

WOMEN'S LIVES BEHIND A MIGRATION STORY
MALE MIGRATION FROM FATSA (TURKEY) TO NAGOYA (JAPAN)

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WOMEN'S LIVES BEHIND A MIGRATION STORY
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ABSTRACT

WOMEN'S LIVES BEHIND A MIGRATION STORY MALE MIGRATION FROM FATSA (TURKEY) TO NAGOYA (JAPAN)

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The main aim of this study is to understand how women's lives change in terms of authority, power and gender roles after their husbands' migration from Fatsa (Turkey) to Nagoya (Japan) since the beginning of 1990s. In this regard, the research question of this study is how women's lives change in terms of authority, daily life practices and gender roles after the migration of their husbands. Otherwise stated, this study inquires whether male migration empowers women's lives; especially their controls on the household, in terms of decision-making processes in the family issues and if yes to what extent it takes place. This research question also provides an opportunity to shed a light on a further point to grasp the meaning of the whole picture of women's lives. Although, male migration has similar impacts on women's lives in different parts of the world; how do women develop different strategies from the other cases to handle with the absence of men in Fatsa? In other words, what makes this study different from the others? How do women experience the process of migration from Fatsa to Japan? Perception of the migration process by the women is essential to focus on as it can be argued that this process is the point where everything starts to changes in women's lives. The process of taking the decision of migration to Japan, specifically the city of Nagoya, and women's strategies to handle with this decision and process will be discussed from the perspective around this point.

Keywords: Japan, Turkey, International Labor Migration, Male Migration, Woman Left Behind

ÖZ

BİR GÖÇ HİKAYESİNİN ARDINDAKİ KADINLARIN HAYATLARI FATSA'DAN (TÜRKİYE) NAGOYA'YA (JAPONYA) ERKEK GÖÇÜ

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Bu çalışmanın temel amacı 90lı yıllardan itibaren kocalarının Fatsa'dan (Türkiye) Nagoya'ya (Japonya) göç etmesinin ardından kadınların iktidar, güç ve cinsiyet rolleri açısından değişen hayatlarını daha iyi anlamaktır. Bu nedenle çalışmanın araştırma sorusu "kocalarının göç edişinin ardından kadınların hayatı iktidar, günlük yaşam pratikleri ve cinsiyet rolleri açısından nasıl değişti?" olarak belirlenmiştir. Diğer bir ifadeyle bu çalışma erkek göçünün kadının hayat içindeki konumunu güçlendirip güçlendirmedini araştırmaktadır. Çalışma özellikle kadınların hane içindeki kontrollünün artıp artmadığını, aile ile ilgili konularda karar verme süreçlerindeki rollerinin güçlenip güçlenmediğini, eğer bu soruların cevabı olumlu ise bu güçlenmenin hangi dereceye kadar yaşandığını odağa almaktadır. Çalışma sorusu, aynı zamanda, kadınların yaşamını yansıtan geniş perspektifli resim daha iyi anlamlandırılabilmesi için de imkân tanımaktadır. Erkeklerin göçünün dünyanın çeşitli bölgelerinde kadınların yaşamı üzerinde benzer etkilere neden olduğu bilinmekle birlikte, acaba Fatsa'daki kadınlar kocalarının yokluğuyla başa çıkabilmek için diğer bölgelerden farklı hangi stratejileri ve nasıl geliştirmektedir? Diğer bir ifadeyle bu çalışmayı diğerlerinden farklı kılan nedir? Kadınlar, Fatsa'dan Japonya'ya göçü nasıl deneyimlemektedir? Kadınların göç sürecini nasıl algıladığı üzerinde önemle durulması gereken bir konudur, zira tam da bu nokta kadınların hayatlarındaki her şeyin değişmeye başladığı noktadır. Japonya'ya, özellikle Nagoya'ya, göçe karra verme süreci ve kadınların bu kararlar ve devamındaki süreçle

bař etme stratejileri 6zellikle bu g6c6n algılanıřı 6zerinden tartıřılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Japonya, T6rkiye, Uluslararası iřçi g6c6, erkek g6c6, geride kalan kadınlar

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Problem

The main aim of this study is to understand how women's lives change in terms of authority, power and gender roles after their husbands' migration from Fatsa to Japan since the beginning of 1990s. It is stated in the literature that women's lives in many areas change dramatically after male migration from the household (Mynitti, 1984; Boehm, 2008). However, although similarities are caught between studies on the impact of male migration women, each case has its uniqueness due to the differences among cultures women born into. Studies on impact of male migration on women point to changes in different aspects of women's lives. In other words, some studies focus on how remittances change the lives of women (Nguyen, Yeoh & Toyota, 2006), while the others emphasis on the empowerment of women's autonomy in the lack of a patriarch (Yabuki, Agadjanian & Sevoyan, 2010).

As for this study, the research question is how women's lives change in terms of authority, daily life practices and gender roles after the migration of the household head. Otherwise stated, this study inquires whether male migration empowers women's lives; especially their controls on the household, in terms of decision-making processes in the family issues and if yes to what extent it takes place. Furthermore, the study aims at displaying in what ways this migration brings changes to women's daily and social lives, which could lead to an alteration of gender roles as regarding herself both mother and father; woman and man at the same time.

This research question also provides an opportunity to shed a light on a further point to grasp the meaning of the whole picture of women's lives. Although, male migration has similar impacts on women's lives in different parts of the world; how do women develop different strategies from the other cases to handle with the absence of men in Fatsa? In other words, what makes this study different from the

others? How do women experience the process of migration from Fatsa to Japan? Perception of the migration process by the women is essential to focus on as it can be argued that this process is the point where everything starts to change in women's lives. The process of taking the decision of migration to Japan, specifically the city of Nagoya, and women's strategies to handle with this decision and process will be discussed from the perspective around this point.

At that point, it is important to mention that there are two target groups of this study: 1) the women migrated to Japan with or after their husbands for a while; 2) the women stay behind. In that sense, the women, migrated to Japan along with or after their husbands, and their experience regarding this migration will also be scrutinized within the scope of this study as well as the women left behind in the migration process. The reason for focusing on the women migrated with their husbands is the fact that despite their presence in Japan as a migrant, sometime in their lives these women have also shared the same experience with the ones left behind. However, it should be kept in mind that in spite of their similarities with the women left behind; this group has a peculiarity and makes a difference than the others in interpreting Japan as a migrated country and their husbands being there.

Lastly, for this study Fatsa is chosen as a field because as for the field of international migration, Fatsa has maintained its reputation and it has become the first province where its people have migrated the opposite direction to the mainstream migration routes, not to the West but to the East, namely Japan. Due to this uniqueness, the case of migration to Japan has not drawn the interest of research and there is not enough literature on it. Therefore, in order to provide a better understanding of how this process started and developed, I mainly made use of the information I gathered from the field during the fieldwork and I also referred to newspapers as a source of information about the subject.

1.2 Migration: A Never-Ending Process

Migration is not a new phenomenon; there have been different migration stories throughout history because of several reasons, such as wars or epidemics. However, especially after 1950s, the occurrence of migration has accelerated in different forms, for instance labor migration or forced migration. According to United Nations Population Division, while in 1965 there were 75 million international migrants; the figure has reached out 214 million in 2010 (King, 2010, p.13). However, it is important to mention that there are many unrecorded migrants not included to this statistics, which means real amount of migrants is higher than what has been recorded. Although economic factors are regarded as one of the main reasons for migration, especially for labor migration, there are other motives providing a basis for the movement of people. In that sense, political problems or natural disasters can also lead to a decision of migration.

Patterns, destinations and forms of migration may diversify through centuries. Between 16th and 18th centuries, migration took place in the form of slavery or labor power due to colonialism within the scope of international migration because people were forced to migrate from Europe or Africa to “the New World –America- to work in mines or farms. After 1550s and the following years, approximately 15 million people from Africa were moved to America” (Stalker, 1994, p.10). In addition to African slaves, during 1800s many Europeans migrated to the New World to work in farms and construction. However, at the beginning of 1900s, colonial powers started to abandon slavery as a result of the rising of abolitionism (Toksöz, 2006; Abadan-Unat, 2006). Besides, America started to regulate its migration policies and applied more strict ones. Until 1880s the only condition for migrating to America was financing the expenses for crossing the Ocean. Since then, America brought other criteria as well as putting more strict regulations concerning migration into effect and made the land more inaccessible compared to past (Castles & Miller, 2003, pp.56-57).

Apart from intercontinental migration, there were also labor movements within Europe in the 19th century and between two world wars. The main reason for migration within Europe was economic. Nevertheless, as of 1945, the direction of migration in the continent has shifted from less-developed countries to highly developed countries mainly in the form of labor recruitment, “guest workers”. North European countries, such as Belgium, Netherlands, Germany and France, recruited workers primarily from Southern Europe; moreover, between 1960s to mid-1970s, there were intern-governmental agreements for guest-workers between North European countries and less-developed countries such as Turkey or Morocco. For example, in 1973, nearly one million Turkish workers inhabited in different European countries (Abadan-Unat, 1976, p.7) as a consequence of Germany’s demand for labor force from Turkey and legal agreements.

Following “petrol crisis” in 1973-1974, labor migration had a tendency to decrease for a while because of economic recession and European countries stopped recruiting foreign workers (Castels & Miller, 2003; Toksöz, 2006; Abadan-Unat, 2006). From the mid-1970s, a new period of movement came on the scene in the sense of international migration and the continent experienced an increase in illegal migrations from less-developed countries to highly developed countries. Especially a decade later, a significant growth in number of refugees and asylum seekers was observed. The situation brought the necessity of making regulations on migration to governments’ agendas (Castles & Miller, 2003).

Besides their influences on international and inter-governmental levels, migration movements have mainly dramatic effects on the one leaving and the one left behind. Migration process affects the family decisions, reshapes relationships and brings separation to the family. Whatever the situation is there is always someone staying behind and trying to keep in touch with the migrated one. Due to the general tendency in the field of migration studies, in the researches the main attention is paid to migrants themselves. However, the studies focusing on the other side of the coin - the ones left behind - clearly display that the process affects not only the ones

migrated but also those left behind. Today, it is academically proved and admitted that the migration of men has crucial effects on the lives of women who stay behind in home. According to Reeder (2001), men's migration has significant effects on the lives of rural Sicilian families and noted that the dynamics of family economy has changed as a result of migration. Moreover, gender roles of "husband-wife" and "father-mother" have altered in the migrant household. Parreñas (2001) argues that the absence of migrant fathers empowers and changes the motherhood role of women in the Philippines. Pribilsky (2004) also supports the empowerment of women after husbands' migration due to having new roles in the families. When husbands are abroad, women become the head of nuclear family and are responsible for the decisions on household such as expenditures or children's care (Gulati, 1993). In the light of above-mentioned studies, I can summarize that the migration period causes an increase in economic wellbeing of women, while it also promotes the self-representation of women socio-cultural environment and provide women with a more influential role in their relations with society.

1.3 International Labor Migration from Turkey

When we look at migration from Turkey, it could be argued that international labor migration has been experienced in Turkey since early 1960s, "...when the number of Turkish workers in Federal Germany suddenly jumped from 7,000 in October 1961 to 18,500 in July 1962 and culminated 615,827 in mid-1974" (Abadan-Unat, 1976, p.3). In 1960s Europe countries, such as the Netherlands, Belgium, France but especially the Federal Germany, started to welcome Turkish "guest workers" in their industries. However, as it is mentioned above, after 1970s especially due to the oil crisis, European countries changed policy and cut the amount of guest workers compared to 1960s, and imposed restrictions on migration flow. However, the change in the demand of European countries has not created a linear change in the enthusiasm of Turkish workers for migrating Europe Therefore, Turkish workers developed different strategies, such as family reunification programs and political asylum, during 1980s and 1990s to legalize their existence in Europe (Soysal, 2009).

On the one hand, in 1980s, family unification process has continued for the ones living in European countries, on the other hand a new destination has been discovered by the workers and a temporary labor migration to Arab countries, mainly Saudi Arabia, Libya and Iraq, has been given a start (İçduygu & Sirkeci, 1998).

The shift in the destination of migration from European countries to Arab lands was a result of oil crisis in 1973-1974. Oil-exporting countries, Arab states, needed labor power from other developing countries (İçduygu & Sirkeci, 1998). The reason for the need for foreign workers in Arab countries was ironically that most of their population was migrating to European countries causing a deficiency in the country in terms of labor force. Thus, between 1970s and 1980s, labor migration from Turkey to Arab countries increased. However, "...by the mid-1990s, partly due to the completion of large scale infrastructural big projects in the oil-exporting countries, and partly due to the unfavorable circumstances caused by the Gulf crisis, the number of Turkish workers in Arab countries began to decline" (İçduygu, 2010, p.7). In 1990s after the collapse of USSR, Eurasian countries have emerged as an alternative destination of migration for Turkish workers as during their development endeavors, mainly based on construction sector, Eurasian countries have also felt the need of cheap, foreign workers (Coşkun & Türkyılmaz, 2009; İçduygu, Sirkeci & Muradoğlu, 2001).

To sum up, Turkey first met the concept of international migration in the early 1960s. Starting with worker recruitment from mainly European countries, the movement of international labor migration from Turkey has first headed to Arab countries and then to Eurasian countries. Still having a current of labor towards these destinations, there has been an exceptional destination, not mentioned in the literature so far, but, has existed since 1990s, the route of migration from Turkey to Japan, where Fatsa (a town in the Black Sea Region) and Nagoya (one of the biggest cities in Japan) have gained importance as departure and arrival points respectively.

The reason for which I decided to study the case of migration from Fatsa to Nagoya is firstly because it was an untouched subject in field of migration studies in Turkey

and secondly because Fatsa is my hometown and I am closely familiar with the case. This provides me to have opportunity to observe different mechanisms throughout the years. Today, a significant amount of migrant workers from Fatsa are living in Japan. Many relatives of mine, even my cousin migrated to Japan because of different reasons. Therefore, alongside academic reasons, my personal curiosity has played a role in focusing on the migration process in Fatsa, how it started and has developed throughout two decades. I have the belief that such a study would also shed light on the current situation and agenda of Fatsa, which is a town, has had a serious political reputation in social and political context of Turkey.

1.4 The Field of the Study: Fatsa

1.4.1 Fatsa: An Exceptional Town

In order to understand the whole picture of the migration case in Fatsa, it is essential to give information about the field of this thesis. Fatsa is a town located in the Black Sea Region of Turkey and a sub-province of Ordu Province. According to Turkish Statistical Institute's report in 2010 (TÜİK, 2010, p.40), the population of Fatsa is 100.303 and the composition of the population has always been cosmopolitan in terms of different ethnic and religious backgrounds (Morgül, 2007, p.39). In Fatsa, the main economic activity is agriculture, especially hazelnut farming and small-scale fishing. As Morgül states hazelnut farming has been the most important economic activity since 1950s (Morgül, 2007, p.29). However, within last decade, due to government's policies on hazelnut farming, local people have had economic problems.¹ Established in 1938, Fındık Tarım Kooperatifleri Satış Birliği (FİSKOBİRLİK) purchased hazelnuts from the producers until 2006. In 2007, Turkish Grain Board (TMO) became the authorized organization for hazelnut purchase. Two years later, the government totally abolished its subvention for hazelnut producer and the authorities of TMO in hazelnut purchase were canceled. As both FİSKOBİRLİK and TMO was offering lower floor price for hazelnut

¹ http://www.sendika.org/yazi.php?yazi_no=25414

causing economic difficulties for hazelnut producer, most of the producers, not satisfied in economic terms, had been obliged to sell their crops on some sort of black market, free market where prices are strictly low, since the beginning. For the last two years, after the cancelation of government aid for hazelnut and disempowerment of TMO, the purchase of hazelnut has been an issue of free market, and local tradesmen have been the only authority in fixing the floor price for the crop. Although the issue of lower floor price has always been the main problem in hazelnut farming, after 2009 the situation has got worse, tradesmen have offered even lower prices, and the producers depending on the income of hazelnut sales for 9-10 months of a year found themselves in more unbearable situation. Due to policies on hazelnut, the on-going economic instability of producers, and the lack of an alternative agricultural product in the region or a branch of industry, many people have been forced to migrate to the other cities or countries (Oral, 2006, pp.52-57).

Stating the economic general overview of the town, I should also mention about the political history of Fatsa, especially the period just before 1980's coup d'état². Despite being a small town at the coast of the Black Sea, Fatsa is a well-known town in Turkish political life because of political activities in town just before 1980's coup d'état. Always considered as a stronghold of the left, Fatsa owes its reputation to "Terzi Fikri". In the local elections of 1977, the candidate of the Republican People's Party (CHP) was selected, however, shortly after taking up the position, the major died. Thus the board of election decided to renew the local elections in the town, in the end of which the independent candidate - Fikri Sönmez, or also known as 'Terzi Fikri'³ - was elected as major. As a follower of Devrimci Yol⁴ (Dev-Yol) fraction, Terzi Fikri's municipality applied participatory local administration model and Fatsa

² Demirel, Tanel (2003). The Turkish Military's Decision to Intervene: 12 September 1980. *Armed Forces & Society* 29(2): 253-280

³ <http://www.devrimciyol.org/Devrimci%20Yol/unutulmayacaklar/Unutma/1980ler/FSonmez.html>

⁴ Bozkurt, S. (2008). *The Resistance Committees: DEVRIMCI YOL and The Question of Revolutionary Organization in Turkey in the Late 1970s*. Unpublished master thesis, METU, Ankara.

turned into an exceptional and unique example of “municipality for people” in Turkey.

In those days Fatsa was a place where Terzi Fikri was trying to totally remodel the functioning of state institutions. In other words, the goal of the participatory local administration model in Fatsa was to make the public opinion the main actor and the decision-maker of municipal actions concerning the sub-province and its villages, a goal which Terzi Fikri achieved. This is why Fatsa under the administration of Terzi Fikri’s municipality was accepted as a ‘liberated area’ (*Kurtarılmış Bölge*) by Dev-Yol fraction, while considered as a “rebel zone” by the government (Türkmen, 2006). Alongside these cultural fests and civil manifestations, such as ‘Struggling for Black Market’ movement⁵, Fatsa Municipality Public Culture Festival⁶ and ‘End to Mug Campaign’⁷, were also held to provide a more democratical atmosphere in the city, Naturally, what Terzi Fikri was striving to carry into effect was not acceptable for the government just before the coup d’état of 1980.

Soon after his taking the office, Fatsa attracted all the attention of government, which started to look for an excuse for to intervene. The excuse the government had been looking for was appeared in July 1980 when a mosque in Çorum was attacked and leftists were blamed for the incidence where more fifty people lost their lives. While this case of Çorum was being heavily discussed in the agenda of Turkey, the prime minister of the period, Süleyman Demirel, pointed out Fatsa as a target with the words: “Don’t pay much attention to Çorum, focus on Fatsa.”⁸ The process ended up with a surgical strike shortly after Demirel’s statements on 11th of July. Many people, in particular mayor Terzi Fikri, were detained for questioning and then arrested.

⁵ http://www.devrimciyol.org/Devrimci%20Yol/kitaplar/kitap6_a11.htm

⁶ http://www.birgun.net/sunday_index.php?news_code=1249817212&year=2009&month=08&day=09
http://www.devrimciyol.org/Devrimci%20Yol/kitaplar/kitap6_a8.htm

⁷ http://www.devrimciyol.org/Devrimci%20Yol/kitaplar/kitap6_a7.htm

⁸ “Demirel Ateşle Oynuyor,” Demokrat, 10 July 1980

Terzi Fikri had never got out. On the date of his date, 4 May 1985, his trial was still continuing and he was still arrested. His short-term experience as a mayor created a radical change in the political history of Turkey (Morgül, 2007; Türkmen, 2006). The Fatsa experience was studied both Turkish and foreign research as a distinctive example of participatory local administration.

1.4.2 A New Route in Turkish Labor Migration Flow: Japan

As it is mentioned above, Fatsa has been an unusual town with its different standing in Turkish republican history, and in the last two decades, it has played an interesting role within Turkish migration, specifically labor migration context. The history of labor migration from Turkey to Europe dates back to 1960s, and it is an on-going process in different forms and and patterns (Abadan-Unat, 2006; Toksöz, 2006; İçduygu & Kirişçi, 2009). However, labor migration from Fatsa has directed to an opposite destination: to the East, to Japan, and specifically to the city of Nagoya. Despite the difference in the destination of migration, it is still the same old story: Also in this there is a man migrating from his hometown to another country to earn more money for his family. Then after settling down, he starts bringing his relatives, especially the male ones, to this new country. After some years, this migrating population creates a relatively big minority, working-class in this new country. In that sense, we can claim that Fatsa case is no exception, however claims are not enough and the questions of how and when migration from Fatsa to Japan took a start and how it has developed in time are still in need of proper answers produced as a result of academic research, as today nearly seven thousand Turkish origin people live in Japan, approximately four thousands of whom are from Fatsa. Nevertheless not every Turkish citizen is recorded in the registrations of Japanese officials; therefore official figures and estimated figures do not match with each other.

Table 1: Official Figures of Turkish Embassy in Tokyo

Years	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Number of Turkish citizens entered Japan	5003	4313	6566	7101	7254	7577	8849
Number of Turkish citizen registered in Japanese municipalities	1194	1424	2054	2309	2407	2275	2264

Source: <http://www.Turkey.jp/tr/konsoloslukjaptoplum.htm>

The main difficulty I faced with during the study is finding out a proper reference source about the initiation of this migration. The only sources I have accessed are press reports⁹ and one documentary, entitled “Sayanora Fatsa”¹⁰. The only additional source is the “narratives”, which constitutes the center of anthropological studies. Both about the initiation and development of this process, I learned a lot during my fieldwork in Fatsa. For most of the time narratives were my only guides to have a better understanding of the case.

As for the initiation of the process, actually, there is a mythical story. Different than the stories of migration to the West or Arab lands, there is not a governmental or economic charm or encouragement and there is no mass movement. There is only one man who is pointed out as the initiator of this whole story and he is the first ring in the chain. He is called Hayri Atılğan, “the conqueror of Japan”. Although he passed away a few years ago, people who are related to this migration process in this way or other definitely know his name and at least some version of his story. As for me, I both read Hayri Atılğan’s story in newspaper and heard about him from the people who have been to Japan for a while.

⁹ <http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2005/10/01/cp/gnc105-20050925-102.html>

¹⁰ Sayanora means “Bye Bye” in Japanese and the documentary was made by Cengiz Özkarakbekir in 2006. http://www.radikal.com.tr/ek_haber.php?ek=cts&haberno=5471

Everything began with a man from Çorum, “Çorumlu”, and working as junk dealer in İstanbul and when this junk dealer met a Japanese smith in 1988. The Japanese smith offered Çorumlu to take him along to Japan and Çorumlu accepted it, both not knowing that they were about to give a start to a migration movement. In those days, Hayri Atılğan was working as chef in a ship. When his ship anchored in Japan, he met with Çorumlu in the harbour. They had some chat and Çorumlu asked Atılğan how much money he was making as a cook. Then Atılğan told him about his job and said that he was making much money. Çorumlu asked him to not leave there and work with him because he felt so lonely in Japan that he needed someone. He also told that if Atılğan accepted to stay and work with him, he would pay the double of what Atılğan was making now in the ship. Thus, Atılğan accepted the offer, settled down in Japan and the story began. Atılğan’s presence in Japan created the first motivation for the migration movement from Fatsa to Japan, especially to the city of Nagoya. Since 1988, the number of immigrants has increased day by day and nowadays it is, off the record, claimed that nearly four thousand people from Fatsa live and work in Japan.

With regard to the reasons for the continuation and development of this migration moment up to now, we can mention unpromising economic situations in Fatsa versus appealing ones in Japan, Japan’s visa policy against Turkey, an environment of kinship and friendship having already settled down in there and these people’s promoting talks about there.

1.5 Contribution of this study to the literature

Migration to Japan has not been studied before as a case study in Turkish migration literature. Different from migration studies in Turkey, this study focuses on a migration movement headed to a totally different a geographic area, while the mainstream migration route from Turkey is towards Europe or transoceanic countries and therefore studies have concentrated on these subjects. Thus, this study shed a light to a field, which has not been touched before in academic sense and skipped the attention of migration researches. I argue that this study will lay the basis for further

and comprehensive studies concerning this migration route from Turkey to Japan. In this context, this study mainly focuses on the impact of male migration from Fatsa to Nagoya on women. In this regard, while many migration studies focuses on the leaving ones, this study fills the gap of understanding the changes in the lives wives in Fatsa. The study aims at providing a holistic picture of without the changes in women's lives leaving any issue out and not sticking into one perspective. The study will also define and emphasis the distinctive conditions of women of Fatsa, such as living in relatively big town, having a higher education level, which have shaped the peculiar process of change for them providing them more power concerning economic, social and family issues in the absence of their men.

1.6 Methodology

The methodology of this fieldwork is based on in-depth interviews. I was in a constant interaction with many other people how was involved in migration process in this way or other, which enriched and diversified the information I gathered in the field. During my fieldwork, I did in-depth interviews with 15 women from different age groups and backgrounds from mid-August, 2010 to beginning of October, 2010. Through my fieldwork, I did not make any classifications in terms of their age, education level or economic situation among the women I talked to. Before going to the field I was planning to reach women whose husbands are still there; however, when I was there, I realized such a categorization meaninglessly narrows down my target group because there are women whose husbands returned back but they waited for them for 16 years, and the experience of these women are no less valuable for my study than that of the women whose husbands are still in Japan. Therefore, I did not applied one strict criterion to choose my interviewees and instead of this, I formed a more diversified group of interviewees as follows: 1) whose husband has been there for a long time; 2) whose husband stayed there, but now back home; 3) the ones who divorced or lost their husbands; 4) who had been in Japan with their husbands, turn backed before them and then re-united with their husbands back in home. All of my respondents live in Fatsa. Many of the interviews were conducted in women's house.

The length of interviews was between 2 hours to 4 hours. During the interviews, I tried to cover different subject matters which can be categorized as follows: 1) the process of migration of man; 2) woman's life during the absence of husband and strategies developed in this period of time; and 3) woman's life after the return of husband. Besides, in order to better understand the migration and adaptation process, survival strategies and changes in their lives I also did in-depth interviews with 3 men who migrated to Japan and stayed there for a long time.

In order to provide theoretical background to the study, Chapter 2 gives an overview of the literature on migration and mainly on labor migration. The first section of the chapter provides an historical synopsis of labor migration since the 16th century. The following section introduces the background of labor migration from Turkey, which gains acceleration at the beginning of 1960s. Then the consequences of labor migration on the left behind is discussed and some significant studies conducted on the left behind are presented. In line with the discussion on the left behind, Turkish case is discussed.

In Chapter 3, the methodology of the research in terms of the field, data collection process and discussions on "being native" in the field is presented in detail. In this chapter, the main discussion is grounded around positive and negative sides of doing anthropology "at home".

The migration process from Fatsa to Japan and how this process is experienced by the women left behind are indicated in Chapter 4. In addition to male migration to Japan, in the second section, as one of the peculiarities of this study than others, the migration of women to Japan with their husbands and their experience is scrutinized.

In Chapter 5, the lives of the left behind is presented. The changes in women's lives in terms of authority, daily life practices and gender roles after the migration of the head of household are argued in detail. In addition, how these changes transform women's lives is discussed. Chapter 5 is followed by the conclusion providing an

overall assessment of the findings of this thesis and classifies areas for further research.

CHAPTER II

A BRIEF LITERATURE ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND IT'S EFFECT ON FAMILY DYNAMICS

2.1 A Historical Background for Labor Migration

*“There can be few people in either industrialized or less developed countries today who do not have personal experience of migration and its effects; this universal experience has become the hallmark of the age of migration”
(Castles and Miller, 2003, p.5).*

Migration is not a new phenomenon. Throughout history people have moved from one place to another as a consequence of wars, famines, or epidemics either within internal or international borders. However, in due time, the routes in which migrations took place, as well as the reasons behind them, have diversified. In order to get a clearer view of the big picture, it is important to take a brief look at the history of migration, especially of labor migration, which is one of the main topics of this thesis. Such a background could make it easier to comprehend the changing patterns of migration, specifically labor migration, from the 16th century up to this day.

Starting from the 16th century, slavery can be regarded as the main cause behind labor migration. It is a known fact that slavery had existed before the 16th century (Yavetz, 1991). However, after the 16th century, with the exploration of “the new world” and the acceleration in colonialism, slavery also became a form of labor migration (Castles & Miller, 2003, p.55). In addition to this, the emergence of capitalism supported this transformed mode of slavery. As Toksöz states, “Labor recruitment came to the forefront mainly because of the need for slaves in order to be employed in coffee, sugar and cotton plantations situated at the south and north

coasts of the new world explored after the mid of 16th century” (Toksöz, 2006, p.11). The slavery in question here is one that is controlled by European hegemony. After the discovery of “the new world”, European countries such as Spain, Britain, France, Portugal, and the Netherlands played an important role in the colonization of both North and South America between the 17th and the 19th centuries (Castels & Miller, 2003, p.52). In order to work in the commodity plantations and mines, 15 million people were brought over by force or were sold as slaves and came to the Americas during these centuries (Appleyard in Castles & Miller, 2003, p.53). Although slavery was abolished in due time, the demand for labor, surely did not disappear. The labor demand for the colonies after the decline of slavery gave way to “indentured workers”.

Koser mentions that, “After the collapse of slavery, indentured labor from China, India, and Japan moved in significant numbers – some 1.5 million from India alone – to continue working the plantations of the European powers” (Koser, 2007, p.3). Later on, as with slavery, indentured labor system was also abandoned, to be followed by what is called labor movement, which appeared as a form of transoceanic migration. A migration flow from Europe to America from the mid-19th century to the beginning of the 20th century took place as an outcome of Industrial Revolution. These developments gave way to an increase in unemployment. Castles and Millers argue that,

“the wealth accumulated in Western Europe through colonial exploitation provided much of the capital which was to unleash the industrial revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In Britain, profits from the colonies were invested in new forms of manufacture, as well as encouraging commercial farming and speeding up the enclosure of arable land of pasture. The displaced tenant farmers swelled the impoverished urban masses available as labor for the new factories...However, from the outset, unfree labor played an important part. Throughout Europe, draconian poor laws introduced to control the displaced farmers and artisans, the ‘hordes of beggars who threatened public order...’ (Castles & Miller, 2003, p.56)

In addition to the consequences of Industrial Revolution, the famines that broke out in this period also had an influence on the migration from Europe to America. Many Europeans from Italy, Spain, and East Europe migrated to America to find jobs in mines or constructions, to build a “better life”. Industrial Revolution brought about intercontinental mass migration and “the expansion of colonial empires and the development of the steamship made it possible for masses of people to flow into the transoceanic migration systems toward Latin America, Australia, and New Zealand as well as North America,” (Sassen, 1999, p.42). On that account, nearly 17 million people from Europe, especially Ireland and England, migrated between the years 1846-1890 to seek better living conditions (Toksöz, 2006, p.14). While transoceanic migration was on the go, migration within Europe was also taking place, in order to fill the labor gap in the countries where people have moved to America. While people living in industrialized countries were migrating to America to have a better life, people living in Poland, Ireland, and Italy were moving to Britain, France, and Germany to look for industrial jobs in those countries.

