

*NAMING VIOLENCE:
WOMEN'S RELIGIOUS
BELONGINGS AND
THEIR WAYS TO SURVIVE
VIOLENCE*

✦ *Research Report* ✦





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Religious Belongings and Their
Ways to Survive Violence*



Research Report

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2021

This publication was prepared within the framework of a project that is supported by the Heinrich Böll Stiftung Association Turkey Representative. Havle Women's Association is the sole responsible of the content of this publication and it does not reflect the official view of the Heinrich Böll Stiftung Association Turkey Representative.

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■■■ HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG
DERNEĐİ TÜRKİYE TEMSİLCİLİĐİ



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Acknowledgements

First, we would like to thank the association of Heinrich Böll Stiftung for making this research possible.

This research is indebted to the hard work, dedication and considerations of a group of women. We carried out this research with the collective effort of a team consisting of Ayşe Kudra Akdeniz, Büşra Kılıç, Edanur Göçmen, Fatma Betül Demir, İrem Gerkuş, Selda Şen, Sena Elbaşı and Yasemin Hekim. The advisors of the research, Prof. Nükhet Sirman and Dr. Feyza Akınerdem guided and inspired us with their ideas on every step of the way. Rumeysa Çamdereli laid the groundwork for the research by coming up with the topic idea; and Büşra Kılıç made a great contribution to the writing of the report. We express our sincere thanks to each and every one of them.

Last but not least, we are grateful to the women who participated in our research and shared their experiences, ideas and feelings with us.



1. Introduction

This report contains an analysis of a study that seeks to understand the ways in which women who practice religion in different ways evaluate violence and abuse against women, how they refer or do not refer to religious and social values when making this evaluation, and the complex relationships between social gender-based violence and social values. With this research, another aim is to reveal the ways in which women cope with violence, while also revealing the people, the institutions and the discourses which cooperate with them and those which hindered them while experiencing it. With the report of this research carried out collectively by a group of women, Havle Women's Association aims to expand and spread the information produced on violence against women in Turkey, to shape its own advocacy activities, and thus to contribute to the feminist movement.

1.1 Research Method

Within the scope of the research, we conducted semi-structured interviews with 32 women, all living in Istanbul, with different education levels, age, marital and socioeconomic status, religious affiliation and intellectual background. In order to get to know the interviewees in the interviews, after asking questions about their families, their relationships with their families and their religious beliefs, we tried to understand how they felt in the context of the violence they experienced, from whom they received support or interference, and how they evaluated their experiences. Finally, we asked them to evaluate the social values, institutions, and events that might be thought of as being related to violence.

While conducting the interviews, we tried to form a group that was as diverse as possible, but in the sample group that we created using the snowball method, the number of women who are university graduates was slightly higher.



Table 1: Women's Profiles

NUMBER	AGE	EDUCATION	OCCUPATION	MARITAL STATUS
B1	65	Highschool	Houswife / Not working	Married
B2	51	Elementary School	Retired / Not working	Divorced
B3	31	University	Working in a government organization	Married / In the divorce Process
B4	42	University	Working for a Non-Profit Org.	Married
B5	71	Literate	Houswife / Not working	Spouse has passed
B6	30	University	Translator	In the divorce process
B7	52	University	Teacher	Married
B8	44	University	Attorney	Married
B9	33	University	Bioengineer	Divorced
B10	32	University	Child Development / Not Working	Married
B11	35	University	Working in a Kindergarten	Married
B12	44	University	Film Producer	Divorced / Has a partner
B13	30	University	Teacher	Divorced
B14	28	University	Doctor	Divorced
B15	40	College	Nurse	In the divorce Process
B16	30	Highschool	Looking for Work	Divorced
B17	32	University	Journalist	Divorced
B18	23	University	Student	Unmarried / Has a Partner
B19	37	Master's Degree	Family Counselor	Married
B20	44	Highschool	Houswife / Not working	Married

Table 1: Women's Profiles

NUMBER	AGE	EDUCATION	OCCUPATION	MARITAL STATUS
B21	25	University (Theology)	Working in a government org.	Unmarried / Has a partner
B22	43	Master's Degree	Farmer	Divorced
B23	26	University (Master's Degree Student)	Student	Unmarried / Has a partner
B24	47	Primary School	Houswife / Not working	Divorced
B25	29	Primary School	Houswife / Not working	Married
B26	25	Master's Degree Student	Corporate Communications Assistant Specialist	Unmarried / Has a partner
B27	43	Primary School	Houswife / Not working	Married
B28	50	Highschool	Seamstress	Divorced / Has a partner
B29	37	Did not attend school	Textile Worker	Single
B30	43	Primary School	Houswife / Not working	Spouse has passed
B31	37	Primary School (Highschool)	Houswife / Not working	Married
B32	44	Doctorate Student	Sociologist	Divorced

1.2 Summary

In the narratives of the women who participated in our study, it was possible to see various intertwined forms of violence defined by the feminist movement. As a continuation and reinforcer of these forms of violence which we did not observe to differ with education, age, and financial situation; loneliness, helplessness and inadequacy emerged as common feelings in the narratives of many women who lived together. When describing their experiences, almost all of the women referred to concepts such as “violence” and “psychological/emotional violence” as well as oppression and control, which can be thought of as related to violence.

In this study, where we wanted to understand the relationship between social values and violence and to see how women make references to religious values in their narratives of violence, we saw that our interviewees constructed very different narratives about the relationship between religion and violence. Most of the women did not associate being Muslim with the violence they experienced. When it came to the objectification and speaking of religion as it is infused in women’s daily lives, we observed that women could not get very comfortable. While describing their own experiences, women rarely made religious references, but rather constructed narratives that touched upon their own individual connection with God and the nature and evolution of this relationship. When we asked them about their thoughts on social norms, values and institutions such as family, divorce, nature and feminism, many of them based their answers on the socially accepted normative religion. While some of the women criticized the lived religion, most of the women did not make comments that would lead to questioning religion.

We saw that while most of the women criticized the concept of gender and feminism, the discourse that shapes their vocabulary most in violence narratives revolves around ‘psychology’. It is possible to say that, unlike feminism, which women see as an “extreme” ideology that does not accept religious values, psychology creates a justifiable ground for

them. When evaluating the violence that they experienced, while most of the women used psychological concepts and discourses that deal with violence on an individual level, it was remarkable that some of them, mostly the educated ones, described the violence they experienced in a therapeutic form that associated the experience with their own childhood or the past of their parents. In other words, for women who embrace the concept of psychological violence, placing the descriptive “psychological” at the beginning of the word and of the concept of violence has given them a perspective that shapes how they interpret and give meaning to the issue itself. While designing our research, we focused on the connection of violence with religious and social values. While we had designed our research with a focus on the connection between violence and religious along with social values, as the interviews progressed and as we listened to women the ways in which women describe violence, the psychologicalization of violence also became one of our focal points. Although the personalization of violence through psychologicalization is more common among educated women, we cannot say that there is a notable distinction that occurs with the level of education. The discourse of psychology, which has entered people’s daily lives in many forms such as psychological television series and network programs, shapes the way people from different ages, education levels and social backgrounds view themselves and enables them to give meaning to their experiences. While the psychology discourse opens a space of self-transformation for women, it also holds them back from forming a connection between violence and social structures, thus preventing women from associating their experiences with patriarchy and social norms. In this context, in our research, psychology appeared as a discourse that both provides opportunities and yet also sets limits for women. However, there were also women in the study who associated violence with social structures and institutions. While feminist women pointed to patriarchy, some women stated that people resorted to violence because they did not practice religion.

While women coped with violence in various ways, religion and psychology were the two of the most prominent coping mechanisms which were not seen as contradictory or as an alternative to one another. With psychology and religion, we saw that women cope with violence by making sense of their experiences. Although we did not direct any questions about the issue, the majority of women stated that they were seeking professional help from psychologists and psychiatrists. While the rate for seeking psychological support was higher in educated young women, there were also women who said they went to free therapy. When we look at religion in the context of coping with violence, it was remarkable that most of the women referred particularly to their belief in the concept of destiny and the idea that what they went through was a trial sent by Allah. It is worth emphasizing here that women did not establish a causality between the decisions they made and their fate/trial beliefs. In other words, whether they end up staying in the relationship or leaving the concept of fate and trial was described as a belief that enables women to make sense of their experiences and comforts them rather than a way of thinking that weakens them and stops them from making decisions by taking away their agency.

In our research, we also focused on support and interference mechanisms such as people, institutions and ideas women have that support or intrude them when coping with violence. We can say that most women mentioned family and friends as support/intrusion mechanisms. It should initially be pointed out that the women participating in the study expressed that they were usually alone when they were struggling with violence. Married women said that they could not tell people about their experiences for a variety of reasons until they decided to get a divorce.

There were also women who had told their families and had received support during the divorce process; but because social norms and values that appeared as violence in women's lives are considered normal or "bearable" for many of their families; the family unit was often described as an interference mechanism. The interference of their families has been a state which has left women stuck and helpless in their lives, especially the women who are married and who do not earn their own money. However, many women mentioned that their friends supported them. Although it was mostly limited to moral support, the support of friends was of great importance because it met the needs of women to be understood, and to be given the opportunity to reflect on themselves and see themselves.

2. Women's Religious Belongings

All the women who participated in the research were either Muslim women or women who stated that they were Muslims at a certain point in their lives. One of the common points in the narratives of these women who practiced religion in different ways was that they described that they had an individual point of view in their relationship to religion. In the questions we asked and in the other narratives that were stated about whether they were believers or what kind of relationship they had with religion, most of the women referred to their individual relationship with God and stated that they feared of God, that they had a friendship with him, that they were grateful to God, and the fact that what they went through was a test of God. Although the individual relationship with God was brought up regardless of education, age, occupation, etc, it was possible to observe some differences in the way this relationship was portrayed. For example, some of the women, especially young women and women who had graduated from the faculty of theology, stated that they had read and researched religious issues a lot and that they did not accept many religious subjects solely based on assumption.

When we asked the women who expressed their religious relationship from a more individual point of view (in the reference they gave to religion while describing their own experiences) about gender essentialism, feminism and the Istanbul Agreement, we saw that in most of the answers we received, women were also strictly aligned with socially accepted religious norms and a normative understanding of religion consisting of a set of rules and values. In other words, women were able to abandon the way they questioned their own experiences when it came to institutional debates involving religion.

Three of the women whose identity and practices had been established from a religious place in the past due to being associated with religion from a political standpoint said that they now distanced themselves from social religion, which they say includes certain rules and assumptions. All three of these women were educated women who had taken off their hijabs. One of the leading similarities in the stories of the three women was that in the religious lifestyle that they led in the past, they tried to shape every detail of their lives according to religious norms. After adopting this approach, which sees religion as a holistic system, all of these women stated that they had belief in God, and experienced spirituality in different ways, but no longer adopted the legal and normative side of religion. They explained this detachment with the exhaustion of advocating in a religious context and taking on religion as an identity, the suffocation of living a “strict and rules-based” religion, the restriction and the desire for freedom that it brings, and the gaining more perspective by meeting different people. The common perspective in all three narratives was the important role that patriarchal religious interpretations on gender issues played in their distancing from religion.

3. The Types of Violence That Women Experience

Women experienced different forms of violence defined in the feminist struggle, mostly as a continuation of one another other and in a connected and interlaced way. In the narratives of the women who participated in our research, the forms of physical, psychological, economic and sexual violence were sometimes expressed in language directly named as violence, oppression, control, etc. while sometimes it was not named.

While delivering our request to interview the women participating in the study, we explained to them that we were conducting research on

the difficulties women experience in their lives and their ways of coping with these difficulties. Since we did not mention the word violence when describing our research, whether women attributed the concept of violence to their experiences was not a given. Therefore, in the interviews, we asked the question: “Have you ever experienced difficulties in your life that escalated to a violent level?” All of the women, except for a 71-year-old illiterate woman and a younger woman who stated that she had not experienced violence from her family, stated that what they experienced was violence and described this violence by using different words. In this section, we will try to analyze what women experience and how they define and portray their experiences by utilizing the categories of violence that already exist in feminist literature.

3.1 Psychological Violence

One of the most outstanding points for us in our research was that the majority of women with different education, age and socioeconomic backgrounds defined their experiences as being psychological violence and the concept of psychological violence was mentioned many times in the stories of many women. Psychological violence which can also be called emotional violence is a form of violence that goes on for years, going unnoticed for a very long time, is very difficult to come to terms with and cope with after being recognized, and takes years to heal from. It is dominantly fed by patriarchal norms, assumptions and values about femininity. When describing their experiences in retrospect, many of the women explained how they began to notice this hidden and unidentified form of violence and how it made their lives unbearable in the past, creating feelings of worthlessness, guilt, insecurity and helplessness in them. B13 explains that the psychological violence and its whole existence is not

identified and that this violence is related to the assumptions about femininity as follows:

What I experienced was more on the psychological side. In my opinion, my authority in terms of my own opinion was being taken away from me. I think my existence was undefined. My existence was being ignored. And the notion was that, my ideas and thoughts did not matter to him, even my existence did not matter because there are more fundamental problems in him, there was a strategy of undermining my value, a strategy of trivializing me, my abilities and my skills which were minimized. I was always made to crumble under the weight of what it meant to be a woman, as if a woman is naturally a sinner and if she says or does something, you know, the things she does without her husband's knowledge are very wrong things, the assumption that she makes wrong decisions, for example if she greets a person in the morning, she can go down the wrong path, leading her to be compromised, those were what went through his mind and what affected his demeanor and these were limiting my life so much (B13).

The forms of psychological violence experienced by women are very diverse and entwined. In our research, we will try to categorize the most common narratives in which women have had to endure accusations, were made to feel inadequate, isolated, having their work devalued, being limited and deceived.

3.1.1 Accusatory Behavior and Making the Subject Feel Inadequate

The leading form of psychological violence in the stories of women is that

they were made to feel inadequate and were accused. Women state that they were constantly criticized and blamed for things by their families and especially by their spouses, and as a result of this, live with a feeling of inadequacy or guilt that overrules their lives. These accusations or criticisms are mostly based on claims made to women for not fitting or conforming to the norms and ideals of the concept of femininity. Women who devote their entire lives to housework are told that they can't do take care of their house well enough, that they can't cook well enough, that they can't be good enough mothers, women are blamed for problems in sexual intercourse, and women who are cheated on by their husbands are told that this happened to them due to their own mistakes. It is, in this context, possible to decipher many of these stories with the concept named "gaslighting" in feminist terminology. So many of the narratives about feeling inadequate and being gaslighted are in the narratives of the past for women who have come out of these relationships, because it takes a lot of time to realize the situation they are dealing with. In these narratives, women express how they came to discover this and how they felt:

Well, I gradually realized that it was affecting my mental health, I was really talking to myself when I was alone at home. I did not consider myself to be valuable in any way; being called 'stupid', 'idiot' and so on... Because he always belittled me, "How many languages do you know? You don't know anything anyway", for example, that was the simplest thing for him, the way he insulted me. You're ugly, incapable of anything, you can't even get a job... For 2 years, I really viewed myself as very inadequate, after about ten years, my perception of being inadequate has disappeared, but the deepest wound he caused in me was about incompe-

tence, it took 10-15 years for me to recover from that (B12).

The married women we interviewed stated that they were the party that was responsible for both running the household and for improving the relationship, but that their efforts in these matters were constantly criticized. In their evaluations of the past, women often name these issues as violence or oppression:

Because I was made to feel inadequate but outside the house, I am talking about the father of the children, outside the house he was telling everyone that I was perfect. But there was always a problem at home, and I was solving the problem. He was not satisfied with the solution. He even criticized the things I had solutions for. This time there was a lot of violence. In words, 'Are you stupid', 'You are ignorant'... there were also curse words. There were many things he didn't like. I kept saying, okay, I cannot do it perfectly, but you too should show up anyway. You know, if there are things that you criticize that I can't do, if you know how to do them better, then do it better. But he wasn't doing it and he was criticizing me. So, he had a lot of this kind of violence, psychological violence was a huge issue (B15).

