to divorce. Many women stated that after divorce they felt a deep distrust toward men, let alone thinking remarriage. However after a while when things turned to be more normalized they consider remarrying and having a child.

Divorced women without children have slightly different trajectory of adjustment. Since they are free of parenting concern, they make future plans relatively easy. Also not having child makes divorce complete since they no longer have anything shared with their ex husbands. Although they seemed to be at an advantage when compared to single mothers, this does not necessarily mean that they are not exempt from negative social attitudes, financial difficulties of falling from dual worker state and feeling of loneliness as frequently stated. Nevertheless, overall, it could be claimed that the participants in this study have relatively less painful post divorce adjustment experience given their socioeconomic statuses. Even if some of the participants have serious economic strain right after divorce, it did not last long and they somehow pulled together soon. So this study gives support to the literature that less financial strain gives way to easy post divorce adjustment (e.g. Robinson 1993; Kurz 1995).

5.2. Financial Consequences

As we stated before precarious financial conditions in the form of permanent financial problems, reduced economic standards or downward mobility are endemic to divorcing women. a good number of studies have addressed financial devastation (Brandwein, et al 1974; Corcoran 1979; Weiss 1984; McLindon 1987; Arendell 1987; Devillier and Forsyth 1988; Weitzman 1981, 1985; Duncan and Hoffman 1985; Gerstel 1987; Grella 1990; Holden and Smock 1991; Smock 1994; Amato 2000; Moorefield, et al 2007) (Arıkan 1990, 1992, 1996; Tor 1993; Demirci 2000), various studies have shown downward mobility in the wake of divorce (Weiss, 1984; Kismann 1987; Devillier and Forsyth 1988; Grella 1990). On the other hand there are studies which states that for highly educated and high income women divorce may have positive impact since it gives women opportunity to gain a sense of control over their financial management (Eeden-Moorefield, et al., 2007; Riessman, 1990) for after all it is some specific features such as being young, less educated, unemployed that are associated with financial insecurity in the wake of divorce (Teachman et al., 2000) Moreover, according to McKelvy and McKenry (2000) for many women financial insecurity lasts only for a short period after divorce.

Knowing the great emphasis on the divorced women's economic situation as an important post divorce experience, in this section we examine women's financial situation after divorce. First we explore the financial difficulties they faced, and their coping strategies to get over the difficult process. In this section we also discuss how work occupies a pivotal role in their strategies and life at large. We evaluate work vis a vis its implications for women's empowerment.

In this current study I found that financial strain was not an extensive concern for the women who participated in our study. All the women in our sample were professionally working before, during the process of divorce or started working right after divorce. While some of them took a long maternal leave ranging from three to four years, some women stated that they didn't even take maternal leave and returned work right after childbirth.

Given their positions and income I categorized five participants as upper middle class [Aysun, Project Manager; Zerrin, Assistant Manager; Fulya, Training Manager; Macide, Finance Manager; Selma, Bank Branch Manager] while the rest of the sample are considered as middle class people. Being aware of great emphasis on the divorced women's economic situation as an important post divorce experience, we asked if they faced any financial strain. 3 women stated that divorce affected them seriously, while 10 of the participants told that right after divorce they were somewhat affected yet managed to recover soon. And for the rest of the sample (18 of the participants) economic strain was not a problem. In fact for 10 women in the sample-Emine, Fulya, Aysun, Asiye, Filiz, Nurgul, Cisem, Raziye, Zerrin, Yasemin- stated being the mainly responsible for the family expenses and that upon divorce nothing really changed in terms of their payments and expenditures, so at least economically they were already ready for the outcome.

Table 5.1. Participants' occupations and their income

PARTICIPANTS	OCCUPATIONS	TL
Aysun	Project Manager	6000
Tulay	Instructor	2000
Emine	Quality Manager	2000
Deniz	Marketing Assistant	1000
Filiz	Sales Executive	1500
Zerrin	Assistant Manager	7000
Sevda	Real Estate Agent	2400
Fulya	Training Manager	4000
Esra	Lawyer	2000
Burcu	Instructor	2000
Isik	Assistant Professor	1500
Evren	Lawyer	3000
Nurgul	Journalist	4000
Mehtap	Administrative Assistant	1500
Perihan	Public Relations Expert	1600
Yasemin	Accounting Manager	4000
Macide	Finance Manager	8000
Nergis	Teacher	2000
Selma	Bank Branch Manager	6000
Merve	Nurse	2000
Raziye	Self Employed	2000
Hulya	Instructor	3000
Rezzan	Teacher	2000
Ayla	Lawyer	3000
Asiye	Administrative Assistant	1600
Belkis	Accountant	1000
Meryem	Instructor	2400
Arzu	Administrative Assistant	1000
Cisem	Lawyer	4000
Tugba	Instructor	2000
Neriman	Teacher	1500

5.2.1. Financial Strain upon Divorce

As mentioned before 10 participants talked about their concerns about their ability to manage financially after divorce. Since it is a general fact that married women have a tendency to leave the long term planning and investment to their husband (Eeden-Moorefield, 2007), even if they have stable income, they suffer from economic challenges when they face events like divorce. Many of the women in our sample illustrated this pervasive tendency. It was clear that for those who had economic strain some of the financial difficulties resulted partly from participants' own ways of financial management during the marriage, one participant [Sevda, Real Estate Agent] for instance had invested all her savings in the joint business that they launched together with her ex-husband, however, upon divorce in her own statement "she had to start from the scratch again". Another participant [Esra, Lawyer], likewise, had severe financial strain both because she paid off her ex-husband's credits debts while they were married and that her parents whom she was leaning on when she was in dire need went bankrupt at the time she was divorcing, the financial strain she had to face was drastic:

I do not have car now. My son has never seen me driving a car, while I always had a brand new car throughout my life, I do not even have a car now. I am ruined materially and emotionally. My career has gone, my marriage has gone, and my savings has gone, what is left? Now I have a great child that is it! Everything other than him is gone.

A third participant, [Evren, Lawyer] on the other hand was working for their own law office with her husband, so by divorcing she also divorced from their work place. Moreover, since all the money transactions was under her husband's name and since it was mainly her husband who was forming the contacts with the clients, she had hard time to form newer contact and open a

new office, therefore divorce for her was equal to serious economic breakdown.

I noticed that the impact of initiator status also plays an important role in economic circumstances. Three of the participants relinquished all their savings to their husbands so as to make the divorce process easier and smooth. However, they faced economic difficulties as a result of their behaviors:

During the trial my husband did not include the title deed of the flat that he agreed to give to me, the judge got nervous when she noticed that the file was not complete and decided to postpone the trial, just at that moment I stood up and begged judge not to postpone the trial and told them that I am giving up the flat. Now I feel that I did the right thing; I do not want his money, I do not want anything but my freedom and peace (Burcu, Instructor)

A second participant [Ayla, Lawyer] left all her belongings to her husband who was earning several times more than her. Although she pulled herself together after a while, she faced an economic downturn right after divorce:

My husband's economic condition was very well, he was doing really well. Economic consequences was one of the things that concerned me the most; it is inevitable that you are thinking economic consequences, you are used to certain life standards, certain lifestyle and upon divorce they all change. My ex husband was earning five times more than me and our life standard was accordingly. After divorce I was influenced a lot, my former life style changed entirely.... It was me who left the house; I did not demand anything, as a divorce initiator. I put my jacket on and left. For a while I stayed with my aunt, and then I rented a flat, and one way or another I went through that period.

Two other participants presented similar findings:

At the beginning I had difficulty in adaptation financially to my new situation because my ex-husband got our joint saving and our car [Arzu, Administrative Assistant].

During and after divorce I did not expect anything from him all I want was getting divorce, and he took advantage of this and did not even offer anything for our daughter's education expenses. I

sent my daughter to courses to prepare her for university he did not pay anything, we really had severe difficulty, and how I managed? I cut down on my own expenses not to affect her education life [Deniz, *Marketing Assistant*].

5. 2.2. Downward Mobility

One further thing regarding financial prospect of divorced women is the issue of downward mobility; an unexpected and immediate change in women's socioeconomic class right after divorce. As Weiss (1984) states downward mobility manifest itself through lifestyle: shopping differently, such as at thrift or discount stores for clothes; eating differently, such as more starches and soups; deferring payment of bills; turning down or off heat; and leaving appliances, cars, or their home unrepaired

Among the women I interviewed, three women faced downward mobility upon divorce [Burcu; Rezzan; Belkıs]. Burcu who was married with a high-earning lawyer and living in an upper-class district moved to a residential area in the suburban part of Istanbul and began to live on her salary from her profession, Instructor. Because she did not want to change her daughters' lifestyles and schools she relinquishes her custody right to her husband. She told how her economic situation has changed and now she has to consider her expenditure.

My daughters come at weekends, we spend time together, go out for dinner, go shopping together yet I am having difficulty in meeting their demands. They want everything; they put whatever they want to the shopping basket, because they are used to it. This is how we brought them up, we never thought about spending money, if they want something they simply went down and bought it, we did not have to consider. But now I cannot manage to buy things they want. I told him (ex-husband) to give alimony for their weekend expenditures; he knows his children after all.

A second participant [Belkıs, Accountant] on the other hand lived through downward mobility upon divorce in a very severe manner. Due to maternal leaves she took after her two sons, she didn't quite involve in work. Divorce changed her life financially; she could not make the standard of living she was enjoying before

divorce and because her salary was not enough to have a proper life with her two sons, she had to live with her parents, what is worse for her was she had to withdraw her son from private college.

For the third participant [Rezzan, Teacher], however, the stark change in her standard of living was no more important than peace and intimacy she had expected in her failing marriage. She seemed to be pretty comfortable with living by her own salary, even though she would not achieve the same standards with her profession. She told us that, after all by choosing herself teaching profession, she already knew that she could have “mediocre life standard with a mediocre salary”. As Catherine Riessman (1990) pin points after divorce women are left themselves in regard to managing the money and as she encountered in her sample “even managing less is a source of pride for women”.

5.2.3. Coping strategies: Alimony and Family help

The participants, who emphasized their financial concern in the wake of divorce, came up with couple of strategies to alleviate their financial worries. The strategies included (i) receiving family help in the form of either childcare or monetary means, (ii) receiving alimony (iii) working for more hours (iv) finding an additional job.

Five women [Emine, Filiz, Burcu, Meryem, and Evren] who were having problems in meeting the expenses of their children stated that they were taking alimony. As one participant [Emine, Quality Manager] humorously stated spending her husband money was not even a case during their marriages so in a way “for the first time she was spending his money”. When I asked if the alimony was regularly paid or if they had any problems regarding that, the participants told us some occasions where they needed to remind their husbands for couple of times or in some circumstances they had to file a lawsuit to family court again requesting the alimony be paid regularly. Interestingly two participants [Emine and Filiz] also stated how the financial supports turned into disadvantage for them because their husbands were using the sum of money they were paying as leverage the press their demands and interfere with the participants’ relationships with their children.

Family help was another mechanism these women drew on for a short period of time at least until they recovered financially. The majority of the participants overcame the initial stage of post divorce period with the help of their families, this ranged from living with parents until feeling self sufficient financially or until arranging a separate living to getting help in childcare. One participant, Tulay (Instructor), for example, could not manage childcare and work at the same time, thus, she had to send her daughter to her mother who was in Cyprus for three years, and she also emphasized her parent's monetary help and told that even though she kept working, without her parents monetary help she would definitely have had financial problems.

Another participant (Raziye, Self employed), who was not working at the time of divorce, was able to manage financial difficulty of post divorce period via her father's helps. Because the parents did not want their daughter to work again for fear that she will suffer from societal attitudes toward a divorced women, they sent a good amount of money on a monthly basis to her. Moreover, although many of the participants prefer to live on their own with their children, by virtue of high rents in the city, living with family emerged as a viable option. Four participants [Belkıs, Deniz, Asiye, Esra] were living with their families at the time of interview.

Listening to women's recounts, it is possible to see that even though they mention some disadvantages, they stress how family help supports them to a great extent. Particularly with respect to childcare women receive enormous help from their families. Due to the issue of trust they prefer their mothers or close relatives rather than nannies, by so doing, they in a sense, share responsibility at nights and weekends as well, which can give them more time and energy to spend on their work and career. Family help therefore turned out to be better help than they could have from nannies. Aysun [Project Manager], one of the participants, for example stated that since her mother cared for her two children after their school, she was able to stay in her office till late and that because she trusted her mother she managed to arrange her business trips without much concern.

[Tulay, Instructor], is a quintessential example of family help. As mentioned above, upon divorce she had sent her daughter to her mother who was in Cyprus for three years and she was only able to pay fortnightly visit during three years. She told during our interview that she had to send her daughter to her mother because she needed to work to start from the scratch again and to build a stable future for her daughter as well, which she now thinks is a right thing to do at that time.

Moreover, one participant [Deniz, Marketing Assistant] underscored another positive aspect of family help upon divorce. Together with her daughter she lives with her parents, and she thinks his father substitutes the absent father figure in the family, and since he is a good model she prefers her father instead of her husband for her daughter to internalize a father figure in the family.

Therefore, in this sample family help came to fore as a part and parcel of coping strategy, and the participants seemed to benefit from it in terms of sharing child care responsibility with someone else.

Although family help can be deemed as disempowering on women's parts and at times were censured for perpetuating women's economic dependence on men or family. The women in our sample turned it into an advantage and living with family or living separately yet getting help from family turned out as an empowering experience for women.

Nevertheless, I was curious regarding any negative effects emanating from dependence on family, for those who live with their parents in particular. Though not recurrent, I encountered that if the parents are too judgmental regarding participants ways of lives, parenting styles or their divorces for that matter, then participants evaluate living with parents with somewhat more negative terms. Three participants stressed this [Belkıs, Isık and Aysun].

Living with family may have another disadvantage with respect to women's social and familial status. One responded [Esra, Lawyer] stressed her fear of losing her motherly authority and be overshadowed by her mother in the eyes of her son. She

deemed it vital to move to a flat soon after she pulled together both financially and psychologically, before her son was grown enough to perceive things around him. Moreover, as Demirci (2000; 171) denoted living with family may also affect social relationships in a negative way. According to her findings turning to family for assistance and overcome adjustment problems through their help may discourage women to form new social relationships or apply to professional help. However, this was not the case for the women in this sample, since they were employed outside of home and already had their social networks.

5.2.4. Working as a Coping Strategy

Holding on the work more, doing extra jobs-like private tutoring or increasing the work hours, in short what we can call “working spree” specifically during the initial stage of adjustment emerged as the most important *modus operandi* how women cope with the financial difficulties or at least put their financial worries at rest.

Financial concern was more of an issue for participants who have children. As Weitzman, (1985) highlights Women’s standard of living may drop by as much as seventy-three percent, while men’s may rise up to forty-two percent. Living arrangements coupled with child’s costs makes women’s adaptation more difficult. Except for participants who were major provider during marriage, all the participants with children stated their concern or rather fear of financial difficulty specifically meeting the expenses of their children. As they were overwhelmed with this concern, they became more attached to their work; the participants following accounts illustrate how working became an overarching coping strategy:

One participant who was on maternal leave told that the first thing she did right after the idea of divorce emerged was looking for job announcement on newspapers:

When I heard about his intention to divorce (her ex-husband explained his decision to divorce to participant’s father first of all which was very heartbreaking for her) the first thing I did was searching for job announcements on the newspapers. While people around me was telling me that I should salvage my marriage, fight

for my marriage or that I should think of my son, I just ignored them as a matter of fact and kept on searching for job and flat. I was thinking on what to do and how to do, my goal was my son, I was thinking of overcoming all financial difficulties in time before he start school. These are of course instinctual, you can take it as motherly instincts, but anyhow, I was in that mood at that time [Sevda, Real Estate Agent]

Hulya (Instructor), another participant, plans to work more to safeguard her future:

Before legal dissolution, we separated our homes. When I returned to Istanbul, I was feeling quite strong. After all, I was professionally employed and earning sufficient salary I thought I could easily make it; yet, it did not turned out so. I lived with my mom for a year and a half, and then I rented a flat, and shared it with one of my friends, if she did not accompany me I would really have much difficulty in meeting the ends because more than half of my salary was going to rent. Now I am concerned about my future, I think I should work more and earn more, or maybe I should find a different high- paying job, I should be stronger I guess.

Two participants' experiences are also telling, [Aysun, Project Manager] who was an academic at a university had to forgo her academic aspirations to find herself a higher income job for her two children future. Being promoted soon she finally achieved a life standard for her and her two children. [Isik, Assistant Professor] the second participant, told us how divorce process made her all the more ambitious to stand on her own feet. During the process, despite her grief and stress she was able to finish writing her dissertation and was able to defend it successfully which gave her an opportunity to find herself job as an assistant professor.

Two other participants, in their experience, commented on their relentless efforts to find themselves jobs to survive financially “without depending on anyone” after the divorce.

While [Mehtap, Administrative Assistant] was literally pounding the pavement in search for job, [Perihan, Public Relations Expert], on the other hand, was earning money by working on her bed right after childbirth, doing clerical help to a dissertation work.

5.2.5. Divorce as an Economic Relief

Surprisingly 13 participants told how marriage itself was an economic burden for they were mostly bearing the brunt of the financial load. In fact according to their accounts, for these participants an economic wellbeing was felt upon divorce. Due to their husbands' unstable works or "financial irresponsibility" they were primarily responsible for the financial expenses in the family. Asiye, for instance, explained that shortly after they got married she found out that her husband had huge credit card debts, during her two years of marriage, they tried to pay off his debts, and she supported her husband with her salary. So contrary to what many divorced women experienced, she reached an economic stability after divorce, as she expressed: "Now at least I can see my salary in my account every month; before divorce I could not see any kuruş"

[Emine, Quality Manager] similarly, was living alone with her daughter paying off all the expenses while her husband was trying one job after another in other cities. She said that she was even sending money to him every now and then. When asked about her economic situation after divorce she told the following:

I am ok, because I no longer have to support someone financially! (laughs) I breathed a deep sigh of relief after divorce, it is even better, because I am receiving alimony of 150 lira, for the first time I am spending his money. He had difficulty in paying this for a while, because he was not used to giving me money

[Fulya, Training Manager] working on high paying job stated the same thing that despite her husband's profession, dentist, he was leaning on her financially, thus, after divorce she felt an economic relief.

Aysun's story is even more striking. She experienced "starting from the scratch" and struggling alone even before the divorce. Losing all their belongings in the earthquake that happened in 1999, they moved to Istanbul. Because they were both unemployed at that time, right after her second childbirth she had to work to pull together economically, additionally she gave private tutors to meet the expenses; her husband leaned on her instead of finding a job, in her own words:

In Istanbul he did not find a job, I mean he did not want to find a job, he delved into such psychological mood I did not understand, I mean he is a medical doctor and assistant professor but somehow he succeeded not to find himself a job! He just sat at home, strolled outside, did not even care for our children....our flat at that time was still under construction and with my salary which was not enough even for our children's basic expenses I was paying the construction of kitchen, bath, every month.

When asked about the underpinnings of the husbands withdrawing from home to the extent of financial neglect, the participants made some comments which were compelling. While one participant was relating the financial neglect to her husband's personality, namely thinking hers to be an individual case; three other participants interpreted it as a deliberate behavior and that they were basically taking advantage their wives' having so much responsibility. The following excerpt sums up the views of the other two participants too [Isik, Cisem]:

Me: did you have any economic strain after divorce?

Participant: nothing changed. I was already managing myself, with divorce I got rid of one economic burden (referring to her husband).

Me: weren't you making a joint saving or having a shared decision?

Never, we never had shared saving or decision. I didn't even know how much he was earning. Even for vacation if my credit card limit was well enough to pay it, then we were going on vacation. Recently we went on a vacation with my son, I paid for two people instead of three, and it was even cheaper for me. I mean yeah in terms of financial concern I didn't have any strain,

Me: was he really irresponsible financially or was it because you were too concerned to take over the financial burden?

Participant: there were times I didn't work, when you asked for something he was simply saying that he didn't have any money. There were many times I went to my parents to borrow some for our grocery shopping. Actually, the way I see it is that he used to take advantage of your being too responsible. Actually we are doing wrong. Recently I read an email it was basically saying that if you become a perfect women actually you lose your husband, because you are taking over too much and do not give him any chance to do stuff and feel responsible. That's very true. And then what happens is that after a while you explode. [Yasemin, Accounting Manager]

So, the quotation seems to be quite in line with what Baber and Allen (1992) pinpoints that "A woman would have the most power if she had an income similar to that of her partner, had independent control over any surplus money available, and shared with her partner an egalitarian ideology that includes a perception that her income is as necessary to the family as the male's. In addition, both partners would be equally invested in and committed to the relationship"

5.2.6. Work as an Empowering Experience

Studies exploring the linkage between women's employment and divorce rate highlights that wives' employment do not necessarily cause marriage to become unsatisfactory but that such employment affords wives in unsatisfactory marriages an economically viable alternative to remaining married (Schoen, et al., 2002).As can be convincingly demonstrated with the quotations our findings lend support to this explanation. It was clear that being highly educated and employed gave them chance, among all other things, to give decision to end their failing marriages. In addition to its benefit during the post divorce period, work was an eminent dynamics that encourage them to file for divorce. One participant stated this bluntly:

Working makes one strong. I am gonna tell you something, If I hadn't been working, I wouldn't have divorced. I wouldn't have divorced whatsoever. I wouldn't have told anyone about my

unhappiness, other than couple of people in my family. I would have just lived with that. Where would I go with two children? To my father's house? No way! Or it would be that I would have left my two children to him and gone to my father's house which was not something I could ever do, it was impossible for me to leave my children...You know what they say, the divorce rate increased when more and more women started working. As a matter of fact, that's true. In the old days women were just helpless how could they divorce? Where could they go? I divorced because I had a chance to divorce. I knew that it was going to be ok. [Macide, Finance Manager]

Being educated and employed as frequently emphasized by the feminist literature empowers women in public sphere, it bears noting that it also undergirds women's bargaining power in the family. One participant illustrated this while she was narrating her divorce process. To the participant her high achievement and stronger work positions changed her relationship with her husband and gave her an upper hand in solving the problems they had during marriage. She evinces this in the following quotations:

As a woman who went to London, and who returned as a woman who discovered herself, her potential, who stood up on her feet financially and even made savings and being more self reliant allowed me to say enough! It is over! then he understood that I could do this, that I was not a helpless woman, that if I divorced I would just keep on my life, that was the moment he took my demands seriously and asked for one more chance and promised to change himself. [Selma, Bank Branch Manager],

Moreover, I also noticed that the participants deem work to earn a living and to function as productive and competent members of society. So while working outside of home is taking women away from domestic sphere, it gives them an opportunity to have life where they can express themselves and help them to achieve self actualization. It was clear in the quotations that the participants were gaining more satisfaction from the work they do.

Now I identify myself with my job, it has been 22 years since I started working here. It is such a long time to be in a firm, in a private sector specifically. I love my work and I love my work environment even more than my work. [Macide, Finance Manager].

Work seems to have empowered women not only through financial security it provided but also by rendering them a venue to have a social life that keeps them away from concentrating solely on the problems emanation from single parenting and divorce itself. As Weiss (1975) pinpoints since work necessitates frequent engagements with people around rather than solitary absorption it may provide relief from obsessive review of what happened and thus loneliness. Since I treated this issue at length in the section, Self esteem, I will not exhaust it here and suffice with the quotations above.

5.2.7. Monetary Pride

As stated in the foregoing paragraphs, some of my participants did experience lower standards of living after divorce, however, many of the women found themselves able to manage financially after a short while. The ability to survive financially became a source of confidence for them, even if they have reduced income after divorce; the women were content to have more control over money. As Catherine Riessman (1990) states managing money is symbolic and a tangible way to measure freedom and to project a new and positive self (p., 170). For some women even trying to meet the ends on their own is a source of pride. P VII- Deniz's account was a case in point; she spoke proudly about of her paying her daughter's education on her own by cutting down on her own expenses, without receiving any help from anyone. In her own words:

I was kind of accused for I was not thinking about my daughter when I was divorcing, but when university exam results were announced he (her ex-husband) called me and thanked me, he said "if it weren't you she would not be successful" that was enough for me. [Deniz, Marketing Assistant]

Having a heightened control over money was a salient source of relief for some of the women in this sample. Seven participants (Emine, Filiz, Yesim, Selma, Hulya, Rezzan, Cisem) stated that they bought house themselves after divorce which they

stated was an important saving and a financial security for future when they get older and not able to work.

They (her ex-husband and his family) were boasting about their richness. But buying material things are not like unachievable, now together with my elder sister we made savings and bought a house, as a matter of fact if you have a regular salary it is easy, the most important thing is happiness. There were four different types of at home, but out of my grief, I was not even making breakfast [Rezzan, Teacher].

Catherine Riessman (1990) in her prominent work, *Divorce Talk: Men and Women Make Sense of Personal Relationships*, depicts similar results, she states how women present themselves as active agents, taking charge by opening bank accounts, establishing credits, and deciding how to spend whatever they have “rather than being victims of their poorer circumstances”, in her own words:

In reconstructing their histories with money, some women describe how husbands had dominated decisions and what a sense of power they now have when they decide on major purchases on their own (p., 170).

Moreover, as a result of overemphasis on work, four women indeed (Aysun, Mehtap, Macide, Ayla) stated that they got promotion during this period, among them being ones who got ahead to the level of managerial position (Macide and Aysun). One participant explained the process:

After divorce in addition to my profession, lawyer, I bought into a company, I mean I got involved in a business, during marriage it was unlikely that I would have done this...well, after divorce, yeah you hang on your job more than you did before, it is like when you are married the center of life is your marriage and family but after divorce, work replaces it I guess [Ayla, Lawyer].

The same sense of pride prevailed in two of the participants [Ayla, Rezzan] accounts they seemed quite proud not to be deterred by their husband’s income and be able to initiate divorce without any reservation with respect to financial difficulty, giving the message that inner “satisfaction matters more than money”. So

as Moorefield, et al stated financial security they finally reached gave them independence they look for which may pave the way for empowerment:

Women also can experience positive financial outcomes related to divorce. Some evidence suggest that the time between divorce and remarriage can serve to financially empower women as they take control of their financial lives.....In the transition period women take increasing responsibility for their financial security, leading to heightened feelings of financial independence and empowerment (2007: 22)

Moreover, it bears noting that in attempt to either get over the stress of divorce to change their concentration or to get ahead in their positions five other participants (Arzu, Rezzan, Perihan, Hulya, Meryem) started graduate study right after divorce. Also interesting at this point was a participant evaluation of her advancement vis a vis her husband's work position, her account bears traces of pride in her achievements as well as criticism of her husbands lack of interest in developing himself:

During our 12 years of marriage he didn't read any book, he did nothing to contribute his development. during those 12 years he never got interested in learning a second language or doing a graduate study, or reading a couple of books at best, nothing, I mean nothing! He did a joint trade business with his uncle but they messed up and that was end of his business life now he is a mediocre working staff in a mediocre business. And this man is a 43 years old man. The point we reached in 43 years is so different. Not that I am boasting about it! But I really worked for it, I sacrificed my social life, I cut down on my time to spend with my daughter. The position I have right now is the end product of my hard work in those years, I am doing nothing right now. In addition I also worked to develop my hobbies, I read hundreds of books, and I am still envisioning studying another degree. [Selma, Bank Branch Manager]

All in all, even though they have financial difficulties to a varying degrees that affected their life prospects, thanks to their professional status the participants by and large did not reveal profound economic hardships upon divorce. In this sense the study at hand has some similarities with L'Hammedieu's (1984) study on the

comparison of middle class and working class women's divorce experience that middle class women did not have extensive financial fears as such.

5.2.8. Summary

As the quotations cogently pictures thanks to their education and employment the participants seemed to have control over their lives. As one participant bluntly stated the women in this study could not think of divorce if they hadn't been working in the first place. In this spirit, work came to be a sole mechanism to make women active agents of their lives. Therefore our findings lend support to what As Okin, (1989) puts forward that "women derive material security, a sense of control over their lives, and increased power in family decision making from having income of their own".

Moreover, working women does not assess their works with monetary means, being employed outside of domestic sphere gives them chance to have a life outside of family context where they can achieve self actualization, have social network. Working is a salient source for satisfaction for women. As Babel and Allen (1992) denotes "more and more women now work for the same reasons that men do-economic survival, financial rewards, personal fulfillment, a sense of identity and the opportunity to interact with others and have one's efforts acknowledged". For Baber and Allen (1992) work has another salient function that it also provides both "intrinsic and extrinsic rewards that women are unlikely to forgo to return to more traditional roles".

Finally, the women in our sample developed couple of strategies in addition to work such as getting family help and alimony. Although these two factors seems to be disempowering women for they render women to be dependent on husband or parents, in our case specifically family help turned out to be a significant dynamic that helped both materially and emotionally in the wake of divorce. Thanks to childcare help they got from their families, the participants stated that they both concentrated on their works and shared the parenting responsibility with someone they trust more.

5.3. Single Parenting

Census data across the world reveals that families headed only by mothers or fathers are increasing. According to a survey, *Families and Living Arrangements: 2006* released by U.S. Census Bureau, in US there were 12.9 million (9 percent) one-parent families in 2006; out of them 10.4 million were single-mother families; while 2.5 million single-father were families. In 2003, 14% of all Australian households were single-parent families¹¹. Again in UK¹² lone parents constitute 15.9% of all families, in other words, one in four dependent children lived in a lone-parent family in 2004. The most recent Demographic Health Survey of Turkey informs us as to the proportion of female-headed households in Turkish setting. To the survey 12.8 percent of all households is female headed families - 13 percent in urban areas, 12 percent in rural areas (DHS 2008). While survey does not specify what percentage of these female headed households constitutes divorced single parents, a specific study on the other hand provide us with the figures of 1993 survey. To the study an increase in proportion divorced /separated female heads from 4.5 percent in 1978 to 9.1 percent in 1993 was observed which was considered to be related to rising divorce rates (Koc, 1994).

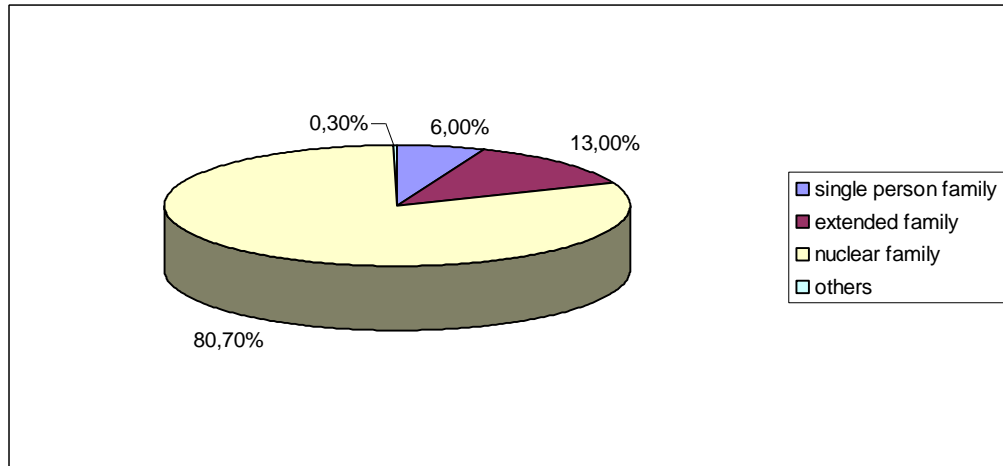
It is important to note that single parent homes are not common in Turkey as such. This may result from the fact that after the break up of a family due either to divorce or death, they are expected to “double up with other house hold rather than setting up their own households” (Ibid, 1994; p., 90), moreover, absence of a nonresidential parent is compensated by grandfather or grandmother. The concept of single parent home, for that reason, is not often referred in the society as such; it is relatively new formation and a new notion (tek ebeveyn) in Turkey. In the Family Structure Survey conducted by Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT) in 2006, the single parent households are embedded to nuclear family percentage since the

¹¹Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Single_parent

¹²Sources: Census, 2001, Office for National Statistics.
<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/nugget.asp?ID=1163>
<http://www.ccsr.ac.uk>

number is not statistically significant, besides it is not recognized as a different family structure unit.

Figure 6.1. Family Structure in Turkey, 2006



Source: Turkstat, Family Structure Survey, 2006

Recalling the fact that the overall universe of single parent group does not corresponds to sizeable number, it is not possible to derive further sociological information from this data, and we expect our qualitative research to fulfill this gap.

In our sample 24 participants were single parents. Majority of them were living on their own with their children except for three women two of whom were single parents living with their families at the time of our interview. Since all of them were working they either had child minders or got family/ relative help for child care. How does single parenting affect women's lives? A number of theme emerged with respect to this question.

5.3.1. Positive Aspect of Single Parenting

The presence of children after divorce has been associated with both poorer and better adjustment for women (Nunez, 1999; p., 16). In the current study single parenting was one of the dominant issues we talked with participants particularly with those, who became single parents after divorce. Because women's post divorce experience is foci of the study, we focused more on the women's own experiences

and feelings of being single mother, their strengths and weaknesses as they themselves realize. I asked if they have any regret at having a child and ever wished not having. Except for two, all the participants replied this question with an emphatic “No”. Even though they stressed difficulties and disadvantages of bringing up a child alone, their overall assessment of single parenting was positive. An argument recurrently stated by most of the participants was its being a support mechanism in the wake of divorce. They told that having a child helped them to pull together soon and gave motivation to move on life, which is quite in line with the findings of a recent study (Yılmaz and Fisiloglu, 2005) conducted in Turkey. In the study where Turkish people’s post divorce adjustment in the face of child related concerns is scrutinized, significant relation between control over child related issues and higher level of post divorce adjustment is found. Namely, ‘people who were more satisfied with their parenting reports higher level of post divorce adjustment’ (p., 97). The positive aspects of having a child were expressly stated by the following participants:

It was difficult (referring to divorce).Yes I fell but I stood right after I fell. I kept on running. Because I have child; you don’t have the chance to hit the bottom if you have a child, you have to move on. So having child in this sense gives you strength, you don’t let yourself down [Fulya, Training Manager].

