

SUBJECTIVITY FORMATION OF WORKING CLASS WOMEN
AND RESPECTABILITY:
A CASE STUDY ON WOMEN SALES WORKERS IN ANKARA

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MEHTAP TATAR

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Prof. Dr. Meliha Altunışık
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

Prof. Dr. Raşit Kaya
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Necmi Erdoğan
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Necmi Erdoğan

(METU, MCS)

Prof. Dr. Raşit Kaya

(METU, MCS)

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa Şen

(METU, SOC)

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name, Last Name: Mehtap Tatar

Signature :

ABSTRACT

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Tatar, Mehtap

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The main aim of this thesis is to examine the role of class and gender in the subjectivity formation of working class women. Women from different classes encounter each other in situations such as customers and sales workers in the shopping environment. Examining this encounter in detail can assist in achieving the main of this study. Therefore, during the in-depth interviews with women sales workers that were conducted, it was seen that many of the women sales workers experience class and gender inequalities as pejorative experiences. In addition, it was understood that respectability is a major issue in the lives of these women. Many of the interviewed sales workers face disrespectful behaviour in their daily lives, and think that other people did not consider them to be respectable. However, since they wish to be recognized as respectable and valuable they invest on certain capitals and as well as behaving in a way they consider will bring them respectability and value. For example, the sales worker tries to hide her poverty,

which she considers a reason why she does not receive respect and to counteract this she attempts to emulate middle class behaviour. In addition, the sales worker invests in her appearance, aims to make a good marriage, and become a good mother and housewife. Furthermore, the interviews show that these women question the inequalities they experience, and even if they are trying to become respectable by following the rules of the capitalist patriarchal system that already subordinates them, they do not totally accept these norms and from time to time they create their own value systems against these norms. This struggle of these women to gain the respectability that they are denied, offers the hope that there will be social transformation rather than a continuation of the existing hierarchical systems.

Key words: Woman sales worker, the formation of subjectivity, respect, class and gender, working class women

ÖZ

İŞÇİ SINIFI KADIN ÖZNELİĞİNİN KURULUMU VE SAYGINLIK: ANKARA'DAKİ KADIN TEZGAHTARLAR ÜZERİNE SAHA ÇALIŞMASI

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Bu tezin temel amacı, işçi sınıfı kadın öznelliğinin kurulumunda sınıf ve toplumsal cinsiyetin oynadığı rolü anlamaktır. Farklı sınıflara ait kadınlar, alışveriş esnasında, müşteri ve tezgahtar olarak birbirleri ile karşılaşır. Bu karşılaşmayı yakından analiz etmek, işçi sınıfı kadın öznelliğinin kurulumunda sınıfın ve toplumsal cinsiyetin oynadığı rolü anlamamıza olanak sağlar. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma kapsamında kadın tezgahtarlar ile derinlemesine görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Bu görüşmelerde, bir çok kadın tezgahtarın sınıf ve toplumsal cinsiyet eşitsizliklerini can acıtıcı deneyimler olarak yaşadıkları görülmüştür. Buna ilaveten, saygınlığın bu kadınların hayatında çok önemli bir yer kapladığı anlaşılmıştır. Görüşülen kadın tezgahtarların bir çoğu, gündelik hayatında sıklıkla saygısızca davranışlara maruz kalır, ve başkalarının gözünde bir saygınlığı olmadığını düşünür. Lakin, kendisi saygın olmak, değerli bulunmak ve saygı görmek istemektedir. Bu nedenle kendisine saygınlık ve değer verebileceğini düşündüğü sermayelere yatırım yapar ve kendisine saygınlık vereceğini düşündüğü davranışlar sergiler. Örneğin, kendisine saygı gösterilmemesinin bir nedeni olarak gördüğü yoksulluğunu gizlemeye ve sanki orta sınıfmış gibi gözükmeye ve davranmaya çalışır. Bunun yanı sıra, dış görünüşüne yatırım yapar; iyi bir evlilik yapmayı, iyi bir anne ve iyi bir ev hanımı olmayı hedefler. Öte yandan, kadın tezgahtarla yapılan görüşmeler, onların yaşadıkları eşitsizlikleri sorguladıklarını, kendilerini alta sıralayan kapitalist ve

ataerkil sistemin kurallarına göre oynayarak saygınlık kazanmaya alıřıyor olsalar bile, bu normları aynen kabul etmediklerini, ve zaman zaman bu normlara karřı kendi deęer sistemlerini oluřturabildiklerini gstermiřtir. Bu nedenle, bu kadınların kendilerinden esirgenen saygınlıęı kazanmak iin her gn yrttkleri mcadele, var olan hiyerarřik sistemlerin devam etmeyeceęi gstererek, sosyal deęiřiminin umudunu tařımaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Kadın tezgahıtar, znellięin inřası, saygınlık, sınıf ve toplumsal cinsiyet, iři sınıfı kadın

To My Dear Mother

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASAGEM	T.R. Prime Ministry Directorate General of Family and Social Research
EU	European Union
HICES	Household Income and Consumption Expenditure Survey
KSSGM	General Directorate on the Status and Problems of Women
NAFTA	The North American Free Trade Agreement
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
TURKSTAT	Turkish Statistical Institute

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Due to the neo-liberal policies implemented since the 1980s, class differences in Turkey have sharpened and deepened. In Turkey poverty and as well the studies on this topic increased after 1990s, however there have been few studies in Turkey, which have examined the reflections of the class relations and poverty on the daily lives of working class. Poverty studies in Turkey examined poverty either using economic indicators or from a government concern to produce policies on poverty. Few studies examined the social, cultural and ideological prospects of unequal class relations. Additionally, there have been very few studies, which examined how working class women experience unequal class relations. Moreover, very few of these studies explored the processes by which working class understand themselves. Although the subjectivity formation of working class women in Turkey is examined in few studies, none of them focused on this issue from a ‘respectability’ perspective. In this sense, my main motivation in this study is to examine the relation between class and gender in the subjectivity construction process for working class women, using respectability as an analytical tool.

To examine how the category of ‘women’ is continuously constructed within classifying procedures and class relations, and to explore the critical role of respectability for the working class women in their subjectivity formation process, I conducted a field research on women sales workers. Sales work, is considered as an unskilled job thus it offers an employment opportunity for working class women. It also offers a field in which the sales workers encounter and interact with middle class women. This situation provides a basis on which to examine how the working class woman sales worker experiences the class differences and class inequalities in

her daily life. Additionally, this encounter offers a ground to explore how the subjectivity of working class women is constructed in relation with the middle class women. Examining the sales worker's perception of middle class women allows for a realization of the centrality of the respectability concerns in the sales worker's life. Examining the sales worker's own narratives on her life and other people's lives offers an opportunity to recognize her daily struggle for respectability.

In my field research, I interviewed 22 women sales workers in Ankara, Turkey I undertook semi-structured in-depth interviews, each lasting about 90 minutes. I randomly select the interviewees; however, I avoided interviewing the middle class sales workers who are outside of the sphere of interest of this study. I used a qualitative research method and thus I do not claim to make any quantity-based generalizations. However, to obtain a more diversified picture of the field and accordingly to be able to conceptualize on my findings, I interviewed women sales workers employed in different parts of Ankara; such as Kızılay, Maltepe, Tunalı, Cebeci, Demetevler, Sıhıye, Ulus, Bahçelievler, Tandoğan and in different large shopping malls Karum, Armada, Ankamall. This approach meant that there was diversity in the shop types, and the profiles of the sales workers and customers. Despite this selection, this study does not attempt to offer an empirical generalization of its findings.

To undertake the interviews it was necessary to gain permission from the employers. This was problematic since most of the time the employers were reluctant to allow me to talk to their employees, because they were afraid that I was from a state institution to check the social security conditions of their employees. Additionally, the employers did not want their workers to spend work time on the interview. Therefore, it was only possible to conduct the interviews in the sales workers' spare time; however, some of the sales workers did not want to spend their limited free time answering my interview questions. Overall, most of the interviews took place during work hours and in the workplace.

The interviews were coded in order to be analysed. The English translations of direct quotations from the interviews are frequently utilized in this text; however, the original narratives in Turkish are also presented in order for the reader not to miss the nuances in the original syntax. Special attention was given to the translation of the quotations in order to keep the original and dilemmatic use of language of the sales workers in the translations. The interview questions and brief information on the women interviewed are presented in the appendix. In this thesis, pseudonyms are used to ensure the anonymity of the interviewees.

In the interviews with the sales workers there was sometimes an unequal and asymmetric relation, in which I was perceived as an educated judgemental other. During the interviews, the sales workers sometimes behaved as if they did not understand the questions, they kept silent and did not answer. Most probably, these were the times when the sales workers wanted to maintain their boundaries and not to share what they considered to be too personal. This silent behaviour allowed the sales workers to avoid unwanted questions and unwanted interventions in their private life during the unequal interviewing experience. However, while interviewing I used a sensitive approach attempting to avoid epistemic violence as much as possible.

In this thesis, I take the 'experience' of women as the main source of producing knowledge about women. I evaluate experience as "the process, by which all social beings' subjectivity constructed" (de Lauretis, 1984, p. 159). Through this field research, I had an opportunity to listen to what the working class women sales workers say about themselves and their lives and to provide "a rhetorical space where the experiences and knowledge of the marginalized can be given epistemic authority, be legitimated and taken seriously" (Skeggs, 1997, p. 39). Since the purpose of this study is to understand how the sales worker becomes a gendered and classed subject, I did not limit the interview questions only to the work related experiences of the sales workers. I asked questions about their lives and their understanding of life in general.

The narratives of women concerning their lives and those of others and the relations between these lives can provide an understanding on how they see the social reality and how their subjectivity is constructed. Their subjectivity is constructed through the relations they have with the others and themselves, and exploring this allows us to understand the interlinking between the social and personal. Additionally, the narratives of these women show how the class difference is experienced and interpreted individually by each sales worker, and how this leads to formation of different gender practices. In this study, direct quotations from the sales workers' narratives are presented with the aim of showing the singularities in the narratives; and to open them for the reader to make different interpretations.

I use certain concepts and terms to explain the subjectivity formation process of the women sales worker. In Chapter 2, I explore the terminology that I use in my discussions. Mainly, I use the term 'class' as formulated by Bourdieu, which can also be conceptualized as social class, which besides its economic significance emphasizes the cultural aspects of class. As proposed by the post-structuralist feminists, specifically Butler, I use the term 'gender' to indicate its performative character. In this Chapter, I also indicate my conceptualization of the formation of subjectivity. For the working class women respectability appears as a major concern during their interpellations of their own experiences. In Chapter 2, I explain my interpretation of the term 'respectability' and note the importance of respectability for this study by referring mainly to Sennet and Skeggs.

In Chapter 3, I mainly focus on the studies on working class and poverty in Turkey, specifically concentrating on those that examine the forms that class relations take in the daily lives of the working class women. Additionally, I explore the studies which examine the subjectivity formation process of working class women and which indicates the inseparable character of class and gender in the subjectivity formation process.

In Chapter 4, I give a general picture of the dynamics of female employment in Turkey. I examine how the interactions between institutions effect women's participation in the labour force. I elaborate on how the traditional norms attributed to women challenges their entry to the labour market, and how the norms of respectability and sexual protection limits women's work opportunities. I demonstrate that the receipt of social benefits and the lack of free child care services reinforce the low level of female employment. I also refer to the tactics, which women have to develop to be able to work, despite all the barriers. Then, I suggest that working provides empowerment for women, though the lack of regulations and policies makes working class women vulnerable and dangers their empowerment. This chapter finishes with an overall assessment of sales work in Turkey.

In Chapter 5, I evaluate the findings of my field research beginning with a section on how the sales worker experiences the encounter with the customer in the workplace. Firstly, I present the sales worker's recognition of the class and gender based differences between herself and the customer. Then, I present the emotions of the sales worker related to the experience of these class and gender based differences, and highlight how class and gender inequalities can be lived as pejorative experiences, which can be considered as the 'hidden injuries of class' and gender. Later, I focus on the 'respectability injuries' of the sales worker, and accordingly the behaviours of the sales workers concerned with respectability. In this section, I present how the sales worker tries to prevent the disrespectful behaviour of others towards her both at workplace and personal life; as well as her respectability-concerned behaviours which consist of mainly avoiding being recognized as poor, investing on femininity, caring and responsibility. I examine how the sales worker engages with the norms of the capitalist system and the patriarchal gender regime, which remove the sales worker's respectability. I try to explore whether the norms of these systems are accepted by the sales worker and whether she plays within the rules of these systems to have a more respectable position; or whether those norms appear as distorted in the sales worker's life. With a focus on how the sales worker performs her femininity in relation to middle class

femininity, I show that both cases are valid; sometimes trying to fulfil middle class norms and also sometimes constructing herself against them.

Although the sales worker tries to behave in certain ways in order to become respectable, the possibility of achieving respectability is unclear. In the last part of Chapter 5, I point out the paradox of trying to become respectable by staying within the norms of a gender regime that already subordinates her; and as well by thinking and acting within the classifying schemes that already devalues her. Acceptance of the rules and norms of a system and playing within it has the peril of reproducing these systems. Yet, the sales worker does not totally accept the norms of the dominant patriarchal and capitalistic system as revealed in her expressions of anger and discrepant attitudes while she explains about these norms and classifications. Therefore, in Chapter 5 I show that the hegemonic discourses appear with distortion in the sales worker's usage. For example, the way in which sales workers perform their femininity, their tactics and the way in which they cope with patriarchal domination are presented. The singularities of each sales worker and her practices that aim at being considered respectable are shown from a standpoint that these tactics, behaviours and performances, can provide the sales worker with some daily and practical benefits, and consequently with empowerment and respectability, although only to a certain extent.

In Chapter 6, I present the conclusion to the study. I stress that although the domination between unequals continue to exist, there is the hope for transformation, which develops in the emotions of the dominated. As can be seen in the utterances of the women sales workers, class and gender based inequalities are unjust and unacceptable, however, the daily performance of the dominated subjects offers the promise that they will become empowered and respectable.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, I present the theoretical and conceptual framework used in this study. Feminist theory, which gives special importance to the experience of women is the basis of this study. Feminist theory produces knowledge about women's experience and believes that giving voice to women's experience, making these experiences visible and analysing them can improve women's lives. Feminist theory also provides insights in understanding how class intersects with gender, how gender is experienced differently by women of different classes. Below, I will describe how feminist theory handles the concepts of class, gender, subjectivity and respectability, and how I use and understand these terms in my analysis.

2.1. Class

There are three main ways that feminist theory handles the concept of 'class'. First is the 'political arithmetic' class analysis, which involves fitting people into pre-ordained classifications (Skeggs, 2004, p. 20). In this strand, people are measured according to the occupations of their father as the 'head of the household'. This class analysis is not appropriate for the feminist theory, as it does not take the mother's labour into account.

The second way that feminist theory handles class is through the traditional or the less traditional Marxist theory of class analysis, in which "class is conceptualized as a relationship of exploitation, primarily based on division of labour" (Skeggs, 2004, p. 20). Feminists argue that female labour has to be included in this analysis. Derived from a Marxist perspective, Marxist and radical feminists argue that

‘women’ constitutes a category just like class and accordingly domestic work can be examined using the terms; labour and exploitation. In this sense, gender relations are considered as the relations of exploitation. Similarly, socialist feminists argue that in the same way that the relations of production result in exploitation, the relations of reproduction result in gender subordination. Socialist feminism assumes that all women are subordinated because of their sex, yet the proletarian women are doubly subordinated because of their class. Socialist feminism argues that the relations of reproduction are a common ground for the struggle of women of working and middle classes. However, this approach does not take into account that gender relations differ with class differences, and a common ground for the struggle of women cannot be based on common subordination as the subordination takes different forms for women of different classes.

The third way that feminist theory deals the concept of class is through the ‘identity politics’ approach of the 1990s. This approach evaluates class as one of the other identities such as sex, race and ethnicity. However, this approach does not problematize the process of formation of these identities, and therefore it has a limited reach in terms of the possibility of social transformation.

These approaches have inadequacies in utilizing class in feminist theory. They all take class as a mere abstraction and try to understand class relations as the reflections of the objective structures. However, class is a lived relation. This is why a class analysis, which provides a room for the agency, would be more functional for feminist studies. In this sense, Bourdieu’s class conceptualization offers an explanatory power that the above mentioned class analysis cannot provide.

Bourdieu (1984) does not see class solely as an economic term. He integrates ‘culture’ in his class analysis by using the term ‘capital’. In Bourdieu’s understanding, the structure of class is based on the movement of capital in the social space. He takes capital as a term beyond its economic connotation and which includes ‘immaterial’ and ‘non-economic’ forms of capital. In Bourdieu’s

understanding, social space is structured by the distribution of various forms of capital among people and these capitals can bring power to their holders. Bourdieu explains how the different types of capitals, mainly economic, cultural, social and symbolic capitals, can be acquired, exchanged, and converted into other forms. In his understanding, each form of capital can be exchanged or ‘cashed in’ for any other form, yet the convertibility does not bring reducibility. Likewise, possession of a capital does not necessarily imply possession of any other form of capital. Moreover, as with economic capital, the other forms are also unequally distributed among social classes and their fractions.

Skeggs utilized Bourdieu in her studies (1997, 2004), to recall class in feminist analysis. Her work; *Formation of Class and Gender: Becoming Respectable* has major importance for this study due to the prospect it offers. In her study, Skeggs (1997) indicates that the term capital has the “explanatory power to understand the intersections of class and gender in subjective production” (p. 7). According to Skeggs (2004), “women can be subjects with capital accumulating strategies” (p. 29) and she uses the concept of capital to develop theories about classed femininity and motherhood.

The term capital also enables us to comprehend the formation of subjectivity as a process of becoming. According to Skeggs (1997), subjects become gendered and classed through lived relations. Subjects are not in a social position; they are continuously being reproduced in social positions (Skeggs, 1997). However, according to Skeggs (1997), class is “reproduced through constraints on capital exchange”. She considers class as being about access and exclusion that is “what people do not have rather than they have” (p. 13). Yet, class also “informs access to how subject positions such as respectability and caring can be taken up” (Skeggs, 1997, p. 94).

On the other hand, Bourdieu utilizes the concept of ‘habitus’ in his class analysis. Habitus can be defined as culturally determined bodily dispositions, which becomes

internalized in acting, thinking, and feeling in certain ways none of which pass through consciousness (Bourdieu, 1990b). Habitus has a spontaneous character of habit and habituation, rather than consciously learned rules (Bourdieu, 1990b). According to Bourdieu, habitus plays a principle role in the generation and structuring of practices and representations. Habitus or dispositions are the internalization of the structures of the social order.

Bourdieu's concept of habitus provides some insight to understanding why people show obedience to that which dominates them. For Bourdieu, those who are dominated accept their subordination because of the match between their habitus and the 'field' in which they are playing. However, the concept of habitus is criticized as not leaving a room for transformation. The relations of domination would not take place, if those who are dominated continue to behave as their habituses presupposes.

Bourdieu is also criticized for not taking 'ambivalence' into account in his analysis. "Bourdieu's model of resigned, adaptive working-class habitus both closes down the working-class possibility of playing the game but also closes off the positive, affective, justifiable experiences of anger and exclusion" (Skeggs, 2004, p. 87). However, according to Skeggs, the emotions of working class are very important and have to be examined carefully. Skeggs (2004) underlies that,

it is by the emotions of affect that class struggle is being expressed, although not often heard. These utterances are however an expression of an alternative value system, one not easily recognized, often misrecognized, and certainly one that cannot be framed in the shape of a self that is in any way interested in accruing exchange-value to itself. (p.90)

Skeggs also argues that the working class has a value system of its own. In this value system, the working class formulates a way to consider itself 'respectable'.

Skeggs (2004) says that a "different value systems that exist outside of the dominant symbolic" and the working class

operate with a very different ethical value system to the dominant symbolic . . . the working class learnt to tell themselves in a particular way (as redeemable and respectable) in order to have their voices heard by middle-class or to receive poor relief. (p.88)

Sennet and Cobb (1972), in *The Hidden Injuries of Class*, a basic reference book for this thesis, argue that the class society takes away the feeling of secure dignity from all people. People consider their position in the society as an extension of their personal ability and take their class position personally. Specifically, working class has the feeling of 'self-accusation' that they decry themselves for their social position. However, this feeling has an ambivalent character:

It isn't right society should think him as a "nobody", isn't right because he never had a chance to be anything else . . . however, there is a split between conscious belief and inner conviction- in secret he feels ashamed for who he is. Class is his personal responsibility, despite the fact that he never had a chance. (Sennet & Cobb, 1972, p. 97)

Social order is on one hand considered as legitimate and illegitimate on the other. The two feelings exist at the same time in the discourse of the working class. Sennet and Cobb (1972, p. 98) argue that "[t]his represents the "internalizing" of class conflict, the process by which struggle between men leads to a struggle within each man". In that sense, Sennet and Cobb sees this ambivalence as a reaction to power in a complicated way. "They are not rebellious in the ordinary sense of the word; they are both angry and ambivalent about their right to be angry" (Sennet & Cobb, 1972, p. 79).

De Certeau and his book *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1988), also provides insights into the ambivalences and being 'in between' positions. De Certeau (1988) shows that everyday practices involve 'ways of operating', 'making do' and 'escape without leaving'. De Certeau explains the ways of operating with his 'tactic' x 'strategy' conceptualization. According to him, the weak have tactics whereas the powerful have strategies. While strategy presumes control of the powerful, tactics are the adaption of the weak to the environment which has been created by the powerful, but by finding ways of coping with the imposed situation, however, by

not totally rejecting it, still playing in the ground of the dominant. However, de Certeau is criticized for over assuming the ‘resistance’ of the weak. Yet, as Buchanan puts “[w]e need to find out not only how individuals become-subservient, which is the trail blazed by Foucault, but also how they become subversive, a pathway that is only a light at the end of the tunnel” (Buchanan, 1997, para. 21).

Acts of making do should not only be thought to be limited to material conditions, they can also be self-protecting mechanisms. Sennet and Cobb (1972) argue that the split of the real person and the performing individual is one of these self-protecting mechanisms. They claim that the worker leaves his real self at home, while he acts out his performing individual at work. This inner division is calming for the worker, who assumes a distant and untouchable persona in order not to feel the pain (Sennet & Cobb, p. 1972). However, whether it is possible to undertake this split on regular and systemic basis is debatable issue. Nevertheless, this split can be an analytical tool for understanding whether the worker has her own values that she judges to be important and these protect her from the field, in which she, as a performing individual, operates.

2.2. Gender

In this research, ‘gender’ pertains to the way it is used by the post-structuralist feminist; Butler in that I do not make the mostly used distinction between sex and gender, in which sex is seen as natural whereas gender is cultural. On the contrary, I believe that sex is as cultural as gender, both being the interpretations of human body. As Butler (1990) says: “sex is as culturally constructed as gender; indeed perhaps it was always already gender, with the consequence that the distinction between sex and gender turned out to be no distinction at all” (p.7).

In that sense, the sexualisation of the bodies creates unequal and hierarchic relations between men and women. I also subscribe to the understanding that does not see

wo/men as universal and culturally essential categories. Accordingly, gender is performative and genders are constructed within a certain gender regime, which is patriarchy for today's world. Butler (1993) explains performativity character of gender as such:

Performativity cannot be understood outside of a process of iterability, a regularized and constrained repetition of norms. And this repetition is not performed by a subject; this repetition is what enables a subject and constitutes the temporal condition for the subject. This iterability implies that 'performance' is not a singular 'act' or event, but a ritualized production, a ritual reiterated under and through constraint, under and through the force of prohibition and taboo, with the threat of ostracism and even death controlling and compelling the shape of the production, but not, I will insist, determining it fully in advance. (p.95)

According to Butler (1990), gender goes far beyond simply internalized values and behaviour patterns. It is an organized system of performances. It is constructed over the rightly repetition of the behaviours, that the hegemonic system imposes. Subjects are somehow conscious of these sets of performances and sometimes this repetition cannot be perfectly achieved. This failure in performing gender, signalize its constructed nature. In addition, it indicates that there is always an unplanned resistance against sex norms.

I also use the term 'femininity', which is closely related with how gender can be performed differently by women, as Skeggs formulates. Accordingly, femininity "can be seen as a form of cultural capital. It is the discursive position available through gender relations that women are encouraged to inhabit and use" (Skeggs, 1997, p. 10). However, referring to Moi (1991), Skeggs (1997) notes that performing femininity in a certain way can also create a symbolic capital.

The discourses of femininity and masculinity become embodied and can be used as cultural resources. This is not to say that gendered relations are purely cultural . . . Gender carries different amounts of symbolic capital in different contexts. (p. 8)

As stated above, Skeggs considers that there are different forms of femininity and different values attributed to them. Femininity has an ambiguous character, just like

gender norms (Skeggs, 2004, p. 25). Skeggs (2004) claims that “norms do not work, or are not taken up; identities are a limited resource, a form of cultural capital that are worked and uncomfortably inhabited” (p. 29). Skeggs conceptualization of gender shows the performative character of gender and thus, it highlights the ambivalences that it includes.

We talk about a femininity as if it is a bounded entity that can be known, yet it is inherently ambiguous, indeterminate, contradictory and unstable ... the appearance of femininity is constantly transformable act based on attachment and detachment of practices and objects in a circuit of exchange, a wilful playfulness, performative and performing, means that it needs careful empirical attention, not just an understanding of mis-recognition. (Skeggs, 2004, p. 24)

Underlining the importance of ambivalences in gender practices, Skeggs criticizes Bourdieu as he ignores the things that they do not ‘fit’ the norms, to the demands of the field. In her words, Bourdieu “assumes that the field is a precondition of the habitus and the habitus will always submit to the field” (Skeggs, 2004, p. 29). In that sense, the term habitus can function as a way of understanding why people perform gender norms, yet it is necessary to take into account the ambivalences to understand that norms are not performed in the same way every time.

In this sense, both Butler’s and Skeggs accounts concerning gender are important in this study. I use gender as an analytic and dynamic conceptualization, which refers to a practice / process. Moreover, I believe the understanding of the formation of subjectivity is only possible by understanding the process of becoming gendered.

2.3. Subjectivity Formation

Experience is important for the subjectivity formation ‘process’. Subjectivity is formed by the ‘interpellation’ of the experiences within certain discourses. Subjectivity is constructed in relation with ‘other’ and therefore, recognition of other is important for construction of subjectivity.

Following Skeggs (1997), I use subjectivity to mean “the conditions of being subjected to frameworks of regulation, knowledge and discourse and constructing subjectivity in the process” (p. 12). Subjectivity is an ongoing construction based on ‘experience’ and class and gender are inseparable in the process of subjectivity construction. I conceive that “[i]t is not individuals who have experience, but subjects who are constituted through experience” (Scott, 1992, pp. 25-26). I support Skeggs’ view that experience is processed through practice, discourse and interpretation (1997, p. 28). Experiences are always in the process of interpretation; and recognition is one of the means by which experiences are interpreted (Skeggs, 1997, p. 29). According to Skeggs (1997), subjects

recognize the recognitions of others. Recognitions do not occur without value judgments and the women are constantly aware of the judgments of real and imaginary others. Recognition of how one is positioned is central to the *processes* of subjective construction. (p. 4)

I concur with Skeggs (1997) that the recognition is the way that women “navigate themselves through classificatory systems and measure and evaluate themselves accordingly” (p. 4).

I consider experience as a process, which is not only defined by class and gender, but also which formulates classed and gendered subjects. “Experience is central to the production of subjectivity, to the production of raced, classed, sexed and gendered ‘woman’” (Skeggs, 1997, p. 38). Class and gender intersects in subjectivity production (Skeggs, 1997, p. 7). Class is one of the factors that shape the day to day living conditions of people and accordingly class is an irresolvable factor in the formation of femininity. Skeggs utilizes Bourdieu to explain how this intersection of class and gender takes place. According to Bourdieu (1984):

Sexual properties are as inseparable from class properties as the yellowness of a lemon is from its acidity: a class is defined in an essential respect by the place and value it gives to sexes and to their socially constituted dispositions. That is why there are as many ways of realizing femininity as there are classes and class fractions, and the division of labor between the sexes takes quite different forms, both in practices and in representations, in different social classes. (pp. 107-108)

On the other hand, the 'other' plays an important role in the formation of subjectivity, including the formation of class and gender. Skeggs (1997) states that for the English working class women subjects of her research, "subjectivity is not part of a discourse of individualism; rather, it is a part of a discourse of dialogism and connection" (p. 164). Class is lived on daily basis and class operates over the other. Here Skeggs (1997) explains the dialogic manner of class:

Class operated in a dialogical manner: in every judgment of themselves [the participants of Skeggs's research] a measurement was made against others. In this process the designated 'other' (based on representations and imaginings of the respectable and judgmental middle class) was constructed as the standard to/from which they measured themselves. The classifying of themselves depended upon the classifying systems of others. (p. 74)

Subject positions are defined by class, and the dialogical other, who is central to the subjectivity formation, is judgemental. Therefore, emotions appear as the subjects become classed. As Skeggs (1997) puts it

[c]lass is absolutely central to the women's trajectories through subject positions. Their subjectivities come to be produced through process of misidentification and dissimulation, showing how the dialogic judgmental other is central to their productions and how class operates at an intimate and emotional level. (p. 13)

2.4. Respectability

Respectability is the major interest of this thesis. I adopt the premise that in a class based society people tend to lose self-respect and pride in themselves and in the eyes of others (Sennet & Cobb, 1972, p. 170). Thus, for those who are not seen to have respectability, it usually becomes a concern. Sennet (2003) tries to understand why there is scarcity of respect in society. Focusing on respectability with its psychological dimension, he points out how inequality translates into a doubt of the self. He makes the link between respect and recognition and asserts that a

[l]ack of respect, though less aggressive than an outright insult, can take an equally wounding form. No insult is offered another person, but neither is recognition extended: he or she is not seen – as a full human being whose presence matters. (Sennet, 2003, p. 3)

According to Sennet, there are three main ways for respect to be achieved in society. Self-respect is developed by working on personal talents and making something of yourself, social honour is acquired by taking care of yourself and both self-respect and social honour are achieved by helping others and giving something back. However, he notes that inequalities tarnish these three modern concepts of modernity and

[t]he tarnish could be removed, somewhat, by honouring differing practical achievements rather than privileging potential talent; by admitting the just claims of adult dependency; by permitting people to participate more actively in the conditions of their own care. (Skeggs, 2003, p. 261)

As a conclusion, he presents the nub of the problem of our society as, “particularly in the welfare state” that the “strong can practice respect towards those destined to remain weak” (Sennet, 2003, p. 263). Accordingly, he affirmed a kind of equality founded on the ‘psychology of autonomy’. He underlined that in order to generate mutual respect in society, “[m]utual recognition has to be negotiated; this negotiation engages the complexities of personal character as much as social structure” (Sennet, 2003, p. 260).

On the other hand, as argued in the above concerning subjectivity, Skeggs states that the women in her research constructed distinctions between themselves and others on continual basis. In these continued identifications, dissimulations and resistances, respectability emerged as a key concept (Skeggs, 1997, p. 32). Skeggs (1997) claims that knowing the judgments of the other about themselves, and having the consciousness of their classifications, their devaluing, their inability to get it right and their inability *to be* without shame and humiliation; the women in her research “turn to respectability and responsibility as a means of establishing a valued and legitimate way of being and way of being seen” (p. 95).

In this context, it is important to recognize the working class’ relation with the dominant symbolic. Whereas sometimes acquiring dominant symbolic could give respectability, working class women can operate with a different ethical value

system to the dominant symbolic, and Skeggs found this to exist in the motherhood and caring practices carried out by the women in her research. This is also the case for femininity, which is defined by middle class values. Working class women cannot inhabit the category of femininity as the proper femininity necessitates middle class habitus (Skeggs, 1997). At that point, the working class woman becomes the author of her experience of femininity, without being symbolically authorized (Skeggs, 2004, p. 25). As a devalued woman, she gives herself value and authorized her existence as valuable a person “through the practices of respectability: a respectability defined in opposition to the middle-class” (Skeggs, 2004, p. 25). This is “not a taking-on of the views of the dominated but an entire reworking of perspective and value” (Skeggs, 2004, p. 25). Skeggs (2004) stresses that the working class woman contests middle-class, symbolically dominant values of respectability, especially those of motherhood (p. 25).