I am trying to please the person I am with, but that person does not see anything I do as valuable, and nothing is enough, and this started to create feelings of inadequacy in me (B6).

A beautiful physical appearance was also one of the main areas in which women felt lacking. A big part of the criticism directed at women by their husbands was that they were not beautiful enough, that they did not

dress well or appropriately, and that they gained weight:

Since my partner could never prove himself in this regard, or because he did not see himself as being enough, because he saw himself as being ‘lesser’ than me, he humiliated me a lot, he put a lot of psychological pressure on me. You couldn’t do this, you weren’t able to do that, etc. things that put me in a difficult situation, or he would make statements that would cause me to be physically incompetent. He would do that a lot. So, I fought on for a long time. And eventually, when I looked in the mirror, I didn’t like what I saw anymore (B6).

We interviewed two women who had had sexual problems in their marriages in the past and stated that the source of this sexual problem was their husbands. Both women stated that while they were having sexual problems, they were held responsible by their husbands for this issue. One of the women stated that she only realized that she was not responsible for the issue after she got divorced, that she was manipulated by her husband, and while describing the problems in their marriage, she bases the psychological violence she experienced on his sexual problems:

He managed it the first night, but we still could not have intercourse. He took pills or something, but no, it did not work again. He said to me, “It is not working because of you”. He said, “You are so tense that I psychologically cannot do it.” How was I to know, it is not an area that I knew of. I was sad too; I was sad that I put him in that position. Well, we had a friend, I witnessed it for two and a half years at that time, she had vaginismus. I was scared, her stress and all, she was being treated at that time, and I was going with

her, I got scared, like, what if that happens to me too. Well, eventually I figured out that I wasn't like that at all. Of course, I came to understand these things much later, when I opened up and talked, I got some professional support, like psychological treatment. When you understand what the dynamics of marriage, there is no such things at all. I'll want to, and I will get to that point, and we can't do it because of him. There is a case of him manipulating me in that situation (B13).

Women, who are told that they are inadequate in almost every social, cultural, physical or sexual issue, have a feeling of inadequacy pervading their lives, both in the subjects they are said to be inadequate and in other matters, as they occupy their minds with such thought patterns. As a result, in relationships where they encounter violence, they tend to see themselves as the "guilty" party, or take responsibility:

Because he underhandedly made comments like, "I'm so in love with you, but you are making me unable to be with you. I'm so in love with you, but you make me hate you. I'm so in love with you, but you're pushing me away from yourself." which of course, didn't sound ridiculous to me at the time, I thought to myself "Oh my God, I devastated a man that is so in love with me. What a terrible person I am. I am an unlovable person." (B14).

You blame yourself when you're cheated on. So not only are you being cheated on, but you are also blaming yourself for it. I blamed myself for example, "I wonder where I went wrong, did I deserve to be cheated on? Am I not enough as a woman?" So, I blamed myself, asking myself what I did wrong to get cheated on. So, it's very, very bad to be cheated on, the worst thing to hurt a woman with (B1).

3.1.2 Separation/Isolation from Family and Social Environment

Loneliness was one of the leading emotions that dominated the narratives of the women participating in the research. Loneliness was a common feeling expressed in different ways among single women, divorced women trying to make a life for themselves without support from their families, and married women. For a significant number of women, marriage itself had created a change in their lives that was isolating, even before they experienced the violence in their marriages. After they got married, nine of the women explained that they went to another city or country, left their job, family, friends, social environment, their daily routines, and tried to establish a life for themselves in a social environment consisting only of their spouses and their spouses' families. The loneliness and lack of preoccupation in their new surroundings were often described by women as depriving them of support mechanisms and disempowering them. In the stories of women who did not have a social life of their own and were only close to their husbands' families, the interventions of mother-in-law and father-in-law in the family became particularly more visible:

One of the difficulties I had in my marriage, as I mentioned, was my mother-in-law's constant involvement in everything. She took things too far each time. See, I had already married away from Turkey into to a foreign country, I am the single daughter of my family. I was leaving my family, loved ones, friends, everything behind. In other words, I got married and with all my faith and loyalty, went to Germany. I didn't speak the language, I just went through a month of training for the family reunification exam. After that, I passed the exam and went to Germany. That was the

only amount of language I knew. I was stuck between four walls. I did not know my way around at all. My husband was going to work. I was alone at home. There was no internet at the house. There was a TV but no satellite to connect (B3).

However, many of the married women also said that their husbands made visible effort to keep them away from their friends and especially from their families, to stop them from seeing their loved ones. Whether the instances were in the past, or happening in their current lives, the majority of the women we spoke with expressed that being cut off from family, friends, or social circles is part of the control mechanism.

He wouldn't give me any reason; all he would say was: "I don't want you to go." That's it. But it was the thing is, my friends were making him very uncomfortable and he was constantly trying to make plans that would tear me away from Istanbul and my friends. He even decided... My Goodness I went through some ridiculous stuff. So, for example, he would get obsessed with something, he dropped out of electrical engineering in the fourth grade, so he said was going to go back to studying there and we would move there. He had studied it in Elazığ, I think, something like that. He had this obsession for a while. He said he would take me there too, because that way I would be separated from my friends in Istanbul. At one point he was obsessed with moving to England. We were going to move to England, and that would have taken me away from everyone again. After that, he decided to move to Hatay, he was obsessed with the idea. I did not agree to move there, and so on. That was just the way it went. He was always doing things like that to keep me isolated from my circle of friends,

for three years, almost every month and in any occasion that I met my friends or if an argument came up, he constantly threatened with this. (B22)

There are only about a handful, about 5 people around me that I call my friends. Because after I got married, they did whatever they could and isolated me from that circle to the point that I don't have any friends anymore. I have become unable to even talk to my friends. Pressuring me, not letting me see them. After that, I was ashamed to do anything with my friends. Whenever we made a plan, it was cancelled. I started drifting away from them. I mean, meeting my friends and such things didn't happen much, I couldn't make plans with them. Whenever I made a plan, either my mother-in-law or Zeki [her husband] would always ruin it. No matter where I wanted to go, even if we arranged a date a week ago, I would have to cancel on that day (B25).

This man started making every meeting with my friends a problem. Selma is my best friend, why is it a problem for me to see Selma or Sena (B13)?"

It is thought that after women get married, they become a part of the husband's family. Because their own family can give advice to women that would protect them and empower them, they are seen as a threat that can cause problems for women with the new rules and new family that they married into. In many interviews, there were instances where women were not allowed to meet up with their own families, and in cases where it was allowed, limits were set. In these narratives, spouses and mother-in-laws emerged as the perpetrators who set boundaries and

regulated these meetings.

It was the second week of our marriage, and as I said, my parents are very close to me, back then of course I did not know what marriage was, and I didn't work for the first month of my marriage. I mean, I wasn't working when I got married. There was a half hour ride between me and my family's homes. They came to us about every two or three days. And my husband, we were only married for two weeks, was very unhappy about it. Because like I said, I was seen as the daughter of my husband's family. Because it is said discreetly, no they will not come, it is not possible etc. My husband said the following sentence to my mother, I don't want to see you in my house anymore. This was a huge deal for my family. When I heard this, I was so devastated that if my father had witnessed this, my father would have killed Selim [husband]. He would kill him. My mother stormed out crying, she said she had a fight with B9 and left. In a conversation between me, my mother and Selim about a year after the incident, and my father was out of town, Ali said carelessly that he still defended it. He said 'You shouldn't have come to our house so often, but you did', and I said at that moment, I mean, I didn't travel around, I didn't spend extra money, there was nothing for me, the only thing was my family being there. For an entire year I told him this, but there was still his opinion which he defended. There was this person in front of me, saying to me, "Your family is garbage now, you will follow my rules (B9)."

My husband abided by his parents for three years when we first got married. B25 will come, B25 will go. B25, whenever they called

for me to come, I would go to them, and whenever I was asked to leave, I would go home at that time. I don't know, whatever they wanted to limit, would be limited. They restricted me from going to my family. They said my family was filling me with wrong ideas. They meant that my family gave me wrong ideas, but this wasn't the case at all (B25).

The saddest thing part about it is that my husband used to go to my mother's neighborhood to work at his shop every day. But I could only see my mother once in thirty or forty days. It was not allowed. If we went to see her, we would go there and come back all together. When my mother came to visit, they would be present with us. We would all sit together. That's the way it was (B27).

3.1.3 Expectation of Domestic Labor and Devaluation of Labor

In our research, we have seen that one of the main areas in which women are blamed and made to feel inadequate in their families and marriages are issues related to domestic labor. Since, apart from the context of making them feel inadequate, the subject of domestic labor is one of the most prominent subjects in women's narratives, we needed a separate heading. The women we interviewed all had the responsibility of taking care of the entire house physically and mentally, regardless of their working status, class, education or age. Vast majority of the women who were expected to take on all the responsibility for housework were treated by their families and mostly by their husbands like the labor they gave at home was constantly lacking and their labor was devaluated. Women sometimes referred to the imbalance in labor and while talking about the labor they gave in the past, used expressions indicating that it was an extra sacrifice and that they were not obliged to make.

In some cases, however, they did not describe the imbalance of labor as a problem, but rather complained that their efforts were not appreciated and recognized:

I had made up my mind, on that vacation. Then after we got back, he had a few more similar and very, very disturbing behaviors, there was this one day when he drove me crazy. I made that decision one day when I was very sick. On that day I was in bed with a 40-degree fever, and he asked me to get up and make him breakfast, and I said that breakfast should be brought to someone who is lying with a fever at 40 degrees. He went crazy and he said, "Do you want me to prepare it", said he was the only one working, that I wasn't doing anything at home anyway, and how could I say such things to him, I don't know, stuff like that. Well, I was very, very strong that day, even though I was incredibly sick, something in me just snapped, I said okay, I will make you breakfast because I thought; if he goes to school without breakfast, he had issues like fainting and low blood sugar, and not that I cared about him but I thought if he faints he will blame me when he comes back home. I said fine, I will prepare it, he said don't prepare it, I prepared it for him and he didn't eat it, something changed in me that day, I don't know what it was, I said 'You will eat it' and again he said he wouldn't. I said, 'If I got up and made breakfast for you in the state that I'm in, you have to eat it', he said he would not eat, I said you will, he said I won't, he said that either he would eat it and not come back home that evening, or that he would not eat and come home. I mean, he threatened me to leave again, something got to me and I said; neither eat nor come home in the evening, I think it was my first ever curse to him, I said fuck off from this house and I beat him or hit him, I really lost my temper. I slammed the door

open and threw him out, I slammed the door in his face, that day I definitely decided to break up from him (B12).

I cooked for him 24/7, I did his laundry, and excuse me for saying this, but he was a filthy man, even the way he smelled changed, you know? He was a man who lacked self-hygiene, cutting his nails, brushing his teeth, you get me? While he was not a person who had enough self-care, during his marriage with me, I sent him in a clean, pristine state to his job every day, a man working at a construction site, every single day I constantly paid attention to him. I got up to prepare the breakfast table in the morning, I made him breakfast, and while he worked a different job for a while, he was going to work early and he said he could not eat that early in the morning, he didn't ask me to make breakfast for two months or so. Then he switched to another job, out of nowhere, trying to offend me in front of his family a few times. I would still set up a table every other day at least. I think this is a kind of violence too, as if this task is ordained to me by some supernatural power, that I must abide by. Why? In my opinion, because he worked and I stayed home, would it hurt me to get up and offer him breakfast? This was my opinion. He started complaining to his mother that I wasn't making him breakfast, that I wasn't setting up a table, bringing this issue up to his family that we hadn't even discussed in private, thinking I would fix it. After that, I patiently remained patiently silent. Of course, my mother-in-law started asking; 'Daughter, is this appropriate?' and so on. I kept quiet, I didn't say nothing big or anything, we got home, I said to him, aren't you ashamed that you're complaining to your family about me, and about this issue? After that, I asked, how

many years have you been living alone? Ten years. I said you can live without breakfast for another ten years. I'm not making you breakfast from now on (B13).

The things my mother-in-law does are never appreciated, let me tell you, that woman is treated like she's a servant. They tried to treat me the same way, but I am a working woman. I get up in the morning and come home in the evening. When I come home in the evening, traditional and time-consuming meals are expected from me. That is impossible. If I were a housewife, I would be a housewife and I would make those things. But despite all of this, I still did them, during that period. I tried to please the person I was with. This was also difficult for me. I was trying to please the person I was with, but that person would not see anything I did as valuable, it wasn't enough, and it started to create a feeling of inadequacy in me (B6).

Looking back to their experiences, women's one-sided effort in house chores and the lack of recognition that they receive for it is one of the issues that form the basis of the psychological violence that they experience. Women refer not only to domestic labor but to the general forms of labor and sacrifices they have made in their marriage or past marriages. For example, shaping their lives according to their spouse's career or education is one of the themes that some women regret when they look back:

I was in charge of all the children and the family over the years. That was also a lot of liability. I always offered the man the opportunity to improve himself, to graduate from university, to take a driving course in Germany, to find a job, to do the application

work, to improve himself, but I did it for him, that was my biggest mistake. If I had done it for myself, my situation would be very different. But I looked for solutions because he came to Germany and so I would help, because I had the responsibility. Until he came to Turkey. That's when I knew, it wasn't going to work out. That's when I realized the truth (B15).

3.1.4 Limiting Women's Bodies

Women's lives and bodies are subject to many different forms of limitation and restriction by their partners, spouses, spouses' families, and their own families. We object to calling all kinds of restrictions 'violence', rooted in the assumption of agency based on autonomy and freedom; however, it is possible to say that a wide variety of restrictions create violence, based on what results and what emotions the established limits lead to in women's lives. The most overpowering restrictions in our research were the ones set for what women could and could not do with their bodies, what they could wear, where they could go and how they could experience intimacy, and which of these concepts were legitimized by social norms. In our research, we interviewed five women who wore the hijab for a period of time, but later chose not to wear it for various reasons, but more specifically due to the changes of the religious meanings they attributed to the hijab.

We knew that one of the women had taken off her hijab and had faced backlash from her family and surroundings, but the other stories about removing the hijab were stories that we did not know about beforehand and that we learned during the interview process. Two of these women mentioned that their families stopped refused to see them after they got

divorced and took off their hijabs. A single woman said that it had been a year since her father stopped seeing her because she had taken off her hijab. We think that interfering in women's removal of their hijabs should be read in the context of patriarchal and social norms that set limits on what women can and cannot wear, rather than simply associating them with religion and religious reasons. As a matter of fact, the forms of interference on the body revealed in the research were not limited to removing the hijab. A woman whose husband wanted her to wear shorts even though she did not want to herself, a woman whose husband wanted her to wear long traditional skirts at home, and a woman whose husband did not want her to wear revealing clothes at home but who also did not want her to wear a burqa outside of the house, experience different faces of the same interference. Moreover, a huge variety of religious, political or ideological meanings are attributed to the hijab and to people who wear the hijab in Turkey. Some people perceive wearing the hijab as part of an identity that represents various values, and it is frequently associated with religiosity. Therefore, we cannot say that the interferences in putting on or taking off the hijab are completely identical to the general interferences in what women wear. In our research, the women who had stopped wearing the questioned the meanings related to the hijab and associated the reactions they received from their families with the close relationship established between the hijab and religiosity.