Just on the contrary, you know what? If I did not have child, I would marry and bear children. Someone asked me the other day why I bore two children in that unhappy marriage, I told her too, after the divorce my children were a great source of happiness, they helped to get a hold on life, I will always be grateful to God, for he gave me two children. As I said if I hadn’t had them I would marry right away and have children now, I’ve never regretted for having them [Aysun, Project Manager].

Perhaps surprisingly, some participants evaluate having children as the only gain left from their marriages. The following participants reveal thus:

The only good thing left from my marriage is my son, it is like he was destined to enter my life, give me a son and then leave [Esra, Lawyer]

Despite everything, I've always said thanks a million to God that I have my son with me. I would say he was the sole gain I was able to get from that marriage. Ok it was failing marriage but my son came out as the sole advantage amongst other things [Nurgul, Journalist].

At this point age comes to be an important component of the issue at hand, two participants stressed this;

If you did not ask this question I would resent to you, yes I always say I am so glad that I have my daughter, because I am 33 now, some people say "you should not have had a child". But I am 33 and I am a divorced women. If I hadn't had her I would be all alone and miserable now, I mean, what did I gain from that marriage otherwise? [Emine, Quality Manager]

Strictly speaking, I wouldn't want to be a divorced woman without a child at this age. I am over 40 and I don't have a child, then, I would say, I would feel failed then. It's like I am over 40 and I have nothing in life [Yasemin, Accounting Manager].

According to Kitson (1987) having children in the wake of divorce may result in higher self-esteem and life satisfaction. The participants' experiences give support to what Kitson stated, in fact, personal growth stemming from having a child was one theme surfaced; one participant expressly related it in her description of her experience:

...I think that I changed a lot with my son, because I learned to look at many things through his eyes. I see things through his eyes; if he loves his father when we are all together I feel as if I love him (ex husband). Even my mother in law, as I told you, she is one of the major reasons of our break up but I try to see her not as my mother in law, whom I hate, but my son's grandmother [Filiz, Sales Executive].

Interestingly, the pleasure component of having child is also stated as an advantage. 21 percent (Six Participants) of the single parent participants related that they simply have fun with their children. In this very juncture the age of child makes important differences; while children over adolescence age

are companions, those under school age provides them with sense of entertainment. Quotations convey the pleasure component clearly:

...psychologically, as she grows older she is giving me fun, making me laugh a lot. I am enjoying parenting, may be because my daughter is not a tough kid, she is able to do her own stuff. I am happy with her. [Evren, Lawyer]

He gives you a chance to go back to your childhood in the first place; you derive happiness from trivial things. Sometimes we start playing a game and I find myself carried away by the game, I sort of become his opponent and try to win the game, it is really funny. So yeah, It is (having child) the biggest treasure in the world. If I were young enough I would definitely remarry and have another [Esra, Lawyer].

Four other participants see their children as their companion:

He is a friend for me, I don't feel alone, if I want to go to a vacation, all I am doing is taking him with me and going wherever I want [Yasemin, Accounting Manager].

While I was getting married, if they showed me my 40s and told me that one day I would divorce from this guy, I would still have my three kids. Can you imagine being divorced and without any kid? It is horrible, you are all alone, by yourself, I am happy that I have them, they are my crutch in life, specifically after divorce I felt it more deeply [Burcu, Instructor].

5.3.2. Challenges and Difficulties

As stated above most of the participants in this study were more or less comfortable with their new single mother roles and saw their children as the sole gain they were able to attain from marriage. They expressly told us that they were definitely glad that they had children. However, this does not necessarily mean that they disavow hardship of lone parenting. 13 participants acknowledged the burden and challenges that attend the parenting alone. They mostly refer to the initial stage of post divorce period. Financial difficulties and the over load emanating from their need to work and to care for the kids at the same time were leading problems they often stated.

However, they created some strategies to overcome this process, two participants stayed with their families to evade apartment rent and childcare; some of them stayed with their families for the initial stage of post divorce period and moved out to live on their own after a while, while majority of the participants lived separately yet received childcare help from their families. A few participants mentioned having monetary help from their families instead, while some of them worked too much to meet the ends. When asked about difficulties the participants primarily related not sharing the difficult task of child rearing, namely parenting alone:

I have never said I shouldn't have him, yeah there are times I feel sorry for him, because you know it is a responsibility that two people should share, the nature of parenting necessitates this. So I think single parenting is not a proper option for a child's wellbeing, because it is not that easy to handle it on your own. For example, my son could not sleep through nights during the first two years, he was eating barely enough, it was really difficult to deal with, after a long and sleepless night I had to go to work in the morning. Yes, he was a source of motivation for me but there were also times he withered my strength away [Filiz, Sales Executive].

One of the participants [Isik, Assistant Professor] who was the only single parent who regretted having children stressed how she was overburdened. When asked to specify the difficulties she lived through she expressed financial hardships and not being able to allocate time to supervise her activities at home and in her school life. She described her experience thus:

We had a child; it was really tough experience for me and still I am having such a hard time doing it. I wish I hadn't had her. I feel overwhelmed; I am having incredible difficulties with regard to parenting...After all it is a huge monetary cost; her father does not have any financial contribution at all. We somehow pulled together through my family's help. I can say that it is the most challenging thing in my life. May be you have heard from many other participants that your kid's needs come before any of your own. You have to think of her all the time, it is very big responsibility. You kind of take on the job of parenting without having a partner to share the load and it is a job without any leave at all, you are working overtime all the time. For example, now when I go home I will check her homework, because I have to, it

really puts immense strain on my shoulder. But you have to be strong.

Although in some cases single parenting is stated to be no different from two-parent families where the fathers are not involved in childcare, one participant pointed out that even in that case, two-parent family is better than single parent in that in the former family type one is not overburdened as such, as single parents are:

It is very very difficult. I am looking at my friends' families and that of my brother and I see that when there are both parents, even if one side is not involved in childcare as such, still you have chance to say "that's it, I am done, now you do this!" One way or another there are two people who are responsible for the children. [Aysun, Project Manager]

To this participant the corollary of making too much effort to be attentive to the needs of children and work simultaneously is losing the sense of living your own life and thus turning into "a robot":

You eventually become a bionic man, a robot. I always say that I am not living my own life; the life I am living is carrying out people's lives mechanically. Here (referring to her work) I am executing the trade center's works, at home carrying out my responsibilities as the mother of my children, when they go to bed I am doing housework as the homemaker of my home; I am doing laundry, tidying the rooms. So then there is no time left to do stuff for my own self.

It is important to note that the hardship and tension encapsulated in women's statements emanates from their perseverance to be attentive to their children's and work's needs. One of the participants explains the underpinning of the difficulties felt:

The thing is that you try to be both a father and mother. So you go through your responsibilities twice as much as your husband does. Because you are alone you are stressed, even if you know that you do right thing you feel a need to check once more, you ruminate over and over because when you are living together (with the husband) you are responsible only to life in general but when you break up when you are alone it is you who is responsible to him (son). [Sevda, Real Estate Agent]

Perhaps the most difficult experience ever felt was recounted by a participant who could not withstand the hardship of single parenting and had to send her daughter to her mother who lived in Cyprus then for a three year period during which time she had to commute between Istanbul and Cyprus every month. Encapsulated in her feeling of missing her daughter was a feeling of guilt for not mothering her daughter properly.

5.3.3. Compensating Father's Absence: Strategies

More difficult than being overburdened by the childcare was coming to terms with absence of father in their children's lives and at this point, perhaps the hardest strain facing single mothers was compensating the "father absence". Listening to the participants we encountered two major concerns that preoccupied their minds; finding a proper male role model that will help children's personality development healthy and keeping the sense of family alive in their kids' minds.

In regard to the concern about the children's emotional reaction in view of the feeling of absence, the participant stated that they felt helpless. It was not easy to create strategy to compensate children's feelings especially when they miss their fathers. This issue was more critical when the father visits the child rarer than legally scheduled or does not visit at all. The participants worry about their children for fear that they might develop an emotional turmoil as a result of father's absence or lack of interest for that matter. For a participant [Nergis, Teacher] the child's emotional reaction to the absence of father came to be worse than the problems she had with her ex-husband while married. She was basically feeling regret for having divorced without calculating thoroughly its impact on her son. The participants went through two layered distress deriving from absence of father; one stress corresponds to the child's sadness and emotional reaction at varying levels; the second stress was emanated from their relentless efforts to find a way to make up for his absence. Although this issue was prevalent and reiterated by almost all participants, the two following quotations sum up the views of many:

It (the distress) was so severe. While we were together I was doing the same thing actually I mean you try hard to compensate his absence due to his irresponsibility and his tendency to neglect his children and his wife! But, still, no matter how strong you are, no matter how hard you try to withstand challenges, trying to make them not feel it (father's absence) was really exhausting. That was the most difficult thing I went through [Perihan, Public Relations Expert].

On my older son's engagement night, his father was not there, this was very difficult for him, and I saw him crying. That was very difficult for me. I mean on special days like this you can't help feeling sad for them (her sons). I cannot put up with seeing them sad [Mehtap, Administrative Assistant].

Thus children's adjustment to their new condition and women's relentless effort to compensate absence of father were leading challenges the single mothers in this study faced, the following excerpt from our interview to a participant [Fulya, Training Manager] not only reveals this challenge but also allows us to see how mothers strategize in the face of this difficult condition bluntly;

Participant: they grow up with a serious shortage. I am sure that in your study the cases are different from ours, because in most of the cases that I happen to see in my surround the fathers are there, I mean in one way or another. They see their children once a week or every fortnight, or may be once in a month but my daughter's father does not exist at all (her ex-husband went abroad and did not attempt to see his daughter at all). As a matter of fact, my daughter is experiencing a very difficult situation. She suffers from an absence, and it is like death. If he died, it would be easier to accept, now she is living with a question, 'when does my father come, will he come or not?' etc.

Me: or may be feeling of rejection?

Participant: I am trying hard to prevent that, I do not know if succeed, but the thing is she is really growing up with a huge absence. I guess this makes her more mature, I mean, when compared to her peers.

Me: have you ever gotten professional help or counseling for her?

Participant: yeah, I think she was at the age of 2, we started going to psychiatrist. She likes to go. I mean, she enjoys being there, because psychiatrist diagnoses her through games and toys, they

play with the toys together. So, times and again I like to resort to experts and psychiatrist.

As the quotation above indicated, in an attempt to create a sense of family and to compensate their children's need for a proper role model, the participants devised strategies. Some participants resorted professional help and tried to keep the situation under control. Having grandfather as a role model was another strategy the participants resorted frequently. One participant, for this reason, chose to live with her family so that her daughter should take her grandfather as a role model. Again a participant stating concern about role model told us that even though she, herself, was the custodial mother, even though she did not really want it, she thought it would be a good idea to allow her 14-year-old son to live with his father and ironically she ended up being the nonresidential parent. A more common solution to father's absence was making him present as much as possible. 10 participants acknowledged that the visitation schedules being fulfilled is of great importance and that whenever the father takes it slow they interfere and prompt their ex-husband to keep up with their visitations, the following quotations convey thus:

I don't prevent him from seeing his father by any means. Just on the contrary when I hear that he is planning not to then I am doing every effort to make him take his son. Hopefully we will manage this, I mean this is my biggest concern: not to give her any harm because of this. But I perfectly know that if we stayed married we would have harmed her [Emine, Quality Manager].

If it happens that he forgets to take his daughter for the weekend, I am raising a firestorm over it (laughs) [Evren, Lawyer].

And interesting strategy brought up by one of the participants was giving the legal custody of two children voluntarily to their father despite that fact that children continued living with her "so that he feels himself responsible and cares for them". Another participant stated that two years after divorce she realized that her daughter did not see any father or any male figure to socialize. So with this concern in her mind, she started inviting male friends to her social gatherings so that her daughter could see male role models, too

For all the strategies, however, there were times when these solutions do not yield any positive results, for some fathers were not willing fulfill to obligation of parenting. At these difficult times women relentlessly sought ways to help their children out to keep the sense of family in their minds. The quotations below allow us to see how these women do not abandon the idea of striving to give their children sense of family going:

All those times when he did not call her, I was telling her “hey your father called you while you were sleeping, he sent you greetings” I just wanted her to feel the love of father. Sometimes I was buying something myself and giving her as if her father sent it to her [Tulay, Instructor]

Do you know the movie Finding Nemo? That movie really saved me. She was around 2, and she used to be influenced from the movie a lot. I don’t know if she understood or not but she was crying while watching, I told her that Nemo did not have a mother, and it was living with its father, just like her (my daughter) living with me a without father. I told her “Some children have fathers with them but they don’t have their mothers and some children have their mothers but they don’t have their fathers. What is worst is that some children do not have any of them, so you are lucky that I am here with you and I love you”. So Nemo became our first aid. [Fulya, Training Manager].

5.3.4. Maintaining Authority in the “Family”

Importantly, one aspect that the lone mothers in our study underscored was maintaining their roles as the head of family and control over their children. The participants provided mixed feeling in regard to maintaining authority; while some participants were simply enjoying full control over their children, some other participants acknowledged the pressures emanating from it. A third category of women brought up the tension they faced between their mothers over sharing the authority over the children. I will now attempt to analyze these three categories of responses.

Yeah, as a matter of fact, I have been single parent since her birth, the positive aspect is you can shape her in a way you want, and there is no one to come against your way of bringing up your

child, which is an advantage. For example you say you wanted your daughter to be a kind and polite girl and you orient her accordingly. If you are married your husband may not like your way of doing this and he may hinder you. I mean in terms of authority, communication being a single mother is an advantage, [Emine, Quality Manager]

To be a lone parent does not sound that bad, I mean, you give all the decisions about child, there is no one to say no! Ok you may need to consult to somebody sometimes but I am ok with it [Fulya, Training Manager].

A third participant, on the other hand, underscored the pitfalls of being the sole authority in that if a woman is a single mother there are some rules of thumb she has to take into account:

If you are a single parent then you have to be authoritarian, you cannot be a loving compassionate mother because being a compassionate mother is being open to manipulation. A father has authority and disciplining power over his children, whereas a mother usually is lenient. In our home there is no one to act like a father to tell them that they should listen to their mother, do their homework, keep their rooms tidy, etc. so then you have to do that, you have to be both. While being tender on one hand, you should stand firm like a rock on the other hand. If you always behave like a compassionate resilient mother, then they may not take you seriously [Aysun, Project Manager].

In another case a participant remarked on the necessity of father's authority for the kids' wellbeing. During the interviews with her, she conveyed how she deemed father's authority essential for her son's personality development and as an indispensable element of raising a good kid.

They see each other every week, every now and then I am telling my sons to be respectful to their fathers. The other day I eavesdropped on their telephone conversation and my son was talking like he is talking to one of his friends. The moment he hung up rebuked him, this is the case for my younger son specifically. I don't want them to lose respect for their father. [Macide, Finance Manager]

In regard to maintaining authority for at home, one important concern was sharing the authority with mothers. Interestingly, while on one hand single mothers were enjoying their mothers help in sharing mothering, they on the other hand brought up their distress by virtue of conceding their authority to their mothers. Although only two participants stated it, I considered it important since their experiences allowed us to see more complex challenges in regard to single parenting. Listening to the story of one participant, Tulay, who could not manage to handle childcare and work at the same time, in this sense, was telling. Having hard time to cope with single parenting challenge she encountered totally unprepared right after divorce, she had to send her daughter to her mother, who was in Cyprus and had to commute between Istanbul and Cyprus every month for three years. The challenges deriving from the single parenting challenge was not resolved after the three years period where she had to commute, since she in a way ceded her authority to her mother, she had hard times reestablishing her authority and mother-daughter relationships with her daughter. As she illustrates:

She was away from me until she turned 3. We spent the next two years by getting to know each other. She was trying to know me and I was getting to know her because you don't have anything in common, it is like you grabbed a kid from somewhere else and tried to get used to her. Actually being a biological mother does not matter, I was visiting her, she used to know me as a mother but I guess the mother-daughter interaction is different thing. We didn't use to have that during all those times. For instance even now, my mother always comes first in her life, whenever we have a dispute she says "I am gonna go to my grandma". Could it have been any different? I don't know. Of course it is not that we have very severe problems but you manage to build a mother-daughter relation only after she turns 5-6. But it is too late. Could it have been any different? I don't really know.

Another participants [Esra, Lawyer] who was living with her mother at the time of our interview presented similar concern, her anxiety, though, were deriving from her mother's domineering behaviors. Her mother's reprimanding her or teaching her rules of discipline "in front of her son" gave her strain since she felt she was losing her motherly authority over her son.

5.3.5. Social Stigma toward Children of Divorced Parents

Another important concern that preoccupy single mother overwhelmingly is the stigma attached to children from single parent homes. As we see above a remarkable number of studies reveal that delinquency, teenage pregnancy, failure at school, psychological problems, etc., are consequences of growing up in a single parent homes (McLanahan and Booth 2001; Cooper and Moore 1995; Ranking and Kern 1994; Sirvanlı-Ozen, 2005). As Paterson (1996) indicates most of the literature associate deviance with the background of family and thus present “single parent homes frequently the top list of at-risk factors for children”. While the studies make the participants worry about their children, they on the other hand think that there is an also an issue of stigma attached to single parenting conveyed particularly through media. Some participants insistently denounced the expression ‘broken family’ that is often alluded to when describing a legally dissolved family. They reiterated how they are offended when a child’s misbehavior is associated with his/her background specifically if he or she is coming from a family of divorced parents. One participant faced this negative attitude directly from a school principle who he did not want to have the student for he was coming from a broken family and that he might have some deviant behaviors. Another participant presented similar account. She heard of a friend’s hesitation to send her son to a nearby school because of the number of students from divorced parents in that school. A third participant, on the other hand, discussed the media representation of children of divorced families:

Most of the time we see on the newspapers, when someone dies out of overdose of drug or something, if his or her parents are divorced, they write “the person from a broken family died out of overdose of heroine” or a crime is exaggerated, if the criminal is from a divorced parents. It is unfair to emphasize on that ground why do you just look at his family and hold him guilty? Of course it is not good to divorce, I wish no body could divorce, but life does not always turn out the way you plan. (Deniz, Marketing Assistant)

The single mothers were well aware of the fact that there is an intrinsic societal expectation that parents should try to keep marriage together for the sake of children, and that two parents are better than one for the well-being of children.

Withstanding these implicit accusation directed to ‘mothers’ they were not only justifying their divorce ground but also negotiating with the existing norm as to the better form of family by bringing an inquisitive lens to the concept of happy family. We delved into this issue with one of the participants:

As a matter of fact there are numbers of families which are legally intact but shattered inside in reality. Seeing such families makes us realize that may be we are (single mothers) in a better condition because you cannot provide a secure and peaceful upbringing to the child in a conflicting family with frequently quarreling parents.....After all, you never know what is happening behind closed doors. I believe that I made the right decision by divorcing for the best interest of my child and I am firmly standing behind my decision. [Fulya, Training Manager]

Moreover, some participants presented critical stance to the dominant family ideology that does marginalize the concept of single parenting in society. One participant, in particular, stressed the monolithic definition of family in books, schools and media:

In schools they teach a certain image of family which is made up of a father, a mother, and a child. Of course that is one image but they should also teach alternative family structures like single parent families, families with father-child or mother-child only. Sometimes when I go to my son’s school I talk to his teacher and ask her to teach different family types. This is not the sole model, I mean, they should emphasize this. I mean, at least sometimes they should give examples of single parent families. [Filiz, Sales Executive]

5.3.6. “As a matter of fact you never divorce if you have a kid”

A final theme that is frequently raised among the single mothers is belief that “divorce is never complete as long as you have a kid” without any exception all the single mothers in this study brought this issue forward. The following quotation from a participant summarizes the difficulties faced:

If you don’t have kids, after divorce you shake hand, say good bye and don’t see him anymore. But because you have a kid you have

to keep a relationship with your ex-husband, you see him once a week; you have to talk to arrange visitations; you have to see him on special days like festivals, so on, it is really tough (Filiz, Sales Executive).

Interestingly, this aspect of single parenting was emphasized even by the participant, Fulya, Training Manager, who is unique in the sample, in that her husband left the country upon divorce and lost the contact with her daughter since then. In her own words:

Divorce without kid must be the least painful break up. Because if you have a kid it is almost impossible to forget him (ex husband). My daughter has his eyes and each time I look into her eyes I have to remember him. If I did not have a kid, I will have forgotten him by now, or I wouldn't remember him every day for a reason.

Moreover, one of the single mothers [Burcu, Instructor] related a different aspect of the very issue stating that when there are kids you also have to be in contact with the ex-husband's family, which for her was a disadvantage.

Without children we would have had an easier divorce process, and I wouldn't have seen him at all after divorce. Now the kids are commuting between two sides(referring to both grands) and you hear a lot of rumors and each sides blaming of each other, sometimes my mother in law sort of send me messages through my children of course it freaks you out. As a matter of fact you never divorce if you have a kid. That really sucks.

5.3.7. The Single Divorced: Single Parenting and Childless Divorcées

Interestingly issue of single parenting encapsulated in our interview agenda took the same amount of time during our interviews to the single divorced as did our talks to the single mothers. 7 women in the sample were divorced without children. Although single parenting was not in my interview agenda when I was talking to childless divorcées, the participants, without being asked, spontaneously commented on being divorced with or without children. Listening to one participant's [Cisem] recount is telling. Growing up in a single parent home, she told that single parenting is not a proper situation for a child's wellbeing and those who consider having child

as an asset after a divorce “are expressing their selfish desires” to her “single parenting may be good for a mother but it is not good for a child”. In her case, the main concern, for not wanting to be a single parent and for her termination of her pregnancy was neither financial difficulty nor childcare or work load. During the interview she emphasized more on the child’s feeling in the face of father absence and society’s negative attitudes toward single parent families.

If I had had a child, I would have tried harder to make it (marriage) with a man who was saying that he was not happy with me. I mean I wouldn’t have relinquished easily for the sake of child. Raising a child without a father sounds horrible to me, since I was raised by a single mother.....when people told me that I should have had a child before divorce, this is so selfish, they don’t concern about raising child well they want something that they can call theirs. So then we see children with psychological problems around [Cisem, Lawyer].

For the childless divorcées not having child from the failing marriage made both divorce process and the aftermath easy. Moreover, it helped them to be able to make a closure over divorce and open a new page thereafter-though this does not mean that they did not have any distress or trauma in the wake of divorce. Moreover, since having children reduce chance of remarriage, not being mother increases their chance in the remarriage market. All the childless divorcées articulated their hope for remarriage and having children (see remarriage section for a lengthy analysis)

5.3.8. Summary: From Single Parenting to Single Protecting

Because there is not a study on the profile of single parenting in Turkey, it is not possible to draw comparative conclusions as to the trajectory of mother only families in contemporary Turkey. However drawing on sample we can comment that the profile of single parenting may not be as devastating as the international literature points out. In our current study the sample consists of professional women, who have stable jobs in the market, financial difficulties did not concern them in the long run. As can be seen from the above quotations, although the participants emphasize challenges of single parenting, a majority of the participants reported positive evaluations being a lone parent, the leading of them being getting over the

trauma of divorce soon through their companionships and having motivation and stamina to move on in their lives.

I asked if they ever felt guilty due to filing for divorce. Except for one participant, no women stated feeling of guilt or regret. In fact they all were convinced that divorce was the right decision and it was better for their children's interest to live in a peaceful atmosphere even if it is in a single parent home.

For single mothers in this study, children and work are cornerstones of their lives. As the work means source of survival that will help them to keep their economic standard and envision better future for their children, they hold on their work more than they did before divorce. Aysun one of the single parents is a case in point. After the divorce, concerning about providing better education for their children, she resigned from her post at a university and got a position at a company. Likewise, another participant Sevda started working right after divorce, the main motivation to turn back to work after three years of maternal leave was her son. So having children gave the participants motivation to get a hold on life, it also encouraged them to work and get ahead in their career. Even if they get child support from their husband-five participants are receiving child support- they do not consider this as a real income as such and lean on their own work. Given the fact that presence of child prompts them to achieve better in work and provides morale for them, single parenting can be taken as an "unintended-yet positive-consequences" of divorce.

However, when it comes hardships stemming from single parenting women were a disadvantage. Dealing with children's problems, specifically compensating the absence of father was the hardest strain they faced through. To handle problems deriving from father's absence, the women interviewed took professional help, tried to substitute father absence through visiting their own fathers more, so that children were exposed to father figure. Moreover, the women interviewed also stressed negative conception of single parenting in society and were bitter about the fact that single parenting is not socially recognized at all. In line with this concern was a negative social approach toward children from single parent families which was also difficult for these women to overcome.

As well, as participants stated single parenting, per se, is a serious and difficult job, budgeting the time between work, domestic chores and care for the kid, and undertaking this tough experience alone is difficult for women. Some of the women who can afford child minders passed domestic chores over these women (Burcu; Fulya, Training Manager; Isık; Zerrin), while the rest of the women either got help from their families or undertook the responsibility themselves.

Importantly, in this study the overwhelming burden that haunted the participants was constructing a sense of real family. As can be seen in the quotations the women were striving to protect their children from the bleak consequences of divorce. They were in a way trying to protect their children from a possible negative impact of raising their children in a single parent home by trying to involve their ex-husband or living with their parents to compensate role modeling in the family. When they lived with their families this time they were making an effort to protect their motherly authority in the eyes of their children. Since they were the only parent the child was interacting for the most part, they were also trying to keep some distance with their children, for; too close relationship may deteriorate the authority a mother is supposed to have. So parenting for these women turns into protecting for the most part, in other words, they were not only single parents but also single protectors.

Finally, as quotations reveal it was solely women who were trying hard to overcome hardships. Therefore, even though the participants have access to stable jobs and income, because their labor at home does not change and besides it increases upon becoming head of the family, they cannot be considered as empowered, As Ehrenreich (1976) pinpoints they are confined to such activities as child raising, personal services for adult males and specified forms of productive labor. As Gunduz-Hosgor (2009) emphasizes despite women's transformation and wider public participation men did not have a corresponding involvement in private domain which keeps gender inequality and women's unpaid labor burden in tack. Therefore, taken altogether to what extent single parenting affect these women in view of empowerment remains to be inconclusive.

CHAPTER 6

AFTER DIVORCE: STRATEGIES, SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND SOCIETAL ATTITUDES, SELF ESTEEM AND REMARRIAGE

6.1. Introduction

In this Chapter, three categories, Social Relationships and Societal Attitudes, Self Esteem and Remarriage that emerged through grounded theory analysis show us how women came across unexpected difficulties in the wake of divorce. Even though the participants talked more about hardships it does not necessarily mean that divorce solely turned out as grief for them. For each category grief and relief were intertwined. For instance while in terms of social attitudes participants indicated more negative experiences, with respect to self esteem and remarriage experiences the participants stressed both grief and relief as an outcome. Moreover, in this section I also examine survival strategies the women interviewed devised in order to mitigate hardships and the over all implications of these strategies on their empowerment.

6. 2. Social Relationships and Societal Attitudes

6.2.1 Societal Attitudes

It is clear that in Turkey disapproval of divorce has declined over the years. Legal changes since 1988 and new sets of laws as of 2001¹³, in particular, facilitated legal procedures of divorce and made it more attainable to the populace. Moreover, increasing number of divorce made it more acceptable for people. The divorced do not feel marginal; nor do they receive outrage as their elders do decades ago.

¹³ For information about the legal regulations see the section, Divorce in Turkey.

However, this does not mean that negative attitudes disappeared and the divorced are free of blaming and judgmental approaches. As will be seen in the quotations that indicate that individuals still feel that they are held accountable and blamed for their divorce, divorced women, in particular, feel under control and excluded. The logic behind this might be the fact that keeping up marriage is an essential social norm and it is not easily sympathized when individuals do not conform to this norm through act of divorce. As Arıkan (1990: 68) states people conceive divorced individuals as failed and incompatible, in some families members of family feel ashamed at their relatives divorce and they prefer not to tell the others anything about divorce.

It can be argued that the level of the stigma is contingent on the circumstances surrounding the divorce; it may change depending on gender, age and even reason for divorce. By most accounts, people hold women responsible for a failing marriage, such sayings as “man make houses, women make homes” (yuvayı disi kus yapar), “a good woman is a sacrificial mother for her family” (kadın dediğin ailesi için saçını süpürge eder), “a good woman keeps her man” (kadın dediğin kocasını elinde tutar) manifest the social expectations of women. Evidence for the approaches and attitudes associated with stigma toward the divorced can be seen in women’s accounts which also indicate strategies that they devised in order not to be held accountable for their divorce. Among those interviewed a big fraction of the participants, 24 women, stated that they concerned about possible negative approaches toward their divorce and look for ways not to be exposed to that, whereas only 6 women stated they did not have any concern. An interesting finding, in this sense, is that several women interviewed expressed disinterest in traditional views and negative attitudes towards divorced women, but paradoxically altered their behaviors in accordance with societies’ expectations like dressing more conservatively, limiting their contact with male colleagues, keeping their husbands surname so that the people around would not know of the divorce. As the following quotations show the attitudes that are associated with stigma emerge spontaneously in everyday interactions.

People want to see you sad, like more dignified, you know, more reserved but why should I be? I got a divorce because I want to be happy, why should I pull away from life? [Emine, Quality Manager]

I was very hesitant in my work place, you know what people say about divorced women, even if I am at university, even if people around me are all educated, they still treat you differently, make you feel you are abnormal, they think now that she is divorced she can wrong any time, you see what I mean? For this reason I withdraw from people. [Perihan, Public Relations Expert]

For some participants devaluation of the divorced in society was thing of a past and therefore it was something they did not expect at all. Two participants stated their disappointment at the existing stigma when they faced the reality once their parents warned them against a possible reaction they might face from people. One participant's experience was telling:

I remember mom's saying, I mean, I am sure that she did not mean it because mom is an educated women, she is not a traditional women thinking those stuff, but anyway I came late for a couple of times and she said "you should be careful because our neighbors know that you got divorced, and we are here for years, be more careful and don't subject yourself to gossips and rumors" I was really offended when she said so, I mean, ok, even though I say I don't care what others think, still, I guess people have a certain attitudes toward a divorced woman, I don't know how to put it but, yeah, I guess I should be considering this more and act more carefully. [Hulya, Instructor]

My dad actually had told me something, which made me think a lot, he said that my married friends might not want to see me, so he said "don't get offended because of that" I kept thinking about that for a long while. You know what happens in the end? This is something I noticed quite recently actually, you simply become more masculine, you start disconnecting from your femininity, I remarried and now I realize my femininity returned (laughs). [Tulay, Instructor].

Another participant [Tugba, Instructor] expressed her resentment at the someone's calling her "divorced" when differentiating her from another colleague in her office, this was a sing for her to believe that "what they supposedly say was true indeed,

people really label the divorced”. Although the women do not believe that their relatives or friends disapprove their divorce, still they affirm that people, too, might be influenced from the prevailing discourses about the divorced and about women in particular. While they don’t want people to comment on their divorce, at times they feel more apprehensive when there is too much silence, as is the case with the following participant:

In our apartment mostly middle-aged people live, I received positive reactions from them, I mean they did not tell anything to my face but they told mom that I was still their daughter, so I kind of get a support from them, that made me relieve a lot [Emine, Quality Manager]

Another participant spoke of how she gained a vantage point upon divorce where she can analyze people and society in a more crystallized way, in her own words:

I guess you start seeing realities more clearly, you truly understand your place in society, you see the looks in peoples eyes. Also you cannot foresee what will happen when you don’t choose to go back to live with your parents and rent a separate flat. The Work place was no different, I was working when I was married, right after my divorce I noticed changes in people’s behaviors, you become a divorced woman you know, your male colleagues and boss especially treat you differently. [Deniz, Marketing Assistant].

Trying to come to term with their experience, the participants were searching for explanation to the attitudes people espouse, one participant [Hulya, Instructor], for instance, was correlating the attitudes with education level indicating that as far as she observed people tend to have more approving attitude as their education level increase. A second narrator related stigma to the socioeconomic level of people suggesting that the divorced from lower social classes must have faced more repressive behaviors. Another participant recounted that she had hard times when she was asked about her marital status, for divorce is not acknowledged as a marital status in society. She also challenged the fact that society conceives divorce as a social decision that will have immediate implications on the society, and therefore, does not accept individual happiness as a ground of divorce. She told how she tried hard to explain and convince people that she wanted divorce on the ground of

unhappiness emanating from lack of emotional intimacy in her marriage. A participant [Sevda, Real Estate Agent] on the other hand was developing a sort of theory stating that it is actually the divorced themselves who are perpetuating the discourses by not acting in a natural way. Again, one participant's evaluation was particularly telling, she recounted her friends' insistent suggestion to remarry in a critical light, questioning the need to be married. She was indignant with the fact that being a divorced woman, she was deemed as incomplete or aberrant:

My friends, whatever their level of education they say, "Do not worry you can marry again" I mean, do I remarry or not? I don't know, it is too early to say anything; perhaps I can remarry, but, you see what they mean? I mean, they imply "ok you made a mistake and we can correct this by remarrying you, we can take you out from this incomplete format" and you know what happens? You start thinking the same, you say to yourself "that's right, I made a mistake now I should correct this", you see? I should remarry urgently (laughs)....I hear this very often, "you can marry again", but do you ask me whether I want to or not? Or is there an eligible man or does it have to be? [Hulya, Instructor]

Another dissenting voice was criticizing the gender aspect of the very issue, censuring people for applying a double standard:

In our society men are the last to be blamed, women are always the first. If a man is a philanderer, I mean like my father, the guy is a perfect womanizer! but this is something to laugh at, you know, but if a woman behaves this way then she is immediately labeled as a whore. You know because of this, women are having a lot of second thoughts as to giving this decision (refers to divorce).

