

FROM EARLY MODERNIZATION TO AUTHORITARIAN POLITICS:
GENDER CLIMATE IN TURKEY AND RUSSIA

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ABSTRACT

FROM EARLY MODERNIZATION TO AUTHORITARIAN POLITICS: GENDER CLIMATE IN TURKEY AND RUSSIA

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This dissertation attempts to examine how and why the gender politics has transformed towards neo-conservatism in Turkey and towards neo-traditionalism Russia in the recent decades. Despite a long history of women's rights in both Turkey and Russia, neo-conservative and neo-traditional approaches have been emerging in both countries, particularly after the access of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and President Vladimir Putin to power. In examining this transformation, the main focus is put on the gender climate, which mainly shapes around the process of hegemony constitution. It is concluded that while modernization attempts by the Republican and Bolshevik revolutions gave the way to the adoption of the principle of women's equality, authoritarian tendencies, which have been appearing under the rule of Prime Minister Erdoğan and President Putin in the recent decade, have given rise to re-focus on biological determinism under the conditions of neo-liberalism, the rise of political Islam and the rise of the Orthodox Church.

Keywords: gender, gender climate, authoritarianism, Turkey, Russia.

ÖZ

ERKEN MODERNLEŞMEDEN OTORİTER SİYASETE: TÜRKİYE VE RUSYA’DA TOPLUMSAL CİNSİYET İKLİMİ

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Bu tez, toplumsal cinsiyet rejiminin Türkiye’de yeni muhafazakarlığa, Rusya’da ise yeni gelenekseciliğe doğru gerçekleşen dönüşümünü incelemektedir. Türkiye ve Rusya’da kadın hakları tarihinin uzun bir geçmişi vardır. Buna rağmen, özellikle Başbakan Recep Tayyip Erdoğan ve Başkan Vladimir Putin’in iktidara gelmesinden sonra, bu iki ülkenin toplumsal cinsiyet rejimi yeni muhafazakar ve yeni gelenekselci yaklaşımlar etrafında şekillenmeye başlamıştır. Bu dönüşüm açıklanırken, esas olarak hegemonya kurma süreci etrafında şekillenen, toplumsal cinsiyet iklimi üzerinde durulmuştur. Cumhuriyet ve Bolşevik devrimleri tarafından izlenen modernleşme çabaları kadınların eşitliği ilkesinin benimsenmesini sağlarken, Başbakan Erdoğan ve Başkan Putin’in iktidarları döneminde ortaya çıkan otoriter eğilimler biyolojik farklılığın ön plana çıkmasına sebep olmuştur. Bunda neo-liberal koşulların ve siyasi İslam ile Ortodoks Kilisesinin yükselişinin de etkisi bulunmaktadır.

Keywords: toplumsal cinsiyet, toplumsal cinsiyet iklimi, otoriteryanizm, Türkiye, Rusya.



To life and change...

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AKP –Justice and Development Party

ANNA – National Center of Domestic Violence

CEDAW – Convention of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

CPSU – Communist Party of Soviet Union

EU – European Union

Ka-Der – Association for the Support and Training of Women Candidates

KSSGM – General Directorate of Women’s Status and Problems

KSGM – General Directorate of Women’s’ Status

NGO – Non-governmental Organization

ŞÖNİM – Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers

TGNA – Turkey Grand National Assembly

UN – United Nations

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNFPA – United Nations Population Fund

UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Objectives

Major question of this study is why/how gender politics has transformed towards neo-traditionalism in Russia and neo-conservatism in Turkey in the recent decade, despite a long history of state feminism and/or women's rights.¹ In both countries, radical revolutions took place at the turn of the last century. In both revolutions, women's equality constituted a major milestone and the emancipation of women, who had been subordinated in previous orders, was primarily aimed at. In the early 1930s, both Republican and Soviet states claimed that women's equality was established and the women's question was resolved. For long decades, neither did the state leave the official commitment to women's equality nor was this commitment challenged. In Turkey, this official commitment has come under scrutiny by the emergence of an autonomous women's movement, following the coup d'état in 1980. In Russia, a need of reformulation was brought up at the state level since the late 1970s and the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991 accelerated the process.

The main similarity I depicted between Turkey and Russia to share is that Republican and Bolshevik revolutions aimed at modernization but signified 'continuity in rupture' or 'oscillation between modernity and tradition.' This became quite visible in the realization of women's rights, and in my understanding, set the path to neo-traditionalism and neo-conservatism in the recent decade. Despite quite progressive efforts, the Republican and Bolshevik regimes preserved patriarchal norms and patterns regarding gender relations and reinvented them in accordance with the new interests and concerns of the state. To put it with my theoretical tools,

¹ I differentiate between neo-traditionalism and neo-conservatism on the basis of my in-depth interviews that I conducted with experts in Turkey and Russia. While Russian experts favor to call the recent situation as neo-traditional, Turkish counterparts heavily use neo-conservatism.

the ideological and official commitment of the newly established Republican and Bolshevik state contoured 'the underlying gender order' towards an egalitarian orientation and constituted the new 'gender climate' based on women's equality and emancipation through work and education. However, biological determinism was never declared as a source or an obstacle before equality between sexes in either Republican or Bolshevik times. Despite all deficiencies, both states adopted the principle of women's equality and internalized a commitment to women's rights.

The state as a vanguard of women's equality and emancipation featured gender climate in the Republican and Bolshevik times. Then, the break and/or challenge with this official commitment primarily characterized the re-orientation of gender climate towards neo-traditionalism in Russia and neo-conservatism in Turkey. Behind this lies biological determinism that resided in the state discourse on gender equality. The state's commitment to 'equality' is quite essential to smooth ruffled feathers regarding women's equality in already patriarchal societies. In its absence, patriarchal features and forces easily come to the surface and get unleashed. What has been experienced in Turkey and Russia is that traditional norms and patterns are revisited under the conditions of neo-liberalism and as a part of the process of new hegemony constitution.

Gender climate is quite determining at this point because it reflects how gender and gender relations are utilized by the state in hegemony constitution in specific socio-historical conditions. It enables one to see the benefits that the states gain with the notions of femininity and masculinity. Putting the lenses on these notions, the roles and duties prescribed for women and men by the states in hegemony constitution could be clarified.

Additionally, my theoretical tools enable me to adopt a holistic approach to the interplay between the state and gender. I have avoided being stuck into the dilemma of instrumentalization or emancipation of women by the Bolshevik and Republican revolutions. This is very common discussion among the students of gender in Bolshevik and Republican revolutions, which I believe constitutes a reductionist

understanding. It prevents us from understanding the revolutionary policies regarding women as products of a multi-dimensional process, which include the pervasive influence of cultural norms and values, and the role of social forces and institutions on the political processes. Rather, I have attempted to examine the recent situation of gender relations in relation to the historical trajectory in both Russia and Turkey. I have believed this could contribute to strategy formation of feminist movement in its relations with the state.

In this study, I have tried to examine 1) how gender relations could become an area of play for the state to establish hegemony, 2) the interaction between state and society rather than a unilateral relationship, 3) the historicity of gender relations, which implies that different forms of masculinity and femininity might emerge.

In a comparative study, I have aimed to conduct a historical sociological analysis to evaluate and discuss the internality of state to gender relations and to examine it in its own historical trajectory. My work also attempts a comparison of the patriarchal system in different socio-historical contexts. In the historical sociology literature, there is a lack of comparative research on patriarchy and its role in state formation. As Miller (2003) argues, economic and political movements, struggles and ideologies are all engendered processes; however, the role gender and patriarchy play in state formation is relatively neglected in historical sociological studies. As Connell (1990) puts, patriarchy is not an imperfection to be corrected or derivative of social relations to be erased by only legal changes. I share Connell's understanding on the importance of patriarchy to examine the inherent nature of gender relations to power and state.

The patriarchal state can be seen, then, not as the manifestation of a patriarchal essence, but as the center of a reverberating set of power relations and political processes in which patriarchy is both constructed and contested. If this perspective is sound, it makes the historical trajectory of the state vital to an understanding of its place and effects in sexual politics (Connell, 1987: 130).

1.2. Theoretical Framework

In this study, I have mainly utilized the studies of R.W. Connell (1990, 1987), Rebecca Kay (2000), Nira Yuval-Davis (1997), Susan Gal and Gail Kligman (2000). My main point of departure has been that, in the terms of Connell (1990), there is ‘an interplay between gender relations and state dynamics’ (p.509). I have adopted the theoretical tools of gender order and gender climate, which match with my point of departure. In this framework, I have touched upon the interest and intervention of the state in women’s bodies and personalities by the notions of femininity and masculinity.

Connell’s framework has been very useful to construct and discuss my arguments. Her framework makes possible to trace historical trajectory of state and gender relations. The concept of gender order depends on a global assumption of hegemonic masculinity [that is, subordination of women to men] and itemizes the structures constituting this phenomenon. Although I agree on her assumptions, I feel her framework alone could not be sufficient to examine the process, which requires an analytical evaluation of the state discourse actions, policies and regulations regarding gender. I try to find out the benefit of considering ‘gender’ for the state and I conclude it as political, cultural and moral hegemony.

In explaining how hegemony constitution occurs in practice, I have found the studies of Kay, Yuval-Davis, Gal and Kligman very fruitful. Kay’s contribution of gender climate enables me to chase the historical trajectory of state and gender relations and to differentiate the reformulations under changing conditions. The studies of Yuval-Davis, Gal and Kligman help me realize how gender and reproduction is utilized in hegemony constitution by the state and recognize the ways in which the state authority is constructed and legitimized by gender relations. All these studies contribute to my understanding in presenting and discussing how the state assumes appropriate notions of femininity and masculinity, and produces gender inequality with its own discourse and policies, which in turn serve the state to gain legitimacy.

1.3. Gender Order and Gender Climate

In Connell's (1987) understanding, gender order consists of power, sexual division of labor and cathexis between men and women; behind the formation of these three structures is the subordination of women to men. The gender order is 'a historically constructed pattern of power relations between men and women and definitions of femininity and masculinity' (p.99). In other words, the society-wide gender order is constituted through historically constructed notions of femininity and masculinity (pp.180-2). Connell explains the way that these notions involve in the composition and constitution of gender order by hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity.

Very generally, hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity signify a global structural fact, the overall subordination of women to men. 'The most important feature of contemporary hegemonic masculinity is that it is heterosexual, being closely connected to the institution of marriage'. Hegemonic masculinity subordinates not only women but also other forms of masculinities such as homosexuality. She labels the appropriate form of femininity, which is in accordance with and oriented to hegemonic masculinity as emphasized femininity. The compliance to technical competence and rationality of men at work, to sexual division of labor at home, to gender discrimination at work, to marriage and childcare embodies emphasized femininity in practice. In practice, maintaining emphasized femininity serves to prevent other models of femininity gaining cultural articulation (pp.183-8). This assessment could be applied to the humiliation of women who do not want to give birth, get married, comply the legal restrictions on abortion, adultery, co-habitation, etc. in both Turkey and Russia.

Kay (2000) contributes to Connell's framework with the concept of gender climate. She defines gender order as the underlying norms and patterns regulating gender relations while gender climate corresponds to the prevailing norms and patterns regulating gender relations. I think the state efforts to reshape gender, generating a

new gender climate, could be attributed to the interplay with gender relations. As she defines:

Perhaps then it would be useful to introduce a new parameter in the debate, a concept, which might be term the gender climate. The gender climate is simply the way in which the gender order is packaged and presented at a given time in a given society. The gender climate reflects the attitudes and opinions, which are propounded by the media and by popular discourses, it affects the ways in which it is considered acceptable to speak about gender, but it does not fundamentally change the underlying gender order. If we imagine for a moment that the gender order itself is represented by a dressmaker's dummy, then the gender climate may affect the way in which the dummy is dressed to suit the prevailing fashions but it will not itself change the form and constitution of the dummy (Kay, 2000: 17).

At the core of gender order lays the power relation between men and women, that is, the subordination of women to male authority. It cannot be claimed that gender climate did not lead to any change in norms and patterns regulating gender relations and identities. However, the power relation and the related definitions of femininity and masculinity remain almost the same. The state is internal to and determines the interaction between gender order and gender climate. The state manipulates and influences the gender order in terms of concerns and interests. So, it shapes gender climate. It manipulates the interaction between gender order and gender climate. The state could elasticize gender order or reinforce its corners.

1.4. Gender, State and Hegemony Constitution

In Connell's understanding, the issue of gender cannot be excluded from the state; the state is gendered. Rather, gender and gender relations prove to be constitutive elements of social interests. Gender is an institutional and motivational system and the state bounds with gender in a wider social context. The state has a collective interest in biological categories (Connell, 1990).

... Gender is a collective phenomenon, an aspect of social institutions as well as an aspect of personal life, and is therefore internal as well as external to the state. Put another way, the state as an institution is part of a wider social structure of gender relations. A recognition of the historicity of gender relations is the essential point of departure (Connell 1990: 509).

Following the approach of Connell, I understand that the state has a determining role in constituting and reconstituting gender relations. Due to its power and institutions, the state is able to play on and influence the underlying norms and patterns regarding gender relations. The state is a significant vehicle of sexual and gender oppression and regulation. As Yuval-Davis puts, it is not only bureaucracy and intellectuals, which biologically, culturally and symbolically produce nations but also state (Yuval-Davis, 2003: 19).

In Connell's understanding, the state is to be recognized in relation to gender. Following Carole Pateman, Connell (1987) argues that the historical trajectory of the state reveals that 'the growth of modern state depends on a change in patterns of gender relations' (p. 127). From the 17th century onset, the state is involved in the constitution and mediation of relations between men and women. The exclusion of women from the social contract theories and from the rational bureaucratic mechanism, the women's suffrage movement in the 18th and 19th centuries, their participation into labor market, their obligation to pay taxes as citizens, their right to enjoy welfare services and transfers in the welfare state period continuously shape sexual division of labor, which is the basis of gender relations, and men-women relations (Connell, 1987: 130-132).

The state engages in considerable ideological activity on issues of sex and gender; this very diverse activity ranges from birth control in India, through the re-imposition of the chador on women in Iran, to the Soviet efforts to increase the number of women in paid work. State attempts to control sexuality; criminalizing homosexuality, legislating on age of consent, venereal disease, AIDS and so on. The state intervenes in the sexual division of labor in ways ranging from subsidized immigration to equal opportunity policies. It regulates workplaces and families, provides schools, builds houses. Given all this, control of the state is a major stake in sexual politics. ... It can hardly be denied that the state is deeply implicated in the social relations of gender (Connell, 1987: 126).

In a similar vein, Burton emphasizes the role of the state in constituting the categories of social structure and in particular the notions of femininity and masculinity. The relations between them are produced as effects of state policies and state structures (cited in Connell, 1990: 515).

The state is constituted within gender relations as the central institutionalization of gendered power. Conversely, gender dynamics are a major force constructing the state, both in the historical creation of state structures and in contemporary politics. ... We need to appraise the state from the start as having a specific location within gender relations, and as having a history shaped by a gender dynamic (Connell, 1990: 519).

At the core of this practice lay biological differences between men and women. These differences are taken crucial in the construction of gender relations, of notions of femininity and masculinity, and of the relations with the state. Due to their biological traits, the ethnic/religious/tribal community, nation and/or state that women belong to position them differently than men and assign them specific obligations. Defining women as biological reproducers of future generations carry specific meanings in its socio-political setting. In other words, biological reproduction has a contextual meaning. Regardless of its contextual meaning, neither are women regarded as individuals in this understanding; nor is their reproductive function considered in terms of women's human rights. Rather, women's assigned position and obligations impose a political meaning on their bodily autonomy and influence their right and decision to give birth or not (Yuval-Davis, 1997: 62, 80-82). Moreover, this specific position and obligations assigned to women are to assume shape the norms and patterns regulating gender relations including inequality, domination and discrimination.

The social relations of gender are not determined by biological difference but deal with it; there is a practical engagement rather than a reduction. It is this engagement that defines gender at the social level, demarcating gender-structured practice from other practice. 'Gender' means practice organized in terms of, or in relation to, the reproductive division of people into male and female (Connell, 1987: 140).

In the line of Yuval-Davis (1997), the interplay between state and gender relations should be primarily connected to biological and cultural reproduction of future generations by women. The interventions of the state [in terms of Yuval-Davis, national project] in women's bodies and behaviors to identify the appropriate femininity could not be considered independent of power relations. The legal, cultural and political interventions are related to hegemonic discourses, which serve to culturally, politically and legally categorize 'other and us' outside the national

borders. In this categorization, women as cultural carriers are to pass down culture to future generations (Yuval-Davis, 1997: 61, 66-67). The role of being cultural carriers, assigned to women, determines the notions of femininity and of masculinity and appropriate code of behavior for women (Yuval-Davis, 1997: 56). In the same line, I think, it may serve to identify 'the other' who do not conform the norms and patterns regulating gender relations inside the community, society and/or nation, and who do not embody the appropriate notions of femininity and masculinity. This stigmatizes, regardless of being male or female, individually chosen aspirations, which do not confirm the underlying norms and patterns.

At this point, hegemony comes into picture in both Connell's and Yuval-Davis' understanding. According to Yuval-Davis, gender relations are at the center of cultural reproduction. Put differently, cultural discourses constitute a field for political struggle and cultural homogeneity is aimed as a result of hegemony constitution. In this political process, a social articulation of ethnicity, religion and gender related interests, similarities, and differences, is attained. The cultural homogeneity embodies appropriate norms and patterns for gender relations, and excludes and marginalizes inappropriate norms and patterns (Yuval-Davis, 1997: 87-90). The inequalities in this social articulation are justified through a process of naturalization, making them appear as inevitable and at the same time natural (Yuval-Davis, 1997: 92). Demographic crisis, national survival, socio-economic crisis, the burden of welfare policies (like childcare) and low rate of active labor force are some contextual examples to be utilized in articulating hegemonic discourses in terms of biological and cultural reproduction of community, society and/or nation (Yuval-Davis, 1997: 66-68, 78) and in naturalizing the discourses.

Applying the Gramscian concept of hegemony to gender relations, Connell depicts the form of politics, which is interplay between social interests related to gender relations, as war of position. In Gramscian understanding, war of position refers to not an open conflict and clash between the state and classes [but a hidden conflict] (Buci-Glucksmann, 1984).

Power in the state is strategic because there is more at issue than a simple distribution of benefits. The state has a constitutive role in forming and reforming social patterns. For instance the state at a superficial level supports marriage through taxation incentives, housing and so on. At a more fundamental level, marriage itself is a legal action and a legal relationship, defined, regulated and to some extent enforced by the state. Another notable state enterprise is in the field of fertility. Pro-natalist and anti-natalist policies have been debated and contraceptives accordingly banned or distributed. ... In managing institutions and relations like marriage and motherhood the state is doing more than regulating them. It is playing a major part in the constitution of the social categories of the gender order. Categories like 'husbands', 'wives', 'mothers', 'homosexuals', are created as groups with certain characteristics and relationships. Through them the state plays a part in the constitutions of the interests at play in sexual politics (Connell, 1987: 130).

In Connell's framework, the state establishes its hegemony by presupposing, recognizing and stipulating hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity, which is dominance of men over women. In doing so, it could get the consent of both men and women who predominantly confirm and comply with hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity.

It does not imply that hegemonic masculinity means being particularly nasty to women. Women may feel as oppressed by non-hegemonic masculinities, may even find the hegemonic pattern more familiar and manageable. There is a likely to be a kind of 'fit' between hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity. What it does imply is the maintenance of practices that institutionalize men's dominance over women. In this sense hegemonic masculinity must embody a successful collective strategy in relation to women. Given the complexity of gender relations no simple or uniform strategy is possible: a 'mix' is necessary. So hegemonic masculinity can contain at the same time, quite consistently, openings towards domesticity and openings towards violence, towards misogyny and towards heterosexual attraction (Connell, 1987: 185-186).

In a similar line with Yuval-Davis (1997), Connell (1987) also mentions about discursive rationalization of inequality in the structuring of social practice (pp. 243-245). Discursive naturalization of gender relations can be achieved by constructing gender and gender relations as natural facts and on biological differences. If one constitutes cultural homogeneity in reference to religion, dogmatic authority, its legitimacy and the exclusion of the marginal could be much more sound and strong.

Reproduction and/or reproductive rights signify the underlying notions of femininity and masculinity that the state assume and utilize in hegemony constitution. This topic might also serve to naturalize and justify the inequalities between sexes. The state actions, policies and official statements by its representatives regulating reproduction depend on implicit assumptions about gender and gender relations. They become apparent in legal enforcement of heterosexuality, control over women's bodies and fertility (Gal & Kligman, 2000: 20). Veiling, access to abortion, incentives to promote marriage and more children can be included in these actions and policies.

From a non-feminist framework, reproduction seems to belong to private sphere and be apart from power relations. However, reproduction constitutes a salient field for political struggle and debate. Politics of reproduction enables the state to 1) establish a connection with its populace and identify the boundaries of being an appropriate member (citizen, comrade, worker, subject, etc.); 2) (re)make nation and its boundaries; 3) gain political legitimacy by constructing itself as a good and moral actor; 4) assume women as a specific political group to be able to preserve and transmit national and cultural values (Gal & Kligman, 2000: 21-33). This way of thinking enables us to examine how reproduction is utilized by political power to shape political struggle and process, and how citizens feel and experience the state's ideological control in everyday lives (Gal & Kligman, 2000: 17). The state discourse, policies and actions about reproduction 'reveal the ways in which politics is being reconstituted, contested and newly legitimated' (cited in Gal & Kligman, 2000: 17). So, politics of reproduction provides a vehicle for the state to step in intimate sphere. It serves to (re)define and impose the notions of femininity and masculinity in accordance with the state discourse.