It's my life, it's a decision that only concerns me, and - just because he gives irrational, absolutely unreasonable reactions and it means different things to him, why should I make such a personal decision based on someone else? After much thought and taking into account the conflict I would endure, I had already explained this and after I explained it, to sister and brother, who I thankful-

ly have a good relationship with, they respected my decision and stood by me, they defended me against my father, they were at home too. But he didn't even listen to me. He gave nonsensical responses. Like, he has these dramatic movements, he like punches the door and stuff, suddenly getting up in rage, raising his voice, things like that, he did stuff like that. Anyway, I checked up on him, he was definitely not in a position to communicate with me. My sister and my brother, we are two years apart, they're twins, they sat down and talked to my father for a long time asking him why he reacted like that, they said let's sit down and talk about it and stuff. You know, saying she didn't want to wear it, she was not happy like that anyway, and so on, it's not like, you know, there are some things in religion, like the red lines to not cross as a Muslim, like, being questioned as a Muslim and stuff. The hijab is not one of those things. It is perceived as fard (obligatory practice for Muslims), but if you don't do it, you do not abandon the religion or something, you know, it is not like that. But he doesn't see it like that. He was like, I can't accept this, he said things like I can't take this. His voice got louder, in a high tone, completely rejecting what the other party said, he was definitely in a very unresponsive state and he always repeated what he said and he said things like I can't see be witness to this, I can't stand it, I can't take it mentally, I don't want to see her for a year. Well, that's how it went. It's been four or five months since we haven't seen each other anyway (B23).

B22, whose narrative you will find below, is a woman who took off her hijab after divorce and had a fall out with her family due to topics surrounding the hijab, divorce and among many other things. B22 wore a burqa at

the beginning of her marriage and prefers to wear more revealing clothes when at home, neither of which are suitable for her husband. While her husband criticizes her revealing clothes with religious references, he sees wearing a burqa as an extremism that threatens his wife's occupation in society as well as her financial income:

I was 10 when I started wearing the hijab. I've never dated, I've never had a boyfriend. I got married when I was 25 and of course I wanted to spend time with my husband. I wanted to dress freely at home. I wore a burqa outside. I wanted to relax when I came home or and I was a newlywed. I wanted to share special things. I used to set the table, prepare the house, I put on low-cut clothes and make up, the first thing he says as soon as he enters the house is "Why are you so naked? It makes the angels flee." and such things. That was the gist of it. He was a religiously oppressive man. He was a two-faced man. He was a liar, but I still can't say he was bad. Because that's what they had taught him. Before we got married, I told him I wore a burqa. He already knew. I said, if that is going to be a problem for you, we should cut this off immediately. He said, "No, you wearing the burqa is so great, it is so exceptional to me, and so on." Then we go out on the street, for example, he walks at a distance from me. He doesn't want any of the parents seeing him with me because he presents himself as a secular profile to the parents. Those parents of the children he taught did not even know that he prayed. He was also a one-on-one tutor. The parents, who hired him as a tutor, were people of an elite circle and he had to present a secular image to that group in order to continue his lessons, to earn money. That's what he believed, or rather, he didn't want to be seen with me and he walked at distance from

me, so I took off my burqa at last, for example, because I couldn't wear it when I was going anywhere with Zeki. I was only wearing the burqa to go to the grocery store. It had turned into something very absurd (B22).

Realizing that her husband had relationships with other women in her marriage that lasted less than a year, B13 mentioned that he constantly criticized the clothes she wore and that he treated the other women he saw in a completely contradictory way.

For instance, in this two-month period, we were married in the first week of August, I wore a pajama set, short sleeves, shorts at home and he said 'don't wear stuff like that' when I asked why, he said, 'I don't like nudity'. One day, I wore stretchy tights, and a T-shirt, physically I did not appear bad, I was not overweight, you know, there was nothing that would disturb him visually, I thought I should appear attractive to him. Anyway, he goes 'don't dress like this', when I asked why, he said, 'you look like those women outside'. I wore jeans, again, 'don't wear that', why, 'it doesn't suit you'. Then I put on some weight for a while, he said, 'your belly looks fat' and etc. His belly stuck out, he couldn't even see his toes when he looked down, but my belly is the problem. He made such statements, but in that relationship, the other girl was trying on fishnet stockings, tights, clothes, the girl sent him those, such conversations took place. But I wasn't supposed to look like anyone else (B13).

For women, limits are set on the extent that they go out, with whom and what they do outside, by their spouses, families and their spouses' fam-

ilies and these limits are expressed by women with words such as violence, oppression and control. In addition to limiting the married women in their meetings with their friends and families, which we mentioned before, not allowing women to work, forcing them to change their jobs, interfering putting up curfew hours by the fathers, exposing them to physical violence because of having a boyfriend can be given as examples of the forms of violence experienced by women.

Boundaries placed on women can be intended to weaken any bond that makes women feel good, without any reference to social norms or grounds for “safety” concerns:

I went to an iftar organized by the Reçel Blog. I had the children with me, my eldest daughter and so on, if I remember correctly. He definitely didn't want me to go, he didn't consent to it, but I went anyway. Because it was important to me. I occasionally wrote for the blog and cared about my friends there, it was good for me, and right after that, I received a message saying, “B22, if you don't love me, which I assume is the case because you don't listen to me, if you love someone else, you should be honest about that” or something along those lines. “If you're in a relationship with someone else, since you don't listen to my words” and so on. After that, I was consistently tried to explain to him that I did not want anyone else, that I was committed entirely to him and to my marriage, going to such gatherings did not feel like an issue to me (B22).

It is not only their husbands or fathers who are perpetrators who set limits on women's bodies and decide what they can and cannot do. Thirteen

of the women who participated in our study frequently mentioned the interferences and restrictions of their husbands' families as well. Others pointed out this issue as directly being the reason for their divorce. Some of the younger women stated that their relationship dynamic shifted completely after their mother-in-law and father-in-law became involved. While evaluating the past, women talked about the things that their husbands' families had done and said that their husbands did not want to cross their families and stand up for them in those situations. Others put all the accountability on the mother-in-law and described their spouses as ineffectual figures in such situations:

Well, we got married and I became the bride of a very difficult family. I fell from a very relaxed family into a very difficult family like a grenade. And it blew up. I was married to a man who could never say no. Everything his mother said was strictly right to him. Whatever his mother said. His mother always knew what was right, because that's how he saw his mom. Since my husband knew that he could not reckon with her, he would never object to anything, he would say that his mother was right (B27).

We had a huge disadvantage – when we got to the point of marriage, before we even got officially engaged, even then my father-in-law wanted to take all the reins, all the planning, the process, everything, and after that, nothing was the same. In other words, this is what his perception looked like, our son will not leave the house, son, you will not surrender yourself to B9, you will stand your ground, you will obey us, you will not do this, you will not do that, it will not be done like that, that girl's place is here now,

she will forget her father's house, she will forget her own cultural background, experience, and so on. But my great husband never saw what was happening. For two and a half years, the marriage continued, and after two and a half years, my husband divorced me. Our marriage can't continue, our families can't get along, we fight all the time, we can't find common ground. It doesn't work. We loved each other very much, but the dad was always in the marriage with us, saying, you're not going to do that, you're not going to have kids, you're not going on vacation etc. But he wouldn't say it directly that way to his son. I mean, it's such a classic Turkish family- well, the male dominated structure is exactly how he raised him anyway, he knew his son's soft spot, he knew how to manipulate. He's a kid who grew up in that man's authority for years, but I have to say that he was an idiot. I grew up under my father's authority as well, but I never did what my father did. I have never acted like my father; I have never seen life that way (B9).

In the life of one of the women we spoke to, she said that unlike the cases with perpetrators being within the family, the communion that she was in would make the decisions on all the important actions and practices that would determine her life, such as the clothes she wore, the person she would marry and her education.

I dropped out of college at the end of my freshman year. I couldn't continue on to second grade. The hijab bans had already started, but I probably wouldn't have continued even if they hadn't, because the community did not consider it appropriate for girls to go to school or attend university, and the daughters of the leading

people of the community did not even go to primary school, and they were proud of it..... Then girls started going to university, it was legitimized. They only allowed a few universities, only a few fields of study. It was after I went, though. It was after all those fights and insults had happened to me B22).

3.1.5 Cheating

In our research, cheating was described as a form of psychological violence experienced along with other forms of physical, psychological and economic violence. Six women who stated that they had been cheated on by their spouses in their marriage talked about how devastating the cheating was for them and how hard it was to bear it. Being cheated on created feelings of worthlessness, insecurity, guilt, and great anger and resentment towards their spouses. For two of the women, cheating was the last straw in an already violent relationship and made them decide to get a divorce, while the other women chose not to get divorced because of their children, economic reasons or because they did not think that their lives would be improved after a divorce. Another woman, B31, said that her husband did not want a divorce after marrying another woman with an Islamic nikah (marriage), so she did not grant her the divorce for 12 years, but then was forced to divorce. B31 described what it felt like to be cheated on:

The fact that I could survive this... I don't know. God gives you the strength and also, you have the children, but of course it's in my thoughts, in my mind. I can't stop my thoughts in any way, they're always there. It is very difficult, by God, I would not wish it any-one. There really is nothing more difficult than being cheated on. Apart from everything... the fighting and the arguments can pass,

but it is very difficult to be cheated on (B31).

B1, who is 67, has learned a few years ago that her husband had been cheating on her for 25 years, and she blames herself for this. She prefers not to get divorced because her children do not want it and she does not want to lose her financial status and does not want him to be able to get married to the other woman.

My two sons were married at the time, so I spoke to my son who was single. I said, “What if I divorced your father.” He said, “Well mom, I love my dad. Despite everything, I love him. I also talked to my father. I’ll talk to you too.” I must have been jealous. So, if I got divorced, I thought, “Now he is going to go and marry his nurse. Can I handle that? The salary will be gone, the house will be gone, I will go to my mother’s house and just sit there. I have a sick brother.” It is not easy to go back to the family home after marriage. For example, my mother is now 83 years old. She gets bored of me after about an hour, I feel it.... I thought about all these issues. I couldn’t see myself taking on all of that. The man himself did not ask for a divorce from me either. I’m telling you; he didn’t think of divorcing me, but on the other hand, he would continue his other relationship. I wouldn’t have said no if he had asked for a divorce. I wouldn’t (B1).

3.2 Financial Violence

We observed that all of the divorced women participating in our research had experienced financial violence in their previous marriages, and more than half of married women have experienced financial violence in their

marriages. As an extension of psychological violence, financial violence was a part of the mechanism of control and oppression placed on women's lives by spouses, mothers, fathers and spouses' families. Situations such as not giving money, confiscating paychecks, not allowing the spouse to work, selling property without the spouse's knowledge, always asking for details of the money spent, not buying household goods, confiscating the wedding gold, threatening not to pay alimony, transferring the property owned before the divorce to someone else, can be shown as examples of the forms of financial violence experienced. The term financial violence was used by two interviewees, but though the other women did not use the phrase 'financial violence', the majority of them mentioned forms of financial violence as a component of the hardships they experienced.

Economic violence is at the center of the story of B3 who got married and moved to Germany. When B3 went to Germany, she saw that there was not a single item in the house that was for her. This lack of furniture, in which she did not even have a bed or a stove, lasted for months. B3 states that the fact that she was not bought a single item of furniture and the psychological violence she experienced by her husband and mother-in-law during this period was what made her understand that she was actually never wanted by this family. B3, whose gold she was given on the wedding day, was confiscated by her mother-in-law right after the wedding, returned to Istanbul at the end of 4 months and is now at the end of the challenging divorce process that has been going on for several years. Imagine this, you are newly married. Should there not be a house set up for that? Shouldn't something be done? I mean, that was not a bride's house, I'm sorry for the language, it was more like a barn than a house. When I moved, I didn't even have a bedroom yet, I was sleeping on a mattress on the floor.... There wasn't any financial inadequacy. These things

were not done completely arbitrarily. I don't think the reason was financial hardship because my husband made good money. Likewise, his father worked for the state railways. The lowest his monthly salary would be was 4000 Euros back then. So, there was no difficulty in that. (B3)

For some of the women who participated in our research, not being allowed to work was a form of financial violence that also worked as a way of isolation. However, in connection with the fact that many of the women we spoke to had a profession, the financial violence on this issue was more diverse, and not only limited to not being allowed to work. The women participating in our research had the responsibility of managing the household duties, which are socially attributed to women. Although women experienced the unpaid labor at home and its depreciation as a form of violence, we have seen in the narratives of women that the role of providing for the house which are normally socially attributed to men were not similarly embraced by many of the men. Some women said that although their husbands had the means, they did not work in a better job or they confiscated the money women earned while at the same time, not taking on any responsibility at home.

For example, B11, whose original field of work is insurance, but works in the organization of a kindergarten at which he is one of the founders, stated that she made very little money in return for her work in this small business. Stating that her husband's earnings were very good, but that he always wanted more, B11 stated that her husband criticized her work for a long time, saying that she should either practice her actual profession and work in a job where she can earn more money, or that she should not work at all. She expressed that this was violence.

In another narrative, B6, who, in her own words, is expected to make

wraps and dumplings at home, salary card was confiscated by her husband right at the beginning of her marriage. However, B6, who could only get her card back when her husband left the house, realizes that there is no money left on the card. When her husband left the house, he also took the wedding gold. B6 started her new life without any money after the marriage. She wants the wedding gold and financial compensation while she is approaching the end of a contentious divorce process that has been going on for 3 years.

There was a rental payment after we got married, so I gave him my salary card, I gave it to him once, and I could never get my salary card back again, and that was it. I couldn't get it my salary card, my own salary card from my own husband.

[You didn't get it even though you asked for it?]

Yes, yes, and a fight broke out when I tried to take it back. For example, when I did his laundry and wanted to wash his trousers, I took out the wallet, I put the wallet to the side, I saw my card at the top, I took it and put it on a different table, I separated his wallet, I separated my card, I was treated like I was going through his stuff and his pockets. Apparently, I was rude because I went through his wallet (B6).

Although women have experienced financial violence in many different ways, the most prominent ones in our interviews were the denial of access to money and the confiscation of wedding gold, including some of the other forms of financial violence as mentioned above. Because there were great commonalities between these two issues in the interviews, we'll cover these two separately here.

3.2.1. *Withholding Money*

Many of the women with different levels of education and backgrounds have stated in different contexts that their partners, ex-spouses and families did not give them money/withheld money from them. In the stories of women, not being given money has directly and indirectly pointed to violence in their lives and depriving women of their material rights is described as a mechanism of control, limiting and punishing women.

B22 is a woman who has experienced forms of financial violence at different stages of her life. The stories of B22 and the way she interprets her experiences are important in terms of showing how not giving money is a part of violence in many different ways, and how people can try to control a woman and reintegrate her into the norm by depriving her of economic support in different periods of her life, during difficult times; so we will elaborate on this section through the experiences of B22.

B22 described the financial violence that she has experienced in her own family as follows:

He provided for our daily needs. Whatever he had to buy for the house he would buy, whether it was food, or drinks, or buying clothes, but he would not give me an allowance. He would not financially provide for anything that he did not regard as a 'need'. But he did a lot of donations. He gave out money everywhere, but he did not give it to me, and I almost never, for example, when I was in university, it was as though I was a child of a poor family. I actually went and got a certificate of poverty and received the

Prime Ministry scholarship and the Istanbul Metropolitan scholarship, for that time Tayyip Erdoğan was in the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality and he was providing a good amount of scholarship. He was giving scholarships on par with the Prime Minister's scholarship. I was living off those two scholarships. My father also gave me a small amount of money, but every time he gave me money, it was a whole ordeal. Both my mom and my dad were like that, too, and by the end of the month I would have to walk for miles because I couldn't afford to get on the bus and all. With that money, I had to pay for the rent of the house I was staying in, the food, the money, and all my education expenses. I mean, they always treated me as if I was the child of a poor family. Although they had money, both were very stingy. That's how they were to me, at least (B22).