An interesting finding at this point was women's strategies to evade from people's reactions. Trying to come to term with their new marital-status in a society where marriage is the only socially approved form of unity, the women were creating strategies to cope with emotional distress and demoralization. Some common behaviors emerged include not telling people about the divorce; distancing themselves from friends, the married in particular and dressing or behaving more conservatively. The first common behavior not telling about their divorce turned up quite often. Several women stated that they did not tell about their divorce to their

colleagues, friends, customers, neighbors for a long period of time. An even more surprising finding we encountered was that one participant did not even tell her family for a while; fearing their immediate reactions she informed her parents some time after divorce. The following quotations give us chance to understand not-telling-people-about-divorce-strategy fully:

I did not tell other people about my divorce; I mean except for a few people, I told them because I was getting permission on the day of trials. I'd just rather people didn't know, because, it is not possible for people to understand this, they still think that if a husband is not cheating, beating or gambling then you should not divorce him. They don't understand your unhappiness, that was one reason, there was also another thing, well we are in a patriarchal society, you know the manufacture sector it is mostly dominated by men, you know, they treat a divorced woman differently. [Emine, Quality Manager]

When I decided to leave university, I was telling people that I need to set up a new life, my children need me, but yes these were the reasons on the surface, deep down I wanted to withdraw from people around me, I want to have a new environment whom will know me with my new marital status, because you know in your environment people judge you, blame you for your divorce, I mean, if they did not say anything this time you see the questioning look in their eyes. As a matter of fact I am an open person I told them about my divorce but still you know people talk. Some of them feel pity for me; some of them search more into the reasons. For this reason actually I truly needed a new atmosphere. [Burcu, Instructor]

Another common strategy was distancing themselves from the people around them, specifically from the married couples. Feeling outsiders and abnormal the women simply did not want to attend gatherings of the married. Some of them even suggested that married couples may feel threatened by the divorce, for the divorced are deemed as "sexually available". It must be due to these very concerns that one participant [Perihan, Public Relations Expert] told emphatically that she stayed away from people for two years, socializing only with her two children. The following quotations from interviews summed up the underlying views behind withdrawal from people:

People do things in couples normally, and you involve the gatherings single, sometimes this feeling of loneliness hurt specifically when you don't want to be different from other people, when you want to be ordinary and when you feel weak, I don't know how to put, but, yeah the other things is you know some people make you feel like as if you are going to chase after their husbands. Normally I am not sort of person who has these weird worries but anyway I start concerning about these things. [Filiz, Sales Executive].

I was not going out to the parks with my baby on Sunday mornings, fearing that people might think that if a woman is going out with her baby alone on Sundays then she must be either divorced or widowed. [Emine, Quality Manager]

God! It affected my social life enormously, people at my age are generally married and they do stuff in couples, sometimes they invite me too but I don't want to go because you know how it is, they feel bad for you and I don't want that, but on the other hand I have very few friends at my age who are unmarried, so it really really limited my social contacts to a great extent. May be I am creating this restriction myself, I mean subconsciously, maybe I could not get away with the feeling that I should be more careful in my social relationships, as I said I tend to socialize with my single friends more. [Hulya, Instructor].

In most of the cases women themselves worry about societal attitudes and develop their own ways of evading this, however, as we stated above for a minority of women in the sample, the main driving force was their parents. The parents reminded women of the societal expectations and sanctions so that they should prepare themselves and should not feel insulted or chagrined. In one of the cases [Aysun, Project Manager], the parents even went further as to prohibiting the participant from inviting her friends, male in particular, over. For another participant [Belkis, Accountant] parents warning that from now on she is a divorced woman and that she should be more dignified was the reason for recurrent quarrels between her and her parents. An even more interesting case was a participant's [Raziye, Self-employed] trade off with her father, namely he asked for his daughter not to return back to work and instead he would send her money every month which she accepted in the end.

Also interesting was a felt need to dress more modestly and gain a dignified manner in behaviors to protect themselves from possible demoralizations, which recurrently turned up during the interviews. This ranged from gaining a masculine pose [Tulay, Instructor; Aysun, Project Manager], to being very careful while talking to men [Filiz, Sales Executive]. One participants [Rezzan, Teacher], for instance, told how she was laughing loudly yet after divorce she tried hard to change that and became a soft spoken person. Another participant spoke of giving up wearing skirts [Fulya, Training Manager].

In some instances silence is preferred as a strategy. When asked how they react, when they are openly criticized, a minority of women stated that they simply ignore, which indicates that even though the women are indignant about the societal repercussion of their divorce, their main motivation is to conform to the society rather than criticizing the social order. The following excerpt followed by two other quotations makes it clear:

Participant: when compared to our elders' time, people look more favorably to divorce. When I was schooling I remember people used to feel pity for a divorced person, I mean as if he or she was sick with cancer, besides it was so rare, in my school for example we had two or three friends whose parents were divorced then, now I see that people around us are a lot more comfortable with the idea of divorce, so I kind of feel all right for that reason, if I lived in those times, I mean in my schooling periods, then yeah I would definitely be having hard times, but you know there are still some people who still think like my mother-in-law. You know how they are; they always blame the mother, the women are always the guilty side for them, they ask what else do you want? You have money, you have house, car, children so what more could you ask for? Yeah I hear condemnation from these types of people.

Me: So what do you do when you hear these criticisms?

Participant: I Ignore. What can I do? I just ignore. [Burcu, Instructor].

I heard people saying, you had a good man, “you could have been a bit more patient”, or “this is how the new generation is; once

they start earning money they think they can manage everything”, “in our times we were dealing with tougher problems but we were not even considering breaking up our homes”, yes you hear all these things too but what can you do you? I just laugh at them. [Hulya, Instructor].

Yes I was subjected to all those blaming, judgments, but I did not really care, I mean I educated myself not to care, I gained a protecting shield and I was not caring what other people tell me, my friends were telling me that I surpassed myself [Deniz, Marketing Assistant].

The stigma produces sense of devaluation on their part, so they feel chagrined and manifest it on their words and gestures. When asked if they have gone through any experience regarding social attitudes or if they were concerned at all, a small minority emphatically rejected the existence of stigma. However, paradoxically, during the interviews they indicated that they, too, create strategies to get away with people’s reactions or possible blaming attitude. One participant’s [Cisem, Lawyer] account was quite compelling in this sense, being a lawyer and living in Istanbul, she told how it is unlikely for her to face any stigma or any attitude that imply her “sexual availability” however, through the end of the interview she stated that in an attempt to protect herself from “the male world” she did not tell her customers that she was divorced and she added that she never planned to disclose it to them. Again another participant [Nurgul, Journalist] told that she does not care whatever people think of her, yet she stated how going out for meal with friends was her routine and that she no longer did it since her divorce. Following excerpt from our interview to another participant [Fulya, Training Manager] displays the paradox more clearly:

Participant: my divorce did not change my social relationships at all, I mean, I guess I am lucky in this sense because my living environment and the people around me are not traditional people, I was not excluded in social life, you know how it happens they call you widow, it never happened to me, nobody considered me as a threat to their marriages, no man treated me differently, I am lucky I guess,

Me: sometimes people say they feel bad when people do things in couples and you attend things single,

Participant: Then I don't go what is the deal! I don't have those types of occasions! I am meeting whoever I see while married, nothing has changed.

Her saying "then I don't go" in an emphatic way gives us hint about how interpersonal sanctions chagrin her. Through the end of the interview when the question is reframed and asked her, this time she told us that she no longer wears mini skirt, nor comes home late and invite her male friend over which runs counter to the fact that she simply discredits all those "strange" ideas.

Perhaps surprisingly, people's negative attitudes correlate with the age of the divorced in question. Namely when people get older they don't seem to be held accountable for their divorce, which lends support to what Fisiloglu and Yilmaz [p. 100] finds in their study that "As people are getting older in Turkey, the cultural pressures on them generally decrease; in other words feelings, thoughts, behaviors, that is to say, lifestyles of younger individuals if divorced can be much more under investigation and/or control by society than those of older divorced people who are relatively free in nearly every domain of the social interaction in the Turkish cultural structure". Two participants spoke of how they were free of any mind probing concern in their relationships with men and women in work or in their neighborhood:

People show respect to me here, this company is mostly made up of young people, I mean I can be considered as the eldest here, well I didn't not notice anything in work related meetings with other company representatives either. [Macide, Manager].

After divorce I found a job in this corporation, the people you saw were really very kind to me, they treated me like I was their mother you know [Mehtap, Administrative Assistant].

6.2.2. Social Relationship

As one would expect all the worries that shape divorced women's behaviors have its negative effects on their social life. Distancing themselves from people around them, from married couple, in particular, the divorced women in a way lost their married

friends and thus narrowed their networks. Part of the reason for this outcome rests with women's own attitudes, namely, women need to develop a shield against any possible demoralizing approach from people, even though they do not experience any incidence. They kept being distant and behaving in a more reserved manner when interacting with their colleagues or neighbors. Moreover, a crucial part of reason for limited contact with the married emanates from technical difficulties in coming together. Since married couples tend to socialize with other married couples, the divorced are simply not invited or each group may have different time schedules, as is described by the following participant:

It is such that, for example, on Sundays I am available its my ex husband's visitation day, he takes the kid, so it's good time for me to see friends but because they are all married they prefer to spend their Sundays with their husband and children. It is ok, if I had husband I would do the same, but the thing is that, the schedules never match, different marital statuses may cause hassle. [Filiz, Sales Executive].

Another driving mechanism for limiting social network stated by 7 participants during the interviews was splitting of friends. The women believe that the ex-husbands' friends will take side of their own friends and hold the other party accountable, in an attempt to shy away from the blaming attitude the women prefer not to see them as often as they see while married. The following quotations describe the process of splitting friends:

Changing your life is not easy at all, you set everything in your life from the beginning, your house change, your lifestyle change, your friends change, I mean everything, it is a very serious turning point. [Ayla, Lawyer].

I had friends from university, and he had his friends, once we got divorced, my friends stayed with me and his friends stayed with him. [Emine, Quality Manager].

Our social group was literally polarized; it was like it was split down the middle! I kept some of the people as my friends, and some of our friends kept being his friends. [Sevda, Real Estate Agent].

More importantly, a surprising finding recurrently came out was couples' lack of socializing during marriage. Over a half of participants spoke of not having common friends that they visit together. This might be due to the fact that even before filing for divorce the couples have marital conflicts which demoralize the parties and isolate them from social groups. However, although it seems to be an end product of marital conflicts, as one participant put, at times this per se may become one of the driving mechanisms leading to marital conflict. One participant summed up the views of many:

We didn't have any friends we share while married Can you believe this? Every couple has friends, they do things in couples, I mean, I even start visiting my elder sister after divorce; we didn't even go to my family together, unbelievable right? I stayed over my sister's house after divorce. We isolated ourselves from people I don't know was it me or him causing this. I was seeing my friends myself, and he had his friends from work whom I didn't even know of. Once he questioned this while we were getting divorced, he said that may be this was one of the reasons for our conflicts, if we had shared friends may be we could have shared our problems with them, may be they could have helped us to sort out things. It can be that while we were telling the problems, things could have been clear for us too and then we could have solved things before they got bigger. [Burcu, Instructor]

Not having a social life as such, the women, on one hand, did not bother to think about splitting friends or facing the trouble of explaining the divorce to the people after the divorce, on the other hand, since they did not develop social relationships during all those times, they ended up feeling remorse for not investing on friends and thus becoming lonelier, as this participant emphatically put in the following excerpt:

Participant: After getting married, I lost all my friends, only his friends were visiting us.

Me: why did you lose your friends? Was he restricting you?

Participant: Not that he was restricting me, it is because I loved him a lot, we used to spend time together; I was spending time with him and his family. Now I realize that it was the worst thing I could ever do to myself. Now (referring her second marriage) I am very careful about this. I am trying to see my friends I mean at

least I am trying to call them; I don't want to be left alone once more, because after divorce I was really alone.

The reasons for not socializing during the marriage vary. Ranging from not wanting to go anywhere with the husband for the husband is humiliating the wife in front of people (6 participants stressed this) to husbands' either being anti social or his restriction on the participant to visit friends (11 participants stated so). It might be that divorce liberated women to turn back to their old ties and make newer ones; it must be for this reason that for some, getting a divorce in this sense was a relief, one of the participants expressed this clearly:

Participant: In fact I got relieved from that aspect as well. After all, we did not have a harmonious marriage; we were not visiting or seeing people together. He was an antisocial person, for example while we were coming from work in the shuttle-bus he was never joining to daily talks, nor greeting people and because he was not talking to anyone, I was not talking either, for it would be improper to talk while he was not. Normally I am not an antisocial person, I like to talk to people, greet them, and I like chatting while commuting yet with him I had to give up this habit.

Me: So he was in a way restricting your relationships with people.

Participant: He was! My friends, colleagues had noticed this, now they are confessing how much I have been changed in terms of my relationships with people since divorce [Ayse, Administrative Assistant].

Perhaps an interesting finding for us during the interviews was encountering women's strategies to either maintain or regain their social lives. We found out that some women attend an association formed for divorced women (9 women), while some prefer religious communities (3 women) or municipality's public education centers (2 women). The motivation to join organizations or communities vary, while some simply look for others like them with whom they can share the difficulties of post divorce adjustment- specifically child related concerns- and learn how to behave. For others it is an opportunity to socialize with and entertainment for children.

While many of the women view these types of organization with disdain, and state that they don't have time for these types of organizations, it is clear that it was helpful for divorced women to socialize together with their children. As stated by the following participant:

As a matter of fact it (joining divorced mothers association) really helped me I saw that I was not alone, a lot of women are having this (trauma after divorce) and seeing how they went over this diminished my distress enormously. [Fulya, Training manager]

It was such hard times, my daughter was having problem and I was not able to help her, joining this association aided me in that I exchanged ideas with other women who had serious concerns about their child like me. [Deniz, Marketing Assistant]

I attended gatherings where Quran was recited every week, it helped me a lot, my son was playing with other kids there and he was enjoying himself, I was feeling good when he was happy. [Nergis, Teacher]

6.2.3. Summary

As are indicated by the quotations above after divorce women go through the social repercussions of their divorce more in a negative way. So, what Durkheim stated in his time when debating about the state policy on divorce by mutual consent that “women do not need legal regulations, being more affected by mores and opinions with severity” (1909b: p. 279) is exactly valid in our contemporary time. Even though legal regulations facilitated divorce procedures for both parties, even if people become more familiar and more tolerant toward the concept of divorce, divorce is still deemed as an unpleasant event that implied a deviation from what is socially approved form of unity. So speaking for the women in the sample, although economic difficulties no longer matter, although by getting a divorce they in a way “gain a sense of control over their lives” as one participant [Rezzan, Teacher] put it, still it comes as an overstatement to say that women are empowered and they are free of informal sanctions that their elders endured decades ago.

As noted earlier, taking the social context into account we see that a single woman living on her own is unacceptable to the community in which she is living, because

as (Muftuler-Bac, 1999; 310) says she is not abiding the rules set by the male dominant system, which requires that she be married, as an unmarried for an independent women living on her own is regarded as an anomaly. Turkey is a part of what Caldwell described as “the patriarchal belt” where male domination, restrictive code of behaviors and the association of family honor with the female virtue are some characteristics. So in such a particular context we see that women develop some coping strategies for their security which, as Kandiyoti put forward gives us ideas as to how they struggle with the existing norms, in her own words:

Systematic analyses of women’s strategies and coping mechanisms can help to capture the nature of patriarchal systems in their cultural, class specific and temporal concreteness and reveal how men and women resist, accommodate, adapt and conflict with each other over resources, rights and responsibilities. Such analyses dissolve some of the artificial divisions apparent in the theoretical discussions of the relationships among class, race and gender since participants’ strategies are shaped by several levels of constraints (1987: p. 285).

We can read women’s coping strategies as a way to readapt to the social norms that they broke once by getting divorced. Perusing the transcripts we got an impression that women are undergoing disillusionment; namely, within the secure boundaries of marriage they may not have realized that independence has a price in some specific contexts. As one participant put they gain a vantage point where they see their social positions more clearly. Therefore, it seems safe to say that gaining “a sense of control over life” may be an independence, yet the informal social sanctions rendering control and repression which follows soon after divorce emaciate them even more.

6.3. Self –Esteem

6.3.1. Self –Esteem, and Work Revisited

The Effects divorce has on self-esteem was a recurrent theme during the interviews. I tried to explore how the feeling of being divorced, how the feeling of rejection- or

abuse in some certain cases-affect one's sense of self esteem and how the process of reconstructing an identity independent of marriage and ex-husband come about.

As a sizeable literature recognizes self esteem as an excellent indicator of divorce adjustment (Bonnington, 1988; Diedrick, 1991; Hadeed, 1993 cited in Nunez, 1999). The literature however presents mixed findings with respect to the positive or negative effects it might have on the self. In her literature review, Nunez (1999) documents studies which state that self-esteem is lowered by divorce; however, her own research suggests that the divorced also increase self-esteem by way of ending an unhappy marriage. Another study finds the relationship between easy adjustment and self esteem as interactive and further states that "Self esteem does not only contribute to good social adjustment, but it may also help constitute-be a component of- good social emotional adjustment" (Garvin, 1988, p. 118). While some studies relate positive changes in self esteem to initiator status (Nunez, 1999), others find important correlation between education (Clarke-Stewart & Bailey, 1990; Spanier & Thompson, 1987 cited in Weiner 1995) indicating that "higher level of education and employment provide distraction from distress and help result in better self-esteem".

Employing a qualitative method throughout our study helped us to capture individual experiences of feeling without reducing their meaning. We drew on individuals' own constructions of their psychological states (Riessman, 1990) as opposed to the quantitative method measuring the psychological state with specific scales.

I came to see that self esteem did correlate with many factors. While for some, self esteem was hurt during marriage, for some other participants the act of divorce in itself was a mean toward regaining it. Again for some participants remarriage helped them regain self-esteem, while for a sizeable number the children were source of strength; still some others stressed meaning of their work as an important mechanism in construction or recovery of their self concept. All in all, for a minority of participants divorce caused grief while for many it was a relief even though they had to face difficulties after divorce.

6.3.2. Divorce as Grief: Self Blame

Even though divorce was an end to the tribulations faced during the marriage, for some of the participants, divorce and its aftermath were no dissimilar. Despite the amount of time passed since the legal separation, the divorce was still important element in their thinking and shaping of life. Sense of sadness, prevailed during the interviews. While the grief had a lot to do with the sense of opportunities-material or emotional- no longer available, the main driving force recurrently emerged was feeling of failure which was specifically the case for 16 percent (5 participants) of the participants in the sample.

unfortunately it is a very tough emotional experience even for those who have friendly divorce, because you have certain expectation when you enter marriage and it gives me sense of failure, I mean being divorced, I mean a feeling of leaving something undone and among all other things, I have to confess that I failed my marriage, I thought I could do it but, I couldn't. [Hulya, Instructor].

Another participant presents the similar account:

Keeping your marriage insistently despite all those problems can be something to be proud of for some people, but I see it as failure on my part, for I couldn't say no, for I preferred somebody's happiness over my own...you start questioning things, you go further down to your childhood, your parents, why I married him, why I carried his child [Filiz, Sales Executive].

Not surprisingly, the feeling of failure at times rendered lack of self-confidence in relationships to others, as is conveyed by one of the participants:

Blaming him would be the easiest thing yet I chose the hard way; I turned to myself instead and questioned where I wronged, I thought many many things, the point I reached was that it was my fault. I am not good at choosing the mate that I can be happy with; I think I am messing things up. By thinking this way, ok, I purified myself of all those anger and hatred toward him, but I guess I exaggerated a bit and I start thinking that I will never have a

proper relationship, because when I fall in love, I just ignore things that can go wrong. If I let myself I may fall in love and mess up again, besides I have a daughter now. So with these agonies in my mind, I feared falling in love and literally escaped from my surround for two years, and now I haven't regained my confidence yet, nor my beliefs in marriage. I guess, the divorce opened a wound and it does not seem to be healed easily. [Fulya, Training Manager]

Although feeling quilt for either allowing injustice, abuse or causing conflicts during marriage was a case for several women in the sample, what was specific to these women was that they could not get over this feeling and carried it into their life after divorce. Feeling quilt for these women was a "permanent strain" (Mastekaasa, 1995) which was the case for one of the above participants. Although during marriage she felt "losing her identity" which she reiterated during the interview, divorce did not relieve her hurt feelings, nor did she quit soul searching:

It has been five years now, I don't feel at all that once I was married to him. I almost finished the questionings but my lack of self confidence remained I would say. It hurt me a lot; I really had enough of it... I was such a lively person, now I am sad most of the time; I put less trust in people. I can't help feeling it; it became part of my personality... I didn't swing indecisively from filing for divorce to staying in marriage at all, but I did experience the feeling of void inside. You get divorced when you really feel that you lose your self but after divorce this time you feel like a fish out of water. Like it or not, be strong or not getting divorced is being like a fish out of water. [Filiz, Sales Executive]

As expected, the linkage between women's self esteem and social expectation is too tight. Turkish society accord women more responsibility to keep up the marriage, mothers in particular are enjoined enormous roles in making the family intact and peaceful even though conditions turn out contrary to their best interests, they are simply expected to sacrifice. And informal sanctions are quick to come when women do not seem to fulfill the obligations, therefore as Barron states "divorce may represent a threat to women's self identity and self-esteem" (1987, p. 345). As one of the participants who lived through battering of serious level for a long time indicated, it puts enormous pressure on women's shoulder:

...It is very difficult to accept, I ask myself “how could I let it happen to me?” There was a reason, though, I was trying to keep a family together, trying to maintain a relationship, and I thought if I had to make a self- sacrifice to achieve this, yes, I would do it...I was always a highlight child of the family, it might not be appropriate to put it this way but strictly speaking I was hardworking, bright, I had a very strong sense of morality, etc, having many positive features I could not accept this, marriage was the only failure I had to face at that time, I felt trapped. I have done everything I’ve wanted to in life, how come I can’t keep my marriage alive? People are managing this simple thing. I mean even the uneducated, ignorant, poverty-stricken women are able to keep their marriages alive and I, as a successful and strong woman, will not be able to do this. How is that possible? I just could not come to grips with it. I just kept blaming myself for years [Aysun, Project Manager].

Therefore, even if one succumbs to much into the sex roles that she is instilled to fulfill in a marriage, it is highly likely that she, too, will face the threat of losing self esteem, this time coupled with a disappointment for ending with failure despite so much of effort:

Women invest more in the family, take larger responsibility for the marriage and therefore perceive divorce as a greater failure than men do (Kurdek 1990 cited in Gahler, 2006)

A participant’s self blame in this sense was more interesting. Being accused of being dominant person, namely, acting as opposed to the sex roles instilled culturally, she was chastised by her husband “not making her man feel like a real man”. Compensating his absence when he was not taking care of the house, feeling herself responsible everything in the family, she took over much of the load, while this seems quite to the advantage of the husband on one hand, on the other hand the husband began feeling ruled by his wife, which in the end, channeled the couple to feel estrangement and to final separation. Since her faults were more pronounced and her behaviors were claimed to be the centerpiece of the crowing problems they couldn’t fix, she kept blaming herself for her husband’s feelings, so much so that she did not even react strongly to his cheating on her.

I always blamed myself; because I was accused of being too much dominant, He kept saying ‘you are suppressing me’ normally a

woman tells this to her husband right? But he was saying this to me, over and over again. I looked back and questioned things, he was right, if I behaved differently things wouldn't have been turned out this way, I blamed myself, but as a matter of fact, it was when I turned 26 that I came to know myself [Perihan, Public Relations Expert].

6.3.3. Feeling Unattractive

One sobering effect divorce has on the women that I came to notice during the interviews is feeling unattractive, helpless and incompetent (Hetherington, et al, 1977). During the first year after divorce, 12 percent of the participants (4 participants) felt a need to improve their appearance, to feel better about the way they look. Two participants underwent surgery right after divorce, while the rest either changed their hair style or color. One participant summed up the reason behind this motive:

Even if I say that the divorce did not have an effect on me, I guess it did. Because after the divorce I did an interesting thing; I went to a studio and had my pictures taken with my hair and make up done. I also died my hair. I guess I felt a need to look more beautiful. [Meryem, Instructor].

6.3.4. Divorce as a Relief: Self-Growth

Even though there are a lot of negative aspects revolving around divorce particularly for women in a patriarchal society, the interviews to the women showed that it is also possible to gain positive sense out of a break up. When asked about any possible gains they reached upon divorce many women commented that they experienced self-growth in addition to the relief in the aftermath of the divorce.

For 61 percent of the participants (19 women), divorce brought about relief. It was the end of all those tribulations they were coping with. Although they have ongoing problems or difficulties emanating from divorce, they, nevertheless, think that the divorce is a new beginning. They expressed their appreciation of discovering new avenues and interests, making their own decisions, controlling their own finances. Such expressions as "I feel like I am born again"(Asiye, MA), "I was so

happy”(Macide, Finance Manager), “I noticed that there is a life out there” (Ayfer, PhD, Project Manager), “I am more in control of myself and my life” (Rezzan, Teacher), “I haven’t been any happier than this since my childhood” (Neriman, Teacher), “I became very happy and lively”(Meryem) appeared repeatedly, indicating that though being infused with problems and challenges getting divorced may have helped women to liberate themselves from the constraints of their particular marriages and helped them discover a whole new world and themselves. The relief was more voiced especially by women who were subject to domestic violence while married. For these participants marriage itself was source of grief while divorce first of all was a way out of the physical sufferings among other things:

I felt humiliated, helpless because it was vicious circle. For example, I was going through all those incidences and sharing my sadness with my friends, they were listening to me, consoling me and I was feeling better, yet, after a couple of days I was going through all these procedures again. I don’t know how to tell but it was really really so bad. What is more, I had a very bad image in people’s eyes: helpless, incapable, someone who is not able to handle her own problems, and dependent. Some people confessed that they got surprised when I broke that dependence on him. Do you see? I was creating such an image of a dependent woman that transforming from that dependent woman to this new independent woman was really awesome, now I can say “no” to people. [Isik, Assistant Professor]

For some women the first thing to reinstate right after divorce is gaining self-esteem back, as is articulated by the same participant:

.....I lost my self-respect, it was such that, for instance I did a strange thing; right after divorce I went to Kusadası for 3-4 days on my own. I said to family “I want to see how people are behaving with me, I want to test whether I am a person such as this man (refers her ex-husband) describes”. My family did not understand, they even discouraged me, but I went any way. And I saw that people are welcoming me, I am not a worthless person. That was the beginning, from then on I started taking self-help courses, I learned how to behave with my family and with people around me, of course, and all these things helped me to pull through. [Isik, PhD]

For educated women marital satisfaction is not solely achieved through monetary means. For the following participant whose ex-husband was a goldsmith and provided her with enormous amount of material comfort claimed that she lost her self-worth during the marriage for she was treated like a property, in her own words:

He denied my individuality, restricted my rights. He tried to hegemonize me. He had a macho attitude you know, “you belong to me” attitude, as if I am his property. You are teacher, you have a position in society, in your family you are your mother’s dearest daughter, but in your marriage you are nothing. With him you are nothing. [Rezzan, Teacher].

What was important for these women was recognition of their individualities. Being highly educated and employed they tend to believe that they should have distinctive statutes both in society and domestic sphere. Examining one case in detail will help us for fuller understanding of their disappointment:

The turning point in our marriage was my graduate study. After I started MA, I came to realize myself identity. I started questioning myself, my life, my aspirations, my expectation from life and I realized my unhappiness more clearly, I was able to distinguish what I wanted and what I didn’t more clearly. As I involved in these things, the gap between us grew larger. While I was fully preoccupied with papers, reading, writing, I realized that my marriage had already been finished. Because his expectation from his wife was not this. The prototype women in his head was a housewife, who admires her husband, welcomes him every night when he comes home, who will have her hair and makeup done for her husband, he was looking for a geisha you know, he thinks that he deserves, there are many women outside who will be longing for marrying to a rich man like him, but me, I am just ungrateful, you see? He was thinking exactly like this. [Burcu, Instructor]

For the women in this sample, taking their lives back and having a mastery over the direction of their lives are important. Despite living through difficult experiences, constraints, suppression during marriage, the women do not consider themselves as victim, they simply look for meaning in things other than their marriages. As is revealed by the following quotations:

Divorced changed me in a very positive way. I was not shattered at all, for me it was having my life's control back again. I did many things that I never could have had I been married; I went to language course, did two masters, I was accepted for the project you know it was very important for me. Yes I had periods of depression but they were while I was married to him, not after divorce. [Rezzan, Teacher]

My father kept saying "you are unfortunate" to me, one day I told him why am I unfortunate? I have my work, I have my children, I have my health, I have my life, why should I be unfortunate, I am quite happy with what I have [Macide, Finance Manager]

At the beginning I felt like I was so late, you just say yourself "I should have done that before, why did I wait that much" and later on you say "you are not late for anything in life", this way might have been more blessed for me, I simply consoled myself saying this, I was an unhappy woman, I was waiting for night to go to bed and waiting for morning to go to work, my life was so monotonous I was feeling like a stone. After divorce I became a tremendously energetic and lively person. I will not give up life [Yasemin, Accounting Manager]

My worldview changed totally, I haven't been any happier than this since my childhood, I haven't ever enjoyed my life more than I do now. Even if I seemed happy sometimes I used to have the feeling of void inside myself. My happiness my joy was always incomplete. It was about my parents (referring to their divorce), but now I am enjoying myself totally, my parent's attitude also changed, they no longer restrict me like they do before I married, for example I came here without feeling a need to tell anyone and I will stay here for ten days, I mean I am happy, what more can I say? [Neriman, Teacher]

Because it is highly likely that involving too much with marital conflicts and problems of kids, women sometimes forget that they have a life of their own. So divorce in this sense may serve to discovery of oneself. One participant who stated that she turned to herself was an example to this.

I discovered poetry. I realized that I had suppressed my artistic talents. I was simply adjusting to his fee-fi-fo life; all those

mother-in-law and grandmother issues(referring to the problems we talked during the interview) I simply suppressed my skills, I know that I have a larger spectrum, I discovered my skills, my personality while writing poems. I told myself “ok you divorced, there is no body to help you, you have a daughter who is causing you problems but these are temporary problems, I said this is you”. [Selma, Bank Branch Manager].

Divorce was a relief for me. One of my friends told me once that I became a happy and lively person after divorce. Yes I became happy because I was so preoccupied the marital problems and the kids; I got tired of giving chances, looking for ways to fix it, and disappointments. When I understood in the end that it was a no-win situation and that I really did my best, that was the breaking of ice, I was so comfortable after the divorce. I turned to myself, my friends, my interests, my life. [Meryem, Instructor]

Interestingly, the following soul searching by a participant makes it clear how embedding herself too much into the marital roles as is constantly instilled by society and construction her identity accordingly-depending too much on her husband-makes her unhappy and dissatisfied, divorce for her was enlightening in that she discovered herself, clarify her expectation from life, from a marriage and a partner that she can love:

He would not have been my obsession if I was not too much dependent on him, if I motivated myself to be able to satisfy with my work and other achievements in life, rather than seeking out happiness only through him. However, I kind of gave up everything, I was totally dependent on him, for example I was not making any preparations for students before going into class, I was not even concerned about if the students understanding or not, I was just doing my job and immediately returning back home,From now on I am very determined not to allow somebody to trample on me, because I have my self confidence now, I have enough confidence to express myself. [Neriman, Teacher]

When asked how the divorce experience changed them as a person, the participants generally rated their experience as positive, such as self-growth and personality development, the following quotations display this mode of feeling:

Well, I came to be more rational; I learned to think more in a logical way. A feeling of “whatever you do in this life you do it on your own”. It is only you or you, nothing other than you. You have

to pursue your life not depending on anyone. I was not doing that in my marriage after all but at least I had an expectation to do that. Yeah I am more rational right now; I guess my feelings were more controlled now. [Nurgul, Journalist]

I became more realistic; I have footholds in my life now. My emotions used to override in my relationships even in my work relations, for example I could not ask for money, I learned to ask for money, because I needed it, you know, when you have your husband it is easier to share the financial burden!...I start viewing world around me in a more realistic fashion, as a woman who experienced this, my approach to my clients have changed, after all I have never been judgmental, I have never attempted to shape a woman's life, my clients but I came to understand women better, for example I even sympathized with a woman who returned to her husband after he threw her out of a window, I developed more empathy in child related legal affairs. It changed my perception I mean, it opened up my perception; I came to understand people better. [Evren, Lawyer].