... human reproduction, which encompasses events throughout the human and especially female life-cycle related to ideas and practices surrounding fertility, birth and child care, including the ways in which these figure into understanding of social and cultural renewal (Ginsburg & Rapp, 1991: 311).

To sum up, gender is regarded as a vehicle of establishing and consolidating hegemony. As it is related to hegemony constitution, then I think gender relations constitute a field, which is always open and vulnerable to state manipulation and

influence. Then, the reconstitution of gender relations and identities in a prevailing gender climate becomes more meaningful as this reveals the interplay between the state and gender relations in specific socio-historical context.

Gender then, is a linking concept. It is about the linking of other fields of social practice to the nodal practices of engendering, childbirth and parenting. ... Gender in this conception is a process rather than a thing. Our language, especially its general categories, invites us to reify. But it should be clear that the 'linking concept' is about the making of the links, the process of organizing social life in a particular way (Connell, 1987: 140).

So, state power is created and transformed through the struggle over the meanings of gender and gender relations. Historical trajectory of state and gender relations is important to examine the current transformations. Demographic debates [which can be extended to family and reproduction] can 'be a site of gender inequality as well as be productive of historically situated, contested meanings about gender'. In contemporary times, the political discourses on gender and gender relations reflect 'the political struggles over reach of state power, the configuration of citizenship and the meanings of masculinity and femininity'. The changing meanings of gender also show us the changing character of state-society relations (Rivkin-Fish, 2010: 703).

1.5. Method

This dissertation was based on both first and secondary resources. First resources consisted of in-depth interviews and official documents including legal documents, public speeches, official websites, reports prepared by UN and UN related bodies, reports of international and national non-governmental organizations involved in promoting gender equality in Turkey and Russia, articles on online media and statistical data. These documents are mainly written in English and Turkish. For the documents written in Russian, particularly the legal documents, I got them selectively translated from Russian to English.

Before starting my fieldwork, I found a chance to meet some scholars, whose fields of interest are gender, gender in Russia and Russian politics at Michigan State University in the United States, where I spent four months as a visiting scholar. At

MSU, I had preliminary preparation, including brief literature review and informal discussions with these scholars on my aim and arguments.

My fieldwork took place in both Turkey and Russia. In my first visit to Russia in the fall 2011, I stayed two months in Moscow and St. Petersburg, and conducted 22 interviews. In my second visit in February 2013, I spent a week in St. Petersburg, did 2 more interviews. I visited 7 NGOs, 2 university institutes, and a women's shelter and interviewed with the experts working in these institutions. Concerning the NGOs, I had interviews with more than one expert from the same organization. The NGO experts I conducted interviews with are actively involved in the women's movement emerging in Russia in the 1990s. I had interview with 9 academicians, whose field of interest is gender politics in Russia. I also conducted interviews with international experts from the UN bodies. I could not arrange any interview with any member of the State Duma and any state official. Some colleagues and the Turkish Embassy in Moscow tried to help me arrange an interview but none of them accepted to give an interview. I could not visit any public shelter due to bureaucratic obstacles. For the case of Turkey, I conducted my interviews in Ankara in the summer of 2013. I conducted 17 interviews. I did 6 more interviews in both Istanbul and Ankara, completing my fieldwork by the winter of 2014. I visited 6 NGOs, UN and its related bodies, and the Ministry of Family and Social Policies. I interviewed with 12 academicians, who are actively involved in the feminist women's movement and whose field of interests is gender politics in Turkey, and a few feminist activists who have affiliation with active women's NGOs in Turkey. The list of the institutions of the interviewees is provided in appendix at the end.

Turkey	Russia
2 International Experts from UN bodies	1 International Expert from UN bodies
10 Academicians	12 Academicians
10 Experts from NGOs	5 Experts from NGOs
1 Feminist Activist	3 Feminist Activists
1 Expert from Women's Shelter	2 Public Officers

I conducted in-depth expert interviews because I aimed at collecting both academic evaluations and practical experiences regarding the approach of the state in Turkey and Russia. My goal was to obtain direct and extensive evaluation on the state discourse and policies concerning gender equality and discrimination in both Turkey and Russia. My questions were semi-structured. In my questions, my primary concern was to chase historical trajectory and to figure out if there was a change in state discourse on gender equality. I posed questions to figure out the parameters of prevailing state discourse, the advantages and deficiencies of the existing legal framework, the situation of women in labor market, family and politics, and the relations between the state and women's movement/feminist circles. In both Turkey and Russia, my fieldwork took place in the big provinces (Ankara, Istanbul, Moscow and St. Petersburg) and I did not visit relatively small cities. It is because the headquarters of most women's NGOs, women's shelters, public offices and highly ranked universities are mostly located in these 4 provinces.

Secondary sources are academic literature in English and Turkish. On Turkey, there is a huge literature in both English and Turkish. The literature in English on Russia is also extensive. Still, I got some pioneering articles in Russian, which are of major importance and based on analysis of pioneering scholars in Russia, translated to Turkish.

1.6. Organization

This dissertation consists of 7 chapters. The first chapter is introduction, which informs the reader about the objectives, research questions, arguments and method of the dissertation. I also introduced my theoretical framework and tools in this chapter. In the Chapter 2, my aim is to provide a brief historical background about the women's question in Republican Turkey and Soviet Russia. I discussed how women's equality was handled and women's emancipation was achieved on the grounds of my theoretical tools, gender order and gender climate. My main argument in this chapter is that despite the strong and sincere official commitment to women's

equality, state discourse and policies signified a rupture in continuity and oscillated between modernity and tradition. This chapter is mainly based on literature review.

In Chapters 3 and 4, I examine the state of the art on gender equality in both Turkey and Russia. I start with the near past since the late 1970s in Soviet Russia and 1980s in Turkey, but I mainly focus on the recent decade, which is marked with the access of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and President Vladimir Putin to power. Under the rule of both political leaders, authoritarian tendencies have started to appear in Turkey and Russia. The reflection of the authoritarian tendencies on gender politics, and more accurately, the role of gender and gender relations in establishing authoritarian politics is quite different compared to the Republican and Bolshevik periods. My main aim in these two chapters is to examine how gender climate has changed towards neo-conservatism and neo-traditionalism. To this end, I focus on the state discourse and policies regarding the rights and situation of women in labor force, family and politics.

I depict the prevailing gender climate in Turkey as neo-conservative and in Russia as neo-traditional. I argue that biological determinism is at the core of state discourse and policies and traditional norms and patterns continue to shape any issue regarding gender equality. I present the legal regulations, their deficiencies, support mechanisms, etc. on the grounds of gender equality. I put my effort to analyze the influence of neo-traditional and neo-conservative notions of femininity and masculinity, which are shaped at the intersection of gender order and climate, on the state discourse, policies, and regulations. I utilize both literature and official documents in these two chapters.

The Chapters 5 and 6 depend on my fieldwork that I conducted in Turkey and Russia. I formulate the discussion in these chapters around three conceptualizations that I directly derive from my interviews. My conceptualizations cover the break/challenge with the official discourse, the composition of labor force in terms of female labor force, and the women's situation regarding family, motherhood, reproduction and childcare. Under these three conceptualizations, I examine my

argument and questions, posed at the beginning of the study. Main discussion revolve around how gender equality and discrimination is understood by the state in neo-traditional and neo-conservative gender climate, and how the revisited notions of family, femininity, and masculinity influence the efforts taken to prevent gender discrimination, to promote gender equality, to resolve women's problems, and to improve their situation. Under the first conceptualization, I reveal how the shift from official discourse took place and what this shift brought up. The second and third conceptualizations are mutually interdependent to promote or weaken gender equality. I discuss and evaluate the inequality and discrimination that Turkish and Russian women encounter in labor force and family. How both states intervene in private sphere including family, motherhood and reproductive rights on behalf of social/national interests constitute a crucial dimension.

The last chapter covers my comparison between Turkish and Russian cases, and my concluding remarks. At the end of my desktop research and fieldwork, I figured out that authoritarian tendencies, coupled with the focus on national values and neo-liberal premises, make both states to revisit the underlying gender order, which has long been patriarchal. Both states tend to reformulate traditional notions of family, femininity and masculinity around new concerns and interests, at the core of which primarily lay hegemony constitution, and consent and support for authoritarian rule by the majority in both Turkey and Russia.

CHAPTER 2

GENDER CLIMATE IN REPUBLICAN AND BOLSHEVIK TIMES

In this chapter, my aim is to present a historical overview of the women's question in the Republican and Bolshevik times. My argument is that both the Republican and Bolshevik revolutions achieved a radical break albeit in continuity with the Ottoman and Tsarist past. Put differently, the newly established regimes oscillated between modernity and tradition. This became quite visible in the way the women's question was handled by both the Republican and Bolshevik revolutionaries.

I explain the rupture in continuity and/or oscillation between modernity and tradition on the grounds of gender order and gender climate. In both Turkish and Russian cultures, the underlying gender order had been patriarchal for long centuries. In the Republican and Bolshevik times, both states embraced an official commitment to women's equality and constituted a gender climate based on egalitarian discourse between men and women. The underlying gender order continued to influence new revolutionary attempts though. Although both revolutions succeeded in making radical changes, their discourses oscillated between tradition and modernity from the very beginning.² The traditional notions of femininity and masculinity continued to penetrate and shape the nature and extent of policies regarding the women's liberation in Turkey and Soviet Russia. Traditional values deeply shaped new image of women, new understanding of family and new legal framework. Not unexpectedly, the Republican and Bolshevik revolution, in terms of its cadres and their culture, had its roots in the Ottoman past and the Tsarist Russia. In addition to this, the new economic and political context imposing 'more' urgent issues and restrictions on the new regime to deal with led to an incomplete liberation for women along the Republican premises and the Marxist lines.

² For similar assessments for both Turkish and Russian cases, please see Coşar (2007); Arat (2004); Stites (1991); Lapidus (1977).

To this end, I examine the new images designed for being a Republican and Bolshevik woman; the Civil, Labor and Penal Codes codified by the newly established regimes in the aftermath of the revolutions; the specific organization that served to organize the new principles among women. In doing so, I point out that traditional features reflected on the design of new images of Republican and Soviet woman, and were preserved in new legal frameworks.

2.1. New Soviet Women and Family

The Soviet ideology on women mainly depended on the theoretical works of August Bebel, Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx (Buckley, 1989: 18).³ The main trait of Marxism on the subordination of women is the existence of capitalist relations of social production, which is based on class divisions and private property. Accordingly, the way to women's liberation would run through the entire abolition of capitalism and transition to a new socialist order in which class structure and private property would disappear.

The first attack by the new regime was on the Tsarist family law in 1917. Against its patriarchal principles, formal equality before the law and equal entitlement to civil and political rights were issued for both sexes by the new regime (Buckley, 1989: 34). In 17 October 1918, the code of laws concerning the Civil Registration of Deaths, Births and Marriages was introduced. In that code, marriage was defined as a civil rather than a religious union. The mutual consent of both parties was made obligatory for the union to take place. The choice or change of residence to be tied to the wishes of men was annulled. The automatic imposition of husband's surname on his wife was also abolished; the women were now allowed to their surname (Schlesinger cited in Buckley, 1989: 35).

³ Especially Marx, and Engels observed capitalism to draw women into labor force, thereby leading to the destruction of sexual division of labor. In the thoughts of Engels and Bebel, the bourgeois family was treated as a core unit to be transformed. The bourgeois family was described as the main source of all social and economic oppressions and to constitute a profound obstacle before the women's participation into public life. Despite their reservations on the women's suffrage movement, especially Bebel's emphasis on the contributions of the suffrage movement, the formal equality before the law was considered to prioritize all attempts, thereby enabling the women to participate in the working life and then getting liberated.

These provisions covered any women in or out of wedlock. This promoted *de facto* marriages, making civil marriage unnecessary and producing unexpected harsh social and economic problems in the early 1920s (Farnsworth, 1977: 143). In November 1925, a new family code was drafted and replaced the 1918 Code in 1926 (Attwood, 1999: 41, 43, 46). The new legislation was aimed at expanding the rights of those in registered marriages to those in unregistered ones. Concerning alimony, child maintenance and inheritance, the registered and unregistered marriages were made legally identical by the new legislation (Attwood, 1999: 46).

Lenin explained to allow freedom from material considerations, religious, social, and parental prejudices, and narrow bourgeois surroundings in love; but not (among other things) 'from seriousness of in love.' ... The form of relations between sexes for the future predicted by most Marxists, then, was a 'marriage,' or love union of some sort, rather than a series of love affairs (Stites, 1991: 261)

In 1917, the absolute right to appeal for divorce was granted to both sexes and conditioned the annulment of marriage to the request of at least one side rather than a mutual consent (Schlesinger cited in Buckley, 1989: 35). Women's rights were taken into account in regulating alimony, custody, distribution of property, etc. (cited in Attwood, 1999: 42). In November 1922, another new one on inheritance ended excluding the daughters from inheritance or granting them a smaller amount than sons; and guaranteed their equal share with the brothers (Schlesinger cited in Buckley, 1989: 36).

The revolutionary attempts to transform 'the traditional family and the private subordination of women' would succeed as far as their integration into society through their labor force participation would be achieved (Ashwin, 2000: 10). The Bolsheviks sought to erase the traditional patterns by liberating the women from socially and economically being dependent on men, and the new state embraced the role of supporting the women for economic independence and childcare (Kiblitckaya, 2000). Accordingly, the new Soviet woman was envisioned as a worker-mother. It was expected that the more the women would have educational and occupational attainments, the greater they would have sexual equality and equal relations within the family (Lapidus, 1982: xxxii).

To this end, the 1918 Labor Code regulated 'equal pay for equal work' principle, obligation to work regardless of sex (aged between 16 and 50), exemption to work for women on the point of childbirth, protective measures for women (regarding night work, over time work, dangerous jobs) and maternity benefits (full-paid leave eight weeks before and eight weeks after birth, extra work breaks for nursing mothers and free access to social insurance) (Dodge, 1966: 57-58).

Obligation to work also accelerated the access of girls and women to education and training. The rate of girls in the secondary schools rose from 40% in 1920s to 50% in the 1930s; from 40% to more than half specialized secondary schools; from less than a third to 43% in higher educational institutions. During the war years, the young women represented for 69% in specialized secondary schools and 77% in higher educational institutions. In the 1970s, the ratio of women with at least secondary education was 15% of middle-aged women (late 50s), more than 50% of early middle aged (40s) and 90% of young women (early 20s) (Dobson, 1977: 267-269).

Women constituted a substantial percentage of the professional class of physicians, lawyers, engineers and scientific workers. Female labor force participation in Soviet Russia was the highest in the world with 90% of working age women on training or job (Kuehnast & Nechemias, 2004: 4). Their share in the labor force was 46.4% in 1926, 45.1% in 1939 and 49.4% in 1959 (Dodge, 1966: 43). However, the widespread stereotypes led to the integration of women into economy as second-class workers (Ashwin, 2000: 11; Kiblitckaya, 2000: 91). In both industry and agriculture, women were predominantly concentrated at lower levels, in low skilled and poorly paid positions. Their presence in the managerial and supervisory positions had not automatically increased. The average female wage had constituted 65-70% of men's wages (Lapidus, 1982).

As worker-mothers, women were to contribute to national economy as well as physical reproduction of nation (Kay, 2000). In other words, both productive and reproductive roles were put on women's shoulders. Accordingly, the Soviet state staked a legitimate claim on controlling maternity and guaranteeing the continuity of

new generations. Motherhood was perceived as a natural right and duty of being a woman (Issoupova, 2000: 30). A new set of measures was codified to reward the mothers and to make motherhood more attractive. When being the biological mother of more than ten children, she was entitled as 'heroine mother' and given a certain amount of money. But the father was not entitled this way and excluded from the process of reproduction (Issoupova, 2000: 33).

In that context, abortion remained the most controversial topic in the Soviet history. The Soviet Russia was the first to legalize abortion in 1920. The decree explained the need for abortion on the grounds of 'the moral survivals and painful economic conditions of the present.' The right to abortion was never recognized as a woman's right (Goldman, 1993: 256). In 1936, abortion was prohibited again with prison sentence for the operators and high fines for the patients. As the Soviet state confirmed causality between rising abortion and harsh economic conditions, and embraced the ban as a way of increasing birthrate, the new law introduced new incentives such as longer maternity leaves, bonuses for mothers with many children, new clinics, nurseries, etc. (Goldman, 1993: 291).

The new role constituted a main dilemma of the women's question in the Soviet history. The newly established Soviet state enforced women to participate into labor force but at the same time continued to assume that women would be responsible for childcare and homemaking while men would be main breadwinner (Kiblitckaya, 2000: 91-94; 61). The traditional roles obstructed women's entrance into labor market, decreasing their productivity and creativity (Dodge, 1966: 2). Furthermore, the new state did not construct sufficient communal system for childcare and housework due to scarce sources. The Soviet state featured motherhood as natural role of women and resolved this problem with a combination of maternal and nursery care (Issoupova, 2000: 36).

As a modernizing country, Soviet Russia had confronted a difficult task of maintaining a balance between change and continuity. Early Bolshevism was not monolithic and had strong traditional wing from the outset. Additionally, the family

was never regarded as 'disdainful' by the Soviet regime (Farnsworth, 1977: 139-140).

Revolutionary change in the USSR has brought not a total rupture with the task but a partial assimilation of and even reintegration of prerevolutionary attitudes and patterns of behavior that are not merely 'bourgeois remnants' destined to evaporate in the course of further development but defining features of a distinctive political culture (Lapidus, 1977: 116).

Even the 1918 Code had been far from being 'communist' as including such provisions as 'male responsibility for women, parental responsibility for children's upbringing and equal obligation of relatives for each other's economic well-being' (Farnsworth, 1977: 141). Nor did the marital stability-oriented legislation of the 1930s represent a reversal or a betrayal to the Marxist premises. Indeed, the Russian society had always been a conservative one regarding men and women seen as complementary to each other in the nature and in the union (Attwood, 1996).

The Revolution, which set out to annihilate everything that belonged to the past, has come to terms with the prerevolutionary Russian heritage. If only to preserve the new, it has been found necessary to restore something of the old. And this, in turn, has involved a revaluation of the Marxist doctrines upon which the Revolution is founded. Particularly in Soviet family law, there has been a partial restoration of prerevolutionary traditions and a partial restatement of Marxist principles (Berman, 1946: 26).

2.2. The *Zhenotdel*: Women's Department of All-Russian Communist Party

The political rights of women including the right to vote and to be deputy to the soviets were issued by 1918 (Buckley, 1989: 35). However, women continued to be regarded as secondary figures in political life (Stites, 1991: 326). In 1922, the percent of female membership in the party was only 8%. Neither urban nor rural women necessarily utilized the new rights and opportunities. To deal with that, a party department under the Central Committee Secretariat to organize work among women, which was called *Zhenotdel*, was established (Lapidus, 1975: 94) in 1919.

The *Zhenotdel* was assigned three main goals: to inform working and peasant women about the newly acquired rights and benefits, to train women cadres for political cadres, and to cooperate with other organizations for opening up public facilities

(kindergartens, nurseries, communal dining rooms, laundries, etc.) (Buckley, 1989: 66). In order to penetrate among the women and to increase political consciousness among them, the *Zhenotdel* invented delegates' assemblies for political education and recruitment, published regular journals,⁴ organized campaigns for female literacy, conferences and mass demonstrations (Lapidus, 1975: 94-96).

When the *Zhenotdel* began to make demands on women's behalf and to criticize the regime for its failings, the party leaders blamed the *Zhenotdel* women on provoking feminist deviations, and the organization was forced to take a more obedient and less independent stance (Wood, 1997: 4). 'Even as it sought to integrate women into the larger political community through its programs, the *Zhenotdel* tended to heighten the consciousness of women as women, to encourage them to take an active part in their own liberation, and to defend the distinctive needs of a female constituency' (Lapidus, 1977: 123).

Throughout the 1920s, the resolutions at the Party Congresses drew the attention on the danger of the rise of feminist tendencies in the *Zhenotdel*. They expressed the fear that separate organizations for improving women's way of life could lead to the isolation and disengagement of female constituency from the common class struggle (cited in Lapidus, 1977: 123). From the outset, feminism had been treated as a bourgeois matter and most party members had been suspicious of separate women's organizations. A special focus on women's needs and problems (or, a more or less 'feminist' viewpoint on women's liberation) was not welcomed by the party leaders because of the official claim of equality (no-class); the potential that gender would carry to mobilize and polarize the whole proletariat on the grounds of sex (gender versus class); the traditional viewpoint and attitudes.

The liquidation of *Zhenotdel* in 1930 showed that the crucial issues for women were abandoned and the women's liberation was narrowly treated only as labor-force participation (Goldman, 1996: 47). During Stalin time, the official discourse was like that the women's question was resolved, liberation of women was fully achieved and

⁴ *Kommunistka* was the official journal of the *Zhenotdel*; *Rabotnitsa* had been a prewar journal for women workers but then started to be rerun by the *Zhenotdel*'s leaders (Lapidus, 1977: 120).

an active ‘new woman’ was created. In the coming decades, the dominant argument was that the revolution had guaranteed emancipation and equality for all (Buckley, 1989: 108-112).

2.3. New Republican Women

Primarily, Atatürk understood that the only way to modernize Turkish society was to deconstruct the religious law and order, including rules, customs and arrangements. He aimed at a nationalist revolution based on secularism (Abadan-Unat, 1991: 178). Put differently, the Republican revolution aimed to establish a civilized society on the grounds of secularism and nationalism as the cultural basis of the new society. This understanding designed a secular image and role for women (Özman, 2010: 448). In this setting, the family life occupied a central place. Atatürk believed that ‘a more egalitarian and harmonious family life’ was the primary way to emancipate women and to assure a civilized nation (Abadan-Unat, 1991: 179).