Similarly, Erdoğan (2007) asserts that the poor-subaltern does not accept the position in which she is placed within the hierarchies and classifying schemes (p. 75). The poor-subaltern focuses on having inner beauty and moral-human values. This claim of owning moral values, can be considered as a way of coping with the social hierarchies and classifying schemes, which locate the poor-subaltern in a lower position.

However, as Erdoğan (2007) notes, the belief that the poor have an inner beauty is a part of the self-apprehension of the poor-subaltern, yet this apprehension is combined with her self-apprehension of being the responsible person for her position and being the writer of her life (p. 75). That is to say, the emphasis on having inner-beauty and moral values paradoxically exist with the wavering of the self-belief which impacts on her self-esteem (Erdoğan, 2007, p.75).

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. The Working Class in Turkey

Some of the studies on the working class in Turkey, mainly focus on organized workers in the context of the history of working class movement, and the political organization of working class and worker's unions. These studies (Sülker, 1955; Enginsoy, 1968; Sülker, 1969; Sülker, 1974; Güzel, 1993; Yazıcı, 1996; Koç, 1998; Yaraşır, 2006; Koç, 2010) are not generally based on workers narratives and do not examine the daily life experiences of the workers. Other studies such as those by Boratav (1995, 2005) aim to discuss class relations through the lens of social transformation. In the 1995 work, Boratav examined the effect of neoliberal policies in the post 1980 era, in terms of the welfare level and saving styles of the working class. Then later, he explored the transformation of class relations after 1980, from the economic, social, and political dimensions (Boratav, 2005).

Several studies on the working class in Turkey have been based on field research and present the narratives of the workers. Kahveci, Suğur and Nichols (1996) took into account the recent developments in Turkey such as the growth of a large informal sector, the emergence of an industrial working class, and the declining economic and social position of state employment. The book gives examples of work and occupation mainly in the urban sector based on several case studies and gives a voice to the experiences of its subjects such as car workers, school teachers, owners of small businesses, metal workers, coal miners and shoe-shine boys.

Özüğurlu (2008) presents the narratives of workers. This book offers a theoretical framework in which to study the formation of the recent working class, and by utilizing this framework he evaluates the rise of a global factory at the 'heaven of unorganized workers' in Denizli, Anatolia. This detailed study tries to frame both the theory and the practice, utilizing the following four levels; the labour market, the class experience of workers both at home and work, the cultural experience of workers, and the collective actions of the workers at the political level.

Suğur and Nichols (2005) present a picture of modern industry and the accompanying management techniques and their effects on the workers, through field research which examines seven large-scale firms located around İzmit. This book contains the narratives of the workers and managers and includes a specific chapter on women workers in the textile sector.

Buğra (2010) published a collection of studies, which are not directly constructed in the context of class analysis, but formed around the commodification of labour. These studies, present pictures of several different forms of labour; including seasonal agriculture workers, cinema workers, footballers, school teachers, health service and office workers. This breadth of occupations makes it an important contribution to the working class literature.

The Tekel protest lasting from 21 November 2009 to 3 April 2010 was a milestone in the increase of research on the working class in Turkey. In a sense, it drew the class issue back into academic agenda. During and after the events, there were several studies, both academic and politically oriented, which directly examined the protest (Şahin, 2010; TKP, 2010; Bulut, 2010; Türk-İş, 2010; Kaldıraç, 2010; Akbulak, 2011; Yıkılmaz & Kumlu, 2011).

An article by Yılmaz (Yıkılmaz & Kumlu, 2011), underlines the need for a theory of becoming classed, which would make it possible to understand the activation and pacification forms of the subjects, to experience the ubiquitous class positions; and

which also would develop an understanding of the desire, power and imagination forms that the subjects produce while experiencing other processes (p.25). In that sense, the current thesis follows a similar path to that outlined by Yılmaz, as it tries to understand respectability as a one of the elements that are experienced in the process of becoming classed and gendered subjects.

Özuğurlu (2010) states that the neoliberalism of 1980s led to the working class losing its position as a research interest and object to be examined, becoming the 'poor' and the 'under class' (p.49). He notes that the workers all over the world have become impoverished, and that meant the previous cynosure 'the proletarian' and the new cynosure 'the poor' have become the same thing (Özuğurlu, 2010, p. 50). Özuğurlu comments that the Tekel workers have the traces of the traditional manufacturing worker, yet they also bear new characteristics and he recalls the key question of how to construct the class struggle in recent times. He draws our attention to the very important point, concerning the tendency towards insecure employment which is growing across all types of employment, levels of education and skill; and asks whether this situation could be the basis for a common worker struggle (Özuğurlu, 2010, pp. 50-51).

In his article in the section, *The Class Struggle for Keeping the Self-Respect* Özuğurlu asserts that 'fear' is the explanatory code for working class behaviour in Turkey. He considers that fear functions on two levels; the first is the fear that the worker will lose their job and to not be able to find another one; the second level is located at a deeper place, is the location of the fear of not fulfilling the requirements to succeed in the basic roles; such as being a favoured child, a valuable wife and a protective parent (Özuğurlu, 2010, p. 61). The second fear is in fact, a major fear which results in the loss of their self-respect. In the current context, precarious work and unemployment brings the worker to the threshold of losing their self-respect. Özuğurlu indicates that, under these conditions, hope is the most urgent need of the current Turkish society, who are drowning in the fear of losing self-respect and the Tekel resistance, in a sense, gave this hope to the Turkish society (Özuğurlu, 2010, p. 62).

There are very few studies, which examine the emotional world of the workers, especially in the Turkish context. There are even less studies, which focus on the self-respect of the working class. Although, this thesis concentrates on working class women, and takes the respectability concerns of these women as an day to day experience, the studies which shed light on the emotional world of the workers and thus Özügürü's focus on fear as the basic code of behaviours, including the fear of losing self-respect, have a crucial importance for this study.

On the other hand, there are several studies on poverty in Turkey, which examines the emotional world of the poor-subaltern, and they also have special importance for this study. The academic interest in the poverty in Turkey increased after the 1990s. There are policy-oriented studies on poverty, conducted to understand the reasons for poverty and find solutions to the problem. This research generally tries to understand poverty using statistical indicators from the Household Income and Consumption Expenditure Survey (HICES) and on the basis of the 'poverty line' but they do not examine how poverty is experienced on daily basis at an interpersonal and social level.

An exceptional work on poverty in Turkey created by Erdoğan (2007) in which he asserts that studies on poverty from a governmental perspective inflict symbolic violence on the poor (2007, p. 31). Unlike the studies given above Erdoğan's collection of articles examines the cultural and political formation of urban poverty exploring the representations of poverty produced by the political-cultural discourses. Poverty is placed in the axis of the class-cultural hierarchies, gender, political and religious belonging, ethnicity and social space (Erdoğan, 2007, p. 14). This work by Erdoğan was the first comprehensive study in Turkey, which examined poverty by exploring the political and cultural processes in which the poor are included or excluded. It highlights the relations of domination and exploitation the marginalization and exclusion processes and the urban poor's interpellation of the conditions of social existence. Moreover, it examines the

relation of the poor-subaltern with the political discourses. The book draws attention to the poor's perception of themselves and of the rich, and examines the poor-subaltern's experiences of the social inequalities and hierarchies in the form of hidden injuries.

As indicated in the book, poverty is not only an economic category but also a social condition that people live in and interpellate and also a situation in which they develop ways to 'make do' (Erdoğan, 2007, p. 14). That is why, examining poverty with economic indicators is not sufficient to achieve a comprehensive analysis (Erdoğan, 2007, p. 15). However, the social position of the poor is not a question of the subjective evaluation by the poor of their own position. That is why, while grouping poverty, this book examines the subjective experiences, memories, anxieties and thoughts of the poor together with the social conditions in which poverty is formed. As Erdoğan (2007) underlines, the poor-subaltern's daily life practices and their narratives and expressions about their own emotions and experiences have to be considered in a social-historical context (p. 15).

Over the past ten years, poverty studies began to include women and domestic relations as a new component of their analysis. Even if these studies mostly handle poverty through income and consumption levels, taking the women into analysis made the studies more comprehensive. Following the general tendency in poverty studies, new analyses also started to be conducted through a development paradigm. In these studies, gender inequality began to be considered to be a factor that blocks the development process. These studies proposed policies that would ensure gender equality, arguing that sustainable development cannot be acquired without sustaining gender equality.

Other studies have appeared which examine the survival strategies of a poor household. These studies tend to analyse urban poverty in terms of internal migration and point out the living strategies, which are related to the social networks that are constructed by traditional structures. However, this tendency

avoids the realization of the new forms of these strategies and networks (Bora, 2007, p. 99). According to Bora, this research considers patriarchy as an extension of tradition; they hold the misunderstanding that modernization will save all women (2007, p. 99). Yet, the conceptualization of household survival strategies has the notion that individuals do not passively accept the structural processes. In that sense, it has the promise that the poor can decide to move outside tradition (De la Rocha, 1994). On the other hand, following the feminist critiques, it can be said that evaluating the household as a coherent unit is problematic. Every household is an area of power relations and conflict. Nevertheless, although the feminist are correct in their emphasis, as Bora (2007) notes, studying poverty from the perspective of the household is useful as far as it provides us with a view of the different dimensions of poverty (p. 99). Additionally, it presents people as social subjects, who can and do develop tactics singularly or together to manage in difficult situations (Bora, 2007, p. 99).

3.2. Working Class Women in Turkey

There is limited literature on working class women in Turkey, however, there are a variety of studies on female labour and women's employment in Turkey, ranging from understanding female employment, using statistical indicators to undertake quantitative research, exploring the problems of female employment, and an examination of the different forms of female labour based on case studies (Ecevit, 1995; Özbay, 1995; Berik, 1995; Ecevit, 1998; KSSGM, 1999; Kardam & Toksöz, 1999; White, 1999; KSSGM, 2000). There are very few studies that conceptualize their research subjects as working class women and accordingly discuss the dimensions of employment for working class women. Ecevit (1991) discussed female employment in terms of factory workers, based on a field study in Bursa. Another example is the study by Bolak (1995) examining women breadwinners and working class households in Turkey.

A fundamental comparative study is Beşpınar (2008) in which she examines the working class women's work experiences in Mexico and Turkey drawing attention

to the unstudied interaction between patriarchy and class stating that the women's working experience should be analysed from the perspective of the interaction of different institutions such as family, the labour market and the state. Beşpınar conducted semi-structured interviews and held focus groups in working class neighbourhoods of Mexico City and Istanbul; and drew the conclusion that examining the interaction of institutions, which are organized by gender ideology, has great potential to tell us about women's participation in the labour force.

Another article by Beşpınar (2010) also deserves to be studied in detail, as it presents working class women's work-related strategies and class in urban Turkey. The article is based on a field study that examines women of different social classes in Istanbul. Beşpınar underlines that women's agency is class-specific. Women from different classes are affected differently by structural factors, and that is why, women of different classes have different work-related strategies. In that sense, Beşpınar asserts that working class women have limited and restricted work related strategies.

Sayılan and Türkmen (2011) showed that class and sex issues are interrelated, as seen in the gender based division of labour that took place during the Tekel protest. In the Tekel factory the male workers had control over the female workers in many aspects especially on deciding with whom the women workers can construct a network. Sayılan and Türkmen comment that patriarchy exists in the home, at work and in the union as well, during the Tekel protest. The women workers in the protest, were connoted with home and family and accordingly, thus they were considered primarily as mothers and housewives, and only secondarily as workers. This prevented the women workers appearing on the public agenda with their position and problems in the labour market. Instead, they were called mothers in resistance, which disregarded their worker identities. Their position as mothers was used to validate the men workers' right claims. Thus, the female workers were defined through the male workers (Sayılan & Türkmen, 2011).

On the other hand, there are several studies in Turkey, examining the encounter of different classes, specifically in the context of work relations including work by the following; Cindođlu and Durakbařa (1996); Kalayciođlu and Rittersberger (1998); Bora and Peker (2000); Erdođan (2000a); Erdođan (2000b); Ocak (2000); Kalayciođlu and Tılıç (2001); Cindođlu and Durakbařa (2002); Özyeđin (2002); Özyeđin (2005); Bora (2005); Erdođan (2010a); Erdođan (2010b) and Koptekin (2010). Whether the research subjects are sales workers, secretaries, door keeper's wives or the domestic workers, all the studies point to the different forms of gender inequalities, which take place in relation to class inequalities thus they have major importance for the current work. As they present different pictures from different encounters these studies function as pathfinders in the process of investigating the subjectivity formation of working class women. Interclass encounters and the variety of different femininities are their common aspects. Although, none of these studies specifically focuses on the respectability concern of the hierarchically lower positioned woman however, these studies offer a perspective that was observed through the lenses of respectability.

Özyeđin (2005) offers a detailed examination of the interaction of class, sexuality and patriarchy in the lives of domestic servants. Her book is important for the current study since she emphasizes that an accurate understanding of domestic servants self-identifications can be gathered by examining their alternative identity definitions, such as being a mother, other than the domestic servant identity (Özyeđin, 2005, p. 164). Özyeđin asserts that the domestic servants in her study had their own strategies to debate their identities in a systemic way which is why their social relations other than the interactions in paid domestic work should be examined (2005, p. 164). The domestic worker identifies herself as a mother, and with this identification, she is mainly earning money to cover the needs of her children. Although, in this thesis the focus is on the process of subjectivity construction for the women sales workers rather than their identifications, this approach is useful to reveal the alternative identifications of the worker.

Additionally, Özyeğin (2005) asserts that female participation in the labour force means that class differences become the main source of differentiation between women (p. 40). Thus, it is not possible to support feminist politics based on the assumption that there is a common identity between women that is independent of race, class and culture (Özyeğin, 2005, p. 40).

The exceptional study by Bora (2005) focused on the relation between class and gender in terms of the formation of women's subjectivity in the case of paid domestic workers. This study is a crucial source for this thesis. Bora asserts that she chose the paid domestic workers as the subject of her analysis, in order to examine the encounter of women from two different classes and to explore the role of class in the formation of the women's subjectivity. Bora uses Butler's conceptualization of gender to express the performative character of gender and uses Bourdieu's terms of capital and habitus to purport that gender and class are irresolvable factors in construction of the women's subjectivity.

Bora claims that the domestic worker formulates her subjectivity in relation to her middle class employers. In addition, Bora (2005) takes Skeggs (1997) as a reference point and indicates that gender is a process rather than an identity; and the power relations between women produce and reproduce the differences between women (pp. 45-46). Moreover, Bora claims that the domestic worker is not placed in a position where she is totally subservient to the domination, and that, in fact, she uses empowerment strategies.

In that sense, this thesis follows the path opened by Bora, using Butler, Bourdieu and Skeggs for the theoretical explanations. The main difference between Bora's work and the current study is that this thesis concentrates on respectability as a tool to express the co-functioning of gender and class in the formation of working class women's subjectivity. Bora rarely refers to respectability in her study since she does not have a respectability concern in her analysis. On the other hand, sales work provides a different basis for the analysis, in that the sales worker does not witness

the domestic life of the customers but only witnesses their consumption capacity. In the case of the domestic worker, she has the opportunity to compare her femininity with that of her middle class employer in the domestic sphere. Yet, both in domestic work and sales work, we see that the middle class woman is the reference point for the workers to evaluate their own positions.

Bora (2005) asserts that the paid domestic worker criticizes her employer as not fulfilling the requirements of her gender. This point is also stated in Özyeğin (1999). The domestic worker identifies the class inequalities over the gender criticism and emphasizes her higher position when compared with her employer, due to her practices of traditional femininity. They see their employers as not being able to fulfil the necessities of being women, as they think a woman has to be able to cook or undertake domestic work in the 'correct' way.

On the other hand, Bora (2005) states that femininity for the domestic worker is constructed through the sustaining the order of the home and raising her children. The domestic worker connects earning money to motherhood and femininity. She sees herself as working to cover the needs of her children (Bora, 2005, p. 108). In that case, Bora (2005) asserts that, the quality of domestic work as a job is not seen as a contradiction for the domestic worker, since it is related to femininity, and thus sustaining her image as a respectable and responsible woman and mother (p. 108).

A further point Bora that emphasizes in her study is that these women always take the middle class femininity as a reference point. Bora (2005) claims that the main comparison group for both the employers and domestic workers is the middle class women (p. 136). However, even though the women of a different class try to realize this middle class femininity norm, their experiences are different and they remain in a disadvantaged position (Bora, 2005, p. 136). Yet, Bora (2005) underlines that the lower class women can utilize this norm, as empowerment strategies. This point is very important for the current study, since it claims that working class women invest in the femininity capital to become respectable.

Bora (2005) draws attention to the importance of earning money for the subjectivity construction of domestic workers. Özyeğin (1999) also mentions that earning money is an important component in the construction of identity. Bora (2005) agrees with Özyeğin explaining that working and earning money empowers the domestic worker in her relations with her husband and employer (p. 107). Bora (2005) also draws our attention to the self-perception of the domestic worker, which is defined over the quality of work she is doing, and even more dominantly, by working (p. 99).

Cindoğlu and Durakbaşa (1996) and Durakbaşa and Cindoğlu (2002), are the two of the very few studies carried out with sales workers in Turkey based on field research and they are very important starting points for this study. In their research, the writers show the ways in which discrimination is experienced by clerical and sales workers in Turkey. It is suggested that women in Turkey experience discrimination in recruitment and promotion. In regard to the recruitment of sales workers, the “[y]oung, unmarried women are particularly preferred as sales workers due to their short term prospects at the job market” (Cindoğlu & Durakbaşa, 1996, p. 85). On the other hand, the writers also show that both the female clerical and sales workers experienced sexual harassment in different degrees and since there is lack of formal and institutional facilities they utilize traditional patriarchal connections to deal with the harasser (Cindoğlu & Durakbaşa, 1996). Moreover, in order to support and enhance women’s labour force participation, the report proposes the instituting of measures to support the special needs of women such as motherhood and childcare.

In their article, Durakbaşa and Cindoğlu (2002), traces the feminisation of the shopping and show how shopping malls have become centres of urban life, and how the social atmosphere in the malls reflects the structural inequalities of class and gender. Durakbaşa and Cindoğlu (2002) investigated the working conditions of the sales workers and noted “the various dramas enacted between shoppers, shop assistants and shop managers” (p 73). Furthermore, they found that “there is always

a struggle involving class and age differences in the process of assessing goods, selling and buying” (p. 87). However, it is also asserted that “the status of shop assistant is rising with the rise of the mall, especially with the rise of standardised in-service training and the more gender-neutral work culture of the mall” (p. 87).

Tutalar (2007) conducted a field study based on semi-structured interviews with twenty-eight sales people in four large Ankara shopping malls; Beğendik, Arcadium, Ankamall and Optimum. However, this work only examined sales work as a form of employment, and presenting the common tendencies but did not have a class perspective.

An important study was undertaken by Koptekin (2010) who examined the class experiences of workers in retail food stores in Ankara. The study focuses on the structure of food retailing, working conditions of workers, stratification, fragmentation and unionization of workers in the stores. In addition, it examines how workers experience class in terms of their self-esteem in the workplace, how they cope with the discourtesy of customers, how they classify customers and whether they develop a sense of deprivation due to working in a consumption area (Koptekin, 2010, p. iv). Koptekin analysed the gender and family relations of 37 store workers, their future hopes and unfulfilled dreams thus her study had very similar research subjects to those in the current study. However, unlike Koptekin’s work, this thesis focuses on working class women and takes gender as its main analytical tool together with class. Furthermore, this thesis differs from Koptekin’s study in that it underlines the importance of respectability for working class women and also examines also the daily lives of the workers.

CHAPTER 4

WORK EXPERIENCE OF WORKING CLASS WOMEN IN TURKEY

4.1. The Dynamics of Women's Employment in Turkey

Over the past 50 years, Turkey has undergone a transformation from being an agrarian country to non-agrarian urbanised country. After the 1970s, Turkey implemented the structural adjustment policies, as prescribed by the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, NAFTA and EU. These policies resulted in trade liberalization, privatization of state institutions and downsizing state provided public services.

These policies directly affected the lives of women in Turkey and their participation in the labour force. The implemented neoliberal policies led to a sectorial growth, which was followed by a demand for labour for these newly emerging sectors. This demand resulted in domestic migration from villages to towns. The continuous decrease in the agricultural population together with the migration most of the women could not become a part of labour force in the cities (Sosyal İş Sendikası, 2010, p. 16). The rate of women's labour force participation in Turkey was around 70% in the 1970s, however, it decreased to 34.5% in 1988 and further decreased to 28.8% in 2011 (Ecevit, 2008; TURKSTAT, 2011). According to TURKSTAT 2012 data, the rate of employment for women is only 27.8% and house work seems to be most powerful factor that keeps women out of the labour force (TURKSTAT, 2012). 23% of men and 10% of women participating in the TURKSTAT Family Structure Survey (2006) stated that women should not work since, according to 65% of women and 60.7% of men, the main role of women is child care and house work (ASAGEM, 2006).

In order to understand the dynamics of women's labour force participation in Turkey, Beşpınar (2008) draws attention to the interactions between institutions; the family, the labour market and the state, asserting that the interconnection between these institutions generates the gender regime and that shapes women's values, norms and actions. Initially, Beşpınar (2008) noted that "low financial and emotional satisfaction attached to the work reinforces these traditional expectations and values" (p. 6). According to the traditional norms in Turkey, women are not expected to work and earn money. Rather, they are considered to be controlled and provided for by male family members. Women also consider that it is the male family members who are responsible for earning money and taking care of the family's financial needs. The main responsibility of women is considered to be domestic work, care of child and the elderly, and sustaining the reproduction of the family. Moreover, that a woman works is seen as a barrier that prohibits them from successfully fulfilling their role as mother and housewife. Given the conditions; in which there are limited work opportunities for women, the work available is mainly poorly paid, insecure and of low status; women are not motivated to work. In financial terms, when the total work related expenses, such as the cost of transportation, work clothes and childcare are higher than the income that could be gained, a woman tends to choose not to work. As Beşpınar (2008) states "[t]he male breadwinner model is not only socio-culturally accepted; state and market policies reinforce this model by lessening the potential of other alternative models for women (pp. 18-19).

In Turkey, patriarchal control has the most impact on the decision whether the female members of a family could work or not. Male members of the family can oppose female members' working, and/or limit the kind of work that women can do and the place in which they work. In addition to the man's expectation that a woman's primary responsibility is to take care of the house work and the children, this opposition derives from the deep male anxieties that if a woman works, her honour will be compromised and this will affect the man's reputation (Özyeğin, 2005, p. 23).

The norms of respectability and sexual protection are important concerns in women's decision to work and the location of her employment. In Turkey, protecting her sexual reputation can be one of the main objectives for a working woman and her family. This is particular true for young working-class women, since they do not want to endanger their chance of finding a husband by having a bad reputation concerning their sexuality. As Beşpınar (2008) notes, in Turkey “working class women have stereotypes about office work; they believe that women who work in an office with male workers are more vulnerable to sexual harassment” (p. 13). Therefore, they can prefer to work from home, or work in a place where the owner is known by their family. Moreover, “[t]ransportation and particularly the potential of sexual harassment during that transportation is another difficulty women experience in Turkey” (Beşpınar; 2008, p. 13). The fear that a woman will be sexually harassed during transportation, is shared by both men and women.

In addition to these obstacles, another important barrier in Turkey is the lack of necessary measures that enable women’s participation in the labour force and advance the conditions of this participation. As Beşpınar (2008) indicates Turkey, compared to other OECD countries has the lowest rate of women in the labour force, it offers women the lowest social benefits such as childcare and there are fewer part-time employment opportunities (p. 14). The lack of free child care services, means that child care remains firmly the responsibility of the women in the family. This is in a sense, reinforcement of gender norms by institutions.

Moreover, women facing opposition to their desire to work needs to “develop certain tactics to ease their husbands’/fathers’ concerns (such as working at home, wearing headscarf or marriage ring, being “superwife” [who does the housework as well as if she was not working], giving her earnings to her husband ...)” (Beşpınar, 2008, p. 10). To counter men’s fear of losing authority, the working women offers their earnings as complementary to the man’s financial contributions, mainly to cover the needs of their children. In regards to the issue of the fear of sexual

harassment at the workplace or during transportation, women “work in the workplaces where only women workers are employed, in their houses or they strategically wear more conservative outfits” (Beşpınar, 2008, p. 18). In addition, a workplace which is recommended through relatives or neighbours, and work which does not necessitate contact or working with men is chosen. Additionally, women avoid a workplace which can be considered as ‘behind closed doors’ in order to avoid gaining bad sexual reputation. Furthermore, women do not choose to work in a situation which requires them to return home at night or to use crowded public transportation.

Under these conditions, in Turkey

working class women are not encouraged by their families to work; they only work when there is a tremendous economic necessity. Women with their limited skills have to look for an “appropriate” job and a well paid one. (Beşpınar, 2008, pp. 10-11)

However, working class women in Turkey generally have low level skills and engage in low paid work. They mostly do not have permanent secure jobs and are not unionized.

In Turkey, the jobs that working class women usually perform are “regarded as a part of women’s traditional roles such as cleaning, cooking, knitting, and sewing” (Beşpınar, 2008, p. 11). For the working class woman working from home is considered to be the more suitable option this includes work that are either related to the family or informal tasks such as home based production. This informal work is low paid, consists of exploitative working hours, and there are no social benefits or job security. However, women regard this kind of work as temporary, the most suitable for their limited conditions (Beşpınar, 2010) and they have the advantage that the woman can take care of the children while working. There is work in other informal sectors for working class women, yet they need to be undertaken outside the family home, this work includes domestic work and street vending. This informal sector work creates a low-level work identity for working class women.

Some formal sector work such as factory work or low-status service work in the private and state sector is available and it does provide some benefits. However, whether the work is formal or informal, the women's earnings are low as is their working status.

However, despite all the challenges working provides empowerment for women in Turkey. A woman who works; earns money, broadens her living space, increases her social interaction and as well cultural capital, and has a transformation to empower in her marriage (Bora, 2005, p. 104). Disregarding the working conditions and occupational status, paid work is crucial, especially for a working class woman, to empower her socially and economically. In addition, as Özyeğin (2005) indicates, a woman working can lead to a change in the material conditions of her life; this can also change the gender division of labour in her family. Yet, the discriminatory and exploitative practices in the labour market, and as well lack of regulations and policies leaves working class women vulnerable and endangers their empowerment (Beşpınar, 2008, p. 17).

4.2. Sales Work in Turkey

Under these conditions, sales work becomes a possible form of urban employment for young working class women. As a general profile, sales workers are young women living in the suburbs who have negotiated with the family for permission to work (Durakbaşa & Cindoğlu, 1996, p. 33). They are mostly single women, who mainly work to contribute to the family income and they usually engage in work that is without social benefits. The type of sales work in which the sales worker sells clothes is considered as a feminized job in which the tasks that the women undertake such as giving advice to the customers, tidying up the goods and cleaning the store are related to their traditional gender roles. Additionally, sales work is a consumer contact occupation “in which stereotypical feminine qualities, such as beauty, attractiveness, docility and service to others, become important assets” (Durakbaşa & Cindoğlu, 2002, p. 84). Generally, sales work is considered not to require

any specific skill other than being able to sell an item. Moreover, it does not necessitate previous job experience. Thus, it has become a field of employment that young working class women can enter relatively easily in contrast to other jobs in the formal sector, which requires either more schooling, or skills such as accounting, typing or hairdressing. The other job alternatives to sales work are mainly being a cashier, secretary or working in a textile factory as a presser.

Although it provides an acceptable work opportunity, sales work has difficult working conditions. Normally, the working day is twelve hours for six or seven days a week. There is limited time for lunch or a limited meal is provided by the shop. It is low paid, without secure employment. Moreover, it is a socially devalued and not a respected job, furthermore, the relation between the customer and sales worker is classed. The low status of sales work in society is reflected in the words used to define the work in Turkish. Although there is a conscious attempt in managerial ideology of shops to define workers in the shop as ‘satış elemanı’ (‘sales person’), which is much less gendered than the term ‘tezgahtar kız’ (direct translation ‘counter girl’), there is a much more disparaging term, ‘tezgahtar parçası’ (‘counter rubbish’), which directly points to low gender and class status (Durakbaşa & Cindoğlu, 2002, p. 84). In this study, the term women sales worker is used in order to refer to the classed and gendered characteristics of the occupation; however, it is not intended to degrade this occupation.

In regard to the general profiles of the sales workers, although there is no specific research on this issue, recently the position of sales worker has been transformed to an occupation, and has begun to necessitate certain qualifications. The change of the shopping arena, the flourishing of the shopping malls and subsequently, the change in shopping culture can be considered to be a reason for this. An increasing number of shop owners or store managers have begun to look for employees with better educational backgrounds. Furthermore, the stigmatized acceptance of sales work as a female job has changed with men engaging in this type of work, due to the

increasing level of unemployment. Additionally, for certain sales work that necessitates physical power men are employed.

Despite the changes in levels of employment, sales work remains a sector that mostly employs women because of the attributes that are required, such as dealing with customers in a polite way, being presentable and sympathetic. Moreover, there are certain characteristics, which are expected of sales workers, especially women, such as submissiveness. As Boardbridge (1991) explains;

[s]ales assistants are expected to be immediately at hand, pleasant, helpful, efficient, courteous, patient, enthusiastic, and imaginative at all times. If the customers wish to abuse at the assistant they can do so freely. The sales assistant is always expected to accept abuse without retaliation (p. 46).

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS OF THE FIELD STUDY: SUBJECTIVITY FORMATION OF WOMEN SALES WORKERS IN ANKARA

5.1. Encountering the Customer in the Workplace

This thesis aims to understand the subjectivity formation process of working class women. In order to achieve this aim, I have made in depth interviews with 22 women sales workers in Ankara. In the interviews I tried to explore the daily life of the sales workers in order to understand what they experience in terms of the class and gender based inequalities in their lives. My research brought me the understanding that respectability is a very major concern for these women I interviewed. Class and gender based inequalities are considered respectability injuries and results from the desire to be respectable. Therefore in this thesis, I look at how the sales workers experience class and gender base inequalities, the role of respectability in their subjectivity formation process and their respectability concerned behaviours.

As explained in the Chapter 2, I use a feminist methodology in my research. According to feminist theory, experience has a great significance. Experience is the set out to explain the construction of sex/gender (Scott, 1992). As discussed in the theoretical framework, experience is the process by which subjectivity is constructed (de Lauretis, 1984, p.159). Thus, in this thesis I examine the narratives of the sales workers on their experiences in order to understand how their subjectivity is formulated. In the daily life of women sales workers, work has an important impact on the development of their experience. Therefore, in this part I will explore how the sales worker experiences the encounter with the customer at work.

I chose to investigate women sales workers since their working environment offers a functional context to examine the interrelation between class and gender. The act of shopping generally constitutes an encounter between women of different classes. That is simply because shopping is mainly considered to be a female activity. Durakbaşı and Cindođlu comment that

the modernized middle classes – internalizing the Western division of labour, in which men are expected to do paid work and women unpaid housework – now consider shopping to be a housework chore, and therefore assigned to women. (Durakbaşı & Cindođlu, 2000, pp. 80-81)

Thus, women do not solely shop for themselves; they purchase items for the household, yet they appear as individuals in the shopping area (Durakbaşı & Cindođlu, 2000, p. 81). Since sales workers are predominantly female; shopping is mainly a woman to woman encounter. However, it is also an encounter in which there is often a class difference between the sales worker and the customer and as stated in *Sınıf Karşılaşmaları: Kapıcının Kızı* (Erdoğan, 2010a), people of different classes do not usually have real relationships in daily life and furthermore being an encounter of women from different classes, it is subsequently an encounter of different femininities. Thus, these situations deserve a closer examination and to fulfil that aim, this study particularly focuses on women sales workers who work in women's clothing outlets, in order to understand the role of class in the construction of gender.