Intercontinental migration slowed down as an effect of World War I and the new restrictive US immigration laws. As a result of the Great Depression, US government discouraged intercontinental migration and migration from Europe to America slowed down in comparison to the previous century until World War II broke out (Stalker, 1994). Yet, during the years between the two world wars, migration within Europe continued, because many people were dead or permanently disabled. This caused an increase in labor demand for farm and factory workers, especially in France. In fact, in this period, France was the only country to accept labor migration from other countries within Europe. France had agreements to recruit labor from countries such as Italy and Poland. However, with the economic repression of the 1930s, France was not hostile to foreign labor immigrants as other European countries or US. Referring to Cross, Castles and Millers point out that “...in the 1920s foreign workers ‘provided a cheap and flexible workforce necessary for capital accumulation and economic growth; at the same time, aliens allowed the French worker a degree of economic mobility’. In the 1930s, on the other hand, immigration

‘attenuated and provided a scapegoat for the economic crisis’” (Castles & Millers, 2003, p.64).

Although economic repressions of the 1930s and World War II caused a decrease in labor migration, after the 1950s, it was accelerated once again. Besides labor migration, nearly 15 million people were displaced and moved within Europe at the end of the war, as a result of border changes (Stalker, 2002). This thesis focuses on a period after 1952, so it might be plausible to take heed of Stalker’s analysis concerning the changes in migration patterns, where he defines four phases that occurred after World War II up to this day:

- *Late 1940s and early-1950s - mass refugee flows*
- *Early 1950s to 1973 – recruitment of contract workers*
- *1974 to mid-1980s – the door close*
- *Mid-1980s to 2001 - asylum seekers, refugees and illegal immigrations*
(Stalker, 2002, pp.161-162)

The years between 1950s and mid-1980s gain specific importance to understand the changing patterns of labor migration. After World War II, an important amount of labor power was needed for the reconstruction of Europe. “The initiator of migration to western Europe is the demand of employers for migrant worker. There is no initiative of migration by the labor force before that of employers. With the increase in demand for labor force Europe starts to import labor force and between 1950 and 1973 the number migrant workers in western Europe hits 10 millions” (Toksöz, 2006, p.26). As a result of the economic growth in England, France, and Germany, the demand for labor increased. Those countries firstly recruited the people who were displaced during the war as labor power. In addition to them, West European countries started to recruit workers from less industrialized south European countries such as Italy. For instance, just after the war, the British government recruited nearly 90.000 workers, which were mainly male, from refugee camps and Italy (Castles &

Miller, 2003). France and Britain also used their colonial ties in North Africa, Caribbean, and India to import labor power. During the 1960s and the 1970s, countries such as Turkey, Tunisia, and Yugoslavia appeared the scene as labor supplying countries for the reconstruction of Europe (Stalker, 2002).

However, in 1973 and henceforth, European labor importing countries stopped recruiting workers from abroad. The closing of borders as such could be as being a result of the accomplishment of Europe's reconstruction, or it could be related to the oil crisis of 1973, which gave rise to an economic recession. To these two reasons, anti-immigrant sentiments can also be added. Concordantly, after mid-1970s, worker recruitment by European countries was no longer exercised and seeds of anti-immigrant policies were planted (Toksöz, 2006). The total number of foreign workers declined in varying degrees in different countries. In Germany and France, the number of foreign workers fell by less than half a million from 1973 to 1980, to 2.1 million and to 1.5 million respectively (Sassen, 1999).

However the scene of labor migration has started to change as of 1980s. The legal and desired process of labor migration has gradually been replaced by illegal movements. Since mid-1980s, asylum seekers, refugees and illegal immigrants have become the center of migration debates in Europe and other parts of the world. Simultaneously in different parts of the world, political instabilities have begun to arise. The collapse of the Soviet Union resulted in conflicts in the eastern part of Europe. Similarly Middle Eastern and African people experience more hard times than ever. Thus people from these geographies strive for new ways for better life standards. Thus they become immigrants who escape from persecution or conflict; they differ from voluntary migrants whose main deriving force to migrate rest on economic grounds. In addition to this, the economic instabilities and policies of closing the borders for foreign labor workers led to an increase in asylum and refugee seeking, and illegal migration ran by human smugglers. As a result of closing the borders against labor migrants, economic instabilities, and the increase in the

conflicts in less developed countries, refugee seeking and illegal migration have increased since mid-1980s in more developed countries.

In conclusion, throughout the history labor force has always been a need for the employers. While initially the demand was from landlords and labor was in form of slavery, with industrialization nation-states asked for workers. In both cases when the local labor was not enough in quantity or was not cheap enough for the business, importing labor and migration provided the solution. As Toksöz argues “both historically and actually the function of migration constitutes the static element of the development of capitalist world system due to the demand for keep low the cost of labor force” (Toksöz, 2006, p.15). Today migration of labor force creates a global market, where the sellers are very willing but the buyers are not to enthusiastic. For many years, Turkey is the supplier of labor force for developed countries, a fact that requires an academic interest for migration from Turkey.

2.2 Turkey: An Emigrant Country

The international labor migration from Turkey is not a new phenomenon though it does not date back to the 16th century, as it is in the European case, either. Starting from the 1960s, Turkey was considered as an “emigrant country”: a country sending immigrants to other parts of the world. In this part of the thesis, it will be discussed how Turkish labor emigration has started and evolved since the 1960s with a look into the reasons that gave rise to it and the results it has caused since then.

After World War II, northwest European countries were in need of labor power to reconstruct their economy. During the 1950s, those countries exported labor from less industrialized South European countries such as Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece. However, with the acceleration of industrialization in South European countries, those countries stopped sending immigrants to the northern parts of Europe, as they needed manpower themselves. Therefore, “...certain Southern European countries no longer provide manpower resources and this function – as long as conjectural factors, such as the energy crisis, rationalization of industries, etc.

are not slowing down – has been taken up by peripheral countries, such as Yugoslavia, Turkey, Tunisia, Morocco, and even nations south of the Sahara in Africa” (Abadan-Unat, 1976, p.3).

In order to understand the reasons behind labor emigration from Turkey, a brief glance at the Turkish population patterns after World War I could be relevant. After World War I period and the establishment of the Turkish Republic, the population of Turkey had doubled from 1945 to 1970. Within the population patterns, like in other developing countries, ‘a high birth rate’, ‘dramatically reduced but still relatively high death rate’ and ‘a high infant mortality rate’ were observed (Tanfer, 1983, p.78). The increase in the population growth brought about significant dependency ratio among the population. In addition to population ratios, it is important to mention the difference between urban and rural areas, which led to internal migration in Turkey, due to economic growth. Although modern industries were established by both public and private entrepreneurs, little effort was put into developing agriculture. This is significant to note in the sense that, as Tanfer argues, even though economic growth was observed during those years, there was an imbalance between the largest cities and rural areas (Tanfer, 1983). In Turkey, the economic growth and the establishment of industries concentrated in the regions of largest cities such as Istanbul and Ankara. However, economic investments on rural areas were not sufficient enough compared to those in urban areas. This situation resulted in an internal immigration trend in Turkey and it also became one of the reasons behind international labor migration later on (Tanfer, 1983).

In that sense, being a developing country and having half of the population at the working age group, Turkey was inevitably a fitting source of workforce for northwest countries, who needed to fill the labor force gap within their borders. Thus, as a major step, emigration of labor power from Turkey to Europe was established in the form of bilateral recruitment agreements. The first bilateral agreement on worker recruitment was signed in 1961 between Turkey and West Germany. According to Abadan-Unat, “recognition of the right to travel abroad for

Turkish citizens in the constitution of 1961 had an important role in speeding up this process” (Abadan-Unat, 2006, p.58). Recruitment agreement with West Germany in 1961, respectively, was followed by agreements between Turkey and Austria, the Netherlands, Belgium in 1964; France in 1965; Switzerland in 1967; and lastly Australia in 1968, a country outside of Europe (Onulduran & Renselaar, 1975, p.30).

Turkey, as the immigrant sending party, also supported the advancement of these agreements, as did the northwest European countries in question. After signing the first agreement with West Germany, Turkish Government put into effect the five-year progress plan. According to this plan, not only population growth would be taken under control but also the export of surplus labor force would be promoted (Abadan-Unat, 2006, p.59). Abadan-Unat states that the exportation of surplus labor force was a strategy for providing Turkish workers with vocational training and turning them into a qualified work force. The government assumed that Turkish workers sent to abroad would gain the necessary vocational skills for working in the national industries when they were back to Turkey. That is the reason why the government supported the process of labor force export.

The workers, who went abroad between the years 1961 to 1973, were called “guest workers”. During these years, the recruitment agreements signed with Europe were based on the ground of ‘rotation’ principle. According to this, a Turkish citizen worker would go to one of the European countries that have bilateral recruitment agreements with Turkey and work there for one year and then turn back to Turkey. However, this principle had never been put into action. Although the workers were not allowed to bring their families with them, they did not want to turn back at the end of the year, since they wanted to earn enough money to start up their own business when they returned. At the same time, the employers also did not want the workers to work for only one year, because most of Turkish workers were employed in heavy industry where European workers did not accept to work. Thus in the beginning of 1970s, the European countries who had guest workers within their borders, had a tendency to admit that this foreign labor force settled down

permanently. That is why Turkey, having sent 805.000 Turkish workers to Europe until 1973, initiated negotiations about the social rights of these workers with the host countries (Abadan-Unat, 2006; Toksöz, 2006).

However, 1973 was the turning point for the international labor migration. Oil crisis broke out in the years 1973-1974 as a result of the Arabian embargo. This embargo led into an economic recession in European. In those years, the economic instability also caused an increase in unemployment in Europe and Europe, which once invited foreign workers so as to create an economic development, this time decided to close the door against the foreign labor force. In 1975, many European countries, especially West Germany that had the crowded Turkish population took the decision to suspend the flow of foreign labor force. Despite a significant decrease in foreign labor recruitment, with tendency of admitting the permanent statue of the existing foreign workers, the flow of labor has continued in the form of family reunification (İçduygu, 2010). As Abadan-Unat states “as a matter of fact while the number of Turkish workers in EU countries were 711.302 in 1973-1974, the (Turkish) population hit 1.765.788 with arrival of spouses and children ” (Abadan-Unat, 2006, p.64).

From 1975 onwards to the 1990s, Turkish emigration shifted to other labor markets: Middle East countries. Oil shocks in 1973-1974 brought about the changing economic conditions in the world and resulted in the demand for labor in the European countries coming to an end. As it is mentioned above, in 1975, European countries put an end to recruitment agreements. After 1975, the flow of migration shifted from Europe to oil-rich Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia, Libya, and Kuwait with the acceleration in the construction projects financed by oil-rich economies (Koç & Onan, 2004). İçduygu and Sirkeci (İçduygu & Sirkeci, 1998) characterizes the migration between Turkey and the Arab countries in three periods:

- 1967 – 1980: During this period, the migration flow to the Arab countries, specifically to Libya and Saudi Arabia, increased steadily. Oil crisis of 1973 caused a new turning point. The oil-exporting Arab countries needed fresh

labor power and at the same time, as it is mentioned above, Europe was closing its doors to foreign workers. Therefore, in this period, there was significant increase in migration to the Arab countries.

- 1981 – 1992: In addition to Saudi Arabia and Libya, Turkish workers migrated to Iraq, Jordan Kuwait, Jordan and Yemen in growing numbers. In this period, nearly 500.000 Turkish workers went to the Arab countries.
- 1993 – Onwards: Turkish migration started to decrease compared to the previous periods. The Gulf Crisis in 1991 could be regarded as one of the main reasons of this decrease. Furthermore, Yemen resigned from labor-importing and Libya went downsizing in foreign labor demand. As a result annual migration to Libya decreased from 2,600 persons in 1993 to 1,800 in 1995. (İçduygu & Sirkeci, 1998)

Even when there have been drops in the number of people migrating to European or the Arab countries, Turkish labor migration flow seems to be continuous. After the 1990s, another route has gained importance in Turkish labor migration. Following the collapse of the former USSR, like after World War II, the newly emerging states needed both reconstruction programs and labor power. In such a context, Turkish firms have played an important role in the construction jobs which led to increase in the project-tied and job-specific migration (İçduygu, Sirkeci & Muradoğlu, 2001; Coşkun & Türkyılmaz, 2009). According to İçduygu and et.al, labor migration to countries of the former USSR was important because “...In a period of reduced flows to labor-receiving Arab countries after the Gulf crisis, migration to countries of the former USSR became a ‘remedy’ for emigration pressure in Turkey. Labor migration from Turkey to these states increased from 8,000 in 1992 to over 20,000 in 1993 and over 40,000 in 1994” (İçduygu, Sirkeci & Muradoğlu, 2001, p.45).

Starting from the 60s until the 90s, Turkey was considered as an “emigrant country”, a country sending immigrants to other countries, due to the great number of people who have emigrated from Turkey to European countries, especially to Germany.

However, according to İçduygu and Keyman, especially since the 80s, Turkey has also been regarded as a “host country”, a country having immigrants from other countries. This increase in migration flow from other countries to Turkey for the last two decades is not coincidental. Turkey’s geographic position, its role as a bridge between Asia and Europe, makes Turkey an attractive country for migration. Moreover, due to its geographic position, Turkey has been playing an important role for refugees, asylum seekers, and transit migrants since the 1980s. The Iranian revolution, the end of the Cold War and the Gulf War has contributed to the increase in the refugees and asylum seekers as a result of political turmoil in the Middle East making Turkey a transit zone between the East and the West for refugees and asylum seekers (İçduygu & Keyman, 1998).

Furthermore, after the collapse of USSR, a major increase in migration flow from Soviet Union countries to Turkey has been observed. The main reason of this increase was that the removal of travel restrictions that were effective during the Soviet Union period. Turkey has been attractive for the post-Soviet Union and also for the Balkan countries, which were regarded as poorer countries. These countries can be listed as Romania, Ukraine, Moldova, Bulgaria, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Gagauiza and Turkmenistan. Immigrants from these countries come to Turkey with their tourist visas and work informally in jobs like domestic works, the entertainment sector, sex industry, construction, tourism sector and agriculture. These irregular labor migrants are mainly composed of women immigrants. These women find jobs mostly in domestic labor market, whereas men generally work in construction and agriculture. According to İçduygu, between the years 1995 and 2006, “the top five source countries for circular irregular migrants were: Moldova (53,000), Romania (23,000), Georgia (18,000), Ukraine (18,000) and Russian Federation (18,000).” (İçduygu, 2008, p.5)

To sum up, we can say that after the establishment of Turkish Republic, Turkey met with some economic problems because of rapid population growth and increased demand for employment. As a developing country, Turkey was not able to meet the

needs of rapidly growing population and create enough jobs for young generations; that is why Turkey reshaped its migration policies and promoted the export of labor force to Europe in 1950s. The fact that Europe was in need of labor force so as to rebuild itself following the World War II had a great role in the recruitment agreements signed between Turkey and European countries to import labor force from Turkey. Due to these agreements, nearly one million Turkish workers had been migrated to European countries from 1960s to oil crisis in 1973. Although after the oil crisis, Europe closed its doors against foreign workers, they had to admit the existence of these foreign workers in their countries and started to give permission for family reunifications. After Europe closed its doors to foreign workers, in 1980s the migration from Turkey changes its destination to Arab countries. Migration to this direction followed a fluctuating regime until the mid-1990s. At the end of 1990s, Turkish workers turned their steps towards former Soviet Republics due to many Turkish companies, especially in the construction business, established in these countries. After 1990s, Turkey came to the fore as a migration-receiving country as it was now more developed country compared to other countries of the region. Its geographic position also made it a transit country for refugees and asylum seekers

I have to state that in these migration processes the migrant has nearly always been a male. Not only in migration to Europe but also in migration to Arab countries and former Soviet republics when we ask the question of who migrates, the answer is “men migrates”. In the literature, there are studies on the problems the migrant male meets and the status of migrant man in the migrated country and homeland. However it is known that migration movements have mainly dramatic effects on the one leaving and the one left behind. Migration process affects the family decisions, reshapes relationships and brings separation to the family. Whatever the situation is there is always someone staying behind and trying to keep in touch with the migrated one. Due to the general tendency in the field of migration studies, in the researches the main attention is paid to migrants themselves. However, the studies focusing on the other side of the coin - the ones left behind - clearly display that the process affects not only the ones migrated but also those left behind. Today, it is

academically proved and admitted that the migration of men has crucial effects on the lives of women who stay behind in home. Therefore this study also focuses on the women who are also greatly affected by the process regardless of they migrate with their husbands or not.

2.3 The Impact of Male Labor Migration on Women

Although within the last years it could be argued that there is an increase in the feminization of migration (Parreñas, 2001), men are still the major actors of international labor migration. For countries where labor migration takes place in significant numbers, women's absence from the international labor migration scene could be explained by the division of labor in accordance with patriarchal values. While men are regarded as the breadwinner, women take the role of housewife. In international labor migration, this situation also becomes apparent and while men migrate, women are the ones who stay behind.

In addition to traditional gender roles and patriarchal values, the type of migration is also important in the decision-making process of whether it would be male or female oriented. Especially within the last decade, there is a growth in feminization in international labor migration. From many countries, specifically Philippines, Mexico, and Sri Lanka, women have migrated to other countries to work (Parreñas, 2001). However, when it comes to countries such as Turkey, where traditional values are still important, we see a male-oriented labor migration, which is also related with the type of work in the destination country. For instance, the migrants work in construction business, which is considered a male work that is why migration of a woman cannot be in question (Koç & Onan, 2004). İçduygu and Sirkeci mention that “there were only 31 female workers registered among the total of 77,000 workers arrived in the Arab countries between 1967 and 1980” (İçduygu & Sirkeci, 1998, p.8).

Since the major actors of international migration are men and the studies usually focus on those main characters that are the immigrants themselves, those who remain

behind are not brought under scrutiny as much as they deserve. However, these “secondary characters”, the ones who stay behind, are as worthy to focus on to fully understand the effects of migration within society. In that sense, this study focuses on those left behind, specifically women, and the changing patterns in their lives after their husbands migrate. Therefore, next section will mention the studies concentrated on the women who are left behind.

2.3.1 Being a Migrant’s Wife

In migration literature, a considerable amount of attention is drawn on the impact of men’s labor migration on those who are left behind, their wives, although this subject, without a doubt, deserves even more attention (Mahler, 2001; Cohen, 2001; Engel, 1986; Hadi, 1996; Desai & Banerji, 2008; Drotbohm, 2010; Reeder, 2001; Boehm, 2008; Pribilsky, 2004; Mynitti, 1984). It could be argued that while on the one hand, male migration have positive effects on those left behind, on the other hand, women face many problems during their husbands’ absence. Male oriented migration flow makes women and children left behind vulnerable in terms of increasing workload and responsibilities for women, as well as changing gender roles, and causing problems of disciplining the children and last but not least economic difficulties (Nguyen, Yeoh & Toyota, 2006).

Many studies show that women’s autonomy increase in terms of decision-making power in the household matters (Nguyen, Yeoh & Toyota, 2006; Boehm, 2008). Yabiku, Agadjanian and Sevoyan, for instance, reveal in their research on Mozambique that male migration from rural areas to the mines and other destinations in South Africa has taken place since the colonial times and this is “positively associated with women’s autonomy and reflect on the mechanisms behind this relationship... a repeated finding is a link between men’s labor migration and women’s autonomy. “Women who remain in the sending community while their husbands are away report higher autonomy, independence, and decision-making authority” (Yabuki, Agadjanian & Sevoyan, 2010, p.4).

The significant change in women's autonomy could be explained with the increase in the responsibilities they attain in the absence of their husbands. With their men gone, women are expected to be responsible for every duty including those that were previously their husbands' concern (Khaled 1995; Boehm 2008). In other words, the duties regarded as "business of a man" are no longer under the duties of men as a result of migration. Therefore, in the absence of the husband, women become responsible for every single matter concerning the nuclear family. It could be argued that this results in the transformation of gender roles. According to Reeder (2001), although the roles of the family members are already constructed, the transoceanic migration in Italy brought about the conflicts on existing roles of men as "breadwinner" and women as "householder". With the transformation of family members' roles, women's visibility in decision-making process, on nuclear family matters increase. Although, this could be interpreted as the empowerment of women's autonomy within the family, many women complain about carrying all of the responsibilities of the household (Gordon, 1981). Women describe the situation as "burden". Salgado de Synder argues that "the newly acquired responsibilities and obligations that women are forced to assume as a result of their husbands' migration could empower women but could also subject them to considerable stress because these role expansions clash sharply with traditional expectations of gender roles and therefore produce family and social conflict" (Salgado de Synder in Menjivar & Agadjanian, 2007, p.1246).

This situation creates a dichotomy in women's previous life, having the husband at home, and present life, living in the absence of the man in the household. In many studies, women present themselves as just "woman" before the migration, whereas after the male migration and being left with all the responsibility, they regard themselves as both "man" and "woman". Boehm, who conducted a fieldwork among Mexican women, explains this situation as:

"Meanwhile, women who stay in Mexico face new burdens alongside increased freedoms: still responsible for domestic chores and child care, they take on tasks that were previously understood as the sphere

of men, such as farming and managing finances...Rosa's assertion – "Now I am a man and a woman!" – underscores that gendered migrations are always gendered moves." (Boehm, 2008, p.20)

However, it could be argued that the empowerment of women's autonomy is not same everywhere. There are other studies which emphasize that women's new responsibilities do not necessarily end in their empowerment. So what determines the increase in women's autonomy? It could be maintained that the type of family women live in and the culture they are born to are the indicating factors that play such a determining role. In the extended families where strong patriarchal values are still on the floor, women do not gain as much power during the absence of their husbands' in terms of decision-making processes (Abadan-Unat 1977; Desai and Banerji 2008). Gordon argues that in the absence of their men, instead of an increase in their autonomy, women did not gain any empowerment:

"specific conditions in Lesotho also seem to make the woman's position an especially dependent, passive and stressful one. She appears to have very little control over a number of important areas of her life. She has little say in whether her husband migrates or not. Whether she likes it or not, no matter how badly she may have functioned in his previous absence, she cannot influence this basic condition of her life. She also knows that she has no control over her husband's actions while he is away. The number and frequency of his visits home, his fidelity to her, whether he will choose to completely abandon the family, all lie outside of her control. She is largely dependent on his good-will in these matters" (Gordon, 1981, p.73).

After male migration, as mentioned above, all responsibilities of the household remain on the on the shoulders of women. However the empowerment of women's autonomy is not resulted positively in every case. The changes in the gender roles occur differently: women also become responsible for the control and usage of remittances. This is an important subject-matter because what determines the type of the families women belong to is closely related to the control of remittances. As in the case of Egypt, women living in extended families do not have any control on the

remittances, that is, women cannot control the money sent by the husbands. Remittances are sent to the household head, who is usually the father of the husband if he is still alive or the eldest brother of the husband (Taylor, 1984). However, there are exceptional cases where women have control over the remittances. Reeder (2001) argues that although men earn the money, women play an important role in the usage of it. The money sent by men is mainly spent for the daily expenses and if the women could save some of it, it is used for investment, such as buying house or land. With regards to this issue, Reeder argues that men have to trust their wives in the usage of remittances since they are far away and have no control on the economy of the house. Although they decide together for the investments, as a result of physical distance, men would accept whatever the women suggest. According to Reeder, making decisions as a couple about the usage of the remittances gives way to a more egalitarian pattern in the migrant family. Moreover, power to decide on how to spend the money sent by men is important because remittances concern the wellbeing of those left behind. Especially in less developed countries, remittances gain additional importance for the quality of life the family left behind has and for the possibility of investment if there is any. Gulati (1993), for one, points out that the remittances provide women and children to live a healthy life.

The migration of men also has impacts on children. After the husband migrates, the women have to take care of the children on their own. The absence of man is hard for children. The major difficulty is raising the children in a disciplined way due to the lack of a “father” image. As a result, women characterize themselves as both father and mother because as Gordon argues “her children are seen as being raised solely by her own efforts and the lack of a father’s presence as boding ill for their development” (Gordon, 1981, p.61). Gordon also points out that in the absence of the father, a male member of the extended family acts like a father (Gordon, 1981).

Finally, women experience changes at different parts of their lives as they are left behind and “alone”. In addition to these changes and difficulties, women have to face another important issue in the social sphere: “honor”. The issue of honor is a

significant one in the communities where patriarchal values are still valid. Reeder (2001) posits that honor gains importance in the rural Sicilian families after male migration. The reason is that, as a man, your relations in the society are based on honor. In that sense, the woman who stays behind easily becomes the center of gossip, therefore she should always be careful about her behavior. When the woman stays behind, it creates a potential for degeneration of honor. In the rural Sicilian, like in those other places where there is a strong code of honor, every single act of women are monitored by husbands and during their absence, father in-law or mother in-law takes up this role (Brink, 1991).

What makes honor so important is also the network of “gossiping”. Anthropologist Max Gluckman points out that “gossip is as an effective political tool, which served principally to maintain the unity of social groups” (Gluckman in Drotbohm, 2010, p.54). Paine also mentions that gossip is “an instrument of individuals trying to achieve their own interests at the cost of others” (Paine in Drotbohm, 2010, p.54). When these two definitions are combined, gossip could be defined as “a negatively evaluative and morally laden verbal exchange concerning the conduct of absent third parties that takes place within a bounded group of persons in a private setting” (Besnier, 1996, p.244). In communities where honor code is strictly applied, gossip about the alone woman, especially any implication about relation with another man, would result in serious troubles for her. Thus women, in particular the ones living with the extended family and in a rather small village, have to deal with the risk of gossip and act carefully in the absence of their husbands.

To sum up, after male migration, important changes take place in women’s lives either positively or negatively. Having all the responsibilities of the household, in some cases, women are empowered, in other cases, however, especially for women living in extended families, there is no such thing. After this general overview on the left—behind studies, it is important to mention Turkish studies on this subject matter.

2.3.2 Studies from Turkey

Turkey is one of the emigration countries since the 1960s and many studies regarding this matter focus on the migrant. There happens to be only a limited number of studies on the left behind in Turkey (Kadıoğlu, 1994; Day & İçduygu, 1997; Abadan-Unat, 1977; Kalaycıoğlu.et.al, 2010; Fidan & Fidecioğlu, 2010; Kıray, 1976; Koç & Onan, 2004). However, as Kıray argues, “migration is not simply and accidental movement to gain cash for a single expenditure such as buying an ox, saving enough for bride price; it is, rather, to start a new form of life and even those who within this irreversible process are still left behind in villages and small towns are equally affected by this sharp challenge” (Kıray in Abadan-Unat, 1976, p.211).

One of the first studies on the international labor migration from Turkey was carried out by Prof.Dr. Ruşen Keleş and Prof. Dr. Nermin Abadan-Unat in Boğazlıyan, a county of Yozgat province in 1975. The main reason for the selection of Boğazlıyan for this study is the significant number of migration from the province to other countries. At the conclusion of this study, Yenisey discusses the impacts of the labor migration on the left behind, especially wives (Yenisey, 1975). Like in the above studies, Yenisey argues that male migration caused changes in the lives of women. When men migrated abroad, even if before the migration the family type was nuclear, he left his wife and children to the extended family. However, when the migrated family earned enough money to build their own house, wife and children moved out, but they were still under the control of the extended family.

Either living with the extended family or in the nuclear family, the empowerment of women autonomy was observed in this research. Yenisey points that although women had to ask for advice from elderly people in the extended families on issues related to agricultural matters, spending of remittances, or the marriage of children, women had gain power of decision making on daily issues. Moreover, this empowerment was supported by the return of husbands and this compulsory separation resulted in more egalitarian families.

Another recent study of importance was carried out in 5 towns of Cihanbeyli and Kulu provinces, Konya (Kalaycıoğlu et. al, 2010). In this study, the experiences of women are discussed in terms of being wife, mother, and the left behind. What is the most interesting part in this study is the “arranged marriages”. The man who left for a European country divorced his wife in Turkey and made an arranged marriage in order to have right for permanent residence. The study mainly focuses on this issue and how the women experience it. In the study, it is stated that the foreign wife of the man provides in his daily life in Europe while his Turkish wife takes care of household in Turkey. Meanwhile the man acts in accordance with the classical patriarchal male role, does his duties as a man and makes a living for both parts. This situation is accepted by both Turkish and foreign wives. The study emphasizes that the migration process empowers the women left behind, but also draws attention to the point that it is compulsory empowerment, not a voluntary one.

It should be stated that there are studies concerning the left behind, however in all these cases the destination of migration is Europe. The reason is that although there is a fact of migration to Arab countries and the former Soviet republic since 1990s, the Europe constitutes the main destination for Turkey since 1950s. However in this study the destination is neither European countries nor Arab or former Soviet republics; this study focuses on a totally different location, which has never been studied in the literature: Japan. The only reference to migration from Turkey to Japan is in an article of İçduygu published in 1999. In the article İçduygu states that there is a case of migration from Fatsa to Japan and it also need to be studied, however until now apart from a few reports in the newspapers and television documentary, there is no academic study about this case. This study discusses the case of migration from Fatsa to Japan. In Chapter IV and V the findings of fieldwork is discussed in terms of similarities with and differences than the other migration cases in the literature from the perspective of its impacts on women. Chapter III is dedicated to the methodology, in other words how the fieldworks was organized and conducted, and what kind of difficulties appeared during the fieldwork.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1 The Field

Sampling is a major problem for any type of research. We can't study every case of whatever we're interested in, nor should we want to. Every scientific enterprise tries to find out something that will apply to everything of a certain kind by studying a few examples, the results of the study being, as we say, "generalizable" (Becker in Neuman, 2006, p.219).

During my fieldwork, I conducted in-depth interviews with 15 women from different age groups – from 34 to 60 – and with diverse socio-economic backgrounds from the mid of August, 2010 to the beginning of October, 2010 so as to focus on the lives of left behind. As understanding the migration process and the life in Japan for migrants, I also did in-depth interviews with three men who stayed in Japan for a long time. During my fieldwork, I did not make any classification among the women I talked in terms of their ages, education levels or economic situations. Before going to field, I was planning to conduct a research among the women whose husbands' are still there. However, when I was in Fatsa, I noticed that there are also women whose husbands returned after a long period of separation. For example there are women whose husbands left for 16 years and the women had waited for them for all this time. Therefore, I did not restrict my subject of research with only women whose husbands are still in Japan. I diversified my categories of interviewees and I classified them as follows: 1) women whose husbands have been there for a long time; 2) women whose husbands have stayed there and now turned back; 3) women who divorced their husbands or lost their husbands; 4) women who had been in

Japan with their husbands, turned back before their husbands and whose husbands are in Fatsa now.

Doing qualitative fieldwork as a researcher, you should focus on your field with its all aspects. During a researcher's stay in the field, he/she should observe any kind of daily activities, which would prove to be important to understand the field as a whole. If the researcher conducts the study in a culturally different region, he/she should spend enough time to get this whole picture. Although at the beginning of the discipline, the studying 'other' was on the floor; studying one's own society has gained importance within last decades in anthropological studies. For this fieldwork, I followed the later method and I did my fieldwork as a native in the field. In that sense, it is important to mention discussions on "anthropology at home" to analyze and understand my situation and how I handled with it.