Due to the Islamist past, the women’s emancipation primarily focused on public visibility and civil rights of women. The institution of family was taken as the first place to establish equality between sexes. To this end, a secular legal system, which would emancipate women from repressive norms of Islamic law and tradition, was immediately established. In 1926, religious law was abolished and a slightly modified version of Swiss Civil Code was adopted. The new Civil Code abolished polygamy; recognized women as equals of men in witnessing at the court, in inheritance and property rights. Women were granted the right to choose their spouses, to initiate divorce, to demand child custody. A minimum age for marriage was identified for both sexes to prevent child marriages (Arat, 1994: 63).

Due to the positivist origins of the Republican understanding, emancipation of all individuals, particularly women, was conditioned on education. Education was perceived as the most powerful tool and strategy to create ideal citizens (Abadan-Unat, 1991: 183). Its transformative capacity to replace traditional mindset with a modern and secular one was stressed on (Arat, 1994: 61). Access to employment

skills and opportunities was also linked to modern education and training (Abadan-Unat, 1991: 183). Free and desegregated public education regardless of sex was instituted; primary school education became mandatory for both boys and girls in 1923. By 1932, the female enrollment in secondary education achieved six-fold increase compared to the number by 1923 (cited in Kabasakal-Arat, 2003: 57-8). The Republican reforms promoted women to attend universities and involve in professional life. In addition to teaching at girls' schools, young Republican women started to engage in professional careers in the fields of medicine, law, engineering, social sciences, natural sciences, etc. In 1929, 26% of all girls aged between 7 to 11 [compared to 51% of boys] enrolled in primary school nation-wide. Women constituted 10% of university graduates by 1938 (White, 2003: 150).

Unfortunately, the traditional norms and patterns could still be traced in the new legal framework. Despite the legal principle of equality between sexes, the new Civil Code was far from reflecting non-traditional values. In the new code, male domination was preserved. There was no absolute equality; man was still defined as the head of family and household, and as main breadwinner. The husband had the right to choose domicile of his family and the right of wife to work outside house was conditioned on husband's consent (Abadan-Unat, 1991: 188). Traditional division of labor was reinforced as well: the wife was given the role of home making and her economic independence was reduced to contribution to family budget (Arat, 1994: 64). According to Sirman (1989), the equivalence of Ottoman *mahrem* [secret, secluded] was created in the modern form called 'private' and men no more as patriarchs but as heads continued to lead the private (p.12).

The traditional norms can also be found in the unequal treatment for men and women in the Penal and Labor Codes. In the Penal Code, the regulation of adultery and abortion did not reflect equality and equal treatment. Adultery was regarded as a threat to public morality and a ground for divorce. Both the definition of and penalty for adultery showed different treatment for men and women at the expense of the latter. Abortion was banned; prosecution was issued for those who help women in access to abortion. In the name of protecting women and their reproductive

functions, the Labor Code restricted women's employment in dangerous and poisonous occupations (Arat, 1994: 66).

From the very onset, the women's question primarily revolved around the debate on morality in the Ottoman-Turkish context. Since the encounter of the Ottoman Empire with Western modernization in the 19th century, the intellectual debates focused on the compatibility of Islam with modernity. In these debates, the woman issue as a symbol occupied a central place (Coşar, 2007: 115; see Abadan-Unat, 1991: 180; Sirman, 1989: 3-9).⁵ In the Ottoman Empire, religious morality was preserved through a public sphere, which was segregated and closed to the women. So, women's public visibility constituted a radical break with the Ottoman past but the question of morality still dominated the debate on women's equality in the Republic.

While a segregated Muslim society underwent secularization and desegregation with a series of institutional reforms, Kemalist women emphasized their professional identities rather than their individuality and sexuality and viewed themselves as prestigious representatives of the government. Their ideological and institutional affiliations with the new Republic helped them to present a sexually modest and respectable picture that would not threaten the patriarchal morality. Thus, however modernist an ideology it was, Kemalism could not alter the traditional norms of morality that guaranteed a biologically defined and socially constraining femininity for women. The notion of female modesty –that is, the traditional values of virginity before marriage, fidelity of the wife, and a particular public comportment and dress- was carried over with an even heavier emotional load to the new generations of Kemalist women and became the basic theme of the 'new morality' for the Kemalist elite (Durakbaşı, 1997: 148).

'Republican women's activism and autonomy, however, were circumscribed by two things: conservative morality and the requirements to remain true to the state's modernizing project and state interests' (White, 2003: 153). Since its early days, the reformers were worried about the adverse effects of Westernization/modernization on women and society such as moral decline. Despite all reforms to encourage women's public visibility, at the same time, it was apprehended to lead to a rise in individualism and decline in their feelings toward family and motherhood (White, 2003: 147). To the end of preserving morality in a desegregated public sphere, the

⁵ For a wider discussion about the parameters of the woman's question throughout the 19th century, please see Kandiyoti (1991).

traditional notion of femininity was revisited in accordance to modernization and nation-building process. Put it differently, liberation of women from religious tradition was coupled with the reproduction of patriarchy in accordance to new national identity and values (cited in Coşar, 2007: 117). In doing so, a normative connection between morality and ‘women’ was established, thereby imposing a notion of appropriate female identity for all women, holding them for the sake of society and considerably shaping the debate on women’s rights so far in the Turkish society.

The ideal Republican woman was a “citizen woman”, urban and urbane, socially progressive, but also uncomplaining and dutiful at home. Modernity, as defined by the Turkish state, included marriage and children as national duty for women. Marriage was to be companionate, rather than contractual and segregated, and children were to be raised “scientifically” by mothers educated in the latest childrearing and household techniques from the West (White, 2003: 146).

In principle, equality between men and women was presented as part of national identity. Both men and women were defined as equal citizens, who were to share same national values, ideals and responsibilities to the end of establishing a civilized nation (Durakbaşa, 1997: 141-2). Women were identified as patriotic citizens, who had a mission of ‘educating the nation’ in addition to their traditional roles (Sirman, 1989: 9).

The “new woman” of the Kemalist era became an explicit symbol of the break with the past, a symbolism which Mustafa Kemal himself did much to promote. He did so personally through the inclusion of Latife Hanım, his wife, in his public tours, through his relations with his adoptive daughters, one of whom, Afet İnan, became a public figure in her own right, and through his broader endorsement of women’s visibility, attested to by photographs of the period ranging from ballroom dancing to official ceremonies. This has had a decisive influence on the socialization of a whole generation of women who internalized the Kemalist message and forged new identities as professionals as well as patriots (Kandiyoti, 1991: 41).

Despite egalitarian statements and policies, motherhood as primary function of women and a division of labor based on being mothering constituted a prominent place in the Republican discourse (Arat, 1994: 60-1). The new woman was envisioned as a professional and social one alongside with her traditional role as

mother. An ideal Republican woman was to be both a modern one, visible in public life and a traditional one performing domestic roles and duties (good mother and wife) at home. Women's domestic duties gained a new form too. As a requirement of being modern, women were expected to cultivate with modern science and technology and to reflect modern knowledge and skills while performing domestic duties such as housework, homemaking, hygiene, cooking, child bearing, etc. (Durakbaşı, 1997: 141-4).

The new Turkish woman would continue to have children and to be a wife as a duty to her nation. The new woman was a thrifty, enlightened, professionally trained housewife who, cognizant of the needs of the Republic only consumed goods produced in Turkey and experienced heterosexual friendship only with her husband (cited in Sirman, 1989: 12).

Women were also specifically articulated in nation-building process due to their reproductive function. They were identified as mothers of Turkish nation and assigned the role of raising loyal children. Equipping women with rights and skills to access education and employment, they were to serve to the national development as enlightened mothers and wives (Arat, 1994: 60-1). The metaphor of nation's mother extended the realm of motherhood from private to public sphere, justifying women's visibility in public sphere as well (Özman, 2010: 449).

2.4. Turkish Women's Union

The Republican nationalism denied any conflict of interest based on ethnicity, religion and class. All citizens were expected to unite around national goals and values, and to give up other demands for the sake of national development. Gender as a reference point for special groups interest and/or conflict of interest was given no place in nation building project either. In this setting, the legal and educational reforms were to contribute to the emancipation of women and to enable them to acquire modern techniques and skills to become better mothers and wives, and to have professional careers. All would stimulate national development in the end. However, the development of female consciousness and identity was neither aimed nor allowed. So, tradition was reconstructed within a new nationalist context (Arat,

1994: 59), thereby restricting to and conditioning the women's equality on national development.

As White (2003) marks, 'state feminism, the state-led promotion of women's equality in the public sphere, monopolized women's activism and shaped it as a tool of the state's modernizing project' (p.155). The experience of women to organize under the roof of women's party and women's union revealed the limits of the revolution in terms of its openness to an autonomous women's activism and its limitations to the establishment of *de facto* equality.

In the mid-1920s, women attempted to establish a political party in 1923 to acquire political rights. However, the political authority did not authorize the establishment of Women's Republican Party on the grounds of being divisive and untimely. The political authority advised women who involved in political initiative to establish a union (Kandiyoti, 1991: 41).

Accordingly, the Women's Union was established in 1924 (Yaraman, 2001: 152; Toska, 1998: 84). The mission remained the same; the Republican women founded the Union to acquire political rights and to achieve full equality with men. Nezihe Muhittin, its chair, argued that the exclusion of women from politics could not be acceptable while women were regarded as equal citizens in paying tax and in getting involved in nation-building process (Yaraman, 2001: 154). The main goal of the Union was defined as to improve the intellectual and social conditions of Republican women and to modernize them. To this end, the Union aimed to organize seminars and prepare publications so as to educate young women and girls as appropriate mothers; to carry out charity activities for widows, orphans, the poor and the elderly; to encourage women to join in working life; to involve in education and morality of new generation (Baykan and Ötüş-Baskett, 1999: 149).

Eventually, political rights were endowed on women in 1930 and 1934; respectively, they were given the right to vote and to get elected to a political office in local elections and full suffrage (White, 2003: 151). Upon that, the Union was assumed to

complete its mission in public opinion. After the International Women's Union Congress held in Istanbul in 1935, the Union dissolved itself. As women's equality with men was maintained in all areas, the *raison d'être* for a sex-segregated organization disappeared (Bozkır, 2000: 25).

In the national elections held in 1935, eighteen women were elected to the Turkey Grand National Assembly (TGNA). This number, however, started to fall down especially after the transition to multi-party politics (Kandiyoti, 1991: 41). It should not be wrong to link the perception of women in politics as a masculine sphere and the low representation of politics dated back to the Republican period. Until the 2007 general elections, the ratio of female MPs could not exceed 5% of the constituency of the national assembly. Arat (1998) argues that female MPs did not perceive the women's problems in terms of equality and liberty for women. During the Republican period, female MPs primarily conceived themselves as the representatives of nation than those of women. This reveals the internalization of nationalist project by female MPs.

2.5. Gender Climate in Republican and Bolshevik Times

In this chapter, my main argument is that the state discourse is a mixture of traditional norms and revolutionary premises from the very onset in Republican and Bolshevik revolutions. I examine how the Republican and Bolshevik understanding of women's emancipation and equality is shaped around both the pre-revolutionary heritage and the radical premises based on Marxism, and secularism and nationalism. In both cases, the state as a vanguard led the progressive reforms towards women's emancipation and equality. The underlying gender order was undoubtedly contoured in new gender climate but could not be entirely transformed. In the Republican and Bolshevik times, the revolutions considerably preserved patriarchal norms and patterns in albeit new form.

As a result of the modernist understanding of the Bolshevik leaders, the women's liberation was bounded to the socialist transformation. They assumed the women to

get liberated by breaking the social order organized around capitalist mode of production, reconstituting the legal system and institutional structures along communist lines, and endowing women with formal equality before the law. Due to their sole focus on capitalist order, they could not feature the pre-revolutionary traditional patterns and values as obstacles before the women's liberation. They could not distinguish the cultural sources of subordination and oppression. Therefore, the traditional norms and patterns continued to shape all revolutionary attempts and to survive in new forms.

Moreover, the practical needs and socio-economic devastation forced the new Soviet regime to depend on family relations and motherhood against the social distrust and disobedience. Because of the lack of sufficient resources, the new regime could not necessarily keep up with its promises regarding the opening up of childcare, nursery, maternity centers, etc. While the Soviet women gained civil rights, great educational and occupational attainments, and relative political presence, the traditional values and patterns had continued to shape their organization, mobilization, recruitment and experience.

The continuum of tradition and modernity embodied itself in the dilemma between production and reproduction throughout the entire Soviet period. Put differently, in my understanding, this dilemma signifies the counter between gender order and gender climate. This is the main issue dissolved and inherited by the post-Soviet state and women. This dilemma influences both the critique of Soviet emancipation of women in the early days of dissolution and post-Soviet state discourse on gender equality, paving the ground to neo-traditional orientation in the recent decade.

The Republican revolution aimed at establishing a modern society on the grounds of secularism and nationalism. For the Republican cadre, the women's inequality was related to Islamic law and order. Then, the women's liberation was conditioned on replacing the Islamist social and legal order. Through establishing new laws and institutions along secularism and guaranteeing the equality before law, the Republican leaders assumed that the women would get liberated. As far as they

focused on the inequalities derived from Islam in defining the term of liberation, they could not feature the patriarchal system as an obstacle before the women's liberation. Therefore, traditional norms and patterns were preserved and continued to survive albeit in different forms in the newly established Turkey. As the women's liberation was linked to modernization and nation-building project on the grounds of secularism and nationalism, autonomous organization of women's interests and generation of feminist consciousness were taken as a threat at the expense of common good and not allowed. Besides, the revolution could not disseminate itself proportionally in rural and urban areas. The women from middle and upper class families mostly benefitted and enjoyed the legal and educational reforms than their counterparts from lower families and rural areas.

In Turkish case, the debate on women's equality revolved around social morality, which was primarily related to public visibility of women. Preserving morality in a secular setting constituted the main controversy and, in my understanding again, signified the encounter between gender order and gender climate. This also revealed the restrictions imposed over gender climate by gender order. The debate of emancipated but unliberated women might confirm this. This debate has shaped both the feminist critique of Republican reforms especially in the 1980s and the neo-conservative parameters of recent state discourse.

To sum up, both revolutions revealed that the 'woman' would constitute a social category crucial to hegemony constitution for newly established regimes. For the Russian case, as Ashwin (2000) argues, what had been done in the name of women by Bolshevik revolution was significantly motivated with the aim of breaking the old social relations, and consolidating a new social structure and a new set of social relations. The transformation through the women's roles and duties would symbolize the victory of the new regime and guarantee its legitimacy (p.1). For the Turkish case, Tekeli (1981) argues that women in the Ottoman rules constituted the social category deeply oppressed and subordinated in the religious order. The women's rights discourse served to a strategic goal, that is the struggle against the religious hegemony (pp. 296-297). I agree on the emphasis put by both Ashwin and Tekeli on

the role of gender and gender relations in hegemony constitution. However, the understanding that ‘women’ were instrumentalized for window-dressing and/or cultural reproduction seems to me reductionist and descriptive. This does not allow us to evaluate the role of gender rather than women in hegemony constitution.



CHAPTER 3

STATE OF THE ART IN THE LATE AND POST-SOVIET RUSSIA

In this chapter, I focus on how the women's empowerment through the state has been changing in the last days of the Soviet Russia and in the post-Soviet Russia under the conditions of socio-economic crisis and of transition to neo-liberalism. My main argument is that neo-traditionalism has been unexpectedly on the rise in Russia since the patriarchal society oscillating between modernity and tradition has come across neo-liberal conditions.

This chapter starts with the late Brezhnev period and ranges to the present because the Soviet system, both socially and economically, entered in a critical period during the 1970s. Then, I overview gender discourse and policies followed for 'the women's empowerment' during *glasnost* and *perestroika*. I put my focus on the shift in the notions of femininity and masculinity, which constitute the basis of prevailing gender climate. In the rest of the chapter, I examine the situation of women in labor force, family, and politics. Particularly, I address on legal changes and social policies to illustrate if they could promote gender equality and prevent gender discrimination.

3.1. Late Brezhnev Era

After the silence lasting for four decades, Leonid Brezhnev (1964-1982) was the first Soviet leader to officially declare that the woman's question wasn't solved in the Soviet Union although the woman's emancipation had been achieved to a certain extent under socialism. This declaration reopened a new, serious and wide discussion on the woman's question although it was still restricted to economic growth, labor supply and population issues. The economic growth rates achieved during the Stalin years were falling; thereby, rational use of labor supply, almost half of which was female labor, turned into an urgent necessity. When the economic stagnation coupled

with falling fertility rates, the contradiction between full-time paid employment and family roles (double burden and over-exploitation) as well as the poor working conditions of women (low wages, low skilled jobs, night shifts, hazardous jobs, etc.) had started to be discussed by economists, sociologists, demographers, journalists, etc. (Buckley, 1989: 161-167).

In the late-1970s, over-burdening and over-mobilization of women was appropriated as a sound ground to criticize the Soviet gender policies. A need of 'rehabilitation' in the definitions of femininity and masculinity started to be mentioned by political leaders. In the media, the debates evolved around the argument that the Soviet policies destroyed the natural balance between men and women, which led to elimination of "the vital element in its citizens' personalities. In order to redress this imbalance, new discourses and rhetoric set out to remind women and men their gendered identities and their allegiance to one of two fundamentally different, indeed opposite sexes" (Kay, 2000: 28).

In the early 1980s, the alarming trends in certain social ills, such as alcoholism, high rates of divorce, low rates of marriage and falling birthrates, had started to surface in the Soviet society. The double-burden and over-exploitation of women was established as destroying sexual division of labor, and leading to disagreement between couples, and then, divorce. Consistently, these alarming trends were considered through the damaging impact of female full-time paid employment over family life and relations, which led to 'the disenchantment with the institution of the family itself' (Lapidus, 1993: 150). Therefore, the lively debate of the 1960s and 1970s over female roles was replaced by a new debate on low fertility rates in the early 1980s; the woman's question came to be explicitly and directly linked to the reproduction of future generations. The women were expected to contribute to their society as mothers. In 1981, the need for 'wider and more effective measures' to ameliorate the female double burden was officially declared in the 25th Party Congress (Buckley, 1989: 180-181). However, especially in the Europeanized urban areas, the tendency for marriage did not go up in correspondence to the improving tendencies in female employment, education, qualifications, training, aspirations and

orientations (Lapidus, 1993: 147). 'The nation's leaders were less than pleased by the prospect of future numerical dominance by the backward and less ideologically reliable Central Asian and Transcaucasian people.' Rising ethnic imbalance became a vital threat for leaders against national security and socio-economic development (Kay, 2002: 53).

To deal with this disenchantment, Brezhnev conducted policies so as to 'strengthen the family' (Bridger, 1992: 178). His government started a pro-natalist campaign to convince women to place the family at the center of their lives and introduced an educational policy to ensure the adoption of more traditional gender roles by the next generations (cited in Marsh, 1998: 90). To back up the shift in discourse with policies, some modifications were made in curriculum and employment law. In 1974, a new family allowance program started; maternity leave benefits were extended to female collective farm workers, sick leave for parents of young children was liberalized, and paid maternity leave was expanded to a full year (Lapidus, 1993: 152-153) as to support women to give more births, to spend more time at home and to strengthen the family bonds. In 1981, maternity leave was extended again. In 1984, a new course named 'The Ethics and Psychology of Family Life' was introduced in the school curriculum, which aimed at teaching the boys and girls the natural differences, thereby producing a gender differentiated order consisting of 'real men' and 'real women', which was defined as the main basis of stable families (Bridger, 1992: 178).

On the other hand, Brezhnev did not give up encouraging the women's participation to labor force. Some supportive measures such as increasing minimum wages, improving and increasing kindergartens, extending part-time job possibilities for women, moderating the pension system, etc. were adopted (Lapidus, 1993: 152). The working conditions of women were tried to be improved by reducing working hours, extending lunch breaks, providing care and food services, improving healthcare, etc. (Vinokurova, 2007: 74). Nonetheless, the Soviet sociological approach to the inequalities in the working life was never questioned. This approach explained low skills and low wages of the women workers through their double-shift. The double-

shift meant that time the women spent at home with children and for domestic duties doubled the men's; therefore, they had less energy and time than men to be high-skilled workers. Additionally, it were women, who would leave, even temporarily, the work for childcare and after childbirth; they would prefer a work place closer to home and offering better childcare facilities than one corresponding to their education and skills. Therefore, the women would inescapably lag behind the men on the basis of skill, wage and grading (Bridger et al., 1996: 18-19). Unfortunately, this way of explanation predominated the state concerns over the double burden and over exploitation of women workers until the mid-1980s.

Brezhnev's concern to disburden the women was mainly derived from the aim of finding out a way to ease both productivity and fertility rather than set up the conditions for 'female self-determination'. Neither these supportive measures nor the arguments made during the Brezhnev period were more radical than those introduced by the Bolshevik Revolution (Buckley, 1989: 188-189).

3.2. Legacy of *Perestroika* and *Glasnost*

Although Brezhnev had initiated opening a debate on the woman's question, it was Mikhail Gorbachev to accept the continuing existence of woman's question. His accession to the Secretariat of the Communist Party of Soviet Union (CPSU) in 1985 opened a new phase in the woman's question in the Soviet Union. The *perestroika* (1985-1991) policies had created opportunities to run a new debate on the women's silenced problems after long decades.