Although she attributes the fact that his mother and father left her without money to "stinginess", in the later parts of her narrative, B22 compared her own situation with their parents' payment of his brother's large financial debts by his family and his material needs being met. In doing so, she implied that she did not assume that stinginess was in the nature of the family, and that being a woman, unlike his brother, provided the basis for this financial violence. B22, who could not get any financial support from her family after the divorce, stated that she was punished in this way by her family because she got divorced. According to B22, what her family wanted was for her to be completely broke, unable to start a new life for herself and eventually be fully dependent on them. As in this example, withholding money is one of the main forms of violence that functions in women's narratives as a way of controlling and punishing them:

I got divorced. This was a big instance of punishment. Back then, I was going to buy a camera, and a computer. I wanted to get into photography. The camera I wanted to buy was five thousand liras, and the lenses I wanted were two or three times as much. A computer was already ten thousand liras at that time. So, I couldn't ask my father for a loan of five thousand liras. They didn't come up to me and say "Look, there are some helpful people around us. Go make a job interview with them if you want. You are divorced, and if you want to make money, there is such an option for you." or "B22, let's give you some money. Start a business with it." They didn't say those or give any other options. I mean, they just ignored me, and when I got the alimony for the children and I took care of my children with that alimony, it became a huge deal. What they want is for me to be completely helpless, completely desperate, and beg on their doorstep and say, "Oh, I've made a huge mistake. Please forgive me (B22)."

B17, like B22, is a woman who has had financial difficulties after her divorce and could not get support from her family during this period. In B17's story, her father's offer to pay her phone bill is regarded as a "bribe" for her not to take off her hijab at the time. As a matter of fact, after her father learned that B17 had taken off her hijab, he stopped paying her phone bill, which was the only financial support he provided:

Then, after I came, he called me and said we want to pay your phone bill, at least we will have contributed to your life and so on. I said ok. I had a friend with me, I told her, my father is bribing me right now, so that I won't take off the hijab or something, I made

a sentence like that. She said why are you saying that, aren't you ashamed, how could that be and so on. I took off my hijab, so I posted it on Facebook in a way that my parents wouldn't see, but someone sent it to them, I guess they saw it somehow. When he was sending it, the first thing he wrote when he was texting me messages about disowning me, he said we are not paying your phone bill anymore. (laughs). That's what he wrote first. I said to my friend, look, did you see what he wrote? Are you still in doubt whether this was a bribe? Also, it's monetary in the sense that—because my fathers have a religious belief — because women in their belief should not work, men should look after them, they say that we all share the same money, that everyone has a right to it but it's all lies because they are the only ones who control the money. That's why I think they violence religion a little, in these cases (B17).

Going back to B22 again, she states that she has always led a financially deprived life in her marriage, but when deciding on the amount of alimony to ask at the divorce, when she added up the money her husband received from private tutoring lessons, she realized that their economic situation was actually quite good. She received child support for her children after the divorce, but the alimony she received served as a tool to enable the continuation of the abusive relationship with her ex-spouse. Only two of the women we interviewed were granted alimony by their ex-husbands after their divorce, and for both, the alimony they received was often used to threaten them by their ex-husbands. B22's ex-husband threatens her in different ways, reminding B22 that since he earned most of his money undocumented, he would have been granted the right to not pay alimony if he had applied to the court, saying that he had earned

too little. B22, who eventually got into a hassle with her ex-spouse, was forced to settle for some reduced amount for the child support she received.

The main occupation which earns Ali the most of his money is private tutoring lessons, and he always takes that money in cash, so Ali's earnings, on paper, seem almost equal to the amount of alimony he pays. Looks like a little more than the alimony. And that's a part of the pressure he placed on me. Knowing this fact is a pressure point, because Ali can do anything, sue for alimony reduction and reduce the amount. Because I can't prove it. I have to work hard to prove it. That's a very slim chance. Because he is not using the credit card properly either. You know, I could otherwise do a credit card tracking, ask the banks for it, etc., but I know very well that A- He is a man who saves money in cash. I have known that all throughout my marriage. That's why I was trying not to clash too much with Ali because I knew that he could go to court for alimony reduction, and he used it against me very well. So, he used my conformity to his benefit. He constantly threatened me to take the kids. He threatened me with not paying child support. He threatened to take custody. Every Ramadan, not this Ramadan, thankfully, the first night of the Ramadan he would send such a message that destroyed me. I was dying of fear and anxiety. You know, "What if he takes my kids." and so on (B22).

3.2.2 Confiscation of the Wedding Gold

One of the main forms of financial violence in our research was that all of the divorced women and a significant portion of the married women mentioned that the distribution of the gold gifted at the wedding took

place entirely outside of their control. The gold of some is taken by the spouse's family immediately after the wedding, some husbands take the gold while leaving the house, and the spouses of some take all the gold for their debts, the details of which are never known. Although we had not asked any questions about this subject specifically, it is notable for us that the issue often appears in the stories:

My husband left and moved in with his family. He took all of his personal belongings at our house and left. We had gold, so he stole our gold and took off. You can write that down, it's a very important detail. ...(laughs) really... I've been laughing since the beginning, it just seems funny, I don't know if such a case is predated anywhere in the world but (B6)...

He took my gold bracelets ten days later, talking about there being a lot of debt. They said that his mother and father were helping pay for it, but it was all a lie. All that debt was only ours. It was something else, there was a debt other than those we had for the wedding, he did not explain what it was to me at all. He took the gold and sold it, and the debt did not go away, the debt still would not end (B13).

Well, when I first got married, my in-laws did not want me because my mother-in-law did not give me the jewelry and gold from the wedding. She took our money, our gold, the gold, everything. Only the bracelet and necklace were left for me. They took everything else. We didn't have much in terms of money anyway, so when my father took those, he said, "We gave them so much gold, how could you just take it?" A fight broke out. A loss of connection occurred between them, because of that. (B25)

Although women are legally entitled to demand their wedding gold during the divorce process, none of them, except one woman, stated that they asked for this. Because such a demand would turn the divorce into a challenging process, thus the divorce would take longer and get more difficult. For the same reason, we witnessed that women did not demand compensation and alimony as well as wedding gold, and that they had to renounce all their financial rights during the divorce process in order to get a non-objected divorce in a shorter amount of time.

3.3 Physical Violence and Sexual violence

14 of the women who participated in our research stated that they had experienced physical violence at some point in their lives. In some narratives, physical violence was at the center of the story. In some other narratives, the experience of violence was expressed as a response to the question, “Have you ever experienced difficulties in your life that escalated to a violent level?” In these narratives, it was clear that physical violence was separated from other forms of violence and was conceived as the primary form of “violence”. However, one of the remarkable points was that in the majority of the stories, physical violence existed as an extension of other forms of violence and is intertwined with other forms of violence:

My rib was broken. He pushed me so hard that my rib broke. My ninth rib was broken, and my world turned upside down.
[After you found out [you were cheated on]?]
Yes, during those arguments. In other words, when I got too heated in the argument, he took off his glasses, he wore glasses, took off his glasses purposefully, took off his glasses with an intention, like a premeditated murder or beating, he wrapped me up like

this, and shook me. Then I freed myself from him. I fell to the ground and broke my rib. I even have a medical report documenting it in case I ever took him to court, but I never did. I didn't even tell my kids. He wasn't even moved by it. I mean, he didn't feel any kind of remorse (B1).

Sexual violence was a subject that was rarely mentioned among the interviewees. Other than that, women talked about the problems they experienced in their sexual life. Except for one, all the women who mentioned problems in their sexual life complained about not receiving sexual attention from their husbands and problems surrounding sexuality with a focus on penetration. In their answers to the question we asked about the sexual nature of genders, despite expressing their assumption that men's sexual desire is more prevalent than women's, it was remarkable that the young women who participated in the research complained that they did not receive sexual attention in their marriage stories, thus conflicting this assumption.

Two interviewees mentioned the sexual problems experienced with their husbands as the founding factor of the psychological violence they experienced. While describing sexual problems, one of them said that although she did not define it as violence, she was once forced into sex. B28, on the other hand, after describing the problems she had with her ex-husband and her divorce story, said that her ex-husband had raped her before she got married so she was obliged to marry him and told us that she did not tell anyone about this until after the marriage was over.

The reason why the marriage happened was because I grew up with stories like, in my own family structure, that if you sexually

interact with someone, you must marry him, he raped me when he person took me to meet his family, when marriage was talked about in the family. Because of that rape, I married him – I felt stuck in a position to stay there with him. Because that's how the marriage started. I thought it had to be like this, because that's what I heard from my elders and it started like that, but inside me this was a great act of violence for me, for example.

[Of course.]

He wasn't even aware of it. His goal was to marry me. But he thought that he could get married that way, so he tried to even out the difference between our families in his own way, there was a big difference between us, he thought that they would not let him have a girl like me. Because he did that to me, he finalized the process according to his own decision. But like I said, with the stories I heard growing up, I don't know if you asked about religion because of that (B28).

It is possible to read the story of B28 in the context of the moral norms established on women's bodies and the limits placed on women's lives and freedoms with these norms. By obtaining strength and legitimacy from these norms, her ex-husband raped her, and B28 felt compelled to marry him because she grew up learning about these norms and is somehow compelled to them. B28 couldn't get support from anyone and couldn't even tell a single person what had happened to her.

4. Means of Defining Violence

As we mentioned before, the initial goal of this research was not to focus on psychological violence and the way women evaluate the violence they

experience. In fact, we did not ask any questions about psychology in the interviews. However, due to the remarkable fact that in most of the interviews, the violence experienced by women of different education levels and ages were defined by them in psychological terms, thus shifting the focus of the research to the issue of the psychologization of violence. The psychological discourse, which is abundant in women's lives from television series to relationship analysis, frequently refers to the "normal" and often individualizes violence, which serves as both an opportunity and a handicap for women to make sense of sociological gender-based violence. While the women were describing the violence they experienced, they gave meaning to their experiences by evaluating them through concepts such as narcissistic personality disorder, psychological issues, ego problems, and mental illness, etc. thus breaking the bond between violence and social structures. As we mentioned before, the women participating in our study tended to describe non-physical forms of violence using the terminology of violence and often referred the concept of psychological violence. However, it should be noted that while women defined their experiences as violence, the psychological adjective that describes the violence also shapes women's approaches towards violence and abuse in general.

The women not only used psychological terms, but also constructed the structure of their narratives in a therapeutic form. In the therapeutic narratives, which we encounter more frequently specifically among educated women, causality was established between the experiences of violence and their childhood family experiences or the past of their mothers and fathers, and the family was described as the source of traumas from the past.

Psychologicalization of violence sometimes took place entirely by individualizing it. In this context, it is noteworthy that a few interviewees, all of whom were educated, said that their spouses had “narcissistic personality disorder” while describing the violence they experienced. The following is an example, in the story of B6, who is 30 years old and has a degree in Theology, who describes her ex-husband’s complaints in regard to her lacking interest in domestic tasks and in him, in relation with narcissistic personality disorder:

He would say things like “Look at me while you dry the laundry, watch me, smile at me.” While doing chores and cleaning the house, he would say “You don’t care about me at all. Why aren’t you interested?” When I wouldn’t clean the house, “Why don’t you clean the house? Can’t you see the house isn’t clean? The house stinks.” So, I think he was doing such ridiculous things because he had narcissistic personality disorder. But what gave me the shock of my life was; “You always wash the dishes in the dishwasher. Why don’t you wash them in the sink for a bit?” That was very strange to me (B6).

You would normally bring home some groceries, right? You would buy something for the house. But no! I mean, I would say that he is a very incapable person. It is very problematic. Maybe he has a deep personality issue. Because he can’t even weigh out some thoughts. He sees everyone around him as either an enemy or a superhero. So, it’s very difficult to live with someone who a personality issue like that, and also someone who comes from an ignorant family (B15).

While evaluating the violence they experienced, some women also gave references to the family of the perpetrator and their upbringing and cited the mother and father as the “cause” of the violence. Despite the relationship formed between violence and family, and even violence of the mother/father, may seem to point to more social relations, it still mostly appeared as an evaluation shaped by a psychological framework. In other words, while the majority of women talked about their families and their upbringing, they did not establish a connection between them and patriarchy, limiting the connection to society only to the family unit, not pointing to the fact that family is a part of the societal structure that forms identity norms on femininity and masculinity.

Many women said that they are culturally or economically superior to their spouses or ex-husbands in terms of education level, cultural level or economic status, and some of the women who said this explained the violence they experienced by referring to the “inferiority complex” that arises in their spouses due to these differences. For example, B28, a 50 year old high school graduate, and a seamstress, stated that their differences with her ex-husband created a complex for him, and she concluded that he resorted to psychological violence to “try to close the gap” causing the complex.

He was of rural origin. In terms of, you know, he was just different from us. His family was different. His educational background was a primary school graduate like us. I don't know why it happened, of course, but it could also be the way his own family were raised. Of course, I think he was a person who had some complexes. Because of his complexes, maybe he would try to tear me down in order to feel better. That was the situation. That's what I meant when I said violence, psychological violence. (B28)

B15, on the other hand, established a causality between her husband's unemployment and the violence she experienced, and explained this with her husband's "complex" as:

When he returned, he was unemployed. He developed a complex because he could never work properly, unemployment complex. (B15)

B6's basing the psychological violence she experienced in many ways on the sexual problems of her husband can also be considered as an evaluation shaped by the therapeutic discourse.

My problem was actually an issue related to sexual life. Since my husband could never prove himself in that area, or because he did not see himself as being enough, and because he felt lesser than me, he shamed me a lot, and he put a lot of psychological pressure on me (B6).

Evaluation of violence in terms of psychological concepts or some causality in the therapeutic form is not limited to educated women. Although we come across more therapeutic expression and psychological analyses among the younger and more educated women in our research, we also frequently found the use of psychological concepts and the presentation of a psychological self in women who were middle aged, less educated or from a lower class. Women from different backgrounds stated that they watched television shows and series on psychology. When we asked the women which TV series they watched, we found that the psychological dramas *Kırmızı Oda* and *Masumlar Apartmanı*, were the most highly watched. For example, B6, whose story we shared above, said that she watched *Kırmızı Oda* because she thought it taught her things. B25, a 29-year-old primary school graduate who has a strong expression that includes self-analysis, said that she watched these series "thinking about

psychological issues” and that they “reflected very well what happens in families”.

The fact that women go to therapy is also a reason that brings their narratives closer to a therapeutic form and brings women to make psychological analysis. As will be discussed later in the report, almost all of the women participating in the research had gone to therapy or used psychiatric medication at some point in their lives. While the vast majority of women who went to therapy were middle-upper class women, there are also women who stated that they went to free therapy. B28 is a 43-year-old primary school graduate who was subjected to severe psychological violence by her mother-in-law for years, and whose mother-in-law passed away just as she was starting to get along with her. She said that she could not talk about the death for years, and that she cried every time it was mentioned, and she gave a reason to this issue by referencing the incompleteness of the feelings that she never got to experience with her mother-in-law:

I had the shaken by the fact that I would not be able to experience those feelings with her and I could not bring myself to accept her death. I went to psychotherapy for this. I had EMDR treatment. It was very difficult for me to accept that my mother-in-law died and for this reason I had a hard time leaving my father-in-law (B28).

B28, too, with the help of the psychologists she went to, explained the problems she had with her stepdaughter from her husband’s ex, through explaining the daughter’s problem with a “mother figure”.

My daughter pushes me a lot, that is, she pushes me, my condi-

tions. Thanks to the psychologists I went to over the years, I saw that she had no compassion, no gratitude, and no remorse. You know? I've realized this over the years. Her actual problem is not with me. Her problem is with the mother figure. Her mother, the actual problematic figure is not present, so she takes her grudge all out on me because I am the mother figure's representative in her life (B28).

4.2 Association with Social Values and Structures

Some of the women explained the violence they experienced in terms of social values and institutions. Four women, three of whom self-identified as feminists, formed a causal relationship between violence and the patriarchy:

Since I'm already a feminist, I mean, of course, I talk about patriarchy and society and issues like that. It's not unlike what most women go through, so my issues are not that difficult (B17).