Divorce affected me more in a positive way than negative, related to my self development. I am looking at life at a larger vantage point now, of course years and work experience also have role in this, but in that marriage I would not have developed myself, I would not have improved myself with him, I would have remained with the same principles, I would exactly be a narrow-minded person.. My social abilities, tolerance toward people and empathy grew. I noticed improvements in my personality. [Macide, Finance Manager]

One area of self-growth emphasized often by the international literature is self-reliance after divorce as a contributing element to the enhanced self esteem. It is likely that women may feel fuller sense of confidence in themselves once they see that they achieve managing things that are considered to be in the sphere of male responsibilities. However the women in the sample did not pronounce this. It may be that women and men in Turkish society are appreciated as long as they play according to the entrenched sex roles demarcated by the culture. A woman's earning her own life, fixing a car, or leaking basin is not socially valued things, nor a matter of respect on her part. So, on the basis of these acts it is not a way to develop self esteem for these women. Moreover, a surprising amount of women were already unhappy about their husbands' financial irresponsibility and told us that they were paying the main household expenses. In some cases the husbands were not making any financial contribution at all, thus the women in a way were major providers, we

heard this from 35 percent of the women(11 participants). In this study what was more pronounced with respect to self-esteem was turning to oneself, distancing from the tribulations and troubles of marriage finding peace and meaning in their loneliness as one of the participant conveyed:

One of the things I always enjoy is when the kids go to bed, I make myself a coffee, if its summer I sit in the balcony, if it's winter I lie toward the landscape, my house looks over a beautiful landscape, and I put a music cd on , slow music generally, and I turn the light down, and I enjoy the silence, it's peace, you know, what I could not live for years, what I haven't felt satiated at all. Yeah I am trying to enjoy by doing things like these at nights; I am chatting online with my friends, yeah stuff like this. [Aysun, PhD, Project Manager]

In the majority of the cases in the sample, there was an amount of grieving process, where women did a lot of soul searching which at times turned into “permanent strain” or self blame. However, for 19 percent of women, the grieving process was either too short or non-exist. We correlate this safe self state with their view of marriage, namely, since they did not have a traditional view of marriage and did not invest in it as such, they came to view divorce as a life course. One participant's dialogue with her father lends support to this view:

My father told me something, he said “now that it ended up with divorce, and then it meant that your decision to marry was wrong. From now on be careful not to do the same mistake”. I said “Dad life is not like this. Life is not that much mathematical, you cannot easily decide what is right what is wrong when you are making your mind”. Besides, was my marriage a mistake? I don t see it that way. I never thought that it was a mistake, I never said I wish I hadn't married to him, what I am saying is it is good that I married and it is good that I got divorced, I am comfortable with my situation. [Ayla, Lawyer]

Another participant presents similar account:

Once I came home, I was in the bathroom washing my hands, my son all of a sudden asked me why I was angry, I looked myself into the mirror and got let down by the face I saw there, full of hatred, sadness, it was at that moment that I swore that I will no longer be frustrated by the divorce, I will no longer think ill of my ex-husband. From that moment on, I started viewing divorce as

one of the events in m life; I am perfectly ok with being divorced. I am just looking ahead. [Sevda, Real Estate Agent]

Perhaps surprisingly, for some women divorce is an enviable event, for it requires courage and strength. To them many of women as a matter of fact are living through unhappy marriages and sometimes even abusive relationships with their husbands but instead of ending, they simply stay in that marriage for societal or monetary concerns. With this thinking they imply that underlying some of the social sanctions lie this implicit admiration.

Our patriarchal culture, economic conditions and family support there are many reasons why women do not ask for divorce. Even if she believes that divorce can be good, they simply stay in marriage and keep suffering. My friend for example, (referring to a friend she came to interview with her friend she left after we drank a cup of coffee) her husband does not match her at all, but she does not have any spirit to change her situation, She thinks this is life, he is her destiny and she should simply keep up her marriage. I guess personality matters alto at this point. Of course your family and your social environment also have effects but many people, man and women, I would say, found me brave enough to divorce in this social context. I received many positive reactions. [Isik, PhD]

6.3.5. Work Revisited: Self Esteem and Work

The correlation between self-esteem and work was one of the important findings of this study. We have to confess that the women interviewed attribute more meaning to work which was even beyond our assumptions. Work is a very important source of happiness which nurtures their selves. As will be seen in the following quotations working is very essential for women, some women could not think of quitting work, it is like quitting work is tantamount to killing their selves. In the wake of divorce, work became an important area of self-growth. As one would expect, women tried to overcome the grieving period by working for more hours than they did before, which-for some-brought about advancement in career. Four women (Aysun, Mehtap, Macide, Ayla) stated that they got promotion during this period among them being ones who got ahead to the level of managerial position (Macide and

Aysun). The meaning of work is cogently conveyed by the following quotations. Two participants assessed work within the context of divorce:

Working makes one strong. I am gonna tell you something, If I hadn't been working, I wouldn't have divorced. I wouldn't have divorced whatsoever. I wouldn't have told anyone about my unhappiness, other than couple of people in my family. I would have just lived with that. Where would I go with two children? To my father's house? No way! Or it would be that I would have left my two children to him and gone to my father's house which was not something I could ever do, it was impossible for me to leave my children. I get horrified even when I hear about women doing that, especially women who are leaving their children to remarry unbelievable! You know what they say, the divorce rate increased when more and more women started working. As a matter of fact, that's true. In the old days women were just helpless how could they divorce? Where could they go? I divorced because I had a chance to divorce. I knew that it was going to be ok. [Macide, Finance Manager]

Specifically after divorce I believe that work has therapeutic aspect if you continue work after divorce I guess it is definitely better than sitting home and keeping thinking about what you are living through. [Cisem, Lawyer]

Aside from the context of divorce some women evaluate work from a larger vantage point and attributed deeper meaning to women's working, seeing it as only way out of women's suppression:

Working is the real enlightenment. A woman should have job even if she earns 200 lira a month. [Belkis, Accountant]

I believed that Working is partly a social and psychological need. It is against the concept of human to explain everything with economic terms... all in all as a woman I can contribute to my surrounding and humanity by working in a decent respectful occupation which can satisfy me and does not include aggression in it. [Asiye, MA]

I took some time off the work during maternal leave, I got bored and distressed alto, and I decided to work, no matter what our economic level was. And I continued working at the school I was working before the leave, not for economic reasons, to regain my social environment, my social life, not to be whipping boy that he

shouts at for stupid, crappy things whenever he comes home.
[Burcu, Instructor]

For some it is the source of recognition and appreciation in society:

My job is very important for me. It expresses my statuses other than being mother and wife in society. It is not just a way to earn money; it is self-realization for me. It gives me status in society. When you talk about a social issue people first of all judge you by your social position, it is like you have to have social position to be able to express your idea over an important issue. After the divorce some people told me that I should remarry to a rich guy so that I can give up work and stay home, and I told them that I was not doing my job for money. It is my contribution to my self-development, to society, to life. It means a lot to me [Perihan, Public Relations expert].

I have a very hectic work, it is taking too much of my time, but it is the most important source of identity for me, it's not only a way to make a living, it is what gives me life [Cisem, Lawyer]

Interestingly, two participants spontaneously compared working to mothering. As if these two concepts are contradictory or oxymoronic at best. Given their tone and line of the arguments, they gave an indication of feeling indignant about confining their life to mothering as opposed to working and achieving a career for themselves.

I had a maternal leave for four months. It was fine, I took care of my baby and welcomed my two other children when they come home after school, these were good things for a couple of weeks but afterwards I was almost going mad. When my contribution is only limited with this (caring for children and being housewife) I get depressed. Getting divorce may not make me depressed but not working does. If I hadn't been working at the time of divorce, a person like me would probably have perished. Because your status of being wife is taken away from you, you are solely left with your motherhood, you feel squeezed in society, but a working woman overcomes this. It does not necessarily relate to money, I mean your job is your authority, you see its necessity even when you are treating your child. [Perihan, Public Relations expert]

For this participant by divorcing a woman definitely loses her status of being a wife in the family, and this loss of role is coupled with another loss in society, marital status. These losses strip her of all the authority she has built so far. As she implied

she in a way compensates her losses by strengthening her professional place in society. Without any authority or recognition in society as she overtly stated she ends up with pristine nothingness, thus she “perishes”. Being a domestic carer and a mother, for that matter, does not suffice to reconstruct their positions in society. Another participant gave a similar account:

When I was pregnant with my third daughter, I cried a lot. I didn't want her; I didn't aspire to be a mother. I had a quest for something that I myself could not figure out. I was after something that specifically belongs to me, for myself. Giving birth to one child after another was placing me into the classical, prototype of Turkish woman. I was just saying that ok fortunately I was getting over the hard processes with leaving the diapers and baby foods they were becoming self reliant and doing their own stuff themselves and I was hoping to do something for myself, I was just concentrating my own aspiration, interest, and questioning my existence my expectation in this world and just then I was becoming pregnant again. Then I was asking, “is that it?” “All I could be in this world, being mother!” [Burcu, Instructor]

A third participant stated that she came to recognize the value of her work for her after divorce. Before divorce even though she had the diploma, she had expected to marry a richer man so that she would not have to work, however after divorce, as she says “My view of work has changed tremendously, if you ask now if you want to leave your job and stay home, I will definitely say no. I want to work now. I have an aim now.” she further stated emphasized that it is not just work for her but a lifestyle.

When asked about future plans or their prospects for the time ahead, many women talked about their career related plans, “I want to be a very good physicist (Neriman, Teacher)”; “I am planning to open an office and concentrate on my work” (Esra, Lawyer); “I am hoping to get admission to a PhD programme” (Perihan, Public Relations Expert); I am determined to do well in the project work (Rezzan, MA, Teacher): I will keep on writing books (Cisem, Lawyer) were some of the career plans which indicate how their life is too much intertwined with their career plans and work.

One particular way to get a fuller understanding of motivation that channels these women into a particular way of act is listening to their criticism of society, events, etc. In this case, listening to their analyses of a specific group of women in Turkey, who are educated but have a different attitude toward carrying that education into work life, namely, highly educated but unemployed women (women who are staying home-*evde oturan kadınlar*), gives us an enormous insight into their conception of work:

I love working. I cannot stay doing nothing. I have always been very busy working except for the periods of my maternal leaves. Even when I was a child I was doing some clerical stuff in my father's market. I always have worked throughout my life, I like accomplishing things, contributing. I am suggesting to young people, that they should work. Specifically earning you own money, having a full control over it, it is just awesome. In our society, Turkish women like to stay home and spend their husband's money. I feel pity for such people! Specifically for those who had all those education, training, their parents invested on them, it is just waste of time and money, sometimes I hear women saying "I am gonna stay home for five years, I will not work", I just feel sorry for them, what a pity! You can stay home when you get old, you should make use of your youth now, you know. This trend is prevalent in our country; if you go to Europe you will see that young people want to work together and built a future together. They don't dream about marrying to a rich husband so that they sit back and enjoy the life. You never know what to expect in life, what if you divorce one day, what will you do with no experience, being away from work for a long time? [Mehtap, Administrative Assistant].

Both man and women should have statuses in society. Even if I become very rich, then I work in a civil association, I don't know it may be charity organization, but somehow I find a way to contribute to life. Even when I newly gave birth I earned money by editing somebody's dissertation. I have my laptop, my skill, what could I ask for to earn money? Even if I quit working, earning money, I never give up my social status in society. But people think work equals to money. That's why I am condemning those who are telling me that I should have found a rich guy at least in my second marriage. I would not feel comfortable with somebody earning for me, would I be happy with the status he endowed me? Such people you know do not understand me, they simply condemn my doing MA, "how ambitious you are" they say, and for that reason I don't share my ideas with such people. [Perihan, Public Relations Expert].

6.3.6. Children and Self-esteem

The positive aspect of having children in the wake of divorce has been talked at length in the chapter on single-parenting; it is not our intention here to exhaust the issue over again. However, since I came to see a strong linkage between having children and self esteem, I will briefly talk about the relation. It turned out that having children was an important source of strength after divorce for the women in this sample. Many of the women stated that they did not lose control or feel scattered thanks to the feeling that they have be strong for the wellbeing of their children, which as a matter of fact help them to recover partially in the mean time, for a participant this is how they teach you in counseling:

I don't want her to see me sullen. So I simply pull together so that she does not see me in that mood. For example after work when I come home, I say "come on honey let's dance", "let's go out and do something". This also helps me, how else psychological recovery comes about after all? You console and convince yourself. You know what they say (referring to therapists) breathe deeply; feel happy, I am doing these things with my daughter. So little by little you recover in the end, so I think that having a child definitely helps [Emine, Quality Manager].

Some women pronounced positive impact of having children on their personality development:

I believe that he changed me a lot because I am looking at many things through his eyes, I am trying to understand things from his standpoint, if he loves his father, when I am with him, it is like I love my ex-husband too. My mother in law, I really hate that woman, she is the one who caused all these troubles, but I see even her as my son's grandmother. [Filiz, Sales Executive].

She has incredible contribution to my internal change, you will not believe this but he literally taught a lot about life to me, there are times he suddenly asked a question and I got lost in thought. [Sevda, Real Estate Agent].

Despite feeling overburdened most of the time, it is clear that having children gives women sense of purpose and hope for better future. Planning for their children's future and working toward that end are major preoccupations for the women interviewed (see chapter on single parenting for related quotations). Moreover, in

addition to sense of purpose and hope for future it also compensates the sense of loss they feel in the aftermath of divorce. Losing their wife status the women may find comfort in securing their statuses as mother. Gahler's (2006), in his study, finds similar linkage between having children and self esteem, to his findings children both create burdens and meaningfulness to one's life, whereas the absence of children relieves burdens but could cause frustration and sense of longing (p. 375). During the interview many of the women pronounced that having children was the sole gain left from their marriages (see chapter on single parenting for related quotations).

Importantly, I also found having children provides sense of mastery, which is considered to be one important component of self esteem (Weiner, 1995, p. 330). The linkage between self mastery and raising children has its implication for societal concerns, in this juncture, as sociologists we cannot help asking "how does having children relate to social evaluation of divorce? Or rather, when does society evaluate a divorced woman in a positive light? We can search for answer to these questions perusing the following quotations:

People appreciated me, specifically I am receiving kind of admiration from men, they say "look at Macide she raised two children by herself" [Macide, Finance Manager].

They became very good boys (her two sons), I am very lucky, they never upset me, but you know I was always after them, I was even with them when they were enrolling to university, I was organizing where they going to stay, my goal was bringing them up as good boys you know, I got over a lot of difficulties both monetary and emotional, their father did not spend even a kurus for them... I never left them on their own even for a second, I was always after them, and I became a friend for them. People around me appreciate this too. [Mehtap, Administrative Assistant].

Since they know that there is a social anxiety over children's well being after divorce, and then more often than not mothers are targeted for when a children from divorce background engages to a misdemeanor. Feeling pressured by the social anxiety, they in a way refute societal criticisms by emphasizing how they did not

allow their children behave like coming from a broken family. Even though these concerns render the women to be apologetic and defensive for the most part, striving against these social claims gives them another sense of purpose. Bringing up good children and the appreciation they occasionally hear provide them with a positive sense of self, since it is an achievement for them in the final analysis. As is evinced by the following comment sent to the online discussion forum of Divorced Mothers Association (DMA):

Yesterday I visited my daughter's teacher; she has started school this year. It is going to be 2.5 years since she has been away from her father. I cannot tell you how excited I was before seeing her teacher. It was going to be the first meeting in person. My excitement was bigger than we had when we were students, you can underestimate your faults and say "never mind", but when it comes to my dearest daughter I cannot help worrying. What if I wronged? Were there any shortages that would harm her? I was really anxious. I am sure many of you had these weird feelings. Anyway, finally we talked with her teacher, she said "your daughter doesn't seem to be affected at all from the divorce, she is quite happy and social, she is quite normal like her peers". You cannot imagine how happy I was at that moment. My happiness drove me to share my feelings and gratitude with you. Once more this incident showed us that we can go over this process (divorce) without giving any harm to our children. [Emine, Quality Manager].

6.3.7. Remarriage and Self Esteem

I also noticed that women who remarried after a while are better off in terms of their self worth and morale. The remarriage in itself help them feel the divorce as an unpleasant memory once experienced. Like some of the participants they don't just stuck with the event and its social and psychological repercussions. Among the newly remarried the priority was to adjust to this new condition rather than trying to get over divorce. And for those who remarried long ago, divorce was just a think of past. Therefore, as Hetherington (1977) stated in his study "a satisfying intimate heterosexual relationship was the most important factor in changing the self-concept two years after the divorce". One participant cogently displays this:

You remarry and start anew. With a new baby you become mother again. If you ask me about my divorce, I totally forgot my first marriage, I feel like I did not live through it at all. I forgot my sorrows too. If hadn't remarried, I would have been dealing with my son's problems again, his being distant to his father, his being lonely, I wouldn't have gotten over easily. [Nergis, Teacher]

Remarriage has an implicit implication for the self esteem, it gives them a feeling that they failed in that particular marriage, not that they do not do well in marriage in the general sense, so it in a way secures them in their self worth, particularly from self blame. Moreover, it may be that remarriage in itself offset the social pressures emanating from informal sanctions, they conform to the social norm of being "married" It is a way to fit into society. They may feel more secure in their social position and social controls which constitute threat to their self esteem.

6.3.8. Summary

As the quotations cogently present the women interviewed expressed how their self was affected by their failing marriage and subsequent divorce. While some of them had the feeling of loss during marriage and thus regard divorce as a relief, some others emphasized the divorce itself as a factor that render them feel guilty and incompetent and view divorce as the onset of grieving process. For as Riessman states "Divorce is not unremittingly negative, associated only with distress and symptoms-despite the perspective that previous investigators have tended to adopt. Nor are positive and negative feelings necessarily bipolar. Alongside the strains are opportunities for considerable personal growth and identity transformation" (1990, p. 203).

A number of participants tend to characterized the divorce experience in terms of its negative effects on their selves and stated that the feeling of self blame and grief were prevalent after divorce. Although individual psychological features of women can be in play in their mode of feelings, we still suggest that the socio-cultural context has a bigger role in shaping the women's mindset. As Lazarus and Folkman (1984) states "the meaning given to an event is very much culturally shaped" (cited in Kung et all, 2004). Embedding themselves too much into the prevailing gender

norms and not being able to develop an identity separate from husband and marital status, they feel disillusioned, failed and go through a very hard post divorce adjustment.

As is seen in quotations, the women were vacillating between succumbing to the prevailing gender norms and experiencing their autonomy they achieved thanks to their education and employment. At this point they compare their situation with those of their mothers. 38 Percent of the women (12 participants) come from an educated family where mothers too had education and professional jobs, yet the basic difference between their mothers and themselves was that the mothers were full time domestic workers in addition to working and earning money. Being in search for a self for them was out of question, as Young (2005) states:

Since woman functions for man as the ground of his subjectivity, she has no support for her won self. She is derelict.....he creates by holding women as his muse, he rests by having her serve his needs at home. Her only comfort is to try to derive her satisfaction from being in the home, the other. She tries to take her subjectivity from her being-for-him. She tries to envelop herself with decoration. She covers herself with jewelry, make up, clothing, in the attempt to make an envelope to give herself a place. But in the end she is left homeless, derelict, with no room of her own, since he makes room for himself by using her as his envelop (p 130)

The women in the study however tend to be different and want to get more autonomy and independence in their social and private realms than their mothers had. Such expressions appeared repeatedly lends support to this, “I am not like my mother, she thinks what society will think more than her own happiness”, “she prefers others’ happiness over her won life”, “her situation was more difficult, you know their ages were”, “I know mom underwent tremendous pressures and difficulties”. It is no surprise that their mothers were undergoing the “double burden” for patriarchal traditional norms and even the Kemalist project that opened up venues for women to have access to education and professional jobs were as a matter of fact suggesting them first and foremost to be good mothers and domestic carers. They were expected to exist in the public sphere as traditional women Cindoglu (1997: p, 255). However, since the women interviewed are exposed more

to liberal gender norms introduced by global market forces, modernity discourses which render individualism, autonomy, their expectation from a family or marriage differs which, in the final analysis, cause contradictions and disillusionment. Therefore, women can be considered to be caught between modern and a traditional gender role, at this point, what Iris Young posited below is also true for Turkish context:

Mothers should subordinate themselves to and be dependent on men, even if they would rather parent on their own, for the sake of nurturing the independence of their children. Independence is a paragon virtue of liberal citizenship but a mother's virtue entails dependence on man. The independence they nurture, moreover, is primarily in their male children since their female children are likely to grow up to be mothers. This argument implies that mothers are less than full citizens in the liberal society (1997; p.122).

A vast majority of women on the other hand lived through positive consequences in the wake of divorce. As the quotations reveal many women after divorce attempted to redefine their identities and worked toward reinstating their self-esteem. Divorce in this sense turned into a venue for them to gain the control of their lives again. There were also some mechanisms which rectify their self-actualization like raising good children and taking care of all the child related costs, remarrying, and achieving in domains other than marriage.

With respect to their experience of work, the women interviewed gave a distinctive account regarding the meaning of the work for them. In the aftermath of divorce, work came to be the site where they channeled their energies to and where they achieved self-actualization. At this point work functioned both as a therapy and transformation of their identities. As well, women talked about the significance of their work for themselves in the general sense, going beyond the context of divorce. At this juncture we should note that women's account does not concur with what Kandiyoti and Kuyas states that moving into labor market does not necessarily bring about changes for more liberal values in domestic sphere which is o true for middle class employed women as long as women identify themselves with their homes or

with their husbands or with their children (See chapter 3- Sex Roles: Women between Family and Work)

All in all, although women seemed to have a firm standing thanks to their education and employment status, and are not victims at all, the prevailing traditional gender norms and negative attitudes toward divorce may pose a threat to their self-esteem.

6.4. Remarriage

6.4.1. Attitudes toward Remarriage

In this chapter I tried to explore remarriage as an important post-divorce experience. With respect to remarriage the participants provided mixed attitudes. While a number of women did not consider remarriage; a large number of women stated that they rate remarriage as a possibility. I searched for reasons for disregarding marriage as well as motives for those who are envisioning a second marriage. Moreover, since 7 participants were already remarried at the time of interview we also talked about their experience of remarriage.

When asked about their thoughts about remarriage 11 participants stated that they do not consider remarriage. As the quotations show their reservations were not without reasons. The first and foremost of the reasons for deeming marriage as a remote possibility was distrust in men. The following quotation sums up the views of many:

Remarriage is the issue I fear a lot, I have distrust toward men and I have a lot of worries in my mind, nevertheless, if I think that I can be happy with a man one day I can marry, but you know, I should think a lot, I mean, it should be you know, rational, I should say 'yes I can invest in this man'. I think no one should be destined to be hurt [Emine, Quality Manager].

A participant, recounting the similar experience on the other hand revealed a deeper distrust in men to the point of antagonism;

I do not think of remarriage, if you ask why? Well, because I do not think that I can fall in love or something at this age, I mean it's the least possibility. You are looking at people around you and you do not see a good man, I mean, at least I don't see! I mean after all, you lose your trust in people; if even your husband, the closest person to you, is treating you this way then to whom else will you trust? Besides when you see men in work and in your surround treating you differently, to whom will you trust? [Deniz, Marketing Assistant]

Never! I mean, briefly never! I haven't changed my mind since I divorced, the only possible point where I can envision myself to reach is getting married but living in separate houses (laughs) [Fulya, Training Manager].

Soon I realized that the distrust emerged as an outgrowth of divorce is not bounded with men only, for some participants, distrust is enshrined to marriage as an institution as well.

To be honest, all my friends' marriages are problematic, sometimes I am examining my thoughts to test if I am reflecting my own unhappiness, I mean, due to my failed marriages I may be seeing all other marriages as failing, but no, as a matter of fact that is not the case, people around me are really unhappy, I am observing my friends from university and they seem happy outside but when you talk to them they complain about many things going wrong in their marriages, I am observing the staff here and I see exactly the same, my close friends are the same, I mean, though not separated, marriages have one foot in grave [Aysun, Project Manager]

When we got divorced, I was saying that I could get marry if I fell in love again, but am I hopeful? No. I am looking at people around me and I see superficial relationships, and as long as it goes like this I am not hopeful, people are having relationships just for the sake of having an affair, they are neither confident of themselves nor of their partners. In this trend I don't think that I can have a relationship, but if somehow I happen to live a deeper relationship then yes I can think of remarriage [Sevda, Real Estate Agent].

The issue of 'trust' surfaced in different fashions, delving more into the underpinning of this attitude that most of the participants espouse, we were able to detect lack of self-confidence prevailing. Ending a failing marriage, they question many things that channel their marriages to end. Many of the respondents stated that

they find themselves no less guilty than their ex- husbands, though, this attitude is more rational than putting too much blame on one side, it may nevertheless be accompanied by outgrowth of lack of self confidence in keeping a marriage together. One participant's recount about remarriage is a case here, she told us that upon divorce, she turned inward and asked herself what mistakes she made, and why she put up with all these things, while on one hand she dispensed with the hatred toward her ex-husband, on the other hand this caused losing self-confidence:

Blaming him would be the easiest thing yet I chose the hard way; I turned to myself instead and questioned where I wronged, I thought many many things, the point I reached was that it was my fault. I am not good at choosing the mate that I can be happy with; I think I am messing things up. By thinking this way, ok, I purified myself of all those anger and hatred toward him, but I guess I exaggerated a bit and I start thinking that I will never have a proper relationship, because when I fall in love, I just ignore things that can go wrong. If I let myself I may fall in love and mess up again, besides I have a daughter now. So with these agonies in my mind, I feared falling in love and literally escaped from my surround for two years, and now I haven't regained my confidence yet, nor my beliefs in marriage. I guess, the divorce opened a wound and it does not seem to be healed easily. [Fulya, Training Manager,]

Despite the social anxiety over being a divorced woman, nevertheless, some women view marriage as an insecure institution. One of the participants, [Aysun, Project Manager], stated that by remarrying she cannot "run the risk again", which revealed how marriage is perceived by these women in the wake of divorce. Interestingly, another participant [Ayla, Lawyer], came to conceive marriage and divorce as a cycle, one brings another, so for her to marry or not is not of an issue for; after all, the end is the same. Another participant, [Hulya, Instructor] went one step further and challenged perception of remarriage as a life course event:

My friends, whatever their level of education they say, "Do not worry you can marry again" I mean, do I remarry or not? I don't know, it is too early to say anything; perhaps I can remarry, but, you see what they mean? [Hulya, Instructor]

What this participant is critical about is not the marriage itself but the imposition of marriage as strongly preferred and socially secure union by the society and that if somehow you fail your marriage you have still chance to compensate this failure by making another successful marriage. Thus, she does not want to remarry simply because she is prompted to do so for some societal reasons or that for remarriage is an expected prospect for a divorced woman. She is definitely uneasy with the conception of marriage as a social institution but not as an intimate union that satisfies individual.

The second prevailing reason for the reservations toward remarriage was presence of children. As we know from the literature that children reduce the chances of getting married (Thornton, 1977). As Buckle, et al (1996) depicts children lower the likelihood of remarriage for both men and women but the impact of children is greater on women's probability of remarriage (cited in Coleman, et al. 2000). Many of the participants who have children alluded to their children for their unwillingness for remarriage, the major fear being the child's having an emotional turmoil. The following participants exemplify this concern:

I do not expect to remarry, I have a daughter, I mean, it sounds difficult to share your life with a stranger especially if you have a daughter [Fulya, Training Manager].

It is very difficult for me to give that decision, because whoever marries me has to be a father to my son, it does not seem possible to me, may be a lover, but again he has to be a friend 99 per cent first of all, I mean a man who enters my life has to conform to my son's program as well, I am not sure. [Filiz, Sales Executive].

The women interviewed were aware of the fact that being divorced decreases their bargaining power in marriage market. For in Turkish society some certain expectations reign in regard to marriage of a woman, the leading of them being virginity. For "in Turkey although families are modernized, traditional values including that women should be virgins at the time of marriage, still prevail" (Cindoglu, et al; 2008). Being above the first marriage age, not being virgin plus having children, the women think that remarrying to a better person than their ex-husbands does not seem possible. Such expressions as "He is going to be a father to

children and be a companion to me, it does not seem possible as such, one in a million may be” (Meryem, Instructor); “He has to be divorced too I guess.” (Belkis, Accountant) appeared repeatedly. Thus it was clear that women considered a possible remarriage to a person who either went through bereavement or divorce. As one participant stated “even if they agreed this time families would react negatively to the marriage” (Neriman, Teacher). Another participant commented how remarriage is inherently pregnant with problems and that it is not the same as the first marriage, her explanation sums up the feelings of many:

If someone enters my life he will have his lived experiences, I wish people continue with their first spouses and be happy because if I marry someone I will bring my lived experience, my son and my ex-husband, everyone has his own baggage. He will be the same. I know that it will be difficult, I can foresee this, as a matter of fact this is what divorce taught me, I wish people marry once and be happy with the same spouse for ever [Yasemin, Accounting Manager].

For some participants age matters more than any other factor, they think that when women get older their aspirations should only be related to their children, or grand child for that matter, one can expect that this tendency has a lot to do with the cultural inculcation that enjoins women that their identity and envisions should not be independent of their families. This becomes more of an issue when women get older. As Kandiyoti (1987; p, 332) puts “the births of a grandchildren brings new responsibilities and chores to the older woman at a time when her western counterpart may well be contemplating going back to college” It must be one reason why as people get older social pressures on them decrease (Yılmaz & Fisiloglu (2005). The participants’ recounts lend support to this idea:

After divorce I considered remarriage seriously, I was specifically aspiring a love marriage because it was something I didn’t have in that marriage. But now I say “I got old”. It is already late. My mother also did not want me to remarry. And now, after all, I don’t have a wish to remarry. It is too far away from me. You get used to this freedom, because you know, you are organizing everything, all the time. If I remarried, most probably I wouldn’t make it, I would tend to run everything and you know this is not something a man would appreciate. I mean after a certain age you find it hard

to change yourself. Things are not like when you are young.
[Macide, Finance Manager]

At this age, it is not that you are going to make a love affair, it is not possible, but may be you can have a companion to be with you in your old age, I don't think of any other possibility as a matter of fact. (Deniz, Marketing Assistant)

Remarriage, never! I am a mother to two sons, they will never accept that. I hurt them once (referring to divorce) I don't have right to do that again. My sole aim from now on is to raise them as good children. Besides, it is too late to give such a decision. I am no longer young [Mehtap, Administrative Assistant].

Cherlin (1992) in his seminal study, *Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage* which, significantly contributed to the research on divorce literature addressed societal evaluation of remarriage, he pronounced that no adequate terms exist for remarriage's important social role, the institutional support for this role is deficient, and general acceptance of their role as a legitimate pattern of activity is questionable (p. 243). What Bir-Akturk and Fisiloglu (2009) stated in their recent study is no different, in the sense that just like in the case of divorce, the same stigmatizing social attitudes toward remarriage do exist in Turkish society, "the remarried have fewer extra familial supports due to the stigma they experience". Therefore it seems quite likely for women to internalize the societal expectation and develop a mode of behavior that will concur with them. The recount of one of the participants made it clear that these women are not unaware of the social anxiety and expectation with regard to divorce women. A participant, after enumerating her reasons for not opting for remarriage despite the fact that she received a viable proposal from one of her colleague she told us that "as a mother of two children thinking second marriage as a life course, as a process sounds unacceptable to me, I do not know why but yes; I have this weird feeling" [Aysun, Project Manager]

6.4.2. Redefinition of Marriage

I attempted to explore how women characterize remarriage, what primarily constitute their main motives to remarry. I talked this with participants who consider

remarriage (13 participants), see it as possibility and with those who aspire to make a good marriage (2 participants). I broached the issue by asking if they remarry someday, what would their criteria and expectations from the second marriage be. Their recounts illustrate how, facing a divorce, they become more cautious as to their mate selection. Learning from their experience, they become clear about set of criteria that may satisfy them most and regard parenting as a crucial element for their children, I found women more articulate to put across their ideas as well. In their recounts emotional gratification overrides as their main demands from a marriage; such expressions as, *“he has to be a friend 99 percent first of all”* (Filiz, Sales Executive), *“I am not giving up with life, I have my feelings inside and I want someone in my life, a soul mate whom I want to be with and who can love me”* (Yasemin, Accounting Manager), *“I can remarry someone who comes out to be my soul mate and promise me a peaceful life”*(Esra, Lawyer), *“if I think that I can be happy with a person yes I can consider remarrying”* (Emine, Quality Manager), I entered that(referring to her old marriage) to love and to be loved, it ended and my feelings were not yet fulfilled. I want to marry to someone who can respect me, understand me; material things are easy to achieve what is harder to achieve is mental and emotional harmony, they were (referring to her husband and his family) so rich but I didn’t even ask for alimony (Rezzan, Teacher); *“All I want is to be loved nothing more than that* (Neriman, Teacher), *‘he must be an emotional companion and my confidant’”* (Burcu, Instructor) were reiterated during the interview. So, second marriage for them is not repeating the traditional pattern of marriage but envisioning more democratic companionship. At this juncture Fulya, Training Manager’s relation of her feeling was noteworthy, though she enumerated reasons for not preferring to remarry, as the interview advanced she avowed that despite her reservations, as a matter of fact, she wants to share her life with ‘a genuinely intimate companion’ specifically after her daughter grew up and set her own life. Some other participants recounted the same sentiment:

...well, I have always had a very active and social life, I can go to cinema, picnic and travels and many other activities with my friends; I can share my problems with friends male/female, I mean I do not have sense like to be more active and independent I should be married or I should have an husband to go out or set off for travel. No it is not that, I can do all these things one way or another

with my friends, so I mean, if I marry he has to be very special man,.....among all other things, I spend wonderful times with my son, if a remarriage will cut down on my time with him, he must be deserving of this [Sevda, Real Estate Agent].

After being through such a difficult and long divorce process one can swear not to marry, I was saying never at that time too... but I looked at my sister's remarriage and my aunt's marriage and realized that at their 40s they have definitely a better marriages, whenever I call my sister I find them either going for a walk together, having tea at balcony I mean, there is companionship between them, they are like twin sisters, when they were young it was not like that, dealing with child' problems, economic strain, yet now they become real friends, I emulate them so much, I emulate their chats, affection. So I may need a friend, a friend only, neither physical contact nor a deep love affair, only a friend, at my late 40s I may consider remarrying to someone whom I can share everything with, whom I can chat for hours with, whom I can go for a walk and travel with [Burcu, Instructor].

The universal literature suggests that remarriage, is an economic recovery and security for divorced women and therefore financial security is a major concern in motivation toward remarriage. Women who remarry typically experience increased economic status and reduced economic distress (Coleman, Ganong & Fine, 2000; Duncan and Hoffman, 1985; Folk, 1992). Cigdem Arikan, in her work, *Social and Psychological Problems of Working Class Divorced Women*, where she examines motives women revealed as to remarriage, denotes socio-economic needs as a significant element for women as a drive for a second marriage. In her sample, 26% of women states economic strain as motive for remarriage while 24% want remarriage so as to get rid of societal attitudes toward a divorced women and 23% states parenting for their children and 26% loneliness. However, the findings of this study do not concur entirely with what Arikan presented, listening to their accounts and those of the remarried, I see that for professional women increasing economic status and thwarting societal judgments were not overarching reasons. Their drives for companionship override economic and social imperatives. The following excerpt from one participant indicates this:

First of all I need to secure my daughter's education and occupation, and help her stand on her feet; it can be outside Istanbul or abroad.... I cannot provide this with pension only, so I

should work more and buy another house to safeguard her future, then I can marry with someone whom I can be happy with, why not, I do not have downright rejection but the only thing is that I did not rest my entire plan on it [Emine, Quality Manager].