For a young (aged from 16 to 35) woman sales worker work is mostly outside the area in which she lives. Until she starts work, her experience comes from her home life, and from attending a neighbourhood school if she is fortunate. Once she finds work, their sphere of experience expands as she meets people who are different from her parents, relatives and friends, and people who live different lives than those around her. The shop becomes the place for new experiences and observations. In the words of one of the shop workers; "I come across new things quite often here, I mean I see here what I've never seen before"¹ (Nazlı).

¹ "Burada çok karşılaşıyorum, yani burada hiç görmediklerimi görüyorum" (Nazlı).

These experiences gained by young women are not limited to seeing different people, but they also acquire direct information about the consumption patterns customers and they can even develop an insight into the personal life of customers. Sales workers can observe the shopping styles of customers and how much they purchase, and the customers' relations with those who accompany them on the shopping trips, such as; friends, boyfriend, husband, children and other family members. In addition, the sales worker can perceive how the customer behaves towards her family and friends, to the shop owner(s) and the sales workers.

The sales worker also talks to the customer generally. This is a functional interaction in the process of selling an item of clothing. However, for many young sales workers this will be a novel encounter, since she will encounter linguistic differences. As Irazca says,

to give an example I can say that customers always come here and people somehow reflect their thoughts and personalities in some way; let alone their speaking you can understand their approach from their gestures and facial expressions.² (Irazca)

The way the customer talks or, her accent and the word she uses can be different from the sales worker's. Language functions as a litmus paper, which highlights the differences between the sales worker and the customer.

The shopping encounter can also lead to a conversation between the sales worker and the customer on issues not related to shopping. In addition, the sales worker can overhear the customer's talks with people who accompany her. Accordingly, the sales experience results in the sales worker learning about the customer's life. During the working day the sales worker acquires a wealth of information through her observations and interactions with the customers, from which she can construct her perception about the clients' lives and also make comparisons with her own life. Observing the shopping environment offers a rich source of data which can be

² "Mesela buraya müşteri geliyor, hani insan kendini bi şekilde belli ediyö yani, yani konuşmasıyla, konuşmasını da geç tipiyle yani mimikleriyle" (Irazca).

examined to determine how the sales worker's subjectivity is constructed. As discussed earlier in the theoretical framework in Chapter 2, subjectivity is constructed over the other. Skeggs suggests that the construction of the subjectivity of working class women "is not part of a discourse of individualism; rather, it is a part of a discourse of dialogism and connection" (Skeggs, 1997, p. 164). In the same line, we see that the sales worker has an 'other' in her mind, who constantly judges her for all kind of her acts. Sometimes this 'other' has a real presence in the sales worker's life, like her father, mother, relatives and friends, but sometimes this 'other' has an imaginary presence, like an outsider eye who sees her all the time. No matter who this other is, they always judge the sales worker for all kind of her acts.

In the same manner, the narratives of the sales workers concerning the customers show us, how the customers also function as the other for the sales worker. The sales worker positions herself in relation to the customers. The sales worker has a perception of the customer's recognition of herself. That is to say, she sees the reflection of herself on the customer, who functions as a mirror. This is a very crucial part of the subjectivity construction process. Referring to domestic servants and the mistress of the house, Özyeğin notes that the women's conceptions about their place in society are formulated through their mutual interaction (Özyeğin, 2005, p.160). Thus, in this study the sales workers' interaction with the customer will be explored, and her self-perception and her perception of the customer will be examined. In addition, the sales worker's perception of how the clients see her will be explored in order to understand the sales worker's subjectivity construction process.

The encounter of the sales worker and the customer results in the recognition of the differences on both sides. The differences by themselves mean nothing, yet the interpretation of the differences is a crucial step in the subjectivity construction process. Therefore, to analyse the subjectivity construction undertaken by the sales worker it is necessary to examine the differences the sales worker sees between herself and the client and how she interprets and manages these differences.

Generally class and gender based differences become the milestones for the sales worker, during the process of locating herself in the social hierarchy in her world.

Özyeğin (2005) shows us that domestic servants have direct knowledge and experience of their employer's social lives and consumption patterns. This is similar to the case of the sales worker; although she does not see the house of the client, she observes her consumption patterns very closely. The sales worker recognizes that the customers have money to buy items beyond the necessities of life. One sales worker commented: "If they think it's beautiful, they come and buy another one; they sometimes even buy three of the same model. Money, they have money"³ (Nazlı). Consequently, the sales worker understands that the customers consume at a greater rate than her. The customer's capacity to spend this much can be something totally new and shocking for the sales worker as Gülsüm says:

I am amazed and indeed very amazed; because for example I didn't work before, either. There were things that I couldn't have bought when my husband was working. One asks oneself if this is also something like that. How can she buy it, does she really work? Different thoughts come to one's mind.⁴ (Gülsüm)

Having recognized the customer's consumption amounts and patterns, the sales worker not only understands the difference between her own consumption capacity and that of the customer, but also has an understanding of the existing differences between herself and the customer, in terms of living conditions and life styles in general. At very basic level, the sales worker thinks that that the customers can buy whereas she cannot.

Take me, for example. I am not someone with a very good budget. I always want to buy something that I can wear. But they don't have such a problem. If they have one garment to wear, then they buy two at a time. I have only one gown which I bought for the wedding ceremony of my brother. I have

³ "Bakıyorlar, çok güzel, geliyorlar bir tane daha alıyorlar; bir modelden üç tane aldıkları oluyor. Para var, onlarda para var" (Nazlı).

⁴ "Şaşıyorum, nasıl şaşıyorum; çünkü mesela ben de çalışmadım. Eşim çalışırken alamadığım şeyler oldu, acaba bu da öyle mi, geliyor insanın aklına. Nasıl alıyor, çalışıyor mu acaba. İnsan, bilmiyorum ya bir şey oluyor" (Gülsüm).

three brothers. I am thinking to wear the same dress in the wedding ceremonies of all of them. Why should I buy a separate dress for each of them? But when she feels depressed she goes and buys this or that the next day. She has the chance to buy various sorts of goods.⁵ (Nazlı)

We see that, her ‘meaning world’ is shaped with the dual oppositions between ‘me’ and ‘her’/ ‘him’. This duality can take the form of the ‘rich people’ versus ‘me’, and she either refers to ‘me’ as the ‘middle way’ or poor. As Irazca says, “sometimes you can even say, look at him, he is rich but I’m only from the middle class”. This is in line with Erdoğan (2007, p.49) who asserts that the social field is composed of the dual opposition of poor and rich for the poor-subaltern.

On the other hand, the sales worker does not only comprehend the differences between her and the customer on an individual level. The sales worker takes her family as a unit of comparison. She thinks, while the client and her family can do certain things mainly due to their financial status, the sales worker and her family cannot do those things. For example, she recognizes that the clients, who are her mother’s age, have different lives. As Nazlı says,

Some of them went to Bodrum and other places, they sometimes tell me that they just came from this place, I’ve just been there, I just came back from England and so on. I just stare at them. They are old and good looking, you know.⁶ (Nazlı)

On the contrary, Nazlı tells that her mother is dependent on her father, even on the issues of what to wear or whether she can go out. Moreover, her mother is not as good looking as the customer of the same age, furthermore, as we learn from Nazlı’s other narratives; her mother was only once able to take a holiday after selling her sole golden bracelet. Here, Nazlı recognizes the difference between the

⁵ “Ben mesela, o kadar bütçesi iyi olan bir insan değilim, sürekli giyebileceğim bir şey almak isterim. Ama onların öyle bir derdi yok, bir tane varsa, geliyorlar iki tane alıyorlar. Benim bir tane abiyem var, abimin düğününde almıştık. Üç tane abim var, üçünün de düğününde onu giymeyi düşünüyorum, niye üç tane birden alayım. Ama o bunu alıyor veya ertesi gün geliyor, bunu alıyor, hepsine çeşit çeşit alma şansı var onun” (Nazlı).

⁶ “Kimisi Bodrum’a falan gitmiş, anlatıyor bazen, şuradan yeni geldim, buradan yeni geldim falan, İngiltere’den yeni geldim falan diye. Bakıyorum öyle. Yaşlılar, bakımlılar falan böyle” (Nazlı).

customer and her mother in terms of dependency on their husbands, consumption capacity, and being able to travel around, and appearances. Here is how Nazlı explains the difference between her mother and customers in regards to their freedom to behave as they want:

They, for example her mother, cannot always do everything they want. They can't go out, they stay at home most of the time. For example, working women are always outside this or that way. They make their holidays this or that way. But my mother is not in the same situation. She goes out only if my father takes her out. She can't go out alone.⁷ (Nazlı)

So, Nazlı's recognition of the difference between her mother and the customer who is the same age as her mother is not only limited to consumption based differences but also can be extended to the recognition of gender-based differences. In the same way, here is Ufuk commenting on the difference between her and the customers in terms of being free and independent:

Let me say to you that she is on easy street. They are free because they can do what they want. We are not free. Personally, I am not free. Just at this moment for example. God forbid there is nobody to protect me if I got divorced from my husband. But they have the guaranty of their home, car, money, mother and father when they are divorced. They simply say that they couldn't agree with their spouse and have divorced. That's all. . . . But if I return to my family home after I have a divorce as a result of my disagreement with my husband I will be financially dependent on my mother and father.⁸ (Ufuk)

That shows that class differences lead to differences in femininities and this is also recognized by the sales worker. As Bora (2005, p.23) stated for domestic work, sales work is also an encounter of different femininities, which is crystalized in different styles and tastes in clothes; the possibilities of personal care in terms of

⁷ "Onlar mesela[annesi], her istediklerini her zaman yapamıyorlar. Bir yere çıkamıyorlar, sürekli bir şekilde evdeler. Mesela, çalışan bayanlar sürekli dışarıdalar, bir şekilde tatillerine gidiyorlar, ama annem öyle değil, eğer babam götürürse gidiyor, götürmezse tek başına gidemiyor" (Nazlı).

⁸ "Bir eli balda, bir eli sütte diyeyim ben sana. İstediklerini yapabildikleri için özgürler onlar. Biz özgür değiliz, şahsen ben özgür değilim. Şu anda mesela, Allah korusun, eşimle boşandığımda benim arkamda kimse yok. Ama onlar boşandığı zaman evine güveniyor, arabasına güveniyor, parasına güveniyor, annesine güveniyor, babasına güveniyor. Diyor ki, ben anlaşımadım, ayrıldım, bitti bu kadar. . . . Ama ben boşandığım zaman, geri geldiğim zaman, anne, ben anlaşımadım, geri geldim, ben annemin eline bakacağım, babamın eline bakacağım" (Ufuk).

being able to spend money and time for it; working conditions; woman's level of dependency on men; and the level of woman's freedom in terms of traveling around by herself. Likewise, it is an encounter of different morality understandings, especially in regards to the relations with men and the preferred types of clothing.

In other words, the sales worker realizes the difference between her and the customer in terms of being a different kind of woman. At first, the sales worker thinks that the client can shop and has time to do so whereas she cannot. That does not merely point out the differences in consumption capacity; but it also involves aspects such as; being able to wear clean, new, matching and latest-trend clothes, using cosmetics and taking care of oneself.

Likewise, the sales worker notices that her way of dressing is different, not only in terms of the quality of her clothes, but also in the extent to which the customers' apparel covers their bodies. The clients wear clothes that reveal parts of the body such as arms, chest, belly and legs whereas some of the sales workers cannot and do not. As Uğur says: "Those who are large. . . . They [the women customers] were brought up in freedom. She's not wearing much anyway, but still she undresses right in the middle"⁹ (Uğur). In Uğur's narrative, we see that Uğur criticizes this woman for not wearing appropriate clothes and behaving properly. She considers this woman as a 'large' woman, a term indicating her disapproval of the woman's life. As seen, here the sales worker differentiates herself from the 'improper' woman, through the differences in their clothing ways. The clothes of 'other' women are open to criticism if they are 'open'. However, the conceptualization of the 'openness' has to be examined closely. Here is how Harika conceptualizes a 'naked' woman:

For example, they wear pants like this, a body like this, this part [waist] is exposed, this makes me angry. Her back is exposed when she leans. She dresses just like that. It's OK, but she wears sleeveless. This is naked for me. Wearing a mini skirt, that's naked for me.¹⁰ (Harika)

⁹ "Serbest olanlar. . . . Kadın rahat, rahat yetişmiş. Giydiği zaten bir şey değil, ama ortada soyunuyor yani" (Uğur).

¹⁰ "Mesela, şuradan pantolon giyiyorlar, şuraya kadar badi, şura [bel] görünüyor, sinir olurum o duruma. Sırtı eğilince açılıyor, tam şöyle giyiniyor. Onda bir şey olmaz ama, sıfır giyinmiş, bir de şöyle görünüyor. O da çıplaktır benim için. Mini etek giyinmiş, çıplak odur bence" (Harika).

Accordingly, for Harika, a woman who wears a cloth that does not cover either her waist, or shoulders or legs is considered as ‘naked’. In contrast to the ‘open’/‘naked’ woman, Harika considers herself as wearing ‘closed’ clothes and being ‘covered’ and although she does not wear a headscarf, she wears long tunics over trousers. As argued, reading the differences between other women over these dichotomies is a part of the subjectivity construction process of the woman sales worker.

From the narratives it can be noted that the sales worker observes the relations of customer with men. She sees that the clients have different kind of relations with men than she does. They are more ‘relaxed’, which means that these women can easily hold hands with their boyfriends, or let their boyfriends kiss them on the street or in shops, and they do not get angry with the men if they see them undressed in the fitting room. Here is Irazca telling the difference between herself and the client:

Well, I think they’re comfortable, take me, for example; let alone the opposite sex, I show the utmost care when talking to people of my own sex, or decide what I’m gonna say before I talk. They are very calm and comfortable, maybe they’re comfortable even with them . . . Holding hands or kissing is nothing for them, maybe.¹¹ (Irazca)

That is to say, as Irazca puts, speaking with man, holding hands with the boyfriend and letting the boyfriend kiss her appears to be the main areas that the sales worker differs from the ‘other’ woman in the sense of relations with man. This difference signals that the sales worker and the customer are different kinds of women with a different understanding of morality.

In accordance, the sales worker considers the woman who behaves ‘freely’ in their relations with man, as a ‘certain type of woman’. This certain type of woman manifests itself when she holds hands with her boyfriend, when she hugs him and

¹¹ “Ya, onlar rahattır herhalde, mesela ben, karşı cinsi bırak, kendi cinsimle konuşmak için bile hani dikkat ediyorum ya da neler konuşacağıma karar vererek konuşuyorum. Onlar çok sakin, rahatlar, herhalde onlarla bile çok çok rahatlardır. . . . Onlara göre bi el tutuşmayla, bi öptürmek hiç bi şeydir belki” (Irazca).

when she kisses him in public without being aware that she falls into disrepute. Here is how Nazlı puts it:

You can understand what type of girls some people are, for instance there were some in my school. They start holding hands when they start dating. I'm not that kind of person. Holding hands or hugging. . . . I hate it, but she'll have a bad reputation; she's not even aware of it. . . . I also see many girls here in a close embrace, kissing in the middle of the street. That's unnecessary.¹² (Nazlı)

The sales worker compares herself with the 'free' woman and shows her difference from her. As Skeggs argues referring to Nead, the working class women "distinguish between those 'types' who enjoy and are in control of sex, and themselves. These distinctions map onto the respectable and unrespectable women" (Nead, 1988 in Skeggs, 1997, p. 131).

The sales worker's relation with her boyfriend is limited to a certain extent, unlike the ones who carries it 'further'. Here is Nazlı reflecting on the limits of her relations with her boyfriend: "For example I have a boyfriend too, I've never held his hands. I kissed him once [on cheek], on the New Year's Eve. Shaking hands happens just like friends"¹³ (Nazlı). Nazlı never held her boyfriend's hand and kissed him only once formally on his cheek. Furthermore, the limitation on relations with men can come to a point where the sales worker cannot even talk to them. Here is Cennet: "I'm not that interested in men, I can't talk to them"¹⁴ (Cennet). Moreover, here is Nur who says that even if she wants to have a friendship with men, she cannot approach them: "Maybe because I'm shy, I can't be friends with

¹² "Bazı kızların gerçekten, yani benim okulumda da vardı, tiplerinden ne oldukları çok belli oluyor. Hemen böyle ilk çıktıkları zaman ellerini tutuyor. Ben hiç öyle şeyleri sevmeyen bir insanım. Elini tutayım, aman sarılayım. . . . Nefret ediyorum, halbusi adı çıkıyor, hiç farkında değil. . . . Burada da çok kız görüyorum, öyle sarmaş dolaş, yolun ortasında öpüşenler; ne gerek var" (Nazlı).

¹³ "Mesela, benim de erkek arkadaşım var, hiçbir kere bile elini tutmamışımıdır. Bir kere öpmüşlüğüm var, o da yılbaşındaydı. Tokalaşma, senle arkadaşımış gibi, öyle oldu". (Nazlı).

¹⁴ "Erkeklerle fazla ilgim yoktur, onlarla konuşmam" (Cennet).

men. . . . I don't want to, even if I do, I can't approach them"¹⁵ (Nur). Considering all these narratives, we can say that, the sales worker tries to stay within the limits of being honourable. For some, being virtuous is even not talking with man, and for some others it is not holding hands; but they all try to avoid the acts that they consider immoral. They all refrain from being like the women they disregard and who they think are not respected also by other people. Here is Harika reflecting on a 'free' woman she does not want to be like:

Nobody respects her. She was brought up freely since she doesn't have a father. . . . I wouldn't like to be like her. . . . She's comfortable, she'll do anything. . . . Everything you can imagine. Not that bad though, she has fears, but she holds hands. When her boyfriend calls her out at night she'll definitely go.¹⁶ (Harika)

All these narratives shows that femininity is constructed over the differences from other femininities. For the sales worker, in terms of femininity, the difference between her and the clients is in the dualities of 'can shop'/ 'cannot shop', 'unkempt' / 'well groomed', 'can go on holiday'/ 'cannot go on holiday', 'can travel around'/ 'stay at home', 'being free' / 'being dependent on husband/family', 'being relaxed in relations with men' / 'having distant relations with men', and wearing clothing that 'covers' / 'reveals'.

5.2. The Sales Worker's Emotional World

This part examines how the sales workers experience the differences that were mentioned above. I present the emotional reactions of the sales workers, through which her subjectivity is constructed in. In this part, I will show that class and gender are experienced as realities with emotional consequences.

¹⁵ "Çok sessiz olduğumdan erkeklerle arkadaşlık kuramam mesela. . . . İstemem ben. İstesem bile zaten yaklaşamam ben erkeklere" (Nur).

¹⁶ "Kimse saymıyor. Babası da olmadığı için biraz serbest büyümüş. . . . o yüzden onun gibi olmak istemezdim. . . . Bu öyle rahat, her şeyi yapar. . . . Her şey, aklınıza gelebilecek her şey. Ama o kadar kötü değil de, var korkuları da, ama el ele tutuşur. Gece sevgilisi çağırıyorsa, kesinlikle dışarı çıkar" (Harika).

The class and gender inequalities, which are experienced on a daily basis, emotionally affect the sales worker. Her experience with these inequalities shapes her emotional world. The emotional worlds of the sales workers that I interviewed show some similarities. As Erdoğan (2007) says each singularity, in relation with the same dominance and power relations produce common or similar wishes, practices, emotions and meaning worlds. In this part, I will present the common elements of the sales workers' emotional world.

As stated in the theoretical framework in Chapter 2, class is an issue of what people do not have access to rather than what they can access. In this sense, it is not only an issue of material scarcity, but also it is an issue of the emotional reaction to experiencing limitations in life in every sense. As Williams says, class operates as a "structure of feeling" (Williams, 1961, p. 977).

As mentioned earlier, subjectivity operates in a dialogic manner. Thus it is possible to assert that sales workers' "classifying themselves depended upon the classifying systems of others" (Skeggs, 1997, p. 74). In the same way, Bora (2005) emphasizes that, "understanding self and others is never distinct from value judgments and these women are always aware of others real or imaginary value judgments" (p. 45). In that sense, sales worker's conceptualization of the value judgments of the 'other' is important and most of the time other's value judgements have emotional impacts on the sales worker.

As argued earlier, the other's recognition of oneself, affects how a person sees herself. Accordingly, the sales worker looks herself through the lens of the customer/other, and sees herself as inferior as she thinks that the customer considers her to be inferior. As Nazlı says "[m]aybe she thinks herself as superior to me. I don't know"¹⁷ (Nazlı). In that sense, this recognition is very important in the formation of the subjectivity of the sales worker and this feeling of inferiority is one of the major elements in the sales worker's emotional world.

¹⁷"Belki, kendini benden üstün görüyor. Bilmiyorum" (Nazlı).

For the sales worker, self-evaluation of being inferior is not only limited to work area but also in other parts of her life she believes that ‘others’ consider her as inferior. This is a great source of pain for the sales worker and results in a permanent state of feeling inadequate. As an example, Irazca explains that she cannot have a relationship with a male customer as they are not equals.

Well, I don’t feel a thing; I just feel that I’m not appropriate for that. For example, um... (she pauses) how can I say, for example a customer comes and well, wants to meet. Some people even have a car. Umm... that’s not my cup of tea. I mean, who am I to meet them? I can’t adapt to that (him).¹⁸
(Irazca)

Skeggs says that “[t]he working class are never free from the judgments of imaginary and real others that position them, not just as different, but as inferior, as inadequate” (Skeggs, 1997, p. 90). So, all the differences that we stated in the above part, are not only recognized as differences, but also they cause a constant feeling of inferiority and inadequacy. As seen, Irazca evaluates herself as not appropriate for the customer; she arrives at that conclusion not only by herself, but from what she perceives as the perception of the other. In the narrative, we see that having a car signalizes the difference between them in the social hierarchy, and this difference results in a feeling of adequacy and becomes the reason why she considers herself inappropriate for him. In a sense, Irazca recognizes her place in the social hierarchy and acts accordingly.

Likewise, here is how Sevda tells about her conception of the clients’ recognition of her:

They think themselves superior. They think we are people to be tyrannized... Especially some ladies often attract my and my friends’ attention. Excuse me, but they treat us as if we are not human, they scold us, even when they ask us something. But when addressing to our manager, or Ms. Ayşe, they become so polite, bow down, and so. . . . Probably because she [the customer] thinks we’re quite lower than her ...¹⁹ (Sevda)

¹⁸ “Valla hiç bi şı hissetmiyorum, sadece ona uygun olmadığımı hissediyorum. Mesela yani, ıı... (duraksıyor)... nasıl söyliyim, mesela müşteri geliyo, işte tanışmak istiyio, öyle insanlar geliyo ki, mesela altında arabası var. Hıı, bu bana göre değil, hani, ben neyim ki bunla tanışçak? Ben buna uyum sağlayamam” (Irazca).

That is to say, in the shopping encounter, either the sales worker herself feels herself to be inferior and inadequate, or she thinks that the client most probably thinks that the sales worker is inferior and inadequate. Most of the time the reasons for feeling inferior is based on working as a sales worker, which the sales worker thinks that in itself reveals the low position of the sales worker in the social hierarchy because she lacks the educational and cultural capital and that is why she sees herself valueless. In that sense, as Erdoğan (2007) asserts lacking educational and cultural capitals bears intense hidden injuries (p. 67). Gülsüm comments on not ever going to school: “And this makes one quite sad. How should I say it, it is a very different feeling that I cannot describe fully”²⁰ (Gülsüm).

The sales worker’s feeling of inferiority is also based on her experience of material scarcity in her life. Not being able to satisfy the very basic human needs, such as the food and clothing results in feeling sad and depressed. Gülsüm explains it as follows:

I have experienced it before...For example, sometimes it happened that when I was with my father, I couldn’t buy a pair of shoes, when my friends could. I was really sad. There were times when I couldn’t buy new clothes in Eid [a Muslim holiday]. It happened many times to me and I felt really upset. I don’t want this to happen to my children.²¹(Gülsüm)

According to Skeggs, “[c]lass relations are felt as they are lived, and these feelings generate strong emotions” (Skeggs, 1997, p. 92). Similarly, the daily childhood experience of material deprivation results in a permanent emotional damage for the

¹⁹ ““Kendilerini daha üstün görüyorlar, ezebileceğim bir insan falan diye geliyorlar...Bazı hanımlar var özellikle çok dikkatimizi çeker, diğer arkadaşla. Bizi böyle affedersin, insan yerine bile koymaz, devamlı tersler, bir şey sorarken bile tersleyerek sorar. Ama müdürümüzle muhatap olduğu zaman, Ayşe hanımla muhatap olduğu zaman, daha böyle kibarlaşır, ezilir büzülür. . . . Herhalde bizi kendinden çok küçük gördüğü için...” (Sevda).

²⁰ “Tabii insan çok üzülüyor. Ne bileyim çok ayrı bir duygu, anlatamam” (Gülsüm).

²¹ “Mesela çok ayakkabı konusunda olsun, babamın yanında falan. Alamadığım, arkadaşlarımın alıp da ben şey giyindiğim zaman çok üzuldüm. Bayramda kıyafet alamadığım şeyler oldu. Çocuğuma yaşatmak istemiyorum. Çok oldu hem de, çok şey oldum ben, üzuldüm” (Gülsüm).

sales worker. Having had a similar experience to Gülsüm, Sakine explains: “When I was a child, there were things we wanted but my dad used to say, not this month, maybe next month. There are some things he couldn’t buy, maybe he regrets that”²² (Sakine).

In adult life many sales workers lack sufficient income and they get tired of constantly being in debt. Gülsüm said: “I would like to clear my debts. Because so many debts suffocate me”²³ (Gülsüm). The situation for the women like Gülsüm is exacerbated by the fact that they work on a temporary basis under unsecure conditions and continuously have to find ways to make ends meet and this leads to anxiety and depression (Kardam & Alyanak, 2003).

The necessity of borrowing money and goods from friends or neighbours is inevitable for some sales workers. Ufuk explains: “We borrowed money, a lot. I don’t know how to pay it back”²⁴ (Ufuk). She also added that although she is not able to repay her debts she still has to borrow from her friends and that really depresses her. Similarly, Gülsüm states that “I have friends, I borrow money from my friends. . . . of course, sometimes they say they don’t have any spare money”²⁵ (Gülsüm). In addition to lacking basic needs, having to borrow from others reveals the sales worker’s poverty. For some of the sales workers, there seems to be no way to get themselves out of debt, but the narratives of the sales workers reveal their dream to have a life, in which they can cover the basic needs of their family; such as housing, food and education.

²² “Küçükken bizim de istediğimiz şeyler oluyordu. Babam bu ay olmaz da belki bir dahaki ay filan diyordu. Hiç almadığı da olmuştur, içimde uhde kalan şeyler de olmuştur” (Sakine).

²³ “Borçlarımı kapatmak isterdim. Çok çünkü borç, beni bunaltrı” (Gülsüm).

²⁴ “Borçlandık, bayağı bir borçlandık. Nasıl ödeyeceğiz bilmiyorum” (Ufuk).

²⁵ “Arkadaşlarım var, arkadaşımından alıyorum. . . . bazen de tabii yok dedikleri de oluyor” (Gülsüm).

As mentioned above, besides lacking sufficient income, being recognized as poor is a pejorative experience. That is why, some of the sales workers try to hide their poverty as explained by Irazca as:

There are times when there's even no tea or sugar at home. . . . Nothing happens, you're just hungry, but you don't, you can't tell anyone. For example, if you have a guest, you borrow from the neighbour. 'Let the guests drink, you don't.' That's what my mother always told me. That's how it is.²⁶ (Irazca)

To sum up, lacking certain goods, being in need of borrowing money and goods and being recognized as poor / lacking is experienced as injuries in the sales worker's life.

On the other hand, self-accusation is a very common feature of sales worker's emotional world. She either accuses herself or her family for her life, being a sales worker, not having education and a good occupation, and not earning enough money.

The main source of accusation for the sales worker is not having education, either due to her own laziness or her parents not allowing her to go to school, or not being able to financially support her education. This is similar to the case in Koptekin's research. Koptekin (2010) interviewed many retail workers who could not continue their education for financial reasons. This lack of education is one of the main sources of their feelings of inferiority and also one of their main regrets in life. These feelings are also very similar to the ones expressed in Skeggs (1997) research "they blamed themselves for the lack of jobs and their lack of interest in schooling" (p. 37). Here is how Irazca blames herself: "Now, I am only known as a sales woman. . . . My mother always told me to study. And for me, going out with my friends or living in the moment seemed very nice"²⁷ (Irazca). She also accuses her

²⁶ " Ya da evde çayın, şekerin olmadığını da biliyorum. . . . Hiç bi şı olmuyo, sadece aç kalıyosun, kimseye söyleyemiyo, söyleyemiyosun. Mesela bi misafir geldi, komşundan alıyosun, veriyosun. Aman misafirsin, siz içmeyin, annem bize hep böyle derdi. Yani öyle" (Irazca).

²⁷"Ben şu an kendi etrafımda tezgahtarım. . . . Annem bana hep oku oku derdi. Bana de arkadaşlarımla gezmek ya da o anı yaşamak çok hoş gelirdi" (Irazca).

parents of not being able to financially support her education. Here it is important to note that most of the time the father is accused of not earning enough to support their children's education, and the mother is blamed for not being able to motivate her husband to earn more money.

Some of the sales workers assert that having an education and then an occupation can change a person's life. Here is Nazlı comparing her teacher with her mother:

When I have a look at my teachers I see that they can wear what they want. But my mother and father tell me that I must cover myself up. They are both that kind of people. . . . If they were educated, they would say "Well, this is me, I have to adapt myself to my social environment. But since they stay at home they have to adapt themselves to the home environment ... They occasionally go to a picnic or organize meetings with neighbours. They don't have any other noteworthy activities."²⁸ (Nazlı)

Nazlı thinks that if one is educated, she can have more liberty on deciding on what to wear and more opportunity to travel around. She considers education and afterward having an occupation will make her independent from her husband. "If I was educated I would practice my profession and not be financially dependent on my husband, I would have my own money"²⁹ (Nazlı).

Almost all the sales workers consider that an educated person deserves and receives respect. They state that people behave respectfully to a person who is a teacher, a nurse or a government officer. In that sense, lacking educational and cultural capital is experienced as 'hidden injuries' (Erdoğan, 2007, p. 67). Harika describes her feeling about a lack of education: "Without education, you live a life of misery like us. . . . If I had done my schooling I would have been educated... maybe I could

²⁸ "Öğretmenlerime de bakıyorum, istedikleri şekilde giyinebiliyorlar, ama annemler bir şekilde, babamlar diyor ya, kapanacaksın, başın kapalı olacak falan filan diye. Onların hepsi de böyle. . . . Okusalar falan, işte ben böyleyim diyecek, benim bu ortama uyum sağlaman gerekiyor diyecek, ona uyum sağlayacak. Ama evde olduğu için bir şekilde o ortama uyum sağlıyor. . . . Arada bir piknik yapmaya falan gidiyorlar, günleri oluyor, öyle, başka yok" (Nazlı).

²⁹ Okursam bir şekilde kendi mesleğimi yapacağım, o zaman hiç değilse eşime mahkûm olmayacağım, kendi param olacak" (Nazlı).

have done something, maybe I would have been somewhere better”³⁰ (Harika). Additionally, Harika added that she thought she would have been more respected if she had finished the school and had an occupation.

In the same way, just as the sales worker blames her parents for not being able to attend to school and/or not working hard enough or earning too little, she feels the guilt and humiliation when she cannot satisfy the needs of her children, as Koptekin (2010, p. 110) also observed.

That is to say, as Sennet and Cobb states;

Class society takes away from all the people within it the feeling of secure dignity in the eyes of others and of themselves. It does so in two ways: first, by the images it projects of why people belong to high or low classes – class presented as the ultimate outcome of personal ability; second, by the definition the society makes of the actions to be taken by people of any class to validate their dignity- legitimizations of self which do not, cannot work and so reinforce the original anxiety. (Sennet & Cobb, 1972, pp. 170-171)

In line with Sennet and Cobb, we see that the sales worker evaluates her not being able to continue schooling and accordingly her current position, as an outcome of her personal ability or her family’s inability to support her schooling financially.