Before discussing "doing anthropology at home", I want to state that while preparing for the field in Ankara, I also had some concerns about the organization of the field. I had concerns on how I would contact with women and even if I did, I was not sure about whether they would interview with me. Furthermore, I was questioning my position in the field as native researcher. However, I knew that for an ethnographer, it is impossible to predict what he/she comes across in the field (Gallo in Falzon, 2005, p.88). Having all of these concerns in my mind, I had a meeting with my advisor and I had nearly experienced same scene as Nader did once upon a time:

Before leaving Harvard I went to see Kluckhohn. In spite of the confidence I had gained from some of my training at Harvard, this last session left me frustrated. When I asked Kluckhohn if he had any advice, he told the story of a graduate student who asked Kroeber the same question. In response Kroeber was said to have taken the largest, fattest ethnography book off his shelf, and said, 'Go forth and do likewise'" (Nader in Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, p.27)

When I got nearly the same answer from my advisor, I was so afraid that I actually thought I would not be unable to do this research. However, after my fieldwork, I

understood what my advisor told to me. An ethnographic fieldwork is not something one can could plan every detail of it. As an ethnographer, you can go field and “do it likewise”. It was the same for me: I went to the field, did my fieldwork, and returned.

My arrival at Fatsa for conducting a fieldwork made me feel different than my previous visits to Fatsa, as this I was not there to spend my holiday with my family. Thus first I had to explain my purpose of staying in Fatsa to my family. I explained them I would not have much time to be with them and I had to study. However they interpreted my words in a way that I had to do my “homework”. This is how I got my permission to turn their invitation down and have more time on my own. After clearing up family issues, it was time to encounter with the field in terms of the organization as a native researcher.

The first step was the organization of my fieldwork, in other words getting in touch with the women and preparing a plan and structure for the interviews. Before my arrival at Fatsa, I contacted my family and got a few names with whom I could make an interview. As I was from Fatsa, I was already familiar with names and had a general idea which families involved in this migration case. Still, ten years ago I settled down in Ankara and for the last decade I have been visiting Fatsa just in holidays for two weeks. That is why I was in need of finding some “gatekeepers” to help me contacting the women left behind and arranging interviews with them. One may first assume that being from Fatsa and knowing many people there may be enough for conducting a fieldwork there but despite all these advantages it would not be easy for an anthropologist to organize a fruitful fieldwork without help of local people. That was the reason for the need of ‘gatekeepers’ in the field, who is “someone with the formal or informal authority to control access to a site” (Neuman, 2006, p.387). In this fieldwork, the first gatekeeper was my own family. My first touches with the women left behind were thanks to my family. Then through snowball technique, I reached other informers. After few interviews, the women I interviewed also arranged meetings for me in order to ‘help a student’.

Before the start-off of my fieldwork, I had tried to plan my fieldwork in detail. I had assumed that I could have opportunity to do in-depth-interviews and perhaps I could get permission from some women to live with them for few days because it was important to understand their daily lives in a deeper sense. However, after my first a few interviews, I realized that the field study would not proceed as I had assumed in Ankara, because women did not accept my offer of living with them for a few days. It was mainly because my stay in Fatsa and the hazelnut harvest overlapped; that is why the interviewees told me that they would go to their villages and stay there during the hazelnut harvest period. When I offered them to go to villages with them, this time they turned down my offer with the excuse that they would be really busy at that time. They stated that not only in the house but also they had to work in hazelnut fields and they would be outside all day.

However, as for the duration and place of interviews, I was lucky enough to access easily to household of interviewees and have enough time for completing the interview. The interviews arranged to be held in interviewees' houses and they lasted approximately up to 4-5 hours without any time limitation. I did not use a structured questionnaire in the interviews; they were conducted through unstructured way. One may assume that carrying out an interview in an unstructured way causes problems; however, this was not the case in my field. Despite lack of a structured questionnaire, I had decided the main topics I had to ask about before coming to the field, which made the process easier. Also being a familiar person for the interviewee was also an advantage and facilitated the process both for the interviewee and me. In the interview, I was first introducing myself. The interviewee was certainly asking about my family, my parents and then I began the interview with the question "why did your husband go to Japan?" The rest was easy and fast, the interview was talking even before I asked.

I had only one specific problem about applying unstructured interviews: interviewers did not want our conversations to be taped. Therefore I asked for permission to take notes during the interviews and they allowed me to do it. Although I was asking

questions and taking notes at the same time, I always showed my interest the conservation. Even I concentrated my notes during the interview just for few minutes; I felt that this made them feel uncomfortable. Therefore, during the interviews, I tried to keep eye contact as much as I could. I learned from this study that if a researcher makes his/her interviewees feel comfortable during the interview, it becomes easier to build a relationship based on trust between the researcher and the interviewee, which is the basis for an ethnographic fieldwork.

Although in time I found a solution to the problem of note taking and having conservation at the same time, I experienced some “technical” difficulties with note taking during the first few interviews. I could not write every detail of the interviews, however I managed to write down the important points and after a while I started to use some abbreviations, which could remind me the whole interview. As I had to count on my memory for transferring my notes into meaningful texts, I had to draft the interview texts shortly after the interviews. Therefore I decided to work on the notes on a daily basis and I wrote down my notes in detail right after the interviews at home. Working on my field notes on daily basis while I still had the memory of the interview in my mind, provided me with detailed field diary despite the lack of tape recordings.

Another advantage of writing down field notes everyday was having the chance of revising field notes. As I did not have a structured questionnaire for my field, revising the field notes before the next interview was useful to catch the missing part of the interviews. Working on my field notes every night pointed me out important questions I had to ask women to understand their situation better. Thus, at the end of first interviews, I had a clear opinion about basic questions, which should be asked during the interviews. Thus I want to say that writing field notes during the field was proved to be very helpful for me as Emerson and et.al. also argue “Perhaps much crucial than how long the ethnographer spends in the field is the timing of writing up field notes...Writing fieldnotes *immediately* after leaving the setting provides

fresher, more detailed recollections...” (Emerson and et. al in Neuman, 2006, p.399) (emphasis in original).

During the fieldwork, I also paid a special attention to understand the world of interviewees. Bogdan and Taylor state that “*Researchers must start with the premise that words and symbols used in their world may have different meaning in the world of their subjects. They must also be attuned to new words and words used in contexts other than those with which they are familiar*” (Bogdan and Taylor in Neuman, 2006, 398) (emphasis in original). I came across with the cases where the most known concepts were used with a different context by my interviewees. For example, the son of one of my interviewees named Japan as a communist country. He had arrived at home in the middle of our interview and as he also stayed for a while in Japan, I had decided to ask some questions about his experience. When he used the definition “communist country” for Japan, I wanted him to explain why he called Japan so. However he just mentioned about egalitarian social life, economic welfare and Japan as a social state. It was the first moment when I realized that I have a different description about a “communist country” than my interviewee. During my fieldwork I, for instance, grasped that “being widow” is more complex social status for my interviewees and “cheating” is not used for the relations of their husbands with other women. Thus, during my interviews I tried to understand or question the concepts the interviewees use, why and in what context they used it.

In conclusion, I carried out a fieldwork based on unstructured interview method. In accessing interviewees, I used my family members as gatekeeper. After the first a few interviews, the interviews were arranged through snowball technique, which means that my interviewees got me in touch with other potential interviewees. In the fieldwork, I was not allowed to tape the conservations; however I got the permission to take down notes while listening. While taking down notes I paid attention not to loose eye contact with my interviewee and my attention what s/he was telling. I went through my notes at the end of each day and kept a detail diary of the field. I was careful about the terms my interviewees used. I tried to grasp the meaning of some

definitions from the perspective of my interviewees. In fact, it was a pretty fruitful fieldwork.

3.2 Being Insider in the Field

An anthropology of one's own people is the most arduous, but also the most valuable achievement of a fieldworker. (Malinowski in Peirano 1998, p.106)

From early days of the discipline, anthropology was defined as the discipline for exotic 'subject matters' separating the researcher and the researched both geographically and culturally (Peirano, 1998). However, this belief has changed since 1960s with the increase of connectedness between people due to developments in technology and the rise of discussions on advantages and disadvantages being outsider/insider in the field (Chavez, 2008; Innes, 2009; Griffith, 1998; Merton, 1972). Therefore, studies done by insiders have accelerated since 1960s. In 1960s, Claude Lévi-Strauss, an esteemed theoretician in the field of anthropology, expresses his concern about the future of the discipline (Peirano, 1998). He argues that anthropology could face the difficulty of subjectivity because of the physical disappearance of the 'exotic' ones. According to Lévi-Strauss, although the discipline was defined as the study of primitives at the beginning, with the development of communication technologies and disappearance of "exotics", the discipline of anthropology is in need of a new definition. And Lévi-Strauss argues that if the main definition of anthropology is set as the relationship between the observer and the observed, a future crisis for the discipline could be eliminated, which means anthropology will no longer be a host of fieldworks where the researcher is a foreigner both culturally and geographically.

Discussions around Insider vs. Outsider in the 1960s set forth that an Insider in the field could be more privileged to understand the group dynamics than an Outsider. An outstanding article about the positionality of Insiders/Outsiders is by Robert K.

Merton, entitled “Insiders and Outsiders: A Chapter in the Sociology of Knowledge”, where Merton argues “Insiders are the members of specified groups and collectivities or occupants of specified social statuses; Outsiders are the nonmembers” (Merton, 1972, p. 21)”. In this regard, Merton argues that while Insider has a “privileged access to particular kinds of knowledge” (Merton, 1972, p. 11), Outsider does not have the same privilege as a nonmember, since the Outsider is regarded as “stranger”, while the Insider comes on the scene with already established ties with the group.

Despite emphasizing the advantageous position of insider, Merton also admits, “both have their distinctive assets and liabilities” (Merton, 1972, p. 33). He states while the Outsider has ability to remark the different side of the studied, which can easily be skipped by an insider. On the other hand the Insider shares a similar world of meaning with the studied; therefore insider would spend less time and effort to grasp the whole with these connotations, which provide a special barrier difficult to be overcome for an outsider.

However, today it is admitted rather than being an insider or outsider the positionality of the researcher is more significant for the sake of the study. As Griffith argues the important point is the reflexive relation between the researcher and the researched. For sure, the background of the researcher is influential on the knowledge she/he produces; however “this is not a simple matter of the researchers’ biography not of technical skill in research. Rather, the researcher is located in the social relations that construct her both Inside and Outside social boundaries” (Griffith, 1998, p.367). In addition Gupta and Ferguson state, “the single most significant factor determining whether a piece of research will be accepted as (that magical word) ‘anthropological’ is the extent to which it depends on experience ‘in the field’” (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997, p.1).

Aware of the above-mentioned approaches on being a native or nonnative researcher, I decided to conduct a study in my hometown. I could argue that being an insider in the field has advantages as well as difficulties.

During my experience of a “native researcher”, I paid a special attention not fall into the traps of over-familiarity while I made use of the facilities provided due to my native identity. Chavez also argues “Some insider researchers have found familiarity with the community and its people to create nearly instant access and rapport...,while for some their insiderness did not prevent complications in asserting their researcher role” (Chavez, 2008, p.481). In my fieldwork, I was one of the researchers having “instant access and rapport”. The women I interviewed within the scope of fieldwork know my family, my parents and sometimes me, personally. However during the interviews, I was not only daughter of a friend, an acquaintance or someone from extended family, but also a female university student, a researcher from Fatsa. Bearing all these identities before the interviewees created their own way of complexities.

Firstly, being from Fatsa and especially being a familiar figure for the interviewees made it easier for both parties of the study to establish a communication. That’s why it was an advantage for me. If I were an outsider, it would, probably, take some more time to get in touch with these women. The advantage of establishing a link so quickly also provided me with the facility of completing the fieldwork in a rather short time, as I did not loose much time in the initial adaptation period of interviewee to the researcher.

However, having an easy access does not mean you can also establish an immediate trust relationship with your interviewees. Despite being a native, even I had difficulty in terms of building a trust relationship. It was not easy to make them trust me and talk about their private lives. For us, I mean objective researchers from academia, in other words “outsiders”, talking about leaving of a family member and its reasons may not seem such a private issue. However for them all these issues and money matters are very private ones and they mainly hesitate to talk about it with fear of “gossiping”. They have this prejudice in their mind that I can tell somebody else about what is talked. Aware of this prejudice and fear and in order to make them feel comfortable and believe me, I emphasized many times the fact that I would never tell

somebody else about our interviews and I would never use their real names in my thesis. Not only during the same interview, but also in all new interviews I had to repeat my promise and principle of not talking about these issues outside. Thus, I managed to establish a trust relationship.

I have to admit that just promising the women not to talk about them was not the only aspect of this researcher-researched link. Another aspect was to show my trust and respect to them. As a familiar figure and having some kind of a tragic life, I attracted their interest. In every interview, they first asked about me, my family, and how I coped with the difficulties I met. They also asked me about my university life in Ankara because of their curiosity of themselves as well as the aim of having an opinion for their children's possible education life. As a strategy, I answered their questions politely and I tried to keep a distance between them and me. I made an effort not to act too frosty or too sincere because field relations are not based on neither "unemotive and purposive work" nor "emotional and positive" manners and the researcher should be careful in the establishment of fieldwork relations (Coffey, 1999, p.56).

Posing me questions was a way of asking me to show the same trust to them. They implicitly required me to tell them about my private life. While I was forcing my interviewees to open their life to me, I could not be unresponsive to their curiosity. As Falzon argues, "Ethnographers typically think of data as a gift from their informants, with all the implications of reciprocity that gift exchange implies" (Falzon, 2009, p.2). In my case, my responses to their questions were a kind of gift to them and created the reciprocity needed between the researcher and the researched. As Crick defines, my relationship with the interviewees was a "mutual exploitation. Both parties risk and exchange information; and one of the risks is necessarily the relationship itself between them. While the ethnographer clearly has the accomplishment of professional work as a central motivation, in the case of informants a range of motivations is possible" (Crick in Coffey, 1999, pp.42-43). I can never be sure about what the exact motivation of my interviewees was while

asking questions about me. I can only make some guesses, which may prove to be true. However, my aim was very obvious, completing the fieldwork, therefore I can admit that to this end I applied all the possible functioning strategies.

Another advantage of conducting a fieldwork as a native was the familiarity with the context and structures. Not only because I was from Fatsa, but especially because I was a woman born and grown in Fatsa, I was more than familiar to their problems about living in Fatsa as woman first, then as a single woman. Johnson–Bailey argues “There were silent understandings, culture-bound phrases that did not need interpretation, and non-verbalized answers conveyed with hand gestures and facial expressions” (Johnson-Bailey in Merriam and et. al, 2001, p.406). This was the case in my fieldwork. While they were telling about their problems, I got what they implicitly told through their mimics, gestures, chosen words and even silent moments. Although I was an ‘outsider’ as a researcher, as not being a woman left behind, I was also an “insider” because of my knowledge and experience in the same society, with the same common cultural values under the same identity, namely being a woman. Therefore I had the chance to grasp a more comprehensive picture of the situation than the one that the verbalized narratives described.

As well as being a native in the field, I also had the benefit of being a woman in the field. I believe that my sexuality was also an important factor for my being accepted to question them. We should take into consideration that these women live under a heavy pressure of fear of gossip, especially about their honor, in other words their relations with men out of family circle. Not to give any chance of gossip about this, they even try not to be alone at home when a plumber comes their home. Therefore assuming that these women would spend 4-5 hours in their homes answering my questions would be a naïf assumption to say the least, if I were a male researcher. I have to admit that while deciding my subject, I did not pay attention to this aspect. However, during the fieldwork I understood how an important aspect it was.

During my fieldwork, I also strived for preventing possible problems caused by overfamiliarity. Coffey highlights the importance of having strangeness on a limited

scale during fieldwork in order to prevent over-familiarity (Coffey, 1999, p.21). Keeping this in mind, I tried to position myself on an objective perspective. I made a self-criticism of my position. I was kind of overfamiliar with my interviewees. All of them know my family; my parents and even some know me from my childhood. Because of this, they may refuse to share information with me. However, our acquaintanceship did not lead to such a problem. I assume the main reason for that was my place of residence. Although I am a child of Fatsa and a familiar family, I do not live in Fatsa. And I have pretty different and independent life from Fatsa. During the fieldwork, I was not there with my identity of an acquaintance trying to have some conversation while having a cup of coffee and find out the untold story because of my curiosity. I presented them a proper objective reason for my being there. I believe that these aspects of my identity created the necessary strangeness between us and made the fieldwork possible.

In conclusion, I learnt a lot from this fieldwork. Despite some problems, I generally made a good use of my insider position. Most important of them was the easy access to the field, interviewees and information, which might take some time for an outsider. I understood that actually conducting a fieldwork is different experience than reading about it. I can say that I applied the methods I read in research method books, but I also had to develop my own strategies peculiar to this field. Aware of my familiarity I tried to keep my distance with my subject of study. Although I kept a detailed diary of the field on daily basis, I waited for a while before making any comments on them, as “the ethnographer’s task is not only to collect information from the emic or insider’s perspective but also to make sense of all the data from an etic or external social scientific perspective” (Fetterman 1998, p.11). In the end, I was able to gather enough information to be able to give a comprehensive picture of my study subject.

CHAPTER IV

MIGRATION TO JAPAN: *WHO DECIDES?*

This chapter mainly focuses on the whole process of migration to Japan, with a special emphasis on how women experience their and their husbands' leaving. In the first part of the chapter, I mention the reasons for migration stated by the women left behind and try to give a picture of in what way male migration is perceived by them. The questions of who takes the decision of migration and whether both women and men as a couple involve in decision-making process are interrogated. The second part is dedicated to the women who visited their husbands in Japan and their perceptions and impressions concerning this visit as well as the women migrated to Japan with their husbands. Their journey is discussed in details from the beginning to the end. In both parts, the question of what the major motives for this migration process are constitutes a main concern of the researcher.

4.1. The migration process of the husbands to Japan

In this part of the study, the process of migration to Japan is discussed in details focusing on different aspects of it. The subjects such as the reasons for migrating, the ways of accessing to and settling down in Japan, the decision-makers of migration and return, the encouraging motives for staying longer are scrutinized based on narratives of interviewees. What makes the migration to Japan quite attractive are mainly those factors; current negative situation in Fatsa and positive feedback that people hear from the previous migrants on the better conditions in Japan. My hypothesis about the reasons for migrating Japan such as unpromising economic situation, visa exemption, an environment of relatives and the promotion of Japan by the ones still there or been there is confirmed through the interviews. During our conversations, the interviewees also mentioned and strongly argued these reasons and thus each reason is analyzed and supported by the statements of interviewees.

It can be stated that, parallel with the findings of many other migration studies, in the case of Fatsa, too, the major motive for migration abroad as labor force is financial problems experienced at home country (Abadan-Unat, 1976; Mynitti, 1984; Taylor, 1984; Osella&Osella, 2000; Malkin,2004; Yabuki et. al, 2010). As mentioned before, Fatsa is a town where the main source of living is based on hazelnut farming and small-scale fishery. Although in the past, these economic activities were providing enough income for the living of a family, because of government policies, abolishment of state subversions, low floor prices for hazelnut purchase and finally turning the hazelnut market into a totally free one caused decrease in incomes in this sector and many people has had economic difficulties in earning their lives. In addition, the economic crises and instabilities in Turkey also have had negative effects on other economic activities, mainly commerce, in Fatsa. Thus, it can be said that the problems of hazelnut farmers, negative effects of the general economic conditions of the country on the tradesmen in Fatsa and lack of any other branches of industry in Fatsa, trapped the people of the town into a vicious circle. From those who could not earn enough through hazelnut farming or any other branches of economic activity, some choose to change their occupation while others find the solution in migration.

Not all of the migrant men who are the main subject of this study are hazelnut farmers. There are also some who were occupied in other branches of economic activity such as jewelers, drivers, car sellers, furnishers, restaurant owners and state officers. However, as mentioned above, the common reason of migration for both hazelnut farmers and these other men who were dealing with other type of economic activities is the economic situation of the town or simply being unable to earn their living within Fatsa. The idea that men in Fatsa were/are being forced to migrate as a result of the poor economic conditions in the city is also agreed by the wives that I have interviewed. During the interviews, all women mentioned better economic

conditions that they had in the past and being unable to earn enough money for the living of a family now. For example, Hasret¹¹ (40, housewife) says:

“My husband used to be a car seller when we got married. He also had hazelnut farms. We were doing quite well economically. But my husband vouched for the debt of a friend and his friend went to Japan illegally, without paying his debts. As he could not pay the debt, my husband decided to migrate to Japan to earn more money. He was also thinking that he could find that friend there.”

Another one mentions that her husband had a furniture shop; however, in time, he could not earn enough money for the living of the family and he decided to migrate to Japan. Parallel with these two statements, all other women explained their husbands' migration to Japan with the same reason: economic problems. Those people who were earning a reasonable income somehow experienced an economic collapse; as a result of their debts, economic crises or specific negative conditions of their own occupation. Trying to find a way out of this new situation and influenced by the good news coming from the other migrant men, these men decide to get out of Fatsa, with the hope of earning more money. Sevcan (35, civil servant) says:

“Before the migration these things were already known, that people could earn a lot of money there and that we could earn enough to lead a better life, as we did once. That's why the idea was quite attractive. I also wanted him to go, to be honest. He already had many friends there. And finally we made our decision and sent my husband to Japan.”

Alongside economically unproductive hazelnut farming and a general financial crisis throughout Turkey, there are other motivations which make the migration attractive from Fatsa specifically to Japan. One reason for preferring Japan as migration destination over Western countries is the easy visa process for Japan. Turkish citizens who are to visit Japan for a short-stay (90 days) have been exempt from visa

¹¹ All names are used in the text are pseudonymous to prevent privacy problems.

since 1957, while many other Western, Middle-Eastern and Arab countries where mainly Turkish workers migrate require visa. This makes migration to Japan as easy as to finance just a flight ticket. However, it should also be stated that although Japanese government do not want visa from Turkish citizens for three months, after three months, one's stay in Japan is considered illegal.

There is a general tendency of the Turkish workers to choose western countries or more recently Arab and former USSR countries as the final destination of their migration. (Abadan-Unat, 1976; İçduygu & Sirkeci, 1998; Coşkun and Türkyılmaz, 2009) However, the case of Fatsa, the advantage of visa exemption highlights Japan as an ideal country to move. The women whom I have interviewed also have an idea about the conditions for entrance to Japan. They all made references to how their husbands entered Japan stating that men went there without a visa for the first time, using the "3 months tourist visa". Now all women know about visa exemption; some heard about it from the very beginning of the migration process as they were included in the decision taking part, while some others learned this later on when they become more involved in the issue of migration.

Another appealing reason for migrants is the existence of some friends and relatives in Japan. To have someone you are familiar with in Japan means to have some assistance in your very first days there. This study differs from other migration studies as in this case the first person who migrated and his story is clearly known. This study, however, has the pattern of a first migrant and his relatives and friends slowly following him with his encouragements as a common feature with other migration stories. (MacDonald&MacDonald, 1964; Wilson, 1994; Shah & Menon, 1999; Haug, 2008)

An additional encouraging factor about migration to Japan is certainly the "advertisement" sent back by the previous migrants. At the beginning, good news of the better economic conditions and higher life standards in Japan spreads quickly through rumor until in time migrant men openly invite and encourage their friends and relatives to migrate to make more money and to live in better conditions. This

advertising and promoting campaign plays a major role on the process of migration to Japan that started in 1990s and continued until today. The encouragement coming from the previous migrants and their emphasis on the better standards in Japan present such contrast to already existing negative situation in Fatsa that migration becomes almost obligatory for these people. These two points, having some contact people in Japan and being influenced by their accounts of the life there are mentioned jointly by all women in the interviews.

During the fieldwork, many women I talked to mention that their husband migrated to Japan through their friends or relatives who have already been living there. As Massey et. al state “migrant networks are sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants, and nonmigrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin. They increase the likelihood of international movement because they lower the costs and risks of movement and increase the expected net returns to migration” (Massey et. Al., 1993, p.448). It is the same pattern in the case of Fatsa. Initially, the friends of migrants gave advice to them about how they could earn a lot of money in Japan. Therefore, the interviewees said that their husbands chose to go to Japan under the influence of what they listened about the life in Japan from their friends. Beyond giving advices and information about making money and life in Japan, these friends in Japan also helped the men intended to migrate to Japan with their entrance to Japan and in finding a job there. Thus these friends in Japan are not only a city guide, but also some kind of a legal, or better to say illegal assistant who sets things right and easy for them for these potential migrants. As women stated most of them learned about Japan and decided to go there through their friends or their relatives who already have been there. Hale (36, housewife) says:

“My husband owned a restaurant around the bus station when we got married. When he decided to go to Japan, this idea was becoming more and more popular. First, my elder sister’s husband went. Later on, sisters of my husband went as well. In 1993 my husband’s elder brother went and he followed him in 1996. There were no job opportunities here, and his economic situation was worsening; that is

why he decided to go. His brothers were already inviting him. He decided to go because they were already there.”

Having some friends or relatives in Japan plays an important role in husband’s decision making process, but at the same time it makes it easier for the wife to accept the fact that her husband is going, as she know that he will have some people helping him there. All in all, when a man sets foot on Japan, he does not have either money or a proper job and he does not speak Japanese. Thus, having someone that can help him makes it quite easy to survive the period of settling down and finding a proper job. In accordance, interviewees whose husbands have friends or relatives in Japan state that it was easier for their husbands to pass through that initial period. It is also important for women that their husbands get some help in finding a job there as migration of the husband leaves the women in a very difficult position of dealing with the feelings that come after this necessary separation of the couple such as longing and loneliness; fear and anxiety that comes as a result of the expanding responsibilities during husband’s absence. Left alone with all these worries, women certainly feel better when they know that their husbands have some contacts in Japan and will get help from people there. It can be said that, the help that husband gets from friends and relatives also ease the condition of the wife by calming down her worries for the gone husband. On the other hand, having some contact in Japan also fastens the process of getting a job, and this should also be evaluated as a great relief for the couple. It is certain that the initial process of finding a job and getting used to this new environment is not that easy when one does not have close relatives; as in the case of Nur’s (46, housewife) husband:

“It was very difficult for him as well. When he went, nobody took care of him. He did not speak Japanese and he did not have much money, either. He even told me that once they had to walk a distance as long as from Ünye to Fatsa having only some cube sugar with the hope of finding a job. They did not have enough money for food. But later on he did well, managed to find a job. There are so many migrants there. One of the villages of Ordu is almost completely gone.”

It is clear from the interviews that there is a strong bond of solidarity among migrants in Japan. All interviewees state that having friends there does not mean just having good company; it means getting serious help whenever you need it. Here it should also be clarified that, the word “friend” in this context is something more than someone you know or someone you are close with. It has the broader meaning of anyone living in the very same conditions with you in Japan and who is also a migrant from Fatsa. This broader meaning let people call any migrant from Fatsa as their “friend”. In case of any trouble in Japan men get help from their friends there and this also means that the wives in Turkey get indirect help from the same friends. Seher’s (46, housewife) case should be mentioned is an outstanding example for this point:

“My husband died in a car accident around 3 o’clock at night which happened as a result of having a cramp while he was driving... Whenever somebody dies there, people collect money among themselves to send the funeral to Turkey. To send a funeral from there costs almost 30.000 dollars. But we did not send a coin; people there raised the money... Somehow, with the help of a friend there now my children are getting monthly payments from Japan, after their father’s death. I guess we are the first and only ones getting such a payment. Hasan does not get it anymore as he started university, but İpek’s payments are going on.”

Seher’s experience is one of the most challenging situations, financially and psychologically, for both the migrant and the ones left behind. However, Seher’s case is also a positive example in the sense that it indicates the strength of the friendship bond there proving that it works even under the hardest conditions. Obviously, this unofficial solidarity bond does not stand for only practical help that people get to cope with the problems at their arrival, but it also means people’s intervention and help in any crisis that may occur during their stay. Besides, it is clear that this intervention and help is not just for the migrant, but it also reaches the wife back in Turkey. Thus, it should be stated that, although the interviewed women explain the importance of having friends in Japan initially in connection to their husband’s comfort there during their first weeks, this motivation certainly has an

encouragement in terms of interviewees as well: these women know that in case of an unexpected crisis, they will also get some kind of help from the solidary bond. This makes it certain that in Fatsa case migrant solidarity is also an important relieving factor for the ones who are left behind.

In conclusion, it is important to underline that this bond of friendship and well-functioning solidarity structure has a certain positive influence in taking the migration decision as it encourages both the migrant and his family who are left behind through the financial and/or psychological help it offers both before and right after the migration and during the migrants stay there. The impact of this influence is so strong that almost all men in one of the interviewees' family (her brothers, cousins etc.) are all living in Japan now. Very much like Hayri Atilgan's encouragements' and invitations' influence on his relatives' and friends' decisions to go in the initial phase; still today, some relatives' or close friends' migration affects the others' decision positively as an encouraging factor (MacDonald & MacDonald, 1964).

As economic conditions in Fatsa make it more and more difficult for people to stay there and as migration to Japan gradually becomes an easier decision to take, the migration emerges as a serious case in Fatsa. The decision making process is experienced under different conditions and thus in a unique way by each family. There are also similarities, though. In most of the cases where husband migrates, most of the women during the interviews mention that the decision is taken within a broader family assembly. There are cases where the wife is accepted or totally excluded from these decision making meetings. For example Seniha (37, housewife) states that they took the decision of her husband's migration with the family:

“At that times, (late 1990s) my father (father-in law) was doing some business with Russia. When he had some issues in his business and had financial problems, Metin decided to go. His brother Orhan was already there. Metin had to go as the economic crisis was really influential then. He did not make his mind in a day. We came together and discussed the issue, later he took the decision. We already had some information about life there from the previous migrants. As I said, his brother was already there and thus Metin did not hesitate. He knew how much he would earn if he goes, so he went.”

Many interviewees mention similar points about their own experience of taking this decision. It is possible to explain this similarity in different cases through general family structure pattern in Fatsa. In Fatsa, main structure of families is closer to traditional broader family concept rather than the more modern nuclear families of city life. Thus, in contrast to nuclear families where important decisions are taken within the small family group of father, mother and children; traditional families of Fatsa tend to take decisions through family meetings where members of these extended families, but specifically the elder male members, get together. As patriarchal ties are more solid in traditional families, the authority of men in these families, and especially that of elder male members, is stronger. Because of this reason, one needs to be careful in evaluating the “we took the decision together” statements of the wives. Although these women seem to take part in the process, the position of women there may be just nominal. It is possible to think that, at least in some cases, the actual decision might have been taken in previous meetings among male members of the family, before the final family gathering where women could be present. The wife seems to be a part of this family meeting where the issue is discussed, however, what would happen if she disagreed with the general opinion? Would the migration of the husband be postponed or cancelled if she simply rejected the idea? The absence of a case where this kind of a challenge took place actually strengthens my argument that women’s participation in those meetings is just nominal and thus women does not have a genuine impact on the decision making process.

On the other hand, there also some extreme cases where it is possible to see that the migration decision is taken even without the consent of the migrant man. In these cases even man is left in a passive position and forced to leave as a result of the decision of the family assembly. Leman’s (40, housewife) husband leave stands as an example of this kind of obligatory/forced migration:

“My husband went because 7 or 8 years before, I have incidentally learned from the painter working in our house that we went bankrupt. After learning this I talked about the situation with my husband and only then I learned all the details. That’s why my husband decided to go actually. They were three brothers working with their father. My husband had some alcohol abuse issues. When they went bankrupt they blamed my husband, telling him that it was his fault. Then he said, “if you say that it’s my mistake, then I will sacrifice myself like Ulubatlı Hasan” and he decided to go.”