For this participant standing up on her feet was very important, though remarriage could have aided her financially to fulfill her dreams for her daughter's future, she did not allude to remarriage as a financial security, instead she plans to save and buy another house as a resource for the future, marrying someone comes only afterwards.

For many of the women quoted here thanks to their stable economic status they achieve despite sex segregated job market, dependence on men for economic support was not the case. Their accounts reveal that rather than increased economic status and reduced economic distress as suggested by the literature (Coleman, Ganong & Fine, 2000; Duncan and Hoffman, 1985; Folk, 1992) they wanted remarriage for intimate companionship or to get rid of loneliness they worry they may suffer soon, so emotional gratification overrides in their approach. The following excerpt from the interview to a participant [Neriman, Teacher] evinces their prevailing sense of independence fully:

Participant: I don't want it (remarriage) right now, I want to keep on improving myself at least a little bit more, I haven't fulfilled my aims yet, I should finish my courses(referring to her English classes) because now I know that I can achieve things and I should. I want to marry one who is from western side (of Turkey) and from an educated family background.....

Interviewer: In what way do you consider remarriage, for example do you also consider economic betterment?

Participant: In many ways. Not that I wanted financial safety, I myself could be richer who knows. I want to enhance my life in more than one aspect. I want to be loved nothing more than that.... I should get ahead and develop my skills, I don't want to expect it from the person I consider marrying, I should do it in the first place. For example if I say that I should marry someone who has career, then I myself should be career woman in the first place, or if I want to marry with a religious person, it is not that I want him to teach me religion, I myself should be religious first of all.

Interviewer: so you don't think marriage as a leverage to progress your life but a shared relationship, is that what you mean?

Participant: I mean, I am trying to improve my life in every sense so that even if I don't remarry, I should reach out a life standard that I set my mind to achieve by myself. I don't want to be dependent on anyone.

In addition to emotional gratification, one underpinning of women's motivation for remarriage lies in their preference of marriage over single life. Talking about their rationale for remarriages also gave us an opportunity to learn about how they evaluate the institution of marriage. The meanings attributed to marital life varies, for some women marital life means a regular more disciplined life, while for some others it is tantamount to being "a real family" the quotations gives support to this:

You have a life of your own, you become more disciplined, it gives you sense of responsibility, and in festivals (referring to religious festivals) you visit your family members with your spouse. I would definitely want a second marriage. [Rezzan, Teacher]

In this way (referring to divorce) you are not a part of family, I feel that. [Yasemin, Accounting Manager]

Moreover, in some cases marriage per se came to be celebrated as first and foremost of an experience which should lived through no matter what:

Marriage is a real life experience; it is something that develops one's self. To me everyone should get married. You know what they say, "men go to army and women marry". It is a big experience, especially women should marry. [Macide, Finance Manager]

Compared to a never-married, I fell lucky. Now I am a real woman, because I had a marriage experience, besides I have a child. If I had never married people would have said "something must be wrong with this woman since she could not get married until this age". [Esra, Lawyer].

For some marriage is reassuring against society's anxiety over a divorced woman.

Not everyone treat women in the same way, after all, we already know how women are treated in Turkey. To be married in this sense is comfortable. [Nergis, Teacher].

Moreover, some of the women interviewed did not seem to be disillusioned with the institution of marriage per se. The participants below who were divorced without children tended to move on their lives, when asked if they have any reservations about remarriage or if they think remarriage as risk for that matter, they stated thus:

I am not concerned about my would-be husband, I just say yes my ex was a maniac but it does not mean that all the men are maniac. [Neriman, Teacher]

Through that marriage I believe that we drove out the evil inside us, [Rezzan, Teacher]

I would definitely remarry. I believed that marriage is very good thing. It gives you sense of belongingness. It is a sharing. I had a long experience of living by myself, marriage keeps me away from that, and I think that it is a good thing. [Tugba, Instructor]

6.4.3. Child Matters: Marriage to Have a Child

Perhaps surprisingly, for some participants, to have child arose as leading motive for a possible remarriage. For these participants marriage was treated like an apparatus for having children. The following participant describes this drive:

Actually I have never liked the idea of remarriage even from the very start, however, as I am getting older, I feel the pressure of having child, I have maternal instinct, at any rate, when I imagine myself as mother, I mean, yeah I want child but not marriage, but you know in our society, in this culture this is not possible, so I am saying to my surround 'If I marry one day, this will be no other reason than having child', I can marry, only when I decide to have child [Ayla, Lawyer].

Another participant, [Aysun, Project Manager] who insistently stated that another marriage for her is another risk which she is not willing to undertake, told that if she didn't have children then she would have remarried

immediately and given birth; Emine, Quality Manager the third participant who stated the same, stressed how she is happy that she has a daughter and that otherwise it will be difficult at this stage to ‘find a man, convince him and have a child from him’; a remarried participant on the other hand told that “If she didn’t want to have a second child, she would think twice about remarrying” (Tulay, Instructor).

The participants seemed to have control over reproductive processes, no participant in our sample brought up “compulsory motherhood” or unwanted child birth, in fact, their wish for having child is seemingly their priority which at least shows us that professional women have reproductive freedom. The chapter on single parenting has abundant support to underscore this.

6.4.4. The Remarriage Experience

Remarriage is an important phase of life after divorce. According to the 2004 statistics number of remarriages was 138.735 (Bir-Akturk and Fisiloglu). According to the statistical records in 2008 the total remarriage rate rose 16.6 percent of all marriages, 8.5 % for women, and 11.3% for men. When divorced individuals are singled out the estimation shows that 9.4% of divorced men made their second or higher order marriages, while as high as 7.9 % divorced women remarried in 2008 (See literature section).

The quality and stability of remarriages are studied very often. While some studies find no difference between first marriages and higher order marriages (Deal et al., 1992; Bir-Akturk and Fisiloglu 2009) a large body of literature reports that remarriages are prone to marital instability and break up at a higher rate than do first marriages (Martin & Bumpass, 1989; Bumpass, et al., 1990; Glick 1984; Booth and Edwards, 1992). We are short of statistical data to verify this finding in Turkish context.

With respect to the conflicts rendering couples to a second or multiple dissolutions for that matter revolves more on issues related to step children and finances (e.g.

White and Booth 1985; Messinger 1976; Parsley and Ihinger-Tallman 1982; Pasley, et al., 1993; Booth and Edwards 1992). A recent study from Turkey (Bir-Akturk and Fisiloglu 2009) presents similar findings, according to the study remarried individuals with residential stepchildren had lower levels of marital satisfaction.

Importantly, the international literature including Turkey suggests remarriage as the most complex form of family formation without clear guidelines and norm (Cherlin, 1981; Booth and Edwards 1992; Bir-Akturk and Fisiloglu (2009) To Booth and Edwards (1992) lack of social support and clear norms to follow make remarriages more “fragile”. Moreover, to Cherlin (1992) expansion of families through remarriage complicate the relationships which may be positive or negative for both children and adults depending on the circumstances, in his own words:

Stepparents, stepchildren, stepsiblings, step grandparents, the new spouses of noncustodial parents and other kin all play a role in family life. This expanded set of relationships in a remarriage can help compensate children for the loss of kin they may suffer after their parents’ divorce. Children whose custodial parents remarry often seem to inherit not only a stepparent but also a set of step grandparents and other step kin. And since many children retain some contact with their noncustodial parent and grandparents, some children whose parents remarry may have contact with more kin than they did before their father and mother separated. But the introduction of these new relationships can also cause at least temporary problems for parents and children (p., 89)

In this study, 7 participants were remarried at the time of interviews. Five participants had one child from their previous marriages, therefore in five of the remarriages there was one adult as stepparent-new husbands were stepfather in this sense. One woman did not have child and one participant had a child in her second marriage. Five of the remarriages had one partner who has been previously married-the participants were married previously. We tried to explore their remarriage experience asking questions in regard to their motives for a second marriage, their present marital satisfaction and wellbeing and effect of a second marriage on children. I was also interested in social repercussion of remarriage, I discussed this with participants, and their accounts gave us important implications regarding social

recognition of remarriage. Finally I tried to comment on the relation between remarriage and empowerment.

6.4.5. The Decision to Remarry, Problems and Challenges

When asked about their feelings and main motivations at the time of decision to remarry four participants stated love as their grounds for remarriage; two participants told they wanted to have complete family where children would grow up with a father figure at home. And finally one participants emphasized loneliness as the main overriding motive in her mind at the time of decision, her account gives us fuller understanding:

While giving this decision I was thinking ahead. I thought about my life when I get older. I saw old Ernie(s) and Berth(s) (Edi-Budu) in the bus-stops and thought that my daughter will have her own life after a while, to what extent can I have space in her life? After all to what extent did my mom have a space in my life, so I felt like I was going to stick to her for the rest of my life, which would be the worst thing I could ever do to her. She would not be unhappy may be, but this feeling would annoy me anyway. You are a human being and you need a crutch in your life. Yeah, I felt that absence in my life. [Tulay, Instructor]

When I further asked if they had economic or societal concern, namely to get rid of the status of being divorced woman, all the women stated that neither economic support nor any social concern was in their mind before giving this decision..

6.4.6. Remarriage and Challenges

An initial stage of adjustment to new marriage for both couples and children emerged several times during the interviews, particularly for participants who were single parents. Since the mothers were too much concerned about child's adjustment and the relationship between child and their new husbands, going through this stage was challenging for them, we asked if there were times they found it very hard to handle. One participant summed up the views of others:

For the first couple of months it was very hard, I asked myself “what did you do”, you know, I was constantly watching his dialogues with my children. That was really really difficult, because you allow a stranger to enter your life; besides it is “you” who gives the decision. I went through another panic when I found out that I was pregnant, I was thinking if I was doing justice to my children, so my first months passed with agonies in my mind, with the birth of my third child things settled down, his birth kind of healed our wounds, that was the milestone but yeah as I was second guessing myself [Perihan, Public Relations Expert].

With respect to their well-being and marital satisfaction the women interviewed gave us positive accounts. One positive effect of remarriage as emerged from our interviews to these seven women was its healing effects on the divorce. Through remarriage they in effect were starting over and since they were concentrating more on the adjustment to the new marriage divorce was becoming thing of a past. As stated before the women who remarried after a while are better off in terms of their self worth and morale as well. Among the newly remarried, in particular, the priority was to adjust to this new condition rather than trying to get over divorce. As one participant told us “You remarry and start anew. With a new baby you become mother again. If you ask me about my divorce, I totally forgot my first marriage, I feel like I did not live through it at all. I forgot my sorrows too. If hadn’t remarried, I would have been dealing with my son's problems again, his being distant to his father, his being lonely, I wouldn’t have gotten over easily” (Nergis, Teacher). As suggested by the literature (e. g. Garvin, 1988; Hetherington 1982) compared to their remarried counterparts, single women experience more stress and poorer adjustment outcomes with fewer mediating resources

Contrary to the sizable number of literature which reports decline in marital quality and satisfaction, the women in their second marriages stated that they are satisfied with their marriages however, as Bir-Akturk and Fisiloglu (2009) recommends to bear in mind the social pressures factor, that is, for the post divorce remarried participants because their previous marriages have failed there could be social pressures not to report that the current marriages is failure”

Moreover, their positive accounts should not lead one to think that remarriages are aloof from problems. According to studies¹⁴ remarriages are expected to be more democratic and egalitarian for three reasons; personal experiences in prior unions; that previously married man and women think differently about marital roles and that greater resources women bring to remarriage increase their bargaining power. In this sample, by and large the participants were satisfied with their relationships and were calling the nature of their relationships more democratic at least when compared to their previous marriages. They stated that they had shared decision making in child related issues and monetary issues. The participants seemed to have say in their marriages. However, in terms of division of labor all the women stated that even though they worked, they were doing housework and childcare fulltime which indicated that some of the gender norms are repeated. Although some of them were telling how bearing the brunt of marriage was itself rendering them to be unsatisfied with their first marriages, in this case however they don't seem to be indignant about it. One participant's [Tulay, Instructor] account at this point was illuminating, when we talked about the difficulty of traditional norms of marriage she told us how she could not meet the expectation of her husband and the families and ended up divorcing. Given her resistance to conform to the established norms it may sound contradictory for her to involve into the system that she is not happy with again. When we ask this to her she simply stated the following:

If you are not ready to face all those things coming along with marriage, I mean if you are not ready to be molded by the rules then divorce liberates you. Ok I entered to that system again but this time by being fully aware of what awaits me I mean, consciously.....yeah the idea of loneliness scared me, your family is with you to a certain extent, yeah loneliness, that is a good word to express my feeling, yeah I did not want to be alone when I am older, for this reason I gave the decision to remarry. But as I said I was fully aware of all the sacrifices and all the negativities I might face, I mean if I am able to manage a second marriage until I get older that is fine, no problem, if I cannot, well, again no problem.

¹⁴ See (Coleman, et al, 2000) for a review of these studies.

6.4.7. Challenges for Children

Remarriage is particularly challenging for children since they go through fundamental changes in their lives, as one participant points out “my daughter lived so many things at the same time, we changed her school, her house, plus her mother remarried, and she had a sister, all these things that a person can live during a lifetime happened at once” (Tulay).

Moreover, some studies report that while divorce can lead to positive outcomes for mother-daughter relations, when mothers remarry when children are young adults both mothers and children state a decrease in mother-child relational quality. (Weiss, 1979; Orbuch, Terri; Thornton, Arland and Cancio, Jennifer, 2000). Except for one case, the remaining four single mothers remarried were fortunate enough not to experience long term problems related to their children apart from the initial adjustment process. This might be due to the fact that before giving the decision they negotiated over child related issues with the would-be husband and were sensitive about their children’s best interests. After all, two of the participants told that they entered to this marriage thinking their children’s interest in the sense that they would live in a complete family and would not be deprived of a father figure. One participant’s negotiation with the new husband over her children before remarriage was quite telling:

When he proposed to me, I told him “don’t think that my son would go to live with his father or he will leave soon for college or university. You are proposing to me and my son right now. If you are ready for this, I can accept your proposal”. So we talked these things beforehand that my son would live with us. We also talked about some certain things I mean things that I suffered in my first marriages which were very important for me. [Nurgul, Journalist]

In one case, on the other hand, the participant [Tulay, Instructor] talked about her 13-year old daughter’s negative reactions to the presence of a stepfather and his intrusion to their lives, she was not accepting her mother’s cooking and cleaning for him and was “getting crabby whatever he does, even when he coughs”. While during divorce process the children were generally caught between their fathers and mothers, in remarriage process women came to be torn between the children and

their new partners and as one would expect it falls down on women to develop strategies to handle the challenge, as is conveyed by this participant:

I never pressured her, I totally leaved it to her, I thought she would be ok over time, but maybe I did the wrong thing, maybe I should have been a little bit more authoritarian, I am trying to tell her about families, there are some TV shows about families I want her to watch them, for example presently there is TV show named Two-families, there are two families there, the parents got divorced and remarried to each other years later, they have their own children, sometimes they are having problems, etc, what I want her to see is that “ this is family, and in family people generally have problems, disputes, quarrels”. This is something she does not understand because she did not live through it, she didn't see a father authority at home, and now she is overreacting to it, she gets crabby whatever he does, even when he coughs! So I want her to watch those TV shows because there she sees there can be problems in families. When we discuss something with him, she thinks he is treating me badly, I am telling her “look right now you are also talking to me with high volume, it is the same, this is not something bad we are just discussing things”. [Tulay, Instructor]

Another participant presented similar account regarding the strategy she devised from the very beginning:

Well, for the initial period, we did something. The house I was living was my father's house, we changed the house because it was where my son was born, if we had continued living there then he (new husband) would have been added to our lives and he would have been like a quest for my son, so instead we preferred the experience to be a start over for all of us, although living in my father's house was serving to our interest better financially, I mean after all we were not going to pay for rent, so instead we rent a flat which my son liked and endorsed too and moved in there...We had problems in the beginning, because and he didn't have children, this was his first marriage, so he didn't use to know how to behave a teenager, but in time they both learned from this experience. They have opposite characteristics, for example my husband is very meticulous and my son is too messy we told him “ok you can be messy in your room however you like, but do not mess up our spaces”. So he learned to be tidy a little bit more and my husband learned to stand mess, he learned to moderate his meticulousness because it was like obsession for him. [Nurgul, Journalist]

6.4.8. Complexity in Remarriage

Since remarriage is considered to be infused with complexity, I tried to understand how couples coped with complex relationships with stepchildren, in-laws, relatives both from former and present marriages, the presence of ex-husband due to children, and the child's naming of these new relationships.

Except for one participant [Nurgul, Journalist] who had very intimate relationships with her ex-husband's family from the very beginning and who kept her relationships during her second marriage too, all the remaining participants told us that even though they kept seeing their husbands mainly due to custodial visitations, they do not see their ex in-laws. Since it would not be appropriate to continue seeing ex-husband's family after remarriage, this was an expectable course of action for both families. The procedure was relatively easier for those who reenter marriage without children; two participants in this situation told us that with divorce they were also separated from all the related kin networks.

The complexity came to be more of an issue with children being a residential member of the new family, for the children the number of kin increases and relationships becomes more complex.

Children's acceptance of newer kin depends on the quality of level of their relationship with their step fathers. In the sample except for one case, the children generally developed positive relationships with the step fathers, and with the stepfathers' family for that matter. Although an initial stage of adjustment was necessary, in two cases (Perihan, Public Relations Expert and Nergis) having a sibling from the new marriage helped them to feel more attached to the newly formed family.

Perhaps surprisingly Children's changing attitudes manifested itself on their naming process. In one of the cases the children came to call their stepfather as "father" after their new sibling's birth, thinking that it would be awkward to call their stepparent different than their brother would do when he grew up. In another case, the child

called the stepfather with his name yet over time he changed his surname and took stepfathers surname to pay tribute his more serious and constant efforts and care than his own father during his schooling years. For the remaining three cases the children called the stepfather with their names. As we observe the common way to call a stepfather is calling him either by his first name or calling “uncle” (amca), its implication is pretty telling, according to Cherlin (1992), it keeps complexity constant:

This practice if accepted will institutionalize the ambiguous position of step parent. An adult whom a child addresses by his first name is neither a parent nor a stranger. Rather that adult is more like a friend or companion (p, 84)

6.4.9. Social-recognition of Remarriage

Bir-Akturk and Fisiloglu (2009) speculates that being an Asian country where remarried families experience more stigma than they do in western countries, in Turkey one can expect social pressures and fewer extra familial supports for the remarried families. In their study they further state that in fact there is a hierarchy among the types of remarriages, while remarrying after the death of a spouse is perceived as more disrespectful to the ex-spouse; remarrying after divorce also includes social pressures due to terminating the prior marriage. Social pressures can take different shapes depending on such dynamics as gender, age and presence/number of children. Depending on anecdotal evidences we can speculate that a woman remarrying with three children or a woman remarrying at an older age (e.g. at her 50s) will not be welcomed by society. Social recognition of remarriage was one of the important aspects that we raised during the interviews. When asked how people approached to their remarriages, the following participants conveyed thus:

They feel sorry for you, and also they think you are loose you know what they think of people from Izmir! The kids, well, they don't want to talk about it, they feel uncomfortable I mean, their surname is different from their mothers, and from “the new father”. They just conceal. When my son's teacher got confused she called me to school to talk about it, he even didn't tell this to

his teacher. Can you believe this?.....in a conversation saying “my second marriage” is really annoying, because you see people they look at you with disdain, they ask and they judge you, because after learning about it they do not comment, they don’t say anything, just silence you know, they get confused. Sometimes I am asked “did you marry because he was rich. Do you see? They want to legitimize it in their minds; they say you might as well found a richer guy this time. [Perihan, Public Relations Expert]

Well remarriage’s social reflection is a bit problematic. I mean it is difficult for you to say it is your second marriage, they immediately expect you to make an explanation, they ask why? This is annoying. Because I don’t want to explain my marriage all the time I try not to say that this is my second marriage. I don’t know may be it is because I don’t want to remember the past, or maybe it is more annoying to know that they will be curious about what might have happened in the past. Of course it is not good for a woman to divorce and make the second marriage, but yeah, I just try not to talk about it, what can you do? [Nergis, Teacher]

The attitudes calls for strategies, as is manifested by one of the participants, to evade facing the anxiety she was simply making it lighter by joking about her remarriage:

I know the remarriages in society, well, actually I did not face any solid reaction but I am making of fun of my own situation, I tell for example “husband number one”, “husband number two” you know. Once we were at a dinner, and I was working for X newspaper at that time and we were talking about marriage, when I said my second husband and one of the colleagues could not help asking how many times I married, I said “ I got married twice, but I am still young” (laughs)[Nurgul, Journalist]

Another participant [Tugba, Instructor] presented a similar account, as is conveyed by the following excerpt:

Participant: by the way my husband is 2, 5 years younger than me,

Interviewer: so did it cause any problem?

Participant: No, not at all, I am just joking about it saying I found a chick (laughs). You know what they say if you marry to a younger person you become rich, that is not true, that is lie (laughs).

A third participant [Zerrin, Assistant Manager] on the other hand who married three times told that she acted confidently giving an image of self assurance which to her mind offsets people's negative attitudes.

So it is clear from the quotations that women are not happy about remarriage's social implications, trying not to talk, joking about it are some strategies to handle the tension. In this spirit, remarriage does not seem to provide a conclusive solution to compensate the fault of divorce, divorce is still there and although by way of remarriage women leave it behind socially it seems to remain

6.4.10. Summary

Despite ending their first marriage with divorce, marital state was still preferable for women. Although marriage is a socially approved form of unity, remarriage does not have the same value as the first marriages, nor does it have social support and clear cut norms as the literature puts forward. Depending on our observation it is possible to speculate that women have lower bargaining power compared to men which is one reason why men remarry at higher rates than women in Turkey. The issue of virginity and presence of children have greater roles in lowering women's bargaining power in the marriage market. Moreover, although both men and women are subjected to stigmatizing attitudes due to divorce, it nevertheless is women who bear the brunt of negative consequences emanating from societal anxiety over divorce.

We can comment on the impact of remarriage on the wellbeing and empowerment of women by looking into the experiences of the remarried in this sample. As the quotations reveal the seven remarried women in the sample gave positive accounts in regard to their remarriage experiences. It is not that women have more egalitarian relationships in their second marriages, the difference however is women in their second marriages are equipped with strategies and have more negotiating power. They enter a relationship knowing what to expect and how to handle. As mentioned above before giving the decision to remarry, they all had negotiated and were very

particular about their expectations and interest which also included children's interest.

Negotiation before a remarriage was more of an issue for women who were seriously considering remarrying. During the interviews, emotional gratification, concerning about loneliness, need for a companionship came to be dominant grounds for remarriage rather than financial safety or social concern as vast body of literature suggests. One participant's long quotation about her efforts to improve her skills and human capital before getting involved into marriage was a case in point. Therefore, the majority of the women in this study give support to the literature which suggests that women in second marriage seeks power more than they do in their first marriages (e.g. Pyke and Coltrane 1996). Their attitude toward remarriage indicates that women empowerment is not that remote given their main motivation and rational calculation, and more importantly, their control over the process. Unlike what Juliet Mitchell (1971) stresses in her work, *Women's Estate*, that a woman is forced economically to find a man who will help support her and her children which is the main barrier on the way to women's empowerment, the women in this sample seems to be independent from this impediment.

Moreover, marriage being an experience in and of itself aroused several times during the interviews, which was reinforcing the idea that no matter what they have gone through, women definitely preferred married state and valued the marriage experience even if it ended up with divorce. Their accounts are in line with what Weingarten (1981) suggests in the following:

Perhaps more critically a remarried person who has had to cope with both divorce and remarriage in his/her own adult life, has been confronted with demands and opportunities for personal growth which differ substantially from the life circumstances facing a person in an intact first marriage (p. 56).

CHAPTER 7

UNIQUE CASE(S): INTERGENERATIONAL AND INTRA-FAMILY TRANSMISSION OF DIVORCE AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE POST DIVORCE EXPERIENCE: FAMILY HELP REVISITED

7.1. Intergenerational and Intra-Family Transmission of Divorce

The phenomenon of intergenerational and intra family transmission of divorce, surfaced several times during our interviews. However, since it is not within the scope of this study to provide an exhaustive treatment of the intergenerational and intra-Family transmission of divorce, which has been given a lot of attention in the divorce literature, I will, instead, evaluate this theme with respect to its effects and repercussion on the post divorce experience of women.

8 participants recounted either parental or sibling divorce or in three cases both parent and siblings' divorce during the interview. Couple of themes emerged in the light of these accounts. Examining their recounts will provide us with a better sense of post divorce experience of women. I was particularly interested in looking into their relationship with the divorcing member of family; how it shapes their vision of marriage and how going through two divorces affect ones sense of self.

7.1.1. Relationship with the Divorced Family Member

In regard to their relationship with the divorcing parents or siblings, the participants presented a critical account. First and foremost, perhaps surprisingly all of the participants experiencing parental divorce maintained a negative relationship with

their fathers. They either rejected or voluntarily lost contact after a certain while. They also questioned the concept of fatherhood expressly:

I never have had a positive relationship with my father. Right now I don't see him.....fatherhood as is well-known is not simply biological, time spent together, investment in childrearing, help build the father-daughter bond. I don't think that we had this bond. It feels as if I don't have a father. Yeah, this is exactly what I feel [Hulya, Instructor].

My problem is not their divorce, I mean; I never said they should not have been divorced. But the aftermath of divorce, I mean my dad, he did not care for us like he cared his other two children from his second marriage, I talked to his son about my father he said he was a greatest father of all, I felt sad upon his response, I mean now that he was the greatest father why didn't he care for us (her and her elder sister)? I will never forgive him [Cisem, Lawyer].

Participants' resentment toward their father does not necessarily mean that they have positive relationship with their mothers instead. Somewhat surprisingly, they were equally critical about their mothers' attitudes; in some cases, the mothers developed authoritarian and over protected characteristic that overwhelmed the participants and prompted them to escape from the home environment where they feel restricted. Three participants were highly critical of their mothers' authoritarian behaviors blaming them for projecting their anger onto the participants. The following quotations make it explicit:

Now I look back and think that Mom has restricted my life a lot, she had never encouraged me for any social activities to improve myself, all she told me was stay at home, do your homework and pass your exam, that's it. Studying lesson was centre of my life; I had no social life, no social activity, and no nothing. I could not develop my skills because of these restrictions. Mom, after all, has a domineering personality; she has always been and still is an authority figure in my life. But what did change? Now I learned to put up with her [Isik, Assistant Professor].

For this participant her wrong decision to marry her ex husband was an escape from her mother, so much so that she formed an association between her mother's

pressures that she deemed as psychological violence with that of her ex husbands physical violence and expressed that “her mother was like her ex-husband”:

It was such a time that I was in a bad mood, I mean psychologically, I was questioning my confidence in myself, he suddenly came up and he was like a psychological support, and I felt happy. As I said mom was causing problems and constantly restraining my life so I describe my behavior at that time (referring to her accepting his proposal) as a delayed adolescence as a result of mom’s restricting behaviors. Because your feelings and behaviors are all suppressed, you know, even if you have education and being professionally employed, still, somehow, you want to get away from that family, and you have no other choice other than marriage, subconsciously you think this way, I do not know, this is how I see it.

The second participant, [Cisem, Lawyer], presents a similar account, she analyzed the change in her mother’s behaviors after divorce and concluded that in an insistent attempt to protect her daughters she lived role confusion, trying to be both a father and a mother, thus, shifted the boundaries and ended up behaving like an authoritarian father let alone being a mother. She further added that she was wise enough to escape from her mother’s restriction:

We are three single women (referring to her mother, sister and herself) but we live in separate houses we do not prefer to live together. She hurt us many times I mean, I mean not physically but you know while she was trying to protect us she exaggerated and turned into a despotic person. We do not communicate well; I mean somehow we could not form a good communication. Thanks God that we were wise enough to escape from that repression

On the other hand, a third participant [Filiz, Sales Executive] who lived through both parental and sibling divorce emphasized more on her elder sister’s post divorce difficulties. What’s more, as she told us, because of her sister’s constant complaints and blaming attitudes, she in a way experienced a post divorce trauma, even before her own divorce. Moreover, she stressed that part of the reason for finally deciding to marry with her boy friend whom after four year of dating she had still hesitations

to involve in a long term relationships with was to get away from her elder sister's pressures.

It is noteworthy that in some instances it was step parenting which drove the participants to marry as a way of getting out of the home environments. One of the participants who went through not only parental divorce but also remarriages of her parents stated that when her stepfather began to live with them she felt increasingly alienated from her home:

mom remarried while I was at high school, again it was a very difficult time, I mean, even though mom consulted to me, even though I endorsed this marriage, even though I told mom that I did not want her to be alone for ever, upon his (step father) living with us I felt like I am not living in my own home. I felt like I am a guest at that house [Hulya, Instructor]

From the above illustrations it seemed that, even though the participants seem to delay marriages they stated that escaping from their conflicting families was an important facilitating factor in their decision to marry. This is consistent with a remarkable number of studies which state that young adults may consider marriage as a way out of the unpleasant home atmosphere (Rubin 1976; Wolfinger, 2003). Parental divorce may have a direct impact on individuals with divorce background, as well it may affect them through indirect ways; the post divorce trauma may impel parents to lean on their daughters for emotional support and counsel, which may be overwhelming. More importantly, the participants also related that since their childhood onward, when drawn into marital disputes, they felt torn between their parents. As Koerner et al. (2002) states when mothers unveil things to their daughters as to their personal problems by revealing negativity toward ex-husband, it is highly likely that the daughter feel psychological distress worrying about their parents. Two participants, in particular, stated their uneasiness when their mothers spoke in a derogatory way about their fathers. They censured this instance and deemed it as a vital mistake on their mothers' part. Moreover, the participants who were highly critical of their parents stressed that their uneasiness with their parents' divorce did not stem from the divorce per se but rather from involving them into all those disputes. One participant, [Cisem, Lawyer], expressly stated this:

My problem is not their divorce, I mean; I never said they should not have been divorced. But the aftermath of divorce, I mean my dad, he did not care for us like he cared his other two children from his second marriage, I talked to his son about my father he said he was a greatest father of all, I felt sad upon his response, I mean now that he was the greatest father why didn't he care for us (her and her elder sister)? I will never forgive him. I will not forgive my mom either, she projected all those traumas and hatred onto us it has been 25 years after the divorce but she is still talking behind my father, calling him 'bastard' each time she refers to him. She relates all her flaws to him; sometimes I need to remind her that dad is no longer alive! You deprived of many things all those years, you do not grow up in a normal family and on top of this you deal with the hatred, I am really angry with them.

7.1.2. Mother-daughter Solidarity after Divorce: "The same destiny"

Even though the participants relate the problems they are going through back to their parents' divorce, and are critical of their mothers in particular, it bears noting that in the aftermath of their own divorces they, nevertheless, get most of the help from their mothers. The 'the so-called same destiny', as one participant name it, gave way to a mother-daughter solidarity which may ease the aftermath of divorce for the daughter. For one participant, [Hulya, Instructor], mother and daughter solidarity was a crucial source of support. During our interview she reiterated how much she appreciated her consistent attitudes and caring during those difficult years and also in her own post divorce adjustment period. Her mother was not only a friend she was also emotional support for her:

My mother was my biggest source of support, it was really really incredible, she was doing everything to comfort me, she was saying honey don't worry about anything, just have rest, do you want me to cook this, do you want me to do that, I mean it was just like when I was studying for university exam, do you understand? No responsibility at all! She was saying, 'just go to your work, and do not worry about anything'. Even now I can feel her support but I think that I should be stronger because I mean, for example, I need to get a phone line installed to my apartment, I am calling her and asking her to do it, or whatever I mean, she is really so helpful and understanding but that is enough, I do not want to be

dependent on her this much, she helped me greatly to overcome this period but it is time I should stand on my own shoes.

The fact that divorce is the shared experience between Hulya and her mother facilitate solidarity formed all the more after Hulya's divorce. She could find solace in her not just because she is her mother but because she went through divorce too which must be the main reason why she felt relief when her mother, on occasion, referred to her own divorce and made comparison.

Sometimes she is telling me that, actually she rarely does this, but it really works, sometimes she is telling me that when she got divorced she had two children, she was working at a state school, and she is reminding me of the hard conditions that we went through altogether, she says 'you are not alone, now I am here for you, thanks God that you have better conditions, you have a good job', when she said these things, it really makes me feel better, I pull together and I say yes, the conditions are better, yes, it really works.

Four other participants, Cisem, Isik, Rezzan, Tugba, recounted similar experiences with respect to their post divorce support, they appreciated the family support they received in the form of childcare, financial and emotional back up. Two quotations reveal the level of support thus:

.. It's like there is no one other than my mother in this life. I wouldn't have expected that I would have become fond of my mother this much, but yeah I literally feel that there is none one but my mother in this life. [Tugba, Instructor]

My mother's support was great; specifically financially she supported us greatly. May God be pleased with her, also when I have things to do I am leaving my daughter to her, she is taking care of her. At times she is also giving emotional support, May God give her long life. [Isik, Assistant Professor].

7.1.3. Elder sisters' Divorces

Four participants, Neriman, Rezzan, Burcu, Filiz, experienced their elder sisters' divorces before those of their own. Perusing the transcripts we encountered that the

elder sister's divorce had somewhat immediate and tangible effects on the participants own marital dissolution and post divorce adjustment. Though their relationships with their sisters followed different trajectories, the ensuing effect on their decision to divorce is positive. As Cunningham and Thornton (2005) state as children age into young adulthood their own experiences shape their attitudes more strongly than parental characteristics. Importantly, in our case one participant who went through her elder sister's divorce told us that her sister's divorce encouraged her to decide to end her own marriage:

I went through a very painful process until I finally decide to divorce. While I was thinking on my on whether to give the decision or not, I remembered my elder sister's divorce and I said to myself "it is not the end of the world". Besides after her divorce my elder sister had a very happy remarriage. It is not that I emulate the remarriage part, but, you know, she became a happy women after divorce, so, yeah her divorce experience gave confidence to make my decision to end my marriage [Burcu, Instructor].