In addition, some of the sales workers accuse their family for their current financial/social states. That is in line with the common tendency of the younger generation, as Erdoğan (2007, p. 69) explained, to blame their parents for their poverty. As an example, Sakine accuses her parents for the social-economic position of the family. Mainly, she accuses her father for not having worked hard enough and not having earned enough. In her own words she says:

I sometimes asked my father, why didn’t you study? You would have a higher salary. He regrets he didn’t study. He’s a secondary school graduate. He got the job passing an exam. But his salary could have been higher, of

³⁰ “Eğitim olmazsa, sürünür böyle bizim gibi . . . Eğer okusaydım eğitim görürdüm. Eğitim gördüğüm için de belki şey yapardım, daha büyük bir yerlerde olabilirdim”(Harika).

course. According to what he told me, he had some good opportunities, but he couldn't use them.³¹ (Sakine)

In that sense, there is “a split between conscious belief and inner conviction - in secret he feels ashamed for who he is. Class is his personal responsibility, despite the fact that he never had a chance” (Sennet & Cobb, 1972, p. 97). Similarly, Irazca blames her mother for not being intelligent and for not being able to direct her husband to have a better economic situation: “A wiser and more sophisticated mother might make my father straighten up and do as he is supposed to do. My mother was a naive person”³² (Irazca). Overall, Irazca thinks that her parents' lack of education, occupation or capital could be the reasons for her current socio-economic position.

This way of thinking also appears in Irazca's explanations on the reason why some people are rich and others are poor. Similarly, Gülsüm reflects on being rich or poor as follows: “I don't know if she [the poor] didn't do it in this world, maybe she'll do in the other. That's how God made her, maybe later she will. Maybe they also suffered back then, or they had their parents' heritage, or their father had a better job, so they could”³³ (Gülsüm). As seen, Gülsüm thinks that either the divine power has decided on who will live how or the parent's economic situation or the father's occupation can lead to a better life for some people.

On the other hand, some of the sales workers cannot totally accuse themselves or their family due to their poverty. Their discourse has a telescopic characteristic. On one hand, she accuses others, but on the other hand, she sees the reason for their

³¹ “Babama söylüyordum, baba niye okumadın daha yüksek maaş alırdın filan dediğim oluyordu. O da tabii okumadığına bin pişman. Ortaokul mezunu. O da işte bir sınavla girmiş. Ama daha yüksek olabilirdi tabii. Anlattığına göre eline çok fırsatlar geçmiş de kullanmamış” (Sakine).

³² “Daha bilgili, daha kültürlü bi anne olsaydı belki babamı yola getirebilirdi. Saf bi anneydi” (Irazca).

³³ “Bilmiyorum, belki bu dünyada göremediyse, öbür dünyada görür. Allah onu öyle şey yaptı, belki sonradan olacak. Belki onlar da zamanında çekti, belki anasının, babasının malı falan vardı da, babası daha bir işle çalışırdı, öyle oldu” (Gülsüm).

poverty as God's will. For example, Cennet said that it is God who decides which occupation people will have. She thinks of it as a distribution of tasks saying, "I believe it's the God who delivers our livelihood. . . . Not everybody can be a doctor, or an engineer or a dustman. Therefore, everybody has a different mission. This is what I have as a mission"³⁴ (Cennet). On the other hand, Ufuk thinks that God did not consider her worthy of a better life. According to Ufuk, poverty is a punishment given by God:

Living our lives, I don't know, maybe we weren't given the chance; maybe we weren't seen as worth it. . . . Well, I really don't know, maybe God is punishing us. Everybody has a burden; they carry as much as they can, but not more.³⁵ (Ufuk)

Thus, poverty is seen as either destiny, or God determining a person's function in the world.

However, similar to this tendency to consider poverty as the God's punishment, the poor sales worker also thinks that her poverty is her destiny. Yet, at that point, she angrily rails against destiny although aware that this is not possible. In that terms, self-accusation concerning a person's social position is not absolute. Conceiving the social order as legitimate and illegitimate exists as telescopically in the meaning world of the poor (Erdoğan, 2007). At one point, the sales worker tends to view other people's richness as legitimate since they consider it might be achieved by studying and working hard. However, at the same time there is also a feeling that something is unjust with the social inequalities, which is expressed in comments such as "I say 'God damn it'... I really do not know; actually they are also only human beings like us but why is the difference between them and us?"³⁶ (Nazlı),

³⁴ "Ben rızkı veren Allah diye düşünüyorum. . . . Herkes doktor olsa olmuyor, herkes mühendis olsa olmuyor, herkes çöpçü olsa olmuyor. Demek ki herkesin ayrı ayrı bir görevi var. Bana düşen de böyle olmakmış" (Cennet).

³⁵ "Hayatını yaşamak ne bileyim, belki bize o fırsat verilmedi, belki de bize o layık görülmedi. . . . Valla bilmiyorum, belki Allah tarafından bize ceza veriliyor. Herkesin bir yükü vardır, ama taşıyacağı yükleri kaldırırlar, taşıyamayacağı yükleri asla kaldıramazlar" (Ufuk).

³⁶ "Kahretsin diyorum... Ne bileyim, aslında onlar da insan, bizler de insanız, ama aramızdaki fark" (Nazlı).

“They are girls, and I’m a girl too, they have hair on their heads, and so do I, why is that so?”³⁷ (Nazlı). The expressions of Nazlı show that she does not totally internalize and normalize the differences she recognizes. She questions them, and this questioning is also a type of rebellion. It signifies that the gender and class inequalities are not accepted without questioning.

The sales worker can also accuse herself for feeling down due to the injustices she recognizes. She thinks she has to think of other people who are in a worse situation than her and that is why she should not complain. As Gülsüm says:

When I feel bored or depressed I say to myself ‘what an unjust world’. But then I regret it because I think that there might be people who are in a worse situation than me. There are many situations where I ask myself ‘Why did I say this to myself?’³⁸ (Gülsüm)

At one hand the sales worker accuses herself and her family, for their position. On the other hand, she sees their position / suffering as God’s decision and cannot blame herself for her position. Then again, she questions the reasons for the inequalities that she experiences and is buried under what she experiences. Yet, she also accuses herself for complaining about her position. She thinks she has to be grateful for her life, by thinking of the other people who live under worse conditions than her. All these reactions show us that class and gender based inequalities are experienced as injuries. However, controversially the sales worker can say that she is not very concerned about the differences she recognizes, and she even says that she is happy since her parents are alive and healthy.

Because I am happy, very happy. I don’t resent anything [the richness of the customer]. Let God give you more. . . . I am happy. I only wish God not to

³⁷ “Onlar da kız, biz de kızız, onlarda da saç var, bizde de var, niye böyle?” (Nazlı).

³⁸ “Tabii, birazcık bunaldığım zaman [ne adaletsiz dünya] diyorum . Ama pişman oluyorum. Benden belki daha kötü durumda olanlar da var. Niye dedim acaba, diye çok soru sorduğum oluyor kendime” (Gülsüm).

let me feel the lack of my mother and father. I do not want anything else.³⁹
(Nazlı)

That is to say, these young women are not desperately unhappy. Some of the sales workers say that although they do not have money, they have a family and they are grateful for this. This is in a sense, sales worker's own evaluation of her life through her own values. She does not give money the value that it is widely given in the society. Instead, she values being healthy and being together with the family. However, some of the sales workers in fact, do not have peaceful family relations, and there are several cases that they do not like her family at all.

As discussed above the sales workers in this study generally feel themselves as inferior and inadequate, and accuse themselves, although telescopically, for their positions. Their daily experiences of class and gender based inequalities have further impacts on their lives and personalities. Rubin (1976) claims that working-class Americans, are living in "worlds of pain". This is a similar case for the sales workers of the current study. Some of their narratives are underpinned by feeling alternativeness, boredom, desperation and lack of self-confidence.

Some of the sales workers think that she has no alternatives in her life, everything goes monotonous, and this makes her depressed. She works under very difficult conditions. Sakine describes her life as "Nothing much happens. It's monotonous"⁴⁰. Irazca also refers to this boredom as follows:

Come here in the morning, see through the open door that it's getting dark, then it's time to go. You see, that's all. It's not about what happened downtown or uptown. It's all about that opening [of the door] you see. What you see from that is all you can all day, this sometimes makes me very bored.⁴¹ (Irazca)

³⁹ "Ben mutluyum çünkü, gayet mutluyum. [Müşterinin zenginliğini] hiç olmuyor içerlediğim falan, Allah daha çok versin. . . . Mutluyum. Yani, Allah annemi, babamı başımdan eksik etmesin de, ben başka bir şey istemiyorum" (Nazlı).

⁴⁰ "Pek bir şey olmuyor. Monoton geçiyor" (Sakine).

⁴¹ "Sabah buraya gir, o kapı açık olan bölgeden sadece havanın karanlık olduğunu gör, aa gitme saatim geldi, anladın mı, sadece bu yani. Ne hani aşağıda ne olmuş, yukarıda ne olmuş değil, sadece gördüğün o kare. O kareden [kapı boşluğu] gördüklerinden akşama kadar yetiniyorsun, bu da bazen beni çok bunalıyo" (Irazca).

In addition, some sales workers stated that they lack self-confidence, they feel shy and therefore they cannot easily converse with others outside their circle of family and friends. Cennet explains that “I want to talk [to people], but I can’t”. Likewise, this also leads to submissiveness at work. For example, Irazca says: “I’m a very shy, reserved person who cannot express herself very well. I mean, when a customer shouts at me, I’m just struck dumb and I blush”⁴² (Irazca). For sure, this shyness also extends to their relations with men. As Nur says “I’m not that interested in men, I cannot talk to them”⁴³ (Nur).

On the other hand, several of the sales workers in this study stated that they do not trust their friends or people in general. As Sakine comments: “Those people who I just get to know always let me down. That’s what they did. There were people who I thought I knew, they wouldn’t do this and that, but then they did. . . . Therefore, now I’m pessimistic, I can’t trust anybody, nobody is any good”⁴⁴ (Sakine). Uğur is of the same opinion: “I was cheated by a few people, some friends”⁴⁵ (Uğur). The same views are held by Cennet:

I have friends, but no best friends. I see people as friends, I play my part, I help them but I’m never paid back. For example, I try to help them when they’re desperate, but I see nobody around when I am desperate. . . . There’s not even a single person I can trust or confide in. Everybody only cares about their own business, everybody thinks of themselves.⁴⁶ (Cennet)

⁴² “Çok utangaç ya da sıkılğan ya da ne bileyim kendini ifade edemiyen bi insanım. Kendisini derken mesela müşteri bana bağırdığında ben şöyle şaşırıp kalırım, hemen kızarıp bozarım” (Irazca).

⁴³ “Erkeklerle fazla ilgim yoktur, onlarla konuşmam” (Nur).

⁴⁴ “Ben de hep böyle tam tanıdım dediğim insanlardan hep tekme yedim. Öyle yaptılar yani. Ben bunu tanıyorum, şunu yapmaz bunu yapmaz dediğim her şeyi yapan insanlar oldu. . . .O yüzden artık karamsarım, güvenmiyorum o yüzden. Kimse iyi değil” (Sakine).

⁴⁵ “Ben bir iki kişiden çok kazık yedim arkadaş ortamından” (Uğur).

Moreover, some of the sales workers stated that they do not have hope and plans for the future. As Sakine says: “I don’t have any future plans. How can I? With what? Everybody is pessimistic about the future, materially”⁴⁷ (Sakine). Some of them are very pessimistic about their lives. “Actually I’m hopeless”⁴⁸ (Sevda) says Sevda. Sakine too says she easily becomes depressed: “I’m pessimistic even about the smallest thing. I detach myself from the world”⁴⁹ (Sakine). Likewise, Cennet says: “Sometimes I see those [rich people] who drive luxury cars. [I think] I could have been like them, I could be in that car. . . . Sometimes I feel hopeless”⁵⁰ (Cennet). Likewise, Irazca does not have the hope that things will change in her life: “God helps some, and strikes others, leaves them where they are forever”⁵¹ (Irazca). She thinks that she will stay where she is in the social hierarchy.

As discussed earlier, we see that the sales worker questions the injustices she faces. Skeggs indicates that the statements like ‘it’s not right’ and ‘it’s not fair’ come from a social position of future being blocked as opposed to a future that can be invested in (Skeggs, 2004, p. 90). By referring to the subjects of her research, she says that “women worked to put a floor on their current circumstances rather than investing

⁴⁶ “Benim arkadaşım vardır ama dostum yoktur. Ben insanları arkadaş olarak görürüm, bana düşen görevi yaparım, yardımı yaparım ama hiçbir zaman onlardan bir karşılık göremem. Mesela ben onlar düştükleri zaman yanında olmaya gayret ederim ama ben düştüğüm zaman hiç kimsenin yanımda olmadığını gördüm. . . . Bir tane insan çıksın ya, ona güveneyim, ona şey yapayım. Herkes kendi derdinde, herkes kendi halinde, herkes kendini düşünüyor” (Cennet).

⁴⁷ “Geleceğe yönelik hiçbir planım yok. Yani nasıl olsun ki neyle olsun. Herkes karamsar gelecekle ilgili, maddi olarak” (Sakine).

⁴⁸ “Aslında pek umutsuz bakıyorum” (Sevda).

⁴⁹ “En ufak bir şeyde karamsar olurum. Yaşamdan elimi ayağımı çekerim” (Sakine).

⁵⁰ “Bazen bakıyorum lüks araba sürenlere falan. Böyle de olabilirdim, bu arabanın içinde ben de olabilirdim. . . . Bazen ümitsizliğe düşünüyorum” (Cennet).

⁵¹ “Allah yürüttüğünü yürütüyo, yürütmediğine vuruyo habire, orda kalıyo” (Irazca).

in the future; their struggle was to retain the past and the present rather than being able to envisage or project into the future” (Skeggs, 2004, p. 92). The hopelessness of the women sales workers is similar to the findings of Skeggs. They feel that there is an injustice in the world, however their main struggle is to save the day. The bad realities of their daily life hold them from having hopes for the future, even if they wanted.

On the other hand, being hopeless and also blaming herself for being hopeless is ‘telescopically’ present in the sales workers’ discourse. Although it is difficult, sales workers think that they have to have the hope that it is the only way they can carry on. A retail worker in Koptekin’s study explained this situation as “hope should make us hold on when we could let go. I hope that something will change in a few years. God willing some changes will take place”⁵² (Koptekin, 2010, p. 225).

However, some of the sales workers still have dreams and hopes for the future. I will present those hopes more in detail in the part on sales workers’ respectability concerned behaviours. To say it briefly here, the most prominent unfulfilled hope for the sales workers is to have had a proper education which would have allowed them to have an occupation; for those who are still enrolled in the school system, this hope is still the most outstanding one, although some of them had doubts that they would be able to continue their education. Other than the desire to continue education, getting married is the second widespread desire among the sales workers. If they are already married, their most common desire is to provide a better future for their children. I will elaborate more on these desires in the coming parts.

To sum up, the women sales workers have similar emotional worlds transcending the singularity of their lives. From this it can be seen that

[c]ategories of class operate not only as an organizing principle which enable access to and limitations on social movements and interaction but are also reproduced at the intimate level as ‘structure of feeling’ (cf. Williams,

⁵² “İnsanları ayakta tutan umudu olmalı. Umut ediyorum birkaç yıl içerisinde bir şeylerin değişeceğini. İnşallah değişir” (Zehra interviewed in Koptekin (2010)).

1961, 1977) in which doubt, anxiety and fear inform the production of subjectivity. (Skeggs, 1997, p. 6)

As we see, the feeling structures of the sales workers resemble each other; full of feeling inferior and inadequate, self-accusation, lacking self-confidence, lacking trust in people, being bored and hopeless. In addition, the class and gender based inequalities are experienced as injuries of respectability and I will elaborate on this in the coming part.

5.3. Injuries of Respectability

In this section, I will first examine the emotions of the sales worker related with experiencing gender and class based inequalities at the workplace. Then, I will consider the sales worker's daily life, and will give a general picture of her emotions on experiencing class and gender based inequalities outside the work. This examination of the sales worker's emotions will reveal the importance of respectability in the sales worker's life. I will specifically focus on the respectability injuries of the sales worker, by examining the main aspect of her life; work, home and relations with men. This part will be followed by a specific section with a focus on the sales worker's respectability concerned behaviours.

As argued in the theoretical framework in Chapter 2 with reference to Sennet and Skeggs, one of the main concerns of the working class is respectability since it is the issue for the people who do not have it. In parallel to Sennet and Skeggs, this research reveals that the women sales workers lack respectability in their lives mainly as a result of their class, gender and occupation.

They face disrespectful behaviour in every sphere of their lives, such as; the workplace, within the family or in her personal relations with men. Moreover, they are subject to both physical and emotional violence along with disrespectful behaviours. Even if the sales workers try to ignore these negative behaviours, they are still injured. However, they see the world through their filters of respectability and that is why independent of their attitude towards these behaviours, there is the

issue of respectability in their life and, they are also vulnerable to the behaviour of others.

Besides, the sales worker, far beyond only being subject to what she thinks as disrespectful behaviour, also feels that 'other' people such as the customers think that she does not deserve respect. Sales worker thinks that people evaluate her as an uneducated, uncultured sales worker. At that point, this feeling of not deserving respectability goes hand in hand with the self-accusation. She blames herself because of her economic situation, for her living conditions and on the whole for being the person she is and living the life that she lives. Yet, on the other hand, she bears the inner objection that she deserves respectability. On the whole, she wants to be considered as deserving respect and consequently she wants to be respected.

Skeggs argues that being working-class generates a constant fear of never having 'got it right' (Skeggs, 1992, p. 6). As she explains by referring to Bourdieu (1986) "[t]hey continually doubt their own judgments. This is the emotional politics of class. They can never have the certainty that they are doing it right which is one of the main signifiers of middle-class dispositions" (Skeggs, 1997, p. 90). This case is described by Bora (2005) as such:

They [domestic workers] are never sure that they are doing the right thing in the right way. Yet this rightness is an area that the middle class organizes. The women from working class, give too much importance to how they are seen by others. (p. 161)

In this part, we will see that this described situation is also valid for women sales workers.

To understand the importance of respectability for the sales worker's life, the next section presents an examination of the sales workers work and personal life and reveals the disrespectful behaviours that she experiences. To start with working place, working as a sales worker means to have direct contact with the customer and being in service to them at in a 'customer is always right' context. There is of

course a variety of customer's behaviour to the sales worker. Fleetwood puts the nuanced account of customers as such:

First, recent empirical work suggests that workers and consumers might actually relate to one another as moral agents, thereby aligning their interests. Bolton and Houlihan (2005) offer a nuanced account of consumers, dividing them into three types: (i) 'mythical sovereigns', who seek to exercise their perceived right to demand not just service but servitude from service providers; (ii) 'functional transactants', who simply wish to carry out a transaction in the simplest manner possible; and (iii) 'moral agents', who treat workers as human beings. (Fleetwood, 2008)

Likewise, in my field research, I realized different types of customer's behaviours. There are mainly three types of customer communicating with the sales worker: i) functional and respectful, ii) ignorant (inherently disrespectful) and iii) disrespectful. In the first one, the customer interacts with the sales worker to buy a cloth and she behaves in a good manner. In the second one, the customer just does not care about the sales worker, she just ignores her. She does not answer her welcoming or ignores her offer for assistance. She is just interested in the clothes. As Nazlı says:

There are those who don't respect [us]. They think highly of themselves. . . . and I do nothing, what can I do?. . . . I do nothing, I mean, I'm interested from a distance. She's looking around for a while, and then leaves. . . . I don't feel anything. I don't know; I just leave the rest to God. I don't care what she does. She thinks herself as superior to me. I don't know. They are mostly well-groomed. There are some girls of my age, they're too flamboyant. She enters, I say welcome, she says something like "hmm". I don't resent that at all. Hope God gives them more.⁵³ (Nazlı)

On close examination the third type, the disrespectful behaviour of the client, the client's harsh criticism of the product offered by the sales worker, turns out to be an aggressive act towards the sales worker. Durakbaşa and Cindoğlu (2008) assert that a customer can show her dislike of the product "in such a manner as to emphasize their class status, while devaluing the shop assistant as well" (p. 85). Here, rather

⁵³ "Saygı duymayan var, kendini bir şey zannedip. . . . Ben de hiç şey yapmıyorum, ne yapayım. . . . Hiçbir şey yapmıyorum, yani, uzaktan ilgileniyorum, o bakıyor bakıyor gidiyor. . . . Hiçbir şey hissetmiyorum, yani ne bileyim, Allah'a havale ediyorum, ne yapıyorsa, yapsın. . . . kendini benden üstün görüyor. Bilmiyorum, zaten bakımlılar genellikle. Bazı kızlar, benim gibi kızlar, çok havalılar. Mesela geliyor, hoş geldiniz diyorum, hım falan yapıyor. . . . Hiç olmuyor içerlediğim falan, Allah daha çok versin" (Nazlı).

than the product, the sales worker and her working class taste become the target of the client's criticisms. The client behaves in an arrogant manner when she does not like the product that the sales worker offers her. The client evaluates the product as low quality and having low aesthetic value; and shows her aversion by looking down her nose at the sales worker. That is to say, "this contest is as much about the denigration of the saleswoman as the product itself" (Durakbaşı & Cindođlu, 2000, p. 86).

Also, the sales workers frequently mention about the client's maltreatment. This behaviour can take various forms such as shouting at the sales worker, insulting and humiliating her. As Sevda says: "This one [the customer] has begun yelling. "Know your place etc." A quarrel has broken out. He continued yelling by saying things like 'You feeble-minded, stupid'"⁵⁴ (Sevda). This is a very similar case for what Koptekin notice at her research on retail workers:

It can easily be observed from many narratives of workers that workers experience social distinctions in a vertical and hierarchical perspective assuming that they are treated as inferior. Their overemphasis on humiliating and insulting behaviours make us think that these behaviours are performed by the majority of consumers. (Koptekin, 2010, p. 81)

On the other hand, as it is the same case for Koptekin's (2010) assertion concerning retail workers, sales worker not only suffer from the poor behaviours of customers but also of the boss. As Sevda puts it: "He was a bad guy, he was suppressing us a lot, shouting at us a lot, etc. He was shouting about everything, and he was often insulting"⁵⁵ (Sevda).

However, for the purpose of this research it is very important to understand how the disrespectful behaviour of the customer is perceived by the sales worker. Basically, the sales worker's perception of the reasons why the client behaves in a

⁵⁴ "Bu [müştteri] bađırmaya başladı, haddini bil falan. . . . Bir tartışma çıktı. Bađırmaya falan başladı, geri zekalı, aptal falan diye böyle" (Sevda).

⁵⁵ "Çok şey bir adamdı, çok eziyordu, çok bađırıyordu falan. Her şeye bađırıyordu, bir de çok hakaret ederek konuşuyordu" (Sevda).

disrespectful way are as follows; i) sales work is an unqualified simple work, and ii) sales work has an asymmetric nature. According to the first understanding, sales workers think that sales work is a socially disvalued job and thus customer just does not respect her. According to the second one, the sales worker thinks that customers see the sales worker as a ‘slave’, and positions herself above the sales worker as they consider themselves as always right.

In regards to the first conception, the sales worker thinks that being a sales worker naturally results in the customer not showing respect to her as it is a socially disvalued job.

He was the kind of person who shouted too much. He was shouting about everything. And he was also very insulting when talking to someone. “There are some women who attract the attention of me and my friends. They do not even treat us like human beings, they always despise us even when asking us about something. But when they see our manager or Mrs. Ayşe they become politer and cringe in embarrassment.”⁵⁶ (Sevda)

Sevda also thinks that it is not only customers who do not respect sales workers, other people also do the same: “When you talk about being a saleswoman people stop and think. . . . Of course, there’s a big difference between a teacher and a saleswoman. . . . when you say you’re a saleswoman, people just ignore you”⁵⁷ (Sevda). Similarly, the sales worker thinks that other people consider sales work to be menial. “My relatives, my grandmother said; you’re educated, you could have found a better job that would be permanent and so on”⁵⁸ (Sakine). Even the sales workers think that their work is ‘simple’, which does not require any brain power.

⁵⁶ “Bazı hanımlar var özellikle çok dikkatimizi çeker, diğer arkadaşla. Bizi böyle affedersin, insan yerine bile koymaz, devamlı tersler, bir şey sorarken bile tersleyerek sorar. Ama müdürümüzle muhatap olduğu zaman, Ayşe hanımla muhatap olduğu zaman, daha böyle kibarlaşır, ezilir büzülür” (Sevda).

⁵⁷ “Bir de tezgahçılık dendiği zaman insanlar bir durup düşünüyor şöyle. . . . Bir öğretmenlikle tezgahçılık arasında tabii çok büyük farklar var. . . . işte tezgahçılık yapıyorum dediğin zaman insanlar bazen seni kaile almıyor” (Sevda).

⁵⁸ “Akrabalarım, babaannem filan o kadar okudun daha iyi bir iş bulabilirdin, orası kalıcı olmaz filan dediler” (Sakine).

As Sakine comments; “I thought it would be a simple job. I mean I thought I wouldn’t be mentally tired”⁵⁹ (Sakine).

On the other hand, the relation with the customer and the sales worker is asymmetric due to its hierarchical character. First, the basic rule of the shopping activity is that the customer has the money to consume and the sales worker is there at her service to help her buy the goods. That is why; this relation is simply experienced in the frame of the well-known discourse that ‘the customer is always right’. Here is how Sevda explains it:

They see themselves as superior and consider their counterpart as someone whom they can oppress. I should think so. They also come with the thought that the customer is always right. For example the good is defective and it is not my fault. But she takes his/her frustration out on me.⁶⁰ (Sevda)

Secondly, this relation is hierarchical because the client’s taste of goods is seen as superior than that of the sales worker. As Benson (1986) explains

[c]ustomers and managers assumed the superiority of an urban bourgeois culture based on good taste and gentle behaviour. Saleswomen brought into the store a variety of working-class cultures whose standards of aesthetics and action diverged from those of the dominant culture. (p. 3)

As Sevda puts it:

We have showed it to her. She belittled me saying: ‘Do you ever think that I would wear this? Take it and wear it yourself.’ After five minutes or so our manager showed the same garment to her and asked: “Do you like it? Does it fit you?” She put it on. Our manager said that it fit her very well. ‘Really’ she replied. So there are this kind of people as well.⁶¹ (Sevda)

⁵⁹ “Tezgahtarlığı basit görüyordum. Yani beynim yorulmaz diye düşünüyordum” (Sakine).

⁶⁰ “Kendilerini daha üstün görüyorlar, ezebileceğim bir insan falan diye geliyorlar. Herhalde öyle. müşteri her zaman haklıdır düşüncesiyle de geliyorlar tabii. Mesela mal defolu, benim suçum değil bu ama hırsını benden çıkarıyor” (Sevda).

⁶¹ “Gösterdik, bana dedi ki, bunu ben giyer miyim sence, alda sen giy dedi, tersledi. Sonra aynı şeyi aradan bir 5 dakika falan geçti, müdürümüz gösterdi, bilmem ki, güzel olur mu sizce falan dedi. Giydi, müdürümüz çok güzel olmuş falan dedi. Gerçekten güzel mi falan diye, oluyor. Bu tipler de oluyor” (Sevda).

Likewise, here is how Irazca explains her taste being different from the customer:

I know that rich people are tasteless. (Interviewer: Hmm, why?) I don't know why. Maybe it is because someone who cannot afford buying many things likes and buys only one thing but examines it in detail when buying it since he does not have many alternatives. However someone who is rich examines the goods not in detail but only roughly probably because he/she has money and buys things without thinking whether he/she looked elegant in it. I say to her "Lady, this one is more beautiful." But she doesn't care and buys the first one that she had chosen. We, on the contrary, examine something, which we want to buy, for hours to see whether it has any defects, understand its quality and see if the size fits. But they do not care about such things.⁶² (Irazca)

Moreover, the relation between the sales worker and client takes the form of an encounter of the 'expert' housewife and the 'young, usually inexperienced, salesperson' (Durakbaşı & Cindođlu, 2002, p. 85). This also contributes to the hierarchical character of this relationship.

Furthermore, in my study I see that some sales workers think that clients have the perception that 'it is my right to behave rudely'. Some of the sales workers told me that the customers took out their own problems on the sales worker. As Sevda tells about it:

She is stressed most of the time. She either argues with a superior and being defeated by him takes her anger out on us or she argues with her husband and becomes very upset. Then she comes and tries some clothes on, spends some time and calms down this way. There is also this kind of customers.⁶³ (Sevda)

⁶² "Zenginlerin [the customers] zevksiz olduklarını biliyorum. (Görüşmeci: Hı, neden?) Bilmem neden, yani her şeyden hani, belki işin içinde bulunduğum içindir. Zevksiz yani ne biliyim, hani alamayan bi tane beğeniyo, ince detayına kaçıyo. O, hani parası olduğu için herhalde, kaba taslak alıyo, bakmıyo, anlamı hani, bu güzel ya da üzerimde şık durdu değil, alıyo, onu da alıyo. Hani "hanfendi, bu daha güzel" diyom, "yoo" diyo, "gerek yok" diyo, "ben onu beğenmedim zaten, bu olsun", hiç önem vermiyo anlıyo musun. Bizler mesela bi şey alıyoruz, defosu var mı bi saat inceleriz, bakarız, ya da işte kalitesi nasıl, ya da işte bedeni bana uyar mı? Onlar da o yok" (Irazca).

⁶³ "Stresli oluyor, ya birileriyle kavga edip çıkıyor, ya onun bir üstüyle kavga edip ezilip gelip hırsını bizden çıkarıyor ya da kocasıyla kavga ediyor geliyor ya da çok morali bozuk oluyor. Kendini tatmin edip, gelip orada bir şeyler deneyip, çıkarıp falan, böyle vakit geçirmek için gelenler oluyor yani" (Sevda).

Similarly, also in Koptekin's research the retail workers "thought that the customers who cause trouble generally transfer their problems, especially family problems, which are not related with the store, to workers" (Koptekin, 2010, p. 106). That is seen particularly when the women customers try to affirm their superior positions over the sales worker as a kind of revenge for the stressful things happening in their own lives. The sales worker thinks that a customer who has problems in their own life uses shopping as a way of relaxation and does not hesitate to behave rudely to the sales worker since she is already angry about other things in her personal life. As Sennett and Cobb (1993) stated "the strong still oppress the weak not only because they can, but because they feel entitled to do so" (p. 54). On the contrary, due to the asymmetric nature of the sales work, the sales worker never has the right to transfer her own problems to the customer; she must always be there, serving with a smiling face.

Richness is also seen by the sales worker as a reason why the client behaves disrespectfully to her, just because she is rich. On the contrary the poorer customers are considered not to maltreat the sales worker and rather behave in a kind or bashful way, when they ask for something. The rich customer, who has the potential to consume, 'is always right' and this positions the sales worker to have to meet all the demands at maximum as she needs to keep her job. As Fleetwood indicates this also causes stress and loss of dignity for the sales worker:

Behaving rude to a shop assistant does not endanger the customer's livelihood, whereas replying in kind and/or refusing to be deferential might endanger the latter's livelihood, especially where the employment is precarious. The master discourse, however, encourages this, and encourages us to make demands as consumers on workers, whilst discouraging us from considering the suffering this may cause them in terms of stress, loss of dignity. It might even be, at least partly, responsible for creating an environment where some people feel emboldened to press their demands as consumers through violence. (Fleetwood, 2006, p. 13)

Without a doubt, independent of the sales worker's reasoning of the disrespectful behaviour of the customer; customer's not showing respect reduces the self-confidence of the sales worker. In addition, the sales worker's perception of how

she is seen by the customer functions as a self-fulfilling prophesy. Knowing that she is considered as not deserving respect is accompanied by a lack of self-esteem. This experience of sales worker is similar to those of the retail worker as stated by Koptekin (2010) “humiliation and maltreatment have become a part of the job of store workers, and these conditions have increased need for respect and self-esteem” (p. 81). Moreover, the sales worker can feel unimportant as a result of being abused and insulted by customers because of the job she does (Koptekin, 2010, p. 79). She loses dignity and self-respect. She is humiliated, and she is even to “be expected to put up with being humiliated” (Koptekin, 2010, p. 81). Moreover, she thinks that she deserves being humiliated. The systematic poor behaviour of the customers causes the sales workers real and great pain (Koptekin, 2010, p. 81).