In Leman’s case it is certain that the opinion of the wife is not asked, as even the subject of the migration, husband, does not play a role on the decision making procedure. In the traditional type broader families, one’s responsibility is not limited with his wife and his children. As this kind of families have family business type economic activities, in any cases of economic or social problems, each man becomes directly in charge of the well-being of the family, thus becoming responsible for their family elders and brothers as well. When necessary, he is asked, or even forced, to compensate for his mistakes and pay off family’s loss and Leman’s case is certainly an example that proves this argument. In such cases, as the benefit of the broader family is much more important than the couple’s; what is necessary for the welfare of the family is asked to be done by the ones who are guilty. Leman’s husband, who had alcohol abuse problem, was the potential scapegoat of the extended family and apparently he could not refute because of his shortcomings. While accepting this burdensome task ordered by his family, Leman’s husband actually trapped his wife with himself. Leman, who was completely unaware of the all these issues, was also forced to cope with this unexpected and undesirable separation and many difficulties that followed her husband’s leave.

As a variant, there are cases where the opinion of not only the husband’s, but also wife’s family is taken. It is obvious that the term family, in patriarchal societies, denotes the family of the husband. Woman, becoming a wife, also becomes a part of her husband’s family. Her own family stands in a secondary position compared to her husband’s. However, it should be stated that, during the interviews I have

encountered cases where not husband's but woman's own family's opinion is taken. Zeynep's (37, civil servant) case is an example to this:

“My husband, before he left, talked to my mother... Before leaving, he said “if only you and my brother accept to live with Zeynep will I leave” to my mother. My mother agreed. I lived with them, in the same house, for 8 years.”

How should such cases, where the family of the wife is also accepted into the decision making process, be evaluated? Firstly, it can be argued that within the traditional family ties the man also feels himself responsible for the family of his wife. However, the focal issue is that, yet again the wife is ignored in the process. Man not only ignores his wife's opinion on the issue by taking consent of elders (male or female) of her family, but he also plans her life in his absence in the way he likes, again without asking her. Zeynep's narrative clarifies the details of her life after her husband left: it was arranged that she would live with her mother. Her mother did not hesitate to agree on the issue without asking her, either. Nobody bothered to ask what she wanted and 8 years of her life was planned this way. Zeynep could not raise a voice neither on her husband's migration, nor on her own life in his absence as the authority figures of the traditional family, the husband and the elders, had already made their minds. This makes it clear that no one cared for the opinion of the woman after taking the consent of the families.

Alongside the cases where the decision of migration is taken after a family meeting, there are also extreme cases when men make their mind individually, without consulting any other person. Seher's case can be mentioned as an example to this. Seher (46, housewife), thinking that her husband is in İstanbul for business, got a phone call from Japan:

“My husband went to Japan in 2000. He was a jeweler here, before he went. He had debts. At the beginning he was going to İstanbul from time to time and I was thinking that he was going for business. Then I learned that he was secretly getting things ready for Japan. He got his passport and ticket this way... But I knew nothing on the issue, before

he left. He even gathered his luggage in his store, bringing some piece each day from home, so that I wouldn't notice. I never knew. One day he said "I am going to Istanbul" and he called me next day telling that he was in Japan. I was sitting at home thinking that he was in İstanbul, and he called me to say "I am in Japan", I was really shocked."

Here the question, why would men prefer going secretly, should be answered. When asked, Seher replied this question saying that her husband did not want them to get worried or be sad. Actually Seher did not have any other reply as she knew nothing more on the issue. That is what she heard when she asked the same question to her husbands. In these cases, it is visible that men were behaving within patriarchal family roles. Men define himself as the head of the family, who is responsible for solving any kind of problem in connection to the family. Getting the family economically stronger and providing a good life for family members without anybody's help are his responsibilities. And if there is a problem; he is the one to solve it. Moreover, if he believes that the solution can be upsetting for the wife in any way, he does not feel obliged to share it with her. He can leave his wife alone for a long period, with the excuse of protecting her, probably causing the woman feel even more worthless. However, this option is not considered by men, as he knows and does what is best for the wife (Bielby, 1999).

Finally, the return from this migration should be handled. There are difference cases in terms of the duration of the household head in Japan and the reasons for the return process. First of all, it should be stated that the period migrants stay in Japan is varied. Some stay for a short period while others stay longer, like 16 years for example. The women whose husbands' stayed in Japan for a short period of time explained that their husbands did not stay there as result of missing his family in Fatsa and could not stand being far away from his family. Women argue that their husbands stayed there to earn the enough money to pay their debts in Fatsa. When he earned enough money, he returned. However, the women whose husbands stayed there for a long period of time could not explain the exact reason for this long duration. They only argue that their husbands' long stay in Japan to earn enough

money to maintain his family. Women also added that it would be harder to earn enough money in Fatsa as a result of economic problems in Turkey. Some of the long-term migrants visit their town for a few times during their stay there, but others do not. The real reason behind their visit Fatsa is the fact that their deportation from Japan. As it is mentioned, their stay in Japan is illegal most of the time and if they are caught, they are deported. Although, some men tried to enter Japan again after their deportation, even there are some cases which men changed their surnames by court decision in Fatsa to migrate Japan again. However, the return migration did not occur as deportation in all cases. There are also men who decide to return Fatsa.

Who decides on return? In the case of Fatsa, where we see that migration decision is generally made by the family, this question has a particular importance. Man, the subject of the return, is now physically far away from the rule and authority of the broad, traditional family. Is it possible to claim that this physical distance lessens the impact of the family on male individual and more importantly for this research, does woman, who had no saying on the decision to go, have an effect on decision to come back? Accounts of the interviewees indicate that decision to come back is left to the man alone. In taking this decision, man thinks through only his own concerns, which can be either longing, together with the difficulty of getting used to the new life there, or reaching the main goal of this journey, having earned enough to relieve the economy of the family in Fatsa. Sometimes, however, making good money and getting too much used to better life standards in Japan become important factors of taking the opposite direction and staying there longer. Clearly, the family ties lose their influence when it comes to the return process; yet again, women are not considered as a consultant on the issue. Seniha (37, housewife) tells her husband's return as follows:

“At first, I was very sad, he was sad as well. And as he couldn't bear that, he returned. He used to say that being abroad, far from one's own home, is not for him. For this reason, he stayed only for 20 months and returned, but still we were really relieved financially and psychologically. He did not want to go again. He always said, the ones

who do not have a wife or children may come and stay abroad. It was really very difficult for him.”

In Seniha’s case her husband’s longing for his family and hometown becomes decisive and he returns after a short stay. In complete contrast to this, there are also others who stayed in Japan for years and do not consider turning back. In such cases the return date is continually postponed by the man. When asked, women explain the reason for this delay through economic conditions. The interviewees mentioned that their husbands do not want to return as their economic issues are not settled yet and as it is certain that they will not earn in Fatsa as much as they do there. Leman (40, housewife), whose husband is one of those who postpone the return continually, says:

“Now he is working as an operator there in the highest level and that’s why he does not want to return. He works as a digger operator there, the highest position in his job. They say that to be a digger operator is really a good job there.”

There are also other return decisions, which are made completely out of the control of the individual, male or female: the ones who are caught as illegal workers and sent to Turkey. In these cases, the return decision is taken by the Japanese officials. One of the interviewees’ husbands was caught when he exceeded the speed limit and then it was understood that he was an illegal “non-visa” worker. He was put into jail for 77 days and then sent back to Turkey and he was banned from entering Japan for 5 years.

To conclude, there are different cases in the decision processes about the migration of the husband. The women whom I talked did not play an important role in the decision-making process to migration to Japan. Elderly and the male members of the extended family had crucial impact on the decision of migration. Women, having a place for themselves in the family meeting, do not have a real chance to influence the final decision of migration. However, there also extreme cases which men decided to

migrate by themselves and did not take any advices even from the elderly of the extended family. Exactly the same is true for the return process, in the position of women. However, there is a change in the position of the family. This time the authority of the family on man loosens leaving the man alone with his decision. It is also possible to suggest that man having done what he should for the good of the family now has the right and freedom to take his decisions alone. While return time is dictated by conditions such as longing the family; having difficulties in getting used to life there; fulfilling the main aim of the life in Japan, i.e. earning money required to get things better in Fatsa or having been caught by the police for illegal workers; in other cases being in better economic conditions or believing that nothing much has been changed in terms of job opportunities in Fatsa becomes reliable reasons to prolong the stay.

To sum up, in this section firstly various reasons of migration to Japan are discussed under the light of the narratives of interviewee women. Secondly, different processes of decision making for the migration are analyzed, concluding that women generally did not have a strong voice within the traditional family structure where elders and male members of the family are authoritative. As a third step, it is also evaluated that women does not have a particular impact on the decision to return; a decision that is left to migrant man alone in most cases. After all, it can be concluded that traditional man/woman or husband/wife roles are employed in almost all cases of migration from Fatsa.

4.2 Migrant Women: The Lucky Ones or Not?

During fieldwork, I have noticed that several women whose husbands went to Japan migrated there along with their husbands or after them. To gather information of different cases during this fieldwork, I thought that it was important to interview with women who have been to Japan because what makes this fieldwork peculiar among similar fieldworks is the migration of women as well as that of men. In the case of Fatsa, some women also went to and worked in Japan. In this part, the migration

process of women to Japan, their lives there and their story of coming back to Fatsa are discussed based on the experiences of interviewees.

There are two main reasons of going to Japan for women: visiting their husbands or going permanently to live there with them. The ones who want to visit their husbands may stay there as long as three months. As mentioned before, stays up to 90 days do not require a visa. Even the ones who went there to visit their husbands explain the decision process of their journey by stating that it was theirs as well as their husband's wish. Having children is also an important factor on taking such a decision as this appears as a factor that increases the impulse of longing on both sides. However, it should be noticed that not all women who have sent their husbands make this kind of visits. This was one of the most curious questions for me during the fieldwork: why some women did not want such a visit while others did? When this question was posed, many explained the situation in connection to financial problems. Some even mentioned that their husbands urge them to visit him, but they do not think it is necessary. To clarify, it should be said that rather than being "unnecessary", for some women, taking such a trip is "extravagance". Ayla (53, tailor) explains her situation as follows:

"When he was there, he really wanted me to visit him, but I couldn't. After all it means spending a lot of money. Instead of spending that much, I preferred not to go. Otherwise, of course I would love to visit him. My husband really insisted on that, but I couldn't. He had to return immediately as a result of an illness. That summer, after the hazelnut harvest, I would take my ticket and go, making a surprise. But he had to return suddenly, I wasn't expecting this. Many friends of mine here visited their husbands. I also wanted to go. I am really fond of my children, and I never thought of leaving them here to go to Japan. I used to persuade myself asking "Why would I spend so much in vain?"

As clear from Ayla's narration, the issue is not being unwilling to go to Japan. Actually all women want to visit their husbands but some feel forced to make a choice: money or their husbands. Faced with such a choice, most choose not spending money. Such a choice can be evaluated in connection with the main aim of

this parting of the couple: women are well aware of the fact that their husbands left them alone in order to make more money and that is why they both, one at the hometown and the other abroad suffer all these difficulties. Money being the only reason for the migration and a solid cause of all these difficulties, women perceive their visit to Japan as unnecessary and spending so much of that hardly-earned money on this trip as extravagance. Her longing for her husband, her own desires, her little chances of enjoying life are all left behind because of these financial concerns.

During the interviews, I was also curious to learn if this was a decision left to women alone. Within the structure of traditional patriarchal family, women may quite possibly be forced to take such a decision of not going. However, women to whom I have posed this question replied it was totally their own decision and will not to spend money on such a trip. However, I could argue that such a self devotion is expected from women. While men leave their home to earn money to pay debts and have better living conditions in Fatsa, women should take into consideration their husbands “miserable situation” during spending the remittances.

There are also some other women, who went to Japan together with their husbands, either for staying there for a while or permanently. There are even some women who are migrants as well, working in Japan. Before coming to the experience of the latter, I will first touch upon the cases of those who stayed in Japan for a while together with their husbands. In terms of taking the decision to go, in these cases, what one sees is that the decision is taken by the couple. The issue is discussed between wife and husband, and when informed the broader family accepts the decision, or at least does not refute. In contrast to the decision process of men’s leave, when the decision was taken under strong authority of the family, in cases of women’s going the decision is left to the couple. This non-interfering attitude of the family can be explained through the idea of wife’s being directly under her husband’s responsibility. It is also seen that women’s opinion on the issue is asked and in some cases the decision is left to her alone. Another peculiar issue is that, going together is

more frequent among newly-wedded couples. In these cases, in a short while after the marriage the couple takes the decision of going.

Aynur (34, housewife) who went to Japan to live there with her husband, has a different story, though. Her husband was already working in Japan while they got engaged. They got married in a period when he was in Turkey and he wanted to go back after the marriage. Aynur said she would accept this only if they go together and her husband agreed. In order not to have any problems, first her husband went and then, after 6 months, she followed him. Aynur gave birth to her children in Japan and for 7 years they lived there as a family. This example has peculiarities when compared to other migration stories. First of all, man takes the decision of leaving not with the elders and male members of the family, but with his wife, taking her consent, and women even sets forth some conditions. Man does not experience the migration alone as an individual but the case becomes a family experience. These indicate a more egalitarian structure in this marriage, when compared to previous examples.

While Aynur mentions her reasons for going with her husband implicitly, Canan (34, housewife), who also went with her husband, is more direct on this issue:

“We got married in 1998 and 40 days after the marriage we went to Japan. We went as a newly-wedded couple, as if we were going for a honeymoon vacation, so we did not have any problems. We were in debt when we got married, that’s why we decided to go together... At my first time, I stayed 6 months. When I got back to Turkey, I was in the 4,5 month of my pregnancy. I came here, gave birth to my daughter and when she was one year old I went to Japan for a second time. I went with my baby this time and stayed for 3 months. When my daughter was 2,5 years old, I went again, leaving her here this time and I stayed for 1,5 years... I went, leaving my daughter here, because I love my husband, and he loves me as well. We could not live apart. I could leave my daughter here, but I would never leave my husband. I could leave my daughter here because I was young then, I was inexperienced. Now, I would never go anywhere without my son. Also my mother-in-law was very fond of my daughter, as she was the first grandchildren of the family. After all, I could not have gone if she did not accept to take care of my daughter. When I went, I was 23. One way or another, it is all about money.”

In contrast to Aynur who returned together with her children, in Canan's marriage her husband seems to be more important than her children. She could even leave her child back, in order to be with her husband. This is one of the most solid cases where one sees the desire of a couple to live together, leaving everything, including the financial concerns, aside. In most of the cases in which the decisions were made in the family assemblies and financial concerns become decisive in postponing the meeting of the couple, husband and wife's concerns or worries on their own relationship are not mentioned at all. Seniha's husband Metin's decision of coming back as soon as possible and Canan's radical decision of going to Japan for 1,5 years, leaving her baby behind, are specific cases in which the desire of the couple to be together surpass other concerns.

In terms of the desire of the couples to live together, there are two major tendencies: on the one side, there are women who do not want even to visit their husband as they perceive it as extravagance and on the other, there are cases of Canan and Aynur, where we see one of the parties taking radical decisions to be with the other. In trying to explain this factor, in which period of marriage husbands migrate to Japan stands out as the first factor. In other words, the migration as couple occurs if the couple is newly married. If husbands decide to migrate Japan in the early days of marriage, women could also join this migration process in some cases. However, there are also other cases. For example, Halime's could not joining her husband in his migration because at that point her family could not let her go even she would got with her husband.

Nazlı (50, housewife) as a completely different case, despite her 15 years'-marriage went to Japan to be sure of her husband's loyalty. She, very much like Canan left her children behind. Her first visit a personal decision, done to secure her relationship with her husband; later on she went again, this time for purely economic reasons and concerns, though.

Alongside these women who go to Japan to stay for a while basically with the aim of visiting their husbands, there are also others who go there permanently to stay and work. Women, who stayed with their husbands in Japan for a long time, explain the reason of not working there through their husbands' wishes. For example Aynur (34, housewife) who lived in Japan for 7 years, never worked. She explains:

“I also wanted to work after I went there. Although I had friends, I was getting bored being at home all day. But my husband didn't want me to work. Then, I got pregnant for my second child, so I didn't have a chance to work. But all my friends were working. That's why I also wanted to find a job. My husband didn't want this because of housework that I need to do, but actually all my friends managed to work and take care of the house at the same time. After all, there was a variety of cheap ready-to-eat food; that was also an option, but I couldn't do that. As I said, after I got pregnant, the issue was totally cancelled.”

It seems that men behave in accordance with their hometown patriarchal traditions when it comes to the issue of their wives' working. They are quite positive on their wives' living in Japan, but they do not want them to work. This point makes it clear that traditional/patriarchal values surpass financial concerns of the couples. However, there also cases which prove the opposite. Women who worked during their stay in Japan explain this purely by economic reasons, such as being able to save more money this way and they also indicate that that's the reason behind the consent of their husbands.

Aylin's (38, housewife) story can be an example for this point, although her case is unusual in some aspects. All interviewees met their husbands in Fatsa and got married there. After the marriage some followed their husband, while others stay in Fatsa waiting for the return of the migrant. Aylin however, went to Japan while she was still a bachelor, through her future husband's help. She worked there for a while. Later on, they decided to get married, and thus they returned to Fatsa. After the marriage that took place in Fatsa, Aylin's husband went to Japan for a second time, leaving her behind:

“I met my future husband when I was going to Japan. It was all by chance. He had a Turkish restaurant there and he was planning to hire two female workers from here. He was a friend of my brother and thus he came to our house. After talking to my family, taking their consent, I didn't reject the idea and decided to go. I went in 1992 and came back in 1994. When I was there we decided to marry, so we got back to Turkey.”

Women who stay for a long time in Japan, even the ones who were working there, return earlier than their husbands, without exception. After a while, their husbands follow them to Turkey. But according to wives' narration, although their husbands think of coming back a short period after their wives' return, it takes at least 2-3 years for them to come. According to women, the reason of this delay is related to economic issues as well. It is actually ironic that women quit their jobs and come back to Turkey while they were still not relieved economically. When this question is asked to them, they reply saying that it was their decision to come back or they were forced to do so. Nazlı (50, housewife), for example, who took the decision to return, explains:

“As I was working very hard and as I felt getting old I decided to return... I went to police for that. They asked me, “Isn't your husband coming with you?” I explained them that we didn't have much money and our children were at school age, and that's why he could not return. I was speaking Japanese very well. I added that I had health issues and because of these I wanted to return. While they were checking if I had any criminal issues, they found out that I was a taxpayer. They were very surprised and happy to see that. They told me that they didn't have any problems with us before, but now, they were not pleased anymore because of the theft issues. They suggested giving me visa for 6 months. But I didn't want that, telling them that I didn't have the energy anymore. They didn't do anything to my husband. I came back in 2007.”

Another difficult situation and choice that women behind are forced to face is the “asking for the wedlock” cases, which actually means an arranged divorce. With “asking for the wedlock” women refer that their husbands' want to divorce in order to marry a Japanese woman to make their stay in Japan legal. This practice is seen in

Fatsa case and Hale's (36, housewife) story is an example for this. While Hale and her husband are living in Japan, her husband proposes to get divorced so that he can marry a Japanese woman in order to stay there more comfortably. Hale accepts this and soon they get divorced. According to Hale's narration, his husband starts living with the Japanese woman, as the police is organizing unexpected visits to the houses of the migrants to catch on the arranged marriages. However, according to Hale, this Japanese lady falls in love with her husband in time, and just to get rid of Hale, who seemed to be an obstacle in front of her, reports her to the police. Hale, who is already not living with her husband because of the arranged marriage, is forced to come back. After staying in Turkey for a month, unable to bear this anymore, she decides to go back, to see her husband. She, with her maiden name now enters the country without a problem. After her husband's promise that he will come to Turkey as soon as possible, she returns. Three years after this, her husband returns, being married to the Japanese woman all throughout this period and getting divorced right before his return.

Obviously, while men agree on women's visits to Japan, they reject their working there in most of the cases. Women's return also becomes problematic in most cases. In these two points, of women's working and their returns, men behave within the boundaries of patriarchal roles and they do not even ask the opinion of their wives. In some unusual cases women are even forced to break the unity of their family. They ignore their husband's relationship with other women, even when they can not be sure that it is an arranged situation; they divorce their husbands and they let them marry some other women for the sake of staying there. All these actually indicate that women, throughout this migration process, are sometimes forced to cope with even more difficult situations than their husbands do.

Together with all these, it is also necessary to mention Japan as women describe it. Among the interviewees of this study, there are not only women who visited their husbands or stayed in Japan with them but also others who have never been there. All interviewees, however, have an idea on Japan and life there, either through their

firsthand experience or through listening to those who have seen the country. How do these women perceive that country?

Women in the first group, who have never been there, learn everything they know from the “advertisement” of those who have been there. They describe Japan as a country where one can make good money, where life standards are high and where everyone is quite respectful. They all add that “it’s a lot better than here”, despite not having seen the place. They also understand their husbands’ long stays. Halime (40, housewife) says:

“He loves the country as if it was his homeland. He knows that he cannot find that comfort anywhere else. There, even the tiniest streets are like motorway. It’s nothing like here, very beautiful. It’s understandable that men don’t want to come back. There, they can live as they like, freely. It’s a pleasant country. It’s completely different from here; Japan is on the one edge, and Fatsa is on the other. He stayed there for 16 years and still didn’t want to come, imagine!”

As clear from this quote, together with being a beautiful and pleasant place, Japan is a place where one can lead a “life of freedom”, in the minds of the women. All women, including the ones that have never been there, agree that Japan is a country where social life offers more space to individuals. Although they cannot express it directly, it is clear that, with freedom in social life women refer to the milder attitude towards affairs. Women know this fact, and they are also aware that their husbands are attracted by this.

Another interesting testimony was by son of one of my interviewees. The son of Leman (40, housewife), Barış, 19 years old, came to home while I was interviewing his mother. When I learnt that he spent three months in Japan with his father; I decided to ask him some questions about Japan. I thought that it would be interesting to have that kind of information, and my instincts proved to be true. While talking about Japan, he called there a “communist country” in a positive sense. I was very surprised by this and asked him why he called Japan as so. Then he explained that

during his stay in Japan, he observed that everyone was equal. One could be either unskilled worker or dentist; but both of them are equal before law and in the society. No one is more privileged than the other. In addition, your profession, or specifically economic status, does not determine the relationship between people. He stated that it is vice versa in Fatsa. In Fatsa, if you are rich, you are privileged; you have higher status in society and even friendship is based on your economic wealth. He said that one cannot imagine a friendship of an unskilled worker and a dentist in Fatsa. However, he experienced the other way around in Japan. Because of what he experienced in Japan, he called there a “communist country” as obviously he has not experienced these life standards in a “democratic country”, which was Turkey. Obviously, in his mind the concept of “equality of individuals” overlaps with the reigme of “communism”. This was a good proof of why Japan seems so appealing for Turkish migrants.

Together with these positive ideas on life there, women also know that their husbands encounter some problems in Japan. Especially on the problem of finding a job, they state that together with having friends, one also needs to have some agents there. Besides, there are also women, although very few, who comments on some details of life there. Leman (40, housewife), for example, complains about high rents and prices in supermarkets.

The second group of women, who have been in Japan as visitors or who have stayed there for longer periods, argue that Japan is a country where one can have a better life compared to Turkey. They specifically underline how respectful Japanese people are and how hardworking, well-organized and righteous lives they lead. Although stating that “they are different”, anytime they make a comparison to Turkey, women conclude that Japan is better. Nur (46, housewife), who had a chance to visit her husband there, states that if her husband gets his visa and asks her to go, she would go there to live with him. Women also mention that the reason of their husbands’ staying there is not only due to economic gains; they stay as life there is better than the one they would have here. All women, including those who have not seen the

place before, justify their husbands' choice to stay there through having a better life.

Canan (34, housewife), who went to Japan with her husband, tells:

“... of course I would love to live there. You don't have any economic problems there. You can have perfect cars there; you can drive those cars that you would never have here. At home, I was using the air condition for almost 24 hours. If you do this here, imagine how much you would pay for the electricity! You would consume the daily amount of electricity you consume there in a month here, but you would pay a 10 times higher bill for that! There you are completely relaxed and free, it's nothing like life here. Here you cannot travel a lot or enjoy your life, it's completely different there. There the clothes are different, women are different; life is different to cut it short. People are really relaxed there. Affairs are not like the ones here. People can go out with their friends, can enjoy life together. Is it the same here?”

In conclusion, it is possible to track a more egalitarian structure in the families of those women who could go to Japan with their husbands, compared to families of those who could not. Yet again, in both cases, important decisions of the family, especially the ones that are related to the social and daily life of woman, are taken by man. There are women that work, either in Fatsa after their husbands' leave or in Japan together with their husbands; however, as mentioned above, this decision of working is taken by men in both conditions. Earning more money is the common reason of both men's and women's choice of working in Japan. In addition to these, women never have an influence on the decision to return, whether of their husbands or of their own. This issue of coming back is dealt solely by men and according to his concerns. Finally, it can be said that the male dominant structure of the patriarchal society continues to be felt on the women left behind, as well as on those who went with their husband.

CHAPTER V

IN THE ABSENCE OF HUSBANDS: THE IMPACTS OF MALE MIGRATION

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the impacts of men's migration on the left behind – the wives. Migration brings about the major changes in the lives of respondents involved in this study. On the one hand, women have experienced the advantages of this migration as increasing autonomy and decision-making power within the household; on the other hand, they have faced the difficulties of being a single mother and woman where traditional patriarchal values are still important. Therefore, this chapter focuses on the dichotomy in women's lives. In the first part of the chapter, I mention how children have experienced the absence of the father's absence and which difficulties of being single parenting women have faced. In the following part, I mention the transformation in the relationship between spouses. In the third part of this section, I discuss the relationship between women and the families after men's migration. In the fourth part, I mention the remittances. Finally, in the last part, I discuss the transformation in women's social life.

5.1 The Relationship between Spouses after Migration

In this section, the changing nature of the relationship between spouses after men's leave and women's experience of this period will be analyzed. Physical absence of one of the parties certainly has negative impact the relationship of the spouses and the family in general, which by definition means being together. The longer the absence of the husband lasts, the harder the situation of the couple gets. As a result of staying physically far from each other for long periods, husband and wife become strangers, short-term absences easing the situation relatively, though. It is certain that

a wife whose husband lived in Japan for 16 years would not have the same experience with another wife who has been away from her husband for 2 years.

During the interviews, a single fact came out naturally: when husbands are still in Japan, main concern of the wives on their relationship with their husbands is “other women in Japan”. Many interviewees mentioned this even without hearing my question. First of all, it should be stated that the point that stands out in women’s interviews was that they never used the word “cheating” in connection to their husbands’ affairs there. While many interviewees mention “daily affairs”, “other women”, “girlfriends” or “natural needs of a man”, none of them use the word “cheating”. I believe, women never use the word “cheating” as they feel that defining the situation with the word would turn their relationship into something they cannot face or bear. Being cheated on publicly, and accepting this, obviously is a burden that women cannot live with. Thus, I conclude that, women avoid using this term in order to ease the situation.

Many interviewees’ getting into this issue without even letting me ask the question is actually a sign of their uneasiness on that point. Women’s main concern is to make this point clear to justify the situation or to avoid any criticism (How come do you agree with this? Don’t you feel dishonored? etc.) that may be directed to them. In most of the interviews women even asked this question to themselves and replied it while speaking: “Would my husband have other affairs in Japan?” “Yes, he would”. Leman (40, housewife), for example, tells:

“Everyone there has “women issues”. I cannot say, “No he won’t do”. How can I say this, do you believe that a man would live there alone for 7 years? But at least I know that he did not marry a woman there; there are many stories of that kind as well. Many men marry a woman there, getting divorced from the one here. We have already forgotten how it was to have a husband here. We are under so many burdens!”

Together with Leman, many women know that the answer of this question is “yes”. They even try to justify this situation in their speech. Not saying that their husbands

are right in having affairs, many women normalize the situation by explaining it with excuses such as “men cannot stand being alone for such a long time”. This seems to be the first method that women developed to cope with this complex situation. The second method is their answer to any possible question on their position in this situation. Many interviewees start defending themselves as if they were asked “Why do you still bear this?” and they explain the situation by stating that “I am not a jealous women”. Ayla (53, tailor) explains:

“(She abruptly started talking about the possibility of her husband’s having an affair there) He may have affairs there. I cannot be sure. I am not a jealous woman. He stayed there for such a long time, certainly he had some issues. He cannot stay there alone for all those years, but I am not jealous of him.”

It seems that women use this strategy both as a defense of their position and a method of deceiving themselves, as they do not have many options other than accepting this situation. In their traditional world, they are brought up according to traditional male/female roles. Even the ones who are working are still reliant on men, such as their fathers or husbands. In small town of Fatsa, where cheating is not taken as a serious reason for divorce, women do not have the courage to resist the difficulties that will follow the divorce. Most probably, they put up with this situation with the hope of having some happiness after this troublesome period, adding more to their worth in the eyes both of society and of themselves as not being “jealous women” at the same time.

Another reason that makes it easy for women to accept these affairs of their husbands is that, all these events take place in Japan, physically so far from the wives. As Ayla mentioned above, what makes it bearable is that, they don’t see it. Many women, however, state that if their husbands would have affairs in Turkey, it would be a real problem then. What is the reason that makes such an affair a serious problem in Turkey? I guess the reason is that, women cannot find an excuse to normalize such an affair if it takes place that close to them. When they cannot justify/explain the

situation through the methods mentioned above, it becomes unbearable for them; thus they choose divorce, which comes with its own problems.

Even if women accept their husbands' affairs in Turkey, the society that they live in would not let it go that way. In small communities like Fatsa, people know each other and this kind of issues become public soon. Thus, a case of cheating and then the divorce of the couple would be discussed by people around, even long after the actual event. Moreover, people would ask many questions and also try to give advice to the couple, not considering if it's their business or not; so this traditional type of social structure where one cannot avoid gossip would double women's difficulties.

Another strategy of women in coping with their husbands' affairs is to remind, both themselves and other people, of their husbands' sufferings such as migrating to take care of their families properly. Women imply that they can ignore the disloyalty of their husbands, as they migrated alone to a place that they did not know at all, just to earn money for their families. Another fact that strengthens this is that men, despite cheating, never "forget" their wives behind. Here what women mean by "not forgetting" should be explained a little. According to the interviewees, men who send regular remittances for the ones behind, who call his wife and children frequently and care for their life, who do not leave their wives to marry another woman there, or who do not bring another woman to Fatsa are men that "do not forget" their wives and who are faithful. When a husband is both working hard for his family and faithful and the same time, it is woman's responsibility to ignore his shortcomings. Nur (46, housewife), for example, tells:

"It is certain that my husband had some girlfriends there; I cannot say that he didn't. He has been there for such a long time. But I am not a jealous woman. My husband never forgot me, on the other hand. That's why I don't care those issues."

Among all women, Aylin's (38, housewife) case is different again. In contrast to cases mentioned above, Aylin's husband was already married to a Japanese woman when they met in 1992. Her husband came back to Fatsa, to find some workers for

his restaurant, and that is how he met Aylin. After her family's consent, she followed her future husband to Japan and she tells the rest of the story as follows:

“I went in 1992 and came back in 1994... My future husband was married to a Japanese woman at that time. It was actually an arranged marriage. He has a son from that marriage. But we decided to get married when I was in Japan, and we came back.”