Perestroika means the restructuring or reconstruction of the Soviet system on political, economic and social grounds (Buckley, 1992a: 4). Gorbachev first mentioned *perestroika* at the 27th Congress of the CPSU and pointed out the need for accelerating economic development and for democratization. The command-administrative system entered a deadlock and paved the way to low growth rates, supply shortage, inefficient ministries, corruption, etc. *Perestroika*, described as a 'revolutionary process' by Gorbachev, was expected to establish a more efficient

economy and less bureaucratic system, thereby overcoming the deadlock. In short time, however, it was realized that a 'revolutionary progress' in economy to succeed would have to coincide with changes in the society. According to Gorbachev, it was necessary to change the way of thinking of citizens, to erase their fear and hesitations, and to encourage them to take responsibility and initiative in work places and in the society. Then, he introduced *glasnost* (opening) as a 'necessary means to the end of *perestroika*' (Buckley, 1993: 18). *Glasnost* and *demokratizatsiia* (democratization) stimulated 'rethinking' the social, economic, and political issues; politicized the people; and triggered critique of the whole Soviet system. Due to legitimate limits and sensitivity of political issues, social issues such as drug addiction, crime, abortion, etc. received more attention during *glasnost* (Buckley, 1993: 3).

One prominent issue of *perestroika* was the women. In 1987, Gorbachev stated that one element of *perestroika* entailed debating how woman's truly female destiny could be fully returned to her since socialist development had not left her sufficient time for housework, childrearing and family life (Buckley, 1989: 191-196). In the words of Gorbachev (1987: 117):

But during our difficult and heroic history, we failed to pay attention to women's specific rights and needs arising from their role as mother and homemaker, and their indispensable educational function as regards children. Engaged in scientific research, working on construction sites, in industry and the service sector, and involved in creative activities, women no longer have enough time to perform their everyday duties at home – housework, raising children and creation of a good family atmosphere. We have discovered that many of our problems –in children's and young people's behavior, in our morals, culture and even industry– are partially caused by the weakening of family ties and a slack to family responsibilities.

What Gorbachev inherited from Brezhnev was 'a nation of exhausted women' and the reassurance of traditional patterns and stereotypes in media and public opinion. Resolution to this crisis shaped around the critique of existing notions of femininity and masculinity and the idea of reassessing women's roles and identities along more traditional lines (Kay, 2002: 54). The way that the crisis was perceived and the proposed solution generated a reformulation in women's roles. First, the Soviet

system had an economic crisis and unemployment rate was quite high. To manage this rate, the women were preferred to leave the workforce to the advantage of men. Second, the social ills of the Soviet society such as drug addiction, alcoholism, juvenile delinquency, abandoned children, sexual promiscuity, anarchic youth, etc. were attributed to the broken family and the women's declining role in it by the reformers. The family as the basic social unit was thought to be in crisis, and thus, could not perform its main social function of raising physically and mentally healthy children. Not unexpectedly, what was proposed was to pull the women out of the workforce and let them to spend more time with their children so as to struggle with these social ills (Bridger et al., 1996: 23-4; Waters, 1992: 128).

Exploring the poor working conditions of and discrimination against the women workers at the workplace in the media encouraged the change in the notion of femininity (Bridger et al., 1996: 24). Through the whole Soviet period, the Labor Code in force was violated and the women could not be prevented from wage disparity, unequal grading and promotions, night shifts, employment in dangerous jobs, predomination in low-paid sectors, etc. Additionally, the state could not provide adequate and sufficient childcare and health care facilities. Once silence was broken in the context of democratization, these issues surfaced in the media. However, all these factors, when matched with patriarchal patterns and stereotypes, were used to mount a traditional argument like sending the women back at home and to their natural mission. Soviet mass media started to make propaganda for early marriage, by portraying how married woman would spend their life in a peaceful and happy way while single women would be so miserable and lonely because of their selfishness (Bridger, 1992: 194).⁶

Gorbachev's call to allow women to return to their natural mission may seem contradictory at short glance. But I think it perfectly reflected how the Soviet state tended to reformulate its approach to woman's question on the grounds of changing

⁶ For how ideal woman and womanhood was portrayed in the Soviet mass media during the time of *perestroika*, see O. Voronina (1994), "Virgin Mary or Mary Magdalene? The Construction and Reconstruction of Sex during the Perestroika Period". In A. Posadskaya & others at the MCGS (eds.), *Women in Russia. A New Era in Russian Feminism*. Moscow: Verso. pp.135-145.

economic, political and demographic interests and how new reformulation pictured its oscillation between traditionalism and modernity. The dilemma between production and reproduction has always been a concern for the Soviet state but such a traditional maneuver from modernization had never been used so explicitly before *perestroika*. *Perestroika* indicated a tighter situation of being compressed between the commitment to the socialist ideology and the need for future rearrangements (Bridger et al., 1996: 15), which would require to move the needle to reach tradition. While encouraging motherhood by increasing opportunities for part-time work, Gorbachev had also advocated the higher visibility in political life and their promotion to senior posts. Gorbachev appointed Aleksandra Biryukova to the Party Secretariat, and then, the women's councils (*zhensovery*) were revived (Lapidus, 1993: 153; Buckley, 1989: 191-196). The notion of 'provision of choice' letting women to decide on their own to either stay at home or work was suggested to resolve this dilemma under the conditions of deepening socio-economic crisis. 'Provision of choice' provided the Communist Party in the 1980s, which helped the party accommodate the Marxist heritage as well as support women's withdrawal from the work force (Buckley, 1989: 191-196).

During *perestroika*, only two documents regarding women were issued: USSR Supreme Soviet Resolution, 10 April 1990, 'On urgent measures to improve the position of women and to safeguard maternity and childhood' and USSR Council of Ministers, 2 August 1990, 'On supplementary measures guaranteeing social protection of families to a regulated market economy' (Posadskaya, 1993: 165-167). State Program for Improving the Position of Women and Childhood (1990) remained as a draft (Posadskaya, 1994: 177). In 1989, political quotas and in 1990 reserved seats were abolished.

The most important contribution of *perestroika* and *glasnost* to the woman's question was to accept the continuation of discrimination against the women. During Brezhnev time, mechanization and technological development were supposed to resolve the contradiction, and the inequality was explained through the double shift of women (Lapidus 1993: 151). Although the way to explain the women's problems

through the double shift was not completely given up, the existence of discrimination was for the time recognized in the Soviet Union (Bridger et al., 1996: 19). Additionally, it opened the discussion on previously taboo subjects such as sex education, contraception, poor working conditions of women, etc. (Bridger, 1992: 184).

But *perestroika* did not live up to expectations to improve the women's life conditions; Gorbachev's policies did not substantially differ from those of the late 1970s. The conditions of greater freedom under Gorbachev, however, did not give rise to a move in policy and debate about gender roles in a feminist direction. Some feminist ideas surfaced but more conservative opinions about women's place in the society continued to prevail. *Glasnost* allowed the expression of a range of views, including highly traditional ones. *Glasnost* had not undermined some of the central claims of Soviet ideology, even if implicitly challenged it. Traditional lines on the need to strengthen the family co-existed alongside fresh pressures for discussion of women's problems. Traditional arguments about strengthening the family ignored issues of female self-determination and equality of the sexes (Buckley, 1989: 191-6). To sum up, even during the time of *perestroika*, the woman's question had been deeply influenced by the patriarchal system existing before and after the Bolshevik revolution (Posadskaya, 1993: 178). 'The divisions related to gender which have surfaced in Russia since the mid-1980s pre-date by far the crisis of the *perestroika* and post-*perestroika* periods, and are rooted in long-standing patriarchal Russian and Soviet attitudes towards women' (cited in Marsh 1998: 89-90).

3.3. Transition to Market Economy

With the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991, a completely new period for the sake of woman's question started up. The historical dilemma between the ideological commitment to woman's equality, and its modification and partial implementation in accordance with the changing demands of the Soviet state came to an end. Indeed, this dilemma, coupled with the traditional patterns and stereotypes regarding the gender relations, led to fluctuations and inconsistencies in state discourse and

policies throughout the whole Soviet period (Kay, 2002: 52). Nonetheless, ideological commitment had never been left and had always constituted a need for the Soviet state to justify its actions regarding women's equality. Despite his quite traditional boom, even Gorbachev had always felt the oppression of Soviet ideology on woman's equality and tried to compensate it with the provision of 'choice' to work or not to work, and with the support for increasing women's political involvement. However, the Yeltsin period represented a complete rupture with the entrapped state in this dilemma and relieved the new Russian state to follow neo-liberal policies more freely.

Transition led to a dramatic change in the ideological and institutional roots of the Soviet gender order. Its two milestones were completely reformulated in accordance with new political, economic and demographic conditions. First, work was no more obliged on all citizens and regulated as an option, especially for women (Ashwin, 2006: 34; 2000: 2).⁷ Second, motherhood was redefined as a private matter rather than a duty to the state, which shifted all responsibility from the state to individual and imposed over men a traditional responsibility for household. Provision of childcare services, which had been formulated to support women's participation in paid employment, ceased to be a major concern and duty of the state (Issoupova, 2000: 39).

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the post-Soviet state had started to implement a neo-liberal approach to the market. Macro-economic stabilization policies, including restrictive monetary and fiscal measures, tax-based income policies and privatization, highly restricted the financial autonomy of the ex-Soviet state, reduced real wages, incomes and enterprise profits (Teplova, 2007: 290).

In the 1990s, the Russian economy was suffering from growing inflation, deficits of consumer goods, a massive foreign currency debt, lack of investment and a fiscal crisis. The crisis affected daily life in more immediate ways than pluralism and democratization of the 1980s and therefore had an impact on women who were more closely involved in the daily struggle for

⁷ For more about monopolizing the role of patriarch by the Soviet state, the gendered relations the state set up with its female and male citizens, and its impact over family relations in a period of rapid change, please see the edited work by Ashwin (2000).

existence than men. As sense of crisis has prevailed among Russian women expressed in such feelings as sharp reduction in quality of life, threat of unemployment, rising criminality, housing problems, substitution of paid medical care and education for formerly free services and fear of future for their families (Marsh, 1998: 88-9).

Dissolution ended the multi-ethnic structure of the Soviet Union and nationalism got on rise. In the political sphere, an identity crisis arose; a need to identify Russia as a nation with national self-esteem, pride and confidence surfaced among the whole Russian people. This led to a search for historical origins of national identity (Bykova, 2004) and to the rediscovery of pre-revolutionary Slavophil traditions and Russian Orthodoxy, which would reinforce traditional stereotypes and assumptions regarding gender relations.

Coupled with nationalist revival, demographic situation led to the reformulation of woman's identity and roles around the new Russian state's concern for population growth (Marsh, 1998: 92). Reformulation on the grounds of ethnic-nationalist concern had started since the early 1980s when fertility rate tended to decrease among ethnic Russians residing in urban areas in contrast to non-ethnic Russian Muslim population in rural areas. On media, single mothers were accused of being selfish and immoral while motherhood was appreciated as a wise way of life (Bridger, 1994: 195).

Russia's problem of population occupied a substantive place in Yeltsin's discourse and policies towards women. In the 1990s, there emerged a severe population problem; for the first time, an unbalance between fertility rate and mortality rate occurred. In 1992, 'a national population decrease' was officially recorded (Marsh, 1998: 92). Nonetheless, the dissolution stimulated the reformulation of a more ethnic-oriented nationalist discourse while 'women as mothers symbol' referred to state socialism in the Soviet times. Concordantly, in contrast to the way of perception of family by Engels and Bebel, works of whom inspired the Bolshevik revolutionaries to establish a new set of norms and relations for family relations, family was ascribed a sense as 'a crucial element in the claim to national identity and self-development' (Marsh, 1998: 94). To sum up, a 'patriarchal nationalist discourse'

developed during Yeltsin's period (Marsh, 1998: 96), which shattered the underpinnings of the Soviet gender order and which could be clearly observed in policies regarding women's employment, motherhood, family relations, and their political participation and organization.

With the Vladimir Putin's regime, the Orthodox Church has become a major ally of the state. The alliance is grounded on a common nationalistic ideology dedicated to restore Russia's national power and pride.⁸ Vladimir Putin's regime appealed to the Orthodox Church to establish national unity and gain legitimacy (Cannady & Kubicek, 2014; see Evans, 2008: 904-5). He combined a sense of patriotism and traditional moral values, and promoted the Orthodox values, depicted as national religion, to contribute to spiritual and moral restoration of the country (Anderson, 2007: 195, 188).⁹ In one of his speeches, President Putin mentioned about the involvement of the Orthodox Church in resolving demographic crisis and called it 'to revive family values and change people's attitudes towards the family'. In this setting, interventions in reproduction and/or reproductive health are to serve the end of reviving tradition and family or *vice versa* (Nechemias, 2009: 24).

3.4. Post-Soviet Notions of Femininity and Masculinity

Since the early 1990s, the Soviet gender climate has been criticized of destroying natural harmony between men and women (as complementary to each other). 'Returning women to home' has come to be strongly advocated and promoted in the society by both Russian liberals and nationalist circles (Metcalf & Afanassieva, 2005: 5).

Media has been devoted to the issue of reestablishing correct gender identities in post-Soviet women and men and returning to a natural balance of characteristics, behavior and division of roles along gender lines. The Soviet experience of emancipation is characterized as unequivocally negative for women, their families and society in general. Soviet attempts to institute

⁸ http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/24/world/europe/24church.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

⁹ <http://www.lifesitenews.com/news/media-howl-as-russia-protects-its-children-from-gay-propaganda/>

gender equality in the public sphere as frequently described as damned or as a pervasion, a term that points directly to the new authority in defining issues of gender: biology or nature (Kay, 2002: 58-59).

According to anti-communist discourse, Soviet socialism broke the proper, natural relations between men and women. Normalization of Russia should include returning to nature, the revival of natural models of masculinity and femininity and that of traditional attitudes about value of family in which man acts as a breadwinner and a protector while woman as a housewife and mother (Riabova & Riabov, 2002: 3-4).

In contrast to the unified ‘mother and worker’ of the Soviet period, there are now a myriad of masculine and feminine types, perhaps even a ‘discursive explosion’ around gender identity ... Despite the plurality, however, there remains an underlying conviction, that is, an ideal woman and ideal man whose essential differences are fixed and normatively correct (Pilkington, 1996: 16).¹⁰

In this debate, the Soviet emancipation of women came to acquire an unfavorable meaning as of destroying femininity. The image of Soviet woman was criticized as being masculine. Women did not want to be sexless workers with short haircuts, in pants and with a masculine body language. Private life, in general, and kitchen, in particular, appeared as a sphere of reaction to the old regime as well as a way of escape from ‘negative emancipation’ (Lissytukina, 1993: 276-8).

It is clear that the gender climate in post-Soviet Russia advocated a strict dichotomy of male and female roles and personality traits and gave overt support to the gender order by encouraging and expressing explicit approval of a traditionalist hierarchy of power both in terms of public and private relations, leadership and decision-making. These positions were strengthened by the implication that they represented a reversal of the gender imbalance allegedly brought about by Soviet policies of equality, the damaging ‘over-emancipation’ of women and the oppressive crushing of masculinity by the overbearing and overtly intrusive state (Kay, 2000: 33)

¹⁰ Various visions on the desirable forms of gender relations emerged in post-Soviet Russia. Still, the identified problem is to create ideal-real man or ideal-real woman rather than to explore difference, diversity and cultural richness. Alternative gender and sexual identities remains extremely limited; homosexuality is still seen as a dangerous sign of individualism and described as an anti-social behavior. For details see L. Attwood (1996), “Young People, sex and sexual identity.” In H. Pilkington (ed.), *Gender, Generation and Identity in Contemporary Russia*, London: Routledge. pp. 95-120.

However, such understandings could allow us to examine the impact of transition to neo-liberalism and of the end of state feminism over gender relations from a reductionist viewpoint of win or lose. Even if hate, anger, denial, etc. reflected in words and behaviours, the pattern of social life still carried the dust of the Soviet past. Despite its totalitarian content, the deep influence of the Soviet gender climate over men and women is hard to deny.

But the educated women of the 1990s are not all alike their illiterate sisters at the turn of the century. Today's situation also differs from earlier periods in that we know that the roles today's women play in society are irreversible: it is impossible to turn back the tide of history. Women have become active members of society; they form part of work collectives; they enjoy public recognition and economic independence – all this has become a means of self-expression and self-fulfillment for the majority of women. Therefore, attempts to return women to the home and remove them from the economic plane are unrealistic (Khotkina, 1994: 91).

More precisely, what was being experienced in the early years of transition was a widespread confusion about proper roles for men and women. On the one hand, there was a population of women workers being terribly exhausted of double shift. On the other hand, the Soviet legacy, a combination of emancipatory discourse with deeply rooted traditional gender patterns and values, was to survive. It would not sound reasonable to expect the post-Soviet women easily give up the idea of having a work because they had internalized work as moral and natural for long decades. But, at the same time, most women embraced the pre-revolutionary figure of male breadwinner as main provider of the family (Kiblitckaya, 2000a: 64-65). Although increasingly expressing traditional views on gender roles, reaffirming their destiny as mothers and as homemakers, and defining husbands as the breadwinner, many women would still like to have a successful career (cited in Teplova, 2007: 300).

3.5. Female Labor Force Participation

Feminization characterizes labor force in Russia women. Today women still continue to constitute half of the active working population in Russia. From 1992 to 2011, female labor force participation continued to be very high. By 2011, the female percentage employed in the economy constituted approximately 48.5% of all

employed while it was slightly different in 1992 and 2007 (Rosstat, 2012). According to Global Gender Gap Index, female labor force participation is 68% by 2013.

In the early transition period, getting out of economic deadlock on market-oriented terms would require minimization of public sector, reduction in surplus labor, and privatization. The target group of labor cut and cut down on overspending would be women rather than men (Shapiro, 1992) within an environment stimulating traditional assumptions (men as primary breadwinner) as well as pro-natalism. Women constituted the majority of the unemployed (UNDP, 2005: 62). Indeed, the common preference of not only politicians but also male managers and workers was on female unemployment in case of massive unemployment (Ashwin & Bowers, 1997: 30-1). As early as in 1992, women constituted 70% of the unemployed in Russia; women became the first to being fired and to occupy redundancies up to 80% (Bridger et al., 1996: 51). Although economic growth after 1999 increased women's employment from 53.6% to 56%, women continued to consistently dominated the registered unemployed in recent years (60% in 1996, 70% in 1999, and 68% in 2003) (UNDP, 2005: 62).

As the Russian Federation embarked on its independent existence in January 1992, the legacy of twenty years of Soviet pro-natalism was imported lock, stock and barrel into policies concerning women in both the domestic and economic spheres. This heritage has, not surprisingly, placed women in an especially vulnerable position as the cold winds of job insecurity and unemployment have begun to blow. The rationale, first introduced in the Gorbachev era, that easing women out of the workforce would kill the two birds of social disintegration and growing unemployment with one stone, has been eagerly adopted by Russia's new rulers, so vehement in their condemnation of virtually all other spheres of late Soviet policy (Bridger et al., 1996: 39).

Under the conditions of transition from state-command to free market economy, the gender segregation in the Soviet labor force surfaced more and increased women's vulnerability. Once full employment ceased, and public sector, which had been predominated by women during the Soviet time, started to minimize, gendered structure of Soviet labor force turned into main obstacles for women to have equal

access to the new, competitive labor market. Transition to neo-liberalism made women more vulnerable to segregation; due to their long concentration in low-paid feminized sectors, requiring low-skills and low training; their absence in higher management positions; their deprivation of promotion and professional training; their becoming less qualified than men (Bridger et al., 1996: 19, 41, 45).

Unlike the Bolsheviks, the market-revolutionaries of the 1990s did not have a particular agenda with regard to gender relations. Some of them favored a supposedly 'traditional' model in which women would return to the home, but most were not concerned with gender relations, which were now considered a matter for the individual rather than the state. In the absence of a strong state agenda, past norms and dispositions were likely to be crucial in shaping post-Soviet gender relations (Ashwin, 2006b: 32).

The changes in the labor law and family policy were of importance to understand the new underpinnings of the post-Soviet gender climate as well. Since the early 1990s, new legal codes regulating labor market and family life were formulated. In the new regulations, 'the long-standing patriarchal Russian and Soviet attitudes'¹¹ towards women appeared to be reinvented as a supplementary institution to help the state and society ease out the devastating impacts of transition.

By the 1991 Law on 'On the Employment of the Population of the Russian Federation', the new Russian state redefined employment; terminated universally compulsory work and rendered it by choice for all citizens irrespective of age and sex; guaranteed equal opportunity for all to find a work. Particular categories of the population, including single parents and women with pre-school children, were identified as 'social invalids' in need of specific help and protection by the state. To that end, the state followed a way to stick the women through 'female ghettos' and 'quotas for special jobs' to the newly emerging economic system rather than mainstreaming their employment in new market order (Khotkina, 1994: 98-9). The amended version of Labor Code by 1992 enumerated a long list of hazardous jobs, prohibitions (night shift, heavy work, overwork, business trip) and protective measures, especially for pregnant women (Klinova, 1995: 50-1). Similarly, in the draft law on employment published in 1993, discrimination and protection for all

¹¹ I borrowed this phrase from Marsh (1998).

citizens was regulated in a contradictory way. While point 1 of article 11 guaranteed equal rights of employment for all irrespective of sex, age, race and nationality, point 2 of the same article did not include discrimination into 'differences in the sphere of work brought about by the particular demands of a given type of work or by the state's special concern for individuals in need of extra social protection (women, minors, people with disabilities)' (Bridger et al., 1996: 46).

From these legal regulations, it is understandable that guaranteeing women's employment required special protection by the state. However, this was not an easy task to achieve under the conditions of retreat of the state, of end of compulsory employment, and of transition to market economy (in the absence of strong state commitment to woman's equality and during the time of economic crisis) when public opinion was surrounded by a traditional discourse through media and policy-makers. 'All categories of women in practice became victims of the state's concern about women. Working women, because of all their social entitlements (which are actually meant for the family, not for the women themselves), ended up being an unprofitable proposition for enterprises' (Khotkina, 1994: 100).