During the evaluation of the violence they experienced; women gave references to religion in different ways. Being uninformed on religion was expressed by several women as the reason underlying violence. 2 women stated that they asked themselves at times whether it would all be different if they had married a more religious man. An example to this phenomenon is B1 who is 67 years old, who says she later became religious, leaning towards religion after learning that her husband had been cheating on him for years, and who now reads a lot of books and watches a lot of shows on religious subjects. According to B1, the reason for violence is that men do not know their religion:

Our men do not know their own religion. I think they are act so badly, cheat, and so on because they do not know their religion. They do as they please. In other words, they listen to religion from the wrong preachers, they learn it wrong, they learn from the wrong books. They do not learn from the true book of Allah. Maybe it's that they don't read it and compare readings (B1).

Along with that, three younger and more educated women stated that women in religious societies/societies with religious undercurrents are exposed to violence more often:

I think there is a lot of this, especially in Turkey or in societies where religion is at the forefront, where religion is used to repress and keep people in line. Because unfortunately, there is always a male hegemony in religions. The woman is always in the sidelines. Like, let me give an example from Islam; even female faqih are very few. Even the female preachers are very few. Yes, there are groups who do it, but then again, the main leader is another man. Let's say the religious interpreters... why doesn't a woman do that? In my opinion, women are always more oppressed in such societies (B19).

In Turkish society, women are exposed to religion, customs, traditions, culture, whatever you call it, under the name of limiting, pressure, psychological violence, and physical violence. There are a lot of people around me who are exposed to these. Also, it can happen not only in their family, but also in relationships as I said (B23).

It would not be wrong to state that all women who associate violence with social issues, on top of religion, have an intellectual background. One of these women, B8, a 44-year-old lawyer stated that education and a moral revolution could be the solution to the problems faced by women.

Education is crucial. Especially education around morals. Maybe a moral revolt is needed for this society to regain its values, to end this corruption... especially in terms of morality. I don't know... for people to do things. But I don't know if this will fall contrary, fall straight, or if we're going to eventually have some kind of breaking point (B8).

5. Women's Ways of Coping with Violence

It takes a period of time for women to come to an awareness about the violence they experience. Once they come to the realization, they cope with and stand up against this violence in a variety of ways. For married women, divorce is one of the leading ways of coping. However, many women may not have the opportunity to divorce or may not choose to divorce, for certain reasons. And even women who do not initially get divorced look for ways to cope with their problems in different ways until they eventually get to the divorce stage.

Some women say that they devote themselves to their work or go to classes to distract themselves, some say that they have to develop various strategies, some change themselves, some ask for help from someone, some say they have a pet to help heal their wounds, some say that they have learned to stand their ground and react, and some say that they try

to solve it by talking about it. It should be noted here that the vast majority of women are alone when coping with violence and they develop their own strategies of coping. In the stories of most women, it is expressed that their efforts and strategies yielded results. Divorcees mostly go out of the relationship that is causing the violence, while women who stay in the relationship say that they either change their relationship dynamic or alleviate their pain with the methods they develop. In our research, there was only one woman who applied to an institution. B20, who called the women's shelter after learning that she was cheated on by her husband and told them she was cheated on and was subjected to psychological violence, says she was turned down by the shelter because she had not experience physical violence.

Among these various ways, the most common way women deal with violence is to go to a therapist or a psychiatrist and find solace in religion. Religion and psychology function in many women's narratives as the main ways of reasoning that support each other and give meaning to women's experiences, without being seen as contradictory or as alternatives to one another. In this section, we will examine the roles that religion and psychology play in attributing meaning to and coping with women's experiences.

5.1 Finding Solace in Religion

We have previously stated that the women participating in our research had established a relationship with Islam from an individual point of view and refer to their relationship with Allah rather than to institutionalized religion when telling their stories. According to women, the bond they establish with God, their worship and their religious beliefs that enable

them to make sense of their experiences are among the main factors that enable them to cope with violence. It is possible to say that religion serves as a factor that provides women with the inner strength to cope with violence or with feelings of loneliness after ending the relationship, rather than a factor that alters the relationship of violence that women are in.

Of course. I mean, I prayed to God, God was really with me. Even now, I have a bit of a grudge against that woman, for example, but I cool myself down against that woman. Only by praying to God. As I said. That's how I relieve myself (B31).

I went through a lot. So much so that I didn't see what I was looking at. It was to that degree that I suffered. I have devoted myself to religion in a very intense way again these days. I prayed a lot, I studied it a lot, I got up in the morning, read Yasin, prayed the rosary. You know, I did everything in the prayer books, all the list of things to do for curing family unhappiness. I did them, and by the grace of God I am very well now. At least I don't care about him anymore. In fact, with the influence of the preachers who say, "Allah commands you to forgive. Forgive so that Allah will forgive you." and after the word of God, I forgive him, I forgive the person he is with, I don't care, I don't bother, I don't even see it (B3).

Among the women we spoke to, only B3 expressed psychological treatment and religion to serve as alternatives to each other, expressing that she did not want to receive psychological help, but instead turned to Allah.

A psychologist friend of mine told me that they had a friend they

could refer me to. They said that if I accepted, they would want me to receive psychological treatment. I absolutely did not accept this. I said that I absolutely do not want to see a psychologist or go to a psychiatrist and take any medication. I know that my medicine is prayer. I said, in hardships the Qur'an is my rope, I will hold on to it, I said, I will hold on to the rope of Allah. I really think I got better thanks to those. So now I am grateful. I mean, I did, I also had a rebellion phase at the time. I rebelled a lot, it's not like I didn't. The moment of human negligence. This devil does it all. Inevitably, I rebelled, you know, asking why all of this happened to me, why it had to be like this, that I could have been happy too, and that my marriage could continue. But when you think about the religious aspect, that is, when you turn to Allah, you say that my God knows something I don't, he saved me, maybe my life there was a trial, I came here and maybe I was saved (B3).

5.1.1 Belief in Fate and Trial

As in B3's narrative, half of the women we spoke to stated that what they went through was a trial sent by God or an aspect of destiny. Women make meaning out of their lives with their beliefs of fate and trial, regardless of age and education level. The thought that life is full of trials, and that these experiences are a part of the inevitable trial and destiny in life, serve the purpose in the lives of women to relieve them and prevent them from taking full responsibility for what they had been subjected to, feeling guilty or suffering greater pain. By referring to the concepts of destiny or test, women implied that what they experienced was not only a result of their own will, but also shaped by the existence of a will other than themselves, namely the will of Allah. It is possible at this level to say

that there is a kind of dialectical relationship between the will of Allah and the will of women. Therefore, we cannot say from these narratives that belief in fate renders women more “passive” or makes them more “subordinate” to their fate; because none of the women established a link between the decisions they made and their belief in fate. In other words, women did not establish a causality between their inability to choose leaving a violent relationship and their belief in fate. Rather, they gave examples about their sense of logic, strategies, or obligations to maintain or end the relationship, as we mentioned earlier. Most of the women rely on Allah when they are in a violent relationship or when they are out of it. Thoughts about fate and trial were expressed as beliefs that enable women to give meaning and evaluate their experiences, making sense of them after the decisions are made and what is experienced is in the past, or to cope with them if they are still currently in that situation.

But surely, I can understand now, I say that this was my destiny. Because destiny has to be experienced somehow. A person is either happy with their family or with the person they marry, but I could not be happy in either of those relationships. It was my fate to go through something like this (B25).

Just recently, I once told my husband so bluntly to his face. I said; All people have a test to endure in this life. If you are my test, it is more than enough testing for me. I don't need any more. It has to be a test for sure. You may say it's nonsense, but these words comfort us.

[No, no, why would I call it nonsense.]

It really relaxes us. I'm old so I'm telling you, but really, all people endure is a trial (B4).

Having a family and children is a very beautiful concept, together with those, health and well-being is important, it is the most important thing. May Allah not test anyone with health. If a person loves their spouse, if they are with their children, then you say the rest is nothing; but of course, those difficulties sometimes overwhelm you. But when you put your trust in Allah and think about it, you say, “My God, you gave me this test, I am going through it, but thank God, it could have been a lot worse.” You still are grateful. But I can also upset, thinking I could have lived a better life (crying). I’m telling you, if I could go back to those times, maybe I wouldn’t have experienced so many difficulties, if I knew what I know now (B7).

While some of the women spontaneously referred to fate or trial while describing their experiences, some of them mentioned these concepts as answers to the question “What do you make of this experience?” An example would be B9, who was subjected to psychological violence from her husband and family, divorced and worked as an engineer in Istanbul, who described what she experienced as a “test” both while describing her experiences and in response to the question we mentioned. According to B9, everyone has something missing in their life and everyone has a test. Comparing what she had after she got divorced and settled in Istanbul with what she had when she was married, she said that her current life with good conditions was not “her choice”, meaning, her destiny was what brought her here.

[Well, what do you make of this experience?]

I mean, as I said at the beginning, I always perceived what I went

through as a test. For some people it's their health, they go through a lot. The family of my best friend in high school died in a car accident. They lost their mother, father and 3 siblings. Then they studied at the school they wanted, married a spouse they wanted, had a child, living the life they wanted, but I know, they're always sad. Because a piece there is always missing. Looking at another friend of mine, yes, they check the boxes for 'a, b, and c' per se but they don't for 'd' and 'e'. If I were at home right now, I wouldn't be living in this position right now, because I would accept my husband's standards and live in Samsun. I wouldn't be able to advance in my career, I wouldn't consider different options, etc. I didn't actually choose that (B9)."

The thought that what is experienced is a test brings along a sense of motivation about passing this test. No woman talked about how to win this test; however, winning it can be thought in relation to being a better servant to God and being able to make the moral/ethical decision in difficult times, and it is possible to say that mastering the test indicates putting on a fight:

I look at it as a test. That is my belief system. I started looking at it this way after I was 18 years old. Normally I would ask "Why me? Why this?" I mean, when you think about it like that, everyone's tests and trials in this life are very unique. And this is mine. Maybe it would have been worse if I had been tested in my health. Thank God, I'm grateful for my situation. Or maybe it could have been something like losing someone in my family. At one point, I said, I think that God tested me in this way and that I have to succeed in that test somehow (B18).

Women do not completely depict themselves as passive reciprocators when they refer to fate in retrospect. B24, who is a 47-year-old primary school graduate, divorced from her husband, states that she regrets not shaping her own destiny and getting a divorce sooner.

Belief has a lot of, you know, so now sometimes I do think this was my trial. It's either a test, or destiny, a trial. Sometimes people determine their own destiny, sometimes I do think, I wish I had left the children with him and left at the time. Maybe they would have lived more comfortably, when I got out of the way, they would have lived in wealth. I do sometimes have that sort of regret now (B24).

B13, a 30-year-old theology graduate who divorced her husband, said that marriage in Islam is not destiny but will. B13, who opposes a kind of belief in destiny, that contradicts the free will of people, emphasizing that marriage is “a person's own choice”. The fact that B13 expressed that she felt like a failure because she was divorced for a long time can also be considered in relation to her emphasis on her own will.

Yes, let me put it this way, I was a servant of God who protested, asking “Why?” things happened to me so many times in this process. It actually affected me very badly. Because I always prayed, saying; “Dear God, if it is for the best, let it happen” or something. However, it was all of my own will, one way or another. We are trying to form a connection between things to the befalling of fate. However, my will was very much active. And in Islam, there is always controversy around the issue of ‘is marriage destiny or not’?

Marriage is purely voluntary. This has nothing to do with fate. In other words, destiny may put people in your life, this is God's will, of course, but we make the choice. God does not oblige us to do so. And I didn't realize I was living my own choice (B13)."

Three of the women we spoke to expressed that the violence they experienced caused them to question their beliefs or socially performative religion. For example, B8 stated that her experiences caused her to feel anger towards socially accepted gender-based assumptions, and in connection to this, she questioned her faith:

There is also the issue of it making me question my faith. I thought that we should re-examine the subject of obedience, to what extent it really should be, the issue of women's obedience to men. It even created an anger in me. Thinking that I experienced the things I did because of these perceptions, these presuppositions, that is, being given these implications in society made me angry (B8).

5.2 Psychology as a Framework for Self-Reflection and Coping with Violence

Although we did not contextually ask the women in our research whether they went to a psychologist, 20 women said they went to a psychologist or psychiatrist during or after coping with violence, and two said they were considering going. A few women, stated who did not state that they went to therapy or a psychiatrist, said that they watched personal development and psychology programs on television, read books, and watched psychological drama series such as Kırmızı Oda and Masumlar

Apartman. Therefore, it is possible to say that conceptually, psychology is one of the main frameworks that women resort to in order to get out of their violent relationship, to find relief and to make sense of their experiences. Among women who had access to therapy, the ratio of middle-class women was higher, so it can be inferred that socio-economic classes make a difference in accessing psychological support. However, some of the women with low socio-economic status also said that they, even if not therapy, received free psychological help or went to the psychiatry departments of public hospitals.

The women who participated in the study, especially married women, stated that they put in an effort to get out of their abusive relationships or to change the relationship dynamic, and they tried to change and understand themselves as well. Here, psychology emerges as a dominant framework that supports women's self-reflexivity:

When you doing readings on psychology, when you start to focus on those subjects, you understand, the more you see and know the underlying reasons of their behavior, the more meaning you give to it. As you understand, of course you come to acceptance. Maybe that problem doesn't go away, but when you understand, you get some relief, you stop wondering about it (B19).

This is an area that serves to empower women and enable them to work on self-discovery and their lives, but it can also add to the sense of responsibility that women take on themselves. For example, B11, one of the women who participated in our research, stated that her husband usually does not take any responsibility for matters such as childcare and domestic labor. She stated that the psychologist she went to told her that she

would always have high expectations of people due to the lack of attention she received as a child, and she took this comment and associated it with her situation, saying that she had high expectations from her husband several times during the interview. This example shows that while psychologists provide women with an opportunity to get out of their abusive relationships and become stronger, they also sometimes offer suggestions that completely personalize the violence they experienced and put more responsibility on women, especially those who already feel guilty and hold themselves accountable.

Psychological and childhood-informed explanations for violence strengthen women's sense of feeling responsible and guilty, while freeing men from accountability:

He is always like a little boy. If he sees in you the attention and the love he received from his mother, and that warmth from his family, he will have a more improved time with you as a wife. It's a different case if he had attachment issues stemming from his childhood, and if he failed to establish those roots as a child growing up, but if he does not have these psychological issues, and is just a general type, and if you are not able to make him stay in the house, I think it is your fault. Unless something else is going on (B27).

Women see therapy as a chance to improve their abusive relationships. However, they often cannot convince their partners to go to therapy and try to cope with this situation by going themselves. I say, for example, okay, I'm speaking, but maybe it would be healthier for us to do something different in that moment, in

terms of our relationship. So, I thought let me first get some help myself. Let me explain myself. Maybe some issues are about me. At least, I think that if I deal with my own part, it will all be a little easier. So, I'm thinking of going first by myself (B10).

For some of the women, the support of a psychologist helped them to be aware of what they are going through, and to make decisions, while for others it helped them heal themselves after the experiences were over and they got out of the abusive relationship. B13 describes how she received free psychological support after ending her short lived, psychologically and financially abusive marriage:

I was lucky, a friend told me and, I benefited from the Kızılay free psychological support resources. I got help from the psychologist there. And it's been very good for me. I was much more comfortable, like, when I was preparing for the exam, I couldn't focus, I had a serious lack of attention. Those processes affected my life in one way or another. I've had other friends who divorced as well. They were not as lucky as me. I was even considering going to go to a psychologist and paying money. Even back then the price was around 250 to 300 liras for each session. So, even if you go twice a month, it is serious amount. I was lucky, I saw the benefit of that for free. I also got paired with a psychologist that I really clicked with. But not everyone is that lucky, not everyone gets that kind of support (B13).

Although psychological concepts and discourses come forward in women's narratives, we cannot say that women completely accept advice given by the psychologists they go to, or that they apply them into their lives.