Aylin seems to have accepted her situation; she is aware of her being an awkward example for society, though. Besides, as a woman who stayed in Japan and worked there, she witnessed many men's cheating on their wives. Aylin's narration becomes important as she is a woman who knows the life in both Fatsa and Japan. She also mentions this while explaining her arguments on life in Japan and migrant men there. According to Aylin most of the migrant men are from rural backgrounds. Here she actually refers to men's being inexperienced on affairs and rigidity of life in Fatsa on this kind of issues:

“They go without any experience here, and they see everything there, all of a sudden. Japanese women are very beautiful, very elegant. Thus Japanese women look very different to our men, at first sight.”

Mentioning that women left behind endure many difficulties, Aylin tells that many women are actually aware of their husbands' affairs in Japan, adding many men divorce their wives because of these affairs. She also underlines the differences between men's behavior towards Japanese women and their wives:

“These men are from rural backgrounds, they migrate from their village to Japan, and there for the first time in their lives they see women wearing mini skirt. Men do anything they like there; however, they never let their wives do similar things here. They would divorce them at once, in that case.”

She cannot stop defending Turkish women at this point. Aware of the fact that Turkish women are brought up with the idea “whatever happens, one should not break her family up”; Aylin (38, housewife) states this with a bold example:

“Turkish women would not do such things [as their husbands do]. Turkish women are loyal to their husbands. They don’t behave as their husbands. For example, I have a neighbor whose husband stayed in Japan for a long time. He has returned, but since his return they never had sex. Still, she lives with her husband, she doesn’t leave him.”

Aylin’s perception of her own family is different, though. Aylin knows that her family is open in many issues, and she believes, if everyone behaves sensitive enough, she can live in peace: “But we, with my husband, know every type of affairs. Thus I never had such issues with him.” It is clear that, Aylin also tries to protect her family from possible criticisms, as she knows, mentioned before, that they seem quite different from outside. Aylin also gives more detailed information on the situation of women in Fatsa, stating that there are many marriages that ended first with arranged divorces, but later on, permanently.

Another example that indicates the traumatic results of husbands’ extramarital affairs is Sevcan’s story. Many men who migrate to Japan ask for arranged divorces from their wives, in order to get residence permit there through marrying Japanese women. Although not often, it is possible to see such cases in Fatsa and one of those women is Sevcan, one of the interviewees of this study. Her husband, after living in Japan for 2 years, wanted to divorce her in order to get a residence permit. Sevcan, despite her unwillingness to divorce, accepted this as she thought that her husband’s return would be very bad for the economical situation of the family. After her approval, they got divorced:

“He asked for an arranged divorce after 2 years. He said that he needed to marry a Japanese woman, just for formalities, so that he would live there more safely. I had my daughter then. I cried a lot, I refused this at first. But in the end, I accepted to get divorced.”

After 4.5 years, Sevcan's husband returned to Fatsa and stayed there for 2 years. Although Sevcan always felt that her husband's affairs went on during this period, his promises on not breaking up with her calmed her down:

“I always knew that there were other women as well. He was in Japan for such a long time; he would have issues of course. When he came here, he was always talking to some women via internet. What can I do, I could accept this as they were far from us. But he was also telling me that he would never leave me.”

After starting a business in Ankara, Sevcan's husband had an affair with a Turkish woman this time. He explained the situation to Sevcan, saying “She will be the same thing as you are to me” with all his manly pride and feeling of righteousness. However, as she puts it: “I ignored the Japanese women but how could I accept another Turkish one here? Japanese women were far away, how could I say yes to someone here?” After a short while, they decided to get divorced. After all these troubles, still it was not Sevcan who suggested the divorce, her husband left home and started to live in another place in Fatsa which was the final hit for her. She explains her difficult situation as follow:

“He could have done all these, but not here. I wish he had done whatever he liked there, but not in Turkey... I would put up with everything he does to me, but not his living in another house in Fatsa. This is a small town, people talk about anything they like. I wish he had gone another city to live in.”

Sevcan's example clarifies why women left behind were so much afraid of getting divorced, preferring to ignore their husbands' affairs to divorce. They are forced to compromise their honor in order to continue living in peace for a little more, although it is possible to discuss how peaceful such a life may be.

Talking about the needs of men, and Japanese women being their relief for the hardships they endure for the sake of their families, one wanders the situation of women left behind. It is implied, if not stated openly, that having sex is a taboo for

women, about which they cannot even speak. Interviewee women never approached the issue from the side of their sexual needs. It is accepted that women's need for sex can be replaced with the status of being a mother or a wife. Moreover, women behave and talk as if they do not have such a need at all. For example, could female migrants have affairs with Japanese men? Or could women in Fatsa satisfy their sexual needs by being with other men there? Did they also have the right to relieve the troubles they have through having affairs? Actually even asking such questions are meaningless, as when it comes to women, these issues are connected to the concept of "chastity"; thus it is impossible to ignore such cases or forgive them. The lightest punishment of women in such cases would be being divorced by her husband.

From all these, what we get is that, for women left behind, their relationship with their husbands is based on a rational effort to maintain the unity of the family rather than an emotional bond between the spouses. This effort is based on two main points: firstly, on husbands' sharing his income with the family, through regular remittances, to take care of the ones left behind; and secondly on husbands' being careful not do anything that would shame his wife. No matter what happens, wives continue waiting their husbands, until they stop doing one of those two points above, which turns the situation into something that women cannot bear. In any case, a happy life together with their husbands is like a dream for the wives left behind. Although women express that they miss their husbands, what happens when they return is far from romantic reunions. Both men and women experience many difficulties of living together for a second time, after such a long period. Zeynep, although her husband stayed in Japan for only 3 years, states that his return was traumatic for everyone:

"He was like a fool at the beginning, after he came. He could not get used to life here. It was strange for the kid as well. My boy was 5 years of when his father went, and 8 in his return. I also got used to be without him."

Despite communication technologies and the possibility of video chats or long phone calls, it is impossible to continue living together from the point it was left after the return. Zeynep mentioning that they did not even have any subject to talk about and that they had many difficulties in the first few years, summarizes the reason of all these difficulties very accurately: “We could not even talk to each other properly. We had different lives, completely different life styles for 8 years.” Actually, the continuation of the marriage during this migration process is a lie. What the spouses experience is some kind of a divorce, and both parties start a new life in the absence of the other. Zeynep mentions that this process frequently ends in a formal divorce, which is natural according to her: “Actually many migrant men get divorced in the end. It is normal that this happens, how would it be possible to maintain a marriage after so many years?”

Here, Zeynep’s question is a crucial point. According to these accounts of the interviewees, after the migration, very much like the situation of the children, their husbands become “non-existing husbands” for the wives. Marriage relationship between the spouses turns into financial and maintaining each other’s honor type of relationship. It can even be said that husbands become some sort of an institution paying a salary to their wives; and in terms of their general relationship, husbands and wives become distant relatives.

Can it be said that women feel happy after their husbands’ return? During the interviews, when questioned in depth, it becomes clear that actually women, who are doing their best to rationalize this migration process, never internalize the difficulties that come with it. Years after, when women turn back and realize all the sacrifices they did for their marriages and families, they feel a deep regret. In the end of all these problems, what they have is probably a house and a life without debts. This may seem like a good bargain at first, but considering long years that women spend without their husbands, the troubles of being a woman living alone in a traditional society like Fatsa, and their hell-like marriage lives after the return of their husbands it is clear that women do not get as much as they put into this game.

In some rare cases, when husbands leave while they are still young and come back soon, this time spent apart helps strengthening the marriage ties. Spouses who experience this belong to the lucky minority, though. Hasret (40, housewife), for example, belongs to this group. Telling that she was in love with her husband when they got married, Hasret adds that she fell in love with him for a second time after his leave:

“If you ask me what the best side of Japan was, I would say that thanks to Japan, I have gained my husband. Now, I would never let him go anywhere.”

To sum it up, it is a fact that men cheat on their wives, in Japan and women have developed some strategies to deal with this fact. To start with, it is certain that women in Fatsa are well aware of the possibility of their husbands' having some affairs there and thus they invent some excuses to put up with such situations. Firstly, using one of the most frequent excuses of men in traditional societies, women explain the existence of another woman in Japan through “necessity”. Secondly, women state that they ignore their husbands' cheating on them as it takes place in another country, so far from them. Thirdly, blocking any kind of criticism of their attitude by stating that they are not jealous, women try to justify their decision of staying with their husbands. Fourthly, women explain this situation as a concession for their husband's sufferings. Finally, women try to ignore everything as their migrant husbands do not “forget” them. Husbands continue sending money, and keep in touch with their families. Although they don't put it directly, as women who are brought up within traditional families, wives behind know that they should ignore these tiny issues, not putting their marriages in danger for such things. Besides, because of the truly active gossip circles in Fatsa and the suppression waiting for them after the divorce women cannot consider the option of leaving their husbands. Being with another man is an unthinkable option for women, on the other hand. Apart from these, it is certain that the relationship between the spouses undergoes a change; turning into a more financial affair. Husbands' return does not help curing

the gap between the spouses, the return itself turning into a problem because of the hardships of living together. This process can be summarized as forcing the divorced couples to live together again, after years. In the end, it is certain that Japan takes much more from the women than it offers to them.

5.2 Children: As a Source of Support

In this section, women's experience with their children will be discussed. The child's experience after the father's leave; the relationship between the father and the child left behind and child's relationship with the mother in father's absence will be elucidated through the perception of women. Despite children's exclusion from the interviewee group of this study, and the specific effort not to direct questions to the interviewees on this issue, all women touched upon the situation of their children during the interviews. Women's emphasis on the issue indicates that having to deal with children after husband's leave is a big challenge for them. For this reason, it is necessary to analyze issues such as women's methods of coping with this challenge, the solutions they have developed and the meaning of the children in the lives of the ones left behind.

Except a few examples, all interviewees had little kids when their husbands left. As a result, these kids became orphans in a sense. In some extreme cases, when the father left during his wife's pregnancy, the child never had a chance to know or see his father physically or to live with him for a long time. This actually ended in a traumatic situation for kids. There is a father, but actually he does not exist. These children actually had to feel the existence of a father in his absence; and live the difficulties of the absence of a father while he is actually alive. This strange experience influenced kids' perception of a father figure to a great extent, together with their perception of their own fathers.

Interviewees whose husbands stayed in Japan for short periods, such as 2-3 years, stated that being apart did not influence the relationship of their children with the father. According to the statements of these women, after the return of the father, it

was easy to overcome the emotional distance between the father and children that emerged as a result of being far away from each other for a long period.

Children whose fathers were absent for a long time, however, had serious complications in their relationship with their fathers. In some cases, the absence of the father for such long periods cut the ties between the father and kids permanently, in an irreparable way, leaving the parties in the traumatic situation of being father and child biologically but living as strangers in the same house. After overcoming the challenges of a life without the father, kids have to face the difficulties of getting used to a life with the father on the one side; father having his own problems setting a communication with his children that he actually does not know, on the other.

All interviewee women expressed that whether their husband stay in Japan for a short time or for long years, their children, not matter of what age, as well as themselves are influenced from this situation. According to these women, the most dominant feeling of the kids on the issue has been longing and almost all of them reflect this feeling through becoming more moody. Being more aggressive, questioning the absence of the father, crying and occasional outbursts are also other ways of reflecting the longing for the kids. The absence of the father, or in other words being without a father, is specifically felt within the family at traditionally important days such as bayrams. Women indicate that kids become more uneasy and sensitive on such days; and thus they always have problems in such cases. Zeynep (37, civil servant), for example, tells:

“It was very difficult for my child as well. One day he wanted to jump from the balcony saying “I miss my father so much”. My son used to get sick too often when he was a little. Whenever he got sick, my husband would feel it and call me. We were doing our best for the kid, buying him whatever he needed, but you cannot deceive him with money. Nothing can compensate the absence of a father. One day he went to the bayram prayer with other children and he came back crying “Why I don’t have a father, everybody does”.

During this period of being apart, both women and children try their best to be in touch with the father despite the physical distance. Before emergence of better and faster communication tools, kids used to preserve their contact with their father through letters or phone calls. It should also be noticed that this kind of tools were useful for only families whose kids were old enough to use them. Nazlı (50, housewife), for example, tells that her daughters were writing letters to their fathers continuously; not contending with phone calls. Thanks to developments in communication technologies, it became easier to meet the kids with their fathers; a great positive impact on the general situation for the kids. The more widespread the computers and internet become; the faster and easier the communication methods get. Kids, using new technologies, can talk to their father for longer periods, even seeing them via video calls. But why is it so important for the kids to be in touch with their fathers? When I asked this question to women that I have interviewed, I got this reply: being in touch with the father, writing him a letter or talking to him, is perceived as an evidence of the existence of the father by the kid. Most probably, this makes it easier for the child to believe in the fact that he has a father, perhaps providing him with a father-child story that he can share with his friends, or at least making it possible for him to answer questions on his father. This certainly works as a source of relief for the kid, letting him/her both legitimize and cope with the absence of the father. In short, this kind of communication becomes a solid proof of the existence of the father. On mother's side, a more easy-going, calm and quite child eases her tasks as well, solving at least one of the problems that she has to deal in the absence of her husband.

Children's becoming more aggressive and uneasy is only one of the complications that may appear after the father's leave. Another important issue here is that, mother, the only authority figure after the father's leave, has to maintain the necessary discipline within the house. Especially controlling male children becomes problematic for the mothers. Interviewees state that not having an adult male role model in the house makes it really hard for them to keep their sons under discipline. According to them, while girls can learn traditional female roles having only their

mothers with them, for boys it is absolutely necessary to have an adult male around. To overcome the difficulty in disciplining children, women have developed different strategies. Whenever women feel the necessity of such a model for their boy, they get help from other males within the extended family, such as uncles or uncle-in-laws. The ones who helped Lemana (40, housewife) on such issues were her father-in-law and her sister's husband:

“As my elder child was a boy, I had difficulties in raising him. He didn't have a father as his model. Girls take mothers and boys take fathers as a model to them. My son did not have anybody as a model for him. I had many difficulties with him. But my father-in-law really helped me a lot; he was like a father indeed... My son did not have a male adult as his model but my sister's husband helped him, guided him. He was like a second father for my son.”

Together with those who try the traditional ways such as getting help from uncles or grandfathers; there are also women who get professional help while bringing up their children. These women who get help from a specialist define themselves as more “conscious” mothers. Nur (46, housewife) is one of those mothers:

“I always tried to have a good dialogue with my kids. I talked to counselors at schools and doctors, asking “How should I do this, how can I be closer to my children?” There was a specialist doctor here, a woman, later on she started running a kindergarten. She was organizing monthly conferences. I always attended those conferences. Of course I had many difficulties while bringing them up. They have a father, but he doesn't exist actually, this is a difficult situation. When they started school, of course they asked “Where is our father?” Everyone had their father beside them, but we were alone. We had different problems when they were little; and many different ones when they became teenagers. But in the end, we managed to cope with the problems through professional help.”

Choosing different methods in solving problems with the kids is actually connected to the difference in education of the mothers. Women who are getting professional help while dealing with their kids are generally the ones who have worked for a

while or are still working. Working women have better contacts with the world outside the house as their world is not limited to visitors coming home or places they visit for certain needs of the family. They have at least a broader social space to feel free, and thus more opportunities to take their own decisions. These connections to outside world and this courage stand alone, actually help these women when it comes to challenge the traditional family authority, allowing them to be more resistant to the outside influences on the issues related to their children. It is possible to say that, in contrast to this, women who choose more traditional ways in dealing with problems related to their kids are living, in more closed, more patriarchal families.

Until now, the problems that emerge in the absence of the father are dealt with. Father's return after a long period, however, causes different problems. This time, getting used to a new life where father physically exists is the challenge waiting the kids. Longing for him for such a long time, these kids do not have a real-life experience of living with the father with whom they could communicate only through letters or phone calls for years. Besides, this time mother also has some problems in adjusting the system she founded in the absence of the father, to his existence. Some women who have similar experiences see the similarities between theirs and their children's cases. Leman (40, housewife), who touches upon such similarities, tells:

“My father lived in Germany for 20 years. He was coming for a month every year. Whenever he came, we wanted to learn when he would go back. There was a gap between us. I know that my kids will feel the same. There is the generation gap, in the end.”

Either because of the generation gap as Leman mentions or because of not being used to live together, there happen some problems between the child who has not seen his father for a while and the father that comes back. Although there are cases where the problems are solved in time; especially when fathers leave even before the birth of the child or come back after a long time, children have great difficulties in getting used to the new situation as they do not learn the concept of having a father at

all. Women state that children have great changes in their general attitudes during this period, adding that this period is also very difficult for the fathers who are having problems in getting close to their children. Halime (40, housewife) tells:

“At first, after my husband’s return, my daughters were not getting on well with their father. In the end, they started talking back; they said “We are not kids anymore”. He, on the other hand, was trying to be distant, acting as if he had been an authoritarian father. He was not with us for 16 years, who cares for his authority... I said, “Of course they will respect you, but try to be friendly to them” and when I said this he behaved as if he didn’t get it. Of course my daughters would have boyfriends. They would, naturally, experience this kind of relationships without taking it too far, but our environment is too small, people are not tolerant to this kind of issues. Once, one of our relatives saw one of my daughters with a boy, and he told this to my husband. First, he got very angry. But then I told him that I knew where she was and with whom; adding “my daughters do tell everything to me, and they never do anything wrong”. He couldn’t do much after this.”

In addition to these cases, there are also stories in which the father’s relationship with the family is completely cut and the unity of the family is broken with divorce. For example, as Sevcan’s marriage ended because of her husband’s migration, his return did not make any difference in the lives of the kids:

“He is quite distant to the kids as well. “I will pay for the school expenses” he said, so my children called him all week. Finally he took them out for shopping. He bought only school bags and shoes. I had to buy all other things. My son meets his father only when he has a benefit, I know my son. Their father does not like them either. It is as if they are distant relatives.”

In Sevcan’s case, the situation of children’s being far from their father continues even after father’s return. As a result of father’s unwillingness to have a close relationship with his children, they cannot have a father-child communication anymore. In this case, children do not have any emotional connection to their father; the father is a stranger to them.

This tension or problems between the father and kids actually affect women as well. Migration process that people start with the hope of relieving their economic problems brings forth new problems or challenges continually. First, women do their best to adjust the family to the new situation after the father's leave; then, the balance is lost again with the coming of the father. Women, who are overburdened in this period of keeping everything in control and adapting themselves to the new situations, feel exhausted, mentally and physically.

Throughout this period, however, mother-child relationship becomes deeper and more precise. The child, who does not have a father physically with him, or who has many problems in being close to the father when he returns, gets more and more dependent on the mother, who he accepts as a father as well. Traditional mother/father roles are united in the mother for the child. Sometime after father's return, if a father-child relationship can be maintained, these roles are re-distributed between mother and father.

When I asked how women define their children under these troublesome conditions, the answer I got was not surprising. For women, their children are main sources of support. They see their children as the only reason of waiting for their husbands' return for such a long time. In a way, they compensate their husbands' absence with their kids, getting all the support that they need to keep up with this situation from them. Apart from this, interviewee women also mentioned that as they had to deal with many issues alone, after their husbands' leave, they try to bring up their children in a way that they could stand on their own feet. They do not want their children to have difficulties in living alone, if they experience a similar situation in the future, with their own families. Ayla (53, tailor) tells that she survived this period with the help of her children, managing to overcome many issues with their help and getting continuous support from them: "it was very difficult to be without my husband, but I leaned upon my kids. It's not an easy thing to live without your husband. I was their both mother and father. But I always got support from my children." Halime (40,

housewife) also states both the support she got from her children and her efforts to get her daughters ready for the difficulties of this life, after her experience:

“I endured everything for all those years just for my two kids; I will not let anyone say a word to them. I was young when he left, I could have left him and go to my mother’s house. But I never thought of this, as I had children. I was ready to starve instead of marrying another man. Death is the end of everything, isn’t it?... ‘You will stand on your own feet, let nobody suppress you, always do your best to vindicate your rights. Don’t be afraid to voice your feelings or thoughts. Tell whatever you think, directly. Know how to defend yourselves.’ This is how I brought up my daughters. My daughters are brought up liberally since their childhood; they have never been under suppression. I always took them with me, wherever I go, so that they would learn everything I know. From state offices to the bazaar at the neighborhood, I carried them by my side. That’s why they know what it is to be on their own. They can do anything they need to do, alone. I was an example, a model for them. They learned a lesson from what I had experienced.”

I also encountered a truly remarkable story in Fatsa case, during the interviews. While almost all interviewees take care of their own children, Aylin (38, housewife), who takes care of two step children, stands out as a unique example. Aylin, at first, went to Japan to work as a waitress in a restaurant. Later on, she took the decision of getting married to her boss. She has two step children: “My husband has a son from a Japanese woman, and a daughter whose mother is from Philippines.”

These two kids, the boy (Mehmet, 17) who is the offspring of the arranged marriage with a Japanese lady, and the girl (Ebru, 18), who is the extramarital child of the Philippine lady and Aylin’s husband, are a part of Aylin (38, housewife)’s family together with Aylin’s own children, Dilara (12) and Derya (6). Ayla tells that Ebru has been living with them for 4 years. At the time of the interviews, she was on holiday in Philippines, with her mother. Although Ebru did not want to come to Fatsa at first, “her father could not leave her there” tells. The son has also been a part of the family since his childhood. Aylin tells that:

“[the father] brought his son to Fatsa for circumcision when he was little. The child stayed for one year and then he went back to his mother. But he still wants to be here. He will come after he is 18.”

It is clear from Aylin’s narration that her husband is a caring father. Thus, he tries to include all children into the family. Aylin’s role in this, however, is impossible to ignore.

First of all, it should be mentioned that Aylin is not forced to accept this situation. From the very first minute, she represents a completely different profile from other interviewee women. She went to Japan while she was a single, she could persuade her family to her decision of leaving alone, and she accepted getting married to her husband, although she knew his situation:

“It was also very difficult for me, but I knew everything before I got married. My husband has always been open to me. I got married knowing all these. Well, one needs to endure what he cannot cure.”

While other women are doing their best to strengthen the ties between the father and the children, Aylin is trying to find a way to be close with her step children. One can imagine that biologic ties can ease the situation for the father-child relationship, the narratives, however, prove the contrary. The only specific difficulty of Aylin was her expectation of having problems with her step daughter, due to some preconceived ideas on her relationship with her, which are actually rooted in some well-established prejudices within the society:

“We both made great efforts with Ebru. She is “the step-daughter” in the end. I also have two daughters. Derya is 6 now and Dilara 12. My daughters also did their best to accept her. Now she is also like my daughter. She is also like Dilara or Derya. We always see that step-mothers make their children suffer. It’s just the opposite for us. I also tell this to Ebru, I say, ‘Instead of me, you make me suffer’.”

Together with closing the biological and social gap of being step mother/daughter there is also the problem of having a half-Philippine step daughter for Aylin, as this attracts more attention from the society they live in. Aylin narrates this as follows:

“We really did our best. We are quite different from all other families living here. People comment on our situation as they like, but they cannot tolerate our family here in Fatsa. You also know how this kind of places are, how people talk about each other. We are completely different from them. That’s why I don’t see many people here, not everyone can understand us. I am happy and content with my family and I don’t need anyone else.”

Besides all these, Ebru is getting used to life in Fatsa and society is getting used to Ebru was also a very troublesome period for Aylin:

“Ebru has been living with us for four years. Now she speaks Turkish very well. She has been here for 4 years and has been going to school here. It was of course very difficult both for her and for us at the beginning. But we made great efforts to keep our relationship strong. Ebru has changed as well... She was not a child like the ones people are used to here. It was difficult for her to adapt. She had many problems due to cultural differences... She is coming from a culture where people are more relaxed on many issues. Here, it is different. People gossip about everything. In terms of traditions and manners, there are huge differences. It was very difficult until we got used to her. Her teachers were calling me to school every day. She was acting in a more relaxed way in terms of affairs and many other issues. She had difficulties getting used to here. But she is really afraid of her father. He is a real Turkish man. Ebru does whatever she likes, though. Thus I told to her teachers not to inform me on every small issue.”

As I mentioned before, Aylin’s case is unique in many ways. Despite the difficulties of migration and many other specific problems of her case, she insists on her living her life as she wishes. It is clear, however, from her narration that most of the time she carries most of this burden on her own shoulders, alone.

To sum it up, migration ends in many problems in terms of father-child relationship. While women deal with the problems of the children on the one hand; they are overburdened with the task of compensating for the absence of the father, on the other. In traditional families mothers get some help from the male adult members of the family, who can be a role model for the children. In other cases, when women have better opportunities to refute the traditional family bonds, they get professional help to cope with the problems of the children in the absence of their father. Women also act as a mediator between the father and the children, explaining their words to each other. Although they are well aware of the fact that not having children would ease their troubles, they still perceive their children as their basic support in life. While doing their best to compensate for the absence of their father, they also compensate for the absence of their husbands, with their kids. In a way, they reformulate the concept of family; family is the children they have, to put it simply. They become exposed to the difficulties of the migration decision that is taken because of the economic shortcomings, as they never think of breaking up with their husbands, for the sake of their children.

5.3 Relationship with Families

In this section, women's relationship with their families and with their husbands' families after their husband's leave will be discussed. Relationships with the families play an important role in women's lives because these extended families have a great impact on many decisions concerning the family, as mentioned before. Many studies, especially the ones concerned with regions where rural and patriarchal values are strong, indicate the fact that spouses live with extended families after the marriage. These studies also state that this situation, living with the husband's family, goes on for the wives after the migration of their husbands. This life together with the husband's family ends only when the husband sends enough money to have a house of their own (Brink, 1991). In Fatsa example as well, there are spouses who live with the extended families. As mentioned above again, there are also couples who start living at their own houses after a while, with the remittance that comes from the

migrant men. During this study, however, I have encountered very few cases as such. General tendency, in contrast to what present literature indicates, is that, spouses in Fatsa live in their own houses, which are very close (in the same building, or in the same neighborhood), to the extended families'. For the women interviewed in this study, this situation went on after their husbands' leave. As it mentioned, in many studies, women could not live in their household after their husbands' migration. If they are already living within the extended household, during the absence of their husbands' migration, they continue to live with them. However, Fatsa case stands in a different position in that sense. In Fatsa, it is possible for women to live in their household. I could argue that although Fatsa is a town where traditional extended family values are still strong, like in some other parts of Turkey, in Fatsa, there are not strictly closed communities.

Why do women try to keep their own houses? The answer of this question can be found within the general structure of the society. In small communities like Fatsa, where patriarchal structure is strongly felt and where even extended families are under suppression of the neighborhood, women are the ones who feel the greatest suppression. Both traditional values of the extended families and general suppression depending on the "what would people think of us?" excuse narrow down the individual social space of women. The moment they start living with the extended families, they lose almost all their freedom; and thus women do not want to be in the same house with the extended families, with which they already have unbreakable social ties. Leman (40, housewife) who lived with her husband's family for a while after their marriage tells her extended family experience as follows:

"I am the elder daughter-in-law of the family. I was the first one that became a part of this family. After the marriage, until 2 months before my husband's leave, I was living with my father-in-law. After he went, my father-in-law said 'We can go on living together' but I didn't accept this. Because living alone has its own comfort. In the end, you are in your own house; you can do whatever you like. You can eat if you like, you don't, if not. Smoking was another problem, for example. I started smoking after I met my husband. You cannot smoke whenever you like if you live with elders. It is a problem. But it

is not like that if you live in your own house. You can smoke as you wish; you can do whatever you like.”

Leman’s narrative states the difficulties of living with the elders of the family very successfully. In a traditional family structure where women’s smoking is not tolerated or smoking in front of elders is perceived as being disrespectful, her own house becomes a place of freedom for women.

My study indicates that men in Fatsa do not force their wives to live with their families after their leave. Men, however, do not let women live totally out of the control mechanism of the traditional extended family, asking their wives to live in a house close to their families’. Together with this, through verbally trusting their wives to their families, men indicate his family as the new source of patriarchy to the women left behind. The reason behind this is that, a woman’s living alone, beyond the control of an extended family or elders of that family is not tolerated in traditional societies like Fatsa. Under this trusting the wife to husband’s family system lies both the idea that a woman cannot deal with daily issues alone, so the intention of finding someone to help her; and the idea of extended family’s standing as a guard to woman’s chastity. Here, it should be clearly stated that by “chastity” women’s getting close to or having sex with any man other than their husbands is meant.

In cases when men’s parents are dead, when there are no other elder relatives or men to whom women may be trusted or when men’s family live in a village of Fatsa far from the center of the town, women are trusted to their own family. It is clear that when it comes to their own families, women tend to accept living with extended families more easily. When she does not live with them in the same house, she again moves a place that is close to her family’s house.

To sum it up, it is the first choice of women to live in their own house alone, under the control of the extended family, after their husbands’ leave. As mentioned above, this leaves some space for women within her house. This option cannot be realized

without the approval of husband, though. Men let their wives live at their own house only when their houses were close to the house of the extended family. Women who are not that lucky are left with the options of living either with their husbands' or their own families. Leman, for example, until her husband's leave stayed with his family. Her father-in-law maintained a strong control on her life while her husband was still in Fatsa and after his leave. She tells:

“My father-in-law would not let us do anything. He was really a conservative man. He had good sides and bad sides. I liked him, but he was a conservative man. For example, he never let us go out on Mondays, Mondays was the day we had the bazaar. Everywhere would be crowded on Mondays and he would not let us go out when it is crowded. He would not let us go out or get on a bus anytime we like, for example. If you need to go out, he would take you there with his car. You need to be at home before the evening prayer. You are not allowed to be late.”

If possible, women prefer to live with their own parents as it is easier for them to share the same house with them. Women's families, however, are as suppressive as men's, when it comes to controlling women's lives. Zeynep (37, civil servant), who lived with her on mother after her husband's leave, tells:

“I was really getting bored being at home all day. My mother was really a despot woman. You also know how Georgians are. My mother was really disciplined as she was widowed at a very young age. She bought us up under great suppression with the fear of “people will talk about us, they will gossip about us”. After my husband's leave, she continued being suppressive. I could not even wear the clothes I like with the fear of people, thinking what they would think of me as I “didn't have my husband”. Actually my husband doesn't care for those things at all. But my mother is different. It was like that when we were little; it was the same after my husband's leave.”

It is clear from Zeynep's narrative that not only their going out, but also their clothes were controlled. Wearing nice clothes, elegant dresses or make up or being attractive in any way while going out are banned to women whose husbands are not in Fatsa.

Here, it should be clarified that “being attractive” can mean things as simple as wearing a white shirt or a red scarf. All of these women are already far from being specifically attractive; some wearing scarfs both at home and outside, others choosing clothes that would hide the curves of their bodies. In their husbands’ absence, however, even these clothes are controlled. Another point that should be underlined is the control mechanism applied to women’s going out. Going out or getting out of the house meant getting beyond the control of the extended family and for this reason women’s going out is strictly controlled. As women’s being out of families’ control is abnormal, points such as where they go and the reason of their going out are generally questioned. If the time is not appropriate, their going out may be prevented by the family. If they really need to go out, they may be accompanied with someone from the family. Apparently, for women going out meant feeling the pressure on them more and more strongly each time.