In 2001, a new Labor Code was enacted and women's employment was regulated in a more liberal way. As same with the previous labor codes, women were considered as 'special' workers requiring special protection but this time the content and level of protection was different. First of all, prohibition of dangerous jobs for women was cancelled; the state made up of a list limiting women's employment areas. Secondly, the prohibition on night shift and overtime came to cover only pregnant women and to exclude women with children under 3. Maternity leave remained the same but the provision protecting pregnant women and mothers in case employers refuse to employ them was invalidated, thereby leaving them much 'vulnerable to discrimination' (Kozina & Zhidkova, 2006: 59-61).

Gender division of labor in the labor market appeared as a characteristic of post-Soviet times. Expansion of 'bringing women back in home' in transition period may not cause massive withdrawal of women from labor market but the new Russian

labor market has experienced ‘a process of re-gendering of jobs’ in the era of economic transition. The Labor Code of 2001 imposes no sanction on the employers if they specify gender in job requirements or advertisements (Kozina & Zhidkova, 2006: 59, 61; see also Posadskaya, 1994: 171). Job advertisements designate men as preferable applicants for prestigious and well-paid jobs while vacancies for women mostly do routine office jobs (Bridger et al. 1996: 80-1). Once the lack of legal guarantees to protect women from discrimination companies with a prevailing gender division of labor on the basis of biological differences in the labor market, women’s concentration in less prestigious and less-paid jobs, particularly similar to domestic work, tends to widen. Physical strength, intelligence and being talented are among other factors sorting out jobs as male or female. Male professions include engineering, mining, loading, management, politics, etc. while female professions are medicine, caring, servicing, cosmetics, etc. (Kozina & Zhidkova, 2006: 61-63).

The majority of women will become more ghettoized than they were in the past, in low-paid undesirable employment while a small minority might be able to take advantage of the changes. Currently [late 1990s] there is a marked tendency for men to take over the better paid occupations and to move into the more prosperous enterprises while women have been left behind or have moved in the opposite direction. Higher pay rates for men is not new but in transition such downgrading of women is likely to be more general and rapid. The vast majority of women want to remain at work even for terrible conditions and lower wages rather than give up. They are in a subordinate position (Ashwin & Bowers, 1997: 33).

‘Gender profile of professions’¹² has also started to change in the transition period. As shown before, the Soviet state forced women to sneak into masculine types of professions where they had never been to before. In the Soviet Union, more than half of women workers were employed in industry but they concentrated in feminized, relatively light, fields of the sector such as manufacturing and service industry; and in these fields, they constituted 80% of low-qualified workers in all fields of industry. Women were the majority of labor force in nonproductive sectors such as health, education, culture, science, and research with a percent of 73% in 1989. According to official statistics of 1989, while the ratio of women leaders all at levels

¹² I borrowed this phrase from Kozina & Zhidkova (2006: 76).

of management was 26%, those in decision-making level was just 7% (Koval, 1995: 21).

In 1994, total share of industry in employment declined respectively from 49% to 42% for women and from 59% to 52% for men. Between 1990 and 1996, light industry predominated by women workers diminished almost by half with a loss of 1.1 million jobs. By 1998, there occurred a 10% point of fall (from 48% to 38%) in female employment in industry, which numerically makes 5.5 million. Between 1990 and 1998, the percentage of women employed in banking, finance and insurance sector fell from 90% to 71%, in communication sector from 71% to 60%, in trade and catering from 80% to 62% while they preserved slightly same percentages in the sectors of education, health care, art and culture, science and transport (Katz, 2001: 216). By 2001, 21% of female employment was in industry; 66.5% in services.¹³

By 2011, the number of women in biological and agricultural sciences, health care (994 of 1536); in education (2018 of 2547); in services (642 of 722); in selling and demonstration (4246 of 5048) while men had an overwhelming majority in natural and engineering sciences (2225 of 3281); mining, construction and repair (2646 of 2955); metal-processing and machinery (3580 of 3895) and transport and communications (709 of 968). The decline of female proportion in traditionally female dominated professions accompanied with an increase in the wages as well. By 1998, average wages in the banking, finance and insurance sector was almost double of average wages in Russia while they had been below average wages in the Soviet Union when women workers had concentrated in these sectors (Kozina & Zhidkova, 2006: 77; see also UNDP, 2005: 62).

Women's low economic status is directly related to widespread employment discrimination. Despite provisions in the Labor Code that prohibit unequal treatment on the basis of sex, women face discrimination in the hiring process, promotion and in remuneration. Women encounter difficulties in obtaining work as employers are often reluctant to hire them, based on the notion that women's family responsibilities will interfere with their labor. By law, women can receive pregnancy, maternity and childcare benefits. In

¹³ <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/russia/employees-industry-female-percent-of-female-employment-wb-data.html>

reality, however, women report numerous violations of their rights in this sphere, from requirements to sign “contracts” that they will not become pregnant for certain period of time, non-payment of benefits for maternity leave and improper dismissal related to pregnancy and maternity. Although there are mechanisms to protect women’s rights in such cases, through the Federal Labor Inspectorate or courts, women seldom use these bodies, either because they are unaware of their rights or simply out of fear of losing their jobs (ABA/CEELI, 2006: 17-18).

With the collapse of state-command economy, new Russian women have started to discover beauty and glamour as a result of easier and wider access to cosmetic products. Its main implication has been feminization of labor market. In order to change the masculine appearance, characteristic of Soviet times, women get more feminine. They enjoy personal grooming, dress-style, make-up, etc. in managing their professional identity. On the side of the employer, physical appearance turns into a criterion for career, promotion and training opportunities. Wearing short skirts, having long legs and a pretty face are identified as criteria in job advertisements. However, this ‘feminization’ serves to reinforce traditional assumptions. While primary role of women is being mother, their feminine look turns into an advantage in employment (Metcalf & Affanassieva, 2005: 3).

3.6. Family, Motherhood, Reproduction

After the dissolution, a steep demographic decline has started to appear in Russia. While the population of Russia was calculated at 148.7 million in 1992, it shrank by almost 4 percent and regressed to 144.5 million in 2003. 1992 was the first year marked by such a sharp decline; for the first time in Russian history death rates exceeded birth rates. Death rate was 50 percent higher in 1997 than in 1987 (2.3 million vs. 1.5 million) while birth rate dropped at 1 million (Eberstadt, 2004: 9-10). By 2005, the negative difference between the number of deaths and births was estimated at 11.2 million (Putin cited in Cook, 2011: 1).

While demographic decline is coincided with high reliance on abortion as a primary method of contraception¹⁴, sharp reduction in marriage rates and increasing divorces, the new Russian state has tended to resolve the demographic crisis in a way, which may prove to be more suitable, cheaper and easier for the state interests than challenging widespread traditional norms and patterns regarding gender relations. In that regard, transformation of childcare, regulation of reproductive rights and management of demographic crisis seem to reflect a considerable ideological change towards neo-traditionalism in post-Soviet Russia. Pro-natalist policies designated to increase fertility rates do not challenge ‘gendered hierarchies’ (Avdeyeva, 2011: 361) but deepen them in economy, politics and at home.¹⁵ Russian state’s approach to gender equality with a view of social protection of motherhood and reproductive rights has impeded taking initiatives for the advancement of women and provision of equal opportunities (ABA/CEELI, 2006: 23).

3.6.1. Childcare and Family Benefits

Provision of nurseries and kindergartens was a political, economic and ideological concern of the Soviet state. Ideological commitment to woman’s equality was accompanied with an aim of achieving full employment of women for rapid industrialization of the country. The change in the regulation of motherhood and the retreat of state from childcare services has posed drastic repercussions over women’s labor force participation. Changes occurring in the labor market in the recent decades have matched with fundamental changes in family allowances, childcare services, job protection of especially pregnant women, maternal leave and other benefits (Teplova, 2005: 4).

¹⁴ The lack of contraception until *perestroika*, and then, limited access to contraceptive methods should be considered in understanding widespread reliance on abortion to prevent involuntary pregnancies.

¹⁵ For a critical analysis of pro-natalist policies as stimulus of high fertility rates, please see P. McDonald (2012), “Gender Equity in Theories of Fertility Transition”, *Population and Development Review*, 26 (3), 427-439.

Devastating results of the economic crisis of the 1990s severely affected the public care system. Neo-liberal policies forced public enterprises to go for cuts on spending and welfare expenditures. The Soviet system of nurseries and kindergartens that were once connected to one's place of work ceased to exist in Russia. Public enterprises could no more afford childcare facilities; nor were new, affordable, private childcare centers immediately opened. According to the State Statistical Committee, there was almost a decline of 40% in preschool institutions during the 1990s (in number from 87.900 to 53.200 in 2000) (Teplova, 2005: 7). While 84 percent of children over three years old utilized public care in the Soviet Union (from 1961 to 1991), 47 percent of them were taken care at home in Russia (from 1991-2001) (Teplova, 2007: 293). Although the enrollment rates of pre-school children in childcare increased up to 59 percent in 2008, the Soviet rates of enrollment could not be caught because the number of childcare centers has not been sufficiently increasing (Avdeyeva, 2011: 370). By 2008, the number of children on the waiting list for nursery or kindergarten was still around 1 million (cited in Cook, 2011: 6).

But at the same time the state has extended the existing categories of support. In the early transformation period, in 1989, paid leave was extended until the child reached 18 months, and unpaid leave was to the first 3 years of life. Also, women who were not employed would be given access to leave with 50% percent of the benefits. Women had an opportunity to work part time or from home while taking leave with the right to return to the same position (Teplova, 2007: 297). In 1992, fully paid maternity leave was extended and again in 1993 to allow women to stop working during the last month of pregnancy; the monthly allowance for children aged 1.5 to 5 years was extended to newborns in 1994; another allowance was established for children between 6 and 16 years of age in 1996 (Rivkin-Fish, 2010: 710, Teplova, 2007: 292). In 1993, maternity leave was extended to redundant women and to full-time students in 1995, and increased to 156 days for multiple births (Teplova, 2005: 8). According to the amendments in the Labor Law in 1992, maternity leave was issued for a period of 70 calendar days prior to and following the birth of child. To protect motherhood, partly paid leave for women with children under 18 months and unpaid leave with those under 3 three years old were provided; part-time

employment for pregnant woman and women with children under 14 was regulated on the condition of the consent of managers and of the demands of work (Klinova, 1995: 50-51).

In the new Labor Code (2001) at work, two types of leave are formulated: maternal and parental. The duration for maternity leave is totally 140 days (half before birth, half after birth). If the duration of employment is at least 1 year, women will receive hundred percent of their regular salary during 140 days. But the amount of payment during maternity leave does not exceed 85 times of minimum monthly wage (around 14 dollars per month by 2002). Childcare leave was renamed as parental leave in 2002. Its duration is up to 36 months and the amount of parental leave payment is around 17 dollars for the first half and 1.7 dollars for the second half (Teplova, 2005: 9).

During 1990s, a universal principle was applied in allocating monthly allowance to families; every family regardless of its level of income was eligible for childcare payment. However, because of scarce resources, eligibility was restricted to families in need in 2001 (if level of per capita income is less than 100 percent of subsistence level in the region). In 2006, monthly allowances for families with children up to 18 months were significantly increased to 1,500 rubles (slightly less than 50 dollars) for the first child and to 3,000 rubles (slightly less than 100 dollars) for the second child (Chernova, 2012: 80, 82).¹⁶ Main reason to or not to make a decision for having a second child is poor housing conditions. Astronomic cost of enlarging living area discourages young families from giving more births.

The complex interaction of traditional, deeply embedded patterns of policy-making in Russia and neo-liberal policies aimed at structural aggravating, combined with the legacy of the authoritarian state and aggravating economic conditions, resulted in a movement toward neo-familialism in the Russian welfare state, rather than neo-liberalism or the deepening of the egalitarian norms inherited from the Soviet period (Teplova, 2007: 285).

¹⁶ In 2011, the amount of minimal monthly allowance for childcare was approximately 73 dollars (Chernova, 2012: 82).

In the post-Soviet gender climate, all new regulations led to a drastic change in the care model and to the rise of a new model: neo-familialist model, or call it as refamilialization of care. Neo-familialist model of care has reinforced the perception of women as the main care providers and has not promoted the redistribution of care work. In contrast to the Soviet period, in which maternity leave was used to stimulate women's labor force participation and help them achieve the role of being working mother, the new leave scheme in Russia aims to facilitate the status of a temporary homemaker for an extended period and to release tension from the labor market (Teplova, 2007: 298-9).

3.6.2. Reproductive Rights and Health

As in the Soviet gender climate, controlling the availability of abortion has been used as a cheap pro-natal method in post-Soviet gender climate (Eberstadt, 2004: 21). During the Yeltsin's period, the cost of abortion was increased to make it non-affordable and then to achieve a reduction in the rates. However, this resolution did not succeed; on the contrary, the rates of illegal abortions considerably increased and threatened health conditions of pregnant women.

Until early 2000s, the right and access to abortion upon the request of women has been preserved. In 2003, the abortion regime started to be slightly tightened. The conditions for terminating pregnancy in the second trimester were restricted in 2004. The State Duma introduced a decree titled 'On approving the list of medical conditions for artificial pregnancy termination' in December 3, 2007 and prohibited the access to abortion on the formerly acceptable social grounds of poverty and unemployment. Another measure introduced in 2008 requires counseling service about the risks of get abortion; signed consent from the woman who wants to get abortion (Cook, 2011: 7-8). In 2011, the State Duma introduced another bill to disqualify abortion as a medical service in the national health plan.¹⁷ Its aim was

¹⁷ <http://www.lifesitenews.com/news/russia-considering-abortion-restrictions-to-slow-population-collapse/>

declared as allowing the doctors to refuse commit abortions and to provide the conditions for women to opt for giving birth, as the Head of State Duma Committee on Women, Children and Family said.

However, reducing abortion rates by tightening pregnancy termination terms has by no means led to a direct increase in fertility rates. Russia has an absurdly high rate of abortion. The ratio of abortion was 67.6% in 1991, 58.5% in 2002, and 36.1%. In the first half of the 1990s, the number of abortions was around approximately 4 million. In the second half, it tended to decrease to approximately 2 million. In 2010, 2011 and 2012, the number of abortions reported is more than 1 million.¹⁸ Although there occurred 3 million less abortion in 2002 than 1987, the number of births decreased about a million (Eberstadt, 2004: 21).

Another measure was taken to improve reproductive health through the introduction Childbirth Certificate Program in 2006. This measure was enacted within National Priority Project 'On Health'. Its aim is to improve the access of pregnant women and infants to health care; reduce obstetrical problems, diseases, reproductive disorders and infant mortality. The government compensates the cost for obstetric and neonatal medical services with certain amount of payments. The state provides approximately 70 dollars for twenty-eight week gestation in obstetric care clinic and 170 dollars for childbirth at a maternity hospital (Osipova cited in Cook, 2011: 5).

3.6.3. Maternity Capital

In the presidential decree 'On the Concept of the National Security' issued in January 2000, President Putin warned that the decreasing fertility rate poses a serious threat to Russia's survival as a nation, as a people (Chernova, 2012: 80). In 2000, the government issued the Concept of Demographic Development for the Russian Federation through 2015 and outlined the preconditions necessary to increase fertility rate: forming a system of societal and personal values embracing families with more children; raising material prosperity; improving socio-economic conditions for

¹⁸ <http://www.johnstonsarchive.net/policy/abortion/ab-russia.html>

bearing and raising children; improving conditions for combining work and family; improving housing conditions. However, these preconditions have a gender-neutral language, thereby ignoring the realities of gendered inequalities in both domestic and public spheres. Not even a word is mentioned on the fact that women have almost all responsibility for domestic work and meet discriminatory attitudes in the labor market when they get pregnant or mother of young children (Rivkin-Fish, 2010: 712-713).

In his annual speech in May 2006, unlike Gorbachev who had envisioned the possibility of women returning to their traditional roles as a means to lighten their double burden in the mid-1980s, President Putin strongly advocated both wage-work and state support for Russian mothers. In that speech, President Putin addressed the demographic development of Russia as the country's most acute problem and related it with mortality, migration and fertility. But his main focus was on fertility among three and formulating new childcare policies (Rotkirch et al., 2007: 350-351). After this, President Putin proposed a new form of benefit to resolve demographic crisis. Maternity capital was enacted by 1 January 2007. It is a certificate and entitlement for mothers who give birth to a second or third child. It pays mothers approximately 10.000 dollars (indexed to inflation) when the child reaches the age of three. The money will not be paid in cash but in a voucher and limited to three ways of possession: 'the purchase or improvement of an apartment, the mother's pension savings, or the child's education costs' (Rivkin-Fish, 2010: 701). Due to the growing economic crisis, the area of use of maternity capital was enlarged; 'the State Duma passed a law allowing families who had signed mortgage documents to purchase accommodation to start using the federal subsidies for multiple-child families (upon clearing their principal debt or paying interest on loans) from 1 January 2009, regardless of the time period between the birth or adoption of the second and subsequent children' (Vishnevsky, 2009: 9).

3.6.4. Domestic Violence and Homosexuality

Russian politics of domestic violence altered dramatically after the collapse of the Soviet Union. With the campaigns initiated especially by women's organizations in the 1990s, domestic violence was named for the first time and identified as a specific violation of human rights (Johnson, 2007: 1). These years witnessed the opening of crisis centers firstly in the urban areas and eventually in more densely populated areas of Russia. The first centers were opened in Moscow and St. Petersburg in 1993 and by 1998 there were 24 organizations operating against domestic violence in Russia. In 2002, the first formal network that brought 120 crisis centers under the same roof was established with the name of Russian Association of Crisis Centers for Women (Johnson, 2006: 43-44).

The main activity of these centers is providing hotline service for victims of sexual and domestic violence (Johnson, 2006: 44). They also provide legal assistance. Due to the state's policies foundation of shelter spaces were very rare. Thanks to the efforts of the women's organizations, the issue of domestic violence was brought to the agenda three times. In 1993, the Women of Russia Party proposed a draft law but it did not succeed. In 1997, the bill was again on the agenda of the Duma but again was not issued. A package of bills addressing the domestic violence was introduced once more in 1999 but the child abuse was at the forefront in the package. The most productive proposal was in 2001 five-year plan introduced by Ministry of Labor and Social Development addressing a variety of violence in the family including the foundation of government crisis centers and shelters. Despite the bill few numbers of centers were opened (Johnson, 2007: 5).

In Russia, there is still no specific law on domestic violence in conformity with CEDAW. All forms of domestic violence, the functions of law enforcement bodies, the accountability of perpetrators, and the rights of victims are not specifically identified (ANNA, 2010: 10-11).¹⁹ The lack of necessary legislation is also highlighted during my interviews. As the experts mentioned, the Russian state

¹⁹ http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/ngos/ANNANCPV_RussianFederation46.pdf

declared that the existing laws, especially the Penal Code, are sufficient to criminalize domestic violence. However, the existing laws provide partial protection to women victims of violence. Domestic violence is not recognized by the Penal Code as separate offences considering the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim. Under the existing gaps in legislation, it is extremely difficult to prove crimes of domestic violence (ANNA, 2010: 10-11).

In 2013, a new law was enacted to prohibit the promotion of homosexuality and other 'deviant' sexual behaviors in public sphere. The law was enacted to discourage homosexual propaganda. Its aim is to protect children from visualizing non-traditional sexual union. Fines ranging from 155\$ is issued if a homosexual couple kiss in public sphere including metro, streets, parks, etc.²⁰

3.7. Political Participation

According to Global Gender Gap Index, women constituted 14% of the parliament by 2013. Women holding ministerial position constitute 16%. Among 136 countries, Russia is ranked at 61. Political participation of women is another dimension immediately affected with the collapse of the Soviet Union. On the one hand, a severe decline in the presence of women in institutional politics happened because of the removal of quotas and reserved seats (Buckley, 1992b). On the other hand, a wide range of women's groups appeared as a result of burgeoning of a newly civil society (Konstantinova, 1994).

3.7.1. Women in Institutional Politics

Until the 1990s, the Soviet Union applied political quota for women in government positions alongside famous saying of Lenin, 'every cook must learn to govern the

²⁰ <http://www.lifesitenews.com/news/vladimir-putin-signs-bill-protecting-children-from-homosexual-propaganda/>; <http://www.lifesitenews.com/news/media-howl-as-russia-protects-its-children-from-gay-propaganda/>

state' (Dorman, October 2, 2011).²¹ Despite quotas and reserved seats, however, the Soviet women were always underrepresented; neither did they acquire political power in decision-making body nor were they appointed to important political posts. On average, women constituted the 26% of party lists, but very few women became members of the Central Committee of CPSU, and only three women became a member of the Politburo throughout 77 years of Soviet history (ABA/CEELI, 2006: 14). Although the female party members constituted 30% of all members by 1989, their upward mobility to decision-making bodies was restricted and only 7% of them occupied the position of party secretariat of regional and territorial committees. Women were predominantly concentrated in the soviets (councils), which would indicate not much political power. In 1988, a new electoral law was passed in the Supreme Soviet; it entitled citizens with two votes, and each social organization (like trade union, Communist Party youth organization, *zhensovety*, etc.) with the right to nominate 100 deputies in electing the Congress of People's Deputies. Although *zhensovety* achieved to full reserved seats allocated to the organization with female deputies, a severe decline in female representation in high political bodies could not be prevented. In the 1989 elections, the percentage of women elected to the Congress of People's Deputies and to the Supreme Soviet was 15.7% and 18.5%, respectively (Buckley, 1992b: 56-60).