On the other hand, in addition to the disrespectful behaviour that the sales worker faces at work, she also faces disrespectful behaviour at home and in her relations with boyfriends, or male family relatives. Mainly, the sales worker is disrespected because she is a woman. Her behaviour and clothes are under the control of the family, especially the men. As Harika says her maternal uncle limits her clothing: “They often get very angry; even if a part my leg is visible and seen by mistake they will beat me; this is their mentality. Therefore, in such a case my maternal uncles will break my legs”⁶⁴ (Harika). In addition, here is how Harika tells about her uncles beating her:

My maternal uncle? No, he does not beat me; but he did it once. He beat me very badly with a belt... (Interviewer: Why, what happened, what was the reason?) My mother had gone on a journey; she went to Ankara because we were in the village. He beat my mother, I took the knife in my hand and said to my uncle that I would kill myself and things like that. My uncle took the knife from my hand and attacked me with the belt. He whipped me on my foot. (Interviewer: Why did he beat your mother?) He said, “why are you going on a journey; your husband is waiting for you at home” and things like that. (Interviewer: What did your father say?) My father did not say

⁶⁴ “Onlar genelde çok kızarlar, bacağım açsam bile döverler, o kafadadırlar. O yüzden dayılarım kırar bacaklarımı” (Harika).

anything, because he is her brother and he has the right to beat... (Interviewer: Why did you oppose to him?) Because he beat my mother very badly. . . . my mother's nose was bleeding very badly... But my maternal uncles love me very much. . . . I don't get too informal with my uncles because my uncles may hit me again if I do so. But they get angry very quickly. If I say something, they suddenly hit me and make me cry and run away.⁶⁵(Harika)

Male relatives can even comment on the female family member's body, her eating habits and other aspects of her behaviour. This was reported by Harika who said that her uncle commented on how overweight she was in a way that emotionally hurt her. Harika tells about how her uncle intervened when she was eating:

We have recently visited our village. We had a barbecue. I was just eating. I was wearing this then, and my belly was wrinkled like this. Just when I was eating my bread, he said: "why are you eating like you've never had it before? Get up and look at your belly. Is this how a girl should be?" I felt dizzy, I left and didn't sit there again.⁶⁶ (Harika)

In Irazca's narrative we can see that his boyfriend insulted her, almost without a reason.

I was in the park. He told me to go home and I wrote back: I will not go home and you just be green with envy... Then he said some very harsh words... Sometimes you think you know someone very well. For example, your sister. You say they would not do such a thing. You think 'she is my sister. She has a high opinion of me' However even your sister may sometimes turn her back on you. And my boyfriend just did that. He said to me: 'It seems that you have deviated from the right path'... He said very harsh things to me. Everything was over for me when he said to me 'you

⁶⁵ "Dayılarım mı, beni dövmez; ama bir kere dövdü. Çok kötü dövdü, kemerle...(Görüşmeci: Niye, hayrola, olay neydi?) Annem gezmeye gitti, Ankara'ya geldi biz köyde olduğumuz için. Annemi dövmüş, ben de elime bıçağı aldım, dayı kendimi öldürürüm falan dedim. Dayım elimde bıçağı bir tuttu, bana kemerle saldırdı. Beni falakayı yatırdı. (Görüşmeci: Anneni niye dövdü?) Ne geziyon, senin kocan evde bekliyor falan diye. (Görüşmeci: Baban ne diyor peki?) Babam da bir şey demedi, çünkü kardeşidir, döver döver falan.(Görüşmeci: Sen niye karşı çıktın?) Ama çok kötü dövdüler o zaman... annemin burnu falan çok kötü kaniyordu... Ama beni çok sever dayılarım. . . . Dayımla fazla laubali olmam,çünkü dayılarım laubali olunca, bir densizlik yaparım, gene vurur falan diye. Ama çabuk şey yapıyor. Ben bir şey derim, o da bana karşılığı pat diye vurur, ağlar, giderim " . (Harika).

⁶⁶ "Geçen köye gittik. Mangal yaktık -affedersiniz- oturduk, ben tam yiyorum. Tam ekmeğin içine koydum, ısırđım, "hiç görmemiş gibi ne yiyon, kalk kız, şu göbeğe bak, kız kısmı böyle mi olur?" dedi, başım döndü, bir kalktım, gittim. Daha da oturmadım" (Harika).

can't even be my dog, let alone my wife". Do you understand?' I was very upset.⁶⁷ (Irazca)

To conclude we can say that the sales worker faces disrespectful behaviour both at workplace and in her personal life. These cause respectability to be a main issue for the sales worker.

5.4. Desire for Respectability: Becoming Respectable

From the narratives of the sales workers, we see that they have injuries of respectability. The comments of the women participating in the research show that they face disrespectful behaviours and lack respect in their lives. Ufuk for example commented; "I didn't benefit materially, and I didn't also see any moral benefit, I didn't get love and respect"⁶⁸ (Ufuk). The same is true for Cennet who explains: "I told you, I didn't get any respect. I'm not respected properly"⁶⁹ (Cennet). Accordingly, respect becomes a very critical issue for the sales worker. Irazca makes a typical comment: "I think respect is very important because nothing exists where there is no respect, even love, it's what creates the love"⁷⁰ (Irazca). Additionally, Cennet puts it this way: "Every person wants to be respected and loved. If a person says they don't want that, they're lying. Because it's in our

⁶⁷ "Parktaydım, eve gitmemi söyledi, ben de şey yazdım "gitmiyorum, sen de çatla" yazdım...ondan sonra şey dedi işte, yani, çok çok ağır laflar konuştu,... bazen, bi insanı çok iyi tanırsın ya, ablanı bile, bu yapmaz dersin, o benim ablam, bana değer veriyö dersin, ablan da bazen arkasını dönebilir, o [erkek arkadaşım] da öyle çıktı, çok ağır laflar konuştu. Yani bana mesela sen yoldan çıkmışsın dedi... "sen benim eşim değil kapım da köpeğim bile olamazsın"" dedi o zaman herşey bitti benim için, anladın mı, çok üzöldüm yani " (Irazca).

⁶⁸ "Ben maddi görmedim, manevi yararı da hiç görmedim, sevgi saygı da görmedim" (Ufuk).

⁶⁹ "Dedim ya, saygı görmedim ki hiç. Doğru düzgün saygı görmüyorum ki" (Cennet).

⁷⁰ "Bence saygı çok önemli, çünkü saygının olmadığı yerde hiç bi şî olmaz, sevgi bile olmaz, çünkü sevgiyi yaratan saygı" (Irazca).

character to be loved, respected, being considered as a good and nice person”⁷¹ (Cennet). Uğur’s comment is in agreement with Cennet. She says that she wants “to be good at heart, respected and loved”⁷² (Uğur). Irazca wants a husband who respects her:

I’m expecting to have a good spouse in the future. I don’t care if he doesn’t have a job, I mean he should, but he should also respect me, because I suffered a lot from my family. I want to experience with him what I couldn’t in my family.⁷³ (Irazca)

On the other hand, as discussed in earlier parts, the sales worker constantly feels like she is being judged by somebody else’s standards. Her imaginary dialogical other always judges herself on being a ‘proper person’. She most of the time bears the precaution of respectability. She feels that she is symbolically positioned being without value. However, she wants to show that she has a value and make sure that she is respectable. In that sense, she tries to prove some value over certain acts, or through her clothing, her house, the furniture or her belongings, or either being married, being a good house wife, mother and so on. She constantly tries to gain some value and be proper.

That is to say, in a sense, the sales worker has tactics and psychological mechanisms not to get emotionally hurt and to protect herself. As Erdoğan states, the ‘coping strategies’ are not only related with life strategies, or limited to the direct relations with power or encounter moments; but they are also valid for the hidden injuries of the poor-subaltern (Erdoğan, 2007, p. 81).

⁷¹ “Her insan ister saygı görmeyi, sevmeyi. Yani istemiyorum diyen insan yalan söylemiştir bence. Çünkü fitratımızda var sevmek, sayılmak, iyi bir insan olmak, güzel bir insan olmak” (Cennet).

⁷² “Benim gönlümün güzel olmasını istiyorum, saygılı, sevgili olmayı istiyorum” (Uğur).

⁷³ “Gelecekte iyi bir eş bekliyorum. Yani işi olmasın, yani işi mutlaka olsun ama bana saygı duysun çünkü çok çektim hani anladın mı, hani ailemden, ailemde görmediğim şeyleri onunla yaşamak istiyorum” (Irazca).

The women in the study try to act in a way that they think will bring them respectability. This can be read as a resistance to be classified as not respectable. They see their social position as their fault, yet they also think that their social and cultural positioning is unjust. As Skeggs describes it for the subject of her research:

They had a strong sense that their social and cultural positioning was unjust. They did not adjust to their social positioning (as Bourdieu 1986) would suggest. Rather they made strenuous efforts to deny, disidentify and dissimulate. These were affective response; class was lived as a structure of feeling. Class is still a hidden injury (Sennet and Cobb, 1977). They tempted to display their distinction from being classified as working-class through a variety of methods. To do so they made investments in their bodies, clothes, consumption practices, leisure pursuits and homes. These investments indicated a strong desire to pass as middle class. (Skeggs, 1997, pp. 94-95)

Accordingly, the sales women try to gain respectability with certain kinds of acts and tactics. In the next part, I will examine the ways that the sales worker uses to acquire respectability. Mainly, she invests in value and standards of others to be recognized as respectable. She tries to avoid being recognized as poor so that she can be seen as respectable. Additionally, to achieve her aim to become respectable she tries to fulfil the middle class gender norms and perform within the morality codes of the patriarchal gender regime. Moreover, even though there is little opportunity she tries to continue her schooling. However, although she thinks that sales work is one of the main reasons for not deserving respect from others, she considers that earning money increases her capability to take on responsibility and accordingly increases her respectability. Yet, she is ready and most of the time willing to leave sales work, when she gets married. She wants to be a good housewife and mother, who takes care of her house as well as possible. In the following parts, I will examine how the respectability trials of the sales worker function. The respectability aiming behaviours of the sales workers have the logic of practice of their 'habitus' and in the coming part I will show how the sales worker invests in certain capitals to acquire more respect.

As discussed earlier, the sales worker tries to achieve value throughout her life and to become respectable. Every act that can bring her more respectability would make

her feel more satisfied with herself. She does not totally accept the value systems that disvalue her or classify her as not deserving respect. Yet, she knows what would make her more respectable, and so, tries to become respectable by playing in the ground of the dominant value system, but with her rules that are shaped under the restrictions of her life and with her own values, which can sometimes be against the middle class values. As argued earlier in Chapter 2, she gives herself value through the practices of respectability, yet this respectability can sometimes be defined in opposition to middle class conception of respectability.

In that sense, Skeggs criticism of habitus and her emphasis on the emotions and utterances is very important for this study. Being in line with Skeggs, and keeping the optimism of will, I argue that class struggle appears in ambivalences, emotions and utterances, which point the sales worker having a different value system other than the dominant symbolic. At this point, Bourdieu can be criticized for his pessimistic account of logic of practices that is figured out with habitus. However, following Gramsci, I can say that pessimism of the intellect that Bourdieu offers would lead us to think about the reasons for the continuation of the inequalities and injustices in detail. Yet, keeping Skeggs' criticism of Bourdieu, this study aimed to show the emotions, ambivalences and utterances of the sales worker. The basic premise of this study, which is the woman sales worker's refusal of being classified as disrespectful, in fact indicates that the classification of the dominant is not totally accepted by her. She has her own value system, through which she resists being disrespectful and she claims to be recognized as respectable. However, at this point, we should not oversee the power of the sales worker to create her own value system. The woman sales worker can have values different from the symbolically dominant values, yet being aware of the dominant symbolic values, she sometimes performs in a way to be considered as respectable within the frame of these values. Nonetheless, being poor-subaltern also means not having the tools to produce one's own discourse, and in a sense value system. In sales worker becoming respectable, we again see a telescopic situation. Sometimes, the sales worker tries to gain middle class values and tries to fulfil middle class norms and standards in order to gain

respectability. However, at the same time, she also does not totally accept the superiority of these values, norms and standards. Therefore, she creates her own values and tries to gain respect through her own way of operating. Moreover, sometimes she claims respect by differentiating herself from middle class values and moral codes; and even positioning herself against them. This situation is simply explained by Gülsüm as follows

(Interviewer: Well, is what others think important for you? If yes, why?)
Yes, to a certain extent. I attach importance to what others think when I am doing something. But sometimes I do not care about it and I do not even think about it. (Interviewer: Can you give me an example when you don't think about it?) For example; you do something. You go somewhere. You then begin thinking "What will happen? Will this be a problem?" You are very undecided. So sometimes I think and sometimes I don't think at all.⁷⁴
(Gülsüm)

In terms of the tactics the sales worker uses to handle disrespectful behaviour at work, one of the basic tactics is to ignore such behaviour. According to Broadbridge (1991),

sales assistants are expected to be immediately at hand, pleasant, helpful, efficient, courteous, patient, enthusiastic, and imaginative at all times. If the customers wish to abuse at the assistant they can do so freely. The sales assistant is always expected to accept abuse without retaliation. (p.46)

In Turkey, the expectations from the sales worker are the similar to what Broadbridge describes. Sales workers are expected to be submissive, especially if they are female. Thus, even if the sales worker is subjected to disrespectful behaviour by the customer, she tries to ignore it. She knows that the client is always considered to be right, so except extraordinary cases, the general tendency of the sales worker is to pretend as if she did not care about the disrespectful behaviour of the client. Here, we see what Sennet and Cobb (1972, p. 206) calls split of individuals. The sales worker copes with the disrespectful behaviour, by leaving the real individual at home and by putting up a performance in the workplace. This is a

⁷⁴ "(Görüşmeci: Peki, başkalarının ne düşündüğü önemli midir senin için?) Tabii, o biraz önemli. Bir şey yaparken önem veririm de, bazen de nedense düşünmüyorum. (Görüşmeci: Mesela hangi konularda düşünmüyorsun?) Mesela, bir hareket yaparsın, bir yere gidersin, ne olur, bu sorun olur mu diye düşünürsün. Çok kararsızsındır. Bazen ediyorum, bazen hiç etmiyorum" (Gülsüm).

tactic to avoid her real self to be injured. On the other hand, the performing sales worker accepts being submissive. In fact, she does not have any other alternative than being submissive. As Fleetwood (1994) argues,

[t]he act of being rude to a shop assistant does not endanger the customer's livelihood, whereas replying in kind and/or refusing to be deferential might endanger the shop assistant's livelihood, especially when the employment is precarious. (p. 8)

Here is how Nazlı comments on how she tries to remain nice to customers under all conditions

Sometimes she [the customer] is nervous and pulls the garments off the hanger. I don't even say a word. She would maybe treat me badly if I decided to talk and say something. I always treat her well and say things such as 'Would you please take a seat?' And then she gets annoyed on her own and leaves.⁷⁵ (Nazlı)

However, there are also cases where the sales worker takes her revenge from the customer, who she thinks is in fact 'not right'. For example, Sevda had an argument with a customer, who had stolen some clothes. Although it is not possible for the sales worker to openly confront the customer, she can avoid showing interest in her, if she considers the customer to be arrogant, or if she thinks that the customer will not buy the cloth she is asking for. In addition, the sales worker sometimes talks to the other sales workers after the customer leaves telling them about the customer's disturbing behaviour and even having fun about it. However, in direct communication with the customer, she behaves submissively. Here is how Nazlı comments on customers not always being right:

A customer came here that day. Smoking is forbidden here because we have white clothes. It was clear that she had smoked and thrown the butts down on the floor here. Now can you say that the customer is right? No. The customer is not always right. (The interviewer: What did you do?). I didn't do anything. I didn't say anything. I hadn't seen her before. If I had seen her, I would have picked a fight. But I didn't see her, and after she left we talked badly about her because what she had done was nothing but misbehaviour.

⁷⁵ "Bazısı sinir oluyor, böyle kendi kendine askılıkları çekiştiriyor, çekiştiriyor. Hiç sesimi çıkarmıyorum. Sesimi çıkarsam belki kötü davranır. Sürekli iyi davranıyorum, oturur musunuz falan diyorum. O da sonra kendi kendine sinirleniyor, gidiyor zaten" (Nazlı).

She wouldn't do such a thing if she was a person with good manners.⁷⁶
(Nazlı)

In addition, splitting the real and performing individual also helps the sales worker to avoid injuries related with her encounter with customer's consumption capacity. The sales worker does not want to see what she sees and that is why she just ignores the wealth of the customer. In a sense, that is a tactic to avoid the emotion of being hopeless accompanied by the feeling of being unable to change anything in one's personal life. The sales worker's performance suppresses the feelings of anger in herself and thus she becomes indifferent to what she sees, being able to ignore the fact that the customer can easily spend money, wear and eat whatever she wants. As Nazlı puts it: "It certainly happens a lot here, here I see things I have never seen before, they sometimes fill it [the shopping basket] up and take it away. . . . I don't feel a thing. I just ignore it"⁷⁷ (Nazlı). Feeling nothing and ignoring is Nazlı's tactic to handle the inequality that she feels. In a sense, being the performative Nazlı, she emotionally 'escapes' from the shop, 'without leaving it' (De Certeau, 1984). That is also what Bora (2005) calls experiencing poverty by retreating from subjectivity (p. 163).

One of the class based tactics to handle class injuries is to avoid being recognized as poor. In the relationship between the sales worker and other people, the sales worker does not want to be seen in her old clothes and not well groomed since that would point to her being poor. To avoid being recognized as poor the sales worker invests in her appearance. I will elaborate more on this in gender based tactics of becoming respectable.

⁷⁶ "O gün buraya bir müşteri geldi, burada sigara içmek yasak, çünkü beyaz kıyafetlerimiz var. İçmiş içmiş, izmaritini de oraya atmış. Şimdi müşteri haklı mı yani? Değil. Her zaman müşteri haklı değildir. (Görüşmeci: Ne yaptın?) Hiçbir şey yapmadım, sesimi çıkarmadım. Daha önce görmemiştim. Görseydim, bir çingar çıkarırdım yani. Ama görmedim, daha sonra arkasından da etmediğimiz laf kalmadı. Çünkü ya bu, terbiyesizlikten başka bir şey değil. Görgülü bir şey olsa, zaten onu yapmaz" (Nazlı).

⁷⁷ "Tabii, burada çok karşılaşıyorum, yani burada hiç görmediklerimi görüyorum, hatta böyle doldurup götürürler falan" (Nazlı).

When we come to how the sales worker tries to avoid being recognized as poor outside her work area, we see that she tries to invest in her home, since in addition to clothes, lacking certain furniture is a clear indication that one is poor. The house of the poor also reveals the family's poverty. Thus, when asked about her hopes and plans Gülsüm replied:

there's furniture which I want to buy. . . . For example I don't have decent furniture. Actually, my father in law didn't buy any. I would like to buy them For example a double bed, a three piece suite, and a carpet. . . . Our furniture is very old, they [my family or my in-laws] didn't buy anything new for us, they're all second hand.⁷⁸ (Gülsüm)

As Ocak asserts, the poor think that their low status house is perceived as dirty, horrible and ugly by those who are in a better position (Ocak, 2007, p. 173). Thus, the poor sales worker tries to invest in her home to avoid the perception that she is poor. Moreover, most of the married sales workers in this research do not have their own houses; they live in *gecekondu* (squatter housing) or a rented house in the outskirts of the city. For that reason, if she has any dreams, it is to own her own house.

Poverty also means lacking food, and in addition, not being able to say it even to the close friends. As Erdoğan (2007) says there is a tendency among the poor not to show their misery to their neighbours (p. 72) and to hide their poverty (p. 74). We see the same case in Irazca when she says that even if they do not have tea at home, they borrow it to serve the guests, and they do not drink it at all:

I know there's no tea or sugar at home. . . . (Interviewer: How do you survive like this?) Nothing happens, you're just hungry, but you don't, you can't tell it to anyone. For example, if you have a guest, you borrow something from the neighbour and serve it. You let the guests drink, you don't. That's what my mother always told me.⁷⁹ (Irazca)

⁷⁸ “Çocuğuma bir şey yapmak, istediğim ev eşyası var, onu almak. . . . Mesela, doğru dürüst pek eşyam yok, açıkçası almadı kayınbabamgil, onu almak isterdim. . . . Mesela, ikiz yatak, oturma grubu, onlar, halı almak isterdim. . . . Şimdiki eşyalarımızı hep eski, almadılar, ikinci el falan aldı” (Gülsüm).

Likewise, being poor inevitably means being in debt. Borrowing from others announces that one is poor. However, the burden of having debts is much more than the material value of the debt itself since it causes an undeniable stress and anxiety. That is why Gülsüm told that her dream is: “paying off my debt. . . . I want my life to be neither good nor bad, I want it in the middle. I want to pay off my debts, because the debt has oppressed me very much”⁸⁰ (Gülsüm).

Poverty causes anxiety; however escaping from being recognized as poor also results in anxiety (Erdoğan, 2007, p. 74). As Erdoğan (2007) states that the traumatizing effect of poverty is not due to material poverty and not even when it combined with the pejorative gaze of others in relation to this material scarcity, in fact the trauma is a result of trying to escape from this gaze (p. 74).

A way to avoid being recognized as poor is to be recognized as middle class. In terms of the sales workers’ opinion about their social-economic position, not all of them said they were poor. Some of them stated that their position is the ‘middle way’ or their situation is ‘normal’. This resembles the US bakery workers responses in Sennett’s (2002) study; in which 80% of bakery workers said that they are ‘middle class’ (p. 67). In regard to this response, Koptekin (2010) comments that a person wants to be respected for what s/he is (p. 115). So, if possible one calls herself what she wants to be called.

The sales worker classifying herself as middle class brings to our attention who she considers to be poor. According to some of the sales workers, a poor person is simply one who does not have money. As Gülsüm puts it: “Those who cannot work

⁷⁹ “Evde çayın, şekerin olmadığını da biliyorum. . . . (Görüşmeci: Bu durumda nasıl idare ediliyor?) Hiç bi şî olmuyo, sadece aç kalıyosun, kimseye söyleyemiyo, söyleyemiyosun. Mesela bi misafir geldi, komşundan alıyosun, veriyosun. Aman misafir içsin, siz içmeyin, annem bize hep böyle derdi” (Irazca).

⁸⁰ “Borcumu kapatmak. . . . Hayatım, ne iyi, ne kötü, orta halli olmasını isterdim, borçlarımı kapatmak isterdim, çünkü borç beni çok bunalttı” (Gülsüm).

or do not have money, they're the ones who are poor"⁸¹ (Gülsüm). Likewise as Irazca puts it: "It's those who don't have money, everything is money. Those who don't have money are poor"⁸² (Irazca). Similarly, Nur says that: "Those who don't have money are actually careful with money. Even if they aren't they can't buy much because they don't have any money. They look for cheap stuff"⁸³ (Nur). Accordingly, when the sales worker thinks that she does not have money, she considers herself to be poor. However, the indicators of not having money can change from one sales worker to another. In that sense, according to some of the women not having food to eat and a place to sleep, and being in need of other people's support, can be the markers of not having money, and thus being poor. Nazlı explains her opinion on the life of a poor person as such:

If they have a home, they somehow get by. Half of them already live under the bridge. They leave their home, have difficulties. . . . About food. They don't have anything to eat. Sometimes I see them at the door, asking for money, saying that they have nothing to eat.⁸⁴ (Nazlı)

Gülsüm describes the poor as those who: "don't live in a good place, get by with aid, can't find a job"⁸⁵ (Gülsüm).

This shows that the sales worker has different definitions of where poverty begins. Harika even thinks that no one is poor: "there are no poor [people], because if you have a place to live, if you have a piece of bread to eat, nobody is poor. That's why;

⁸¹ "Çalışamayan, parası olmayan, onlardır yoksul" (Gülsüm).

⁸² "Parası olmayandır, her şey para ya. Bence parası olmayan fakirdir" (Irazca).

⁸³ Parası olmayan, tutumlulardır aslında. Tutumlu olmasalar bile parası olmadığı için fazla bir şey alamazlar. Ucuz şeylere bakarlar" (Nur).

⁸⁴ "Eğer bir evleri varsa, evlerinde öyle ya da böyle bir şekilde idare ederler. Yarıları da zaten köprü altlarında yaşıyor. Evini terk ediyor, sıkıntı oluyor falan. . . . Yeme içmesi, yani yiyemeyen, içemeyen. Ben bazen görüyorum, geliyorlar kapıya direniyorlar, işte yemek yok, sabah akşam yiyemiyoruz falan diye, para verin diye" (Nazlı).

⁸⁵ "Pek iyi evde yaşamaz, yardımla şey yapar, iş bulamaz; budur yoksul" (Gülsüm).

I think there are no poor people in this world”⁸⁶ (Harika). Thus, from this perspective only the people who need to beg for living are considered to be poor. However, this statement possibly reveals Harika’s reluctance to admit to the interviewer that she is poor.

How the sales worker conceives inequalities determines if she can heal her poverty caused emotional injuries. As discussed earlier, the encounter with the ‘rich’ customer drives the sales worker to think about the reasons for the inequality. However, the sales workers’ narratives show that the social order can be conceived as legitimate and illegitimate both at the same time. The sales worker thinks ‘we are all equal’, but this statement is accompanied with the question ‘why is it like that then?’ As Erdoğan (2007) notes referring to Gramsci (1971, p. 420), the equality comprehension is articulated in the sales workers’ narratives in an “embryonic and chaotic way” (p. 89). At this point, the sales worker’s way of thinking that she is suffering in this world either because it is God’s will or it is the mission assigned to her in this world helps her cure her emotional injuries. Additionally, thinking that the rich earn their money by unethical ways and losing their moral values also helps them to heal their emotional injuries.

The class of the sales worker is one of the main reasons for her respectability injuries. Although she does not want to be identified as the working class, she does not use the term ‘working class’ since she does not have access to this concept. In addition, even if the sales worker does not call it the ‘middle class’, she knows that ‘middle class’ people, with the capitals and the image they have, are respected in the society. Accepting their sovereignty the sales worker tries to acquire these capitals and adopt this image. That is talking with the language of the sovereign, what Bourdieu calls ‘allodoxia’.

⁸⁶ “Aslında yoksul yoktur ki, çünkü başını sokacak bir yerin olduktan sonra, karnını doyuracak bir parça ekmek olduktan sonra hiç kimse yoksul değildir. O yüzden yoksul yoktur bu dünyada bence” (Harika).

As discussed in the earlier part, the sales worker presents herself as living a ‘normal’ life or being in the ‘middle way’. This disidentification from poverty can be thought as the “desire to pass middle class” (Skeggs, 1997). The subjects of this research do not show adjustment to their class, because accepting poverty would mean to accept the disrespected social positioning. They desire to be recognized as middle class. However, in the field I also came across with sales workers, who openly told me that they were or they used to be living in poverty, as in the cases of Irazca, Ufuk and Gülsüm. As Ufuk tells it:

My mother’s life was full of material hardship. She always asked my father for money but he never gave her. He would say: ‘What will the woman do with money? She just sits at home.’ So she had to be very thrifty. When there is no money you are forced to be thrifty. Let’s say that I do not have money. Then I have to stay here. Where will I go if I don’t? Can I go on a jaunt? No. So, she was sitting and waiting. (Interviewer: How did she manage the meals? You’ve got many brothers, how did she manage to feed you all?) She used to go downtown once every two or three weeks and buy, for example, a kilo of apples, a kilo of tomatoes, a kilo of cucumbers and spinach. We always had to eat spinach (She laughs).⁸⁷ (Ufuk)

In order to be recognized as middle class, the sales worker tries to adopt the images of middle class. Buying expensive latest design mobile phones is an example for this. . Here is Sakine telling about her mobile phone: “It has a camera. I didn’t save to buy that. I begged my father, then he got into debt to buy it. . . . I just wanted to have it, everybody had one, so I wanted one, too”⁸⁸ (Sakine). Even though Sakine sometimes cannot afford food or cost of transportation, she has an expensive mobile phone. Sakine wants to have that mobile phone since ‘everyone’ has one. As Skeggs (1997) asserts clothing and objects are thought to signify the worth of the

⁸⁷ “Annemin durumu ne bileyim, parasızlıkla geçti ömrü, hep isterdi, vermezdi, isterdi vermezdi. Ne yapacak kadın, evinde oturur. İdare etmesi gerekirdi. Mecbur idare ediliyor, para yokken, şurada benim param yok, ben mecbur oturuyorum burada. Oturmasam nereye gideceğim? Gezebilir miyim? Hayır. Tozabilir miyim? Hayır. Oturuyordu, bekliyordu. (Görüşmeci: Yemeği nasıl yapıyor, o kadar kardeşiniz, nasıl doyuruyordu sizi?) İki haftada mı, üç haftada mı ne pazara çıkardı. O da bir kilo elma, bir kilo domates, bir kilo da salatalık falan alırdı, ıspanak alırdı işte. Hep ıspanak yedik biz. (Gülüyor)” (Ufuk).

⁸⁸ “Kameralı. Ama onu da biriktirip almadım. Babama yalvararak, onu borçlandırarak aldım yani . . . Bir kere istedim yani herkeste vardı, benim de canım istedi” (Sakine).

person (p. 86), and to increase her worth, the sales worker tries to acquire the items that she thinks would tell the world that she has some value.

More than being recognized as middle class, in fact, the sales worker desires to pass as middle class. However, she is aware that becoming middle class is not so simple, and does not look possible. Irazca says that the possibility of having a life that is different from one's parents is very low. Irazca explains:

You are just like your family. Your life changes depending on the environment. For example, I'll most probably find someone similar to my family and marry him. My family isn't high class, not very low either. Think about it, we don't even know anyone from the upper class, we only see them on TV or hear about them. He will probably be like them, or lower. But probably not higher. Anyway, God knows. . . . when I say upper class, I mean, we're not rich you know? Rich people have rich people around, and poor people have poor, that's what I mean.⁸⁹ (Irazca)

In a sense, Irazca knows her place very well. She knows that it is not easy to break through the invisible class ceiling.

However, the younger sales workers still harbour their hope to continue their education, or marry a person who has a 'higher' position than their parents; they still think that there is a possibility of having a life that is different from that of their parents. Additionally, some of the women think that they are more modern than their parents as they live in the city rather than a village and therefore their lives are better than their parents' lives. As Uğur says: "My life will be different, I'm sure...Because my family lived by looking at the old, I'll live by looking at the new, so it will be different"⁹⁰ (Uğur). Just like Uğur, Nur says:

⁸⁹ "Ya ailen nasılsa sen de öyle olursun. Hani çevreye göre senin de hayatın ona göre değişebilir. Mesela ben, kendi ailem gibi birini bulup onunla evlenirim herhalde. Benim ailem, yani çok yüksek değil, çok aşağıda değil. Yani düşünsene çok yüksek birilerini tanımıyoruz bile, sadece televizyonlarda, ya da düşünsene, sadece isimlerini duyuyoruz. Herhalde, ya onlar gibi olur, ya düşüğü olur, ama yükseğini sanmıyorum. Gene de hani Allah bilir de. . . . hani böyle hani, zengin değiliz anladın mı, zengin insanlarla da hani bi konuşmamız, çevremiz, zengin zengin çevresi olur, fakirin fakir, yani onun gibi." (Irazca).

⁹⁰ "Benim hayatım farklı olacak, bundan eminim...Çünkü ailem eskilere bakarak yaşamını sürdürdü de, ben yenilere bakarak yaşam sürdürünce daha farklı olur" (Uğur).

My life will be different from my family. They didn't even leave their villages, I did... Since they always lived in the village, they were stuck in the house. For example, my mother was always at home, but I'm out. I won't be like them.⁹¹ (Nur)

However, the sales workers' narratives on a better future appear telescopically with her pessimistic views of continuing to live a hard life and not even succeeding in realizing her main dream of making a happy marriage. Mainly, those who still have some opportunity to continue their education and who think that it is possible to make their own marriage, are more optimistic about the future.

To conclude, the sales worker who lives in poverty does not want to be seen as poor. She tries to hide her poverty. She claims that her social position is 'normal'. She refrains from admitting to the interviewer, or even to herself, that she is poor, just like she hides her poverty from her friends or guests who come to her house. Furthermore, she desires to be recognized as middle class and if possible, to become middle class.