Despite all this suppression and limitation of their social spaces, women still seem happy living close to their extended families. When asked, they explain the reason of this through the help they get from their families. Interviewee women mention that they get both financial and psychological help from their families in the absence of their husband. Halime (40, housewife), who moved to a house closer to her family’s after her husband’s leave explains her experience as follows:

“He could not send any money to us for the first few years after he went; he couldn’t find a job there. Sometimes he would be able to earn due to accidents he caused at work. What happens if you don’t get money from your husband? We didn’t have any money at all. Fortunately, I had my family; they took care of me... What would I do without them?”

Women do not get this much support from the families all the time, though. There are also examples among interviewees who did not get any kind of help after their husbands’ leave, or who had problems with her husband’s families in this period. Women and their parents-in-law specifically have problems on financial issues.

Halime, as mentioned above, got help only from her own family, while having many problems with her husband's:

“I didn't have problems with my husband but his family never helped us... They never helped me, besides; they always behave as an obstacle in front of me. Despite their being a problem on their own, I still had to give an account of everything to them.”

What makes this process more unbearable for women is this obligation of being in touch with their in-laws all the time, even when they do not get any help from them. While women have to deal with all their problems alone, behaviors of their husband's family towards them become more and more hurtful.

In conclusion, many women are trusted either to their own or to their husbands' families in their husbands' absence. General tendency is women's living in a place of their own, but close to one of the families as their houses become some kind of a freedom space for women. When husbands do not approve this option, women move either to her in-laws' or to her own family's house. Traditional family structure never accepts women as individuals and thus do not let them have their own social space or rights. Despite all these difficulties, some women state that they get both financial and psychological help from the extended families to a great extent. Other women who do not get any help from the families, but are still subject to the suppression of them have great troubles coping with this exhausting situation.

5.4 Financial Matters

In this section, the issue of how the money earned in Japan, after the departure of the husbands to Japan, returns to Fatsa will be recounted. The questions to be answered are: To whom the money is sent in Fatsa? (Is it sent to the woman left behind or to another member of the extended family?) And how that money is spent? If the woman left behind is also working in Fatsa, how is the money earned by the woman is spent? As having control over money in a sense demonstrates who has the power, it is important to designate the social status of the working woman.

In the studies conducted on labor migration, the prevalent conclusion is as follows: “The one who earns it has power over how the money is spent. The one who possesses the money, whether s/he has earned it or not, also has power over the distribution of money and how it is spent” (Polatnick in Doğu, 1984, p.79). Labor migration is generally observed in small settlements such as villages. In these small settlements, the woman left behind, if not already living with the family of the man, absolutely moves into the house of the man’s family after the departure of the man. For this reason, the woman becomes dependent on the man’s family in every sense. She has right to speak neither on her own life nor on the money her husband sends. In this structure where the woman is by no means considered as an individual, the worker husband abroad sends the money either to his father or to his brother. The reason is that the head of household, patriarch is now either the father or the brother of the husband (Taylor, 1984).

Nevertheless, there are diversions from this general tendency in the example of Fatsa. When I asked to whom their husbands sent the remittance, my interviewees in Fatsa generally stated that they received the remittance. In the example of Fatsa, it should be taken into account that being different from other migration cases, men work at a far away place and they cannot come back to Fatsa for a long time. For this reason, the man relatively loses the control of money he sends, and his right to speak on how that money should be spent disappears. Consequently, the remittance is sent to a person and spent according to the demands of the ones remained in Fatsa. The reason why the remittance is sent to woman is the fact that most of the women who remained in Fatsa do not live with their husbands’ families. Keeping two houses separate concretizes the reality that there are two houses to be provided for. On the other hand, in the case of living with the husband’s family, the fact that two houses are gathered under a single roof create the impression that there is only one house to be provided for, and automatically the father or the brother of the husband becomes the head of that house. However, when there are two houses, two heads of houses are required and in the absence of the man, the woman becomes the head of the house of

necessity. Thus, at least some of the money is sent to the woman and the woman decides how that money should be spent.

Nevertheless, the fact that the money is sent to the woman can cause problems between the husband's family and the woman. Most of my interviewees stated that their husbands sent money not only to them but also to their families. However, the woman was oppressed with regards to the control and management of money. For instance, Halime (40, housewife) was subject to such oppression. After her husband left, she did not receive any money from him for some time. In the meantime Halime, expressing that she was not subsidized by her husband's family, was subsidized by her own family. However, when her husband found a job and started sending money regularly, she and in-laws quarreled. Halime (40, housewife), while reciting what she has gone through, expressed that nobody took care of them while her husband did not send money and that when her husband started to send money her husband's relatives made a claim on it and she complained about the problems that came up:

“Nobody cared about us when there was no money, when money started to come problems arose all of a sudden. Everybody gathered around us when money started to come but they did not gather for us, they did it for money, who cares about us? Of course nobody would stop by when there is no money.”

The woman who has to fight against many difficulties in the absence of money cannot always feel at peace when she has it. Halime's statement “What I have gone through because of this money,” summarizes the toils of women in Fatsa whose husbands are in Japan due to migration. In Halime's case, like in many cases, the main problem is that the money is sent to Halime. Halime narrates:

“The question was “Why a bank account was opened for me? The bank account should have been opened for my father-in-law and the money would be deposited to his account. How come the money would be deposited to my account? I wonder to whose account the money would be deposited and how would I make ends meet?”

Nobody thinks about these and nobody cares to ask “Do you need anything?”

Why does the fact that her husband sends money so that Halime, who lives in a separate house with her two children instead of living with her husband’s family, can live off cause so many problems? The only answer that springs to mind is a problem of power sharing. The father of the man regards being the head of his son’s family as his own right. As the head of the family, it is natural for the father of the man that he should possess all the money earned and that the money should be spent at his sole discretion. The fact that his right is taken away from him, and besides, given to a younger, lower status -to make matters worse- woman or that this right is shared between him and the woman is unacceptable to the father of the man and he objects to this situation. Consequently, there were times that they not only called Halime to account for how she spent the money but also there were times when they directly asked for money.

“My husband’s family never helped us but they always hindered everything. To crown it all, you have to account for everything... My mother-in-law used to come and ask for money and she would say ‘my son is sending you money.’ I would tell her that I was spending the money ‘to pay our debts’ but she would not listen to me; I would ask ‘how can I get you any money?’”

The fact that not only the father but also the mother of the husband asks for money from the woman indicates another situation. In a community in Fatsa where the traditional family structure still prevails, child’s becoming independent from the family constitutes a problem. It is understood from the disposition of the family of Halime’s husband that no matter how much the child grows up, he is still responsible to his family and the family can demand that he shares his earnings with the family even if the child has made a life for himself. For this reason, the wife of the man does not matter. From the family’s point of view, demanding the money of the man is at first the right of his parents. As a matter of fact, in Halime’s case, it can be inferred

that the husband is inured to this situation and in accordance with this thought he has sent money to his parents in addition to his wife: “In the meantime, to my surprise, my husband was sending money to his family as well... I had guessed that my husband was sending money also to them... But my mother-in-law would constantly ask for money from me too.”

As most of my interviewees’ husbands worked in Japan as illegal workers I asked them how their husbands could send the money. The majority of women stated that their husbands could easily send money to Fatsa via post office; or via bank by favour of a friend they met in Japan. When I asked how frequently the money was sent, I received different answers. Some women stated that, when their husbands found a regular job, they remitted every month while some others stated that their husbands remitted every 2-3 months. For instance, Halime recounted as follows:

“My husband would send the money all at once. Supposing that he sent nothing for 2-3 months and then he would send the money all at once. When this was the case, either the debt would run up or there was debt to be paid previously, so the money would be spent on the debt and again we would hardly make both ends meet. In this way we, me and two children, were trying to live off.”

The fact that the remittance is sent regularly every month or every a few months is observed when the man generally stays in Japan for a long time. If the man has gone to work for a short time (2-3 years) the situation changes. During short term stays, the man saves money in Japan instead of sending it to the woman or to his family. The aim in this situation is to be able to make the money that will pay the debt in Fatsa as soon as possible. Therefore, concerns about the woman’s daily bread become secondary of importance. In cases when the man stays for a short time and saves money to pay the debts in Fatsa, either her own family or her husband’s family subsidize the woman.

The financial situation of the husband and wife primarily determines how the money is spent. In general, the men who go to Japan to work not only have financial

difficulties but also debts that they are unable to pay. The debt can be man's or his extended family's debt. No matter whose debt it is, the decision remains the same; the money that comes from Japan is principally used to pay this debt. Hale (36, housewife) recounts:

“Both my husband and his brothers were in heavy debts. Whenever my husband sent money, it was used to pay the debts. We never had a luxurious, prosperous life... At first, when he was gone, he could not always send money and when he did, the money was spent to pay the debts.”

After the debt is paid, the woman seizes the control of money. Only after the debts are paid the woman reaches financial prosperity. After this point, from the money she receives almost as a regular salary, the woman makes a living for herself and her children as well as making savings for future. After meeting the daily and vital needs, the remaining money is saved. The money is not spent on luxury in any way. When I asked the reason for this, the women replied that the income state of their husbands would not be the same every month, so they put away money just in case their husbands could not send it. Furthermore, if possible, the women use the money as an investment, they especially try to become homeowners or they want to ameliorate the conditions of their houses. In all these processes it is the woman who makes the decisions. Ayla (53, tailor) tells how she had the house constructed when her husband was absent:

“I had this house constructed as well. (She is talking about the three-storey house in the village) In the first days of his absence only the foundation of the building was laid. I completed the construction of this house with the money he sent. I went to the downtown to fetch the constructor, I bought the building material, I completed the construction of this house to the last detail until he came.”

In addition to paying the debts, owning an asset which will not be lost easily, such as a house, makes women happy. In fact, it can be claimed that the women have contributed to these make women feel proud of themselves. The statement “I had this

house constructed as well” in Ayla’s narrative is striking from this perspective. While the man works and sends the money, the woman who spends the money smartly, the woman who both makes her living and has her house constructed, and meanwhile dealt with the construction in every phase, is aware of her power in one sense. All of these achievements are made not only because of her husband’s work but also because of her efforts; and to my observations, no woman in Fatsa can put up with the underestimation of her efforts any more.

It is also observed that many women, who have become aware of her power, confronted their families with the will to work. Despite the fact that husbands largely subsidize their wives, there are women who work and earn their own money. Not only in Fatsa but also in Japan, as mentioned above, there are women who work. In both cases, when I asked women why they started to work, they replied that they were bored of sitting at home and that they wanted to contribute to the home economics. Zeynep (37, civil servant) who started to work after some time her husband went recounted her story as follows:

“When I heard that they were looking for someone to hire at the hospital, I told my mother. So, my mother spoke to one of our acquaintances. All in all, before I started working I did not have insurance but now I do. What is more important is that I breathed a sigh of relief. I got myself out of the house.”

For women, working is both a means of overcoming financial difficulties more quickly and an excuse to get rid of the oppression that has increased dramatically during the absence of the husband; besides, working women somehow guarantee their lives as well. The debt is paid right away, and they have some more money. Going to work everyday means that women at least have a space outside the house with which the family cannot interfere. So, interpreting woman’s will to work, confronting the family with such a demand, as the increase of self-confidence would not be misleading.

Further, except for the woman's will to contribute to the home economics or to open up a space for herself in life, there are cases in which the woman had to work because her husband did not subsidize her. Sevcan (35, civil servant) is one of the women who had to work because her husband did not subsidize her. Sevcan's story was narrated above. Her husband, after he went to Japan, sent her money for some time, but later on in order to stay in Japan more complacently he wanted to get divorced from her. Though Sevcan resisted for some time, ultimately she had to accept to get divorced from him. Afterwards, her husband continued to cheat on her in Turkey and he left the house, thus this fake divorce turned into a real divorce. Her husband did not subsidize Sevcan and her children after the divorce. That being the case, Sevcan (35, civil servant) had to work:

“I also have worked at the hospital for two years. At home, I was depressed all the way. I had to work because of both financial and spiritual reasons. At home, I could do nothing but think of my husband all the time. I was going crazy. Thus my elder brother got me this job. It helped me a lot, both financially and spiritually.”

The fact that Sevcan decides to work instead of taking refuge in her own family and expecting them to help her demonstrates that Sevcan's perception of her self has changed. Though migration to Japan is realized basically to make the family's financial situation better off, it can be suggested that at the end of this process women are empowered despite all the difficulties they experience.

Furthermore, when women are asked what they think about the improvement in the financial situation, they are quite critical of the process. Women accept that the money sent from Japan improved life conditions one way or another. At worst, the debt was paid and they owned a house. Nevertheless, when they look back, it can be observed that they are not happy with the sacrifices they have made. Zeynep (37, civil servant) beautifully underlines that what Japan made them gain does not really worth when compared to the difficult years they have been through:

“Now, my husband is unemployed. While he was there we paid our debt and we only had a house. When I think of it I ask myself, whether it would worth a house or not? I do not think it would.”

As Zeynep stated, as long as the husband returns to Fatsa, Japan does not provide a permanent improvement. The husband who has returned to Fatsa has to confront being unemployed after some time, and all the difficulties experienced become depreciated.

Consequently, being different from other cases of migration, in the case of Fatsa the money is largely sent to the woman remained in Fatsa and it is controlled by the woman. The reason why the money is sent to mainly the woman remained in Fatsa and why mostly the woman has control over the money is that the women generally live in their houses rather than living with their husbands' families. It is principally the debt which determines how the money should be spent. If the man or the family of the man is in debt, the money earned in Japan is used to pay the debt. Only after the debt is paid then the woman can use the money to make a living. The fact that the money is sent to the woman and that the woman decides how the money should be spent causes problems between the woman and the family of the man. Two reasons can be suggested for this: The first is that following man's departure, father of the man regards himself as the head of his son's family and therefore the only authority to receive the money. Secondly, due to the extended and traditional family structure, the fact that the male child has a life of his own is not accepted and that the family members ask for their share in everything earned by the male child. It is understood that many men tried to prevent the oncoming problems by sending money both to their wives and to their families at the same time. The woman uses the money not only to save the day but also to make a permanent investment. Primarily, the woman tries to own a house or to ameliorate the conditions of an already owned house. When the family of the husband quits the scene, all the decisions about the money are made by the woman. Due to the fact that the man, even if he gives instructions to his wife on how the money should be spent, is far away from home, he has no other

choice but to trust his wife. The woman who increased her self-confidence in this process can also demand to work. What is more, instead of being subsidized by others she prefers to work.

5.5 Changes in Responsibilities and the Social Life of Woman

5.5.1 Changes in Responsibilities of Woman

In this section, what kind of changes took place in the daily life of women remained in Fatsa after the departure of husbands to Japan will be discussed. First of all, it should be pointed out that after men's departure significant changes take place in the daily life of women. Before husband leaves, woman performs her duties as a housewife in accordance with the traditional husband-wife role definitions and she does not question the situation at all. Her responsibility is limited to meeting the requirements of the household in the house. It is expected from the woman that she takes care of children, husband and –if there are any– elderly family members; however, she has not any responsibility out of the house. In general the only duty that requires her to go out of the house is to do the market shopping, which is done by the husband in some houses.

Nevertheless, with the departure of husband, woman has to perform other duties in addition to the ones she has at home. The reason why woman has to take care of everything is that she usually has a separate house, that she does not live with her husband's family or her own family; and thus, despite the assistance she receives from outside she is the one who has to primarily deal with everything. What is more, the fact that the women remained live in a district which is not small, such as Fatsa, causes women to be empowered perforce. In most of the similar studies conducted previously, women generally live with the family of the husband in smaller districts or in villages. Therefore, after the husband leaves, there are no changes concerning the duties woman performs in the house; because the husband is replaced either by the father or the brother of the husband. However, in the example of Fatsa, as women

continue to live in their houses after the departure of men, there are significant changes that take place with regards to their area of responsibility.

When I asked women what these responsibilities were, the first answer I received was that these were duties performed normally by men. This indicates that women have internalized the traditional roles of woman and man, and that they find it strange when they have to perform a duty which they define as a duty to be performed by men. When I asked them to exemplify these duties, they listed duties which include dealing with money such as paying the bills, paying the rent, paying the debt as well as taking care of the repairs of the house and taking care of the children's requirements concerning the school. Women, who stated that they had not performed such duties before, recounted that they had to perform these duties and learn while performing them due to the fact that their husbands migrated and that they lived separately from the elder members of the family. Seher (46, housewife) narrates the changes that took place in her social life after her husband left and this process of empowerment as follows:

“Before he went, I neither worked nor did anything else. I was just a housewife. I knew neither how to pay a bill nor how to pay a rent before he went. I learned everything after he went. Now I am like a man. I can do anything. I became both a mother and a father while I knew nothing.”

From Seher's narrative, as Townsend and et.al. argues that “self empowerment is a process, not a result” (Townsend and et. al, 1999, p.24). Townsend and et.al continues with a quotation from Mercado who explains this self-empowerment process very clearly:

To be empowered is to rise above all the barriers, to do things you've never imagined. Above all, it is to overcome the fear of doing things. But this fear is defeated when you feel capable of doing things. For this, you need the power from within, that is to say you need a positive reinforcement and to realize that you really can do them, can learn, can take care charge of yourself and can go forward. This is a dialectical process because you never get back to the same point, to where you started. To live empowerment is to go on changing yourself every day...” (Townsend and et. al, 1999, p.33)

However, Leman (40, housewife) tells how this process exhausted her and how she was depressed because of all those responsibilities with the following statements:

“After my husband went, I had to carry the entire burden. I had never paid electric bill or water bill all my life. I had to take care of them. That was when I first learned how to deal with these. It was too difficult for me as well; I took the pains and wearied out for years.”

In addition to these outdoor duties, woman has to take care of everything related to children. As stated before, with the departure of fathers, the traditional roles of mother and father intermingle and the woman remained behind starts defining herself as both a mother and a father not only in the eye of her children but also in her own perception. When her husband was at home, she was taking care of the child's domestic needs only, now she has to be responsible for her child's life at all points. It is the woman who makes the decisions about both dealing with the school and marriage issues when the child is grown up. For this reason, although the child in fact has a father and the woman has a husband, the woman raises the child as though the child does not have a father; and thus, the woman alone faces all the difficulties of single parenting. Aynur (46, housewife) returned to Fatsa after living in Japan for some time, tells about the difficulties of her new life:

“When I returned here, I had a house so I started living there. But... it was really difficult without my husband. I was really tired of dealing with house chores. There were lots of modifications, changes in the house; I alone took care of them. I talked to the constructors, I stood over them. These are not easy duties, especially for a woman living alone. They are too tiring. Almost all parts of the house was demolished and rebuilt, it is no joke, is it? However, for a woman these are too difficult duties. What is more, it is not only the house you should take care of but also two children... You deal with children alone while dealing with the house. You register them for school, you help them get used to here, and I took care of everything.”

Though this process appears to be a positive one considering that the woman increases her self-confidence, gets involved in the public life outdoors and becomes

more visible, we should remind that this is an obligation not a preference and that the process of learning and getting used to it is difficult for most of them. It should be kept in mind that while this process empowers women it also oppresses them. For this reason, some of my interviewees could not help expressing the longing they felt for their husbands. One of them was Sevcan (35, civil servant):

“After Samet went, I took care of the house. I am used to paying the bills but a husband is a husband in the end. He somehow supports you. Otherwise, you have all the responsibility; you have to be careful, day and night. What devastated me was this responsibility with two children. I am too tired. I am responsible for everything, I take care of everything.”

With the migration of men in Fatsa, the woman left behind has to perform another duty which is specific to the region, taking care of hazelnut gardens. Although everyone does not make a living from hazelnuts in Fatsa, each family has a hazelnut garden even if it is a small one. Hazelnut garden care continues throughout the year. Hazelnut gardens should be maintained during spring, and the harvest takes place in August and September. Even if the garden is small, as maintenance of hazelnut garden is onerous, generally daily casual workers are employed. The same situation is also valid for the harvest. After the harvest, hazelnuts are dried in broad, open spaces in villages and then processed in the hay machine so that hazelnuts are separated from their green shell to be sold to the dealer. In my field work, most of my interviewees stated that their hazelnut gardens were sold or taken care of by their husbands' family. However, I also encountered women who deal with hazelnut gardens alone. Hasret (40, housewife) is one of those women. She narrates what she has gone through concerning hazelnut gardens:

“Sometimes I would have great difficulty in taking care of hazelnut gardens, and then I would be moved to tears. Because when my husband was here, he would not make me do anything. No matter how he arranged everything via phone from Japan, I had to go and take care of the business in hazelnut gardens. I had to do it because my husband was not there. One day, hazelnuts were processed in the hay machine; I was working and crying at the same time. One of the workers saw me crying and said ‘sister, you had better go and sit down, you are too tired, and we will take care of it.’ ”

To emphasize it once more, in fact women remained behind are not really happy with having to take care of everything alone. Having to shoulder so much responsibility not only makes them weary but also they have difficulty in accepting the situation as the roles of womanhood-manhood, to which they are accustomed, are digressed. Despite the fact that this “compulsory empowerment” (Kalaycıoğlu, et.al, 2010) makes women more empowered, compared to their previous statuses, as a result of the decisions they have made, due to the fact that women still live in a traditional environment, they also experience the psychological difficulty of not being under the same conditions when compared to the other married couples. However, some of my interviewees stated that they were used to “the absence of a man at home.” What is meant by the absence of a man at home is that either their father were dead when they were too young or that their father migrated to Germany to work, just like their husbands. Nevertheless, all the women in such situations cannot help expressing that the experience they are having now is much more different. Actually, when they reach the same position they can realize the difficulties they had experienced some time ago as children but were not aware of them, for it was their “mothers” who was experiencing the difficulties at those times but not them.

To sum up, with the migration of the husband to Japan many significant changes take place in the life of the woman. Before man’s departure, woman performs the household duties that are defined by the tradition and defines herself as only “a housewife,” whereas with the departure of man, woman has to go out of the house. In this case, each and every duty ranging from paying the bills, constructing a house to taking care of the children’s needs as well as the garden work becomes the responsibility of the woman. The woman who is not accustomed to all of these duties has to go through a compulsory learning process; nevertheless, this “compulsory learning process” also becomes a new challenge for women. At the end of this process, the woman, though not always happy with it, starts to define herself as both a man and a woman, as both a mother and a father. Additionally, leading a life that is different from the traditional family life, although she is empowered now, in fact

makes her feel different and alone, as a result of which the woman has to deal with a negative psychology.

5.5.2 Changes in the Social Life

In this section, the changes observed in the social life and social status of the woman following the migration of husband to Japan will be addressed. All of my interviewees in my field study were married when their husbands went to Japan. Among these women although later on there were those who got divorced or were not married because their husbands were dead, they all experienced their husbands' stay in Japan as "married" women. In a traditional society such as Fatsa, being a married woman generally means that the woman either lives with her husband or with her husband's family in a separate house and that the husband is responsible for the woman. While the woman performs the domestic duties defined by the tradition, the outdoor duties and bringing home the bacon is "man's duty." Though this structure appears to restrain woman, it actually provides woman with a kind of area of freedom. The married woman only answers to her husband, and thus, as long as her husband allows her she has the freedom to do some certain activities.

However, women, whose husbands went to Japan to work, though they are "married" are devoid of these rights. Women remained in Fatsa after their husbands went are treated as "widows" by the society. While in law "widow" is a noun used to define women/men whose husbands/wives are dead, the use of noun "widow" for a woman has a different meaning in traditional societies. The society keeps an eye on the "widow" more than it does on a married or a single woman; therefore, the extended family tries to protect her more.

My interviewees defined themselves as "widows" due to the fact that they were left alone in the marriage life as if their husbands were dead or as if they got divorced. Another reason for this was the treatment of their families and the society. Yet during the interviews, they stated that this was not their choice and that the society defined them as such. Even if matrimony is protected, physical absence of the husband is

imposed on the woman as a situation in which the woman has to mind her ways in the eyes of the society.

The reason why the society keeps an eye on the “widow” so closely is her honour. What is meant by honour is that the woman does not have any intimacy with a man extramaritally. Hereby, intimacy can be any action that ranges from simply talking to someone to sexual intercourse. For a widower, such oppression mechanisms are never applied. As discussed in the previous chapter, husbands in Japan can be regarded as “widowers” but this does not necessitate the fact that they should be distinctively protected and that their lives should be restrained. As a matter of fact, I had mentioned in the previous chapter that men could keep company with other women and that their wives tried to justify their husbands’ behavior by suggesting that this was a “right” or “necessity.” However, such a situation for woman is out of the question; therefore, when their husbands leave, women feel that they have to mend their ways as twice as carefully in public. After their husbands depart, they keep a distance to every man with who they are in contact and who are not members of the family and this brings important restrictions to their social lives. Leman (40, housewife) narrates:

“When my husband went, I had to be really careful. Ultimately, you are living as a woman alone. People are only too glad to gossip about you. So I had to be careful as possible as I could. For example, when a constructor came to my house I would call him ‘brother’ whether he was elder than me or not, so that I would not be misinterpreted, so that nobody would look at me cross-eyed.”

As Leman stated, woman has no alternative but to restrain herself because the social pressure on her is too heavy. Besides, as they are women grown up in this society, most probably they have internalized the oppression and that this is the way to behave in the absence of a husband. As they have internalized this structure of thought, it is not possible for them to act contrarily; nevertheless, they are worried because of the fear of gossip. Sevcan (35, civil servant) expresses this situation as follows:

“This is a small place, people talk about everything... Ultimately, you are called a widow here. The glances and the way they speak to you change. You always have to be careful about your behavior. A human being should not say ‘it will not happen to me’, anything can happen.”

The difficulties resulting from the social pressure make women’s lives much more difficult. On the one hand, they are forced to accept a status, “widowhood”, to which they do not belong. On the other hand, accepting this status does not solve their problems, they are always worried about being gossiped about and getting a bad reputation. In addition to these, they have to spend more time outdoors because of their increased responsibilities with the departure of men. However, this causes them to find themselves in the middle of a tension. Aynur (34, housewife) narrates the tension and difficulties she has experienced:

“You alone have to take care of children while taking care of the house. Registering the children for school, helping them get used to this place, I took care of all of these. In the meantime, you cannot always do your job easily. What I mean is, when you are constantly outdoors, people start asking ‘why are you always outdoors?’ So what, someone has to go to the bank, go to the school for children, talk to the constructors. How can I complete these tasks in one day? I have to go out of the house everyday but it is a problem here. People start asking ‘how come you are out of the house everyday?’ What am I supposed to do? My family lives in Ünye, my father is there. How can he come and help me all the time? I have to take care of everything and I have to do it alone.”

On the one hand, having to go out of the house often, on the other hand, the fear of getting a bad reputation because she goes out of the house often defines the dilemma of the woman. For those who get an uncontested divorce after their husbands go to Japan, another status except for “widowhood” is out of the question. Hale (36, housewife) a legally “real widow”, who has accepted to get divorced from her husband so that her husband would make a marriage of convenience to stay in Japan more easily, does not speak much differently than other women:

“As I returned from Japan having divorced, I came to my father’s house. It is really difficult, not as easy as it seems. As I was already divorced I was using my father’s surname. It is not easy to live with my family too. Even if it is an uncontested divorce you are divorced. That is to say, you become a widow, but it is compulsory, widowhood is a result of the conditions. He is still my husband in fact. But everybody starts interfering with your business. The elderly are as such here, you know it. You cannot go out of the house easily. They interfere with everything. Thus all of them started to prey on me.”

As it can be seen, migration of man forces woman to accommodate herself to a lot of conditions which are unpreferable. The process which at first appears to stand a life that is separate from a husband creates new difficulties for woman as the time goes by. When man leaves the house, not only her responsibilities increase and her field of activity broadens but also her social status changes from “married” to “widow.” This transformation makes her vulnerable to verbal and psychologic interference of the elder family members, extended family members, and people from the immediate vicinity who is not family members (neighbors, acquaintances, friends, etc.). Woman who gained a little freedom with the status of being married misses out this freedom with the migration of man.

Same conditions await women who have lived in Japan for some time with their husbands, when they come back to Fatsa. In fact, it can be proposed that for those women, keeping pace with the life in Fatsa withal as a “widow” is more traumatic. Among my interviewees, the ones who stayed in Japan spoke of what an easygoing country Japan was. When I asked what they meant by “easygoing”, they told me that they could socialize in Japan more easily, that they could go out of the house easily, and that they could dress as they like because their husbands did not interfere with them about such issues. Canan (34, housewife) narrates:

“You cannot stay out here easily, you cannot live your life but it is just to the contrary in Japan. There the clothes are very different, the women are very different; in short, the life is very different. People are very easygoing there. Man-woman relationships are definitely not like

here. People go out with friends, have fun and stay out. Is that the case here?”

The differences Canan emphasized are imprinted on the minds of women as a totally different life experience. As it is understood from women's narratives, husband does not restrain his wife's behaviours thanks to being far away from the traditional society and the families. Woman, though she does not experience it at all points, has an opinion that will enable her to make comparison. For example, woman cannot experience the easygoingness of woman-man relationships even in Japan. However, socializing with her female friends at a place out of the house and observing other lives during that socialization makes her realize the cage she is confined to.

Some women remained behind in Fatsa start working in order to relieve the pressure a little and to create a life space for them out of the house. It is not also easy for woman to decide to work. She either has to make a living for herself and her children as she is divorced from her husband just like Sevcan's case or she has to persuade the elder family members. While in the first case woman is more easily permitted to work, whereas in the second case woman has to struggle against her family. Woman who gained the right to work at least has an environment where she can socialize except for the house and immediate vicinities.

When I asked my interviewees with whom they socialized in Fatsa, they replied that they generally met close and distant family members and family friends. I asked them whether they met each other as women whose husbands went to Japan. As most of them knew each other, they mentioned that at first they had met as “women whose husbands went to Japan.” These meetings would take place either in small groups or as one-to-one home visit. They would share the difficulties they had experienced. They were holding onto each other thinking that “one who suffers understands the other sufferer.” Nevertheless, this solidarity mechanism stopped being useful as the time went by. When I asked the reason, almost all of them told me that people were

gossiping. Presently, they either see each other much less or not at all. Sevcan (35, civil servant) narrates how they started seeing each other less in time:

“Before, we would meet as women whose husbands are in Japan. We would tell about our problems and difficulties, but there is a limit to it. This is a small place, but then everybody starts talking about everything. Now, we only say hello to each other. I only see one or two of them. We used to call ourselves ‘Japan-wrecked.’”

As it is seen, while men in Japan can establish a solidarity mechanism and make it work, even such solidarity is impossible for women remained behind. Traditional family and social structure, the fact that each and every action or word of a woman defined as a “widow” is a subject of gossip in the eye of the public preclude the commiseration with someone which is a human need. For this reason, being in solidarity with the ones who can best understand their experiences becomes impossible for women remained in Fatsa.