This participant also told that after the divorce she became all the more attached to her elder sister, since they in a way united in their experience of divorce. Her elder sister became more understanding and helpful toward her. Another participant, [Rezzan, Teacher] lived through her divorce experiment with somewhat less distress thanks to her elder sister support. Since elder sister was living by herself after divorce, the participant did not have to worry about renting flat, buying furniture, namely starting from the scratch again which, as she stressed, was a relief for her.

The process of two elder sisters' uniting in their experience of divorce was not that smooth though; for one participant, going through her elder sister's divorce was worse than her own experience. Nevertheless, her narrative makes it clear that she gained a lot from her elder sister's experience and had a relatively easy post divorce hardships. Her elder sister did not have an economic strain, for Filiz was there to help her; she both supported her financially and found her a job. During this time Filiz in a way gained experience to stand on her own feet after divorce which, may partly explain her easy post divorce adjustment, she was well equipped to resist an economic tension following divorce. Although she enumerates a lot of negative factors emanating from her sister's divorce, the following statement from our

interview to her reveals that she learned some very important lessons from her experience:

To me, you know that I got divorced too; divorce is a turning point where one re-determines one's own boundaries and those of people around him or her. You either came out injured or adopt an attitude against the world. Or you recover totally. To me it is a process to change things in your life. And how you make use of this process and how long you prolong it entirely depends on the person who is experiencing it. You can struggle which I think you have to, considering the fact that you have a child and there is no other way-or you can turn into someone who continuously makes other people sad. My elder sister chose the easiest way. She repeatedly told us the 13-year she lived through, besides she did this when her children were present. As a matter of fact, it is not true to evaluate this process as one person's process; now that it affects everyone in the family then it is every family member's process, every family member's turning point.

As well, Filiz learned from her elder sister's divorce process with respect to relationship skills, as is manifested in her following recounts:

My elder sister's divorce was a turning point for us; in order not to repeat the same mistakes sometimes we gave wrong decisions and messed up....the way out of this distress should not be railing against people, she shared her problems with her daughter, to me it is one the worst thing that could happen to a child, my mom was doing this with me, it has always been too much for me, Now I am very cautious not to make the same mistake to my son.

At this point she was talking like a divorce counselor:

I think people should think twice about how they can get rid of this situation. If you turned to be a self-pitying person you continue with the same mood. I call this process as finishing the evolution. You may get help from your family or not, in any case it is a difficult process, one should venture its risks.

7.1.4. Effects of Divorce(s) on the Self

The participants frequently stressed their journey into their selves. Going through two divorces in their lives it should not come a surprise that the processes would have an impact on their selves. Somewhat surprisingly we noticed that with regard

to its impact on their selves the participants stressed parental divorce more than their own divorces. The underlying factor behind denouncement of parental divorce is resentment deriving from losing sense of family and experience of difficult emotional states as a result of parental divorce. All of the participants conveyed their emotional reaction sometime during their upbringing, the following quotation reveal it:

No matter how happy I seem, I used to have feeling of void inside. I was sad and I guess a little bit obsessed about things going on in my family. [Neriman, Teacher].

One remarkable theme as described by one participant, [Cisem, Lawyer] was self blame:

Every now and then she was telling us how she was so self sacrificing, how she brought us up alone and all those stuff but it puts a heavy load on your shoulders, after a while you say this women ruined her life for us, you start feeling guilty for causing this.

For Cisem a happy and a proper family is something improbable as she has never experienced it. She cannot even figure a happy family, loneliness for her became an addiction, and not wanting to transmit her destiny to her offspring she terminated her pregnancy:

If I had grown up in a happy family and if I had missed it then may be I would have tried hard to find ways to make my own marriage a happier one, I guess. Yet because I don't have such experience (a happy family) you do not miss an unlive life actually, perhaps I would not struggle again for a man who says "I am unhappy with you" but at least it could have affected me who knows. Anyway, as I said I don't know I did not have it.

Another participant, [Filiz, Sales Executive], who went through her parents' marital instability and her elder sister's divorce, related absence of love and affection when she talked about divorce and herself:

I would give all I have for my father to love mom or to live one full day in a loving atmosphere. Hugging and kissing are not things that I am used to. What I mean is a child should live in peaceful and loving environment, if I am smiling at my son's

father despite all those threats and not responding him as he deserves, it is for my son's happiness.

Moreover, living through two divorces in her life, this participant spoke of distrust in a relationship, in a happy marriage. A happy and long lasting marriage for her is unbelievable, “not in this world”. Seeing her parents' and her sister's divorce, for her it was foreseeable that “no relationship lasts forever”. When recounting about impossibility of remarriage for her, she told how her first marriage was involuntary in the first place:

As a matter of fact, I was not envisioning marriage at all, with my ex-husband we dated for like four years. Yet four years should not make you think that we were doing well though, it was overt that our personalities were too different to reconcile, I guess I was carried away by his insistence because I had never thought about marriage. I did not dream about getting married, having an immense wedding party, wedding dress like many other girls do. As I said I was carried by his love. I do not believe in an eternal love, I don't know it may derive from lack of love, my family's unhappiness, specifically that of my parents. I mean I remember when they were together (parents) they didn't have a happy relationship, one moment they got along well, the next moment you saw them quarreling. Thus I lost my faith in eternal happiness, maybe it is also related to this.

Therefore, for this participant divorce was not something probable but a ‘self fulfilling prophesy’. As well, as noted before, the participants expressed their restlessness at their mothers speaking ill behind their fathers. They expressed how they were torn between quarreling parents both before and after divorce and how it ruined their psychology along the way. A participant told how she was infuriated about her mother's continuing hatred toward her father even after his death five years ago. Not wanting to cause their children to experience the same bad mood, the women who have children state that they are very careful when they talk behind their husbands specifically if their children are present.

Some participants alluded to their over emphasis on the self reliance as an effect left from the parental divorce they lived through, their own divorce in a way verified the fact that a woman should stand on her own feet. As Cisem reflected after a while an

emphasis on self sufficiency renders not relying on anyone and taking on too much load which in the end overwhelms one. Cisem, like her elder sister did, developed a personality characterized by distrust, while talking about the underpinnings that led to her divorce she explained:

I might be at fault there too, because we did not grow up with a father, we got used to handle everything ourselves, we do not ask for anyone to run errand for shopping or going bank because we simply do not trust. I could not even entrust the rent payment to him, because I kept worrying whether or not he paid. I know it is too bad, I am angry at myself taking all the load on my shoulder, I should have left some of the usual stuff to him maybe we could have had quarrels because of sharing the labor but at least I should have given him chance to do it, but I could not do it, I kept doing what I had been used to till then, thus he could not develop a sense of responsibility and relied on me, he was relaxed, after all Cisem is doing everything why bother?

I want to have the control over everything in my life, or I should simple be the one in charge. My obsession with weight is just one example of this as a matter of fact. Formerly, I was able to keep away from food, when I decided that I shouldn't. But now I can't do that, I can't help eating when I wanted to. This is annoying to me [Tugba, Instructor].

Interestingly, one participant, [Neriman, Teacher] who lived through parental divorce at the age of 20, stated feeling of embarrassment about her parents' divorce at somewhat late age. The resentment emanated from being encumbered with the social cost of parental divorce. Living in a small city where negative attitudes associated with stigma are attached to divorce not only for divorcing parents but also for offspring from divorce background:

My parents divorce influenced me more than my elder sister's divorce, because you feel sad for your parents, of course you feel sad for your sister too but this is not something to be ashamed of. I feel ashamed of their divorce you know, my elder sister says the same thing, you know, they are older people they are supposed to be mature enough to solve their problems, besides they have adult children. People ask, you know, what could be the problem that they could not solve and had to divorce at this age? You cannot explain to people. They understand young people's divorce but for older parents this is unacceptable, they condemn you.

7.1.5. Summary

Parental divorce have implications for the post divorce phase as well, all the women in the sample were fully involved in their mothers' post divorce period, and they stressed difficulties of getting divorce in their mothers' times including social pressures and economic hardships. Seeing their parents and elder sister's divorces, the women interviewed developed pessimist perspectives regarding lifelong marriages or any relationship in fact. Some of these negative perspectives reflected through several discourses during the interviews are 'no relationship lasts forever'; 'you will never invest in your husband' 'whomever you marry the end is the same'.

With respect to the relationships with divorcing member of the family we found that the participants were by and large critical and blaming, especially those who had parental divorces. The participants' criticisms were either because they divorced in the first place or because they could not handle the problems and difficulties coming along with divorce and reflected their anger and frustration to their children. This was particularly the case for those who witnessed their elder sisters' divorces. Nevertheless, all mothers and sisters were principle support for the participants in the wake of divorce. The participants reiterated how they appreciated their mothers' help for childcare and emotional and even financial support which apparently helped live through relatively easy post divorce adjustment.

In regard to their journey into the self, the participants indicated that parental divorce influenced them more than their own divorces. One participant described her feeling as self blame; another participant discussed how the ongoing conflict between parents both before and after divorce left her torn between her father and mother. A third participant stressed how she developed an overemphasis on self reliance and how it made her lonely and overwhelmed. Perhaps the most interesting one is stated by a participant who told that she was always ashamed of her parents' divorce and that it diminished her self-esteem.

CHAPTER 8

DISCUSSION

Surviving Divorce: Divorce as Relief and Grief?

Before presenting the closing discussion, it may prove helpful to revisit the high points of the present study. In this thesis, unlike the vast amount of literature which has focused more on the impacts of divorce on children, family, and society, divorce experience was explored solely through the lenses of women. Divorced women's economic, social, psychological well-being was examined looking into how they manage to adapt to their new lives after legal dissolution; how the distress was overcome and how economic and social problems were coped with; how they struggled to juggle between their newly found statuses and work lives which they had to do even better to survive and finally how they make sense of their divorce experiences especially when they face challenges "within a context of multiple losses and transitions" (Bisagni, 1999: 23). In chapter one I outlined the fundamental research questions this study seeks insights. In chapter two I presented theoretical overview. Here I stated that employing feminist perspective as theoretical framework provided researcher with an opportunity to look at ways in which women not only face difficulties or inhibitions but also chances for them to empower themselves. Therefore, the analysis made in this thesis is embedded in a context where challenges and hardships women go through in the face of marital dissolution are revealed along with their active agency both during the divorce process and its aftermath. In this section I also delineated different feminist schools of thought, their divisions and convergence, as well as the specific feminist perspective I employ as a theoretical orientation in this study. This chapter also included literature review. I examined four areas of women's lives that divorce potentially influence: financial concerns, social approaches and women's social networks, single parenting and remarriage. In the next chapter I portrayed Legal and historical aspect of divorce in Turkey. Here I also briefly talked about structure of family in Turkey. In chapter

four I discussed the methodology employed in the thesis, I highlighted pivotal role of narrative interviewing in allowing us to gain insight into variegated dimensions of interviewing professional women over a sensitive issue and I delineated how life story interview helped us to collect authentic data from women's own account and to see the context where the women experience divorce and its aftermath.

Next this section also talked about the rationale of using grounded theory approach as an inductive way of data analysis. I talked how I used analytic categories derived from the interview data, built categories and constructed theoretical concepts I also depicted how Feminist scholarship and grounded theory concur on many levels that they both respect participants experience as a source of knowledge and avoid trying to fit the findings into a simple. Also, I referred important tenets of conducting research with feminist perspectives that it (a) helps women connect their personal experience in families to the larger social context (b) captures how women struggle against and adapt to family relations that nurture or suppress them, (c) provides a vision of non-oppressive family relations, (d) embraces the diversity among women and families by race, class, age (e) challenge prevailing concepts and assumptions in the discipline, including how we think about gender". Here in I also recounted my experiences and feelings over the duration of data collection, I raised issue of objectification that a feminist research should be cautious about. And I also talked about benefits and caveats of women to women interviewing process.

The fifth and sixth chapter constituted data analysis of this dissertation. Using grounded theory I built two theoretical categories; (i) right after divorce and (ii) after divorce where I explored the areas participants presented themselves as active agents of divorce process even when they came across hardships and challenges thwarting their mobility and empowerment. Areas where participants talked more about their positive experiences revolved around their financial experience and self esteem. In these sections how women derived sense of power and meaning from the negative experience they have gone through was talked. The next chapter focused more on how the active agency women derived was challenged and overshadowed by patriarchy manifested itself through various and complex ways. Here I also read women's strategies as a way to conform to society in an attempt to maximize their

security and stability, which, in effect, were reinforcing patriarchy rather than challenging it. While in some areas women talked more on relief or grief aspect of divorce process, it is important to note that in all areas the experience of grief and relief were intertwined, rather than mutually exclusive. Chances for empowerment and the hardships they faced explored through such common themes constituted social attitudes toward divorced women, single parenting and remarriage. In the final chapter I made closing discussion.

Moving on Divorce

Financial Consequences of Divorce and Single Parenting

It is not all too bad!

As depicted in the sections, the fact that the women were able to terminate a failing and in some cases abusive relationship per se attested to the level of empowerment they had (Moghadam, 2007). At this point it may prove helpful to highlight their socio-economic statuses. Being educated and employed, as frequently emphasized by the feminist literature, empowers women in public sphere, it bears noting that it also undergirds women's bargaining power in the family. As quotations from women's interviews demonstrate women did not concern about financial strain after the divorce, which facilitated their decision to divorce-as is clear from the large fraction of women who are the initiators of divorces statuses in this present study. Moreover the participants in this study also revealed their agency by setting up their own households rather than doubling up with any other family member or moving in with their parents as is socially expected. By doing so, they set up a more independent life than they did before marriage. In this connection this study's finding is in line with a large number of studies which found linkage between women's employment and divorce rate that wives' employment do not necessarily cause marriage to become unsatisfactory but that such employment affords wives in unsatisfactory marriages an economically viable alternative to remaining married (i.e. Schoen, et al., 2002; Smock, 2004).

It was clear that being highly educated and employed gave them chance, among all other things, to give decision to end their failing marriages. In addition to its benefit during the post divorce period, therefore, work was an eminent dynamics that encouraged them to carve out a way to end their failing relationships, as one participant stated that “If she hadn’t been working, she wouldn’t have divorced.”

Moreover, after divorce thanks to their professional statuses, the participants by and large did not reveal profound economic hardships. Surprisingly some participants told us how marriage itself was an economic burden, for they were mostly bearing the brunt of the financial load. In fact for these participants, an economic wellbeing was felt upon divorce, for having an increased control over money was itself a source of relief. Therefore, the participants after the divorce presented themselves as active agents, taking charge by involving in graduate studies, getting ahead in their careers, doing extra jobs.

Women’s economic autonomy in feminist theory is considered to be the basic requirement for women to develop the capacity to have a voice in familial relationships, to be able to leave an abusive relationship and to successfully resist exploitation and control (i.e. Hartman 1981; Mitchel 1974; Jaggar 1995; Chafetz, 1990; Okin 1989; Moghadam 2007). In line with the literature, in this study empowerment and economic security came to fore as an important element, I agree with the feminist scholar Juliet Mitchell (1971) that “Any emancipation movement must still concentrate on the economic element- the entry of women fully into public industry and the right to earn a living wage”.

From Single Parenting to Single Protecting

Single parenting was another aspect of post divorce phase where we explore chances for empowerment as well as hardship women face through. How does single parenting affect women in regard to their empowerment? Though this question seems to have several positive and negative dimensions, it is vital to visit the theoretical framework we are mainly drawing on. Looking through socialist feminist literature, first of all access to work life and stable income thwarts women’s reliance

on their husbands' income and helps them to give the decision about living apart instead of staying in the conflicting marriage (see for example Sarvasy and Allen, 1984; Hartman 1981; Mithcel 1974; Jaggar 1995). These feminist researchers underscore policies to be created to enable women's economic self sufficiency specifically for women who are in disadvantageous situations. In this sense alimony in the form of child support at times is criticized for it is considered to keep women's traditional dependence on men.

As a matter of fact, socialist feminist literature has an ambiguous stance to single parenting in view of its effect on women's empowerment and over all wellbeing. To Sarvasy and Van Allen, while for middle class women thanks to their waged works 'heading a family alone' can be independence, however, since sexual discrimination in the market and their unpaid domestic chores continue this may not be a true liberation as Ehrenreich, (1990) points out "women stabilize patriarchal structures (housewife, mother, etc.) by fulfilling these roles".

Looking into the local context the disadvantage stemming from single parenting is not confined with economic sphere. The social recognition of single parenting in Turkish setting is equally as problematic as any other concern stated in the literature. As the quotations reveal, negative approaches to the degree of stigma attached both to single mothers and children from single parent homes makes women feel disintegrated with the society, which alone increases women's distress as they do not want their children to face this social pressures and exclusion.

At this juncture, we also see that this problem seems to rests solely with the mothers. As mentioned before, as is the case in many cultural setting, in Turkish context too, breaking the bond of marriage a man can start anew, he can be treated as a single person, however, a women after divorce is conceived as a 'divorced women' specifically if she is a mother, a certain dignity is expected from her in society. So after divorce two socially unrecognized identities were adhered to women, 'divorced woman' and 'single parent'. As we see in the words of the participants, women have to create strategies not to be exposed to these social repressions, though they cannot evade the distress emanating from them. Therefore, what Hewlett (1986) points out

may hold true for the findings of present study that “without social policies and institutions that recognize and supports women’s roles as mothers and breadwinners independence is a disaster for majority of women”.

Therefore, even though the participants have access to stable jobs and income, because their labor at home does not change and besides it increases upon becoming head of the family, they cannot be readily considered as empowered, As Ehrenreich (1976) pinpoints they are confined to such activities as child raising, personal services for adult males and specified forms of productive labor. Gunduz-Hosgor (2009) in her study where she analyzes condition of women rights in contemporary Turkey relates difficulties women face to persistent gender inequality in Turkey, to her, with the help of growing industrialization and modernization women had access to public sphere, market, education and politics, however, men did not have a corresponding involvement in private domain as such; while women are undergoing a transformation and participating in public sphere more; men resist the change which, to her, also leads to low fertility as a result, for having more children overwhelms women.

More importantly, in an attempt to rebuild a sense of real family these women were seeking out ways to devise strategies, which causes them to become solicitous mothers trying more to protect rather than to parent their kids. The strategies created followed different trajectories, namely, trying to give kids complete sense family and a role model the women in this study were making sure the kids see their fathers regularly or they were having grand parents to step in to provide the role model. To that end they were either living with their parents or at least visiting their parents often. Since living with parents might yield multiple authority figures for the kids (i.e. at least grand father and grand mother), they also tried to find ways to make sure their own motherly authority is not overshadowed in the eyes of their children. Again, because participants are spending more time with their kids than their fathers do, they felt a need to keep some distance from their children, for; too close relationship may deteriorate the authority a mother is supposed to have as some participants stressed. As well, they were overly preoccupied with social stigma toward their kids and were trying to prevent that (asking for help from their teachers

at school was one thing they were resorting to). Therefore, for women in this study, parenting as a matter of fact was protecting kids from all possible things emanating from their divorce status that might have negative impact on the kids. What is at issue here is that even if they are highly educated and professional, women in this study were bearing the brunt of divorce stress. They were for the most part undertaking this stress just as they took on other social, psychological and financial challenges emerging in the wake of divorce. Therefore, in this connection women's facing the hardship alone once more shows us how division of labor continues even after divorce and men keeps benefitting from women's taking on most of the burden on their shoulders. As Hartman (1981) states men's control of women's labor; both in the household and in the labor market and the division of labor by gender tends to benefit men. Considering all its pros and cons how single parenting experience affects these women's agency and over all empowerment remains to be seen. Moreover, further research that explores meaning and value of children for professional women in a more comprehensive way with a larger sample size is needed

Also important in this juncture is the issue of masculinity reconstructed in these processes. As we come to see, while women are becoming single parents, their husbands are turning into childless divorcees and given the majority of participants who complained about their ex-husbands' lack of interest in childcare and neglect in visitation schedule, it can be said that the ex-husbands in this case in a way divorce not only from women but also from their children. Since this study explores post divorce experience through lenses of women with feminist perspective, experiences of men and construction of masculinity was beyond the scope of this study, however, this study underscores a need for further research not only on post divorce experience of men whereby we can have a chance to see how masculinity is challenged, affected and reconstructed through the experience of divorce, but also in process of Modernization history of Turkey.

*After Divorce: Social attitudes toward divorced women, Self Esteem and
Remarriage Experience*

As discussed in chapter six with respect to social repercussion of women's divorce, single parenting, and remarriage experience the participants have difficulty to be the active agents of their divorce process. Regarding the social reflections of the divorce the findings in this dissertation gives support to a study on Turkish people's attitudes toward divorce (Arıkan, 1996), which presents that Turkish people at least in principle conceive divorce as a solution to a failing marriage, yet when it comes to carrying their attitudes into everyday practices, they fail to act accordingly. Moreover, one thing that came as a surprise was existence of stigma in all conditions. In this study, among those interviewed a big fraction of the participants (79 percent) stated that they concerned about possible negative approaches toward their divorce and looked for ways not to be exposed to those behaviors. The attitudes and behaviors associated with stigma manifested themselves in every socio-economic levels and conditions surrounding divorce.

As many women stated in the quotations, blaming attitudes either come from family, relative or friends, colleagues, etc. Because keeping up marriage regardless of the circumstances is socially expected, it is not readily sympathized when individuals do not conform to this norm through act of divorce. As stated by Abbot and Wallace, it is always women who are the first to blame:

The breakdown of the family, the selfishness of women who want to have paid employment, or who do not want to remain in a relationship or who feel that the only way that can become adults is to have a child are blamed for society's ills and specifically for adolescent criminality and high welfare-state spending (1992; 139).

Patriarchal Affairs: Strategies

The women in this study, however, developed strategies to cope with informal sanction that they faced in everyday life, though oftentimes these strategies included

restrictions, involuntary changes in their lives. Interestingly, in our current study, several women interviewed expressed disinterest in traditional views and did not acknowledge any incidence. However, nearing the end of the interviews they revealed that they altered their behaviors to fit customary expectations to mitigate the stigma they might experience.

Perusing the transcripts I got an impression that women were undergoing disillusionments; namely, within the “secure” boundaries of marriage they may not have realized that independence has a price in some specific contexts; therefore by way of divorce as one participant put they gained a vantage point where they were able to see their social positions more clearly. So, while leaving an unhappy or rather abusing marriage attest to their agency and even can be read as resistance to the patriarchal gender norms, which consign women to keep up marriage and sacrifice not matter what; trying hard to readapt, on the other hand, is a sign of acquiescence in the final analysis. Trying to conform to the social expectations does not really help women to gain empowerment because the strategies they devised for the most part-as can be recalled from the quotations-limited their mobility and were for the most parts involuntary -like no longer attending to socially mixed dinners, not inviting male friends home, not coming home late at night, so forth.

Moreover, another aspect of strategizing is that women as a matter of fact seek out ways to conform to the social order, which in effect procreate the social sanctions and reinforce patriarchy. Given their socio-economic statuses these women are by definition deemed as empowered. They have power to challenge norms, however, when they consign themselves to conform to patriarchal norms in an attempt to safeguard their security and stability, they in a way not only perpetuate but also reinforce patriarchy by being complicit in establishing women’s secondary status in society. Because as Bisagni (1999) underscores while patriarchy likely is the source of abusive partnerships, female socialization towards self-sacrifice may help to perpetuate such patterns. To Bisagni it may even go so far as to assume accountability for tolerating spousal abuse as this stance ultimately might impel wellbeing (pg. 19). So, it is clear that these women manifested individual coping strategies to handle suppression under the rule of different forms of patriarchy

(Erturk, 2004). And it is possible to read these coping strategies- as Kandiyoti (1988) did in her famous work, *Bargaining with Patriarchy*- as “rules of game” or a small price paid in return for in exchange of the security, stability and presumed respect which may in turn procreate patriarchy.

Another area where women in this study presented themselves as active agents of divorce process which they describe as both grief and relief is self esteem women gained in the wake of divorce. While for some divorce tantamount to failure, for 19 participants it brought about relief. It was the end of over-involvement in marital conflicts and problems related to kids. Divorce in this sense was a new beginning; discovery of one’s self that was forgotten amid the marital conflicts and quarrels, as one participant uttered “they became more in control of their selves and their lives”.

With respect to having a sense of self esteem, it turned out that women derived meaning and self growth from their works. Therefore being employed in this study emerged as an important source of happiness which nurtured their selves. As feminist sociologists Catherine Riessman (1990) and Michel Bisagni (1995) refer “Insofar as divorce challenges women's traditional domestic role, forging an extramarital identity is central to adjustment”. In the wake of divorce, the women in this study held fast on their works more strongly. Working was backbone of their lives rather than a mean for making money and survival. In addition to material security, it also helped them to build a sense of purpose and accomplishment in life and challenges in different ways that helped them to build a life of their own.

Through their work women were also compensating multiple losses of statuses, i.e. status of being a wife in the family, and the privilege of marital status in society. They in a way were compensating these losses by strengthening their professional places in society. Moreover by sticking more strongly to their works women also kept their social networks intact. Therefore Work seemed to have empowered women not only through financial security and sense of accomplishment but also through giving them a chance to have a social life that keeps them away from focusing solely on the problems emanation from single parenting and divorce itself. As Bisagni (1995) in her study, the *role of work identity in women’s adjustment to*

divorce, emphasized work specifically after divorce provides positive distraction, social support, productivity and meaningfulness.

Furthermore, women also derived meaning and self growth from being single parent. Parenting provided them with sense of mastery over childrearing as well as sense of purpose and hope for a better future.

Just in this juncture it is important to note that although empowerment is a central concept in feminist theory, among the major schools, in particular, in socialist feminist theory, there is not enough emphasis on how women gain empowerment thorough definition of self and discovery of own distinctive perspectives, which essentially was the case in this study. Although Juliet Mitchell's (1971) conception of empowerment that stipulates four structures-production, reproduction, sexuality and the socialization of children to be transformed for women's liberation, helps us carve out a framework to understand women's agency; in this study that framework does not indeed address issues related to self as such. Although these structures are crucial for any transformation, a need for a detailed analysis of self is in evidence. Nor does Moghadam's questions measuring level of empowerment includes elements of self. In this study to compensate theoretical gap I benefitted from feminist Sociologists (i.e. Catherine Riessman, Michel Bisagni).

With respect to women's relations to their selves, the current study concurs with Riessman's findings that "Divorce is not unremittingly negative, associated only with distress and symptoms-despite the perspective that previous investigators have tended to adopt. Nor are positive and negative feelings necessarily bipolar. Alongside the strains are opportunities for considerable personal growth and identity transformation" (1990, p. 203).

Moreover, in this study, women's experience of self esteem turned out to be in line with what Feminist sociologist Michel Bisagni (1999) in her another study, *Women's Personal and Collaborative Knowledge within the Divorce Context: a Feminist Inquiry*, stated that women can go through empowering experiences like profound redefinition of self after they come to term with their divorce. They start a

new life by what emphasizing what Bisagni described as “personal voice”. As discussed in the section where divorce’s effect on the self esteem is explored, the participants recounted their experiences of self esteem after divorce and tried to improve their self-worth. Moreover, another key term Bisagni points out, relational empowerment, “the surge of a shared spirit of strength, solidarity and support and an augmented, amplified, and critically aware sense of wisdom and voice within a female community and caring and connection” (Ibid, p., 13) applies to the women’s experience in this study. As discussed in above chapters, even if they do not return to live with their parents, the women interviewed nevertheless derived enormous amount of support with variegated benefits ranging from emotional support to material ones from their relationships with their parents. The informal support network includes mothers, sisters and closes friends and provide them connections where they can gain “spirit of solidarity within a still soberingly sexist society” (see the section, Intergenerational Transmission of Divorce and Family Help Revisited). In this connection it is important to note that the solidarity they formed did not necessarily translate into a political activism. The women interviewed criticized the patriarchal practices as they confronted with them and did not attempt to involve in a larger project of conscious raising activities or informing people around them. This was clear from their lack of involvement in any political or feminist activism. None of the participants in this study stated any favoring attitude toward feminist movements. Therefore as I stated many times the survival strategies they created aimed to facilitate their conformity to the society on an individual level.

Remarriage

Remarriage, on the other hand, poses complexity with regard to women’s empowerment. Despite ending their first marriage with divorce, marital state was still preferable for women. They did not seem to be disillusioned with the institution of marriage per se, even though they are critical of their former marriage on the individual level. As one participant put it “*my ex was a maniac but it does not mean that all the men are maniac*”.

Women's power to terminate an unhappy relationship and form another one specifically on the ground of emotional gratification attested to the level of agency women have. However, upon entry to second or even higher order marriages, the women interviewed stated that they had to strategize to gain stability in the newly formed family. The participants seemed to have say in their marriages. However, in terms of division of labor all the women interviewed stated that even though they were working outside whole day, they still were doing housework and childcare fulltime, which indicated that some of the gender norms are repeated. Moreover in order to adjust to the newly formed family and help the children adapt to step father required carving out ways to handle challenges. One angle of these strategies is related to complexity of marriage and children adjustment to step fathers. Because "women are gate keeper in Turkey" as aforementioned, it falls down on women to compromise and strategize and attend to everybody's needs in family. Another angle of the strategies concerns social attitudes toward remarriage.

Although marriage is a socially approved form of unity, remarriage does not have the same value as the first marriages do, nor does it have social support and clear cut norms as the literature puts forward. Importantly, for unmarried women in this study, women's divorce status decreased their bargaining power in remarriage market. In Turkish society certain expectations reign in regard to marriage of a woman, the leading of them being virginity (see Cindoglu, 1997, 2008). It is such that not being virgin undermines the human capital these women have. As can be recalled from the quotations even though they do not support in principle, the participants in a way agreed that by divorcing they degraded their statuses thus they should remarry to a divorced man, since it is also socially expected, while the same restriction is not the case for a divorced man.

As Bir-Akturk and Fisiloglu (2009) stated just like in the case of divorce, the same stigmatizing social attitudes toward remarriage do exist in Turkish society, "the remarried have fewer extra familial supports due to the stigma they experience". The women interviewed expressed how they were uncomfortable about talking about their remarriages in social gatherings for fear that they were going to be judged. Remarrying or making higher order marriages for that matter after bereavement or

divorce is deemed improper for a woman who is expected to mourn for her husband after bereavement or in case of a divorce just dedicate her life to her kids. They are expected to be chaste and reserved, or else they are simply condemned, as one participant put it “they think you are loose”. Social attitudes were manifesting different trajectories for different category of women; while for remarried women attitudes were overshadowing the agency they achieved, for the unremarried women they had a deterring effect on their decision to remarry. One participants’ statement that “as a mother of two kids, she thought it was weird and unacceptable to think of remarriage as a life course” manifests internalization of patriarchal mindset. As Hartman (1981:387) points out “The argument about the significance of patriarchy in women's lives revolves around whether or not women perceive patriarchy as oppressive”

Nonetheless, remarriage when compared to status of being divorced can have slightly more positive place in society. Though stated by minority of participants in this study, it turned out that marriage is reassuring against society’s anxiety over a divorced woman, which is a very telling illustration of how patriarchy continues to shape women’s lives in various ways (Walby, 1989). Even though financially they are independent and do not seek marriage on the basis of financial security, they seem to look for ways to get social protection under the patronage of men, for “it is more comfortable to be married” as a participant stated. Therefore, what Juliet Mitchell (1971) stresses in her work, *Women’s Estate*, that a woman is forced economically to find a man who will help support her and her children does not indeed apply to the cases of women in this study. In fact, the fact that these women deem marriage as social security makes one think that the patriarchal mechanism underlying these women’s attitudes are more related to the cultural underpinnings. Therefore in order to understand the complex mechanism molding these women’s attitudes entails more flexible and fine tuning of the analysis of patriarchy (see Walby, 1989). At this point the concept of patriarchal bargain comes handy to discern how patriarchy in complex and subtle ways continue to shape women’s lives and how women end up being complicit in perpetuation of patriarchy in their responds to the patriarchal challenges (Johnson 1983; Beechey, 1979; Kandiyoti, 1988; Erturk 2004). As aforementioned, in their remarriage experience too, these

women were devising ways to maximize their securities and stabilities one important underpinning of their remarriage decision as they overtly stated or implied attested to that.

All in all, speaking for the women in the sample, although economic difficulties no longer matter, although by getting a divorce they in a way “gain a sense of control over their lives” *as* one participant put it, still it comes as an overstatement to say that women are empowered and they are free of informal sanctions that their elders endured decades ago. Because social circumstances are much more than scenes and settings for growth: they exert a force that strongly influences women and man in particular directions. In making sense of separation moreover the divorced use ideological categories that come out of a social context. (Riessman, 1990).

Moreover, the experiences of women are understood better when women’s role is reevaluated within the context of modernization history of Turkey. As discussed in the third chapter, since the foundation of Republic, the status of women has become an important aspect of modernization and westernization efforts (Muftuler-Bac, 1999; Gole, 1996; Bora 2002). Women were granted social, legal and political rights within the framework of Republican reforms. However, as is often stated it was emancipation without liberation (e.g. Kandiyoti, 1987) since the patriarchal mindset has always overshadowed women’s gains. Although Kemalist reforms, socioeconomic developments and increasing urbanization have contributed to women’s entry to public sphere, male role on the other hand did not manifest any corresponding change. As Kandiyoti (1982) adroitly depicted “Even in the case of professional women the strains inherent in combining work and domestic responsibilities are seldom allowed to reflect on men who continue to be sheltered from new role demands”. For highly educated and professional women, in particular, the patriarchal mindset keeping male role and sexist social attitudes intact caused challenges and barrier for women’s emancipation and women needed to develop survival strategies to mitigate with patriarchy to gain stability and to maintain their independence in society. The participants in this study presented similar reactions when they confronted with society after their divorce. As we discussed at length in this study, the participants talked a lot about challenges and

difficulties while trying to maintain their independence. This study, therefore, contributes to research on women's struggle on the way to emancipation since the foundation of Republic.