The next section elaborates on the sales worker's attempts to be like the middle class women by trying to fulfil the gender norms of the middle class, acquire the middle class femininity capital and adopt the image of middle class women. I will also show how the sales worker, not being able to properly imitate the femininity of middle class, does it in her own way.

The narratives of the sales workers show us that they feel anxieties. However, as presented earlier, these anxieties are not only class related anxieties. They are also gender related. To put it more clearly, they are the anxieties resulting from being a working class woman. The indispensable character of class and gender is explained by Skeggs (1997) as follows:

⁹¹ "Benim hayatım ailemin hayatından farklı olacak. Onlar köyden dışarı çıkmamış, ben çıkıyorum... Çünkü onlar köyde yaşadığı için hep evde kalmış. Mesela annem hep evde kalmıştır ama ben dışarıdayım, onlar gibi olmaz" (Nur).

The anxieties of working-class women are always made through reference to something to which they do not have access, be it money, knowledge or space. They know nearly everything that they do will be recognized as classed. This is very different to feeling inadequate but being normalized at the same time where the anxiety is not of a class based character. This is why gender and class are inseparable. The women never see themselves as just women; it is always read through class. This is evidenced clearly through their desire to pass. (p.91)

The sales worker wants to pass as middle class, yet again, not only in terms of class, but also in terms of gender. She wants to become or be recognized as an ideal middle class woman since, among the hegemonic middle class norms, gender norm is the most respected one in the society. That is why the sales worker tries to acquire the capitals that middle class women have, and accordingly tries to invest in these capitals as much as possible. Likewise she wants to adopt the image that middle class women have.

The image of the middle class woman perceived by the women in this research is created in two main ways; first from popular cultural elements and second through their interaction with the middle class woman customer in the shopping arena. The television serials, advertisements and programs focusing on taking good care of the family and home either through cooking, cleaning or craftwork; all portray an ideal middle class woman, who is in accord with the capitalist system and patriarchal gender regime. The sales worker also interacts with middle class women as customers and from this, she learns about the life of these women.

Being married is the very basic norm of ideal middle class women over a certain age. Likewise, getting married / being a married woman is one of the most commonly shared dreams of the sales workers. As Sakine says: “All I want is a happy family. That’s all my hope and dream”⁹² (Sakine). However, the meaning of marriage for the sales worker is different from what it means to a middle class woman. For the poor young sales workers marriage offers “the promise of a

⁹² “Umudum, hayallerim. İyi bir insanla birlikte olmak istiyorum tek hayalim bir mutlu ailem olsun. Umudum da hayalim de odur. Bundan sonrası zaten iki kişiyle devam edecek bir yaşam” (Sakine).

potentially better economic life, potential emotional security, a respectable base for having children and confirmation of desirability” (Skeggs, 1997, p. 114). Here is how Irazca puts it: “My hopes, (silence), my hopes (silence), well, my hopes are, I want to have children, I want to marry, as soon as possible. Maybe in order to leave this environment, or because I believe I’ll have a better life”⁹³ (Irazca). Moreover, here in Gülsüm’s narrative, we see how marriage functioned as a way of escape from the unhappy family:

(Interviewer: So did you become happy when you got married; because then somehow you could get away with it?) Of course, (Interviewer: To live with your husband is more comfortable after all) Yes. (Interviewer: But, did you want to marry?) I did not want to marry because I was very young. But then I also considered that I did not have a mother and I was not studying, I was only sitting at home. I thought I'd better get married.⁹⁴ (Gülsüm)

Most of the sales workers want to make a happy marriage with a good husband and have children. A good husband is considered by the young women as someone who loves and respects her. The husband is expected to have a job, but more importantly, he is expected to respect her wife. Irazca explains what she expects from the future as follows:

I think about it, but I don’t expect anything, do you know the only thing I’m expecting? I’m expecting a good spouse from the future. I don’t care if he doesn’t have a job, I mean he should, but he should also respect me, because I suffered a lot from my family. I want to experience with him what I couldn’t with my family.⁹⁵ (Irazca)

⁹³ “Umutlarım, (sessizlik), umutlarım (sessizlik), valla umutlarım, çocuklarımın olmasını isterim, evlenmek istiyorum, bi an önce. Belki bu ortamdan ayrılmak için, belki hayatımın düzeleceğine inandığım için” (Irazca).

⁹⁴ “(Görüşmeci: Evlendiğin için mutlu oldun mu o zaman, bir şekilde kurtuldun?) Tabii canım. (Görüşmeci: Kocan daha rahat sonuçta) Evet. (Görüşmeci: Evlenmeyi istedin mi peki?) Yaşım küçük diye istememiştim. Bir yönden de düşündüm, annem yok, okumuyorum da evde oturuyorum. En iyisi evleneyim dedim” (Gülsüm).

⁹⁵ “Düşünüyorum ama, hiç bi şey beklemiyorum, sadece ne bekliyorum biliyo musun, gelecekte iyi bi eş bekliyorum. Yani işi olmasın, yani işi mutlaka olsun ama bana saygı duysun çünkü çok çektim hani anladın mı, hani ailemden, ailemde görmediğim şeyleri onunla yaşamak istiyorum.” (Irazca).

On the other hand, marriage is a way of social validation for the sales worker. “Male partners can enable the construction of confidence generated from cultural validation, otherwise unavailable” (Skeggs, 1997, p. 115). Married women are respected more in the society, when compared with single women. Accordingly, working class women are under increasing cultural and economic pressure to be married (Skeggs, 1997, p. 35). Irazca’s narrative reflects this:

I love weddings but recently I haven’t been [to weddings]. . . . when I used to go, people would ask me “Haven’t you got married yet?”, “What are you waiting for?” I avoid answering such questions (laughs).⁹⁶ (Irazca)

Sales workers think that not getting married is considered a sign of failure. However, the encounters with the customers who get married at an older age can change the sales worker’s understanding of ideal marriage age. Irazca says:

I sometimes wonder, am I too old to marry now? No I’m not. . . . I’m sometimes sad, but I then say, how old am I to marry? For example a customer comes. She is 40 years old. When I see her I think there is still a long way to go. Sometimes I say to myself, I wish I was married and not working.⁹⁷ (Irazca)

However, not all of the sales workers have the dream to get married. I also came across cases where the sales worker has doubts about getting married. For example, Sevda does not want to get married since her parents divorced. Her only aim is to finish her school and become a teacher.

I never think about getting married anyway. This is the last thing that I would ever think. I have always dreamed of having my own house. I have always wanted to have a life in which I do all the housework myself and go to work and come back. I am not the kind of woman who craves marrying a man and then looking after him and the children, I don’t know but such an idea seems very repulsive to me. . . . It may possibly be due to what I experienced in my social environment and family. . . . For example my

⁹⁶ “Ben çok seviyorum düğünleri. . . . Bu aralar pek gitmiyorum, ama çok seviyorum yani. . . . yani ne biliyim hani, oraya gittiğn zaman dedim ya, çevredeki, bizim çevremizdeki en azından, insanlar, benim yaşlılarım evlenmiş oluyo, ya da “sen daha evlenmedin mi?”, “neyi bekliyon?” Bu tür sorulara cevap vermemek için kaçıyorum (gülüyor)” (Irazca).

⁹⁷ “Bazen üzülüyorum, bazen de diyorum ki, ya daha benim yaşım daha ne ki, mesela bi müşteri geliyo, 40 yaşında, bekar, onu görünce diyorum ki zaten çok var, bazen de şey diyorum, keşke evlenseydim ben de, keşke çalışmasaydım” (Irazca).

father and mother are divorced so I can say that my family is the biggest example that has determined my attitude against marriage. Observations in the social environment may also be another factor. For example I have seen many examples of people who fell madly in love with someone and said “I can’t live without him/her”, and married that person but got divorced after a while. It is probably such experiences that have caused me to have a negative attitude against marriage.⁹⁸ (Sevda)

Sevda’s unwillingness to get married, unlike most of the sales workers, signalizes two important points. The first one is; she has a different future prospect from the other sales workers most probably because she is going to university. She has the hope to have an occupation, and that will allow her to be free in her decision to get married. The second thing is; this singularity signalizes that even if the widespread norm is to get married, the sales worker can behave in contrast to that norm, based on her own judgement. This bears the hope for social transformation. Sevda thinks that marriage would not bring her anything but trouble. She thinks that the happy family ideal does not work. So, she chooses to act against the dominant symbol.

In addition to getting married, femininity is a capital that provides respectability to the sales worker. According to Bora (2005), the description of femininity is based on middle class women, so the femininity model (or norm) is actually the middle class femininity and the values related with it (p. 136). Bora (2005) claims that the domestic workers of her study construct and interpret themselves with reference to middle class femininity (p. 136). In my research, I also realized that for the sales workers the middle class femininity is the reference point.

According to Skeggs (1997) “[f]emininity is the process through which women are gendered and become specific sorts of women” (p. 98). However, gendering of women is closely related with the class related experiences of women. As Skeggs

⁹⁸ “Evlenmeyi falan hiç düşünmüyorum zaten, en son düşünebileceğim şey. Hep hayallerim kendi evimde, kendi başıma, işini yapan, işe gidip gelen. Yani hiç öyle evlenip de koca, çoluk, çocuk falan. Bilmiyorum nedense çok soğuk, çok itici geliyor bana. . . . Herhalde çevreden, aileden gördüklerimden dolayı olabilir. . . . öyle diyeyim; zaten benim annemle babam ayrı. Herhalde en büyük örnek kendi ailem, çevremde gördüklerim. Çok böyle aman aman aşık olup, deli gibi sevip, işte hayatımda onsuz yaşayamam deyip evlenip de daha sonra boşanan insanları gördüğüm için. Herhalde bunlardan ötürü çekici gelmiyor bana” (Sevda).

(1997) states, “[b]eing, becoming, practicing and doing femininity are very different things for women of different classes, races, ages and nations” (p. 98).

Femininity is “a form of cultural capital” and “the discursive position available through gender relations that women are encouraged to inhabit and use” (Skeggs, 1997, p. 10). The working class women have limited resources to trade capital assets and their ability to increase these assets or to convert them to gain material reward is severely limited (Skeggs, 1997, p. 9). However, the working class women have the femininity capital to invest in and to use socially in tactical ways (Skeggs, 1997, p. 10). Skeggs (1997) asserts that “[i]n the struggle to survive, the women have to know which strategies of investment and which practices yield the highest profit” (p. 101). In that sense, they invest in femininity to gain high profits and respectability.

In my field, I observed that the sales worker tries to achieve the dominant norms of middle class femininity. Here, the customers play a reference point for the sales worker in constructing her femininity. As the middle class femininity has a high symbolic capital, the sales worker tries to fulfil the middle class femininity norms to acquire this symbolic capital. However, properly performing the middle class femininity is not possible for the sales worker. As Skeggs (2004) puts it:

Yet we know from the analyses of femininity that the body does not believe if it is a working-class one (see Fraser, 1999; Skeggs, 1997; Tyler, 1991); femininity for many working-class women is a performance, not performative. And we know that even when some of the working-class learn to play the game of the middle-classes this often generates a habitus that can rarely be comfortably inhabited. (p. 88)

Middle class femininity involves; being a good housewife who can cook well and who has a clean and tidy house, being a good mother who can kindly take care of her children, and being a good looking woman who can spend time and money for her beauty, who wears nice cloths, who is fit and who can take care of herself. In addition, this ideal woman has to have a respected occupation like being a teacher or working in an office. She uses her annual leave to go on holiday. Thus, it is not possible for the sales worker to perform all these necessities. For example, in the

scarcity of financial resources, it is not possible for her to buy as many clothes as middle class women. It is not possible for her to fulfil her children's needs as much as a middle class mother can. It is not possible for her to have a socially respected job. It is not possible for her to go on holidays. However, the sales worker can still invest in some of these femininity capitals that will bring her respectability.

As mentioned above, being a good housewife is one of the main features of middle class femininity. However, being a good housewife also means having the required resources. It means being able to buy the foods that middle class women can buy, and having nice the furniture and home stuff. However, the sales women can do these only to a limited extend. Nevertheless, still "working-class women can gain some status and respectability by taking familial responsibility" (Skeggs, 1997, p. 52).

In my research, we see that most of the sales workers choose not to work once they get married and rather to be a housewife. Here is how Harika puts it: "I prefer not to work. . . . I'll be a housewife, do the housework. . . . I like cleaning more"⁹⁹ (Harika). That is to say, being a housewife is preferred to being a sales worker. Here is how Uğur puts it: "But if we were well off, I'd never work. I would send him to work in the morning and meet him in the evening with a smiling face. He would be tired and I would welcome him with a kiss"¹⁰⁰ (Uğur).

The sales workers' desire to get married is often accompanied by the desire to have children. Being a mother is considered to provide respect for women in the society. Furthermore, motherhood is one of the basic experiences that empowers a woman since it creates a legitimate area that she can realize herself (Bora & Üstün, 2005, p. 23). However, as we see it in the case of Gülsüm, she cannot perform the

⁹⁹ "Ben çalışmamayı tercih ederim. . . . Evimin hanımı olayım, iş göreyim. . . . Temizlik benim daha çok hoşuma gidiyor" (Harika).

¹⁰⁰ "Ama durumumuz iyiye, katiyen çalışmam. Onu sabah işe gönderip de, akşam güler yüzle. O yorgun argın olacak, güler yüzle, öperek falan" (Uğur).

symbolically dominant motherhood of kindly taking care of her child. Unfortunately, she does not earn enough to take her daughter to the doctor. Likewise, in Ufuk's case, she cannot go to the doctor for a regular control during her pregnancy due to financial constraints.

At this point, it is important to see that even though the woman sales worker may not provide her child with the necessary living conditions that are defined and recognized as respectable by the middle class, she still sacrifices herself for her child. In my research I observed that if the sales worker is already married with children, her children are the centre of her life, plans and wishes. She wishes to provide a better life for her children in which they do not experience the difficulties that she has experienced. She is ready to fulfil the needs of her family even at the expense of herself. In this sense, the sales worker fulfils the needs of her family in a selfless way in order to be a good caring mother. Skeggs (1992) asserts that, by doing so, the caring identity fulfils her own desire to feel valuable; and her altruism makes her feel good (p. 62). Likewise, as Erdoğan (2007) states, sacrificing oneself for her children functions as an evidence of self-adequacy and ability to do so, have control and make decisions (p. 71). In this way, the woman's social position will be equipped with a moral meaning (Erdoğan, 2007, p. 71).

In addition to investing in being a good mother, paying attention to one's appearance is another way of investing in femininity. In this context, we see that outfit is very important for the sales worker. The sales worker thinks that other people recognize what someone wears and behave them according to how they look. Other people mentioned here can be people in the neighbourhood, on the street or even the members of the family. The sales worker thinks that people who wear clean, new, matching and appropriate clothes are given more respect. The sales worker, who does not have as many capitals to invest in, places a high value on what she wears and thus invests in clothes as a source of cultural capital (Skeggs, 1997, p. 104). Here is how Cennet puts it:

I have decided that I will take care of myself. I pass through the neighbourhood. . . . all women look at me. . . . They say Cennet, you have

started to dress better since you found a job. . . . Now I take care of myself, I try to dress better, be neat. . . . As I said, one leaves an impression with her look. . . . Before, I didn't care if people said that I'm beautiful or ugly. But now I want to see some respect. For instance, when I'm dressed with old stuff, they ignore me, now I see that even the looks change when I'm dressed up. . . . If you see someone with shabby clothes, and then see the same person with a tie or wearing better clothes, it looks better, or luxurious, well, maybe not luxurious. But you have a different impression when you see them dressed clean and more properly.¹⁰¹ (Cennet)

In parallel to Cennet, Nur emphasizes the importance of wearing clean and matching clothes: "I think it's very important. Especially harmony, cleanliness. It's very nice when people look at you with envy when you go out"¹⁰² (Nur). Likewise, Uğur says that being crisp and clean is important. Here is how she puts it: "A well-groomed person is always better. . . . And you know, death may come upon us anytime anywhere, so one must be clean at all times. Cleanliness should be everything for you. So I always take good care of myself"¹⁰³ (Uğur). As seen in the narratives, the common emphasis is on the cleanness of the clothes. Even if the sales worker cannot buy new clothes, she can wear clean clothes and she tries to do so in order to be recognized as respectable.

In addition to investing in clothes, the sales worker can invest in her body in order to be recognized as more respectable. The sales worker thinks that looking beautiful

¹⁰¹ "Karar aldım, kendi kendime bakacağım. . . . Mahalleden geçiyorum. . . . Bakıyorlar bütün kadınlar. . . . Melek, işe girdin gireli giyinmeye başladın falan dediler. . . . Artık özen gösteriyorum kendime, dikkat ediyorum güzel giyinmeye, temiz olmaya. . . . Dedim ya, bir insan dış görünüşüyle insanların kafasında bir şeyler oluşturur. . . . Bundan önce insanlar güzel desin, çirkin desin bilmem ne o konularla pek ilgilenmiyordum ama bundan sonra biraz da saygı görmek isterim, o manada. Mesela eski giyindiğim zaman şey yapıyorlar görmüyorlar, şimdi bakıyorum giyindiğim zaman bakışlar bile değişiyor. . . . Mesela sen yolda giderken üstü paspal bir insan görsen aynı insanı kravatlı şekilde görsen veya daha güzel, lüks giyinmiş bir şekilde görsen, lüks değil de, lüks biraz şey oluyor. Temiz, daha düzgün giyinmiş görsen, değil mi, insanın düşüncesi değişir o anda" (Cennet).

¹⁰² "Bence çok önemlidir. Özellikle uyumu, temizliği. Dışarı çıktığın zaman insanların sana özentiyile bakması çok güzel" (Nur).

¹⁰³ "Bakımlı insan her an için iyidir. . . . her zaman bir insan temiz olmalıdır. Temizlik her yerde, her şeyin olmalıdır. O yüzden kendime çok bakarım" (Uğur).

is important and almost all of them relate beauty with not being overweight. In addition, being overweight is socially disregarded, especially for young women. Here is how Harika tells about it:

For example when you go visit somewhere you have to look very good. Sometimes in the family, in public, or at a wedding, they tell me that I put on a lot of weight. This makes me really upset. This is very important for me. Someone has to say to me: “oh, you’re beautiful” or something like that.¹⁰⁴ (Harika)

In my field, I realized that majority of the sales workers was concerned on how they look. Majority of them had the concern to do some kind of sports activity, and this is most of the time walking, in order to lose weight. However, very few actually walked as a sport activity, rather there were some who had to walk due to lack of money to cover for the transportation cost.

On the other hand, most of the sales women try to utilize some affordable beauty tips, such as putting a gelatine band over the belly to lose weight or implementing a ‘Dove’¹⁰⁵ mask. However, there were also cases that the sales worker also invests an important amount of money in buying expensive cosmetics, even if she does not have enough money to do so. As Irazca states: “Cosmetics? Well, actually when it comes to that I’m a bit. . . . I buy things from Avon, I say to myself I won’t buy, then the lady shows me something, I try it, I like it and buy it”¹⁰⁶ (Irazca).

In the above section we see that the sales worker sees being a good house wife and a good mother and taking care of her appearance can bring her respectability. Other than these, most of the woman sales workers think that “respectability is

¹⁰⁴ “Mesela, bir yerde gezdiğin zaman çok güzel görünmen lazım. Toplulukta, aile içinde, düğünlere falan gittiğimizde, bana çok kötü kilo almışsın diyorlar, moralim bozuluyor. O çok önemli benim için. Birisi bana “ay, çok güzelsin” falan demesi lazım” (Harika).

¹⁰⁵ An affordadable soap bar.

¹⁰⁶ “Kozmetik mi, valla o konuda da biraz şeyim, Avon’dan alıyorum, yani almayacağım diyom, geliyo abla bişey gösteriyo, sürüyom, beğeniyom işte, aliyom” (Irazca).

constructed against sexuality” (Skeggs, 1997, p. 13). In my field, I observed that the sales workers make a distinction between women who have limitations in their relations with men and those who do not. Most of the time, women who have close relations with men are disregarded. A majority of the sales workers believed that sexual desires should be kept under control in order to be recognized as honourable. As Skeggs (1997) says “[p]roving and maintaining respectability involves taking responsibility for the control over sexual display” (p. 130). Here is how Nazlı explains it: “Would the men do it if the girls didn’t ask for it? . . . I think the girls definitely ask for it, because they take the first step, I see it. . . . I want it too, but I hold myself, I say to myself, what are you doing, or something like that”¹⁰⁷ (Nazlı).

The sales worker also conceptualizes the reasons why sexuality should be restricted. One of the reasons proposed is the control of the patriarchal figures over her life; such as her father, brother, uncles or boyfriend. She thinks that her immoral act can disturb these people. Here is Uğur referring to the risks of getting closer to a man: “Because if someone sees that, they will go and tell my father; saying to him your daughter is doing this and that. I’m gonna marry someday, how can I look at my husband in the face”¹⁰⁸ (Uğur). As it is obvious in Uğur’s case, being ‘honourable’ is a capital which has an important value for marriage.

I have also observed cases where patriarchal limitations are also internalized by the sales worker. That is to say, even if the sales worker thinks that her father will not learn about her possible ‘immoral’ acts, she still chooses to avoid behaving in the way that her father does not approve. Here is Uğur telling about the times she is in the threshold of not fully performing like an ‘honourable’ woman by going out with a man: “You know, somewhere something stops you. I remember what my father says. He told me that he trusted me. If I start talking with someone, I remember my

¹⁰⁷ “Kızlar istemese, erkekler yapar mı? . . . Kızlar bence yüzde yüz istiyorlar, çünkü bir adım ilk önce kızlar atıyor, ben görüyorum bunu. . . . Ben istiyorum, engelliyorum kendimi açıkçası, diyorum sen ne yapıyorsun falan diyorum kendi kendime” (Nazlı).

¹⁰⁸ “Çünkü biri görse, gidip babana diyecek, senin kızın böyle böyle yapıyormuş gibi. Yarın evleneceksin, eşinin yüzüne nasıl bakacaksın” (Uğur).

father”¹⁰⁹ (Uğur). On the other hand, Uğur’s narrative also indicates that she does not absolutely internalize her father’s limitations. One part of her wants to go forward and talk with a man, but the other part wins and holds her back.

Furthermore, most of the sales workers think that the patriarchal figures have the right to restrict them. Here is Harika referring to her uncles’ right to control her, which even takes the form of physical violence: “They’re usually quite angry, they beat me even when I expose my legs. They’re narrow-minded. They always interfere [with my attire]. . . . I think they are right. If they didn’t, I could even be a whore, other friends, I could have been like them”¹¹⁰ (Harika). Harika’s narrative also shows us how she internalizes the patriarchal codes of morality and even the patriarchal use of language. It also demonstrates the understanding that honour is something to be safeguarded by men.

Kardam (2005) asserts that

honour is a property of women which is controlled by men. Women should passively obey the rules of conduct accepted as honourable while men have to actively make women obey these rules. As a result, ‘honour’ was usually formulated as something obliging both men and women to behave in a certain way. Women, in terms of “being careful about themselves, especially in their relations with men” and men, in terms of ‘having an attentive eye on their women’. (p.19)

In this sense, Harika thinks that her relatives have to actively make her obey the rules of conduct as they are accepted to be honourable; if not she thinks that she would misbehave. At this point, the reasons why women accept or even expect such limitations on themselves have to be understood. Most of the time women have to obey the limitations, as they have no other alternatives not to do so. When they do

¹⁰⁹ “Bir yerde bir şey durduruyor derler ya, benim de babamın lafları aklıma gelirdi. Babam, sana güveniyorum kızım derdi. Bir insanla konuşmaya kalksam, babamın lafları aklıma gelir” (Uğur).

¹¹⁰ “Onlar genelde çok kızarlar, bacağım açsam bile döverler, o kafadadırlar. Çok karışır [kıyafetlerime]. . . . Bence haklılar. Böyle olmasalar, ben belki orospu bile olabilirdim, diğer arkadaşlar, onun gibi olabilirdim” (Harika).

not obey, they are forced to obey, even by physical means. Here is how Gülsüm tells about it:

(Interviewer: Did you ever find a way to do something that your dad did not allow you to do?) Never... (Interviewer: Did you not do anything that your dad did not allow you to do?) No. (Interviewer: Why?) Well, he was very nervous and I was afraid of him. (Interviewer: Did he beat you a lot?) Extremely. (Interviewer: How did you feel then?) I was angry.¹¹¹ (Gülsüm)

In addition, seconding Bourdieu (2003), we can evaluate the sales workers' obedience and internalization of the domination as an "unconscious fit between their habitus and the field they operate in. In truth, it demonstrates the "somatization of social relations of domination" (p. 31).

However it is also important to note that, there are cases where the sales worker does not find it fair that the patriarchal figures limit them. Furthermore, there are a lot of cases where the sales worker finds ways of meeting with her boy friendly, secretly from her family. In the case of Gülsüm, she finds it unfair that his father restricts her. She has a father, whom she does not like and whom she chooses not to see after getting married. Here is how Gülsüm describes her father:

My dad, how to say, was a very strange person. Therefore I was very careful with what I did and there were no problems. He interfered with the way I dressed. He limited the conversations I had with my friends, he restricted me in terms of going out and watching television. He would restrict me about everything. (Interviewer: And, do you think he was right in doing so?) He was unfair... Because I was a child and I needed to see my friends. I could not even go out let alone see my friends. (Interviewer: Why do you think he restricted everything?) I do not really know why he did.¹¹² (Gülsüm)

¹¹¹ "(Görüşmeci: Peki baban seni kısıtladığında sen bir yol bulup, babanın yapma dediklerini yaptığın oldu mu?) Olmadı... (Görüşmeci: Yapma dediklerinin hepsini yapmadın mı?) Evet.(Görüşmedi: Neden peki?) Ne bileyim çok şey bir insandı, korkardım. (Görüşmeci: Çok dövüyor muydu?) Aşırı. (Görüşmeci: Ne hissediyordun o zaman?) Kızıyordum" (Gülsüm).

¹¹² "Babam, nasıl söyleyeyim ben sana, çok acayip bir insandı. O yönden yaptığım harekete de çok dikkat ediyordum, o yönden problem olmuyordu. Giyinmemi kısıtlardı. Arkadaşlarımla görüşmemi, dışarı çıkmamı, televizyon izlememi. Her şeyimi kısıtlardı ya. (Interviewer: Peki haklı mıydı sence kısıtlarken?) Haksızdı... Çünkü bir çocuğa, benim arkadaşımın falan görüşmem lazım. Burak arkadaşımı dışarıya bile çıkmam lazım yani. (Interviewer: O niye kısıtlıyordu sence?) Bilmiyorum ya. Niye kısıtlıyordu" (Gülsüm).

Likewise, even though Ufuk thinks her father does not have the right to interfere her own affairs, she, just like Gülsüm, cannot object to her father or say to her father that she finds him unfair, because she thinks no matter what the issue is, her father always presents himself as fair:

He always turned out to be right all the time. We are wrong and he's right... I do not know why he always turned out to be right and we were wrong all the time. We did not talk much so that he wouldn't beat us and we would say "let him stew in his own juice". This is why he always oppresses us because we do not object. And we do not talk much so that he will not oppress us.¹¹³(Ufuk)

In addition, Gülsüm does not think that the honour of women has to be protected by man and on contrary to Harika, she does not think that she would have done wrong things if her father had not limited her:

(Interviewer: Well, do you think men should be the guard of women's honour? That is what they say.) No, because women can protect their honour. I do not really know. (Interviewer: So, if your dad had not restricted you, would you have done something wrong?) No, I would not have, because I knew everything. I mean I was a sensible person. For example there are also bad girls; I would not behave like them, I would really not. I have thought of everything I did. (So, your father did not have to restrict you?) No, my father did not have to restrict me.¹¹⁴ (Gülsüm)

Here we see that some of the sales workers do not like their father at all. In the cases of Gülsüm, Ufuk, Sevda and Irazca, they even hate their fathers. That is to say, rather than internalizing their father's limitations, they find it unfair. Their fathers used violence against them and ultimately the gender inequality and the patriarchal limitation have borne the emotion of hatred towards the father. These

¹¹³ "O haklı çıkıyor her zaman, kendisi haklıdır her zaman. Biz haksızız, o haklı... Valla bilmiyorum, hep o haklı duruma düşüyor, biz haksızız veya ben, biz hep öyleyiz. Ses çıkartmayız, bize dokunmasın, ne hali varsa görsün deriz. Bizi hep öyle gördüğü için eziyor zaten. Ezdiği için de biz seslenmiyoruz" (Ufuk).

¹¹⁴ (Interviewer: Peki kadının namusu erkeğin namusu mudur sence? Öyle derler ya.) Hayır, Çünkü kadın kendi namusunu koruyabilir. Bilmiyorum ya. (Interviewer: Peki baban seni kısıtlamasaydı, sen hatalı bir şeyler yapabilir miydin?) Yapmazdım, çünkü biliyordum her şeyi. Yani aklım başımdaydı. Mesela .. kızlar da var, öyle değildim, yapmazdım. Yaptığım hareketi falan düşünerek yaparım. (Babanın seni kısıtlamasına gerek yoktu?) Yoktu" (Gülsüm).

women showed sympathy to their mothers since their mothers were also subject to their husband's violence. However, their love to their mother is not absolute, as they also accuse their mother for having married their father.

On the other hand, some of the sales workers asserted that women should not have sexual intercourse before they get married. Having a previous sexual relationship, even in the form of holding hands or kissing, with some other man than the husband is considered to be an injurious act. In that sense, these women postpone satisfying their sexual desires with men until they get married, not to regret it afterwards. Here is Nazlı explaining her thoughts on this issue:

Everything has a time and place. . . . It's very wrong even when you're engaged, because you know, anything can happen. Some people break up, and he gets away with a kiss, then talks behind your back, I did this and that. Then you'll not receive any proposals. Everything is much better after marriage, because that's how my mother was. She didn't date anyone except my father. Now they are very happy. I think that's how it should be.¹¹⁵
(Nazlı)

Uğur also thinks the same. She is proud of not having any kind of relation with any man: "Thank God I haven't experienced anything with anyone, I am very comfortable about this. I mean, I am proud. I am ready to face anyone, anytime"¹¹⁶ (Uğur). Likewise, Irazca says that if she holds hands with his boyfriend and kisses him, she would feel deep sorrow in case of a break-up. She explains that she would feel 'belittled' and 'used'. Here is how she puts it:

For me, even holding hands is a big issue, for example I, hmm., if I'm holding hands with my boyfriend, or let him kiss me, after we break up I

¹¹⁵ "Sonuçta her şeyin bir zamanı, bir yeri var. . . . Nişanlıyken de çok şey bence, çünkü bozulanda oluyor, onun öptüğü yanına kar kalıyor, sonra arkadan konuşur, ben şununla şöyle yapmıştım, böyle yapmıştım da falan, kısmet kapanır. Her şey evlendikten sonra daha güzel olur diye düşünüyorum, çünkü benim annem öyleymiş, hiçbir erkekle çıkmamış şimdiye kadar, babamdan hariç. Şimdi çok iyiler yani. Bence öyle olmalı" (Nazlı).

¹¹⁶ "Allah'ıma şükür hiçbir şey yaşamadım hiç kimseyle, çok rahatım o konuda, yüzüm böyle ak yani, rahatım. Herkesle de hazır hazır yüzleşmeye de her zaman hazırım" (Uğur).

would feel really sad about it, you know? Or I would feel I had a defect. I would feel used, you know.¹¹⁷ (Irazca)

Here, we see that the common points of these statements is that women do not want to have close relations with men before getting married, because they think that men will not find it appropriate if they find out that they previously had close relations with other men. This situation is socially recognized as unexpected. In this sense, their “sexual experience is framed through wider social categories such as reputation and respectability” (Skeggs, 1997, p. 131). On the other hand, not having any previous affairs with men give these women a higher capital in the marriage market.

However, Irazca was working as a sales worker for more than four years and her thoughts on kissing a man has changed over the years. She kissed his boyfriend, who later left her, and she really felt sorry about having kissed him. She was in a dilemma. She sees that customers have close relations with men before they get married. On one hand, she constructed herself by differentiating from these women, but on the other hand, these encounters started to change her opinions and values. However, as the morality judgements are constructed as a painful process for women, and as these judgements have very deep roots in one’s psyche, and more importantly not obeying the morality norms of the dominant patriarchal system would entail a heavy price, the change of attitude in regards to the understanding of morality is a very difficult process.