As a result, following husband’s migration to Japan, fundamental changes take place in woman’s area of responsibility and her social status. Woman, who becomes the head of the house as she lives in a separate house, has to take care of outdoor duties. In this respect, despite the assistance of the families or the instructions of man from Japan, the main subject is now woman. These new responsibilities bring about a compulsory learning and compulsory empowering process for woman. Although women can take care of the practical part of these responsibilities, they are psychologically quite consumed away, and they feel themselves alone and different from other married women. Though women’s starting to perform outdoor duties appears to be the case that women take part more in social life, it actually increases the pressure on them. Despite they are married, they are treated as “widows” in the eye of the society and family, and even if they do not want they have to accept this new identity. For this reason, they feel much more restrained than other women. Women who go to Japan and stay there for some time go through a trauma of knowing that another life is possible after they return to Fatsa. Some women who

have to live under such a pressure in the house start struggling against their families to get a job. For those who gain the struggle, the pressure is a little relieved and they have one more space of their own outside the house. Fear of being gossiped about hinders the fact that women can create a mechanism of solidarity among women remained in Fatsa. For this reason, their lives take a more self-enclosed state and they start meeting only the family members. It is again the woman remained in Fatsa who picks up the cost of this process, which is endured in order to overcome the financial difficulty, with her life turned into a home confinement.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The concept of labor migration on an international level in Turkey was first observed in 1960s as of putting worker recruitment agreements with European countries, such as France, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands in to force. The movement of labor force from Turkey to European countries lasted more than a decade, until the mid-1970s. In 1973-1974 the outbreak of oil crisis brought about the prohibition of recruited workers' access to Europe because of economic recession. Hence, labor migration to Europe from Turkey has continued in small numbers and mostly in form of family reunifications.

Another result of oil crisis was the increase in Turkish worker migration to oil-rich Arab countries. As discussed in the second chapter, Turkish labor migration changed its destination from Europe to Arab countries and then to former USSR republics. Until 1990s, worker migration to Arab countries had a tendency of increase steadily; today the movement towards Arab countries still continues although in a less density compared to the past. After the mid-1990s, Turkish labor migration routed to the former USSR republics in search of labor power to restructure the republics as Europe did in the 1960s.

However, there is a different destination of Turkish labor migration since the beginning of 1990s that has not received any attention in the academic field before: migration to Japan and specifically from Fatsa, a province of Ordu. This study is dedicated to this academically neglected migration movement in Turkey. The aim of the study is to first provide a general historical background of the migration to Japan and then focus on the women left behind in this migration process. The study displays that there has been an important migration flow from Fatsa to Japan,

specifically to the city of Nagoya since 1990s. This migration movement has started with the initiation of a specific person, Hayri Atilgan, known by many people in Fatsa regardless of whether they have been a part of this migration.

The migration movement from Fatsa to Japan is structured as a chain where Hayri Atilgan constitutes the first ring. In Fatsa case, the process begins with the migration of someone from the family or relatives. The one who goes to Japan opens the gates for at least one person from his family or friends. The first one not only encourage his relatives or friends to go to Japan but also provides help, job, a place to live etc. for the new-comer. Although the statistics do not reflect the exact truth, as the migration process and the status as a labor are not legal, it is estimated that today nearly three or three and half thousands people from Fatsa are living and working there.

Despite lack of legal stimulant as in the case of migration to Europe, e.g. worker recruitment agreements and legal status the migration process creates its own reasons. The first reason for migrating from Fatsa to Japan is economic conditions in Fatsa. Even though Fatsa is a rather big town in Black Sea, the people of Fatsa do not have many choices in terms of economic activities. The main source of income is hazelnut agriculture and trade. However, because of governments' agriculture policies on hazelnut production, hazelnut agriculture has become insufficient by itself as a source of income. In addition, the overall economic recession in Turkey has greatly affected trade, especially small-scale enterprises in Fatsa. Left with no choice or solution in terms of making a living, the people of Fatsa, men in majority, have found the solution in migrating to Japan.

The question of why they have chosen to migrate to Japan rather than a European or Arab country has its answer in encouraging facts about Japan. First of all, there is already an existing community composed of Turkish citizens from Fatsa, which provided a feeling of security for the newcomer. Then there is visa facility, which opens the borders of Japan to Turkish citizens without visa for a 90-day stay and thus makes the initial phase of access to Japan pretty easier. Besides, there is the fact of

‘promotion’ of Japan by the previous migrants about better economic conditions and higher life standards in Japan. The combination of these factors makes migration to Japan a very attractive and inevitable opportunity for people of Fatsa in terms of economic recovery. Similar to other migration movements, in Fatsa case mainly men migrate. The duration of men’s stay in Japan varies from two or three years up to twenty years. As their stay in Japan under tourist status is considered illegal after 90 days, some of them make arranged marriages with Japanese women, while others prefer to hide and act carefully not be caught by migration office in Japan.

In the academic circles, the main attention is given to migrants themselves and the studies put them in the center of migration studies. However, the situation of the left behind has gained importance in the last decades. One of the reason for this increased attention is that the researchers have noticed that the left behinds have to face many difficulties as well as migrants. Another reason is to disrupt the gendered focus of migration studies. Thus we now observe more and more studies focusing on the women left behind. This study also follows this recent tendency. After some preliminary information on the migration from Fatsa to Japan, the study discusses the main focus, the wives of emigrant men. The study addresses the lives of women during the absence of their husbands, which has not received the attention it deserves yet. That is why I have tried to discuss the impact of male migration on women.

During the fieldwork, I learned a lot about this migration process and the experiences of women whose husbands have migrated to Japan. I also had the chance to interview the women who went to Japan with their husbands. The women who have been to Japan gave me opportunity to make a comparison between the women left behind and them in terms of the changes in their lives. I believe that such a comparison enriched the study. I tried to focus on how both migrated and non-migrated women’s lives change during the absence of the husbands in terms of authority, daily life practices and gender roles.

First I tried to understand the reason and process of decision-making for the migration. My primary aim was to have better understanding of the role of women in

this process. In general, women do not have right to speak about the decision concerning the migration of the man. The decision is generally discussed in the extended family with family elders and men. Although women also attend these meetings for decision-making, elderly and men have the last word about man's leaving. In some cases, not women but the families of women are asked for permission to migrate by the men. There are also examples in which men can skip the procedure of asking for permission from the family, and just give a decision by themselves. The process functions slightly different in the cases where the women are supposed to migrate with their husbands. These women may cause some difference than the others, as they go with their husbands to Japan and they seem to be involved in the decision-making process. Still, I argue that even these women do not play any effective role in taking the decision for migration, since it has been decided long ago by patriarchal authorities, in other words men. Therefore, even though migrating as a couple could be considered as an indication of more egalitarian relationship in the nuclear family, the main actor is still man, like in the traditional patriarchal societies. Women also do not have a say in the decision of return of themselves or their husbands. Mainly the husband settles the issue for himself and for his wife.

The husband's control over the woman's life even continues after his departure. Just before his departure, the man makes all the necessary arrangements in order to make sure that the woman survives a life within the limits of his will. In many cases of migration, we observe that after the departure of the man, the woman keeps her existing position and continues living with the family of the man. However in the case of Fatsa, the women demand to live in their own houses, which is accepted by the men on the condition that the house is situated in the same building or neighborhood with their families. In some examples, the man requires the woman to live with her family, which is preferable for the wife.

The closeness to the family or living with a member of an extended family means that the man can assure the control over woman through these mechanisms. Thus the

first impact of the man's departure on the woman's life is the increased social pressure and control. In the absence of the husband, the family applies a pressure more than ever because of traditional family structure in Fatsa. This is resulted with restriction of the woman's freedom in the social life. Every act of the woman is under surveillance by the family and even by the society.

In addition to increased pressure and control, the woman's life has also gone a change in terms of autonomy, daily life practices and gender roles. The women have empowered after the husbands' migration as a result of taking care of everything concerning the household. Living in a separate house than the extended family, the woman has to face many problems in their daily life. Normally, in a traditional family all the roles of husband and wife are well defined. Generally the woman is responsible for the duties inside the house, taking care of husband, children and household in the general sense, while the man is responsible with the duties outside the house, mainly money matters etc. However the woman left alone after the departure of the man suddenly find herself in the middle of a bunch of problems to be dealt with. Ranging from paying the bills, paying the rent of the house, calling the plumber to hazelnut farming, purchase of land, construction or maintenance of a house, taking decisions about the education of children, the woman has now to cope with all these new problems.

The process of dealing with these new issues is in fact a process of compulsory learning and empowering for the women. Although many of them admit that they now feel more powerful in terms of surviving in social life, the women also state that the procedure of compulsory leaning was not an easy one. They tell how hard it was for them to learn all those issues and both take of house and children and then deal with the things outside. For them, it was psychologically difficult times. Many state that they have felt exhausted. Now they admit that they do not need a man to take care of them, but they also confess that sometimes they feel alone because of their special situation. To conclude I should add that the time the men spent in Japan directly affects the empowerment of the women left behind.

As result of this empowerment, the women also have a say in the use of remittances. After the departure of the husband, as of the time when the remittance starts coming an authority struggle is seen between the in-laws and the woman. The in-laws believe that they are the authority; therefore they should have the money. They also emphasize the fact that the man in Japan is their son, thus they have to have a share in his money. Although initially the remittance is solely used for paying the debts regardless of whom they belong, after the debts are paid off the remittance is in the control of the woman. This is mainly because the woman lives in a separate house with her children. As the remittance is sent to the woman, she becomes the sole decision-maker in how money would be spent and which kind of investments would be done, of course with the advices of the husband.

Many women I interviewed told that migration brought about the economic recovery. At least, they paid off the debts and made some sort of investment. However, there are also cases where the men did not send money and the relation of husband and wife ended up with divorce. In these cases, family of the women gains importance. In the absence of the man and in the case of divorce, the family of the woman comes into scene, takes care of their daughter and backs her up in her fight to survive.

Another aspect of change in the life of the women is observed in the relationship of the spouses. Many women state that their relationship with the husbands was negatively affected from this migration in the long run. A minority of the women state that the relationship as a couple has got better. The first problem is that both the woman and the man forget about living together as a couple. Therefore after long-term separations, coming together is not experienced as romantic and easy as it is assumed. While the man is abroad, the woman and the man establish a new life where they are no longer a couple. Thus quitting this new life and going back to the past way of life, which has been forgotten long ago, creates a psychological problem and requires a long term of adaptation for the couple as well as the children. In the short-term stay of the men, the re-adaptation process may be less painful.

Another problem in the relation of the spouses is the issue of cheating. The women are aware that their husbands have relations with other women in Japan. However they try to act as if this is a normal thing. First they do not use the word “cheating”. Second they use the terminology of patriarchal ideology, they say that it is a need of a man. They also state that they can accept it as it is in Japan and not in Turkey. Calling themselves “not a jealous woman”, they try to give the image that they do not care about this. In addition, it is inferred from what they tell is that as long as their husbands call them, send them money, do not ask for a divorce and do not bring a Japan woman with them Turkey, they can tolerate this issue.

However the vice versa is not acceptable neither by family nor by the society. As Hondagneu-Sotelo and Cranford argues “...sexual infidelity, for example, may be tolerated in man, who is allowed to maintain a *casa chica* with a second woman and children, but a woman left alone by her sojourning husband is often under the watchful eyes of the other villagers, and any contact with unrelated man may be cause for suspicion” (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Cranford, 1999, p.118). This is the exact case in Fatsa. After their husbands’ departure, the families and the society treat the women like a “widow”. The status of a “widow” creates more limitations than ever in the women’s social life. Their every act is controlled by the family. With the fear of gossiping, they also apply a mean auto control on their life. They also have cope with the psychology of being a fake “widow” while they still have a husband and a marriage.

In addition to change in the relationship of husband and wife, the relationship between father and children is also deeply affected by this long-term absence of the father. First of all, the role of the father is also undertaken by the mother. In some cases, especially if a boy child is in question, the mother applies for help and search for a male model for the boy child. Generally a man from the extended family serves as the role model for the boy. Nevertheless the physical lack of the father is always a problem for the children, especially when they are too young to understand the situation. Sometimes they may find it hard to make a sense of the lack of the father;

they can have some psychological problems. I have to mention that not only the lack but also the existence of the father is a problem for the children. The return of father is also a problem for the children. Children who are not used to living under the authority of a father cannot deal with the situation. It is the same for the father, too. Then this time the mother acts as a mediator between the father and the children and has to undertake the burden of this relationship. The adaptation period takes a long time, if the father has been away for a long term.

Although, in many areas women's autonomy empowered as a result of changes in daily life activities and gender roles, this could be argued as compulsory one. As Abadan-Unat argues "migration as a component of modernization is exercising a double function: promoting emancipation of women as well as creating a false climate of liberation, which actually does not surpass increased" (Abadan-Unat, 1977, p.55). In Fatsa case, as it mentioned above, women have empowered in many areas of their lives as a result of having new responsibilities. These new responsibilities bring about a compulsory learning and compulsory empowering process for woman. Although, women have started to perform outdoor duties, it actually increases the pressure on them. Even though they are married, they are treated as "widows" in the eye of society and family. For this reason, women feel more restrained than other women. Some women who have to live under such a pressure in the house start struggling against their families to get a job. For those who gain the struggle, the pressure is a little relieved and they have one more space of their own outside the house. Women who migrate Japan with her husband and stay there for a while are aware that another life is possible after they return to Fatsa.

To conclude, this study shows that the migration process does not only affect the migrated ones but also have significant impacts on the left behind. Therefore, in further studies, the left behind should be given the necessary attention they deserve to have a better understanding of the whole picture of the migration process. In addition, there could be comparative studies between the women left behind and the women whose husbands do not migrate in the settlements where the case of

migration is observed. Besides, research can be conducted which specifically focus on the children left behind since there is not enough study on this subject in Turkey within the migration literature. In that sense, there could be comparative studies on the impacts of fathers migration either female children or male children. Moreover, different from other locations it is important to study Japan migration to understand the changes in Turkish labor migration pattern.

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APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A

THE GENERAL PROFILES OF THE INTERVIWEES

Leman

40 yaşında, Fatsa doğumlu. Lise mezunu olan Leman hayatında hiç çalışmamış. Görüşmenin yapıldığı sırada da ev hanımıydı. Leman üç çocuk annesi, iki oğlu bir tane de kızı var. eşi 7 yıldır Japonya'da olan Leman, eşini bu süre içerisinde hiç ziyaret etmemiş. 21 yıldır evliler. Kendisinin herhangi bir sigortası da yok.

Seniha

37 yaşında olan Seniha ve eşi 20 yıllık evliler. Eşi 15 yıl önce Japonya'ya gitmiş ve 2 yıla yakın kalıp dönmüş. Lise mezunu olan Seniha hiç çalışmamış, ev hanımı. Bir çocuk annesi ve O'nun da herhangi bir sigortası yok. Eşini Japonya'da kaldığı süre içerisinde hiç ziyaret etmemiş.

Ayla

53 yaşında olan Ayla ve eşi 35 yıldır evliler ve bu evlilikten 2 kız çocukları bir de erkek çocukları var. Ortaokul mezunu olan Ayla 27 yıl boyunca terzilik yapmış. İlk başlarda evde terzilik yaparken eşi Japonya'ya gittikten bir süre sonra yürüme engelli kızkardeşi ile beraber bir dükkan açmışlar. Kızkardeşinin vefatı ile beraber dükkanını kapatmış ve evinde terzilik yapmaya devam etmiş. Eşi 1994'te Japonya'ya gitmiş, 1999'da yakalanıp geri dönmüş. Geldikten 3 ay sonra mahkeme kararı ile soyadını değiştirip tekrar gitmiş ve kesin olarak 2009'da dönüş yapmış. Ayla'nın iki kızı ve bir oğlu var. İki kızını eşi Japonya'dayken evlendiren Ayla'nın da, her ne kadar çalışmış olsa bile sigortası yok. Görüşme sırasında artık terzilik yapmıyordu.

Aylin

38 yaşında olan Aylin yüksek okul mezunu. 1992'de eşinin aracılığı ile (daha evli değillermiş) Japonya'ya gitmiş ve 2 sene orada çalışmış. Evlenmeden önce kasiyerlik, muhasebecilik ve bilgisayar operatörlüğü yapmış. 2 çocuk annesi, 2 kız. Fakat eşinin Filipinli bir kadından bir kızı ve Japon bir kadından bir oğlu daha var. Filipinli kadından olma kızı 4 yıldır Fatsa'da onlarla beraber yaşıyor. Eşi 1990'da Japonya'ya gitmiş, 1992'de gelmiş ve beraber gitmişler Japonya'ya. Evlenmek için tekrar 1994'te Türkiye'ye gelmişler. Eşi 1995'te tek başına Japonya'ya gidiyor ve 2002'ye kadar kalıyor orada. Sonra geliyor ve 3 ay kalıp tekrar gidiyor. 2006 yılında Filipinli kadından olma kızı ile beraber kesin dönüş yapıyor. Japon kadın ile evli fakat Filipinli kadın ile evli değil. Kadın Japonya'da iken bu durumların hepsini biliyor. Ortada gizli saklı bir durum yok. Eşi ile 16 yıllık evli ve çalışmış olmasına rağmen O'nun da sigortası yok.

Seher

46 yaşında olan Seher lise mezunu ve bir kız ve bir erkek çocuğu var. Eşi 2000'de Japonya'ya gitmiş ve 2004 yılında orada vefat etmiş bir trafik kazasında. Çocukları Japonya'dan 18 yaşlarına kadar para almış. Oğlu 18 yaşını doldurduğu için şu anda alamıyor ama kızı hala alıyor. Evliyken ve bekarlığında hiç çalışmamış. Son iki yıldır erkek kardeşinin işlettiği giyim mağazasında O'na yardımcı oluyor. 1988 yılında evlenmiş, 2004 yılında dul kalmış. Bir daha da evlenmemiş. Sigortası var.

Canan

34 yaşında olan Canan lise mezunu. Bir erkek ve bir kız çocuğu var. 1998 yılında evlendikten 40 gün sonra balayı diyerek Japonya'ya gitmişler. Hamile olunca 6 ay sonra dönmüş, eşi orada kalmış. Bir sene sonra kızı ile beraber bir daha gitmişler. 3 ay kalmışlar ve sonra kızı ile beraber dönmüşler. Kızı 2.5 yaşına gelen kadar Türkiye'de kalmış. 1.5 yıl kalmış orada. Kızı 4 yaşındayken geri dönmüş. O döndükten 4 sene sonra eşi temelli dönmüş. Hiç çalışmamış ve sigortası yok. 12 yıllık evli.

Nazlı

50 yaşında ve ilkokul mezunu olan Nazlı iki kız çocuk annesi. Eşi önce 1985'te İtalya'ya gitmiş ve 7 yıl orada kalmış. Döndükten sonra 1995 yılında Japonya'ya gitmiş. 2000'de kendisi gitmiş ve 3 ay kalıp gelmiş. 2002'de eşi de gelmiş, sonra tekrar soyadlarını değiştirmişler ve bir daha gitmişler. 2007'de kendisi dönmüş, 2008'de eşi dönmüş. Eşi şimdi de bir yıldır Kore'de. Türkiye'de hiç çalışmamış, Japonya'da kaldığı süre içerisinde çalışmış sadece. Sigortası yok. 32 yıllık evli.

Zeynep

37 yaşında ve lise mezunu. Zeynep'in iki erkek çocuğu var. Eşi 1998'de gitmiş, 2008'de dönmüş. Eşi gittikten 5 yıl sonra kendi çalışmaya başlamış. Hastenede memur olarak çalışıyor. Eşi gidince kendi annesi ile yaşamaya başlamış. Eşinin dönmesinden iki yıl önce kendi evine çıkmış ayrı olarak. Sigortası var.16 yıllık evli.

Çiçek

60 yaşında ve ilkokul mezunu olan Çiçek'in iki erkek çocuğu bir tane de kızı var. Eşi 1990'da gitmiş, 1994'te kaza yapınca dönmüş. Sonra tekrar 1995'te gitmiş ve 1997'de dönmüş. 1998'de tekrar giden eşi 2004'e kadar kalıyor ve sonra kesin dönüş yapıyor. Çiçek'in iki erkek çocuğu da orada çalışıyor. Biri 1995'te gitmiş, diğeri 2005 yılında. Biri Brezilyalı bir kadın evli, diğeri ise bir Japonla. Çiçek hiç çalışmamış ve sigortası yok. Eşi ile 40 yıldır evliler.

Sevcan

35 yaşında ve lise mezunu. Biri erkek biri kız olmak üzere iki çocuğu var. Eşi 2000'de gitmiş, 2004'te dönmüş. Sonra 2005 yılında tekrar gitmiş ve 2007'de kesin dönüş yapmış. Eşi ile evlendiklerinde çalışmayan Sevcan, 2008'den bu yana hastanede memur olarak çalışıyor. Sigortası var. 15 yıllık evli aslında ama 2002'de eşi daha rahat kalabilmek için Japonya'da boşanmak istemiş. 2002'de boşanmışlar. 2009'da tamamen ayrılmışlar.

Hasret

40 yaşında olan Hasret lise mezunu ama görüşme sırasında açıköğretimden üniversite okuyordu. İki erkek çocuk annesi. Eşi 2005'te gitmiş ve 2008 yılında dönmüş. Evlendiklerinde çalışmıyormuş, hala da çalışmıyor ama vaizelik yapıyor. Sigortası yok ve 18 yıllık evli.

Nur

46 yaşında olan Nur, lise mezunu ve iki erkek çocuk annesi. Eşi 1992'de gidiyor, 1996'ya kadar kalıyor. 1996'da geliyor, sonra tekrar 2000'de gidiyor. Hala orada. Ev hanımı. Sigortası yok ve eşi ile 21 yıllık evli.

Aynur

34 yaşında ve ortaokul mezunu. 2 çocuk annesi, iki erkek. Biz görüşürme yaparken üçüncü çocuğuna hamileydi. Eşi 1994 gitmiş, o zaman evli değillermiş, 1998'de gelmiş ve nişanlanmışlar. Sonra eşi tekrar gitmiş. 2001 yılında gelmiş ve evlenmişler. Evlendikten 1.5 yıl sonra beraber gitmişler. 2008 yılında kendisi dönmüş, 2010 yılında eşi dönmüş. Evlendiklerinde ve evlendikten sonra çalışmamış fakat eşi döndükten sonra açtıkları markette eşi ile beraber çalışıyor. Sigortası yok. 9 yıllık evli.

Halime

40 yaşında ve ortaokul mezunu. İki kız çocuğu var. Eşi 1991'de gitmiş, 2007'de dönmüş, tam 16 yıl orada kalmış. Ev hanımı olan Halime'nin sigortası yok ve 23 yıllık evli. 16 yıl boyunca eşini Japonya'da hiç ziyaret etmemiş.

Hale

36 yaşında ve lise mezunu. İki çocuk annesi; bir kız ve bir erkek. Eşi 1996'da gitmiş, 2009'de dönmüş, kendisi de 1998'de gitmiş, 2006'de dönmüş. Ev hanımı. Ama Japonya'dayken çalışmış kısa bir süre. Sigortası yok ve 19 yıllık evli.

APPENDIX B

Turkish Originals of Quotations from In-Depth Interviews

Chapter 4

Hasret (40, ev hanımı)

“Evlendiğimizde eşim galericiydi. Aynı zamanda fındık bahçeleri de vardı. Durumumuz iyiydi. Kendimizi gayet güzel geçindiriyorduk. Fakat eşim bir gün bir arkadaşına kefil olmuş. Sonrasında bu arkadaşı da eşime olan borcunu ödemedi kaçak olarak Japonya’ya gitmiş. Eşim de borçların altından kalkamayınca çalışmaya Japonya’ya gitmeye karar verdi. Aynı zamanda o arkadaşını da orada bulacağını düşünüyordu.”

Sevcan (35, devlet memuru)

“Gitmeden öne evde konuşuluyordu zaten, orada iyi para kazanıldığı, eğer giderse durumumuzun yeniden iyi olacağı. Çok cazip geldi tabii oraya gitmek. Bende istedim açıkçası gitmesini. Zaten arkadaş çevresinden birçok insan da oradaydı. Biz de sonunda karar verdik ve eşimi gönderdik.”

Hale (36, ev hanımı)

“Eşimin evlendiğimiz sırada garajlarda lokantası vardı. Eşim Japonya’ya gitmeye karar verdiğinde yeni yeni popüler olmaya başlamıştı bu iş. Önce ablamın eşi gitti. Sonrasında da eşimin kızkardeşleri de gitti. Zaten 1993’te eşimin abisi gitti, 1996’da eşimin kendisi gitti. İş imkanları burada çok yoktu, durumu da biraz kötülemeye başlamıştı. O yüzden de gitmeye karar verdi. Aynı zamanda kardeşleri de gel diye yanlarına çağırdı. Onların da orada olması nedeniyle gitmeye karar verdi.”

Nur (46, ev hanımı)

“Onun içinde çok zordu tabii. Oraya gittiğinde doğru düzgün kimse sahip çıkmamış. Dilini de bilmiyor tabii ki oranın. Paraları yok ellerinde. Hatta bir gün sırf iş bulmak için Ünye-Fatsa arası gibi bir yolu ağızlarında kesme şeker ile yürümüşler. Yemek almaya bile paraları yok. Ama sonradan topladı, iş buldu. Orada çok fazla buradan insan var. Hatta Ordu’nun bir köyü hep orada.”

Seher (46, ev hanımı)

“Eşim Japonya’da gece saat 3’te araba kullanırken, kramp girmiş ve trafik kazası yapmış, öyle ölmüş... Orada bir cenaze olduğu zaman hemen herkes kendi arasında para toplayıp buraya gönderiyor cenazeyi. Oradan buraya cenaze göndermek neredeyse 30.000 dolar civarında. Ama biz tek bir kuruş bile göndermedik. Oradakiler toplayıp gönderdiler...Fakat nasıl yaptılar nasıl ettilerse oradaki bir tanıdığımız sayesinde şu anda benim çocuklarım babalarından Japonya’dan maaş alıyorlar. İlk ve sanırım böyle maaş alan tek biziz...Hasan üniversiteye başladığı için kesildi ama İpek’inki hala devam ediyor.”

Seniha (37, ev hanımı)

“O zamanlarda (1990ların sonuna doğru) babam (kayınpederi) Rusya ile iş yapıyordu. Rusya ile yaptığı işte sıkıntı çıkıp, zora girince, Metin de gitmeye karar verdi. Zaten kardeşi Orhan ordaydı. Gitmek zorundaydı, çok kriz vardı o sıra. Bir anda gelip ben gideceğim demedi. Düşündük, taşındık hep beraber ve öyle gitmeye karar verdi. Zaten gidenlerden biliyorduk nasıl olduğunu. Dediğim gibi kardeşi de orada olduğu için çok da tereddüt etmedi. Gittiğinde ne kadar para kazanacağını biliyordu ve o yüzden de gitti.”

Leman (40, ev hanımı)

“Kocam gitti çünkü 7-8 sene önce evimde boya yapan boyacıdan şans eseri öğrendim ki meğersem biz batmışız da benim haberim yok. Öğrendikten sonra bu durumu eşimle konuştum ve her şey ortaya çıktı zaten. Bunun üzerine benim kocam da Japonya’ya gitmeye karar verdi. Bunlar üç kardeş ve babaları ile beraber çalışıyorlardı. Benim kocamın da biraz alkol durumları vardı. Bunlar batınca kardeşleri hep buna yüklendi ‘senin yüzünden oldu’ diye. O zaman bu da aynen şöyle dedi: ‘Madem her şey benim yüzünden, ben de kendimi Ulubatlı Hasan gibi feda edeceğim kendimi’ ve gitmeye karar verdi.”

Zeynep (37, devlet memuru)

“Eşim gitmeden önce annemle konuştu... Eşim gitmeden önce anneme ‘Eğer sen ve abim, Zeynep ile beraber kalırsanız o zaman giderim’ demiş. Annem de kabul etmiş. 8 sene boyunca annemlerle aynı evde kaldım.”

Seher (46, ev hanımı)

“Eşim 2000 yılında gitti Japonya’ya. Gitmeden önce burada kuyumculuk yapıyordu. Zamanla borçları olmaya başladı. İlk başta ara ara İstanbul’a gidiyordu. Ben de işleri var zannediyordum. Meğersem Japonya işlerini hallediyormuş gizlice. Pasaportunu, uçak biletini hep öyle halletmiş... Ama ben Japonya’ya gidene kadar hiçbir şekilde gittiğini bilmiyordum. Hatta ben anlamayayım diye gizlice her gün birer parça eşyasını dükkana götürmüş, bavulunu da orada hazırlamış. Benim hiç haberim olmadı. Bir gün evden çıktı “İstanbul’a gidiyorum” diye, bir gün sonra bir aradı “Ben Japonya’dayım” dedi. Ben de evde rahat rahat oturuyordum “Eşim İstanbul’a gitti” diye. Bir de aramasın mı beni “Ben Japonya’dayım” diye. Neye uğradığımı şaşırđım resmen.”

Seniha (37, ev hanımı)

“İlk başta çok üzıldüm, o da çok üzıldı. Zaten dayanamayıp döndü. Gurbetlik bana göre değil diyip dururdu. O yüzden sadece 20 ay kaldı geldi fakat maddi manevi çok rahatladık. Bir daha gitmeyi kendi de istemedi zaten. Gurbette eşi, çocuđu olmayan kalsın, gelsin yaşasın derdi. Onun için çok zor oldu.”

Leman (40, ev hanımı)

“Aslında kocam da artık dönmek istiyor ama şu anda orada operatör olarak en üst seviyede çalışıyor. O yüzden çok da dönmek istemiyor. Operatör olarak kepeçede çalışıyor. En üst seviye de aslında orada şu anda. Operatör olarak çalışmak çok iyi bir işmiş orada.”

Ayla (53, terzi)

“Orada kaldığı zaman çok istedi beni oraya götürmeyi, ama ben bir türlü gidemedim. Sonuçta oraya gitsem bir sürü para demek. Parayı harcamak yerine ben gitmemeyi tercih ettim. Yoksa ben de istemez miydim gitmeyi. Kocam çok ısrar etti ama bir türlü gidemedim. Kocam aniden orada rahatsızlanınca bir anda dönmeye karar verdi. Yoksa aslında o yaz fındıktan sonra bilet alıp gidecektim ona sürpriz yapacaktım, fakat o çok ani bir şekilde döndü. Ben de beklemiyordum dönmesini. Burada benim arkadaşlarımdan kocası orada olanlar, çok gitti oraya kocalarının yanına. Ben istemedim ama gitmeyi. Ben çocuklarıma çok düşkünüm, onları burada bırakıp oraya gitmeyi hiç

düşünmedim, istemedim. “Boşu boşuna neden masraf yapayım?” dedim hep kendi kendime.”

Canan (34, ev hanımı)

“Biz eşimle 1998 yılında evlendik ve evlendikten 40 gün sonra Japonya’ya gittik. Evleniyoruz diye gittik, balayı amaçlı o yüzden hiçbir sıkıntı yaşamadık girişte. Borçlarımız vardı evlendiğimizde, o yüzden de beraber gitmeye karar verdik... İlk gittiğimde 6 ay kaldım. 4,5 aylık hamileydim Türkiye’ye geldiğimde. Buraya geldim kızımı doğurdum ve kızım bir yaşına bastıktan sonra bir daha gittim. Bu sefer kızım ile beraber gittik. Bu gidişimizde 3 ay kaldık ve döndük. Ben ikinci kez kızım 2,5 yaşına gelince gittim. Ama bu sefer kızımı bırakıp öyle gittim. Bu seferki gidişimde tam 1,5 yıl kaldım... Ben çocuğumu bırakıp bir daha gittim, çünkü biz eşimle birbirimizi çok seviyoruz. Asla birbirimizden ayrılamazdık. Çocuğumu bırakıp gidebilirdim ama kocamı asla bırakamazdım. Hoş kızımı bırakıp gittim ama o zamanlar ben de küçüktüm, cahildim. Şimdi oğlumu bırakıp asla bir yere gitmem. Bir de kayınvalidem çok düşküdü torununa, çünkü ailenin de ilk torunuydu. Sonuçta eğer kayınvalidem de bakarım demeseydi tabii ki gidemezdim. Ben oraya gittiğimde 23 yaşındaydım ve öyle ya da böyle işin özü para.”