For example, B9, who executed her interview in a therapeutic form, explained causality between her parent's problems and her own experiences, and frequently used psychological concepts in her narrative, criticized the psychologists she went to as follows:

I paid a lot of money in Istanbul, went to consultants; and 'Just leave, let go of your family' was the advice I received. We live in Turkey. We have certain customs, traditions, rules and norms. I could also think to leave and let my parents go on my own. But I can't implement that. I can't do it. I say, advice milder options to me, don't encourage me to turn my back against them. Just try to show me ways I can block them and prevent them a little more. Enlighten me in this sense, I said, but it's so hard. I do not know; I did not get the support I needed on this (B9).

B9's criticisms are in line with the criticisms made about psychologists giving advice by ignoring the social circumstances in which women live, assuming that they live in a free and disconnected way from their relationships such as their family and marriage. Although some women did not directly criticize the advice of psychologists, they said that they did not shape their lives according to that advice. B1, who, at the age of 65, found out that her husband cheated on him for 25 years, and then suffered physical violence that caused her rib to break, says that she preferred not to get divorced when she compared the life she would have if she divorced versus her married life, despite the advice given by her psychiatrist to divorce.

I was insane then, dear. I was mad. I'm already on antidepressants right now. Then I went to the doctor, to the psychiatrist. The wom-

an told me to divorce, get a divorce. “Because this is a tumor inside you. Unless you have surgery and remove this tumor, you will not be okay.” she said. She was a female psychiatrist. “Otherwise, you can’t get better.” she said. Of course, I told her what had happened, while crying, like I am now. “Unless you get divorced, you can’t get better.” she said. I did not get a divorce. (B1)

5.3 Decisions to Stay in the Marriage

Fifteen of the women participating in our study were divorced or in the process of divorce. While divorce is a solution that married women resort to in order to leave violence behind, many women who participated in our research have had to stay in their marriage and suffer. These women explained to us why they had or had not considered divorce in the past, and reasons why they did not decide to divorce. The process of the divorce-or-stay decision always included lines of reasoning that women formed or were obliged to form when considering the possible outcomes of the decision. Calling it a decision may not be correct in some cases, because women were forced to make that choice in a desperate and helpless situation, especially under the circumstance that their families did not support them.

The majority of women who decided to continue their marriages were women who had children and were not working. While some women are not supported by their families, women who do have the opportunity to stay with their families do not want to return to a living situation where they have no financial freedom and live in their family’s home.

B4, who is a Syrian refugee, states that her husband’s family do not want her and that they are trying to them to divorce, and that she does not want a divorce. Because she thinks that if she gets divorced, husband who

is a Turkish citizen will have custody of the children, and this will mean leaving them. According to B4, if she gets the children, her father will not accept her children, so there is no way to get out of this marriage, where she is subjected to physical and emotional violence:

I am different from them, and they are different from me too. So, they didn't like that. They worked hard for the divorce. But I didn't leave. Because I will not leave my children behind. They wouldn't give the children to me. Even if they did, then my father would not accept them. There is nowhere else for me to continue my life.
(B4)

B25 is an unemployed woman and a mother who has been subjected to severe psychological violence from her husband and was once subjected to severe physical violence. B25 has repeatedly stated that she wanted to leave but had to return because her family did not support her, and that for her husband's family, divorce meant "losing her honor". Also, as with B4, one of the factors that shaped B25's decision not to divorce is her child:

I'm considering a divorce, but they do not have that.
[How so? What do they say? Did you tell them you were considering divorce?]
Of course, I told them. Everyone knew, so did my mother-in-law. I was expressing it. They said things like: 'We do not do divorce. If you leave, you will die. What leaves will be your coffin'. This stuff is real. I don't even know how to tell you, they implied that I had a 'friend', that I was leaving for this friend, that we were going to run away.
[Who has a friend?]
And I said, how absurd is that! I mean, their reasoning is that

Table 2: Women's Ways of Coping with Violence Table

NUMBER	AGE	EDUCATION	WAYS OF COPING WITH VIOLENCE
B1	65	Highschool	Finding solace in religion
B2	51	Elementary School	Divorce
B3	31	University	Finding Solace in Religion, Decision to divorce
B4	42	University	Being vocal, Consulting to friends
B5	71	Literate	Occupying oneself with work, being patient, Doing worshipping practices
B6	30	University	Trying to communicate, doing Umrah, divorce
B7	52	University	Attending courses, Getting distracted with kids, Seeing a psychologist
B8	44	University	Going to couple's therapy
B9	33	University	Seeing a psychologist, Occupying oneself with intense work
B10	32	University	Seeing a psychologist, Opening up to friends
B11	35	University	Seeing a psychologist, Ppening up to friends
B12	44	University	Cleaning, Reading, Watching tv shows/movies, Divorce
B13	30	University	Seeing a psychologist who works for free
B14	28	University	Going to couple's therapy, doing worshipping practices
B15	40	College	Divorce, Finding solace in Religion
B16	30	Highschool	Divorce
B17	32	University	Going to couple's therapy, Divorce, Cutting ties with family
B18	23	University	Developing a coping strategy of acting as if one does not car
B19	37	Master's Degree	Solidarity with friends
B20	44	Highschool	Seeing a psychologist, Using psychiatric medicine, Calling the women's safe house

Table 2: Women's Ways of Coping with Violence Table

NUMBER	AGE	EDUCATION	WAYS OF COPING WITH VIOLENCE
B21	25	University (Theology)	-
B22	43	Master's Degree	Divorce, Starting a business
B23	26	University (Master's Degree Student)	Seeing a psychologist
B24	47	Primary School	getting out from the house and visiting the mother-in-law
B25	29	Primary School	Attending courses, Turning to activities that motivate one, Seeing a psychologist who works for free
B26	25	Master's Degree Student	Change of place after flirting violence
B27	43	Primary School	Keeping things to oneself, Being patient, Developing new strategies, Getting help from psychologists and Visiting entombed saints
B28	50	Highschool	First staying in the relationship while developing new strategies for daily practices, Then getting a divorce
B29	37	Did not attend school	-
B30	43	Primary School	Doing nothing
B31	37	Primary School (Highschool)	Seeing a psychiatrist
B32	44	Doctorate Student	Occupying oneself with intense reading, Seeing a psychologist, divorce

when someone is breaking up with someone, it must be because the woman has another lover. A person leaves a person because there's another person. Otherwise you would not divorce, they say. I had to endure all this 'You come in a wedding dress; you can only leave in a coffin' mentality. Same with my mother-in-law. Her sister says to me, 'what do you want'? She says look, you have children and stuff. You will look after them. She says, if I leave, my honor will be destroyed. Those are their words.

I've made the decision three, four times since I got married, saying that's it, I'm done. Is it my fault or is he very persistent, I do not understand. But every time it happens, I come back again, it's like some kind of joke.

[So how do you come back? Do you come back because your family doesn't want you there? You said your mother didn't want to have you there.]

That's exactly what happens. I can tell that they don't want me. They keep on saying, this will all be better if you do this and that and those, and what happens when they constantly say things to you, is that you say to yourself 'I'll go away just to get rid of their constant blabbering'. It really gets to you at a certain point. The same subject, the same topic is spoken all day long at home. Morning to night, all the time. And because it is spoken without being any pause. I don't know, I tell myself I'm not wanted, I say at least, he works during the day so I'm by myself at home. I could listen to music as much as I want, do what I want, inside the house or go out to the park with my son. You know, going out to get some ice cream, or just do something. But otherwise, it's a house of chaos, I don't want to take my child there or do anything anymore, in that environment. Things change a lot when you have a child (B25).

For women who have the opportunity to go back to their family home, this option means disrupting their entire routine and living like a guest in their family's house, facing financial difficulties while at the same time allowing their spouses to be free. B1 is a 65-year-old woman who learned a few years ago that her husband had been in a relationship with another woman for 25 years. She stated that she was considering divorce after finding out about her husband's affair, telling us why she decided not to divorce:

“Because this is a tumor inside you. Unless you have surgery and remove this tumor, you will not be okay.” she said. She was a female psychiatrist. “Otherwise, you can't get better.” she said. Of course, I told her what had happened, while crying, like I am now. “Unless you get divorced, you can't get better.” she said. I did not get a divorce. My two sons were married at the time, so I spoke to my son who was single. I said, “What if I divorced your father.” He said, “Well mom, I love my dad. Despite everything, I love him. I also talked to my father. I'll talk to you too.” I must have been jealous. So, if I got divorced, I thought, “Now he is going to go and marry his nurse. Can I handle that? The salary will be gone, the house will be gone, I will go to my mother's house and just sit there. I have a sick brother.” It is not easy to go back to the family home after marriage. For example, my mother is now 83 years old. She gets bored of me after about an hour, I feel it. She asks stuff like ‘When will you go back home?’. Maybe, I don't know, maybe it's just my idea, but I feel uneasy or she picks up a fight with my brother. As usual, she gives him a scolding for spilling cigarette guts, for doing this and that. I get up and go home. I

thought about all these issues. I couldn't see myself taking on all of that. The man himself did not ask for a divorce from me either. I'm telling you; he didn't think of divorcing me, but on the other hand, he would continue his other relationship. I wouldn't have said no if he had asked for a divorce. I wouldn't (B1).

While a lack of financial and familial support and having children shaped their decisions, many women also emphasized that they loved their spouses. For women, the love in question was always articulated together with other reasons. For example, B20 recounted the conversation she had with her daughter who she says lost respect towards her when she did not divorce her husband after learning about the affair:

I sat her down, I said to my daughter, look, I love your father, I am not helpless, we can take our alimony, your father will take care of us anyway, I have a grandmother, I have my father's house, if I go there, no one will turn me away, if I go there, I have a room, I can work if I want. I don't even have to, your father will pay for all my expenses, but that's not the case, it's not because I'm desperate, look, has your father done anything to you? Does he cover everything materially and spiritually? He has nothing against you... this is my life, if I ask you for help, help me, but there is nothing I can't deal with right now, not financially, not morally, look how many years we've devoted, to just end it like this, I love your father very much, if I didn't love him ooo ... it wouldn't take me a minute to leave. Well, I'm a person with a strong attachment to my comfort zone, for example, I if I like a cafe, I always go to that cafe, if I go to a restaurant, I keep going there, I am always that way... I mean, I have a lot of attachments and I am extremely attached to your

father, whether I love him too, it would be much easier if I didn't... And it didn't upset me that much, I didn't get my anxiety because of him, I didn't get the psoriasis because of him, I won't feel sad for your father's cheating, I'm far more hurt about other things. These don't matter to me at all, and besides, I heard everything clearly and truthfully, because at least I could listen. I hate lies, at least he couldn't deny it as much as before (B20)...

According to B20, divorce means 'giving away' your spouse. B20 says that she is not desperate and that she would get a divorce if she wasn't in love. In a way, love works together with the norms that surround marriage in women's lives. So, for women, divorce meant that the dream of sharing a lifelong marriage coming to an end. Next to disappointment, divorce also meant breaking the existing marriage norm in society. In connection to these points, two of the women expressed that they saw divorce as a type of failure. One of the interviewees who said this talked about how much of a fighter she was, several times during the interview, thus getting a divorce felt like losing that fight.

6.1 Family Support and Hindrance

When asked who would side with them during this process, the greater portion of the women immediately replied that no one would be there for them. This "no one" indicated mostly family. As seen on the table above, almost all of the women stated that their families were not there for support as they went through this period of violence.

All of the women, except for a few, stated that they did not talk to their families about the violence, especially the psychological violence they were subjected to within marriage. The main reasons for hiding the vi-

olence were stated as that they wanted not to upset their families, that they desired good relationships and mutual respect between their spouses and their families, that they were concerned the problem would be enhanced once the families get involved, and that they were too proud to mention. Many of the women stated that they only talked to their families about the violence when they already decided on the divorce.

I couldn't tell my parents about a thing, just so they wouldn't turn against him. Because they really loved my husband (B7).

I wish I told my family about my troubles, I started to talk to them way too late. I mean, I tried to talk to my mom after the birth of my fourth child. I think it's because I was too proud, because my mom didn't want me to be in this relationship. Neither my dad. But I had already set sail. Boarded on this ship. I had children. I had started to live an Islamic life. It was so hard for my family. And I had my pride. So I didn't say a word for years (B15).

I mean, yes, it was hard to come out because you try to carry it on your own this way, on top of that, you make efforts to make your family respect your husband. It is kind of like acting several roles. You also want to work up your husband's status within the family, that he gets some respect, importance (B29).

I had breakdowns, cried a lot, screamed for sure, I went through it all some way. But I went through some things within myself. I mean, even when I was at my worst, I never revealed a thing, I kept it all to myself. Telling my family would mean that things come to an end, anyway (B32).

Some women stated that they talked to the other women in the family such as sisters or cousins about their troubles:

I was careful not to give anything away to my family. So that, about my husband, they wouldn't feel... you know, families have a great part in divorces, that they make everything even more complicated if you cannot handle the problems yourself... So I only talked to my sister's daughter with whom I'm close (B8).

I mean I couldn't say anything because I figured they would be upset. I didn't share with them. My mom doesn't know even now. My sister knows but I told her only after I got divorced. That is, I haven't told anyone when I was still married (B29).

No one was ever there for me but I would often talk to my sibling, to get things out of my chest, you know. Even then I wouldn't tell everything but I would tell some things and feel relaxed. Only my sibling. I still tell the things I went through because I feel things getting easier, as if my burden is lifted as I talk (B25).

While some of the women who shared their experiences with their families received support from their families, some stated that their families made things worse, did not show any understanding, blamed them, cut off their contact or did not get involved at all. We observed that specifically in the case of married women, the necessity of maintaining the institution of marriage and women's responsibility in managing this task, domestic chores that are assigned to women, social norms, value and expectations such as feelings that women are supposed to feel and make

others feel are the main factors that prevented families from supporting their daughters.

I was accused. Even the closest members, my mom for example, “You were so tense at the time.” Even my sister-in-law. My sister-in-law. I would be with my mother-in-law or my mom would nag. Mothers who have daughters, somewhat more, they don’t expect much from their sons but always from their daughters that the daughters give them care and such. It was pretty normal that I would be tense during all those troubles. All in all, I am no angel. It was like “You were tense so you deserved to be cheated on.”, my mom sought excuses for the cheating. No one was there for me (B1).

My mom told me that my father blamed me for it, and that his take was “Who would put up with her talking, anyway? Why couldn’t she make it? Why couldn’t she get along? She’s already incompatible by nature (B14).”

Lack of family support means for women, especially women without an income, that there is nowhere to go, a dead end and despair. B22 who experienced different types of violence from both her husband and her family, often refer to this despair in her story of marriage and not being able to divorce for many years. After her decision to get divorced, her family cut their ties and show no financial support.

After I decided to get divorced, both my parents chose not to talk to me. My mom met me once or twice but it was absurd. I mean, I decided to get divorced. They didn’t check on me under no cir-

cumstances. They didn't want to talk to me. They forbid my sister from visiting me and I had to move to somewhere else. The house I was living was going to be demolished. I was trying to move, they never once asked "My daughter, do you have the money? How do you get by?" All the while I was trying to handle the move on my own, with two kids (B22).

Some of the women stated that the psychological violence they went through were not perceived as a type of violence, nor a valid reason for divorce and that it was perceived as something to be tolerated:

This one time, I was feeling really suffocated, I told my mom that I couldn't take it anymore. My mom said something along the lines of "My daughter, our door is always open for you, but you can never find the comfort of your own home here. You would seek it if you were to come here, but your home is better even though it's bad.". My father completely lost it, his blood pressure went up, at the thought of how could this even be possible... He thinks, you know, that you should only come to me when you get cheated on, experienced violence, when you get beaten up. He doesn't articulate the words but you know what he means. As it always goes, Salih is a such a good man, he sure has his vices, that he might be mean or inconsiderate but that's just how he is. That's the way he was taught by his father. He is from Erzurum, that's just his culture. Don't think about it too hard, put up with it, look, how you live in abundance. I mean it's very classic. Classic Turkish society. No one cares if you're emotionally unsatisfied, that you received no help, no support, that you've been worn out and broken by their words... In this sense I cannot receive much help from my

family. I don't think they will ever tell me to take things easy and comfort me (B11).