Here is how Irazca comments on how her opinions changed after she started working:

In those times [when she was not working] I dressed more modestly but as you know when you go into different environments your thoughts change as well as your dresses. . . . For example before, I never liked to dress but now I like to dress more; or for example say a woman comes home late I used to

¹¹⁷ “Bana göre bi el tutuşmak bile çok çok büyük bi şey, ben mesela, ee, erkek arkadaşımle elele tutuşuyosam, ona öptürdüysem kendimi, ben ayrıldıktan sonra ona, çok üzülürüm yani anladın mı? Ya da kendimde bi eksiklik, ya da düşmüş gibi görürüm. Yani beni kullandı derim, o kadar, yani düşün” (Irazca).

think ‘she is late - it is already 9 or 10 p.m.’. But now I say ‘nothing is wrong because at 9 or 10 p.m. everyone is on streets’. Everything has changed. (Interviewer: And, has this troubled you in any way? I mean when your thoughts changed and when you became aware that your thoughts have changed because you contradicted with yourself) Actually, I was scared during the time I was changing but then I gradually believed that I should be like this.¹¹⁸ (Irazca)

Nevertheless, this narrative of Irazca shows that given the opportunities, a woman’s value judgement can change, in a way that can empower her. In fact, the hope of social transformation lies here.

On the other hand, in cohesion with the thoughts on pre-marriage sexual relation, some of the sales workers think that a proper man does not want to have any intercourse with her loved one before marriage. They think that if a man really loves a woman, he will refrain from touching her. Here is how Nazlı tells it:

My boyfriend doesn’t want to do such things. Because we talked about it before. He talked with his friends about it. I had another friend [Rabia] who dated a friend of my boyfriend [Bekir]. He [another friend of my boyfriend] said, ‘Rabia sat on Bekir, haven’t you done anything to Nazlı yet... why can’t you do anything with your girlfriend’. Then he [my boyfriend] said, ‘I love her, I feel weird even touching her, I love her, I don’t have the heart to do it. . . . (Interviewer: What do you mean by ‘sat on’?) It means that she was sitting on his lap.¹¹⁹ (Nazlı)

¹¹⁸ “Hani o zamanlar [while she was not working] ben daha kapalı giyiniyodum, işte hani ne oluyo insan ortam gire gire, açılıyo, sadece kılık kıyafeti değil, görüşleri bile değişiyö. . . . mesela önceden ben hiç böyle giyinmeye düşkün bi insan değildim, ama şimdi daha çok giyinmeyi seviyorum, ya da mesela, atıyorum, mesela geç saatte bi bayan eve geldiği zaman “aa, saat 9-10 oldu, daha o gelmemiş” filan, olay böyle bakıyodum. Ama şimdi “saat daha 9-10, daha ne varki bu saate, herkes sokaklarda” filan. Her konuda değişti. (Görüşmeci: Peki bu sende bi sıkıntıya yol açmadı mı? Hani düşüncelerin değişirken, değiştiğini farkederken, yani kendinle çeliştiğini filan) Aslında değişirken hep korktum, ama sonra yavaş yavaş yavaş böyle olmam gerektiğine inandım” (Irazca).

¹¹⁹ “Benim erkek arkadaşım hiç öyle bir şey istemiyor, çünkü biz daha önce bunu konuştuk. Daha önce arkadaşlarıyla konuşmuşlar, bir arkadaşım daha vardı benimle birlikte, sevgilimin arkadaşıyla çıkan. Demiş ki, çocuğu adın Bekir’di, Bekir Rabia’yı üzerine aldı sen hala Nazlı’ya hiçbir şey yapamadın mı demiş... Sen daha niye bir şey yapamıyorsun kendi sevgiline demiş. Ondan sonra o demiş ki, ben onu seviyorum, elleyince bile şey oluyorum demiş, ben onu seviyorum, hiç kıyamıyorum bile falan demiş. . . . (Üzerine almış ne demek?) Yani üste oturmuş oluyor” (Nazlı).

Similarly, some of the sales workers think that if a man has a relation with a woman before marriage, he most probably is not thinking ‘seriously’ with her. That is to say, in such a case, he is together with her not to get married but to have fun. At this point, we face the dichotomy of ‘the woman to get married to’ and ‘the women to have fun with’. Here is Nur reflecting on her position in this dichotomy: “For fun, I think such friendships are for fun. Not for marriage, I will be close to someone for marriage, but not for having fun, I don’t want such things”¹²⁰ (Nur).

To sum up, most of the sales workers restrict their sexuality to be recognized as respectable. They try to protect their honour by avoiding what they consider as immoral acts. They differentiate themselves from the ‘fallen’ women who made the mistake of having close relations with men before marriage. As opposed to these immoral women, who can sometimes be the customers, they are moral as they do not have close relations with men, as they postpone their sexual desires for them until after marriage. As seen, morality is the very basic constructive feature for their subjectivity. As Cennet says: “I don’t expect anything from life. I don’t want to be spoiled. I want to have good morals, this is enough for me”¹²¹ (Cennet).

However, fortunately, we cannot say that all the sales workers totally accept the traditional morality codes and gender roles of patriarchy. Some of them do question it, and do resist it. They do not internalize what is dictated to them. They will not reproduce those restrictions which were imposed to them. Glsm, who has only held hands with her husband all her life, says:

Even if I do not allow my daughter to make friends with a guy whom she will not marry or do not let a guy hold her hands and such, my daughter can do this without telling me. I allow her to do everything so that she does not

¹²⁰ “Eđence bence. Yani arkadaş edinenler bence eđence iin. Evlenmek iin deđil, ben evlenmek iin biriyle yakınlık kurarım ama byle gezmek iin deđil, istemiyorum oyle bir Őey” (Nur).

¹²¹ “Hayattan bir Őey beklemiyorum ben, bir Őey de ummuyorum. Ben bozulmayayım. İyi olayım ahlaken, o bana yeter” (Cennet).

say my mother was restricting me about everything, restricting me about seeing my friends.¹²² (Gülsüm)

Here, in Gülsüm's position, the possibility of change exists. In this singularity, we see the possibility of a different future.

So far, I have examined the sales worker's conception on how being a good house wife, a caring mother, having good looks, and being 'moral' can bring her respectability. We have seen that the sales worker tries to fulfil the middle class norms regarding the first three, even if she could not successfully realize these norms. However, in regards to morality the sales worker claims her respectability by differentiating herself from the other 'immoral' women, who do not behave properly in their relations with men. Other than those areas, there is also a close relation between working and respectability in the sales worker's life.

In my field, I observed that most of the sales workers were not happy to be working as sales workers. Sales work is a socially disvalued job and sales workers are most of the time, not recognized as respectable. The working conditions of sales work is also not so favourable, as it necessitates long working hours on foot, with a low salary and sometimes without benefits. In addition, sales workers are subject to disrespectful behaviours from the customers and shop owners, however they are expected to be submissive.

In this context, a significant number of the sales workers that I interviewed had the dream of getting married, and afterwards quitting their job as a sales worker. Rather than working as a sales worker, they want to be housewives. They want to have children and look after them themselves. As Beşpınar (2008) asserts "Childcare is the main problem working class women experience" (p. 13). Lack of affordable childcare service leads women not to work in order to be able to take care of their children.

¹²² Ben yapmasın [evlenmeyeceği bir erkekle arkadaşlık etmesin, elele tutuşmasın vb.] derim, [kızım] gider yapar. Yapsın, yarın büğün demesin ki, ne bileyim annem her şeyimi kısıtladı, arkadaşımın falan çıkamadım falan demesin yani" (Gülsüm).

This is closely related with the gender roles attributed to men and women. Men are expected to earn money whereas women have to stay at home. In this understanding women's working is also seen as a shame for men's pride. Women's working is understood as her being open to the dangers of public life, including losing her honour. As Beşpınar (2008) says women's mobility outside the home is restricted due to 'honour' concerns. The outside is thought to be dangerous for women. There is a fear that women can be subject to misbehaviours which will damage her honour, especially on the way to work and in the workplace. In addition, being a sales worker is conceived as a job that is open to sexual harassment thus this is a threat to the husband's reputation. Due to these concerns, some of the sales workers choose not to work after getting married, but rather be good housewives.

In the same way, in my field, I came across the examples of the control of the patriarchal figures over woman's decisions about working and her working conditions. As argued in Chapter 4, in some cases husbands/fathers/male relatives have the last say on women's decisions, including her decision on working. Here is Sakine reflecting on this:

I don't know if I'd work. I would, if I were a civil servant or something, but not in a job like this. . . . I want to be a housewife. But if my husband, I mean, if I must work, I will. . . . If he asks me not to work, I won't quit if I were a civil servant, but otherwise, I'll just stay home (Interviewer: Let's say you are a civil servant, what happens then?) I'll quit.¹²³ (Sakine)

Here we see that the type of the work can affect the sales worker's decision to leave her job upon her husband's will. She does not treat the same to being a civil servant and being a sales worker. Yet, at the last account, if the husband does not want her to work, even if she was a civil servant, she would quit her job. Here, we see that the sales worker accepts her husband's control over her decision to work. These

¹²³ "Bilmiyorum çalışır mıyım. Memur filan olursam çalışırım ama böyle bir işte çalışmam yani. . . . Ev hanımı olmak istiyorum. Yani evlendiğim zaman ev hayatını yaşamak istiyorum. Eşim geldiği zaman ona yemek yapmak, vakit ayırmak isterim. Çocuğuma vakit ayırmak isterim. Ama eşim yani mesela çalışmam gerekiyorsa çalışırım. . . . Çalışma derse gerçi memur olsam bırakmam da ama olmasam çalışma derse otururum evimde. (Diyelim memur oldun ne olacak?) Bırakırım" (Sakine).

kinds of limitations are perceived as the husband protecting his wife and his ‘sweet’ jealousy, which is appreciated by the woman. Nazlı says: “He can be jealous; they say pig isn’t jealous of its partner. I like his jealousy”¹²⁴ (Nazlı).

Some of the sales workers think that they can work when they get married, in case of a financial necessity. As Uğur puts it:

(Interviewer: Will you continue working when you get married?) No. Let him [my husband] look after me. I mustn’t care about working (She laughs). But if I fall into a financially difficult situation and if my husband got into debt after buying furniture and similar household items, then I would accept to work in a job in the establishment in which he works. And in that case I would work without ever complaining about it. I am already working for my father and what if I work a little bit for my husband. However if we are financially well-off I would never work. I would send my husband to work in the morning and welcome him with kisses and a smiling face when he returns tired from work in the evening.¹²⁵ (Uğur)

When there is a real economic trouble in the family, men cannot oppose strongly to woman’s working. However, under this condition, the woman needs to find ways to minimize the men’s potential opposition to her working. At this point, the family tries to find an ‘appropriate’ workplace for the woman. In case of sales work, shops which only serve women and which mainly have women staff are preferred more. That is why, Hazan’s working place, a women under wear shop, is appreciated by her fiancé and that is why she is not expecting any opposition from him in terms of carrying on working in the same place after getting married:

I’m currently in close relation with women; if the job continues like this I will also continue, why should I not? (Interviewer: Would your boyfriend say anything?) No, he will not. He also feels comfortable because here is a

¹²⁴ “Kıskansın, domuz eşini kıskanmazmış. Kıskanması benim hoşuma gidiyor” (Nazlı).

¹²⁵ “(Görşmeci: Evlenince çalışmaya devam edecek misin?) Yok. O [kocam] baksın, bana ne. (Gülüyor) Zor durumda kalırsam, hani onun borçları olursa, yatak odasıdır, şunudur, bunudur, borçlu kalırsa, yanında bir yer varsa, yani onun çalıştığı yerde bir iş varsa, seve seve çalışırım, yani hiç uf falan demeden çalışırım. Ben babama çalışıyorum, birazcık da ona çalışırım. Ama durumumuz iyiyse, katiyen çalışmam. Onu sabah işe gönderip de, akşam güler yüzle. O yorgun argın olacak, güler yüzle, öperek falan” (Uğur).

safe place. Even when the ladies' boyfriends come, our customers wait outside, and their boyfriends do not want to come in.¹²⁶ (Hazan)

In addition, the family tries to find a shop that is owned by someone they know and trust like in the cases of Nazlı and Hazan. In addition, a workplace which does not necessitate using public transportation and which is near to her house or where her relatives work is more preferable like in the cases of Nur, Harika and Nazlı. The journey to work is perceived to be dangerous by the family. That is why, in order to 'protect' Irazca on her way back home in the dark, Rukiye's mother goes to her workplace every day to accompany her on the journey back home. Similarly, Nazlı works at a shop that is on her aunt's way to work and he accompanies her on the journey to work and home.

Furthermore, some of the sales workers feel that they have to protect their honour when at work, and to avoid people speaking badly and gossiping about them. As there is an inevitable interaction with other men on the way to work, or in the workplace, the sales workers develop certain tactics to cope with the men's potential interest. One of the tactics is to wear conservative clothes. In Sakine's case, she started to wear a headscarf after working for a while when she realized that people in her workplace were having an extramarital affair. She considers that wearing a headscarf signals that she has moral values and she would not engage in such affairs. Likewise, Uğur started to wear a headscarf on her first working day. Wearing a headscarf shows that she is respectable. She says:

If I had come here with my head open, as I did before, believe me they would call me names, bad names I mean; let me tell you this. But it's not how I am inside, they judge you only by the looks. Now I have the headscarf, nobody can say anything about me.¹²⁷ (Uğur)

¹²⁶ "Şu anda zaten bayanlarla haşır neşir olduğum için, böyle bir iş olursa devam ederim, neden etmeyeyim? (Görüşmeci: Erkek arkadaşın bir şey der mi?) Yok, demez. O da rahat zaten böyle bir yer olduğu için. Erkek arkadaşları gelseler bile, müşterilerimiz dışarıda bekliyorlar, erkek arkadaşları içeri girmek istemiyorlar " (Hazan).

¹²⁷ "Ben buraya açık gelseydim, eski halimle gelseydim, inan ki burada bir lakabım olurdu benim, yani kötü bir lakap; ben sana böyle söyleyeyim. Ama içimde hiçbir şey yok, sadece görünüş öyle söylerler. Benim şu an şu başörtü başımda, kimse bana bir laf söyleyemiyor" (Uğur).

In the same way, Uğur also gives massage to her boss and she thinks that her boss does not see anything wrong with it since he considers her as having moral values due to her headscarf.

I even give massages to my boss, I mean I massage his shoulders but I swear he did not give me a negative reaction nor did I to him. (Interviewer: What would his wife do if she saw?) I do not know, his wife knows that I have no evil thoughts. For example, he [the small child] was here and he would react to his father if there was anything wrong. They know me after all.¹²⁸ (Uğur)

That is to say, when the sales worker wears conservative clothes, this would allow her more liberty in to behave in a way, which would normally be considered as inappropriate. In the same manner, the sales worker tactically calls her male boss and other male clients ‘brother’ in order to protect herself from their potential interest. Uğur says:

You behave nicely to someone and two days later he asks you out or he comes and visits you. . . . I warn them and they understand. I call them brother. They tell me not to call them brother and I say I will call them brother because I will only not call my husband brother because everybody is like a brother, father or sibling to me whether they are younger or older than me.¹²⁹ (Uğur)

On the other hand, there are also some tactics that sales worker utilizes in order to calm down her father’s /husband’s opposition to her working. In cases where the opposition is based on the man’s fear of losing his authority over her, the sales workers tries to understate the importance of her financial contribution, not to damage the men’s reputation. In some cases, man does not appreciate that woman is contributing to the household income since he is afraid of being recognized as

¹²⁸ “Ben patrona masaj bile yapıyorum, omuzlarına falan, ama yemin ederim, ne onun bana böyle ters bir tepki verdiği gördüm, ne de ben ona karşı. (Görüşmeci: Karısı görse ne yapardı?) Bilmiyorum ya, karısı biliyordur içimde kötülük olmadığını. O [küçük çocuk] mesela buradaydı, şey yapsa, babasına tepkisini gösterir. Beni tanıyorlar en azından” (Uğur).

¹²⁹ “Adama iyi davranıyorsun, adam sana iki gün sonra çıkma teklifi ediyor, iki gün sonra seni ziyarete geliyor. . . . Uyarıyorum. Onlar da anlıyorlar. Abim be falan diyorum, bana abi deme diyorlar, valla abi derim diyorum, ben sadece eşime abi demem diyorum. Yoksa benden büyük veya küçük olsun, herkes benim için abi, baba, kardeş gibidir” (Uğur).

living at her expense. To deal with these kinds of authority concerns, the sales worker acts as if she wanted to work to cover her own needs, or the needs of her child. So, she tries to understate her contribution and justifies it on the basis of covering her or her child's needs, yet not covering the needs that are considered to be covered by the man.

Although sales work is a socially disvalued job, it gives the sales workers the opportunity to work and earn money. Putting the difficult part of the sales work aside, working provides the sales workers with the satisfaction of working and earning money. Working is a way to self-realization and makes people feel valuable. Here is Sevda commenting on her working: "No matter what they say, I'm working anyway. It's better than sitting at home, I think"¹³⁰ (Sevda).

Practically, most of the time, working meant the legitimate way of being outside of the home for the women of this research. The woman, who would not normally be allowed to go out, could legitimately do so due to her work. Inevitably, as she works, she has some interaction with other people different from her family and people in the neighbourhood. Although this can be a reason for a working woman to be disregarded in her neighbourhood, at the same time it is a way of gaining empowerment for a woman through the daily life knowledge and experience acquired as a result of working. The working woman perceives herself as capable of being outside alone, and capable of using public transportation. In other words, she thinks working opens her eyes.

Even though this empowerment does not necessarily result in opposing to the patriarchal restrictions women face, it has such potential. As Bora (2005) states, earning money, extending the living space, increasing the cultural capital through social interaction at work can cause some transformation in the power relations with men in the marriage and family (p. 104).

¹³⁰ "Kim ne derse desin, sonuçta çalışıyor muyum, çalışıyorum. Evde oturmaktan iyidir diye düşünüyorum" (Sevda).

Moreover, earning money empowers a woman. “Women have a right to say when they have money”¹³¹ says Sakine. Earning money makes a woman happy, just as Bora also stated for the domestic workers (Bora, 2005, p. 98). Having money to spend for personal necessities or being able to fulfil some of her family’s needs increases the sales worker’s self-confidence. Sakine refers to this as follows;

I have gained self-confidence. About certain things, for example, a friend says I’m gonna buy this and that. Now I don’t think to myself that I can’t buy it. I can buy it myself. I have self-confidence.¹³² (Sakine)

Sevda also points out the same feeling: “Of course, I feel good about it. Because I’m earning my own money. You can provide yourself; you can buy it when you want it. That’s the good side of it”¹³³ (Sevda). Similarly, here is Nazlı referring to how she feels about earning money: "I feel grown up, I mean, I feel I’m helping them [my family] somehow, and I have gained their trust. Moreover, I gained my own respect for myself”¹³⁴ (Nazlı). That is to say, earning money leads to an increase in one’s responsibility. Here is Uğur telling how she felt when she started to earn money: “I felt responsible. You take the responsibility for something. My elder sister got engaged; believe me, I didn’t buy anything for myself; I bought it all for my elder sister. I bought 5 pairs of slippers, a sleeping set, her bathrobe and her kitchenware”¹³⁵ (Uğur). Being able to purchase these items has increased Uğur’s

¹³¹ “Parası olunca söz hakkı oluyor kadının” (Sakine).

¹³² “Kendime bir güvenim geldi. Bir şeye karşı hani, mesela arkadaş ortamında oluyor. Arkadaş şunu alacağım, bunu alacağım diyor. Artık ben alamam diye içimden geçirmiyorum şimdi ben de alabilirim diyorum. İnsanın kendine güveni geliyor” (Sakine).

¹³³ “Tabii iyi hissediyor insan kendini. Ben de para kazanıyorum diye. Bir de ihtiyaçlarını karşılayabiliyorsun, istediğini en azından alabiliyorsun. O yönden çok iyi” (Sevda).

¹³⁴ “Kendimi büyümüş hissettim, yani bir şekilde onlara [aileme] yardımcı olduğumu hissettim, güvenlerini kazandım. Artık kendime güvenim geldi açıkçası” (Nazlı).

¹³⁵ “Sorumlu hissettim. İnsan bir şeylerden sorumlu oluyor. Ablam nişanlandı, inan kendime bir şey almadım, hep ablama aldım. 5 tane terlik aldım, uyku setini aldım, bornozunu aldım, mutfağını aldım” (Uğur).

status in the family. As Skeggs (1997) states responsibility provides respectability. All these women increase their respectability within their families and friends, through earning money. Here is Cennet, openly articulating that earning money increased her respectability within the family:

After I found a job, people started to respect me more, even my family started to see me differently. I don't know why. For example my mother, my relatives . . . Because me helping my father also serves their purpose. Before they tried to marry me in order to get rid of my burden, that's how I feel. Now they say Cennet, don't ever get married! Now that the house has been given to the contractor, they want me to help my father until it's built. I mean, I'm not there as Cennet, but as the money I bring in (Then do you think you would be more respectable in the eyes of these people if you earned more money?) Of course I would, wouldn't I? ¹³⁶ (Cennet)

Earning money can also empower women against the patriarchal figures. Özyeğin (2005) states that in marriage relations, the power of woman in decision-making can increase when she earns money (p. 256). However, Özyeğin (2005) also notes that if the woman earns more than her husband, the man could increase his control over decision taking, not to lose authority (p. 256).

All in all, although the work relations in sales work becomes an area where gender and class inequalities are reconstructed, it is important to note that working and earning money empowers the sales workers through increasing their power in decision-making process, and increasing their self-confidence, responsibility, and respectability.

5.5. Becoming Respectable: Is it Possible?

So far, I have examined how class and gender based inequalities are experienced in the sales worker's daily life. I pointed out that respectability is a major concern for

¹³⁶ “İşe girdikten sonra insanlar bana daha çok saygı göstermeye başladı, ailem de olsun, daha farklı bakmaya başladılar. Neden anlamıyorum. Annem mesela, akrabalarım. . . . Çünkü babama yardım etmem onların işine geliyor. Önceden evlendirmeye çalışıyorlardı, benim yüküm gitsin üzerinden, ben öyle hissediyorum. Şimdi de Melek, sakın evlenme diyor. Ev müteahhide verildi ya, babana yardım et bu ev yapılanaya kadar. Yani Melek olarak durmuyorsun ki orada, getirdiğin paraya göre duruyormuşum gibi hissediyorum kendimi. . . . (O zaman daha çok para kazanmak seni daha saygın bir hale getirir miydi, bu insanların gözünde?) Getirirdi tabii. Getirirdi, getirmez mi” (Cennet).

the sales worker and explored her behaviours which she considers would bring her respectability. The sales worker claims respectability through certain practices such as; avoiding being recognized as poor with a desire to be recognized as middle class, getting married, investing in femininity by being a good housewife and mother who takes good care of her children, investing in her appearance, limiting her sexuality and controlling her behaviours in the name of honour; and through working and earning money. The sales worker is aware of the classifying schemes that degrade her, and plays within a field where playing with rules of the classifying system at one hand enables her to invest in her capitals, and on the other hand reproduces the rules of the game. That is to say, she is classified in the capitalistic class society, and accordingly she tries to play with the rules of this structure in order to change the position she was put in. Likewise, the dominant patriarchal gender regime oppresses her; however, playing with the rules of this regime also allows her to acquire some capitals which have a value in the system. At this point, it is worth questioning whether playing with the rules of the dominant capitalist and patriarchal system would bring one respectability, or just to the contrary, would reproduce the system which already causes the inequalities and lack of respect.

In order to examine this, first of all one has to recognize the inseparable character of class and gender in the subjectivity construction process. All the behaviours of the sales workers which could bring her respectability are shaped by her being a working class woman. For example, she invests in her appearance to avoid being recognized as poor and to be recognized as middle class, however she invests in her appearances to the extent that a working women class woman can. In order to be recognized as middle class, she tries to acquire the image of the middle class, yet most of the time this image is associated with being a woman; like her appearance; through a haircut, clothes, shoes, bags, and accessories. As Skeggs (1997) states, the indispensable character of class and gender is more obvious especially in the desire to become middle class. In addition, she tries to perform middle class femininity as much as she can, as a capital that is closely related with both one's class and gender. Likewise, we see that all her gender related practices are also classed; like in the

cases of getting married, being a caring and domestic subject and trying to control her sexuality before she gets married. Her conception of femininity and her understanding of honour have the manifestation of her class. That is to say, she is a classed and gendered subject as well as all her respectability concerned behaviours.

At this point, in order to examine the possibility of her respectability, it is necessary to re-examine the nuances, ambivalences and telescopic resistance that reveal when the hegemonic systems and regimes function. These nuances give us the clues about the possibility of transformation of the hierarchies and unequal structures. They tell us about the potentials of empowerment strategies for the subordinates. In this sense, the narratives of the sales worker which tells us that she finds the inequalities as unfair, the tactics that she performs to resist the dominant symbol, and her creation of her own value system as opposed to the dominant ideology even to a certain extent, show us that the classifying schemes and patriarchal suppression is not absolutely accepted by the sales worker. Therefore, her behaviours that claim respectability can give her respectability and can empower her on a daily basis. However, her daily resistance to the inequalities through her dilemmatic and ambiguous interpretation of the social hierarchies and power relations, and through her own ways of operating the dominant values and norms offers the hope of a social change.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The relation between class and gender has been discussed in several studies in Turkey. However, very few studies examine the real meaning of unequal class relations for the women who experience them on daily basis. There are very few studies which focus on the encounter between women from different classes, however, to date the respectability concerns of the working class women in Turkey has not been the focus of research.

In order to explore the importance of respectability for working class women, this study uses field research to highlight the subjectivity construction process of women sales workers in Ankara. The subjectivity formation of women sales worker is a process in which both class and gender play crucial and inseparable roles. In addition, the 'other' plays a crucial role in the subjectivity formation process. The sales work provides a ground to examine the encounter between women of different classes. The sales worker recognizes the differences between herself and the customer during the shopping encounter. The customer functions as the 'other' for the woman sales worker, in relation to whom she constructs her subjectivity. The sales worker has a conception of how the customer perceives her, and accordingly she perceives herself from the mirror of the customer.

Class and gender relations are experienced on a daily basis, and resulting in certain emotions and structures of feeling. The sales worker can feel that she is inferior and inadequate. She blames herself and her family for her social position, yet she also thinks she should not do this since she does not have the right to complain about her position. Seeing the social order as legitimate and illegitimate telescopically appears

in her narratives. Likewise, she is both pessimistic and hopeless for the future, but she also considers herself happy being grateful that she is healthy and her family is doing well.

Class and gender based inequalities result ‘hidden injuries’ for the woman sales worker. Specifically, ‘respectability’ emerges as a major injury for her. She considers herself as lacking respectability in her life and she thinks that other people do not recognize her as deserving value and respect. Yet, she wants to become and be recognized as valuable and respectable. Accordingly, she performs behaviours that she considers will bring her respectability. She disidentifies from her class position and invests in capitals that will allow her to be recognized as middle class. She tries to invest in middle class femininity, which she believes would bring her respectability. She tries to be a good housewife and mother who takes good care of her family and children. She tries to invest on her appearance through being slim, wearing clean and matching clothes. She disidentifies herself from ‘immoral’ women who have improper relations with men. She claims her respectability through being a moral woman who limits her sexual behaviour. Although she does not want to continue working as a sales worker and would prefer to be a housewife after marriage, however, she considers herself as respectable as she is currently working and earning money.

The sales worker’s claim for value and respectability over her practices which are performed in the field of dominant symbolic leads to a discussion on the reasons for the sales worker’s obedience to the dominant classifying system and gender regime. However, this study underlines that the sales worker’s do not absolutely accept the dominant values and the classifying schemes is not the case. As Nazlı asks: “They are girls, and I’m a girl too, they have hair on their heads, and so do I, why is it [the inequality between me and her] so?”¹³⁷ The sales worker experiences class and gender based inequalities through her emotions, which signal that these inequalities cannot be totally internalized and naturalized. The emotions of affect and the

¹³⁷ “Onlar da kız, biz de kızız, onlarda da saç var, bizde de var, [bu eşitsizlik] niye böyle?” (Nazlı).

utterances in the sales worker's narratives are the expressions of the alternative value system possessed by the sales workers.

The women sales worker finds ways to escape the domination, through her acts of simulation and dissimulation. She disidentifies her class position and tries to fulfil the ideal middle class women norms, yet she also creates her own value system which is to some extent constructed against the dominant one. We see it especially in her justification of social inequalities, her degradation of rich but 'selfish' women and her identification of herself as a moral woman and a caring subject, who earns money and has responsibility.

As Kandiyoti argues; in patriarchy, obedience to the domination is a result of patriarchal bargaining, in which the women gain something back in return. In our case, the sales worker gains practical respectability when she obeys or simulates obedience to the dominant patriarchal and capitalist norms. The sales worker plays within the rules and norms of the dominant to become and to be recognized as respectable, thus, when playing with these rules, she uses her own tactics to manipulate them, and escape the field without leaving it.

On the other hand, this study also points out the breaking points in the reproduction of the dominant oppressive patriarchal norms. The sales worker, who has suffered from the patriarchal limitations in her life may not reproduce it, as in the case of Gülsüm, who says:

Even if I do not allow my daughter to make friends with a man whom she will not marry or do not let a man hold her hands and etc. my daughter may do this without telling me. I allow her to do everything so that she does not say my mother did not allow me to do everything and prevented me from seeing my friends. ¹³⁸(Gülsüm)

¹³⁸ "Ben yapmasın [evlenmeyeceği bir erkekle arkadaşlık etmesin, elele tutuşmasın vb.] derim, [kızım] gider yapar. Yapsın, yarın bürgün demesin ki, ne bileyim annem her şeyimi kısıtladı, arkadaşımın falan çıkamadım falan demesin yani" (Gülsüm).

This study argues that investing in certain capitals would increase the sales worker's respectability and can empower her. As can be seen in the sales worker's narratives, class and gender based inequalities and the dominating systems are questioned furthermore, not reproducing the oppressing systems is possible. Class and gender based inequalities are unjustifiable and their elimination is achievable and desirable. The daily struggle of the sales worker for respectability and her everyday tactics to cope with the domination gives hope for social transformation.

This study has certain limitations. It does not handle the issue from a political perspective and does not discuss the organization of working class women in Turkey and the sales worker's participation in trade unions. It did not provide a detailed statistical data regarding sales work as a form of female employment and it does not discuss the social security conditions of the sales workers. These could be areas of further research.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX-A

Details of Interviewees

No	Name	Working Place	Age	Number in the Household	Other information
1	Firuze	Ulus	20	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Left high school• Engaged to a sales worker
2	Sakine	Ulus	19	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Passed university exam, but could not enrol• Recently worn headscarf
3	Hülya	Kızılay	23	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• University student
4	Gökşen	Tunalı	19	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lives in Keçiören• Her father is a civil servant
5	Aydan	Tunalı	33	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lives in Çankaya• Has been working as a sales worker for 16 years
6	Ferhunde	Bahçeli	28	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lives in Çankaya
7	Sevda	Tunalı	23	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lives in Keçiören
8	Duygu	Ankamall	21	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lives in Cebeci
9	Suna	Armada	35	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A sales worker for 14 years
10	Seniha	Karum		3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lives in İlker• Married with one child• A sales worker before she married
11	Cennet	Ulus	20	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lives in Sincan• Her father is a civil servant who has extra jobs.
12	Uğur	Ulus	19	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lives in Mamak• Recently started

					wearing a headscarf
13	Nazlı	Maltepe	16	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lives in Altındağ • High school student
14	Irazca	Cebeci	22	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lives in Mamak • Her family migrated from a village
15	Nur	Demetevler	16	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lives in Yenimahalle • Her family migrated from a city in central Anatolia
16	Harika	Demetevler	17	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Her family migrated from a city in central Anatolia • Wears a head scarf
17	Ufuk	Tandoğan	19	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lives in Cebeci • Married and pregnant
18	Nebahat	Maltepe	23	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lives in Batıkent • Her family migrated from northern Anatolia
19	Asutay	Maltepe	21	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduated from vocational university
20	Dicle	Sıhhiye	21	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduated from vocational university
21	Hazan	Kızılay	19	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Her father, who died, was a state officer
22	Gülsüm	Tandoğan	22	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Her parents were divorced when she was 7. • She has a child. • She is also taking care of her brother. • Her husband is a part time caretaker.