As Kümbetoğlu (2002) underscores, after all, empowerment in patriarchal setting is tantamount to new emerging problems and conflicts for women, which entails change in long entrenched values and attitudes. Therefore, it appears that as long as they are in this setting, women will need to devise strategies to conform to society which in return will give them security and stability while, on the other hand, these very coping strategies would keep on procreating and reinforcing patriarchy. As Young (1997) states even if women can be empowered in work force, it will be incomplete as long as the patriarchal social norms do not change and keep haunting the mindsets.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Case Summaries of the Participants

A brief information regarding women whose narratives were utilized for analyses were provided here. So as to protect the identities of the women only sketchy information is given and pseudonyms are used.

Arzu

Arzu is in her late thirties, an administrative assistant at a university. She has been divorced for three years. Since divorce, she has been living with her family in Istanbul. The biggest difficulty regarding her post divorce adjustment is the fact that she has to see her ex-husband every day since they both are working in the same work place. Her family is living in Istanbul for generations, her father is self employed-primary school graduate while her mother was (now retired) a teacher-Izmir Teaching Institution graduate. She provided me with rich and detailed information, regarding her divorce experience and feelings.

Hulya

Hulya, 37, is an Instructor at a university; she has been divorced for three and half years and does not have children. Living with her mother for a while after divorce, she moved to her own flat with one of her friends. She has a master's degree in education; at the time of our interview she was planning to apply for PhD in psychology. Her divorce can be deemed as the least traumatic divorce, for it was consensual and the divorce ground was termination of love, nevertheless, she stated that she had difficulty in adjustment, grieved for a long period of time and pulled together only through antidepressants. Drawing her own case she remarkably concluded that "even in its best possible state, divorce is a trauma". She did not only provided me with her recollections of event and her feelings, she also was notably analytical in her commentary regarding divorce in Turkish society, myths, realities and patriarchal mindsets that procreate negative attitudes toward divorced women.

Merve

Merve, 31, is a nurse in Denizli, a touristic city in the inner part of the Aegean Region. She has two sons, at the age of ten, and two. She has been divorced for one year, at the time of our interview she was still suffering from depression and physical ailments resulting from the prolonged divorce process. Before divorce she lived in Konya, right after the dissolution she moved to Denizli. Now she is living alone with her two sons. Thanks to her mother's financial and emotional help she was able to pull herself together sooner than expected. she was very open and helpful during the interview and provided us with ample data.

Ayla

Ayla is in her early thirties, a daughter of educated parents; father, lawyer, graduated from two universities and mother a college graduate running a book store. She has been divorced for three years, has been living alone in the upper class, rich district of Istanbul (Şişli). What was so special about our interview with her was her being a very successful and committed lawyer specialized in divorce cases and her being founder of Divorced Mothers Association. She was candid and open and provided me with not only information about her own case but also her experience as a lawyer and as a chair of Divorced Mothers Association. With her insightful ideas and analytical commentaries she really did contribute to the study. Our interview was longer than the other interviews and was full of rich information. We reserved part of our interview to Divorced Mothers Association where different experiences of women in the association, attitudes, beliefs, and legal aspect of divorce were raised.

Tulay

Tulay, 39, is an Instructor at a university, the mother of one son, age 2, and a daughter, age 13. Ten years after divorce she remarried and now has a happy marriage. She has master's degree in teaching. Coming from an educated family; father teacher and mother politician/journalist she had a very interesting childhood. She divorced after a 3 years of marriage while her daughter was 9 months old. The most difficult hardship upon divorce was juggling between work and childcare. Not

being able to manage it, she had to send her daughter to her mother who was in Cyprus for three years. She was only able to pay fortnightly visit during three years. After three years of separation, she had hard times reestablishing her authority and mother-daughter relationships with her daughter. She remarried when her daughter was at school age, and problems culminated with her remarriage, for the daughter reacted strongly against the step father. Our interview revolved mostly around her divorce experience and her daughter's reactions to the events she went through. We made our interview in her office; she was candid and comfortable during the interview.

Sevda

Sevda is a real estate agent, mother of a son, age 10. She is 40 years old, and lives with her son. Daughter of migrant family who worked in Germany as guest workers in 1970s, she commuted between Germany and Bayburt during her childhood and was left to her grandmother till her family finally returned to Istanbul. She was a very self-reliant, outspoken and easy going woman. She was pretty comfortable with the interview and often laughed throughout the course of interview. Her analytical commentary gave me the impression of wisdom; she was really incisive in her analyses.

Deniz

Deniz is in her early forties, the mother of one daughter, age 18. She has been divorced for eight years. She is an Assistant Manager at a firm, has worked for several companies so far. She is living with her family and daughter. She came from traditional conservative family, which was the particular reason of her early marriage; marriage for her was kind of an escape. She does not seem to be happy living with her family after all those years and having financial problems since divorce.

Fulya

Fulya is also in her early forties. She is a training manager at a technology partner firm for travel agencies. She has a daughter at preschool age, 5; and lives alone with her daughter. She came from an urban, educated family, her father is a judge and her

mother, after teaching for a while quit working and ended up being a housewife. She has been divorced for five years. My interview with her was pretty lively and full of rich dialogues, laughs. Although her story is one of a sad one, she seemed to be quite comfortable with it, she provided me with lots of details. We contacted her through Divorced Mothers Association, where she was a member; we also talked about her role in the association.

Filiz

Filiz, 36, is a sales manager, daughter of a son, age three. She lives alone with her son. She came from a conservative family, her father was a junior officer in military and her mother was a housewife. Due to her father's position they traveled a lot and finally settled in Istanbul. Her experience with her own family, specifically her father, was more of an issue than divorce per se; during the interview she told painful recollection regarding her parents' parenting style and their restrictive behavior toward her due to which she decided to marry to escape. During the divorce process she did not get any support from her family and found solace in her friends and son. Her narrative also contained notable information about her parenting concerns and attitudes toward children of divorced families. She was quite indignant about the prejudices against children from divorced families.

Zerrin

Zerrin is in her early forties, the mother of one son at primary school, age 8. Zerrin is General Manager Assistant in an insurance company, due to her position we talked over her experience as a woman working in an upper position which is mostly occupied by men. She is a daughter of an educated family living in Bursa, a psychiatrist father; a high school graduate mother. The most unique aspect of her narrative was the number of marriages she has had; she has divorced twice and married three times. Even if they all are difficult experiences for her, her second divorce seemed to have a more devastating effect on her, her son is from the second marriage.

Burcu

Burcu is an instructor at a university, mother of three daughters age 16, 10 and 7. She is 39 years old and was divorced after 16 years of marriage.. She is coming from an urban family, her father is building contractor and her mother is a housewife. Formerly they lived in Thrace region, Kırklareli, her childhood passed there. When the daughters came Istanbul for university education, the family moved Istanbul and since then they are living here. Her marital problems started right after she got married and continued until she finally divorced, her narrative mostly revolved around divorce process and the reasons that led the divorce. We met with Burcu three times at her house. She was open, very conversational and helpful. Our interview to her lasted for 8 hours altogether.

Asiye

Asiye is a graduate student in Connecticut, USA. She is 29 years old, has been divorced for two years and remarried a while ago. Asiye was born in Istanbul, and she is the daughter of modelist/dress designer father-secondary school graduate and retired mother-high school graduate. She is now teaching assistant, formerly in Turkey she was a cleric (secretary) at university. I interviewed Asiye before she went to USA; afterwards we emailed each other for additive questions and for some clarification. She wrote to me several times promptly and she seemed to be committed to the study. Unlike other women, her narrative had a negative tone which manifested a marked protest against patriarchy, traditions that she stated, in her experience, as the underlying reasons of conflicts in the marriages.

Emine

Emine, 33, is a quality manager in a textile firm. She has a son at preschool age, 5 and lives with her family. She is coming from an urban family in Istanbul. Emine had difficulty to decide to participate and before coming to interview she wanted to know a lot about the research, after a several phone calls and emails informing her about the nature and procedures of the interview, she finally decided to participate. Her behavior before and during interview gave me the impression that she was too much skeptical about people which may have been the result of divorce process-she told how she confronted with many intricate plays by her ex-husband during trials.

Her narrative contained many painful events; since getting divorced itself was very difficult she seemed to be relieved to have had a divorce eventually..

Esra

Esra is in her early forties, she is a lawyer and came from an urbanite, educated family, lived in Istanbul for generations; her father is pharmacist and her mother housewife, university graduate. She has a son, age 2, 5. She was very comfortable with the interview, she provided me with a lot of details and commentaries regarding her marriage and divorce experience. Divorce was definitely very painful for her because she still felt a deep love toward her ex-husband, however, she seemed to have overcome trauma two years after divorce. With divorce all her life changed because she lost most of her financial savings and because she was not working due to marriage and then childbirth, she was kind of starting anew at the time of our interview. She also became interested in spiritualist movements, read books and got involved in one of the gatherings of these movements, *the Secret*. Her self confidence and motivation was impressing; our interview was full or rich dialogues and commentaries.

Yasemin

Yasemin, 41, is an accounting manager living alone with his son in Istanbul. She has been divorced over a year. Her divorce decision was a shocking one. After 16 years half of which passed with hustles and the bustles of bringing up their son and going back and forth between decision to divorce and keeping up the marriage, she finally ended her marriage which to her was not really a marriage indeed. We conducted our interview at a café, even though she said she moved on in her life, it was clear on her narrative that she was put down by her failing marriage and the post divorce hardships, specifically her son's adjustment problems..

Macide

Macide was a finance manager living with her two sons in Istanbul. She is 50 years old. She has been divorced for 15 years after an 8-year of marriage. Interestingly she told that the worst part of her divorce story was her relentless efforts to convince her husband, her family and even her friends that she wanted divorce. Her post divorce experience was equally difficult for she was feeling sad for her two sons's being away from their fathers. She seemed to be too much attached to her career and was proud of her success that starting as a mere accountant she climbed up the career ladders and was promoted to the managerial position in the same company. Her job was centerpiece of her life; we conducted our interview in her spacious and fancy office.

Nergis,

Nergis, 41, is a teacher. She got divorced after three years of marriage and remarried couple of years later. Her post divorce period before she remarried was “not as easy as she foresaw” she lived alone with her son, and her son's reaction to their newly found situation grieved her too much. Remarriage for her was a turning point by means of which she both had a closure over her divorce and got rid of the constant grief she was feeling due to her son's loneliness and being away from his father. After remarriage she had two more children which made them have a real sense of family. We met her in her own house and had a rich interview.

Rezzan

Rezzan, 34, is a teacher. She has been divorced for 7 years after her two years of marriage which for the most part was full of conflicts and quarrels. Rezzan is coming from a divorced background, both her parents and her sister are divorced, which affected her marital behavior in a way that in order to not to repeat her mothers and sisters' mistakes and to avoid confrontation she put up with her husband's maltreatment of her. Right after her divorce, she decided to move on with her life and got into graduate studies. At the time of our interview she was pretty impressive in her determination to change her life for the better.

Belkis

Belkis, 39, works as an accountant at a firm. She is the mother of two sons; age 10 and 1. She lives with her family in Istanbul, her family-in her own words- is a classical Turkish family, conservative yet understanding, and economically middle class (father working-teacher; mother, vocational high school graduate- housewife). She has been divorced for one year. At the beginning of our interview Belkis was too much reserved and reticent, fortunately half way through the interview, she became more comfortable and provided sufficient information. She was quite clever in her commentaries and responses.

Aysun

Aysun, 38, is project manager at a company; she has a PhD. Her life is an example of struggle. She came from uneducated and lower class family where she started earning money from very early on by helping her parents in their small shop. Even before primary schooling she helped her parents by babysitting at home for her mother works in the shop with her father, in which time she educated herself and learned reading on her own. Studying at engineering leading universities here in Turkey and US, she worked as assistant professor in Turkey in Malatya where she met her husband and had the marriage and divorce experience. She has a son, age 12 and a daughter age 9. She has been divorced for 8 years. Although she had a traumatic marriage experience where she suffered from violence, she seemed very comfortable while telling her story and she provided us with a lot of details and commentaries regarding her marriage and divorce experience. Our interview to her was full of rich dialogues where we talked on many other issues as well as her divorce ranging from patriarchy, feminism and feminists in Turkey, business life, and academy. She was a quite strong and determined woman, her self confidence and motivation were impressive.

Raziye

Raziye, is a 31 years old divorcé. Before divorce she was running a souvenir shop with her husband, upon disagreements as to decision making and some minor

disputes she gave up working. She has one son, age 11 and is living alone in Istanbul. She comes from an urbanite family, her childhood passed in Ankara. Her parents specifically, her father is committed to education a lot, and wanted their daughter to attend university. She was divorced for a year, and seemed to have overcome the post divorce distress. She was quite lively and determined to continue her education, her career, and wish to provide her son a good education.

Nurgul

Nurgul, 45, is a journalist living in Istanbul with her son aged 18. She got divorced after 10 years of marriage. Couple of years later she remarried. We talked both about her divorce and her remarriage experience. She was open and upfront during the interview. Also she seemed to be very assertive and thoughtful; our interview was full of rich dialogues and commentaries.

Mehtap

Mehtap, 58, is an administrative assistant at a university. After divorce she lived with her two sons in Istanbul and upon one of her son's marriages and the second son's leaving the city for university education, she began living alone in her own apartment. She has been divorced for nine years, before getting divorced together with her ex-husband they lived abroad for 30 years. Mehtap had a very traumatic experience of divorce. Her life story was full of struggles for economic and emotional survival. Her work experience both abroad and in Istanbul took a great amount of our interview and her life being rich in experience made our interview insightful. She welcomed us in her spacious office and our interview to her lasted around three hours.

Perihan

Perihan, 38, is a mother of three children. She married at a very early age while she was a university student and became pregnant soon after, so for her the struggles to juggle between children care, home making and work started at a very early age, which for the most part was her divorce ground. She divorced seven years ago and two years after her divorce she remarried. Our interview to her revolved around her divorce, remarriage experiences and

children's reaction to these events. Her strength and perseverance for her work and for her career was quite stunning, at the time of our interview to her she was an MA student. The interview took place in her office and lasted more than two hours.

Isik

Isik, 39, is an assistant professor at one of the leading universities in Turkey. She has a PhD in teaching. She has one daughter, age 9 and is living with her daughter in Ankara. She comes from an urbanite family and has lived in Ankara throughout her life. She came from a divorced family, she lived together with her mother until she married. She told negative effects of her mother's controlling behaviors on her, which she thinks was the particular reason of her lack of self confidence and of her sudden decision to marry to "escape" from her repressive family. She got divorced six years ago and seemed to be determined to set her life again after all the sufferings she went through; she was committed to her career and was planning to continue get ahead.

Evren

Evren, 37, is a lawyer. She has one daughter, age 9 and is living with her daughter in Istanbul. She comes from a traditional family where parents were not doing well enough financially. She has been divorced for 5 years. She seemed to move on with her life. The interview took place in her office located in a central district of Istanbul. Being a lawyer dealing particularly with divorce cases, she was quite thoughtful and experienced. Our interview to her was quite rich.

Selma

Selma, 43, is Bank Branch Manager. She is living in Istanbul with her daughter, age 14. She is a real entrepreneur and committed very much to her career. Her life was full of endeavors to juggle her work aspirations and marriage. She had a very volatile, colorful personality. She was not only committed to her career but also to her interest. We conducted our interview in her work place. The interview lasted

more than two hours, she was very conversational and comfortable during our interview, providing us with ample data.

Neriman

Neriman, 30, is a teacher who is living in Elazığ. What is unique to Neriman was that she came all the way from Elazığ to Istanbul to participate in our study, and during her stay in Istanbul we met three times to complete our interview which altogether lasted for eight hours. She came from a divorce background, her parents got divorced when she was a high school student and her elder sister divorced soon after she got married. her divorce experience was a traumatic story, she had been very committed to her marriage and even though from the very beginning it was not a fulfilling marriage she felt she had to stay in that marriage no matter what. Living in a small city, she basically was concerned about people's attitudes since she would have been the third person divorcing in the family. At the time of our interview she had been divorced over a year.

Cisem

Cisem is in her early thirties, she is lawyer, living in Istanbul. Coming from a divorced background, Cisem talked more about her parents divorce and how her own divorce relate to a great extent her divorce background. Although she was comfortable during the interview it was overt that she could not recovered two divorces she had gone through which was quite clear in her account. Her marriage lasted three years and she was childless. her being childless allowed us to get insight into the experience of a childless divorcé.

Tugba

Tugba, 31, is an instructor at university, she lives in Ankara. She too comes from a divorced background; her parents got separated when she was at 7, upon her mother's radical decision to go US for graduate studies. Her parent's divorce was separation from her parents, for she had to live with her grandparents for couple of years. Upon her mother's return she spent her life with her mother witnessing her single parenting and remarriage experience. Tugba's marriage did not last long, after one and half years she got divorced from her ex-husband because of her mother

in law's incessant interference in the marriage. Couple of years after her divorce, she remarried with and had a baby. She was pretty comfortable during the interview providing us with ample data. we had our interview at her house.

Meryem

Meryem, 44, is an instructor at a university and a PhD student; she has been divorced for two years and lives with her two sons in Istanbul. At the time of our interview she was studying on her dissertation. Meryem as a matter of fact was not prodivorce woman and as she told us she struggled not to separate giving her husband several changes and waiting for 7 years before she finally agreed on divorce. The interview took place in her house where she lives with her sons. During our interview she was quite conversational. She seemed to be recovered from the trauma she had during divorce process, she was rather peaceful and was comfortable with talking about her divorce in details.

APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM

Dear respondent this questionnaire form will be evaluated for the dissertation titled *POST DIVORCE EXPERIENCE OF HIGLY EDUCATED AND PROFESSIONAL WOMEN*. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. The information gained from this interview will remain confidential and your identity will not be revealed. The results of this research will be used for academic purposes only and will be disseminated in scholarly journals and presentations. If I should come to any question that you do not want to answer, please let me know and we will go on to the next question. You may stop the interview at any time.

I understand that the interview will be taped, transcribed and analyzed, that the transcripts will be identified by fake names, that the interviews will be published, but all the identifying marks will be removed and that the tapes will be erased immediately after the final analysis.

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary.

Signed _____

1-Your age:

2-Your hometown:

3-Where did you live till you were 12 years old.

4-What is your mother's education and occupation?

5- What is your father's education and occupation?

6-What is your parents' marital status?

7- What is your education level?

8- Do you work? If yes what is your occupation?

9- What is your average salary?

10- Do you live with your family or alone?

11-Where do live now (city/district)?

12- What was your ex-husband's education level?

13-What was/is your ex-husband's occupation?

14-Do you have child?

15-How long did your marriage last?

16-What is your divorce date?

APPENDIX C: TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Tezin Kapsamı

31 kadınla yaşam öyküsü mülakat tekniği ile yapılan çalışmada, yüksek tahsilli ve çalışan kadının boşanma sonrası tecrübesi çalışılmıştır. Türkiye’de boşanma Batı ülkelerine nazaran çok yüksek oranda olmasa da 2000li yıllardan itibaren dikkate değer ölçüde artış göstermiş 2008 yılında ise zirve noktasına ulaşmıştır. Örneğin 90’lı yıllarda boşanma oranı Türkiye’de binde 0.46 ve binde 0.52 iken, 2001 yılında büyük bir artış göstererek binde 1.35 % olmuş ve bu tarihten itibaren de artarak yükselmeye devam ederek 2008 yılında binde 1.40 ile zirve noktasına ulaşmıştır. Bununla birlikte Yılmaz & Fisiloglu (2005)’nunda ifade ettiği gibi boşanma Türkiye’de aile yaşamında karşı karşıya kalınan stres ve sıkıntıların önemli bir göstergesi olup Türkiye’nin içinden geçtiği değişim sürecinin bir yansıması olmasına rağmen üzerinde çok az çalışılan bir konu olmuştur.

Son yıllarda boşanma sosyologlar tarafından çalışılmaya başlansa da genelde yapılan çalışmalar daha çok boşanmanın çocuk ve aile üzerinde etkisi üzerine yoğunlaşmış kadınların boşanma sonrası tecrübesi neredeyse hiç çalışılmamıştır. Boşanma daha çok genel manada bir kurum olarak aile ya da çocuk üzerine etkisi açısından sıklıkla çalışılmıştır. Yine boşanma demografik olarak ele alındığı zaman daha ziyade trendler, boşanma sonrası oluşan tek ebeveynli aileler, yeniden evlilik neticesinde kurulmuş aileler ve bu oluşumların demografik özellikleri itibarıyla ele alınmaktadır. Boşanmanın demografik sonuçları ve genel anlamda aile, özelde de çocuk üzerine etkisi önemli konular olmakla birlikte kadın ya da erkek üzerine etkisinin spesifik olarak ele alınmamış olması ve yine sosyolojik perspektifle ele alınmaması literatürde bir eksiklik oluşmasına sebep olmaktadır. Bu bağlamda bu çalışma eğitilmiş ve çalışan kadınların boşanma sonrası tecrübelerini sosyolojik bir perspektif ile çalışarak literatüre önemli bir katkı sağlama amacını taşımaktadır.

Teorik Bakış Açısı

Boşanma olgusunu açıklamak için Feminist teori (Carbonne, 1994), sembolik etkileşim (Orbuch, 1992), sistem teorisi (Emery, 1994), sosyal kapital perspektif (Teachman, Paasch, & Carver, 1996), and the yaşam süreci perspektifi (Amato & Booth, 1997), gibi pek çok teori kullanılmıştır. Bu çalışmada teorik bakış açısı olarak feminist teori den istifade etmiştir. Feminist teori kadına ait tecrübeyi anlamamızda bize yardımcı olurken kadınların ataerki karşısında yasadıkları zorluklar, bu zorluklara karşı mücadeleleri hakkında da bize bakış açısı sunar. Feminist olmayan yaklaşımların kadına ait tecrübeyi sorunsallaştırırken daha eril bir bakış açısından yola çıkmakta ve kadına ait tecrübeyi kendi bütünselliği içerisinde verememektedir. Sandra Harding(1986)' in ifade ettiği gibi feminist teori kadına ait tecrübeyi algılamamız ve açıklamamızda bize alternatif bir bakış açısı sunmaktadır.

Feminist perspektif aile hayatını araştırmalarının merkezine alır ve kadının aile içindeki rolüne odaklanır. Kadını ezen ve ikinci sınıflaştırın mekanizmaların aile içersinde şekillendiğinden yola çıkarak bu mekanizmaları ve onların yeniden üretim süreçlerini kritik bir bakış açısı ile ele alır. Cinsellik, çocuk doğurma ve yetiştirme, aile içi şiddet, aile içinde eşitsizlikler gibi uzun süre bilimsel literatürde ihmal edilmiş konular feminist literatürde sık sık işlenen konular haline gelmiştir. Dahası araştırma sonuçlarından toplum yararına politikalar üretmek feminist teorinin amaçlarından olduğundan yapılan çalışmalar sadece aile çalışmalarına değil aile içi eşitliği sağlamaya yönelik politika üretmeye de katkıda bulunmuştur.

Belirtmek gerekir ki feminist teori aile kavramına kesin ve net bir tanım getirmek ya da onu teorik bir kavram olarak ele almaktan ziyade, daha çok aile ile iç içe olan olgular (aile içi cinsiyet rolleri, annelik, aile içinde sosyalleşme, vs.) ve bu olguların birbirleri ile olan etkileşimi üzerine yoğunlaşır. (Thorne, 1992). Özel ve kamusal ayrımını reddeder ve aileyi toplumdaki ayrılmış izole bir birim olarak görmez. Tam tersine feminist teoriye göre aile sosyal devlet, okul, gibi daha büyük kurumlarla güçlü bağlar içindedir. Feminist teori bu şekilde kadının aile içi rolleri ve iş yaşamı arasındaki çatışma, iş piyasası ve kadın gibi kavramları mercek altına alır.

Bu çalışmada feminist teoriden istifade etmemiz bize sadece teorik bir çerçeve sunmaz aynı zamanda kadınların geleneksel bir toplumda karşılaştıkları zorluklar ve kısıtlanmaları ortaya çıkarma ve daha da önemlisi kadınların bu zorluklar karşısında ürettikleri yaşam stratejileri hatta güçlenme odaklarına da dikkatimizi çeker. Feminist bakış acısı kadını sadece özel yaşamdaki sorumlulukları ile kısıtlayan ona kamusal alan yasağı getiren geleneksel aile yapılarını eleştirmekle kalmaz, kadınların bu sınırlı kalıplardan nasıl çıkacaklarına yoğunlaşsan, çareler üreten çalışmalar içersine girer. Bu bağlamda kadınların boşanma sonrası tecrübelerine odaklanan bu çalışma araştırmaya katılan kadınların boşanma sürecinde karşılaştıkları zorlukları incelerken diğer taraftan kadınların yaşam stratejileri, topluma entegre olma çabaları ya da tepkileri mercek altına alınmıştır. Bu şekilde çalışma Türkiye bağlamında çok çalışılmayan bir konuyu, sosyolojik ve feminist bir perspektifle ele alarak aile çalışmaları alanına bir katkı sağlamak amacındadır.

Son yıllarda tüm dünyada olduğu gibi Türkiye’de de aile yapılarında değişim gözlenmektedir. Boşanma oranları artmakta, çiftler daha geç yaşta evlenmekte, yeniden evlilik oranları artmakta, doğum oranları dikkate değer oranda düşmektedir. Geleneksel aile modellerinin dönüşümüne sebebiyet veren tüm bu değişimler, büyük oranda kadının daha fazla oranda eğitim ve iş yaşamına girmesi ile vuku bulmuştur. Bu nedenle Kadınların yaşamlarında ve algılarındaki değişimi anlamak feminist bir perspektifle yapılan analizi gerektirmektedir.

İki Temel Teorik Kavram: Ataerki ve Güçlenme

Ataerki feminist teoride erkek egemen sistemi ve kadının bu sistemdeki ikincil konumunu açıklamak için sıklıkla başvurulmuş bir kavramdır. Farklı feminist okullardan teorisyenler ataerki ye farklı manalar yüklemiş daha maddeci bakış açısından bakan feminist okullar ataerkinin erkeğin kadının emeği üzerindeki kontrolü ve sömürüsü, kültürel bir bakış açısı ile ataerki'yi ele alan feminist okullar ise ataerkinin bir erkek egemen bir ideoloji olduğunu ortaya atmış ve kadının özellikle cinselliği ve bedeni üzerinde erkeğin kontrolü olarak kavramsallaştırmışlardır. Tüm farklı yaklaşımların ortak noktası ise ataerkinin biyolojik bir temelini olmadığı ve değişebileceğidir. Ataerki feminist teoride temel

bir kavram olmasına rağmen son yıllarda sıklıkla eleştirilen ve tartışılan bir kavram olmuştur. Feminist teorisyenler bir kavramın tüm toplumlardaki farklı tecrübeleri açıklayamayacağı, kadının ikincil konumunun farklı kültürlerde farklı yapılanış biçimi olduğu ve kültürel ve coğrafi bağlamın dikkate alınarak çalışılması gerektiğini ısrarlar vurgulamışlardır. Bazı teorisyenler ataerki gibi sınırlayıcı bir kavramdan çok genel ve açık olmaması nedeniyle tamamen vazgeçmek gerektiğini bile söylemişlerdir (Littlewood, 2004). Sylvia Walby gibi bazı teorisyenler ise ataerki ye daha kapsayıcı bir tanım getirmek suretiyle sorunu çözmeye çalışmışlardır. Sylvia Walby'nin ataerkinin kamusal ve özel alanda farklı yapılandığını ifade eden ve ekonomide, devlette, aile içi şiddette, cinsellikte kendini yeniden ürettiğini ifade eden kavramsallaştırması bu çalışmada özellikle kullanılmıştır. Çalışmada ayrıca Deniz Kandiyoti'nin kadınların kendilerinin de mevcut sistemdeki iktidar ve güvenliklerini artırmak amacı ile bilerek ya da bilmeyerek ataerki'yi destekleyen pratikler içersine girebildiklerini ifade eden “ataerki pazarlıklar” kavramı da kullanılmıştır.

Güçlenme

Çalışmanın temel kavramlarından biri de güçlenme kavramıdır. Daha çok kalkınma alanında kullanılan kadının güçlenmesi kavramı feminist teoride oldukça merkezi bir kavramdır. Feminist teoride güçlenme ataerki ideolojiyi sorgulama ve toplumda kadının ikincil statüsünü üreten ve yeniden üreten mekanizmaları tasfiye etme olarak tanımlanmaktadır (Ranadive, 2005). Marksist bir tabandan gelen feminist okullar güçlenmeyi kadının iş yaşamına katılımı, iş piyasasında daha istikrarlı bir pozisyonda olması, diskriminasyondan kurtulması olarak açıklarken, daha kültürel boyutuna eğilen feminist yaklaşımlar güçlenmeyi toplumda cinsiyetçiliğin azalması, kadının bedeni üzerinde kontrolü olarak tanımlama eğilimindedirler. Bununla birlikte tüm feminist okullar kadının güçlenmesinin eğitime, iş piyasasına ve ev içi emeğe erkekle eşit oranda katılmasıyla mümkün olacağı görüşünde birleşmektedirler. Bu çalışmada Juliet Michell (1971)'in kadının güçlenmesi için 4 temel yapının üretim, yeniden üretim, cinsellik ve çocuk bakımının sosyalizasyonu gibi kavramların dönüşmesi gerekir yaklaşımı temel alınsa da, Feminist sosyolog Michel Bisagni (1999)'nin ortaya atmış olduğu kadınların birbirleri ile kurmuş

oldukları sosyal ağların maddi manevi destek mekanizmaları olduğu ve kadınların güçlenmesinde önemi yadırganamayacağı tezi de dikkate alınmıştır. Güçlenmeyi daha somut manada ele almak için ise Valentine Moghadam'ın (2007: p., 7) güçlenmeyi kavramsallaştırmak için sormuş olduğu sorulardan istifade edilmiştir. Bir toplumda kadının güçlenmesinin ne seviye olduğunu ölçmek için Moghadam su soruları yöneltilir:

- (i) Kadınların yaşadıkları toplumda sahip oldukları yasal haklar nelerdir?
- (ii) Kadınlar politik yaşama ne kadar katılmaktadırlar? Memnun olmadıkları Herhangi politik ya da sosyal hareket karşısında memnuniyetsizliklerini ifade edebilirler mi?
- (iii) İş yaşamında ne kadar kolay terfi edebilmekteler? Herhangi bir diskriminasyon yaşıyorlar mı? Eşit işe eşit ücret politikası ne kadar uygulanmaktadır?.
- (iv) Toplumda kadınlar için ilk evlilik yaşı nedir? Kadınlar eşlerini kendileri seçebiliyorlar mı? Evlenebildikleri gibi boşanabiliyor larmı?
- (v) Toplumun boşanmış ya da dul kadına karşı tutumu nedir?
- (vi) Kadınlar eğitim hayatına erkeklerle aynı oranda girebiliyorlar mı?
- (vii) Kadınlar kendi doğurganlıklarını kendileri kontrol edebiliyorlarmı?
- (viii) Toplumda kadına karşı şiddet ne oranda kontrol altına alınabiliyor? Ne tarz hukuki müeyyideler bulunmaktadır?

Metodoloji ve Metotlar

Bu tezde yaşam öyküsü mülakat tekniği kullanılmış, 31 yüksek tahsilli ve çalışan kadınlara, iki yıl boyunca yüz yüze mülakat yapılmıştır. Çalışmada yaşam öyküsü mülakat tekniği kullanmamızın nedeni bu mülakat tekniğinin kadınların boşanma tecrübesini daha geniş bir perspektiften dinlememize ve boşanmanın gerçekleştiği bağlamı da görmemize imkân sağlıyor olmasıdır ki bu feminist teori ile de bağdaşan bir özelliktir. Feminist teori cinsiyet bağlılığı ve özne-nesne hiyerarşisi olmayan araştırmayı destekler (Harding 1986: 10) ayrıca uygulanan metodun katılımcıları güçlendirmesi hatta terapetik bir etkisinin olması da önemlidir (Mies, 1983; Smith,

1987).Her ne kadar nicel metotlar da önemsense de feminist teoride nitel metotların kullanımı daha sık karşılaşılan bir durumdur. Bunun nedeni ise nitel metotların sembolik anlam, ideoloji ve iç içe geçmiş ilişkileri ortaya çıkarmada daha başarılı olmasıdır (Thompson, 1992: 8).

Bu çalışmada veri analiz için grounded teori yaklaşımı kullanılmıştır. İlk defa 1967 yılında Barney Glasser ve Anselm Strauss tarafından kullanılan yaklaşım, derinlemesine analize olanak sağladığı için aile çalışmalarında özellikle kullanılmıştır (Weaver & Marilyn, 2005:481). Bu teorik yaklaşım bize elde ettiğimiz veriden teorik kategoriler oluşturma ve analizi bu kategoriler ışığında yapma olanağı sağlamaktadır. Feminist teori ve grounded teori pek çok açıdan örtüşmektedir. Her iki yaklaşımda katılımcının tecrübesini önemser ve sübjektif veriyi bilgi kaynağı olarak görür. Kadınların tecrübesini tüm yönleriyle anlamak olayın gerçekleştiği sosyo politik bağlamı tam anlamıyla kavramaktan geçer dolayısıyla her iki yaklaşımda da sosyopolitik bağlam önemlidir feminist teori bunu çünkü kadınlar toplumun belli bir şekilde yapılanmasından dolayı belli bir tecrübeyi yaşamak zorunda kalırlar diye açıklar. Son olarak feminist teori bulguları basit bir teoriye entegre etmekten kaçınır (Noone, 2003) ve bulgularını sonuç değil yeni bulgular için birer başlangıç diye sunar (Keller, 1983), grounded teori ise hipotez kurup test etmek yerine araştırmacının elindeki veriye eğilip oradan yeni bulgular üretmesini tavsiye eder (Charmaz, 2006: 4).