Aynur (34, ev hanımı)

“Ben de oraya gittikten sonra çalışmak istedim. Ne kadar arkadaşım olsa da tüm gün evde otur otur insanın canı sıkılıyor. Fakat eşim çalışmamı istemedi. Zaten sonrasına ikinci çocuğuma hamile kalınca çalışmaya da fırsatım olmadı. Bir de arkadaşlarımın hepsi de çalışıyordu. O yüzden de çalışmak istiyordum. Eşim ev işleri yüzünden çalışmamı istemiyordu ama çalışan arkadaşlarım da bir şekilde hepsini hallediyordu. Sonuçta bir sürü, çeşit çeşit ucuz hazır yemekler de var, öyle de olabilirdi ama olmadı işte. Dediğim gibi hamilelik de olunca benim çalışma durumu hepten ortadan kalktı.”

Aylin (38, ev hanımı)

“Aslında kocamla Japonya’ya giderken tanıştım. Her şey şans eseri olarak gelişti. Kocamın Japonya’da Türk lokantası vardı ve kendi iş yerinde çalıştırmak üzere buradan kadın işçi götürcekti. Şans eseri abimin de tanıdığıydı ve bizim eve de geldi. Bizimkilerle konuştuktan sonra, bizimkiler de bir şey demeyince ben de gitmeye karar verdim. 1992 yılında gittim ve 1994 yılında geri döndüm. Kocamın

restoranında ilk başta garsonluk yaptım. Daha sonrasında yavaş yavaş kendi başıma işi öğrendim ve aşçılık seviyesine kadar yükseldim. Kocam o sıra bir Japon’la evliydi. Aslında anlaşmalı bir evlilikti. Onunla beraber yaşamıyordu ben oraya gittiğimde. Vize alabilmek için evlenmişti fakat bir tane de oğlu var. Fakat benim Japonya’da olduğum zaman eşimle evlenme kararı aldık ve bu yüzden Türkiye’ye döndük.”

Nazlı (50, ev hanımı)

“Çok fazla çalıştığım için ve yaşımda iyice ilerlediği için dönmek istedim... Dönmek için polise başvurdum. Polis sordu ‘Eşin gitmiyor mu?’ diye. Ben de paramızın olmadığını çocuklarımın okuduğunu, o yüzden de onun dönemeyeceğini söyledim. Japonca da çok güzel konuşurdum zaten. Benim artık sağlık sorunlarım olduğunu o yüzden de gitmek istediğimi söyledim. Sonra benim suçum var mı yok mu diye araştırırken vergi mükellefi olduğum ortaya çıktı. Bunu görünce çok şaşırdılar ve sevindiler. Önceden bizden çok memnun olduklarını ama bu hırsızlık işleriyle beraber artık memnun olmadıklarını belirttiler. Bana hatta 6 aylık vize vermeyi teklif ettiler. Ama ben istemedim, artık enerjim olmadığını söyledim. Eşime de hiç dokunmadılar. 2007’de döndüm.”

Halime (40, ev hanımı)

“Görsen sanki Türkiye değil de Japonya onun vatani, öyle seviyor Japonya’yı. Oradaki rahatlık hiçbir yerde yok tabii. Orada sokak araları bile asfalt. Burası gibi mi. Çok çok güzel bir yer. Adamlar haklı tabii gelmemekte. Orada özgür bir şekilde, istedikleri gibi yaşıyorlar, zaten güzel de bir yer. Orası ile burası çok ayrı, çok farklı. Orası bir uç burası bir uç. 16 yıl kaldı orada, gözü doymadı, sen düşün artık.”

Canan (34, ev hanımı)

“...tabii ki orada yaşamayı çok isterdim. Orada hiçbir şekilde ekonomik sıkıntı yok. Muhteşem arabalara sahip olabiliyorsun orada. Hiçbir şekilde burada binemeyeceğin arabalara biniyorsun. Benzin desen zaten ucuz. Evimde beni nerdeyse 24 saat klima çalışıyordu. Burada çalıştır bakalım 24 saat klimayı, ne kadar elektrik faturası ödersin acaba? Orada kullandığın bir günlük elektriği burada ancak 1 ay kullanırsın ama burada 10 kat fazla para ödersin. Orada çok rahatsin, özgürsün buradaki gibi kesinlikle değil. Burada rahat rahat gezemezsin, hayatını yaşayamazsın ama orası tam tersi. Orada kıyafetler çok farklı, kadınlar çok farklı kısacası hayat çok farklı.

İnsanlar çok rahat orda. Kadın erkek ilişkileri kesinlikle buradaki gibi değil. Herkes arkadaşlarıyla rahat rahat çıkar, eğlenir, gezer tozar. Burada öyle mi?”

Chapter 5

Zeynep (37, devlet memuru)

“Çocuğum içinde çok zor oldu tabii. Kendisini balkondan atmak istedi bir gün ben babamı özledim diye. Küçükken çok hastalanırdı benim çocuğum, ne zaman hastalansa kocamın içine doğardı beni arardı o da. Sonuçta biz çocuğa her şeyi alıyorduk ediyorduk ama çocuğu para ile kandıramazsın. Babanın yerini hiçbir şey tutmaz. Bir gün bayram namazına gönderdim komşunun çocukları ile ağlaya ağlaya geri geldi benim babam niye yok, herkesin babası var diye.”

Leman (40, ev hanımı)

“Büyük çocuk erkek çocuk olunca onu yetiştirirken çok zorlandım. Önünde rol alacağı bir baba yoktu. Kız çocuğu anneden erkek çocuğu babadan örnek alır. Bizim büyü oğlanın önünde rol alacağı kimse yoktu. Onunla çok uğraştım. Ama kayınpederim çok yardımcı oldu bana, baba gibiydi gerçekten, çok yardımcı oldu bana...Ayrıca benim büyük oğlanın önünde örnek olacak birisi yoktu ama kız kardeşimin eşi ona çok yol gösterdi. İkinci bir baba gibi oldu oğlum için”

Nur (46, ev hanımı)

“Ben burada çocuklarımı diyalogumu iyi kurmaya çok uğraştım. Rehber hocalara, doktorlara danıştım hep, nasıl yapabilirim, çocuklarıma nasıl yaklaşabilirim diye. Burada doçent bir doktor vardı kadın, daha sonra kreş açtı. Onun her ay konferansları olurdu, onlara katılırdım muhakkak. Çocukları büyütürken tabii ki çok zorlandım. Babaları var ama yok, bu çok zor bir durum. Çocuklarım okula ilk gittiğinde tabii soruyor bizim babamız nerde diye. Herkesin annesi babası yanında bir tek ben varım. Çocuklarında ayrı sıkıntılar, ergenliklerinde ayrı sıkıntılar yaşadık. Ama neyse ki profesyonel yardımlarla da bir şekilde atlattık. “

Leman (40, ev hanımı)

“Babam 20 yıl Almanya’da kaldı. Her sene sadece bir ay geliyordu. Babam geldiği zaman ne zaman gidecek diye soruyorduk. Bizim aramızda bir kopukluk vardı. Biliyorum babaları dönünce bizim

çocuklar arasında da bir kopukluk olacak. Sonuçta arada nesil farkı var.”

Halime (40, ev hanımı)

“İlk başlarda eşim dönünce kızlar ve babaları hiç anlayamıyorlardı. En sonunda kızlar da konuşmaya başladı tabii. Biz artık büyüdük dediler. Bir de kendi içinde güya kızlarına sevgi göstermiyor. Sert baba güya. Sen zaten 16 yıldır yoksun ki, sert olsan ne olmasan ne...Tabii ki seni sayacaklar ama onlarla arkadaş olmaya çalışıyorum. Böyle deyince anlamıyor ayağına yattıyor. Benim kızlarımın da tabii erkek arkadaşları da var sevgilileri de var. Abartmadan tabii ki yaşayacaklar bunları ama burası küçük yer işte kaldırmıyor böyle şeyleri. Neymişte bizim bir akraba benim kızlardan biriyle görmüş, bunu da gelmiş bizimkine söylemiş. İlk başta geldi, bir sinirlendi güya. Ama ben biliyorum dedim. Benim kızlarım bana her şeyi anlatır, ayrıca yanlış bir şey yaptıkları da yok dedim. O zaman bir şey diyemiyor zaten.”

Sevcan (35, devlet memuru)

“Çocuklarıma karşı da çok ilgisiz. Ben okul masraflarını karşılayacağım dedi, bir hafta çocuklar babalarını aradılar. En sonunda götürdü çocuklar sadece çanta ile ayakkabı almış. Geri kalan her şeylerini ben aldım tabii ki. Oğlum zaten babasıyla görüşürse çıkar için görüşür bilirim oğlum. Ama zaten babalarında çocuklarına karşı hiçbir sevgi yok ki. Sanki babaları ile uzaktan akraba gibiler.”

Ayla (53, terzi)

“Kocasız olmak çok zordu, çocuklarıma sığındım O'nun yokluğunda. Kocasız yaşamak çok zor. Aynı zamanda hem anne oluyorsun hem baba. Ama O'nun yokluğunda her zaman çocuklarımdan destek aldım.”

Halime (40, ev hanımı)

“Ben bunca yıl her şeye iki çocuğum için katlandım, kızlarıma bir tek kelime söyletirmem. Sonuçta gittiği zaman gençtim, ne olacak basar giderdim annemin yanına. Ama aklımdan bile geçirmedim, çocuklarım var çünkü. Aç da kalırım, açlıktan da ölürüm ama başkasıyla asla evlenmeyi düşünmedim. Sonuçta ölüm var her şeyin

sonunda...Siz her zaman ayaklarınızın üstüne basın, kimseye ezdirmeyin kendinizi, her zaman hakkınızı arayın. Hiçbir şeyi de içinize atmayın. Neyse içinizden geçen onu söyleyin karşınızdakine. Kendi haklarınızı savunmayı bilin. Ben kızlarımı da öyle yetiştirdim. Benim kızlarım küçüklükten beri serbestler., öyle baskı ile büyümediler. Ben de onları her yere peşimden götürdüm her işi öğrensinler diye. Devlet dairesinden tut da pazara kadar her yere sürükledim peşimden. O yüzden kendi ayakları üstünde durmayı bilir benim çocuklarım. Her şeylerini kendileri yaparlar, hallederler. Sonuçta önlerinde örnek olarak ben vardım. Benim yaşadıklarımından ders çıkardılar.”

Aylin (38, ev hanımı)

“Eşimin bir Japon’dan bir oğlu, bir Filipinliden de bir kızı var.”

“Japon oğlu da küçükken sünnet olmak için buraya geldi. 1 sene kaldı, sonra geri annesinin yanına gitti. Fakat o da buraya gelmek istiyor. 18 yaşını doldurduktan sonra o da gelecek buraya.”

“Benim için de çok zor zamanlardı, fakat evlenmeden önce her şeyi biliyordum. Kocam her zaman bana karşı dürüst oldu. Tüm bunları bilerek evlendim. Well, one needs to endure what he cannot cure.”

“Fakat biz Ebru ile karşılıklı olarak çok çaba harcadık. Sonuçta üveylik-özlük durumu var. Benim de ayrıca iki tane kızım var. Derya şu anda 6 yaşında. Dilara şu anda 12 yaşında. Benim çocuklarımda çok çaba harcadı. O da artık aynı benim bir kızım gibi. Dilara ya da Deniz neyse benim için Ebru da O. Biz burada hep üvey annelerin çocuklara kötü davrandığı ile ilgili hikayeler duyarız. Bizim durumumuzda tam tersi, Ebru bana çok çektirdi.”

“Fakat iki tarafa da çok uğraştı ilişkileri korumak için. Çok çaba harcadık. Biz zaten burada yaşayan ailelere göre çok farklıyız. İnsanlar bu durumları kendilerine göre çok farklı yorumluyorlar ama bizi aile yapımızı Fatsa kaldıramaz. Sen de bilirsin buraları, insanların nasıl konuştuklarını. Biz tamamen farklı bir aileyiz. O yüzden de zaten çok fazla insan ile görüşmem çünkü buradaki herkes bizi anlayamaz. Bana benim ailem yeter ayrıca, dışarıdan kimseye de ihtiyacım yok.”

“Ebru 4 yıldan beri bizimle beraber kalıyor. Türkçeyi artık çok güzel konuşabiliyor. Zaten 4 senede burada, okula da burada gidiyor. Tabii ki ilk başlarda çok zordu hem onun için hem bizim için. Fakat iki tarafa da çok uğraştı ilişkileri korumak için. Ebru da çok değişti zaten. Ebru buradaki çocuklardan çok farklı. Buraya alışması uzun zaman aldı. Kültürel farklılıklardan dolayı çok sıkıntı yaşadı..İnsanların çok rahat yaşadığı bir kültürden geliyor. Burada ise farklı. Herkes her şeyi

konusur. Kültürel farklılık çok fazla. Bizim de O'na alışmamız uzun sürdü. Öğretmenleri beni her gün okula çağırırdı. Ebru diğer çocuklara göre çok daha rahat bir çocuk. Bu yüzden buraya alışmakta çok zorlandı. Ama babasından gerçekten korkar. Babası da tam bir Türk erkeğidir. Ama Ebru çok inatçıdır, o yüzden ne isterse O'nu yapar. Ben de artık öğretmenlerine her ufak şey de beni çağırılmalarını söyledim.”

Leman (40, ev hanımı)

“orada olan herkesin bir karı-kız işi vardır. Ben şimdi yoktur diyemiyorum. Nasıl diyeyim 7 yıl boyunca bir erkek orada boş durur mu? Ama en azından biliyorum orada evlenmedi, öyle hikayeler de çok var. Orada çok var evlenip burada karsını boşayan. Biz kocayı unuttuk zaten burada. O kadar yük bindi ki sırtımıza!”

Ayla (53, terzi)

“Bir anda kocasının oradaki bir ilişkisi olup olamama durumuna geçti – sonuçta orada bir şeyler yapmış olsa olur. Gözüm görmez sonuçta. Ben kıskanç bir insan değilim. O kadar yıl kalmış orada, olmuştur tabii bir şeyler. O kadar yıl kalan adam boş duracak değil ya, ama ben öyle kıskanmam etmem.”

Nur (46, ev hanımı)

“Eşimin tabii ki oralarda kız arkadaşları olmuştur, olamamıştır desem yalan olur. O kadar yıldır orada sonuçta. Ama ben öyle kıskanç bir insan değilim. Hem ayrıca kocam beni hiçbir zaman unutmadı. O yüzden çok da düşünmüyorum o konuları.”

Aylin (38, ev hanımı)

“Japonya'ya 1992'de gittim, 1994'te döndüm...Şimdiki kocam o zaman bir Japon kadın ile evliydi. Aslında ayarlanmış bir evlilikti. Eşimin o evliliğinden bir oğlu var. Evlenmeye karar verdiğimizde ben Japonya'daydım ve bu kararı alınca dönmeye karar verdik.”

“Burada hiçbir şeyi görmeden gidiyorlar, bir anda her şeyi orada görüyorlar. Japon kadınları çok güzel, çok bakımlılar. Bizim erkeklerimize de bir anda çok farklı geldi Japon kadınları.”

“Buradan giden erkeklerin çoğu kırsal kesimden gidiyor; köylerinden kalkıp Japonya'ya göç ediyorlar. Hayatlarında ilk defa mini etek giyen kadınlar görüyorlar. Erkekler orada hayatlarını istedikleri gibi yaşıyorlar ama eşlerinin burada aynı şeyleri yapmalarına asla izin vermezler. Öyle bir durum olduğu anda boşarlar eşlerini.”

Zaten Türk kadını da yapmaz. Türk kadını sadıktır eşine. Kocaları gibi davranmaz. Ben biliyorum mesela bir komşu var kocası uzun süre Japonya’da kaldı sonra döndü, fakat döndüğünden beri kocasıyla hiçbir cinsel ilişkisi olmadı. Kadın buna rağmen yıllardır kocasına dayanıyor, ondan ayrılmıyor.”

Sevcan (35, devlet memuru)

“2 yıl sonra benden nikah istedi. Orada daha rahat kalabilmek için formalite icabı Japon bir kadınla evleneceğini söyledi. O sırada kızım da doğmuştu tabi. Çok ağladım, çok zorlandım ama sonunda nikahımı vermeyi kabul ettim.”

“Ama ben hayatında başka kadınlar olduğunu zaten biliyordum. Sonuçta orada o kadar kaldı, zaten olacaktı bir şeyler. Buraya geldiğinde de internette de hep konuşuyordu. Ama napayım bene sonuçta göz görmeyince gönülde kabul ediyor bir şekilde. Ama bir yandan da bana seni asla bırakmam diyordu.”

“Her şeyi yapsaydı da keşke Türkiye’de yapmasaydı aynısını. Orada ne yapıyorsa yapsaydı da burada yapmasaydı. Bana her şeyi yapsaydı da bunu yapmasaydı, gidip Fatsa’da ev tutmasaydı. Burası küçük yer, insanlar her şeyi konuşuyorlar. Keşke gidip başka yere yerleşseydi.”

Zeynep (37, devlet memuru)

“İlk başta burada çok salak oldu. Hiçbir şekilde alışamadı. Ee çocukta çok garip oldu. O giderken 5 yaşındaydı, döndüğünde 8 yaşında. Bende alışmışım onsuzluğa.”

“Birçok erkek eşinden bir süre sonra ayrılıyor. Böyle bir şeyin olması çok normal çünkü o kadar yıl ayrı kaldıktan sonra bir evliliği nasıl koruyabilirsin ki?”

Hasret (40, ev hanımı)

“Eğer sorarsan bana Japonya’nın en iyi tarafı neydi diye, Japonya bana kocamı kazandırdı. Şimdi gitmek istese asla bir yere gönderemem kocamı.”

Leman (40, ev hanımı)

“Ben evin en büyük geliniyim. Önce ben geldim bu eve gelin olarak. Eşim gitmeden 2 ay öncesine kadar da hep kayınpederimle yaşadım. Eşim gittikten

sonra kayınpederim yine beraber duralım dedi ama ben kabul etmedim. Çünkü ayrı yaşamının kendi içinde rahatlığı çok fazladır. Sonuçta kendi evin, istediğin zaman istediğin şeyi yaparsın. İstedığın zaman yemeğini yersin, istediğin zaman yemezsin. Ayrıca sigara mesela önemli bir sorundu. Beni sigaraya kocam alıştırmıştı zaten. Büyüklerle yaşadığın zaman rahat rahat içemiyorsun öyle. Sıkıntı oluyor. Ama kendi evin olunca öyle mi. İstedığın gibi sigaranı da içersin her şeyi de yaparsın.”

Leman (40, ev hanımı)

“...Kayınpederim hiçbir şeyi bize yaptırmazdı. Zaten çok tutucu bir kayınpederim vardı. Hem artıları vardı hem de eksileri vardı. Çok severdim ama çok da tutucu bir adamdı. Mesela pazartesi günleri dışarı çıkamazdın, niye çünkü pazartesi günleri Pazar kuruluyor. Her yer çok kalabalık. Öyle kalabalığın içine çıkmak olmazdı ya da mesela öyle her istediğin zaman dışarı çıkamazsın, dolmuşa binemezsin. Eğer bir işin olacaksa o arabayla götürecekt. Akşam ezanından önce muhakkak evde olacaksın. Öyle geç kalmak olmaz kesinlikle. Aynı şekilde her şeyimizi de yapardı. Bizi hiçbir şeyden eksi bırakmazdı. Yazın başında eşarbından ayakkabısına her şeyimizi alır getirirdi. Aynı şekilde kışın başında eşarbından çizmesine her şeyimizi alır getirirdi...”

Zeynep (37, devlet memuru)

“Canım çok sıkılıyordu artık evde oturmaktan. Benim annem de çok despot bir kadın. Sonuçta sende bilirsin Gürcüleri. Annem çok genç yaşta dul kaldığı için, çok disiplinliydi. Aman söz olur aman laf olur diye diye bizi çok sıkı büyüttü. Kocam gittikten sonra da annemin despotluğu devam etti. Aman kocan yok diye laf ederler diyerek doğru dürüst giyinemedim bile. Aslında benim kocam olsa hiç karışmaz öyle şeylere, aman kıyafetmiş aman gezmeymiş hiç umurunda olmaz. Ama annem öyle değil. Biz küçükken de öyleydi, kocam gidince de öyle oldu.”

Halime (40, ev hanımı)

“Zaten ilk gittiği bir iki sene hiç para gönderemedi, işe girememiş orada. Bir de ara ara çalıştığı işlerin birinde kaza yapmış, öyle olunca da bir süre para kazanamadı tabii. Ee eşin para göndermeyince ne olacak? 1 kuruş bile paramız yok tabii. Allahtan ailem vardı, onlar sahip çıktı bana...Ailem olmasaydı ne yapardım ben?”

Halime (40, ev hanımı)

“Eşimin ailesi hiçbir zaman yardımcı olmadı, ama her zaman çok güzel köstek oldular her şey için. Köstek oldukları yetmiyormuş gibi bir de her şeyinin hesabını vermek zorundasın.”

Halime (40, ev hanımı)

“Para yokken kimsenin umrunda değildik, para gelmeye başladığında bir anda sorunlar da çıktı. Para gelmeye başladığında herkes etrafımıza üşüştü ama yine bizim için değil, gelen para için, sen ben kimin umrunda! Para yokken kimse yanına uğramaz tabii.”

“Neymiş de niye benim üstüme hesap açılmış? Kayınpederimin üstüne açılacaktı hesap ona yatacağı para, bana nasıl yatarmış? Kime yatacağı acaba, ben bu evi nasıl geçindirecektim acaba? Bunları düşünen, bana “bir ihtiyacın var mı?” diye sormak kimsenin umrunda bile değil.”

“Eşimin ailesi hiçbir zaman yardımcı olmadı, ama her zaman çok güzel köstek oldular her şey için. Köstek oldukları yetmiyormuş gibi bir de her şeyinin hesabını vermek zorundasın... Kayınvalidem ise gelirdi, benden para isterdi ‘oğlum sana para gönderiyor’ diye. Ben de derdim ‘borca gidiyor’ diye ama dinlemezdi, ‘ben sana nerden para bulayım’ derdim.”

“Eşim aynı zamanda ailesine de para gönderiyormuş...Aslında tahmin ediyordum, eşimin onlara da para gönderdiğini...ama kayınvalidem gelir sürekli benden de para isterdi.”

“Eşim topluca gönderiyordu parayı. Diyelim 2-3 ay hiçbir şey göndermiyordu, sonra bir anda toplu para gönderiyordu. Öyle olunca tabii bir sürü borç birikmiş oluyordu ya da önceden kalan borçlar oluyordu, gelen para yine oraya gidiyordu, sonra ucu ucuna yaşıyorduk tekrardan. Böyle böyle iki çocukla beraber geçinip gitmeye çalışıyorduk.”

Hale (36, ev hanımı)

“Eşimin de kardeşlerinin bir sürü borçları var. Eşim ne zaman para gönderse hep onlarla borç ödendi. Öyle ferahlık, bolluk içinde yaşamadık yani...İlk gittiğinde sürekli para gönderemez, gönderdiği zaman paranın çoğunluğu borçlara giderdi”.

Ayla (53, terzi)

Bu evi de ben yaptım. (Köydeki ev için bunu söylüyor, baya 3 katlı ev aslında) o ilk giderken sadece temeli atılmıştı. Ben gönderdiği paralarla tamamladım bu evi. Gittim çarşıdan ustayı getirdim, malzemesini aldım, her şeyiyle o gelen kadar ben tamamladım bu evi”

Zeynep (37, devlet memuru)

“Ben hastaneye birilerini alacaklar diye duyduğumda anneme söyledim. Annem de gitmiş enişten ile konuşmuş. Sonuçta çalışmaya başlamadan önce sigortam yoktu, şu anda sigortam da var. Asıl önemlisi rahat bir nefes aldım. Kendi evden dışarıya atmış oldum.”

Sevcan (35, devlet memuru)

“İki yıldır hastanede çalışıyorum. Evde oturmaktan çok bunalmıştım. Hem maddi hem manevi olarak çalışmak zorundaydım. Evde kocamı düşünmekten başka bir şey yapmıyordum. Delirmek üzereydim. Bu yüzden ağabeyim bana bu işi buldu. Hem maddi hem manevi olarak çok katkısı oldu bu işin.”

Zeynep (37, devlet memuru)

“Şu anda eşimin işi yok. O ordayken borçlarımızı ödedik ve sadece bir evimiz oldu. Düşününce aslında bir ev uğruna değer miydi, bence değmezdi.”

Seher (46, ev hanımı)

“O gitmeden önce ben ne çalıştım ne de başka bir şey yaptım. Sadece ev hanımıydım. O gitmeden önce ne bir fatura yatırmayı bilirdim ne de bir kira ödemeyi. O gittikten sonra her şeyi öğrendim. Şimdi erkek gibiyim. Her şeyi yaparım, ederim. Hem anne oldum hem de baba oldum hiçbir şey bilmezken.”

Leman (40, ev hanımı)

“...Eşim gittikten sonra bütün yük benim üstüme binmeye başladı. Hayatım boyunca hiç elektrik, su faturası yatırmamıştım. Bağ-Kur ile uğraşmamıştım. Hepsiyile ben uğraşmaya başladım. Bütün bunlarla ilgilenmeyi ilk o zaman öğrendim. Benim için de çok zor oldu, çok uğraştım, çok yoruldu yıllarca.”

Aynur (46, ev hanımı)

“Buraya döndükten sonra kendi evim vardı zaten orada yaşamaya başladım. Kayınvalidem zaten kendi kızı ile beraber kalıyordu. Kayınpederim vefat etmişti önceden. Ama her ne kadar kendi evim de olsa tek başıma da yaşasam eşim olmayınca çok zor oldu. Ev işlerinin hepsiyle tek başına ilgilenmek beni çok yordu. Evde bir sürü tadilat işi oldu değişiklik oldu bunların hepsini ben kendi başıma yaptırđım. Ustaları ben ayarladım, aşlarında ben durdum. Bunlar kolay işler değil, tek bir kadın için hele hiç kolay değil. Çok yorucu işler. Evin her yeri bozuldu, yeniden yapıldı nerdeyse, kolay iş mi bu? Evi yeniletmemi de eşim istedi. O ordayken, hazır hala iyi para kazanıyorken evi yenileyelim dedi ben de yaptırđım. Ama bir kadın için çok zor işler bunlar. Hem sadece ev işi değil, bir yandan da iki tane çocuk var...Ev işleriyle uğraşırken bir yandan çocuklarla uğraşıyorsun tek başına. Çocukları okula yazdır, onların buraya alışmalarına yardımcı ol, her şeyle ben ilgilendim...”

Sevcan (35, devlet memuru)

“Samet gittikten sonra evin her işiyle ben uğraştım. Ben fatura işiyle uğraşmaya alışkınyımdır ama sonuçta koca kocadır. Bir şekilde sana destek olur. Öteki türlü tüm sorumluluk sende, gece gündüz her şeye dikkat etmek zorundasın. Beni zaten bir yandan da bu sorumluluk mahvetti, iki çocukla beraber. Çok fazla yorulduđm. Her şey benden soruluyor, her şeyi ben yapıyorum.”

Hasret (40, ev hanımı)

“Fındık işlerinde bazen çok zorlanırdım, o zaman kendi kendime çok duygulanırdım. Eşim buradayken bana hiçbir şey yaptırmazdı çünkü. Sonuçta her ne kadar o oradan telefon ile her şeyi ayarlasa da ben de gidip orada işler ile ilgilenirdim. Sonuçta kocam orada olmadığı için ben ilgileniyordum. Bir gün patoz vardı, ben bir yandan yapıyorum bir yandan ağlıyorum. Sonra bir işçi gördü, abla sen git otur dinlen biraz çok yoruldun biz hallederiz dedi.”

Leman (40, ev hanımı)

“Kocam gittikten sonra çok dikkat etmek zorunda kaldım. Sonuçta tek başına kadın olarak kalıyorsun. Etraf laf etmeye dünden hazır zaten. O yüzden elimden geldiğince dikkat etmek zorundaydım. Mesela benden küçük ya da büyük fark etmez eve usta gelirdi, sonuçta erkek, hepsine abi derdim, yanlış anlamasın, yanlış gözle bana bakmasın diye.”

Sevcan (35, devlet memuru)

“Burası küçük yer, insanlar her şeyi konuşuyorlar....Sonuçta senin de adın burada dul oluyor. Bakışlar, konuşmalar değişiyor. Sürekli yaptığın hareketlere dikkat etmek zorundasın. İnsanoğlu başıma bu da gelmez demesin, her şey geliyor insanın başına.”

Aynur (34, ev hanımı)

“Ev işleriyle uğraşırken bir yandan çocuklarla uğraşıyorsun tek başına. Çocukları okula yazdır, onların buraya alışmalarına yardımcı ol, her şeyle ben ilgilendim. Bu sırada bir de her zaman rahatça işinizi yapamıyorsunuz burda. Yani demek istediğim, sürekli dışarıda olunca bu seferde laf oluyor neden sürekli dışarıdasın diye. Ee ne yapayım, bankaya gidilecek, fatura yatırılacak, çocukların okuluna gidilecek, ustalarla görüşülecek. Bunların hepsini ben tek başıma bir günde nasıl yapayım? Her gün dışarı çıkmam gerekiyor ama buralarda o bile sıkıntı. Hemen laf oluyor aman nasıl da her gün dışarıdasın diye. Napayım ya? Zaten aile Ünye’de, babam var orada. Nasıl gelsin benim yanıma sürekli yardım etsin bana? Her şeyi ben yapmak zorundayım tek başıma.”

Hale (36, ev hanımı)

“Boşanmış olarak Japonya’dan döndüğüm için babamın evine geldim. O da çok zor, öyle kolay değil. Zaten boşanmış olduğum için babamın soyadına geçmişim. Bizimkilerle yaşamak da öyle kolay değil. Zaten anlaşmalı bile olsa boşanmış oluyorsun. Dul oluyorsun yani, ama zoraki, şartlardan dolayı bir dulluk var orada. Eşim hala benim kocam aslında. Ama herkes her şeyine karışmaya başlıyor. Burada büyükler öyle, sen de bilirsin. Rahatça dışarı çıkamazsın edemezsin. Her işine karışırlar. Bunların hepsi böyle böyle sıkıntı olmaya başladı bana.”

Canan (34, ev hanımı)

“Burada rahat rahat gezemezsin, hayatını yaşayamazsın ama orası tam tersi. Orada kıyafetler çok farklı, kadınlar çok farklı kısacası hayat çok farklı. İnsanlar çok rahat orda. Kadın erkek ilişkileri kesinlikle buradaki gibi değil. Herkes arkadaşlarıyla rahat rahat çıkar, eğlenir, gezer tozar. Burada öyle mi?”

Sevcan (35, devlet memuru)

“Önceden kocası Japonya’da olan kadınlar olarak görüşürdük. Birbirimize derdimizi sıkıntımızı anlatırdık ama bir yere kadar, burası

küçük yer sonra herkes her şeyi konuşmaya başlıyor. Artık sadece merhabamız var. Sadece 1-2 tanesiyle görüşürüm hala. Japonzedeler derdik kendimize.