The first elections of the Russian Federation, held in 1993, gave way to a new hope regarding women's political participation. A bloc of women's organizations named Women of Russia ran in the elections. Its members were the Union of Women of Russia (former Soviet Women's Committee), the Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Russia and Women of the Fleet. Women of Russia won 8.1% of the vote on the party list and sent twenty-one female deputies to the State Duma. Other than Women of Russia, none of five parties running in the elections put forward female candidates in first twelve, which was equal to 5% election threshold. Deputies in Women of Russia held positions in various committees, widely ranging from feminine ones (like health protection, women, children, social policy) to traditionally

²¹ <http://russianow.washingtonpost.com/2011/10/womens-place-is-in-the-duma.php>

male ones (like budget, international affairs, legal reform, etc.) in the State Duma (Buckley, 1997).

Women of Russia was established to voice, defend and support the women in a period of harsh economic transition. Its members assumed that women suffered more from unemployment and economic reforms than men. Before the 1995 elections, a lively debate started on whether the faction would turn into a political party or not. Although the formation of Women of Russia crashed with the Marxist taboo of politics according to gender, the deeply embedded assumptions reflected in the views of its members. They believed in distinctive natures of man and woman; saw it neither necessary nor appropriate organizing in the form of women's party; and agreed on remaining as a part of women's movement. However, in the 1995 elections, the bloc failed to exceed the election threshold and was left out of the Duma (Buckley, 1999: 158-159).

The next elections happened to draw a quite poor picture. In 1995 national elections, the percentage of female deputies in the State Duma was 10.2% and this percentage dropped to 7.7% in the 1999 national elections (Shevchenko, 2006: 132). According to the results of 1995 elections, there were two women in the upper chamber of national parliament and no woman among ministerial officers and mayors of provinces. By 1999, only one woman occupied a position at the top level of government as Deputy Prime Minister; one more woman worked as the aid to President Yeltsin; and one more was a governor. In the executive branch, a 'steep pyramid' effect to the detriment of women deputies was observed in 1997; while women constituted 55.9% of all government workers, only 2.4% of those holding the highest level posts such as president, prime minister, cabinet ministers, deputies and judges, and 19.2% of high-level executive positions such as federal ministers' aides and leading officials in federal agencies were occupied by women. Their percentage rose up to 47.1 and 79.9 of those having senior and junior level executive jobs (Nechemias, 2000: 199-200; see UNDP, 2005: 68).

In addition to numerical underrepresentation of women at high-level posts in the parliament and government, the female deputies were generally assigned to the chairmanship of committees of low importance and less power. The committees assumed to be 'more appropriate' for women were generally the ones related to issues as family, children, ecology, social problems and ethics. This reflects the dominant male tendency in legislative and executive powers, that is, women as caretakers of family and society should deal with social problems. In the Duma elected in 1995, the female deputies tended to chair the Duma committees on women, family, youth, ecology and so on, which were taken as matters of relatively low priority and importance in comparison to budget planning, economic policies, industry, privatization, etc. where male deputies became in the chair.

In the 1999 elections, only 33 of 441 deputies elected were women, approximately 7%. In 1999-2003, a woman occupied the position of Deputy President to the government, with responsibility for social benefits.²² The distribution of committee chairmanship in the 1999 Duma did not falsify the prevalent tendency and assumption; women were in the chair of committees on women, family and youth, problems in the North and Far East, and ethics, which were working with low budget, less power and less preference to become a member (Shevchenko, 2006: 134-5). Such a distribution refers to a broader gender division of labor; while men are expected to protect the country, women should take care children, the youth, the elderly, the underprivileged, etc. (Nechemias, 2000: 201), in other words, those sections of the population which are in need of special care and privileges, like themselves.

For the 2003 elections, at least, all political parties put women candidates on the party lists. The number of women deputies in the Duma slightly increased to 10%. Seven women deputies were elected to the upper chamber in 2003 while it was six in 2002, one in 2001, and two in 2000. However, women's representation in decision-

²² <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/Review/responses/RUSSIAN-FEDERATION-English.pdf> (Accessed on January 3, 2013).

making bodies of the executive branch did not show a different tendency; no woman held a position of minister. By 2004, approximately 40 women were working as first deputy ministers, deputy ministers, and state secretaries in the ministries, which are described as traditionally male-dominated ones such as defense, transportation, energy, finance, emergency response, industry, science, and technology.²³ One woman from the ruling party United Russia secured a position of Deputy Speaker of the Duma in 2003. No woman was in chairmanship of any Duma factions. Only four women were in charge of Duma committees, but those on women, family and youth; natural resources and nature management; problems of the North and Far East; and public health (Aivazova & Kertman, 2004: 29-30).

In 2007 elections, the percentage of woman deputies in the Duma increased to 14% but gender composition of governing bodies of the Duma did not indicate a rosy picture; women deputies managed to hold 30% of deputy chair positions. Male deputies took on the chair of all four factions in the Duma. Out of a total of 33 specialized parliamentary committees and commissions, where lawmaking would take place, women retained only three. Their specialization areas remained the same: women, family and children; public health; natural resources and problems; and the problems of the North and Far East (Aivazova, 2008: 69-73).

To sum up, women's underrepresentation in Russia is related to a set of factors. Although being members of prominent political parties, women rarely obtain political office. It is because women are nominated on low places on party lists and not assigned for leadership positions. Behind this tendency mainly lies the lack of sufficient financial support and gender stereotypes. In Russia, financial support related to holding a management position in large enterprises is crucial to being a successful candidate but women are at a distinct disadvantage. Additionally, the prevalent gender stereotypes do designate politics inappropriate and unsuitable for politics due to biological differences and domestic duties. This common belief discourages women themselves from being enthusiastic about holding political office and the electorate from voting for them (ABA/CEELI, 2006: 16). Finally, this

²³ <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/Review/responses/RUSSIAN-FEDERATION-English.pdf> (Accessed on January 3, 2013).

assumption impedes both the investors and political parties from supporting them. Especially in traditional societies, women's participation in legislative and executive power requires full commitment of the state to take and carry out promoting measures such as positive discrimination and quota. Nonetheless, the transformation of social structure to the end of achieving gender equality and struggling against gender discrimination does not constitute a priority of the Russian state. Within such a context, traditional stereotypes and assumptions have come to influence the patterns of political participation.

Women's participation into institutional politics has not been sufficiently promoted. Rather, their degradation and exclusion grounded on biological differences have strengthened. Some former deputies of Duma expressed the need to change people's opinions about themselves; complained about distrust on themselves regardless of their qualities, and interest in their physical appearances rather than being talented and high-skilled candidates for political jobs (Dorman, October 2, 2011). The rise of neo-traditionalism also prevented fertile discussion of gender specific problems and solutions in the Duma (Shevchenko, 2006).

3.7.2. Women's Civic Activism and Feminism

Due to the ideological dominance of class identity in the Soviet Union, any kind of organization or activity based on sex was prohibited. After the abolition of *Zhenotdel* in 1930 with the claim of accomplishing its mission, Soviet Women's Committee was created in 1941, but with an aim of mobilizing the population alongside socialist goals rather than pioneering lively debates around women's own concerns and interests and offering different resolutions than official discourse (Sperling, 1999: 18; Buckley, 1997: 159). Within the context of *glasnost* and *demokratizatsiia*, a sphere has been opened up for civic activism.²⁴ Numerous women's organizations have

²⁴ In the early 1990s, a need for creating a new framework emerged and new publications criticizing the Soviet approach of women's equality were published. Olga Voronina, Zoya Pukhova, Anastasia Posadskaya, Natalya Rimashevskaya, Valentina Konstantinova, Yelena Yershova, Natalya Pushkareva and Tatiana Zabelina were among the first leading activists, who would involve in the foundation of women's organizations like Moscow Center for Gender Studies, LOTUS (League of Liberation from Stereotypes), Center for Women, Family and Gender Studies at Moscow Institute of

mushroomed, widely ranging from nationalist organizations, professional associations, local groups or associations for mothers of soldiers and disabled children, lesbian groups, crisis centers as well as hotlines for women exposed to sexual and domestic violence and feminist organizations (Lipovskaya, 1997: 188-191).²⁵ Primarily, unemployment among educated women surfaced discrimination against women in the labor market, and led to a transformation in women's consciousness, which was based on their perceptions on women's problems (Sperling, 1999: 57). With the transition to neo-liberalism and democracy, an autonomous sphere of political activity has emerged, paving the ground for the proliferation of women's organizations. The reflection of this process on political activity, in general, is the categorization of institutional politics and civic activism as masculine and feminine, which corresponds to the traditional division of labor.

Unfortunately, civic activism of women has not had a smooth development. As briefly discussed above, institutional politics and civic activism have been discursively constructed on the grounds of sex in the post-Soviet Russia. While institutional politics is associated with masculinity and not received appropriate for women, civic activism is designated as a feminine sphere of activity and participation, more suitable for women. This division of institutional and civil politics on the grounds of femininity and masculinity undeniably refers to biological difference between man and woman, upon which social identities and practices are grounded. Due to this innate difference, men and women are assumed to have different interests and motivations, which are completely relevant to 'sex', and thus, to fit in 'proper spheres of activity'. According to this innate difference, while woman is naturally altruistic and morally superior creature, man behaves self-

Youth, Moscow Assault Recovery Center. Among them, Olga Voronina offered the term patriarchy to be more appropriate and useful to examine the Soviet Union, which broke the ground then. See O.Voronina (1993), "Soviet patriarchy: past and present", *Hypatia*, 18 (4). For a brief summary of the emergence of feminist women's movement, see E. Waters (1993), "The Emergence of a Women's Movement". In N. Funk & M. Mueller (eds.), *Gender Politics and Post-Communism*. London & NY: Routledge. pp.287-302.

²⁵ Buckley (1992) makes a five-fold categorization of women's groups emerging immediately after *glasnost*: women's sections within broader nationalist movements (especially in post-communist countries), women-only political groups or parties, professional women's groups, women-only consciousness-raising groups and women's self-help groups (pp.62-66).

interested and seeks for material benefits. Appropriateness of civic activism for women is related to their domestic roles, which require patience, caring, emotionality, etc. while institutional politics is portrayed as a dirty job (Salmenniemi, 2003; 2005). So long as these two spheres of political activity is dichotomized, then the women's organizations are not expected to perform an intermediating role between the society and political system regarding the interests of women; nor could they influence over policy-making process.

The serious pursuit of a career is an act of egoism incompatible with being a 'real woman'. Politics in particular places demands on women that are difficult to reconcile with familial responsibilities. Many regard politics as an ugly business at odds with women's true nature, which involves a primary commitment to love and family. (...) women by nature are not suited for the treachery and betrayal endemic to the political world, and those women who do choose a political career suffer, as a rule, from unsuccessful private lives and excess of male qualities (cited in Nechemias, 2000: 215).

There are two primary obstacles before women's movement in Russia: the residue of historical hostility against feminism, and the negative association of equality with Soviet experience of emancipation. As first, the hostility towards feminism has been reinforced through multi-faceted neo-traditionalism, which surfaces in labor market, family politics and demographic politics. Stereotypes and hostile myths about an independent women's movement have still been quite powerful in Russia today. The description of women's movement as 'a social monster', 'as an impermissible luxury', as an enemy or as unsuitable to Russian moral codes proves to be very strong obstacles (Konstantinova, 1994: 61-62). Several activists reacted feminism with a description of 'total independence and concomitant rejection of men', while some others described feminism as a fight for equal rights within reasonable bounds, which acknowledges a sort of natural inequality in domestic sphere (Sperling, 1999: 60). Rather, some activists express insults on and humiliation of women with the lack of democratization, strong civil society, accountable state, rule of law, justice, equality, etc. and equate the elimination of gender inequality and discrimination with a broader socio-economic and political change towards democracy (Ferree et al., 1999).

Radical feminism, Western feminism, and lesbianism, then are for some activists equated with feminism per se, while for others feminism may be defined as more of a liberal feminism, safe, irreproachably advocating equal rights for women, but not entailing a radical restructuring of society, or a rejection of traditional gender roles and heterosexuality (Sperling, 1999: 63).

Second obstacle is interrelated with the reassurance of historical hostility against feminism in the post-Soviet period. Equality has a negative association with the Soviet experience of emancipation, which means ‘suffering’ for women, namely double shift. Additionally, feminism and equality come to imply a rejection of ‘femininity’, which Soviet women had been deprived of for seventy years. All this leads to rejection of feminism both in some academic circles and at popular level, and deprives women’s movement of massive popular support on the basis of demand for equality (Sperling, 1999: 66-69).

In post-communist societies the very concept of equality has been subjected to a sustained onslaught – and not only from exponents of the free market. The re-emergence of an active women’s movement in Russia, following seventy years of denial and repression, has contributed to the dismantling of the phoney Soviet ideology of sexual egalitarianism, already under attack in Brezhnev’s time. But at the same time a strong resistance to western feminism has emerged. Here ‘feminism’ is understood to be a competitive ideology which aims to sacrifice all that is ‘feminine’ in women, in a mad pursuit of equal rights and opportunities with men; feminism is seen as an ideology which ignores the special responsibilities that women bear as mothers and disregards the bitter experience of women’s ‘double (or triple) burden’ in communist systems (Edmondson, 1996: 95-96).

Especially in the early 1990s, emancipation meant having a right [or choice]²⁶ not to work for the Russian women, and use consumer products. As a reaction to the image of masculine Soviet woman and physical uniformity in terms of dressing and hairstyle, post-Soviet women have tended to care much about their physical appearance, dressing, and make-up. While some feminist groups in the West react consumerism and reject much care on physical appearance, these have a symbolic meaning of returning to individuality for the post-Soviet women. Some rituals like chivalry, courtship, wedding ceremony, etc., which are being rejected by most

²⁶ The word ‘choice’ is my addition here. I think it appropriate to exchange between right and choice because the situation of having a right was being formulated and presented as a matter of choice in *perestroika* and in the early transition period.

feminist groups as to emphasize innate nature of man and woman, have become very popular for post-Soviet meaning, which represent an opposition to Soviet culture (see Lissyutkina, 1993).

Moreover, newly rising women's movement has encountered all difficulties of getting organized in a post-totalitarian and traditional society so long as the absence of democratic culture and institutions, strong civil society, financial support, and social services, on which women heavily depended especially to relieve their double burden. Combined with a traditional society underestimating feminism and/or feminist movement, these difficulties have discouraged women's movement (Sperling, 1999: 14). The level of feminist consciousness among the founders and members of women's organizations is pretty low. Second, an account of gender inequality and discrimination on the grounds of a much broader sense, which used to be socialism, and now, turned into democratization, was still prevalent in early days following the independence (see Konstantinova, 1994: 58, 65). Even women themselves might receive being a member of women's organizations as luxurious, fruitless and time-consuming. Biological division of spheres of socio-political activity ironically resulted in low interest and belief in women's movement to resolve their daily life problems. Trying to survive in devastating economic conditions (waiting for long period on queues), and domestic duties and childcare made women reluctant and non-enthusiastic to involve in civic activity (see Salmenniemi, 2003; Konstantinova, 1994).

Despite hostility against feminism and obstacles in front of a unified women's movement to pioneer a radical restructuring of gender relations, however, numerous women's organizations were established in the early 1990s. By 1994, there were 300 registered women's organizations but only a few of them and a small group of activists and intellectuals adopt and employ feminism as a position and theoretical framework to explain women's problems in Russia (see Racioppi & See, 1995). This hostile environment, at the same time, has stimulated women 'to organize and become active in attempting to improve their own situation and that of other women like themselves' as 'the postulates and attitudes put forward so unashamedly threatened

the well-being and even, in most extreme cases, the survival of themselves and their families' (Kay, 1996: 118-119). In this context, women's civic activism could not sustain a united women's movement to struggle with traditional patterns and stereotypes. The historical hostility against feminism has impeded the formation of a common ground for women's organizations to unite and influence the political authorities.

3.7.3. International Compliance and National Machinery

In the 1993 Constitution of Russian Federation, the universal principle of equal rights and opportunities for men and women is set out (article 19, paragraph 3). Russian Federation also ratified certain international declarations and conventions such as CEDAW, Declaration and the Platform of Action of the Fourth World UN Conference on Women, UN, UNESCO and ILO conventions for abolishing violence and discrimination against women and ensuring equal opportunities for them in all spheres of social life (UNDP, 2005: 59). Despite this, a very essential requirement has not been accomplished by Russia, that is, the legal recognition of discrimination. The principle of equal rights for men and women is set forth in the Constitution; sex-based discrimination is prohibited in employment and political participation. However, there is a 'main defect' in Russian legislation: 'gender neutrality, the lack of any norms ensuring the equalization of men's and women's opportunities in the realization of their rights and freedoms (as) proclaimed by the (Russian) Constitution'. Gender neutrality reflects a lack of awareness and prevents the legislation of gender-specific laws, which provide women legal right to realize equal opportunities (ABA/CEELI, 2006: 15-16).

As mentioned in international conventions, an effective and independent national mechanism is another requirement strongly crucial to gender mainstreaming in all sphere of social life. However, Russia has not effectively created a national mechanism endowed with executive power and budget so far. This indicates that achieving gender equality, eradicating traditional gender stereotypes, and challenging

gender discrimination do not constitute a priority and distinctive sphere of policy for the Russian state.

After signing the Beijing Declaration in 1995, the Russian representatives at the highest level declared the state's commitment to establish an independent national mechanism, which would directly recommend and influence the government on policy formation regarding women, attend the legislative process and have a budget. Two National Plans in 1996-2000 and 2001-2005 were approved to improve women's status and roles in society. Although the National Plans prove to be the most important tool of national mechanism, they could not effectively be implemented due to budget restrictions and have not been developed at federal level since then (UNDP, 2005: 59).

However, the institutional basis of the national mechanism has not been effectively improved; on the contrary, a process of disintegration started in 2004 as part of administrative reform. In the executive branch, the subdivisions of departments responsible for policy implementation to secure women's empowerment were reorganized, which meant in practice as 'equivalent to be abolished'. For example, the Department on Medical and Social Problems of the Family, affiliated to the Ministry of Health and Social Development, was reorganized. The Department of Social Welfare remained under the Ministry but its mandate to achieve gender equality was reorganized as optional. The Commission on the Status of Women was removed and substituted by an Inter-departmental Commission for Gender Equality in the Russian Federation in 2005. The latter was dissolved in 2007 as a result of the change of government. In the legislative branch, there are two committees functioning, namely the Committee of the Federation Council on Social Policy and Health and the State Duma Committee on Family Affairs, Women and Children (UNDP, 2010: 49-50). Nonetheless, these committees have no executive power, have no function other than consultation, and have no budget and authority.

Another tool of the national mechanisms is gender statistics, which help to monitor the status of men and women in all walks of life, to make international comparisons, and to provide information monitoring and assess efficiency of implementation of government decisions and policy on equal

opportunities. There have been some improvements in this area of government statistics, but they are still inadequate to meet the country's needs. There are also concerns about gradual decrease in the number of regional sub-divisions of Rosstat (the government statistics agency) producing regional statistical digests on gender issues. In 2009 only 9 regions released such digests, compared with 11 regions in 2008 and 28 regions in 2007, although some indicators showing gender differentiation are presented in other statistical digests and bulletins (UNDP, 2010: 49-50).

3.8. Conclusion

In this chapter, I examine the way in which women's equality has been handled in the post-Soviet period. At the beginning, I provide a brief historical introduction to understand the conditions of change in gender climate. I discuss the state discourse, policies and legal regulations regarding the situation of women in labor force, family and politics. I try to point out the deficiencies in these sectors, and discrimination and inequality that women encounter. My main finding is there has been a shift towards neo-traditionalism in post-Soviet Russia. The family as the basic social unit is brought up to ameliorate the socio-economic crisis and to rebuild the social order. Focus on the family is not new in the Soviet history but reinventing the notions of femininity and masculinity on a neo-traditional basis is quite new. Contrary to the Bolshevik gender climate, biological determinism is stimulated as the core of new focus on family, and of new notions of femininity and masculinity. The post-Soviet state reveals the Orthodoxy and nationalist tunes in justifying the new reference points.

CHAPTER 4

PARAMETERS OF NEW GENDER CLIMATE IN POST-SOVIET RUSSIA

In this chapter, I examine the findings of my fieldwork. My primary finding is the tendency to identify the ‘prevailing gender climate’ in post-Soviet Russia as neo-traditional. I argue that gender climate in post-Soviet Russia has gained a neo-traditional face when the ‘underlying gender order’ couple with the conditions of the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the transition to market economy. I conceptualized my findings under three topics: the break in official commitment, feminization of reproduction and feminization of labor force. I identify these three topics as the main pillars of neo-traditional gender climate in post-Soviet Russia.

The organization of sub-chapters corresponds to the presentation and discussion of my findings related to each topic. In the first sub-section, I examine the break in official commitment to the women’s equality. In the second one, I emphasize the impact of demographic crisis and address on feminization of reproduction on the grounds of motherhood, maternity capital and abortion. In the third one, I examine deficiencies women encounter in labor force despite feminization of labor force; I particularly focus on work and family balance, maternal leave, and gender segregation in labor force.

4.1. The Break in Official Commitment to ‘Women’s Equality’

While the Soviet gender climate was the re-formulation of pre-revolutionary gender order on the grounds of Bolshevik premises, the post-Soviet gender climate has been reshaped under the conditions of the collapse of socialism, which paved the way to the abolition of official commitment to woman’s equality, the transition to market economy, and the increasing power and prestige of the Orthodox Church. Under these circumstances, an orientation towards neo-traditionalism in gender climate

appears in the state discourse and policies regarding gender relations in the post-Soviet times.

Gender climate in post-Soviet Russia advocated a strict dichotomy of male and female roles and personality traits and gave overt support to gender order by encouraging and expressing approval of a traditional hierarchy of power ... these positions were strengthened by the implication that they represented a reversal of gender imbalance brought by Soviet policies of equality leading to damaging over-emancipation of women and crushing of masculinity by overly intrusive state (Kay, 2000: 33).