APPENDIX-B

Semi Structured Interview Questions (in English)

Interview No:

Date:

Place:

Household Information

	Age	Place of Birth	Home district	Migrant (Y/N)	Education	Work	Income	Rent	Religion	Other
Interviewee										
Mother										
Father										
Sibling 1 Child 1										
Sibling 2/ Child 2										
Sibling 3/ Child 3										
Fiancé/ Spouse										
Other										

Herself

- Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?

Her Family

- Do you think your life is any different from other members of your family?

Daily Life

- Can you tell me about how you spend your day?
- What do you do at the weekends or during your vacations?
- Can you tell me a little bit about your friends?

Relationship with Her Body

- Do you take care of yourself?
- How often and where do you go shopping?

Relations with the Customer

- How do you spend a work day?
- What kinds of customers visit your shop?
- How is your relationship with the customers?

Perceptions on Richness and Poverty

- Who do you think is rich? Where do the rich people live in the city?
How do they live?
- Who do you think is poor? Where do the poor people live in the city?
How do they live?
- What do you think about your family's circumstances?
- What changes to your work/ domestic life will there be in future?

Working

- Did you want to work?
- How did your family react to you going to work?

Working as a Sales Worker

- How did you find this job?
- How did your family and friends react to you when you first started working as a sales worker?
- Have your tastes, clothes, attitude changed after you started working?
- How long do you want to/will you work at this job?

Earning Money

- Has working changed anything in your life?

Boyfriend

- Do you have a boyfriend?
- Can you tell me a about your relationship with your boyfriend?

Future Expectations

- What are your plans and expectations for the future?
- What are your dreams?
- What are your hopes?

Other

Observations & Notes

APPENDIX-C

Semi Structured Interview Questions (in Turkish)

Yarı Yapılandırılmış Görüşme Soruları (Türkçe)

Tarih:

Yer:

Hane Bilgileri

	Yaş	Doğum Yeri	İkametgah	Göç	Öğrenim durumu	İş	Gelir	Kira	Mezhep	Diğer
Kendisi										
Annesi										
Babası										
Kardeş 1 Çocuk 1										
Kardeş 2 Çocuk 2										
Kardeş 3 Çocuk 3										
Nişanlısı Eşi										
Diğer										

Kendisi

- Bana kendinden biraz bahseder misin?

Ailesi

- Senin hayatın ailenin hayatından farklı mı sence?

Gündelik Hayatı

- Bir gününü nasıl geçirdiğini anlatır mısın?
- Haftasonları ya da tatillerinizde ne yapıyorsun?
- Arkadaşlarından biraz bahseder misin?

Bedeniyle Kurduğu İlişki

- Kendine özen gösterir misin?
- Ne sıklıkla, nereden alışveriş yaparsın?

Müşteri ile İlişkiler

- İş günün nasıl geçiyor?
- Mağazanıza ne tip müşteriler geliyor?
- Müşterilere ilişkin nasıl?

Zenginlik – Fakirlik Algısı

- Sence zengin kim? Zenginler kentin hangi kısmında otururlar? Nasıl yaşarlar?
- Sence fakir kim? Fakirler kentin hangi kısmında otururlar? Nasıl yaşarlar?
- Sence sizin ailenin durumu nasıl?
- Senin gelecekteki durumun nasıl olacak?

Çalışma

- Çalışmayı sen mi istedin?
- Ailen çalışmanı nasıl karşıladı?

Tezgahtar Olarak Çalışma

- Bu işi nasıl buldun?

- Çevrendekiler tezgahlar olarak çalışmanı nasıl karşıladı?
- İşe başladıktan sonra beğenin, kıyafetin, tavrın değişti mi?
- Bu işte ne kadar süreyle çalışmak istiyorsun / çalışacaksın?

Para Kazanma

- Çalışıyor olman, hayatında bir şeyleri değiştirdi mi?

Erkek Arkadaş

- Erkek arkadaşın var mı?
- Erkek arkadaşınla ilişkiden bahseder misin?

Gelecek Beklentisi

- Geleceğe yönelik planların, gelecekte beklentilerin neler?
- Hayallerin?
- Umutların?

Diğer

Gözlemler & Notlar

APPENDIX-D

TURKISH SUMMARY

Türkiye'deki sınıf farklılıkları 1980'lerden bu yana uygulanan neo-liberal politikalar nedeni ile hem derinleşmiş, hem de keskinleşmiştir. Türkiye'de yoksulluk ve yoksulluk üzerine yapılan araştırmalar, 1990'lardan sonra bir artış göstermiştir, lakin sınıfın ve yoksulluğun işçi sınıfının gündelik hayatına olan yansımalarını inceleyen az sayıda çalışma olmuştur. Türkiye'deki yoksulluk çalışmaları, yoksulluğu, çoğunlukla ekonomik göstergeler ile ya da yoksulluğu yönetmek üzerine politikalar üretmek maksadı ile incelemişlerdir. Bu alandaki az sayıda çalışma, eşitsiz sınıf ilişkilerinin sosyal, kültürel ve ideolojik yönlerini incelemiştir. İşçi sınıfı kadının eşitsiz ilişkileri nasıl deneyimlediğini inceleyen çok az sayıda çalışma olmuştur. Bu çalışmalardan sadece bir kaçı, işçi sınıfının kendisini nasıl kavradığı konusunu ele almıştır. Türkiye'deki işçi sınıfı kadın öznelliğinin nasıl kurulduğu bu çalışmalardan sadece bir kaçında ele alınsa bile, bu çalışmaların hiç biri konuyu 'saygınlık' perspektifi ile ele almamıştır. Bu bağlamda, bu tezin temel amacı işçi sınıfı kadın öznelliğinin kurulumu sürecinde sınıf ve toplumsal cinsiyetin oynadığı rolü, saygınlığı analitik bir araç olarak kullanarak incelemektir.

'Kadın' kategorisinin sınıf ilişkilerinde nasıl kurulduğunu incelemek ve saygınlığın işçi sınıfı kadının öznelliğinin kurulumunda oynadığı kritik görevi anlamak için, bu çalışmada kadın tezgahlar üzerine bir saha araştırması yapılmıştır. Tezgahçılık, çalışma esnasında işçi sınıfı kadınların orta sınıf kadınlar ile karşılaşmasına neden olan bir istihdam alanıdır. Bu nedenle tezgahçılık, sınıf farklılıkları ve eşitsizliklerinin gündelik hayatta nasıl deneyimlendiği incelememiz için bir araştırma zemini sunmaktadır. Alışveriş esnasında yaşanan sınıflar arası karşılaşma, işçi sınıfı kadın öznelliğinin kurulumunda orta sınıf kadının oynadığı

rolü incelememize de olanak verir. Tezgahtar kadının orta sınıf kadın algısını incelemek, kadın tezgahtarın saygınlık ile ilgili kaygılarının hayatında oynadığı önemli rolü fark etmemize de vesile olur. Tezgahtar kadının kendi hayatı ve başkalarının hayatı üzerine anlatılarını incelemek, onun saygınlık adına verdiği gündelik mücadeleyi fark etmemize olanak verir.

Alan araştırması kapsamında Ankara’da yirmi iki kadın tezgahtar ile yaklaşık doksan dakika süren yarı yapılandırılmış derin görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Görüşme yapılan kişiler rastgele seçilmiş, ancak orta sınıf tezgahtarlar ile görüşme yapılmasından, çalışmanın odaklandığı konu dışında kalıyor olmasından dolayı, imtina edilmiştir. Niteliksel araştırma metodu ile yürütülen bu çalışma niceliksel genellemeler yapma iddiası taşımamaktadır. Yine de, alana dair farklılıkları görebilmek ve bulguları kavramsallaştırabilmek için, Ankara’nın Maltepe, Tunalı, Cebeci, Demetevler, Sıhıye, Ulus, Bahçelievler, Tandoğan gibi bir çok farklı kesiminde ve Karum, Armada, Ankamall gibi farklı alışveriş merkezlerinde çalışan kadın tezgahtarlar ile görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Bu yöntem sayesinde tezgahtar ve müşteri profillerinde ve mağaza türlerinde bir çeşitlilik olması sağlanmıştır. Görüşme örnekleminde böyle bir seçim yapılmış olmasına rağmen bu çalışma, bulgularına ilişkin ampirik genellemeler yapma iddiasında değildir.

Bu tezde, ‘deneyim’ kadınlar hakkında temel bilgi üretme kaynağı olarak ele alınmıştır. Deneyim bütün sosyal varlıkların öznelliklerinin kurulduğu bir süreç olarak görülür. Bu çalışmada, işçi sınıfı kadın tezgahtarların deneyimleri ve bu kadınların kendileri ve hayatları hakkında söyledikleri ele alınmıştır. Bu çalışmanın amacı işçi sınıfı kadın tezgahtarların nasıl toplumsal cinsiyetli ve sınıflı özneler haline geldiğini anlamak olduğu için, görüşme soruları sadece iş hayatıyla sınırlandırılmamış, bu kadınların hayatlarının genelini anlamaya yönelik olarak tasarlanmıştır.

Kadınların kendi hayatları ve başkalarının hayatları hakkındaki anlatıları, onların toplumsal gerçekliği nasıl gördükleri ve öznelliklerini nasıl kurduklarını

anlamamıza neden olacak bilgiler sunar. Bu çalışmadaki kadınların öznellikleri öteki ile kurdukları ilişki üzerinden kurulur. Bu ilişkiyi incelemek, toplumsal olan ile özel olan arasındaki bağlantıyı anlamamıza olanak tanır. Aynı zamanda bu anlatılar, sınıf farklılıklarının her bir tezgahtar tarafından nasıl anlamlandırıldığını ve yaşandığını ve sınıf farklılıklarının nasıl farklı kadınlıklara neden olduğunu anlamamıza olanak sağlar. Bu çalışmada, kadın tezgahtarların anlatılarından tekillikleri göstermek ve bu anlatıları okurun farklı okumalarına açmak maksadı ile direk alıntılar yapılmıştır.

Bu çalışmada kadın tezgahtarların öznelliklerinin kurulum süreçlerini anlatmak için bir takım terimler ve kavramlar kullanılmıştır. Bunlardan ilki olan ‘sınıf’ kavramı Bourdieu tarafından kullanıldığı biçimi ile sosyal sınıf kavramına denk gelecek şekilde, sınıfın ekonomik özelliklerinin yanı sıra kültürel özelliklerine vurgu yapan anlamı ile kullanılmıştır. ‘Toplumsal cinsiyet’ kavramı, post yapısalcı feministler, ve özellikle Butler tarafından kullanılan şekli ile, kavramın performansa dayalı yönüne vurgu yapacak şekilde kullanılmıştır.

Çalışmada ‘özneliğin kurulumu’, öznellerin deneyimlerini belirli bir söylem içinde anlamlandırdıkları bir süreç olarak görülmektedir. Öznellik, öteki ile ilişki içinde kurulur; sınıf ve toplumsal cinsiyet özneliğin kurulumunda ayrılmaz bir şekilde birlikte işler. Bu anlayışa göre, bireyler deneyim sahibi olarak değil, deneyim üzerinden kurulan özneler olarak değerlendirilirler (Scott, 1992, s. 25-26). Deneyimler her zaman gerçekleşme ve bir söylem içinde anlamlandırılma sürecine tabidir (Skeggs, 1997, s. 28). Skeggs’e göre özneler ötekinin kendilerini nasıl gördüğünün ayırdındalardır. Ötekinin özneyi değerlendirmesi, değer yargılarından bağımsız bir süreç olarak işlemez. Kadınlar, sürekli olarak gerçek ya da hayali ötekilerin kendisi hakkındaki yargılarının farkındadır. Öznenin, ötekinin gözündeki konumunu fark etmesi, özneliğin kurulumun esas noktasıdır.

Bu çalışmada ‘saygınlık’ kavramı, sınıflı toplumda insanların kendilerinin ve başkalarının nazarında öz saygılarını ve saygınlıklarını yitirdikleri önermesine dayanarak ele alınır (Sennet ve Cobb, 1972, s. 170). Saygınlık, saygınlık

göremeyenlerin sorunudur. Başkalarının gözünde saygın olmadığını düşünen işçi sınıfı kadın, saygınlık pratikleri ile kendisine değer katmaya çalışır. Bu saygınlık, orta sınıfın tarif ettiği saygınlığa zıt bir biçimde tanımlanabilir (Skeggs, 2004, s. 25). Egemen olanın kimin saygın olup kimin saygın olmadığı yönündeki görüşleri aynen kabul edilmez, bu alana dair yeni bakış açıları geliştirilir (Skeggs, 2004, s. 25).

Bu çalışmada Türkiye’de kadın istihdamına ilişkin genel bir resim sunulur. Türkiye’de kadının iş gücü piyasasına katılımındaki dinamikleri anlamak için aile, emek piyasası ve devlet arasındaki kurumlar arası etkileşimi incelemek gereklidir (Beşpınar, 2008). Bu kurumlar arasındaki bağlantı kadınların değerlerini, normlarını ve hareketlerini belirleyen toplumsal cinsiyet rejimini oluşturur. Bu bağlamda, Türkiye’de kadının çalışmaktan aldığı düşük finansal ve duygusal tatmin, kadınların iş gücü piyasasına katılımlarına ilişkin mevcut olan geleneksel dışlayıcı değerleri pekiştirir (Beşpınar, 2008). Türkiye’deki geleneksel normlara göre, kadınlar çalışmak ve para kazanmak durumunda değillerdir. Daha ziyade kadınlara, ailedeki erkek üyelerin bakması ve kadınların bu erkeklerin kontrolü altında yaşamayı kabul etmeleri beklenmektedir. Benzer şekilde kadınlar da para kazanmaktan ve aileyi geçindirmekten sorumlu olan kişilerin, ailenin erkek üyeleri olduğunu düşünebilmektedirler. Kadının temel görevleri ev işi yapmak, çocuklara ve yaşlılara bakmak ve ailenin yeniden üretimini sağlamak olarak görülür. Daha da ötesi, kadının çalışması; kadının anne ve ev kadını rollerini tam olarak yerine getirmesine engelmış gibi görülür. Kadının sınırlı sayıda iş olanağının bulunduğu bu koşullar altında var olan iş seçenekleri, kadını çalışmaya motive etmeyen, çoğunlukla az kazancı olan, güvencesiz ve düşük statülü işlerdir. Finansal olarak kadının çalışmak için yapacağı; iş yerine ulaşım, iş yerinde giyecek kıyafetler ve çocuk bakımı harcamaları, çalışarak elde edilebilecek kazançtan daha fazla olabilmektedir. Bu durum, kadını çalışmamaya teşvik eder. Beşpınar’ın (2008) belirttiği gibi ekmeği kazanın erkek olduğu iş bölümü, sadece sosyo-kültürel olarak değil, devlet ve piyasa politikaları tarafından da dayatılır.

Türkiye’de ataerkil yapı gereğince ailenin kadın üyelerinin çalışıp çalışamayacağı üzerine söz sahibi olanlar erkeklerdir. Ailenin erkek üyeleri kadının çalışmasına karşı çıkabilir ya da kadının nerede, ne tür bir iş yapabileceğini sınırlandırır. Erkeğin, kadının esas görevinin ev işi yapmak ve çocuklara bakmak olması yönündeki beklentilerine ek olarak, kadının çalışmasına karşı çıkışı, eğer kadın çalışırsa erkeğin onurunun ve saygınlığının zedeleneceği kaygısından kaynaklanmaktadır (Özyeğin, 2005, s. 23). Buna ek olarak, Türkiye’de kadının ‘namus’unu korumak, kadın ve ailesi için çok önemli bir konudur. Bu özellikle, namuslarına düşen gölge nedeni ile eş bulmaları tehlikeye girebilecek ile genç işçi sınıfı kadınlar için daha da geçerli bir durumdur. Ayrıca Türkiye’deki işçi sınıfı kadınlar, erkeklerin olduğu bir ofiste çalışmaya dair cinsel tacize uğrayabilecekleri yönünde bir kaygı taşırlar (Beşpınar, 2008). Benzer şekilde, ulaşım ve ulaşım esnasında yaşanabilecek cinsel taciz Türkiye’de kadınların deneyimledikleri başka bir problemdir (Beşpınar; 2008, s. 13). Kadının iş yerine gidip gelirken cinsel tacize uğrayabileceği kaygısını hem kadınlar, hem erkekler taşımaktadır.

Bu sıkıntılara ek olarak, Türkiye’de kadınların iş gücüne katılımlarını teşvik edecek ve çalışma koşullarını iyileştirecek araçların olmayışı çok önemli bir sorundur. Türkiye OECD ülkeleri arasında kadının iş gücüne katılımı bakımından en düşük orana sahip ülkedir. Aynı zamanda Türkiye’de kolayca erişilebilir ücretsiz çocuk bakım hizmetinin olmaması, çocuk bakımının ailenin bir sorumluluğu olarak kalmasına, bu nedenle de var olan toplumsal cinsiyet normlarının pekişmesine neden olur.

Çalışmalarına yönelik ailelerinin itirazı ile karşılaşan kadınlar, kocalarının/babalarının bu karşı çıkışlarına karşı bir takım taktikler geliştirirler. Bu taktikler; evden çalışmak, başörtüsü takmak ve ya evlenmek, ya da hem çalışan, hem de ev işini aksatmadan yapabilen “süper eşler” olmak ve kazancı olduğu gibi eşe vermek olabilir (Beşpınar, 2008, s. 10). Kazılan paranın eşe verildiği durumlarda, erkeğin otoritesini kaybetme korkusunu hafifletmek için, kadın kazancını erkeğin kazancına ek olarak, temel olarak çocuklarının ihtiyaçlarını

karşılamaya yönelik edinilmiş bir kazanç olarak resmeder. İş yerinde cinsel tacize uğrayacağı korkusunun aşmak için ise, sadece kadınların olduğu bir yerde, ya da evden çalışmayı, ya da stratejik olarak daha muhafazakar kıyafetler giymeyi tercih eder (Beşpınar, 2008, s. 18). Akrabalar ya da komşular tarafından önerilen bir yerde çalışmak, ya da erkekler ile ilişki kurulmasını gerektirmeyecek işlerde çalışmak da başvurulan yöntemlerdir. Aynı zamanda kadınlar, saygınlıklarına gölge düşüreceğini düşündükleri ‘kapalı kapılar arkasında’ çalışmaktan kaçınabilirler. Benzer şekilde işlerini; geç vakitte, karanlıkta veya kalabalık toplu taşıma araçlarını kullanarak evlerine dönmelerini gerektirmeyecek işler olarak seçemeye gayret ederler.

Türkiye’de işçi sınıfı kadınların sıklıkla çalıştığı işler, kadınların geleneksel görevlerinin bir uzantısı olan; yemek yapma, örgü örme ya da dikiş dikmek gibi işler olabilmektedir (Beşpınar, 2008, s. 11). İşçi sınıfı kadın için evden çalışarak yapılabilecek enformel sektör işleri kadınlar için daha iyi bir seçenek olarak değerlendirilebilmektedir. Bu işler düşük gelirlili, uzun çalışma saatlerini gerektiren, sigortasız ve iş güvenliği olmayan işler olabilirler. Kadınlar bu türden işlere kısıtlı koşulları altında edinebilecekleri geçici işler gözü ile bakarlar (Beşpınar, 2010). Bu işleri yaparken evden çalışırken çocuklarına bakabilecek olmanın avantajını kullanırlar. Kadınların ev dışında da yapabilecekleri gündelikçilik ve ya sokakta satıcılık yapmak gibi başka enformel işler de vardır. Enformel sektördeki bu işler, düşük seviyede iş aidiyeti geliştirirler. Bunun dışında fabrikada çalışmak ya da düşük statülü hizmet sektöründe çalışmak gibi sigortalı formal sektör işler seçenekleri de bulunmaktadır. İster formal ister enformal olsun, bu işlerde kadınların çalışma koşulları kötü ve kazançları düşüktür.

Çalışılırken karşılaşılan bütün sorunlara rağmen, çalışmak kadının güçlenmesini sağlar. Çalışan bir kadın, para kazanır, yaşam alanını genişletir, artan sosyal etkileşimini dolayısı ile kültürel sermayesini artırır, ve evliliğinde onu güçlendirebilecek bir dönüşüm yaşar (Bora, 2005, s. 104). Çalışma koşullarından ve mesleki statüden bağımsız olarak, ücretli çalışma, özellikle genç kadınların sosyal

ve ekonomik olarak güçlenmesi için zaruridir. Buna ek olarak, Özyeğin'in (2005) de belirttiği gibi çalışmak bir kadının hayatındaki maddi koşullarının değişmesine ve aynı zamanda aile içindeki cinsiyete dayalı iş bölümünün dönüşmesine neden olabilir. Lakin, iş piyasasındaki ayrımcı ve sömürücü pratikler ile düzenlemelerdeki ve politikalarındaki eksiklikler işçi sınıfı kadınların çalışarak güçlenmesini tehlikeye atar (Beşpınar, 2008, s. 17).

Yukarda bahsi geçen koşullar altında tezgahtarlık, işçi sınıfı kadınlar için bir istihdam olanağıdır. Tezgahtarlar çoğunlukla kentin çeperlerinde yaşayan, ve çalışmak için ailelerinden izin almak durumunda olan genç kadınlardır (Durakbaşa ve Cindoğlu, 1996, s. 33). Çoğunlukla bekarlardır, ve aile gelirine katkı sağlamak için sigortasız olarak çalışırlar. Müşterilere tavsiye verdikleri, kıyafetleri düzenledikleri ve mağazayı temizledikleri için, yaptıkları iş geleneksel cinsiyet normları ile örtüşür. Aynı zamanda tezgahtarlık müşteri ile birebir ilişki kurmayı gerektiren; güzellik, çekicilik, uysallık ve başkalarına hizmet etmek gibi tipik kadınsı özelliklerin önemli artı değerler olduğu bir meslektir (Durakbaşa ve Cindoğlu, 2002, s. 84). Genellikle tezgahtarlık belirli bir ürünü satabilme yeteneğinden başka bir yetenek gerektirmiyor olarak düşünülür. Belirli bir iş tecrübesini de gerektirmez. Bu nedenle formal sektördeki muhasebecilik, manikürcülük ve kuaförlük gibi daha çok eğitim ya da belirli bir beceri gerektiren diğer işlere nazaran genç işçi sınıfı kadınlara görece olarak daha kolay bir şekilde girebildikleri bir iş sahası sunar. Tezgahtarlığa alternatif olarak benzer durumdaki kadınların yapabildikleri diğer işler kasiyerlik ve ütücülüktür.

Bu anlamda tezgahtarlık önemli bir iş fırsatı olmasına rağmen, zor çalışma koşullarına sahiptir. Normal durumlarda, haftanın altı ya da yedi günü, günde on iki saat çalışılan, öğle yemeği ve dinlenmek için çok kısıtlı bir sürenin olduğu bir iştir. Çoğunlukla güvencesiz ve düşük ücretlidir. Daha da ötesi, müşteri ve tezgahtar arasındaki ilişkinin sınıflar arası bir karşılaşma niteliğinde olduğu, sosyal olarak değer verilmeyen ve saygı göremeyen bir meslektir. İşin toplumdaki düşük statüsü, tezgahtarlığı Türkçe'de tanımlarken kullanılan kelimelere de yansımıştır. İş

tanımlamak için her ne kadar mağaza yöneticileri, ‘tezgahtar kız’ yerine daha az cinsiyet referansı olan ‘satış elemanı’ terimini kullanmaya gayret gösterseler de, toplumda işin düşük cinsiyet ve sınıf statüsünü gösteren ‘tezgahtar parçası’ ifadesi de kullanılmaktadır (Durakbaşı ve Cindođlu, 2002, s. 84). Bu çalışmada, işin cinsiyet ve sınıf boyutuna bir yergi manası olmadan vurgu yapmak için ‘işçi sınıfı kadın tezgahtar’ terimi kullanılmıştır.

Tezgahtar kadınların genel profillerine ilişkin olarak, bu konuda yapılmış özel bir araştırma olmasına rağmen, son yıllarda tezgahtarlık belirli bir takım nitelikler gerektiren bir meslek olmaya başlamıştır. Son yıllarda birçok alışveriş merkezinin açılmış olması ve bunun alışveriş kültürünü değiştiriyor olması bu değişimin bir nedeni olarak görülebilir. Örneğin, giderek artan sayıda mağaza sahibi eğitim durumu daha iyi çalışanları tercih etmeye başlamışlardır. Ayrıca, tezgahtarlığın bir kadın mesleđi olarak görülmesi, işsizliđin artmasıyla bu mesleđi yapan erkek sayısındaki artış nedeni ile değişmeye başlamıştır. Yine de, bu değişimlere rağmen, tezgahtarlık bu işe atfedilen sempatik olma ve müşteriler ile kibar bir biçimde ilgilenme özelliklerini gerektirdiğinden dolayı çođunlukla kadınların istihdam edildiđi bir iş sahası olarak kalmaktadır.

Sınıf ve toplumsal cinsiyet ilişkileri gündelik olarak deneyimlenir ve belli birtakım duygulara ve hissediş biçimlerine neden olur. Örneğin, işçi sınıfı kadın tezgahtar, çođunlukla kendisini yetersiz ve eksik hisseder. Hem bir yandan kendisini ve ailesini sosyal pozisyonundan dolayı suçlar, hem de aynı zamanda konumundan dolayı şikayet etme hakkı olmadığını ve kendisini suçlamaması gerektiğini düşünür. Anlatılarında, kendi sosyal pozisyonunu meşru görüp görmediđi hakkında çelişik ifadeler yer almaktadır. Aynı şekilde, bir yandan gelecek için karamsar ve umutsuzdur, bir yandan da kendini mutlu olarak görür ve kendisi ve ailesi sağlıklı olduđu için şükreder.

Sınıf ve toplumsal cinsiyet eşitsizlikleri kadın tezgahtarda gizli yaralara neden olur. Özellikle saygınlık, onun için temel bir yara olarak açığa çıkar. Pratikte gündelik hayatında hak ettiği saygı görmediğini ve genel olarak başka insanların onu saygın ve değerli olarak görmediklerini düşünür. Fakat, saygın ve değerli olmak, ve böyle görülmek ister. Bu nedenle, kendisine saygınlık sağlayacağını düşündüğü davranışları sergiler. Örneğin, kendini sınıf pozisyonu üzerinden tanımlamaz, yoksulluğunu göstermek istemez ve orta sınıf olarak değerlendirilmek için yatırımlar yapar. Kendisine saygınlık sağlayacağını düşündüğü, orta sınıf kadınlık normlarını yerine getirmeye çalışır. Bu bağlamda, çocuklarına ve ailesine güzelce bakabilen iyi bir ev kadını, iyi bir anne olmaya çalışır. Benzer şekilde kilosunu kontrol ederek, temiz ve uyumlu kıyafetler giyerek dış görünüşüne yatırım yapmaya çalışır. Öte yandan kendisini, erkeklerle uygunsuz ilişkileri olduğunu düşündüğü ‘ahlaksız’ olarak gördüğü kadınlardan ayırır. Saygınlığını, erkekler ile sınırlı bir ilişkiye giren ‘ahlaklı’ bir kadın oluşu üzerinden kurar. Evlendikten sonra tezgahtar olarak çalışmaya devam etmek yerine ev hanımı olmak istese de, hali hazırda tezgahtar olarak bile olsa da çalıştığı ve para kazandığı için kendisini sorumluluk sahibi saygın bir birey olarak görür.

Kadın tezgahtarın saygın olmak adına egemen semboliğin alanında sergilediği davranışları ve değer görme ve saygınlık talebi, tezgahtarın egemen sınıflandırma sistemlerine ve toplumsal cinsiyet rejimlerine itaatinin sebepleri üzerine bir tartışmaya neden olur. Lakin bu çalışma, işçi sınıfı kadın tezgahtarın egemen değerleri ve sınıflandırma şemalarını mutlak olarak kabul etmediğinin altını çizer. Örneğin Nazlı, “onlar da kız, biz de kızız, onlarda da saç var, bizde de var, niye böyle?” diyerek müşteri ile arasında gördüğü farklılıkların nedenini sorgulamaktadır.

Kadın tezgahtar, sınıf ve toplumsal cinsiyet eşitsizliklerini, bu eşitsizliklerin tamamen içselleştirilip doğallaştırılamayacağını işaret eden, bu eşitsizlikleri yaşarken açığa çıkan duygular vasıtası ile deneyimler. Kadın tezgahtarın satır aralarında yakalanabilen duyguları ve ifadeleri, egemen olanın ötesinde başka bir değer sistemine sahip olduğunu işaret eder.

Kadın tezgahtar, simülasyon ve disimilasyon yolu ile baskıdan kaçmanın yollarını bulur. Kendini sınıf pozisyonu ile tanımlamayı ve sınıf aidiyeti göstermeyerek, orta sınıf kadınlık normlarını yerine getirmeye çalışır ve egemen olan değer yargılarına karşı zaman zaman kendi değer sistemini kurarak. Örneğin, kendisini zengin, çalışmak zorunda olmayan, paranın kıymetini bilmeyen ve erkekler ile rahat ilişkiler kurabilen müşteriye karşı; ahlaklı, malının kıymetini bilen, çalıştığı ve para kazandığı için ailevi sorumluluklara sahip, kendinden önce başkalarını düşünen bir özne olarak kurar.

Kandiyoti (1988); ataerkil tahakküme itaati, itaat eden kadına itaatının karşılığında bir takım faydalar sağlayan, ataerkil bir pazarlığın sonucu olarak görür. Bu çalışmada, tezgahtar kadın egemen ataerkil ve kapitalist normlara uyarak ya da bu normlara uyuyormuş gibi yaparak gündelik hayatında pratik bir saygınlık kazanır. Kadın tezgahtar, saygın olmak ve saygın olarak görülmek için egemenin kuralları ve normları içinde hareket eder, fakat bir yandan da bu kuralları kendi özel taktiklerini kullanarak manipüle eder.

Öte taraftan bu çalışma, egemen baskıcı ataerkil normların yeniden üretimindeki kırılma noktalarına da işaret eder. Kendi hayatındaki ataerkil kısıtlamalardan muzdarip olan kadın tezgahtar, ataerkil kısıtlamaları Gülsüm'ün de ifade ettiği gibi yeniden üretmeyebilir: “Ben yapmasın [evlenmeyeceği bir erkekle arkadaşlık etmesin, el ele tutuşmasın vs.] derim, [kızım] gider yapar. Yapsın, yarın bürgün demesin ki, ne bileyim annem her şeyimi kısıtladı, arkadaşım falan çıkamadım falan demesin yani.”

Bu çalışma belirli bazı sermayelere yatırım yapmanın tezgahtar kadının saygınlığını artıracak ve onu güçlendireceğini iddia eder. Kadın tezgahtarın anlatılarında gördüğümüz üzere, sınıf ve toplumsal cinsiyet eşitsizliklerinin ve tahakküm sistemlerinin sorgulanması ve daha da ötesi bu sistemlerin aynen tekrar üretilmemesi muhtemeldir. Sınıf ve toplumsal cinsiyet kaynaklı eşitsizlikler meşru gösterilemez ve bu eşitsizliklerin giderebilmesi hem mümkündür, hem de zaruridir.

Kadın tezgahların saygınlık için verdiđi gündelik mücadele ve onun tahakküme karşı geliřtirdiđi gündelik baş etme taktikleri sosyal dönüşüm için umut vadetmektedir.

APPENDIX-E

TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enformatik Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>

YAZARIN

Soyadı : Tatar
Adı : Mehtap
Bölümü : Medya ve Kültürel Çalışmalar

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) : Subjectivity Formation of Working Class Women and Respectability: A Case Study on Women Sales Workers in Ankara

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans Doktora

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
3. Tezimden bir bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz.

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