There are many stories in which families both support and hinder at the same time. One example is the experiences B25 had. B25 tells her family about the incident in which her husband strangles her to a point she no longer can breathe. B25's father, in her own words, grasped him by the throat, and called him to account on what he did to his daughter. After spending a week at her uncle's house, B25 is encouraged by her uncle and her family to go back home. B25 also recounts how her mother didn't want her around and that she had nowhere else to go:

Then he called my uncle, and threatened my uncle Mustafa. He says, I'll come and kill you all there, and I'll get my wife. My uncle answers, what do you think you're killing like this, chickens? Come get her if you dare, I won't give her to you, my niece came to me, so it's over, he says. She can stay as long as she wants, my uncle says. So I stayed there. Then he started begging, calling my uncle, my mom, my dad and so on. So my uncle said, you know, he doesn't seem to get any better, but look, he regrets it now. My mom already didn't want me to come back.

[Why didn't your mom want you to come back?]

I mean, she just doesn't, since we don't get along well, she doesn't want me even now. Even when I just distance myself a little, she doesn't want me. She says I should rent a place and work.

[How about your father?]

I mean, my father—he wanted to but Selman pressured so much that he eventually convinced my parents, let's say (B25).

When families do not offer support, intervene or make any effort to help them out, women's lives still get more difficult even if their families do not actively hinder them. In such cases, while some women feel emotionally supported by their families, these feelings are not enough to make them help themselves out from the state of violence they are experiencing.

My family doesn't get involved in anything, and that's already why we ended up like this, if only they showed their tough side (B20)...

Let me put it like this, my family was always there for me, but never the way they should've been. Now as we talk, my mom keeps questioning, "Why didn't we say anything at all for all those years? Why didn't we come and get you, make a scene and take you home? How on earth did we let them torture you like this? Why so much pressure, so much psychological violence, why?" I would have wanted my parents on my side during those times. They would understand me, love me, know that I had some troubles, and my mom even developed heart problems because of my troubles. They knew, but couldn't do anything. Honestly, I wouldn't have wanted them to do it. For once they too are involved... I would never tell them most of what I had gone through. Even today they don't know most of it. If I am to tell them anything, I wait for a couple months, to take it all in myself first. I would have loved if they were to be there for me, to guide me, that they had the power to prevent them from oppressing me this much (B28).

There are 7 women in this research who had family support during their

divorces. Three of these women stated that their families supported them unconditionally:

When I got divorced, no one in my family ever questioned me. They always said, if you made this decision, then there must be something. Never asked me why I'm getting divorced, with two kids, after years of marriage, never asked me why I chose to end things, and that was what it matters, my family. That my family supported me (B29).

B13 is one of the few women who stated receiving family support. B13 stated that she thinks herself as one of the lucky ones, but she still felt misunderstood because her family kept telling her not to get upset:

I said no. That he said I can't go. After this, my mom and grandma, I mean my mom was already trying so hard. She never wanted me to maintain that marriage. I'm lucky, you know. I had two women who had my back, after all. But I was mad at them at the time, because they were interfering a bit much. They kept saying things like "You won't cry, you won't get upset, you'll stay strong;". One time, I went to my cousin's wedding, they told me "Take off your ring, go dance in the middle," I mean, I said these are not for me (she laughs). So it was like this. But not everyone is as lucky, they can't get this type of support. Except for family. Because your family wants you so that you never get sad, cry, they raise hell should something like this happens. My family was there for me no matter what, but they also didn't understand me. (she laughs). What do you mean I won't cry, I won't get upset. Give me a break, I've been through such times, I had to deal with someone. They don't

get it (B13).

Lack of family support is not limited to cases of violence by spouses, unmarried women, or married women regarding their premarital times, also recounted cases where families showed no support, judged them and hindered them. It is possible to see this case in this excerpt below that belongs to an interviewee who experienced persistent following and stalking as a teenager by a man she didn't recognize:

If I knew what I know now my reaction would be different, of course, but I was a child of 15. And this went on like this for three or four months, it's psychological violence. Eventually I... yes, I wanted to tell my dad... I mean, I wanted to because we couldn't deal with it anyhow. A friends' mom couldn't figure it out. My teachers couldn't figure it out. And my father's first reaction was "if the female dog doesn't wag its tail, the male dog doesn't start to run.". I can never forget these words (B19).

As seen in the excerpt above, married, unmarried or divorced women are all expected, in sometimes similar and sometimes different ways, to behave a certain way, within the limits of sexual morality that is based on social norms and values regarding womanhood and women's bodies. When women step outside these norms, they are immediately blamed and left deprived of support by their families who embrace these norms and values.

6.2 Friendship Support and Hindrance

We found in our research that in cases where family support is nonexistent, or the source violence is the family itself, the greatest source of support was friends. Many of the women who received friendship support mentioned that they open up to their friends and emphasized the importance of the emotional support they get from them.

For instance, after stating that she opens up to her friends and feels understood by them, B11 mentioned the limits of friendship support.

I wish I had a younger or older sister, I would have wanted such support. Because friends can support you only to a certain point. You talk to them and they understand. But Selin can't just tell me "You get a divorce right this moment, we'll figure things out one way or another." She won't tell me, she can't, because this is bigger than her (B11).

Even though friends give them only moral support, it is immensely important for them. Conversations amongst friends help some of the women change their lives and give them insight about themselves and their situations. In other words, even though its economical side and availability is limited, those conversations play a meaningful role in women's lives as they meet their need for "being understood which women crave" and help them understand and interpret their experiences:

I decided to go back the fourth year. Eda has a great part in this decision because she's a lawyer. She said, you know you always tell the same story. I wasn't aware of it yet. Because it's hard to see things when you're in the middle of it, all the psychological oppression and violence (B15).

It is hard for women who are repeatedly told that they are wrong, and therefore who keep thinking they're the ones to be blamed and try to deal with everything at the same time, to identify especially the psychological violence and name it. Friends offer the type of support that helps women see their situations. B12 who was constantly blamed and manipulated, and felt as if she's not enough, recalls what her friend told her 20 years ago:

During a period I started thinking of getting divorced, my friend came to Ankara, I invited her over, we hung out a bit, and I asked her, well, I don't even remember, she reminded me later, that I asked if I was a bad person. She immediately understood things weren't right, even though I had not told her that things were bad between us, I just asked her if I was a person. I remember her telling me, you know what, you are beautiful, and he is an ugly person, I remember her telling me this (B12).

Another example that shows how friendships can be in different roles goes as follows:

B17's family offers no financial or moral support after she gets divorced and stops practicing hijab, and B17 struggles financially. Her friends in the political organization B17 participates offer her both financial and moral support. For B17, a solidarity, different than personal friendships, that comes from organizing together enhanced the support that is offered to her:

I had friends I worked together politically, this X group. Then

friends from Y group, who are my personal friends, I think the solidarity they showed was weaker. Because many tried to talk me out of the divorce, or from taking my hijab off, and tried to encourage me to be more compliant. I mean, so they supported me but only emotionally. The others showed financial support as well. It is probably because of the political sentiment. I was also kind of the person who would work for everything, so maybe that was also effective. So they showed both financial and moral solidarity. (B17)

We heard two stories in which friends encouraged the women to stay inside this context of violence on basis of “marriage and ideals for a good life”, and therefore showed the opposite of support.

My friends with whom I shared this told me “you’re exaggerating” or “you shouldn’t have done that” or “that’s just how we are, there’s nothing to do, that’s just how things are when you’re married, make peace with it, you’re married now (B8)”

Table 3: Support and Hindrance Mechanisms

NUMBER	MARITAL STATUS	PERPETRATOR	SUPPORT / HINDRANCE
B1	Married	Spouse, Mother	No support, Family and friends hinder
B2	Divorced	Spouse	Friend/Sister support
B3	Married / In the Divorce Process	Spouse, Mother-in-law	No one during the abuse, Family support during the divorce
B4	Married	Father, Step-mother, Spouse	Friendship support
B5	Spouse has passed	Spouse	-
B6	In the Divorce Process	Spouse, Mother-in-law	No one during the abuse, Family support during the divorce
B7	Married	Spouse, Mother-in-law, Spouse's relatives	Friendship support
B8	Married	Spouse	Friendship support
B9	Divorced	Spouse, Father	No one
B10	Married	Spouse	Friendship support
B11	Married	Spouse	Friendship support
B12	Divorced / Has a partner	Spouse	No one during the abuse, Friendship support during the divorce
B13	Divorced	Spouse	No one during the abuse, Family support during the divorce
B14	Divorced	Spouse, Father	Aunt friends
B15	In the Divorce Process	Spouse	Friends
B16	Divorced	Partner, Spouse	Everyone
B17	Divorced	Spouse, Family	Family hindrance, Friendship support
B18	Unmarried / Has a Partner	Father	Mother and Siblings
B19	Married	Older brother, Mother-in-law, Former stalker	No one supports, Father hinders
B20	Married	Spouse	No one

Table 3: Support and Hindrance Mechanisms

NUMBER	MARITAL STATUS	PERPETRATOR	SUPPORT / HINDRANCE
B21	Unmarried / Has a Partner	-	-
B22	Divorced	Family, Community, Spouse	No one supports, Family hinders
B23	Unmarried / Has a Partner	Father	Siblings support
B24	Divorced	Ex-spouse	No one supports
B25	Married	Spouse, Spouse's Family, Mother	No one supports
B26	Unmarried / Has a Partner	Ex-partner, Family	No one supports
B27	Married	Spouse, Spouse's Family	No one supports
B28	Divorced / Has a partner	Ex-spouse	No one during the abuse, Mother and sister Support during the divorce
B29	Single	-	-
B30	Spouse has passed	Late spouse	Mother supports
B31	Married	Spouse	Sister support
B32	Divorced	Ex-spouse	Family support

7. Being the subject of violence as a Muslim

We asked our participants how it feels to be subjected to violence as a Muslim. Some women replied that they did not necessarily connect their Muslim identity to the violence they went through:

I never linked the two to be honest. I mean it's kind of separate for me, being a Muslim is one thing, and my boyfriend is another. I think I never... mix up the two, I guess. Maybe the religion itself doesn't let the two mix, I don't know... I mean as a Muslim... I never thought about it... (B26)

Maybe I wasn't aware of it at the time, now I don't think of it much through a Muslim perspective because maybe it was normal for me at the time, during its most intense period, I don't really know. I mean I never thought of it like this.

[I see. Do you think your beliefs helped you cope with the violence you went through?]

No. It has nothing to do with that at all. I mean it wasn't like I sought refuge in God, or anything like that. What does any of this have to do with that guy's psychological problems? (B28)

Most of the answers stated that Islam and violence do not comply. One of the most significant points was that many women of different educational backgrounds and ages were critical of widely accepted assumptions based on gender that are assigned to Islam and stated that these were not inherent to the religion of Islam. Even though our interviewees did not articulate the concept of "patriarchy" explicitly, they opposed patriarchal religious interpretations. They emphasized that they criticize

the teachings that justify violence and are assumed to be a part of Islam, and their ethical inconsistencies. More educated and specifically women with religious studies degrees gave out detailed answers interpreting topics concerning Islamic laws, and women with less religious knowledge questioned the religious beliefs of the perpetrator and the religion as it is widely accepted in the society through reasoning on the basis of their own experiences and basic religious principles.

[How does it feel to be subjected to violence as a Muslim? How do you feel?]

Like a failure. Because that's not being a Muslim. Religion, the religion of Muslims, what did our prophet Muhammad say as a final advice? That all should be charitable to women, which means you don't ever lay a finger on them. That is the final advice "Don't ever lay a finger on women." But I don't know whatever they understand from being a Muslim. They're just violent, I mean, men. What do men say to me, my husband for example, that if I don't get his approval I cannot set a foot to jannah (paradise). How come, did you breastfeed me? I mean why, who told you that? They still say this, their approval... There's also that, it's another weak account of a hadith, if a woman leaves the house without the permission of the husband or if the husband doesn't know, then the angels curse her for every step she takes. Eh, then curse be upon you, you're damned. What curse though? It's okay to go to work. Right? (Right.) Ha, there! You can go to the doctor, go pay your bills, go to school, there's no problem, no curse. Those curses be upon you then. Excuse me, I apologize. (B4)

I don't think our marriage would be like this if he were to have proper Islamic morals. Our marriage wouldn't proceed like this. I didn't consider this in a religious frame, Burcu, but I thought of this for one, that if he had the manners of the prophet then he wouldn't treat me like this (B11).

I always thought of this, my father prays five times a day, fasts, does everything he needs to do but never once thinks of how he treats his wife and kids at home. So, that is, he steps out of the line and seizes others' rights. It's clear as day. He hurts me, doesn't even bother to look at me. Then I'd ask, "How are you a Muslim? Is being a Muslim only about praying, fasting, doing charity, doing this and that?". I just couldn't bring myself to accept this, I questioned this all the time (B9).

B20 learns about his husband's affair with another woman and thinks this is founded in the problems she's having in her own relationship to sexuality. These problems, for B20, are founded in social and religious premises regarding sexuality. Unlike other women, B20 does not observe a differentiate the "true" religion and the widely practiced religion in the society, she thinks sexuality is considered as immoral and sinful in religion:

Of course it hurt me a lot, the things they teach us as part of our religion and the things they do, they don't match. So they set up rules for us, this is a sin, that is a sin, okay so if it's a sin, you should stay away from it, you won't be able to learn certain things, okay so then you also won't get to learn either... it should apply to you as well, I don't get it, are men any different than us, they have the same faculties, I mean in our religion... so I say half of marriage is sexuality, as for immorality, accord-

ing to us, to our religion, there are things that need to be lived behind closed doors, so I can't learn any of it, so you go and see it from someone who learned it well, then hold me to the same standard, then tell me I don't know anything, okay so if I don't know things, because they're sins, because I'm Muslim, sins, immorality, okay then you put them on a pedestal, and humiliate me, look down on me, okay so where do you put that in Islam (B20)?

Perspectives on Social Values and Events

In this research in which we wondered the complex relationships between social values and gender based violence, we asked our participants about social values, institutions and events such as marriage, divorce, fitrah, feminism and Istanbul Convention that potentially relate to violence against women. We found from women's replies that distinct from their personal stories in which they vocalize their own experiences, they also embrace a normative religious understanding and sometimes patriarchal interpretations of religion that is based on social gender hierarchy. In other words, most of the women opposed violence against women and stated that Islam and violence don't comply while recounting their experiences, whereas there were many who did not question the religious interpretations that were shaped by the dominant rule that center historically and socially accepted gender hierarchy. Below you can find women's similar perspectives on topics as fitrah, feminism and Istanbul Convention, which they shaped based on a criticism of the concept of gender and sometimes based on religious references.

8.1 *Fitrah*

Except for the three or four women who identified as feminists, all interviewees stated that women and men are equipped with different *fitrah*, which means they are created differently. The women have a variety of perspectives on *fitrah*, but they opposed the idea of equality among men and women. Since the word *fitrah* points to creation, they supported this opposition with religious references, social assumptions that are intertwined with those references and their own experiences.

As much as we suggest that our participants opposed patriarchal interpretations of religion, some of them had the idea that men are actually created stronger and superior to women. Mostly middle aged women had this idea, and within this frame, men who are created stronger and superior should protect women who are weaker by nature. In this sense, men are caretakers of women.

While B1 defends men's superiority and women's obedience on the basis of her readings of translations of Qur'an, B2 mentions the idea that women are created from the rib of man.