Neo-traditional orientation primarily reflects on biological determinism and gains recognition in identifying proper gender identities and relations. This started to appear as early as 1970s when the economic and moral crises surfaced. The crisis was related to the women's emancipation. It became a common idea that the Soviet ideology was the violation of the natural order of the gender relations. This prepared the ground for return to traditionalist understanding of gender roles and identities. In this understanding, women are depicted as good wives while men as breadwinners (Interview 1, Zdravomyslova, Academician, St.Petersburg, 14.2.2013).

In terms of neo-traditionalism, there is a clear trend. I see [it] in both men and women and I think there are different sources. Some view the traditional family structure as [the] natural and eternally Russian norm that is [...] healthy, functional, and [which] goes as [far] back as [the] Domostroi, one of the written documents of the 16th century, which is [a central component of] monks' teachings. It describes [a] very hierarchal, very patriarchal composition of family in [late] medieval Russia. It has very little in common with the present day society. Some contemporary people think that this is way things [have been] happen[ing] all along; let's return to that. Others view that even in the Soviet era there was that sort of equality plus certain norms that again raised men and sort of kept women in [check]. Some say, "no no that is not true; in the bad [...] Soviet times, the men and women were too equal. Let's restore the traditional structure and undo the Soviet era." Finally, some people think that [way] without necessarily inviting history to help; people who think that this is the better way because [...] women are made to care for children and they are more nurturing, they breastfeed, they do this and that, and the real men are breadwinners. Yes, women can work but their work will serve other purposes (Interview 2, Feminist Activist, Moscow, 8.11.2011).

The post-Soviet gender climate is primarily featured with the break in official commitment to the woman's equality. Despite all deficiencies, the Soviet state had always an official commitment to the woman's equality and embraced the idea of women's emancipation through work. Biological determinism was never overtly claimed by the Soviet state but the underlying gender order still continued to survive in deep. In the absence of official commitment to woman's equality, the notions of femininity and masculinity characterizing a traditional gender order have surfaced and made possible a reorientation in gender climate towards neo-traditionalism.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the official commitment to the woman's equality was broken not only at the discursive level but also at the institutional level. The state discourse has shifted from the model of working mother to motherhood; social services including childcare and nursery have been significantly reduced; national mechanism with executive power has been gradually abolished. Transition to market economy led to a drastic change in labor market and social rights. The post-Soviet state tended to resolve urgent issues of economic and moral crisis in a traditional way, thereby deepening the existing inequalities in employment at the expense of women.

I believe gender was [taken into consideration] during the Soviet time. *De facto* measures were taken, [but] few people knew [their] *de jure* meaning. Compared to today, women and men were more equal in the Soviet times. But the number of [women] in politics was low then because everybody had to work; it was like a law. Now, there is no such obligation. It depends on choice and now there are not many choices in terms of jobs and family. Let me explain it to you: women and men were both working in Soviet times. [Even though], according to statistics, women earned less than men, unemployment was quite low. The number of university graduates was high and [there was a very good chance that graduates would find a job]. There were [jobs available]; unemployment was nearly zero. [In addition], women enjoyed social security. Even if [a woman] had to care for her child at home, the state financially compensated her. But now there is no social security for women because women are working not only in the public but also in the private sector. In the Soviet [era], all were working in the public sector (Interview 3, NGO Expert, Moscow, 3.11.2011).

In parallel to discursive shift, drastic changes started to happen on institutional level. The Soviet state assumed responsibility to enable women to synchronically fulfill productive and reproductive functions. An efficient web of institutional infrastructure was designed for working mothers to maintain work and family balance.

At that time [in the Soviet period] some [problems] were solved. All women and all young girls could study [without paying any fees]. Both higher education and [primary and secondary] education, [along with] childcare, were taken care of. And women could work. Children [were] in [kindergarten]. We have 3 months of summer vacation and it is very difficult to [find child care]. [Children] should not only have vacation but also [opportunities to do interesting things and develop themselves], and this was also solved because we had trade unions, vacation houses, pioneer clubs, and so on and so forth. [So] the parents could have their own vacation with their own children and then for two months put them in summer vacation clubs. Many women could make very good careers [in their profession]. [Even so], at home they weren't as equal as at work because they [were also responsible for all of the housework] (Interviewee 4, NGO Expert, Moscow, 31.10.2011).

The neo-liberal recipe required the post-Soviet state to reduce social services in quantity. Privatization of Soviet economic units including nursery, kindergarten, clinic, etc. started. Following this, the state, on both ideological and institutional terms, left its responsibility for the provision of childcare over individual families.

The main problem is that women did not expect to assume male roles. Now, they have new roles. Their roles changed. They have responsibilities both at home and at work. During the Soviet times, we [women] had social security. The state supported us. When a woman had a problem, they could go to the administrative body and get help. There were some mechanisms to resolve their problems. [Since] the dissolution of the Soviet Union, women [have been] left alone to resolve their problems. Now, women have to count on themselves rather than state benefits. Besides, men are not as strong as women assume. This complicates women's situation too (Interview 5, NGO Expert, Moscow, 7.11.2011).

All these developments denoted that the woman's equality would not constitute a top priority for the post-Soviet state while having to deal with devastating political, economic and social conditions.

For the post-Soviet time, I think that for the first ten years of the post-Soviet state – of independent Russia – it was very difficult even to [to talk about gender politics] at all because the gender question was not a focus at all. Even social questions [in general] were not as much in focus because [it was a period of] economic transition, and the [only] thing the state tried to take [into] account was [providing] social support to the [least privileged members] of the population. I think there [has never been any] special focus on gender or women. Of course, it is also politics: don't [show] any support [...] to any special [population] categories. It was not a focus. It is also a political issue because that means other questions are more important [than gender]. You know gender is very often not well defined and taken for granted when [making or planning] political decisions. You may not think about gender outright but gender always exists. If you don't pay any attention [to the issue] but take for granted some sort of gender categorizing, [it will affect] the situation even if you do not [make] any special decisions or pay attention [to gender] at all. That was an issue with that sort of politics because they did not [consciously] take gender [into account], but the consequences of this politics influenced [women] very much. For example, [gender politics] were strongly connected with the system of childcare because in the Soviet time we had very well-developed system of childcare; we had kindergartens and [that] sort of thing (Interview 6, Academician, Moscow, 2.11.2011).

In comparison to economic crisis, gender equality and gender discrimination is thought to have a secondary importance and urgency on state level. However, policies prepared to manage economic and social crisis have direct impacts over gender relations and identities.

Gender is a very important issue. To resolve this appropriately, first the government has to accept the existence of such an issue. This issue had to gain recognition on the government level. To this end, our mission is to present this issue and disseminate it in every level, every sphere. You know many small [efforts] makes a great [result]. Our efforts lead the state to consider this issue seriously [...] and are mentioned in our reports and programs on gender issues. But it is hard to say yet [whether] the state fully understands its importance. There are laws but their implementation is quite poor. The legal framework is not implemented efficiently for men and women in our country. This [does not receive as much] attention now because priority is given to economic problems and crises because the number of poor [people] is increasing. The difference between rural and urban [populations] is also growing]. So, in this context, the gender issue stays behind. However, all

these problems directly affect women. For men, it is easier to resolve global problems but on the other side women are affected by them too (Interview 3, NGO Expert, Moscow, 3.11.2011).

Especially in the last decade, the post-Soviet state has failed to generate an approach and an efficient strategy for mainstreaming gender equality and empowerment.

You have to say that until I think 2004 (not sure about years), we had a strategic plan that the government pursued in gender questions. There was also a group that pursued and a governmental mechanism to discuss gender equality issue. Then the strategic plan was not pursued. There was a draft that was discussed before my arrival (not sure about the date) but it was the last strategic plan was drafted but not pursued in 2006 or 2007. And then the follow-up hung in the air. The gender issues are being followed in the Ministry of Health, which is Health and Social Affairs. So it has lost its prominence in the follow-up we had during the Soviet days. In Soviet days, there was quite a drive to have these women affairs at pretty senior levels in government and there were pursued the strategic plan where remnant of those more centralized and they stopped (Interview 7, Expert of an International Organization, Moscow, 1.11.2011).

Once the state has no strategic approach to mainstreaming gender equality and preventing gender discrimination, then it is not organized at institutional level either. Gorbachev attempted to revitalize the *zhensovety* during *perestroika*. A sphere for civic activism was allowed; civil societal organizations to enhance women's rights mushroomed. During Yeltsin's time, a national mechanism was established under executive power and some councils at ministerial level. In the last decade, a coordinative, executive and follow-up mechanism has gradually dissolved at senior level due to the changes in administrative structure.

It has been twenty years [since] the dissolution [of the Soviet Union]. In the 1990s, the women's movement was quite active. There were civil society organizations and commissions established, and they worked efficiently. A national mechanism [for gender equality] was established. Commissions were established under the Presidency and Prime Ministry. There was the Coordination Council under the Ministry of Labor and activities carried out in the Duma. But by 2004, when Putin came to power, an administrative reorganization took place. Some changes happened in the ministries.

Previously, there were many ministries but now some are united and put under the same roof. Now there are ten or eleven ministries. Then, the national mechanism was abolished. I mean, all the commissions were dissolved. [The government] tried to reestablish but it was really difficult. Now, there is the Coordination Council under the Ministry of Health and the Counseling Council [the Committee on Family, Women, and Children Affairs] in the Duma. That is all. There are no more institutions, which worked in cooperation before (Interview 8, Expert of an International Organization, Moscow, 30.11.2011).

Recently, there is no ministry or governmental branch endowed with executive power and budget for women's issues. The absence of a national mechanism prevents the generation and promotion of a gender sensitive approach on the state level. Measures for mainstreaming gender equality and empowerment could not be designed, coordinated and monitored at national level.

There is an inter-agency commission, [which is like the national machinery and which is called the Gender Equality Committee] under the Ministry of Health and Social Development. It is not an agency commission but a council. Basically this council's role is to oversee and make sure that the Russian Federation fulfills the recommendations of CEDAW Committee. The representatives of all the ministries are the members of this Council. There are some members from NGOs. We come together quarterly at least. We talk and discuss the situation of pregnant women, the situation of women in the North Caucasus, women's labor rights, trafficking... This council is what they [the members of the council] refer to as national machinery (Interview 9, NGO Expert, Moscow, 2.12.2011).

The government declares the Council under Ministry of Health and Social Development as to be national machinery. Nevertheless, this Council does not meet by the UN standards and requirements.

One of the main issues that we raised at that point was the need for a strategic approach again at the very senior level in government to have coordination, a committee or body of follow-up on all the good advancements and suggestions have been made over the time on gender issues. ... Again the main issue that was pointed out many other things would follow to place if there was the Coordination Committee. The government has picked that up. So the very positive outcome that I see from CEDAW report and the CEDAW process for Russia is that the government now has in a way of

blueprint for follow-up if you look at that report, it really shows in the issues that progress could be made. I would not say relatively ... but I think if there was a follow-up mechanism it could be set in motion and so this follow-up mechanism has been created at the beginning of this year. Unfortunately, we would say it has not been created at the Prime Minister's level as an umbrella over different ministries that have these sectors should have this mainstream agenda. But it has again been created under the Ministry of Health. It is chaired by the Deputy Minister. But it is a consultative committee and brings the governmental bodies and civil society organizations together. It is still working. But it has not been terribly active and meeting often enough for that. But there are discussions on the draft laws (Interview 7, Expert of an International Organization, Moscow, 1.11.2011).

In addition to this Council, there is another committee in the State Duma, named as the Committee on Family, Women and Children Affairs. It has a function of only consultancy and has neither power nor budget. Additionally, as it is evident from its name, this Committee has a traditional approach on gender relations and identities.

It is working traditionally. This committee [on Family, Women, and Children Affairs] has always been in the Duma under different names. It works for children but does not do anything for women. For example, the draft law [on the prevention of domestic violence] was promoted 10 years ago. Now we again try to promote it. It is same for the law on domestic violence. Maybe our state thinks that this committee has to have a traditional view [of gender]. That's why we don't have any promotion. It isn't very open to women's problems. They don't see them as real problems. This committee puts forward a draft law on the prohibition of abortion. So, what? (Interview 10, NGO Expert, Moscow, 7.11.2011).

The post-Soviet state locates the women's problems into the family and children. Women's existence is defined as being a mother, and their concerns and interests as individuals do not constitute a focal interest for the state. This Committee works on the rights of pregnant women, mothers and children including duration of maternal leave, maternal leave payment, reproductive rights, etc.

Last time our government writes to promote traditional family, it was done by the Committee of Mizulina again. We don't have any national machinery, which was suggested by the CEDAW. Last summer, in 2010, we talked about it in the CEDAW Committee. The committee has suggested to our government [that they should] to have a national machinery for gender

promotion with executive power. But our government says that “we have the committee of family in the Duma; what is the problem? And family is woman. We don’t have women’s problems but those of childhood and family” (Interview 10, NGO Expert and Lawyer, Moscow, 7.11.2011).

The lack of a national mechanism, ministry and/or executive agency, which prepare a strategic plan and coordinates action, proves to be an obstacle to mainstreaming gender equality and preventing gender discrimination. Its main result is that the existing mechanisms cannot prepare a law or efficiently support a draft law into the Duma.

We have fought for some years for the adoption of a gender [equality] law. We started in 1994 and in a few years we had a model law, which includes all the points of gender mainstreaming. We wanted Parliament to adopt this law, but our fight was unsuccessful because the men in the majority in the Duma didn’t want to adopt this law. They said all the points you [propose] are included in different laws, which already exist. We said that in the courts the judge should have all these [in one place], where he could find [a particular] point. If the law is compact, including all these different points, it will be much easier for them to judge and decide. But we were not successful. Then we wanted to adopt the so-called “anti-discrimination” law, [including all aspects of discrimination]. We didn’t succeed. Two attempts were unsuccessful. Now we have also nothing [at the national level] to promote women. No ministry for example. We don’t have a government commission. There was one but it was dissolved. The committee headed by Mizulina is the only one but it isn’t a national mechanism and has no executive power. They propose laws but nobody is interested in implementing them in the ministries. We have nothing in the administrative bodies. The commission under the government was dissolved. They said that they don’t need it (Interview 4, NGO Expert, Moscow 31.10.2011).

The council under the Ministry of Health does not work efficiently in preparing gender-specific draft laws either.

Well, it has consulting power, then Ministry of Health taking issues from there and can drive the development of draft laws for example if it wanted to do. So it is a tool that could leave to executive action. And I think it could be driving and should be driving. This is why it was created [...] after CEDAW it is still active to make it drive and action on these matters. But it has been

meeting only twice or three times by now (Interview 7, Expert of an International Organization, Moscow, 1.11.2011).

Another issue of quite importance is the absence of a gender-specific law. Russian state has promoted neither a legal definition of gender discrimination nor a specific law that directly pointing out to mainstreaming gender equality and preventing gender discrimination. The Russian state depends on the fact that the Constitution of the Russian Federation issues equal rights for men and women at home, in labor market, politics and education.

In Russia, we don't have any law on gender equality and equal rights for women and men. We don't have a special law. We have this article in the Constitution and many in other laws. But we don't have any special law. One of the ideas of our organization is to promote a special law. Now, it is not adopted yet. First of all, it is a definition of gender discrimination. We don't have any definition in existing laws in Russia. We have just statements about non-discrimination but we don't have any definition like in CEDAW commission. We talk about harassment. We don't have a definition or law of harassment in Russia. It is a big law; political rights, labor rights of women. We talk about non-discrimination of women in the labor market. It is like equal work equal payment. And in political rights, we think about quotas (Interview 10, NGO Expert, Moscow, 7.11.2011).

The existing legal framework might not be depicted as completely inefficient but it is gender neutral and not gender sensitive, as it ought to be. Equality before law is necessary but insufficient requirement to improve women's rights. For women to realize equal opportunities in all spheres of social life, gender discrimination is to be legally defined and necessary measures to eliminate the reasons of discrimination are to be taken. To this end, the state is to have a gender specific approach and a national mechanism.

There is you know very paradoxical situation. One the one hand, we have the best articles in our constitution which say that women in Russia possess not only equal rights but also equal opportunities. This is the [positive element]. We have a lot of not very bad laws, which are proclaiming equal rights. But unfortunately this is just lip service. We don't have the national mechanism of gender equality. Practically, we have only one facility in terms of women's

mechanism in the state Duma, which is the Committee on Family, Women, and Children Affairs (Interview 11, Academician, Moscow, 9.11.2011).

Particularly, the case of domestic violence requires an awareness of vulnerability of and discrimination against women. Domestic violence is not a sphere of violation of women's human rights, which either 'equality before law' or gender-neutral laws could protect. A gender specific legislation covering not only domestic violence but also sexual harassment, marital rape, honor killings, bride abductions, etc. will clarify what constitutes gender discrimination and what kind of preventive measures should be taken to eliminate it.

There was a draft law. Not one, we had about 40 draft laws. Not one was adopted because our parliament says that we have legislation; we have a criminal court and you can use this legislation in domestic violence. But the police who sit everyday who look at these problems everyday say that our legislation isn't good. We have to get special legislation for domestic violence (Interview 12, NGO Expert, Moscow, 7.11.2011).

The absence of a specific law removes the accountability of the perpetrators, enables them to repeat violence against their family members, and leaves the victims without any protection. As a result, legal process does not work efficiently and fast enough to immediately punish the perpetrators and protect the victims of domestic violence. Even if the victim appeals to the court, 'in view of the gaps in legislation, it is extremely difficult to prove crimes of domestic violence (even physical violence, which has ensuing visible evidence)' (ANNA, 2010: 11).

The courts are late at the stage. The evidence isn't collected. The issue is that many courts cases come to court so late. When they come to the court, the evidence is insufficient and cannot subsumed okay under the law (Interview 7, Expert of an International Organization, Moscow, 1.11.2011).

The lack of a specific law makes the legal process complicated and harder in diagnosing the cases of gender discrimination and defining the invisible barriers before gender equality.

That's why you couldn't find any court decision where you can find statements about women's discrimination. Even if it is discrimination, the court says that it was a violation of labor law or something else, for instance. But our parliamentary says that we need to solve the problem of family but we don't see so (Interview 10, NGO Expert, Moscow, 7.11.2011).

The lack of specific legislation to combat domestic violence indicates that the Russian state has no priority to improve gender equality and to eliminate gender discrimination. Rather, the Committee in the State Duma and the Council under the Ministry of Health and Social Development introduced quite conservative drafts, which reflect the lack of awareness about gender discrimination on the state level.

Lakhova and Mizulina [two important female politicians] were democrats before and then moved to United Russia Party. They became conservative and stated to promote conservative policy. Lakhova initiated a conservative law on adoption of Russian orphans and Mizulina is absolutely conservative and initiated anti-abortion law (Interview 13, Expert of Crisis Center, St.Petersburg, 14.2.2013).

Although there is draft law on domestic violence under preparation by 2013, it is not approved in the State Duma yet. While the women's organizations prefer to catch-up with the international standards stipulated by CEDAW and in the Istanbul Convention, the state turns a deaf ear to them and does not tend to cooperate with local women's non-governmental organizations.

About the law on domestic violence: concerning the local situation, we didn't have financial support from the Russian state and Russian businessmen, particularly with one issue. They gave money for children and for the elderly but not for women, not for the victims of domestic violence. We are in a bad situation. Now, we are trying to [propose] a new law on violence against women. Unfortunately, the project [draft] of the new law is very old, old-fashioned, not progressive, and absolutely [contrary to] new trends and international conventions. The Istanbul Convention is progressive and strong concerning violence against women but the law prepared by the Russian government goes against this trend. It was written by the *Duma* deputies. We tried to send our [comments] on this new law. They were all rejected. We prepared lots of suggestions last year, from many many organizations in Russia, but they were rejected. We don't like the law on domestic violence. It

didn't contain more than model suggestions. It is just [so that people can] say "yes Russia has a law on domestic violence," but it isn't comprehensive or modern. [In the draft law] you see mostly prevention, but there is no [...] system of effective promotion, punishment of perpetrators, or safety (Interview 13, Expert of Crisis Center, St.Petersburg, 14.2.2013).

The post-Soviet state has weak liability in terms of its commitment to international obligations under CEDAW and is very slow in taking necessary measures as suggested by the UN authorities. The shadow reports to be submitted to the UN bodies are not prepared on time. Contrary to the UN requirements, there is still no national mechanism, gender specific law, domestic violence law; nor is gender discrimination legally defined in the existing legal framework. In practice, this prevents to prove gender discrimination.

Russia also signed CEDAW, [so if we follow the Convention], this means that the Russian government took on the obligation to fulfill and implement all the provisions stipulated in the convention. There is very important [obligation] that the government creates a national mechanism for gender equality. Unfortunately, the government did not adopt it. During the Putin era, many kinds of backlash happened. Among this backlash is the annihilation of the commission, which existed within the frame of the presidential administration. It was not very powerful administration but it existed. It was something like a forum. It was the year [2006] that the President spoke about women's situation and conditions in our country, and the commission was under the president. It was annihilated when Putin was the president, along with the one under the Prime Minister. It was much [worse] in the Ministry of Social Development and Health. It was reorganized and was a big department in the frame of a previous Ministry. Now only one person is more or less [working on] women's issues (Interview 11, Academician, Moscow, 9.11.2011).