Veri Toplama

Çalışmada 31 yüksek tahsilli ve çalışan kadınla yaşam öyküsü tekniği ile yapılmıştır. Örneklem kartopu yöntemi ile yapılmıştır. Haziran 2007 ile Eylül 2009 tarihleri arasında iki yıl süresince yüz yüze mülakat yapılmıştır. Mülakatlar bazı durumlarda birden fazla oturumda gerçekleştirilmiş ve en az bir buçuk saat en fazla sekiz saat sürmüştür. Mülakatların hemen hemen tamamı İstanbul ve Ankara'da gerçekleştirilmiş, iki katılımcı Denizli ve Elazığ'dan katılmıştır.

Mülakat öncesi katılımcılar mülakat hakkında bilgilendirilmiş, 4 katılımcı hariç tüm katılımcılar mülakat sürecinde kayıt cihazı kullanımını Kabul etmişlerdir. Katılımcılar ile çoğunlukla iş yerleri ya da iş yerlerine yakın kafelerde mülakat yapılırken 7 katılımcı ile evlerinde mülakat yapılmıştır.

Mülakatta yaşam öyküsü mülakat tekniği kullanıldığı için açık uçlu sorular sorulmuş, katılımcılardan hayat hikâyelerini anlatmaları istenmiş ve cevapların yeterince açık olmadığı durumlarda katılımcıdan daha açıklayıcı olması istenmiştir. Mülakat boyunca açık uçlu sorular araştırmanın temel sorularını içermiştir. Bu sorular sırasıyla:

- (iii) Kadınlar boşanma sonrası dönemde boşanma stresini nasıl yaşıyorlar? Boşanmayı kadının güçlenimini genel manada nasıl etkiliyor?
- (iv) Yüksek tahsilli ve çalışan kadının boşanma sonrasında hangi alanlarda zorluklar ve kısıtlanmalar ile karşılaşmakta? Hangi alanlarda rahatlamaktadır?
- (v) Ekonomik zorluklar, tek ebeveynlik ve toplumun negatif tutumları ile nasıl baş etmek de ne tarz yaşam stratejileri geliştirmektedirler?
- (vi) Boşanma yüksek tahsilli ve çalışan kadının öz benlik saygısını nasıl etkilemiştir? Aldatılmak, terk edilmek, şiddete maruz kalmak gibi yoğun hisler ile nasıl baş etmişlerdir?

Mülakatlar kayıt edilmiş ve sonrasında araştırmacı tarafından transkript edilmiştir. Transkript esnasında aynı zamanda notlar tutulmuş teorik kategoriler oluşturmak amacı ile kodlamalar yapılmıştır. Katılımcıların gerçek isimleri gizliliği korumak amacı ile çalışmada verilmemiş sahte isimler tercih edilmiştir. Araştırmacı katılımcılardan veri toplamamın yanı sıra avukatlar ve Boşanmış Anneler Derneği ile temasa geçerekte veri toplamaya çalışmıştır. Boşanmış Anneler Derneği'nin

online tartışma forumuna üye olunmuş ve yine diğer üyelerinde izni ile tartışmalar yer yer analizlere eklenmiştir.

Katılımcıların Karakteristik Özellikleri

Katılımcılar üç katılımcı hariç en az lisans derecesine sahip tüm gün çalışan kadınlardır. Sekiz katılımcı yüksek lisans, iki katılımcı ise doktora derecesine sahiptir. Katılımcıların ortalama yaşı 38,4'tür ve en az bir yıl önce boşanmışlardır. İki kez boşanan bir katılımcı hariç hepsi bir kez boşanmışlardır. 24 katılımcı çocuk sahibidir ve tek ebeveyn olarak çocuklarını büyütmektedirler. Katılımcıların ortalama çocuk sayısı 1,5'tir. Çoğunlukla orta sınıf olarak da niteleyebileceğimiz katılımcıların gelirleri yıllık 12000TL ile 96000 TL arasındadır.

Katılımcıların ortalama ilk evlilik yaşları 24,4'tür, bu rakam Türkiye'de ortalama ilk evlilik yaşı olan , 22,8,'in üzerindedir (Turkstat, 2008). Ve boşanma öncesi ortalama evlilik süreleri 7 yıldır.

Bulgular

Data analiz ışığında boşanmanın kadınlar için kısıtlayıcı ve zorluklar yarattığı aynı zamanda kadınların güçlendiği ya da boşanma sürecinin aktif özneleri olduğu alanlar incelenmiştir. Bu kategoriler birbirinden çok farklı değil tam tersine iç içe geçmiş süreçlerdir, katılımcılar boşanma sonrası tecrübelerinde bazı durumlarda kısıtlanma ya da zorluk yaşarken diğer yanda da bağımsızlıklarını pekiştirmiş zorluklar ile mücadelelerinde aktif özneler olmuşlardır. Örneğin katılımcılar ekonomik olarak boşanma sonrası kendi kazançları üzerinde daha fazla kontrol sahibi olmuş bu alanda rahatlama yaşamışken, toplumun boşanmış kadına negatif yaklaşımı karşısında çeşitli kısıtlamalar ve zorluklar ile karşı karşıya kalmışlardır. Boşanma sonrası bir süreç olduğundan bu çalışmada kategorileri boşanmadan hemen sonra ve boşanma sonrası diye ikiye ayrılmış kadınların ve boşanmanın kadınlar için güçlenme ya da sınırlanma durumları bu kategoriler içinde incelenmiştir.

Boşanmadan Hemen Sonra

Bu kategori altında boşanmanın ekonomik sonuçları ve tek ebeveynlik incelenmiştir. Boşanmadan hemen sonra kadınlar ekonomik açıdan rahatlama hissetmişlerdir. 13 katılımcı evlilik sürecinde eski eşlerinin yüksek kazanç sahibi olmalarına rağmen evin maddi giderlerine hiç katkıda bulunmadıklarını ve tüm masrafları tek başlarına kendileri karşılamak zorunda kaldıklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Bu katılımcılardan bazıları eşlerinin çalışma konusunda istikrarsızlığından ya da aile gelirlerini yönetme konusundaki yetersizliklerinden de ayrıca şikâyet etmiş ve kredi kartı borcu sıklıkla gündeme gelmiştir.

Katılımcılar boşanma ile bu sıkıntılardan kurtulduklarını ve kendi kazançları üzerinde daha fazla kontrol sahibi olduklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Kadınların sosyo ekonomik düzeylerinin onların güçlenmelerinde ve boşanma stresini zorluk yaşamadan atlattıklarını kolaylaştırmada etkili olmuş hatta bir katılımcının da ifade ettiği gibi mutsuz oldukları evliliklerini de bitirmeyi mümkün kılmıştır. Katılımcılar iş yaşamlarını onları sadece maddi olarak tatmin eden bir mekanizma değil aynı zamanda topluma katkı, sosyal tatmin olarak da nitelemişlerdir. Feminist literatürde de sıkça ifade edildiği gibi kadınların iş yaşamları onların güçlenmesinde önemli bir mekanizma olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır.

Kadınları boşanma sürecinde ve hemen sonrasında en çok kaygılandıran bir diğer durumda tek ebeveynliktir. Tek ebeveynlik katılımcıları boşanma sonrası hem rahatlatan hem de pek çok sıkıntı ile karşılaşmalarına sebep olan bir durumdur. Kadınlar çocuk sahibi olmaya çok önem atfetmişler ve çocuk sahibi olmanın verdiği sorumluluk duygusunun onların kişiliğini geliştirici etkisinden bahsetmişler ve boşanma stresini daha kolay atlattıklarını vurgulamışlardır. Tam bu noktada vurgulanması gereken bir diğer noktada kadınların boşanma sonrasında kendi ebeveynleri ile birlikte yaşamak yerine ayrı ev tutup çocukları ile bağımsız yaşamayı tercih etmeleridir. Kadınlar bu şekilde hem evli buldukları hem de evliliklerinden önceki durumlarına göre daha bağımsız bir yaşam sürmektedirler. Bu açıdan tek ebeveynlik kadınları güçlendiren bir süreç gibi gözükmektedir. Bununla birlikte tek başına çocuk büyütmenin zorluklarını da sık sık vurgulamışlardır. İş yaşamının

yoğunluğu ve tek başına çocuk büyütmenin sorumluluğu ve bu ikisini dengelemeye çalışmaları tüm tek ebeveyn katılımcıların ısrarla altınız çizdiği bir zorluk olarak ortaya çıkmıştır.

Kadınlar yanı sıra çocuklarının boşanma sürecinden etkilenmesi karşısında da duygusal olarak zor bir süreç yaşamışlar ve bununla mücadele etmek için ise profesyonel yardım da dahil olmak üzere birçok strateji geliştirmişlerdir. Çocuklarına babalarının yokluğunu hissettirmemek ve bir baba figürü oluşturmak için kimi zaman kendi anne babalarını daha sık ziyaret etmişler kimi zaman da eski eşlerini çocuklarını daha sık görmelerini sağlamaya çalışmışlardır.

Toplumun tıpkı boşanmış kadına negatif tutumu gibi boşanmış ailelerin çocuklarına da negatif tutum sergilemesi, boşanmış aile çocuklarının sağlıklı bireyler olamayacağı önyargısı katılımcıları rahatsız etmekte ve çocuklarının geleceğine yönelik kaygılar taşımalarına neden olmaktadır. Pek çok kadın bu konuda toplumun somut tepkilerine maruz kaldıklarını mesela boşanmış aile çocuğu olduğu için bazı okulların çocuklarını kabul etmekte tereddüt gösterdiklerini söylemişlerdir. Tüm bu durumlar kadınları rahatsız etmekte ve boşanmanın yükünün daha çok kadınlar tarafından çekildiğini ise bir kez daha gözler önüne sermektedir. Yine feminist literatürde vurgulandığı gibi kadınlar ev içi rollerini erkeklerden daha fazla üstlendikleri müddetçe onlar için güçlenme uzak bir kavram olarak görünmektedir.

Boşanma Sonrası Süreç

Boşanmadan uzun bir süre sonra da kadınların toplumun boşanmaya karşı negatif tutumları, boşanmış kadınlar olarak benlik algıları ve yeniden evlilik durumu ön plana çıkmakta ve kadının güçlenimi ve diğer taraftan hayatının sınırlanması iç içe yaşanmaktadır.

Toplumun boşanmış kadına negatif tutumu hususunda bu tez Türk insanının boşanmaya karşı tutumu çalışmasına (Arıkan, 1996), benzer sonuçlar ortaya çıkarmıştır. Buna göre Türk toplumu prensipte boşanmayı kabul etmekte hatta evliliğin bireyler için çileye dönüştüğü durumlarda boşanmayı bir çözüm olarak

görmektedir. Bununla birlikte pratikte yinede boşanmış bireylere karşı önyargı devam etmekte, özelliklede boşanmış kadınlar toplum tarafından marjinalize edilmektedir. Çalışmaya katılan katılımcıların büyük çoğunluğu toplumun negatif tutumları ile karşı karşıya kaldıklarını ve bununla mücadele etmek için değişik stratejiler geliştirdiklerini vurgulamışlardır. Boşandıktan sonra kadın erkek karışık toplantı ya da yemeklere gitmemek, giyim kuşamlarına dikkat etmek, ve eve geç saatlerde gelmemeye çalışmak bunlardan bazılarıdır. Dahası katılımcılardan geleneksel yaklaşımları önemsemediklerini ve hiç bir negatif tutumla karşılaşmadıklarını söyleyenler dahi mülakat sırasında toplum ile karşı karşıya gelmemek için bazı tedbirler aldıklarını geleneksel olmamalarına rağmen topluma uyum sağlamaya çalıştıklarını şu ya da bu şekilde ifade etmişlerdir.

Her ne kadar bu stratejiler kadınların isteği dahilinde olmayıp kadınların hayatlarını kısıtlıyor olsa da bu çalışmada kadınların stratejileri onların boşanma sürecinin aktif özneleri olduklarını bir kez daha gözler önüne sermektedir. Bununla birlikte kadınların toplumun önyargılarını bertaraf etmek için uğraşmak yerine topluma uyum sağlamak için çareler aramaları ataerki'yi sorgulamak ya da zayıflatmak yerine daha da güçlenmesine neden olmaktadır.

Kadınların en fazla güçlenme ve boşanma sonrası rahatlama hissettikleri alan benlik algısıdır. Bazı kadınlar boşanma sonrasında başarısızlık ve kendilerine güvensizlik hissettiklerini söylemişlerdir. Bununla birlikte katılımcıların çoğunluğu (19 katılımcı) kendine güvensizlik ve benlik özsaygılarını evlilik sürecinde yitirdiklerini boşanma ile bu durumdan kurtulduklarını ve rahatladıklarını söylemişlerdir. Evlilik içinde yaşanan sorunlara çok fazla odaklanma ve çocukların yükünü taşıma kadınların bu sorunlar yumağında kaybolmalarına neden olmuş ve boşanma ile birlikte bir katılımcının da ifade ettiği gibi hayatları üzerinde daha fazla kontrol sahibi olmuşlardır.

Benlik algısı hususunda kadınların iş yaşamında yaşadıkları tatmin ve başarı hissi onların boşanma sonrasında olumlu tecrübeleri üzerinde önemli bir etkiye sahiptir. Feminist sosyologlar Catherine Riessman (1990) and Michel Bisagni (1995)'ninde ifade ettiği gibi kadınların ev içi rolleri onları kısıtlarken, ev içi rollerinden uzakta

bir kimlik edinmeleri de onların boşanma sonrası adaptasyonlarına olumlu katkıda bulunmaktadır. Kadınlar boşandıktan sonra iş yaşamlarına daha fazla tutunduklarını ve iş yaşamında başarılı olmak için daha fazla çaba sarf ettiklerini vurgulamışlardır. Kadınların ifadelerinden de anlaşıldığı üzere çalışmak katılımcılar için sadece para kazanma sebebi olmaktan ziyade kadınların kendilerini ifade ettikleri, hayata tutunmak için bir amaç edindikleri bir alan olmaya başlamıştır. Bazı katılımcılar evlilikleri sürecinde çalışmayı bir yük gibi algıladıkları hatta bir süre sonra çalışmayı bırakmayı düşündükleri ama boşanmadan sonra bunu akıllarından dahi geçirmediklerini söylemişlerdir.

Boşanma kadınlar için bir dizi statü kaybını beraberinde getirmektedir. Kadınlar evliliklerinin bitmesi ile birlikte önce eş olma statülerini sonra topluma evli olma statülerini, velayeti alamama durumunda ise anne olma statülerini yitirirler. Bu çalışmada katılımcılar tüm bu kayıpları iş yaşamlarına daha fazla tutunarak telafi etme eğilimindedirler. Profesyonel olarak çalışma kadınlara toplum içinde bir statü sağlamakta onları toplumun önemli bireyleri kılmaktadır. Aynı zamanda iş yerlerinde kurmuş oldukları sosyal ilişkiler arkadaş ağlarını da korumalarını sağlamaktadır ki bir katılımcının da ifade ettiği gibi “çalışmak boşanmadan sonra evde oturup boşanma stresini ve boşanma sürecinde yaşanan sıkıntıları düşünüp durmaktan daha iyidir”. Bisagni (1995) ‘nin Çalışmanın Kadınların Boşanma Sonrası Adaptasyonlarına Etkisi konulu çalışmasında da ifade ettiği gibi çalışmak olumlu dikkat dağılması, sosyal destek, üretkenlik ve hayatta mana edinimi gibi faydalar sağlamaktadır.

Kadınların boşanma sonrası benlik algılarını etki eden bir diğer faktör de tek ebeveynliktir. Ebeveynlik kadınları çocukları üzerine kontrol sahibi olmaya yönlendirmekte çocuklarının hayatlarındaki değişim ve başarılar onlara geleceğe yönelik ümit ve bir amaç hissi sağlamakta buda yine kadınların benlik algılarının olumlu anlamda etkilemektedir. Bu bağlamda kadının güçlenmesi feminist teori de önemli bir kavram olsa da benlik algısının feminist literatürde çok da çalışılmayan bir kavram olması, özellikle Sosyalist feminist literatürde bu konuda önemli eksikliklerin olması bu çalışmanın altını çizdiği önemli bir konudur. Juliet Mitchell (1971)’in kadının güçlenmesi için, üretim, yeniden üretim, cinsellik ve çocuk

bakımının sosyalizasyonu gibi 4 önemli yapının dönüşmesi gerektiği tezi bize kadının aktif öznellik durumunu anlamamıza yardımcı olsa da bu çalışmada önemli yer tutan benlik durumunu anlamamıza yardımcı olamamaktadır. Bu nedenle öz benlik saygısına yer veren daha yeni feminist literatürden (Örneğin, Catherine Riessman, Michel Bisagni) yer yer istifade edilmiştir.

Katılımcıların boşanma sonrası benlik algıları ve öz benlik saygısı açısından bu çalışmanın bulguları Riessman's (1990 p. 203)'nin bulguları ile benzerlik göstermektedir. Buna göre boşanma literatürde sıklıkla ifade edildiğinin aksine her durumda negatif bir tecrübe değildir, yine pozitif ve negatif duygular bir birinin taban tabana zıddı kavramlar değildir, yaşanan stresin yanı başında kişisel gelişim ve kimlik transformasyonu gibi önemli fırsatlar de yer almaktadır.

Son olarak katılımcıların benlik algıları boşanma sonrası aileleri ve sosyal çevreleri ile kurdukları bağlar bağlamında da ele alınmıştır. Çalışmada katılımcılar boşandıktan sonra ailelerinin yanına dönmeyip ayrı bir yaşam kursalar da maddi ve manevi anlamda aile ve arkadaş desteğinin süreci sıkıntısız atlattada önemli bir etkisinin olduğunu vurgulamışlardır. Ama bu destek mekanizması politik bir aktivizme dönüşmemiş kadınlar karşılaştıkları zorluklar karşısında bireysel olarak mücadele etmişlerdir.

Yeniden evlenen katılımcılar ile yeniden evlilik değerlendirilmiş ve kadının güçlenmesi ve boşanma sonrası tecrübesine etkisi değerlendirilmiştir. Yeniden evliliğin katılımcıların güçlenme ve boşanma sonrası tecrübelerine hem olumlu hem de olumsuz etkisinin olduğu gözlenmiştir.

İlk evliliğin boşanma ile sonuçlanması kadınların evlilik algılarını değiştirmemiş evli olma hali boşanmaya göre toplumca daha fazla desteklenen bir hal olması nedeniyle kadınlar için tercih edilir bir durum olmuştur. Yeniden evlenen katılımcılar ikinci evliliklerinde daha mutlu olduklarını ifade etmelerine rağmen yine de ilk evliliklerine benzer sorunları ikinci evliliklerinde de gördüklerini söylemişlerdir. Kadınlar ev dışında çalışıyor olsalar da yine ev içine ait sorumluluğu erkekten daha fazla üstlenmektedirler. Yeniden evliliğe adaptasyon sürecinde hem

kendileri hem de çocuklarının sağlıklı bir adaptasyon süreci geçirmesi için yine katılımcıların stratejiler geliştirdikleri görülmektedir.

Yeniden evlilik sürecinde Kadınları kısıtlayan önemli bir faktörde toplumun, özellikle kadınlar için, yeniden evliliğe karşı negatif tutumudur. Evlilik toplum tarafından desteklenen bir kurum olmasına rağmen yeniden evlilik aynı değeri görmemekte, aynı zamanda literatürde de belirtildiği gibi toplumca benimsenmiş açık ve net normları olmadığından yeniden evlilik karmaşık bir kurum olmaya devam etmektedir. Bir-Akturk and Fisiloglu (2009) çalışmalarında ortaya koydukları gibi tıpkı boşanma gibi yeniden evlilikte toplumca yadırganmakta ve ikinci evliliğini yapan çiftler gerek çevreleri gerekse toplum tarafından daha az destek görmektedirler. Bu çalışmada yeniden evlenen katılımcıların ifadeleri de bu bulguyu doğrulamaktadır. Katılımcılar sosyal ortamlarda evliliklerinin ikinci evlilikleri olduğunu söylemekte tereddüt etmekte, yargılanmaktan ve toplumun ikinci evliliğin yapan kadınları hafif meşrep kadınlar gibi görmesinden rahatsız olmaktadır. Kocasını ölen kadınlar yas tutmalı, boşanan kadınlar ise kendilerini çocuklarına adanmışlardır. Katılımcıların bu yaklaşımlardan etkilendikleri görülmektedir yeniden evliliği kendine çok uzak gördüğünü söyleyen bir katılımcı “iki çocuk annesi bir kadın olarak yeniden evlenmeyi kabul edemediğini, normal görmediğini” ifade etmiştir.

Yeniden evlenmeyen katılımcılar için yeniden evlilik şansı yine toplumsal önyargılar nedeniyle oldukça sınırlıdır. Cindoğlu'nun (1997, 2008) çalışmalarında belirttiği gibi bekâret Türk toplumunda oldukça önemsenen bir olgudur, kadınların evlilik öncesi bekâret sahibi olmaları toplumca beklenen ve önemi azalmadan devam eden bir durumdur ve bekâret sahibi bir kadın daha değerli kadın olarak algılanmaktadır. Bu çalışmada yeniden evlenmeyen kadınlar geleneksel yaklaşımları önemsemediklerini söylediler de boşanmış oldukları için ancak kendileri gibi boşanmış erkekler ile evlenebileceklerini ifade etmişlerdir.

Toplumun yeniden evliliğe negatif yaklaşımına rağmen yeniden evliliğin boşanmaya göre daha çok tercih edilir bir durum olduğu açıktır. Katılımcılardan bir kaçısı yeniden evliliğin boşanmış kadın olmanın verdiği stresten kurtulmanın bir yolu

olduğunu söylemişlerdir. Bu katılımcılar tarafından çok sık ifade edilmese de kadınların ataerkil söylemleri nasıl içselleştirdiğini göstermesi açısından önemlidir. Katılımcılar ekonomik açıdan yeniden evliliği gerekli görmese de toplumsal açıdan kendilerini daha güvenli hissetmek için boşanmış olma statüsüne yeğlemektedirler. Feminist teorisyen Sylvia Walby(1989)'nin de ifade ettiği gibi ataerki kadınların hayatlarını çok değişik şekilde etkilemekte ve değişen çağa göre farklı şekiller alarak varlığını sürdürmektedir.

Data analiz neticesinde ortaya çıkan iki temel kategoriye ek olarak bu çalışmada birde 8 katılımcı ile kuşaklar arası boşanma etkisi incelenmiştir. 8 katılımcı anne babaları ya da kız kardeşlerinin de boşandıklarını ifade etmişler bunun üzerine bu katılımcılar ile ek mülakatlar yapılmış ve ebeveyn ile kız kardeşlerin boşanma tecrübelerinin katılımcıların boşanma tecrübesi üzerine etkisi incelenmiştir. Katılımcıların boşanana anne baba ya da kardeş ile nasıl bir ilişki içinde olduğu sorulmuş ve boşanma tecrübesini ailesi vasıtasıyla bir kez yaşanmış olmasının katılımcının kendi evliliğini boşanma ile sonuçlandırması üzerine herhangi bir etkisinin olup olmadığı araştırılmıştır. Data analiz neticesinde katılımcıların anne babalarının boşanmasından daha uzun vadede etkilendikleri, anne babalarının boşanmalarına çocuk yaşta şahit oldukları ve anneleri tarafından yetiştirildikleri için bunun onların karakter oluşumuna etkide bulunduğu ve boşanmayı anne babası boşanmamış katılımcılara nazaran daha fazla çözüm olarak gördükleri ortaya çıkmıştır. Özellikle anne babası boşanmış olan katılımcılar annelerinin daha eski yıllarda boşanmış olmasına rağmen kendi ayakları üzerinde durup kimseye muhtaç olmadan çocuklarını büyütmiş olmasından özellikle cesaret almış kendilerinin boşanmanın eskiye göre daha toleransla karşılandığı bu çağda daha kolay boşanacaklarını ve daha kolay adapte olacaklarını düşünerek boşanmaya daha çabuk karar verdiklerini belirtmişlerdir.

Katılımcılar aynı zamanda evlilikte karşılaştıkları sorunlar ile sağlıklı bir biçimde baş edememelerini tek ebeveynli bir ailede büyüyüp sağlıklı karı koca ilişkilerine şahit olmamalarına bağlamış bu konuda boşanan anne ve babalarını eleştirmişlerdir. Hemen hemen tüm katılımcılar anne babalarının boşanma tecrübesini eleştirmiş bununla birlikte annelerine daha fazla sempati beslemiş babalarını ise hiç

affetmemişlerdir. Yine kız kardeşleri boşanan katılımcılarda, katılımcının kendisinden önce kızkardesinin boşanmasının katılımcıyı daha çok cesaretlendirici bir etkisinin olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Buna göre anne babası boşanan kadınlar boşanmayı çok küçük yaşlardan itibaren tecrübe ettikleri için bu onların kişilik gelişimi evlilik ve boşanma algısını şekillendirirken, kız kardeşin katılımcıdan önce boşanma tecrübesinin yaşaması katılımcıyı sadece daha fazla cesaretlendirici etkide bulunmaktadır. Kızkardeş anne babaya göre daha yakın bir zamanda boşandığı için boşanmasının topluma yansımaları ve genel sonuçları itibarıyla katılımcı tarafından daha fazla referans alınmaktadır. Sonuç olarak anne baba boşanmasının ve kız kardeş boşanmasının katılımcıların boşanma tecrübesi üzerine direkt ya da dolaylı olarak etki ettiği görülmüştür.

Sonuç

Bu çalışma yüksek tahsilli ve çalışan kadınların boşanma tecrübesini çalışmaktadır. Boşanma daha çok aile çalışmaları bağlamında demografik olarak ele alınmış ve aile yapıları üzerine etkisi, boşanmanın çocuk üzerine etkisi, trendler ve değişim bağlamında incelenmiş boşanmanın kadın üzerine etkisi özellikle Türkiye bağlamında çok az çalışılmış, özellikle kadınların boşanma sonrası tecrübeleri hiç çalışılmamıştır. Bu çalışma eksikliği gidermeye çalışmış, yüksek tahsilli ve çalışan kadınların boşanma sonrası hayatlarını yaşam öyküsü metodu ile derinlemesine çalışmıştır. Katılımcıların boşanma sonrasında yaşadıkları ekonomik, sosyal, psikolojik durumları ve genel olarak boşanma sonrası adaptasyonları incelenmiştir. Çalışmanın sonuçlarında da gösterildiği gibi boşanma pek çok kadın için ekonomik zorlukları, sosyal ve psikolojik yıpranmayı beraberinde getirirken, kimi kadın için ise evlilikte yaşanan sıkıntıların sona ermesi ve rahatlama ile sonuçlanmaktadır. Dahası eğitilmiş, çalışan ve şehirli kadının boşanması kadının liberasyonunun bir göstergesi gibi algılsa da ataerkinin yoğun biçimde yaşandığı bir toplumda, hangi sosyo-ekonomik bağlamda olursa olsun kadınların pek çok açıdan hayatları sınırlanmakta ve toplumun boşanmış kadına negatif yaklaşımı kadınların yaşamlarını önemli ölçüde etkilemektedir.

Data analiz neticesinde kadınların yaşadıkları tecrübeler boşanmadan hemen sonra ve genel olarak boşanma sonrası diye ikiye ayrılmış ekonomik zorluklar, tek ebeveynlik, toplumun boşanmış kadına karşı tutumu, boşanmanın kadınların benlikleri üzerine etkisi, yeniden evlilik, ebeveyn ve kız kardeşin boşanma tecrübesinin katılımcıların boşanma sürecine etkisi ve kadınların tüm bu zorluklar karşısında ürettikleri yaşam stratejileri sırasıyla temel kategoriler olarak belirlenmiştir.

Çalışmada kadınların boşanma sonrasında sıkıntı ve rahatlama yaşadığı alanlar ayrı ayrı kategoriler şeklinde verilmiştir. Bu noktada güçlük ve rahatlama yaşanan alanlar her ne kadar ayrı kategoriler şeklinde sunulsa da çalışma süresince de yer yer belirtildiği gibi güçlük ve rahatlık tecrübesi çoğu zaman birbiri ile örtüşmüştür. Kadınlar güçlük çektikleri alanlarda yaşam stratejileri geliştirmişler, teslimiyetçi ya da pasif bir yaklaşım yerine mücadeleci bir tutum sergilemişlerdir. Bu bağlamda bu tezin en büyük savı güçlük çektikleri alanlarda dahi katılımcıların boşanma sürecinde aktif özneler olmalarıdır. Diğer taraftan bu tez kadınların geliştirdikleri stratejileri bireysel stratejiler olup politik bir aktivizme ya da toplumu değiştirmeye yönelik olmadığını vurgular. Bu önemli bir bakış açıdır, çünkü eğitimli ve güçlü kadınlar olarak katılımcıların toplumu değiştirmek ve dönüştürmekten ziyade toplumla karşı karşıya kalmamak adına topluma entegre olmaya çalışmaları, bu bağlamda geleneksel ve eşitsiz yaklaşımları tolere etmeleri ataerkiyi besleyen ve yeniden üremesine neden olan bir yaklaşımdır. Bu çalışma bazı durumlarda kadınların yaşam stratejilerinin ataerkiyi yeniden üretmeye neden olduğunu öne sürer. Deniz Kandiyoti'nin “ataerki pazarlıklar” kavramıyla anlattığı gibi, kadınlar kendi iktidar alanlarını genişletmek ve kendilerini güvence altına almak için erkek egemen sistemin devamını isteyebilir hatta bunun için çaba da gösterebilirler ve kadınların yaşadığı eşitsizlik, baskı ve ikincilleşmenin suç ortakları olabilirler. Dolayısıyla bu çalışma kadınların topluma entegre olma çabalarını sadece onların aktif özne olmaları ile değil aynı zamanda ataerkiye farkında olmadan verilen bir destek olarak da okur.

Katılımcıların tecrübeleri Türkiye’de modernleşme sürecinde kadına biçilen rol çerçevesinde yeniden ele alınırsa ortaya çıkan resim daha kapsamlı bir biçim alır.

Üçüncü bölümde de tartıştığımız gibi, Cumhuriyet'in kuruluşundan itibaren kadının statüsü hep önemsenmiş ve modernleşmenin ve batılılaşmanın köşe taşı kabul edilmiştir. (Muftuler-Bac, 1999; Gole, 1996; Bora 2002). Cumhuriyetin ilk yıllarından itibaren Kemalist reform çerçevesinde Türk kadınları sosyal, hukuki ve politik alanda Batıdaki pek çok ülkede bulunmayan haklara sahip oldular. Bununla birlikte Kemalist reform projesinin ataerkiyi sorgulamadığı ya da zayıflatmadığı bilakis daha da güçlendirdiği feminist yazarlar tarafından sıklıkla ifade edilmiş, Kemalist reformlar kadınların emancipe edildikleri fakat libere edilmedikleri için eleştirmişlerdir (örneğin Kandiyoti, 1987). Geline nokta Cumhuriyetin ilk yıllarından beri yapılan reformlar, sosyo ekonomik gelişme ve şehirleşme kadının eğitim ve kamusal alana grime şansını her gecen gün daha fazla artırmış fakat kadının yaşadığı bu transformasyona paralel erkek de özel alana daha fazla girme gibi bir eğilim içersine girmemiştir. Sonuç olarak kadınların ev ve iş yaşamını dengeleme sorunları erkeklerin hiç anlam veremedikleri sorunlar olarak kalmıştır ev içinde eşler arasındaki stresin temel kaynaklarından biri olmuştur ve kadınlar bu stresle baş edebilmek için bireysel stratejiler geliştirmişlerdir.

Bu çalışmaya katılan katılımcıların yaşadıkları tecrübeler ve bunlarla baş etme yolları, Türk modernleşme tarihi içersinde kadınların ataerki ile baş etme stratejileri ile benzerlik göstermektedir. Daha önce de tartıştığımız gibi katılımcılar yaşadıkları zorluklar, sıkıntılar karşısında teslimiyetçi bir yaklaşım izlememiş, bağımsızlıklarını korumanın yollarını aramışlardır. Bu bağlamda bu çalışma Türk modernleşme tarihi içinde kadının liberasyonu konusuna ayrı bir ışık tutarak literatüre katkıda bulunmaktadır.

Sonuç olarak Kümbetoğlu (2002)'nunda altını çizdiği gibi ataerki bir bağlamda kadının güçlenmesi yeni sorunları ve çatışmaları beraberinde getirmektedir. Dolayısıyla ataerki kültür yapısı zayıflamadığı, güçlenerek devam ettiği müddetçe kadınlar topluma uyum sağlamak ve toplum içindeki statülerini güvende tutmak için yeni stratejiler geliştirecek, ataerki de kendini yeniden üretecektir. Young (1997)'in vurguladığı gibi kadınlar iş yaşamında güçlenseler bile ataerki norm ve gelenekler zihinleri kuşattığı müddetçe bu tamamlanmamış bir güçlenme olacaktır.

APPENDIX D: CURRICULUM VITAE

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WORK EXPERIENCE

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2009-2010	University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, USA	Fulbright Fellow & Visiting Researcher
2005-2007	Beykent University, Istanbul	Language Instructor

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English

PUBLICATIONS

Kavas, Serap. "Turkish Modernization: Present Challenges within the context of the AK Party and the European Union" *Insight Turkey* Volume 8 (4) October-December 2006

Kavas, Serap. "Virginia Woolf: Vacillation between Humanism and Feminism, the Hours" *Varlik*, Vol 1115, December 2003 (In Turkish)

HOBBIES

Movies, Music, Travel