I think there's difference. God created us different. No matter how hard feminists defend that men and women are equal, I don't agree. I just read it yesterday in the Qur'an. "We made the men strong.". He takes care of things, wins the bread. That's how it should be anyway. I mean, a man must have the upper hand at home. Not in terms of salary. He must be smarter, calmer. The woman should follow. The woman should stay back, if she has better ideas than the man then they should be realized, but there

must be a fear of the father, fear of the husband in a household, he must carry some weight. Just as God says, “Man is the shepherd of the house.” It would be easier on the woman as well. Because women have this urge to trust, shelter. God created this urge for us, it’s in our fitrah (B1).

Of course there’s difference. Men are stronger. Men are created stronger such is that, the woman is under the man’s right rib (...) So that his hands is always over. Men are stronger. Women are under the responsibility of men. Of course they’re not the same, they have different things (B2).

B3 is a young woman who expresses that men are stronger. Even though she establishes this strength as physical strength, she expresses that men are stronger in terms of religion as well. She thinks men should look out for women and therefore should be one step ahead:

I always envision men to be more dominant than women but not in a context of violence. That’s not what I mean. It’s not that men can be oppressive, or he can cut you off banging his fist on the table, no. He should be a step ahead only in terms of looking out for women. This is so he is more protective, not so that he can be violent. Both in terms of nature and religiously, they’re stronger than us. If it was so God would make us strong as well. We would have been physically strong. God gave the strength to them, not us. If it was so we would be strong, let’s say if we were to be equal, then we would be strong too. For instance, a woman would beat him back with the same strength when she is beaten up by a man (B3).

There are many women who expressed that women are more emotional and naive, and men are more solid and rational. While expressing this, B7 attributes her sleeplessness when her child has a fever while her husband acts more relaxed, to fitrah, without mentioning the socially established, taught, and performed patriarchy:

Of course there's difference. Women are equipped with an urge to be liked by nature. And men with possessing and dominating. Women are more emotional, men are not. Men are more solid. Towards their children as well. When my child gets a fever I can't sleep at all. But he acts very relaxed. I mean, in terms of education, care giving, loving the kids, it's nice, they do it all just fine. But when there's a trouble, moms are always the ones that goes through more difficulties, such as in the cases of sickness and such. Fathers are not that much, or my husband is not (B7).

As they express the differences, many women also differentiated the natures of men and women on the basis of women's detail orientation and men's superficiality. In fact, it is even possible to say that women consider themselves different, maybe even more skilled or superior in this sense. For example, in the excerpt below, it is worth to note how B9 attributes the domestic labor women are forced to provide as a quality of women's detail oriented nature.

I mean, women are way detail oriented for one. What you call a man is very superficial. You eat, that's all. For women, you plan the meal, prepare it, shop for it, spend hours cooking it, set the table, wait for your husband, eagerly want to eat but the man comes, sits and eats, that's all. He doesn't even look back, very simple,

very straightforward. The thing to be done and the end result, that's not how it works for women, there are many many details. I think women, the women of today, men and women changed their format a lot. I mean, the standard women and men are very different than what we have today. I would think that women are more emotional but now people claim the opposite, that men are. I don't see it all, I don't know where they are. That's their most significant qualities. What you call woman is pure detail. But men are completely straight, dull like wood (B9).

One significant point regarding the perspectives of fitrah was the idea that men have more sexual drive than women:

But flirting and all, they do it. Now I think, after a certain point, I guess it's in their nature. God promises them Paradise in the Qur'an repeatedly, because He knows how bad the nature of his creation is. you know how he says the Devil whispers, he knows the Devil whispers to men a lot, and that's why he urges them to repel a lot. So is the nature of men. They can't help it (B1).

For a man, a woman. According to the men's desires... I interpret this centered on men. A woman can control her desires but men aren't like that. In terms of their fitrah, I think their desires are much more dominant. So I think marriage is necessary (B3).

I mean a woman, when she looks at a man, she looks at everything but the sexual thing. That's the last thing. When a man looks at a woman, he looks at everything, one two three maybe, the fourth thing is sexual. Then other stuff. Important things (B4).

Two women with religious studies degrees stated that men and women are different in fitrah, so they aren't equal, but that there's no difference in terms of rights.

I think the fitrah of men and women are both physically and emotionally different. But there's no difference when it comes to rights. In terms of rights... this is valid for my beliefs, the Qur'an addresses, "O humans," not "O women," or "O men,". So if you do something or receive something, you both should. So there's no discrimination. But in terms of fitrah, creation, I think they're different physically, and in terms of naivety, sensitiveness, emotional sensitivity (B21).

Two women stated that women are emotionally or rationally superior.

Eh, I definitely believe that we come from different worlds. This may sound kind of lame, but I think they're complete idiots, for example. Seriously. I think they have serious issues regarding intelligence. Whether it's IQ, or EQ, I think we see the world differently. I pity them, you know they say, Adam came first, and then Eve was created. I think the story goes like this: Adam came, and God said, what have I done, or something like that. So he said, maybe I should do a Beta version, so he sent us. Otherwise Adam wouldn't be able to survive, that's what I think. He can't handle it because he doesn't have what it takes. So yeah, in that sense, I think women are superior. They look at the world differently, it is for a fact. We approach things very differently. that's also a fact. There are pleasant men, too, for sure, good men. But we look at things differently. I think, you know something that comes from

amygdala... We are creatures who would during the cave times breastfeed our child and watch the kids from the dangers of the wilderness all the while we would cook. We can multitask. We see things so differently, at least that's how my brain works. Thinking twenty different things simultaneously, planning twenty steps ahead, foreseeing what's gonna happen... That's how I decided to divorce as well. I said, I'm gonna go nuts. Like that. We expect nothing from them, that's just how they are. They're like, miserable creatures that run on testosterone, you'll give something to keep them busy, they're gonna do it. Like that. I mean I don't hate them but I think women are superior in this sense. Yes, I think they are. I think it's related to the hormones as well (B12).

Even though they expressed a difference in the creation of men and women, a couple of the women emphasized that their fitrah changed today. For example, B4 said women's fitrah have changed but men's stayed the same because it didn't fit to their purposes.

8.2 *Feminism*

Except for the 5 women who identified as feminists and a few that had positive attitudes towards feminism, most of the women in our research either harshly criticized feminism or stated their distance based on a variety of reasons. The women's critical position to the idea of gender equality is a major reason for their criticism to feminism. On the other hand, there were women who did not know about feminism, and from different age groups. It is emphasized once again that the way of thinking that enables women to make sense of the violence they experienced is the discourse of psychology, because some women who criticized or

did not know about feminism had a strong self-reflectivity, named and personalized their experienced as violence. In other words, while women embraced the psychological discourse and explained their experiences with psychological terms, they considered feminism as an “-ism” to be avoided for it denies fitrah, defends equality, opposes religion, stands on the extremes and relates to politics.

Below you can see the answers B1 and B7 gave to the question of “What does feminism mean to you?”. Their answers go along with their answers regarding the question of fitrah and is founded in their criticism against the idea of equality:

Means nothing to me to be honest. Well, I don't think they're much religious either. I mean, saying men and women are equal, God forgive me, I think they're wrong from the beginning. (B1)

Never, ever, I don't believe such a thing. There's no such thing as feminism. Men and women are the same in the eyes of God. Each has their responsibilities. Men are superior by nature, he is created that way. Men are trusted with women so that they protect them, God gave them this duty, it's established in the Qur'an. Feminism is utter nonsense (B7).

To be speculative, it's possible to infer that the negative connotations of feminism in Turkey shapes these answers. For while our interviewer was interviewing B2 who had not known about feminism and gave her a brief description, B2 immediately replied “I'm also one of them”. The fact that a woman unaware of the connotations around feminism and who experienced violence from her husband immediately embraced feminism is

worth noting.

It does not ring a bell to be honest. What is feminism. I hear the word feminist a lot, is it against men. What is it exactly, please excuse my ignorance. I don't know what it holds. What kind of women are they?

[It has a long history but we can briefly call it as the movement that fights against inequality between men and women.]

There, I'm one of them.

A couple of the women, all of them educated, stated that feminism emphasizes the difference between the sexes and that was unnecessary, and that it is extreme:

As I said, I've never been on the side of something that masses defend. Never even been close. Feminism, for instance, that is autonomization, why though? I don't know why this was needed. It doesn't mean anything to me. Sounds nonsensical (B9).

I mean, feminism is something that, you know, let's say you're vegetarian, so this idea reflects to your whole diet. Feminism is kinda like that, for me, in every area in life, this sexism is going to reflect, it's emphasizing something over and over. It's exhausting for me, the fact that you have to emphasize it. Yes, sometimes it needs to be emphasized but I don't think that's the way to go. So I can say feminism is kind of like a populism. It's like a populist movement. It's an extreme movement. I don't like to be on the extremes (B21).

There were women who did not view feminism under a negative light but also were cautious:

I know about Havle. I even watched a couple seminars, the on-line ones. I really liked it. So many different people, hearing their point of views broadened my horizon, but there are also many question marks. Muslim feminist, feminism, Muslim. As we discussed amongst ourselves, “Is it possible? How so? This way, that way.” And such. It’s something we ponder upon but I’m not very rigid. Yes, I respect that, things are possible, but something like that. But I don’t like that thing against men, to be honest. Well I guess you don’t do that anyways, but it’s important to protect that diversity and respect. I’m the mother of a son, after all. (B10)

Five participants expressed their opinions on feminism by recounting their own stories and their stories of getting closer to becoming a feminist:

Feminism means to me my own story. I mean, it’s as I said, because I came from a conservative environment and left there to become someone who makes her own decisions, with economical independence, and who can go through her own mental processes, who can think, in short... I think I owe that to feminism. So this is also my own feminist story. So that’s why my life and feminism is interchangeable for me. I don’t know how well I was able to explain it but... (laughs) (B26)

8.3 Istanbul Convention

Our participants gave out parallel answers to questions regarding fitrah, feminism and Istanbul convention. A majority of their answers are founded in their approach to the concept of gender. The number of women who oppose or support the convention, or gave vague answers, or unaware of the convention are pretty close to each other, thus, it is not possible to identify a dominant view among the women. However, it is possible say that except for the few women who identified as feminist and those who know about it because they're professionals in law, what the participants knew about Istanbul convention was limited to the ideas media presents and to the claims which groups that oppose gender equality disseminate. It is significant that the first point to come to the minds of the women was the topic of LGBT. The women explain that the reason for their opposition is that the Convention recognizes the concept of gender and "homosexuality" which are against fitrah, and that the Convention harms the institution of family and culture with an inclusive definition of violence.

B7, who expresses negative opinions on feminism and argues for an understanding of fitrah in which men are superior, states how she finds the Convention un-Islamic:

Istanbul Convention is pure nonsense, it's one of those things which are made very un-Islamic in our times. So they're against the logic of religion. I don't believe it, I'm so glad the withdrawal happened (B7).

B11 states while she is not much informed, she has "heard that there were articles about homosexuality".

I don't know the contents of it much but I think it was abolished because it was related to this thing. I guess there were a few articles on this homosexuality thing. Yasin [her husband] has read the Convention. He approves the withdrawal by the way. I don't think of it much because I have to read it first. To be able to comment on it... I approve it in the sense that it defends women's rights, but about homosexuality, I have hesitations. I don't know what to think, it's something that isn't accepted in Islam but I don't get that either. For people who were created that way, if they're created that way, and if Islam doesn't accept them. I mean, it's a mental gap I cannot fill, I don't know. If we look from an Islamic perspective Istanbul Convention isn't right. But take Islam aside, I sure don't accept that there's nothing to protect women's right. I'm a bit indecisive about it, you know, as I said, I haven't read it (B11).

The most striking part of her words is that B11 positions the Convention and Islam opposed to each other by saying "since homosexuality is involved" and "If we look from an Islamic perspective Istanbul Convention isn't right". In the narrative of B11, who states that she also cannot fully accept it, we see that women think of religion as a static and normative set of rules, and therefore they are hesitant to question what is described as a norm regarding gender issues. In other words, once again, there is a gap between the opinions that arise from everyday experiences they have and witness, and the literary and normative knowledge. Although women talk about this gap, their hesitations and confusions, it is very difficult for women who want to preserve their religious values to question the normative, and produce a discourse to reinterpret it, and most women do not want to take on this.

B10, similar to B11, expresses her hesitations regarding the Convention. She states that the Convention is not “innocent” at all since it harms the institution of family. To interpret B10’s narrative, she argues that this is both because the convention recognizes gender and that the convention broadens the definition of violence. According to B10, this harms the family by taking issues that can be “resolved within the family” to the institutions.

[Do you know about the Istanbul Convention?]

Yes, I do. In fact, we did some stuff. I listened to this Sema Maraşlı. Have you listened to her, she had this interview. She defended men. In fact, men went up and said, “Even we couldn’t defend ourselves this much.” I mean, that’s a bit much, I’m no Sema Maraşlı, but I still didn’t approve the Convention much. I don’t oppose 100% either. Yes, I approve the articles about violence, but it’s definitely not innocent. My personal opinion.

[What do you think? That it’s not innocent?]

I think it will harm the Turkish family, coming from foreign cultures. That our culture is being played with, I didn’t like it that much. It felt like they want to play with our culture. So I disliked some articles. I really liked some others. I mean I can’t give a certain approval or disapproval for it, but I had some parts I didn’t like.

[Which ones for example?]

Well there are these things about sexism, like when you have even the smallest fight with your husband it ends there, he gets called on, you can’t see him again. I mean these are often solvable things inside the family, it feels open to abuse (B10).

However, we have also seen that women who are less educated, have heard less about the issue in the media, and have experienced physical violence, can have a more positive view of the Convention and feminism. The approach these women have is shaped by their own experiences and their openness to the violence experienced by other women, rather than normative religious understandings and ideological discourses:

Yes, yes I heard. I don't know the content of it much but it must be about violence against women. And it was withdrawn. It would be nice if it wasn't. It's a pity, while our women are dying here (B2).

But I think that is wrong. Why is it wrong, it's wrong because, women are killed anyway. What else women should do to make their voices heard, where should they seek help? A, a person like me, I would either die at the hands of that man or stand aside, I would no longer see what the man does, I would ignore it. So I lived through it all. I mean, he almost killed me in certain incidents, if my kids weren't to stand between us. For instance, someone would knock on the door, as he left, someone would come, call out to open the door, his mom, I'll beat up, I'll throw you down. Why, because I said a couple things to her. The kids wouldn't open the door. Then he came back, as I said, and stopped giving any money. He had given weekly before, now he didn't give any for eight whole years. Just because of his anger. Only because I said some things to that woman. Think about it, what would happen if the kids weren't there? If he came with all that anger, he could have killed me, or throw me down the window, I would have gotten my bones broken, so the government is mistaken here. Wom-

en are already getting killed, stabbed, this, that. It's wrong, I don't think the government is right here (B24).

Apart from these, 5 of the women participating in the research stated that they had not heard of the convention and that many women, most of them feminists, supported the Istanbul Convention.

9. Conclusion

Throughout this research, which we set out to understand the relationship between social and religious values and gender-based violence, we have learned a lot that can contribute to our fight against violence. We found in the research that it is very difficult for women to objectivize and talk about the religion that has permeated deep into their daily lives. That is the reason why women did not often make religious references in the narratives where they talked about their experiences, with an exception for the idea of fate and testing. However, while expressing their views on social values, structures and forms of struggle related to violence, such as family, nature, feminism, and the Istanbul Convention, they frequently referred to religious values, which we can call more normative, accepted by the society and shaped by the dominant powers.

Some of the women based their opposition to feminism and the Istanbul Convention and their understanding of fitrah on their criticism of gender equality by giving religious references. As Havle, we have seen that one of the issues that we have to deal with in the fight against violence against women is to produce knowledge and advocate by taking these criticisms into account.



However, while women distance themselves from feminism, which they find “ideological” and contrary to nature, they evaluate their experiences by using the psychology discourse that individualizes violence and thus creates a more legitimate ground. Identifying the points where many women with strong self-reflexivity, who name the violence they experience as violence and frequently use the concepts that point to violence while making sense of their experiences, criticize feminism was also critical in drawing the framework of Havle’s struggle with violence against women.