In addition to the lack of legal definition of discrimination, there is no designated institution that women can apply for the cases of discrimination. Discrimination against women in labor market and domestic violence are two most common cases that most women in Russia have to cope with. Indeed, these are issues of social importance for the Russian state. However, women are left helpless and necessarily

unprotected. A lawyer from an NGO assigned to protect labor rights of women explains the situation of women under discrimination in labor market as follows:

In addition, there is no special institution that people exposed to discrimination can appeal to. There is no institution at all. Only in St. Petersburg there is a small public institution, under the surveillance of the government, which deals with sexual discrimination. But this institution has no authority to impose a penalty or fine or to sue the people or employer involved in discrimination. There is no any institution to apply sanctions, either. Thus, women exposed to discrimination do not know where to appeal [from the very beginning]. Even when they appeal to the court or public institutions, they could not get any help because the Prosecution Office and State Institution of Labor Inspection deal with issues related to work. So, they direct women to the court. Indeed, they do not usually do anything. There is no serious supervision, [and if one is launched] it remains cosmetic. They only direct women to the court. So, when a woman goes to the court, she has no legal evidence of discrimination. It is difficult to prove discrimination. Both sides have to [submit proof]; the employer has to prove that there is no discrimination while the woman has to prove that she was exposed to it. If a woman cannot prove discrimination, then the case will not conclude in her favor and no sanction will be applied to the employer. In other words, discrimination is everywhere but there [are no consequences] (Interview 23, NGO Expert, St.Petersburg, 16.11.2011).

Another issue the Russian state fails regarding gender equality is the collection of statistical data nation-wide. It must see the whole situation regarding gender equality and discrimination in quantitative data in mainstreaming gender equality and preventing gender discrimination. In addition to establishing a national mechanism, collecting and updating statistical data is very of importance for the sustainability of follow-up, monitoring, control and evaluation of measures taken on senior state level. As an expert from an international organization explains the situation:

One probably has to say that many of the achievements have also not being followed up not even in terms of reliable figures. You need statistics to be kept up and you need reporting from the republics to the center in order to keep a body of statistical knowledge on these issues like access to jobs, I mean, what have you on the situation of gender issue. Even incidence of domestic violence for quite a while and even now not really statistically followed up. At least not consistently for all the republics and so on and so on

the statistical material you have and you can ... is not really comprehensive of all. It is never really liable statistics because there might be one or two republics that have never reported ... We can't be sure of the overall figure. That is one issue (Interview 7, Expert of an International Organization, Moscow, 1.11.2011).

Not unexpectedly, monitoring and collecting data on domestic violence nationwide is not adopted by the Russian state as a preventive method to depict the situation and then combat domestic violence.

The [available] information about violence in the family is fake; it isn't true. There is manipulation and disinformation about domestic violence. The government said very openly that they would not run a comprehensive project [draft law] against domestic violence. They rejected the issue [completely]. We have [a traditional family model]: high status of males, and fathers or husbands who control children and women and who have the power. The government invites conservative men from religious circles to give speeches and wishes to prevent the influence of outside agencies, such as pedagogical influences, on the family (Interview 13, Expert of Crisis Center, St.Petersburg, 14.2.2013).

To sum up, the post-Soviet state has not developed a distinctive focus on gender issues. The 'struggle' with gender discrimination and gender role stereotypes in society requires more than the constitutional principles of equal rights and opportunities for all. The implementation of existing laws and the legislation of gender specific law are crucial to promote gender equality.

4.2. Feminization of Reproduction

In the post-Soviet era, gender issues are once more located at the center of Russian national politics due to the demographic and political concerns on reproduction and related matters. State policy on women's issues has been completely integrated into national policy on the grounds of family, demographics, health, poverty reduction, etc. The state finds it legitimate to get involved in reproductive issues, define problems, suggest solutions and manipulate reproductive behavior. Russian state's policy regarding women is currently organized around the task of 'creating an

environment that enables women to combine their professional, family and household responsibilities' (UNDP, 2010: 48-49).

In this setting, reproduction is feminized, which features the orientation of post-Soviet gender climate towards neo-traditionalism. Women's reproductive function is emphasized for biological and demographic survival of Russian nation (Rivkin-Fish, 2010: 703). Women's problems are reduced and restricted to having children. Behind this understanding lies the assumption of the traditional labor division between men and women. More importantly, this assumption is presented as 'the only feasible and socially acceptable paradigm' by the state (UNDP, 2010: 48-49).

In most cases of differentiation on the grounds of sex [regardless of protection at work place, education or domestic work] the defining factor and justification for this differentiation was women's reproductive functions. Since the reproductive function is one area in which the difference between men and women cannot be questioned, this focus is logical and can be observed in many societies where the gender climate is promoting biological determinism and gender differentiation. Where biological differences assumed to determine not only the physical but also deep psychological and social differences, however the significance of maternity has to expand beyond pregnancy, child-birth and breast-feeding to encompass women's assumed greater capacity for and abilities in caring, nurturing behavior (Kay, 2000: 22).

4.2.1. Motherhood

Social construction of reproduction as motherhood has always been a characteristic of the underlying gender order in Russia since the pre-revolutionary times. Production-reproduction dilemma characterized the prevailing gender climates in the Soviet times. Depending on the socio-economic context, the cursor occasionally moved more towards reproductive function of women but the focus on the productive capacity of women was never abandoned due to the official commitment to the woman's equality. The dilemma was overcome through over-burdening and over-mobilization of women, which was the primary critique against the Soviet gender policies.

Our state, our ideologists, decided to support the traditional values. They decided to support not women, as it was in the Soviet period, but family, absolutely traditional family, not couples that are perhaps educating children and raising children but just registered family relations. In the Soviet period, our state was interested first of all in high levels of labor force participation. That's why they wanted to see women first of all as workers somewhere. [The working mother] was the main concept of the Soviet period, and the main concept of the post-Soviet period is the mother [...] at home and the father [...] making enough money to support the whole family, with women deciding not to work but to only have children, and so on (Interview 14, Academician, Moscow, 6.12.2011).

What differentiates post-Soviet gender climate from the Soviet one is the recognition of over-burdening and over-mobilization of women as their main problem, the reformulation of labor force participation on voluntary basis, and the definition of motherhood and family as the primary function of women, rather than transforming the underlying patterns and assumptions regarding gender relations and identities.

The portrayal of women [in the post-Soviet time] is primarily as mothers, [which the government has promoted] in the past [few] years. [...] Gender politics is articulated in a traditionalist way, although it is impossible to claim that a coherent gender politics exists in post-Soviet Russia. The traditionalist articulation of gender politics more or less refers to the reinvention of householders as women. Women are mostly connected [to the home] in Russia. When women's images are primarily related to family obligations and as mothers, [the obligation to work] is secondary compared to the family (Interview 15, Academician, St.Petersburg, 16.11.2011).

It can be claimed that the post-Soviet gender climate has strongly featured biological determinism regarding gender relations and identities to strengthen family. The post-Soviet gender discourse and policies overtly signify the determining impact of biological differences between men and women over psychological and social traits. Biological determinism is used to define true/proper femininity and masculinity. Motherhood is taken as primary social role and function of being 'a true and/or proper woman', and it is justified through female biological traits. As being portrayed naturally emotional, gentle and soft versus being rational, selfish and wild,

women are supposed to be more properly suited for the role of caring and bringing the family together.

I believe there is an attempt to introduce some elements of the traditional family structure, mostly by [...] encouraging women to have children, [...] say two or more, and for women to [have as] their primary responsibility characteristics such as nurturing and the socialization of children. That seems to coexist with and not necessarily prevail over the belief that women have the right to (and both should and can) get educated, get work, achieve more, [...] etc. I think there is an attempt to combine two spheres that are difficult to [fully] combine in any society, because that requires a lot of resources. However, I think there is an underlying assumption that the genders are different [and that this] is a natural way of life that does not quite mean that they are not equal but [rather that] they are different, and with these differences [certain inequalities, discrepancies or certain elements of different stages of life] may come. As I said, there is an assumption that women are more responsible for children and care of the children, which is again taken for [granted] as natural. For a woman, having, raising and starting a family is naturally interesting, important and valuable (Interview 2, Feminist Activist, Moscow, 8.11.2011).

Redefinition of femininity around motherhood is primarily related to demographic crisis, which has been steadily alerting to Russian governments since the 1990s. Sharp decrease in fertility rates, high rates of divorce and abortion, and low rates of marriage have prepared the appropriate conditions for the regeneration of gender climate alongside neo-traditional lines. As motherhood is being defined as the primary function of women and as the main condition of being a true/proper woman, demographic crisis has gained a gendered face in post-Soviet Russia. It has provided a quite sound ground for a justifiable claim over feminization of reproduction in a society, where the definitions of femininity and masculinity already reflect the association between women and nature.

National politics always has a gender dimension. The demographic problem is a particular one: women are assessed as reproductive resources. The church is happy about it; it's very strict about who are bad women and who are good women. Demography and reproduction are state issues because that is how the state sees the demographic problem. If the state sees the demographic problem as a migration issue, this is another story. Part of the demographic

problem is reproduction and women. They used to be productive and reproductive. But now they almost forget about their productive roles. Reproduction is not a private but a political issue (Interview 16, Academician, St.Petersburg, 15.11.2011).

Indeed, in most polities, demographic politics has a national and gendered dimension; Russia cannot be claimed as an exception here. As Yuval-Davis (1997) argues, as biological and ideological reproduction of nation is prioritized, then motherhood is defined as the primary role of women. This is justified on the grounds of the sake of nation and the family rather than their self-emancipation.

Of course the state is promoting the idea of traditional family because [of] the demography situation and political reasons (Interview 17, NGO Expert, Moscow, 2.12.2011).

For the post-Soviet state, demographic crisis is a political issue of national importance as well. Non-active population has outnumbered active working population. There is an evident disproportion between Orthodox Russians concentrating in urban areas and Muslim populations settled in rural areas. Russia has let in immigrants from Far East and Siberia, and from China. All these conditions make demographic crisis a vital issue for the sake of Russian state and nation. In terms of gender politics, these conditions constitute the socio-economic context of prevailing gender climate in post-Soviet Russia.

Demographics are presented by the leaders of the country, by Putin and Medvedev or whoever is around now, as a solution or as a potential solution to all the problems [the country is facing]. The scheme is very simple if not to say simplistic. There are fewer and fewer people and your demography is falling. If they can stabilize [the population], things will be better. If women suddenly began to have more children, everything will be resolved: economic and social issues will become better as long as women keep having more and more children, [because] we have more people. This is the main premise (Interview 18, Academician, Moscow, 8.11.2011).

Demographic crisis has coupled with the increasing power and prestige of the Orthodox Church. The accusation of the Orthodox Church on single women to be

egoist contributes to the nationalist understanding of demographic crisis. The Orthodox Church draws attention on moral pollution of society, abortion, traditional family and its hostility to Western feminism and to self-realization of women as individuals. The reproductive function of women is identified as a duty to the nation rather than an individual decision.

On the one hand, [we have] the patriarchal type of neo-traditionalism, which is easily identified with the politics of Russian Orthodox Church and Russian nationalism. They come together and nationalism is always quite traditional. The church ideology [is such that] they emphasize gender boundaries, they essentialize gender, and they try to moralize gender roles and sexuality and women's reproductive capacities. Family becomes very feminine and their femininity is also very traditional because when you speak about family, they have very archaic understanding of what family is. When we speak about sexual life, they have very moral lines [which are] very different from real practices in understanding what should be "proper" sexual life, [the division of men's and women's roles], and what [makes a] "good" man or woman. That is neo-traditionalism. It is very vocal in the Russian church. The church is getting more power ideologically and politically because politicians want to build up national idea and also to have ideological legitimacy (Interview 1, Academician, St.Petersburg, 14.2.2013).

The point to be underlined for the sake of this study is the way to resolve the demographic crisis, which would bring the reinvention and reinstallation of traditional assumptions and patterns. As the underlying gender order associated with the conditions of market economy, which requires a significant decrease in social services, including especially childcare, neo-traditional orientation rises as the easiest and cheapest way of increasing fertility rates. This serves neo-liberal premises and is easily justified by nationalist tunes.

Now, if we're considering Russia, the state has some gender [policies] but they are very controversial. Now the focus of these policies is mainly demographic. There is a lot of moral panic about demographic situation and the low birth rate. So the focus of politics is demography, [...] but now there are many different ways to stimulate those rates and in different countries you can see different kinds of policies. For example, [extensive] social support, [financial] support, and [some kind of incentive] for every child. Maternal capital is an example of such politics that is sort of trying to find some

balance. But very interestingly you could receive it only once and only for the second child, not for the third or fourth. Maybe it will change; there is discussion about that. That is not money you can just receive; it is money that you can spend on something like education for either mother or child; or for housing and pension for the mother. It is useful (Interview 6, Academician, Moscow, 2.11.2011).

As long as demographic crisis is gendered, proper images of gender relations and identities are drawn on the grounds of biological traits. Accordingly, a natural connection appears between women and family. Family is promoted as focal point and motherhood as primary duty for women. Nurturing, caring, being emotional and soft are taken as proper feminine traits and as essential to being woman in both biological and social sense. Then, establishing strong family ties and a warm home environment is seen as women's primary duty, and home-family is claimed as women's proper/natural/non-negotiable life space and motherhood as women's proper life way [natural destiny] (Kay, 2000: 29-30).

Women are not only mothers, women are personalities. That is the sense of the feminist attitude. If something happens in my country, [it will always] concern women as mothers because we have demographic [importance]. [Population growth] is decreasing and when the death [rate] is much higher than the rate of birth, so women are interesting for our government only as 'birth givers' (Interview 11, Academician, Moscow, 9.11.2011).

Besides, an inevitable connection between reproductive function and sustainable morality in society is established and imposed over women as if it was a non-negotiable natural fact. Strong traditional family is to manage the spread of moral crisis especially among the youth. It is believed, the stronger the family is, the fewer decline in social order moral order happens. The connection between morality and maternal role is attributed to the assumption that women have 'finer sense of morality and justice'. Women are to be morally superior than men due to 'the maternal role and its subsequent nurturing and caring characteristics, which were ascribed to all women regardless of their actual maternal status' (Kay, 2000: 29-30).

Family issue is discussed when demography and health issues are discussed because of the deterioration of public health and alcoholism, there is a threat

on birth rates and general mortality. The government looks to the family as in need of support. When family issues are adequately addressed, some other issues will fall into place. Meaning there would be generally more attention to family health, women's health, to the impact on birth rate and child health in the end. It triggers the whole staff, the other positive developments if one is getting it right. If you see comments on family in this context, by now there is a lot of awareness of this link. The politicians generally started in child health and give attention on it. I think this is the point that we entry in our discussion on women (Interview 7, Expert of an International Organization, Moscow, 1.11.2011).

The main impact of this understanding, which constitutes the core of new gender climate in post-Soviet Russia, is the lack of self-realization, individualization and emancipation of women from family. Women's self-realization is primarily portrayed as motherhood. Maternity is discursively built up and imposed over women as a non-negotiable social duty rather than an individual matter/personal choice. Another way of self-realization of women, which means not to give birth and run after professional aspirations, is taken as a by-product of Western ideas and influence; Western ideas are thought to bring egoism for women, and to destroy Russian people and culture.

Our government, all these ideologists, they all are speaking about a demographic crisis and they see a connection between Western feminism and this demographic crisis. They say that Western feminism is the [reason] for the decreasing number of children because every woman would like to realize herself. She is thinking about her self-realization. When she is 20, 30, 35 years old and even when she is 40, she is not ready to have children and [now] very few women are ready to have more than two children (Interview 14, Academician, Moscow, 6.12.2011).

Nevertheless, the life aspirations of educated, middle and upper class, professional women are an inevitable result of equality policies for almost a century. Russian women at the turn of 21st century are different from their sisters at the turn of 20th century (Khotkina, 1994). State feminism has led to some changes in the underlying gender order although not completely crashing it. From the very outset, 'accepted notions of femininity had to expand to include the idea of women as educated and skilled workers and ... to free femininity from its enmeshed attachment and

association with the home and the family' (Kay, 2000: 20). Now, work has a meaning of self-realization for them as well. That is why the attempts of bringing women back at home proposed by Gorbachev and Yeltsin were not in conformity with the reality and failed.

It seems that women workers will retain their work within enterprises for as long as it is possible for them to do so. Seventy years of propaganda telling women that work was a path to freedom and the most worthy of endeavors has certainly left its mark: women will not draw from the labor market in the near future unless they are forced to do so (Ashwin & Bowers, 1997: 30).

The implication of Soviet gender climate on the definition of femininity is the internalization of women's equal access to education and work, and its appropriation as another way of self-realization for women in addition to motherhood, especially by educated young women and in feminist circles. In my understanding, this signifies the encounter between the gender order and the gender climate. Although the underlying gender order was not totally transformed in the Soviet times, Soviet gender climate led to irreversible effects on women's equality and emancipation. The existence of traditional values that survived paves the ground for a neo-traditional orientation, though.

There are different trends and events that seem contradictory. But we somehow have, in Russia's gender order, a kind of feminist that we didn't see before. There is a feminist understanding of gender. There are gender studies. Of course it is the minority. This is very new field. But there are feminist critiques in philosophy and literature. You have feminist voices in the public sphere. This was really not the case in the Soviet period. There were only some feminist initiatives. This is one thing and it is positive. There is also the market influence, and this gives rise to the phenomenon of the businesswomen. There are more and more women, although [still] not enough, in the political arena. Those who [break] through the barriers of gender in the political sphere are really important. You really have the empowerment of women and an understanding of gender equality, which was not the case in the Soviet period. On the other side, you also have neo-traditionalism, [which] takes a different face (Interview 1, Academician, St.Petersburg, 14.2.2013).

Primarily, surviving through one income proves to be impossible under the devastating economic conditions. Most families are in need of a second income. Even if they do not need a second income, the married women with children still want to work for some other reasons. Being a member of 'labor collectives' provides women with a sense of identity; working outside house brings women chance to release from domestic work, reach friendship, be involved in social production (Ashwin & Bowers, 1997: 27).

In two field surveys (carried out in four provincial regions from 1993 to 1997) (Kay, 2002) conducted with young women (older than 16) with degree of either specialized secondary or higher education, the result is that there is not a common view of returning to the home prevailing among the women interviewed. It is suggested that most of them explain their choice of study with an aspiration of prospective career; they want it for their own and their families' security. However, they feel 'a pressure to conform normative expectations regarding women's domestic and family roles' (p.65) and understand the resolution of the dilemma between work and family as a matter of choice. For many of them, the home and family is the sphere of women's primary responsibility, not the sole one though. Mostly, women see men as primary breadwinners despite their desire to stay in work (Ashwin, 2006b: 35).

4.2.2. Maternity Capital

Feminization of reproduction is embodied in pro-natal policies followed by the Russian state. Pro-natal policies specify reproductive function of women in the construction of gender identity and relations. Maternity capital is not gender neutral; on the contrary, it designates women rather than men as the target group and is named maternity capital instead of parental. Parenthood was still defined in terms of motherhood and fathers were again assigned the traditional role. The words 'men' and 'women' were absent in his speech. Instead, the term, 'young families,' was used as synonymous with women and mothers (Rotkrich et al., 2007: 352, 355).

In contrast to the first decade of transition, President Putin seemed to acknowledge that bearing and raising children have negative consequences for women's power. Women have to make a choice between their productive and reproductive functions (Zdravomyslova, 2005). To resolve this, he never mentioned about sending women 'back home'; rather, he seemed to recognize the dilemma of child-rearing for educated women in contemporary Russia (to stay at home and quit work, or to prefer career to children), and of the forms of discrimination experienced by economically dependent housewives in their families (Rotkirch et al., 2007: 353).

Unfortunately, President Putin's understanding of maternity capital proved to be definitely gender-framed, despite its gender-neutral language. In his inauguration in 2006, he did not even say a word about men, their needs, roles (as father and husband) and potential contribution to family life. Neither was any word about single-parent households, which is a characteristic of Russian society (Kay, 2007: 5). The indirect support of fathers on childcare was addressed concerning the military service. Here, President Putin suggested revising some legal conditions on obligatory military service, such a delay of recruitment for conscripts whose wives are pregnant (Rotkirch et al., 2007: 352, 355).

Maternal capital is gendered. It is maternal. It should be parental and include men, too. This compensates women's leave from work and professionalizes the housewife. For this purpose, if the state is traditional, it is too [little] for mothers. Women have to work sooner or later to earn money for their family. If a woman has to stay at home, for example for 10 years, then after 10 years when she wants to go back to work she is not qualified. And the state on the other hand needs a labor force, again because of the demographic crisis. These measures and demands are in conflict. And around their 40s women begin to have to care for their own parents. They are necessary for the care of the elderly. [So a woman] is forced out [from the labor market] by these measures. [Women] have a tradition of education, economic independence, and employment. They are well qualified (Interview 1, Academician, St.Petersburg, 14.2.2013)

President Putin's approach to low fertility rate as well as his solution was purely economic and pragmatic. He identified low income, inadequate housing conditions, and limited sources to ensure a decent level of healthcare and education as main reasons of low fertility. As long as the situation was analyzed in economic terms, the

suggested policies would just include the provision of a set of financial and social support measures for young families by the state (Rotkirch et al., 2007: 352). Maternity capital aims to influence reproductive decisions of families and increase fertility rate through a considerable amount of money paid for once and only for the second child, not first or third.

Our government wants to inspire women to have a lot of children. Not two, but more [than that]: that's why three or more children in Russia called a big family, a lot of kinder, a lot of children in your family, etc. They have special support now: 10,000 USD for [having] the third child (Interview 14, Academician, Moscow, 6.12.2011).

In a research conducted at European University in St.Petersburg, researchers conducted interviews with families using maternity capital, and aimed at measuring the impact of maternity capital over reproduction decisions and gender relations in family. In an interview I conducted with one of these researchers, she pointed out that women would more need institutional support rather than a one-time financial support to give birth for a second or third child (or more) although maternity capital is taken as better than nothing.

Women do need institutional support. Not the decoration of state support, but good health care for the children, [...] kindergarten, a guarantee that their children will have good free education, and the possibility of going on maternal leave. The institutional system should work properly. It is important that [there be] maternal [capital] or small benefits. I like these interviews because people speak in a metaphoric way. It is like having a meal: you have the normal meal, the meat and everything, and after that [you have] this small piece of chocolate. This maternal leave is like a piece of chocolate. It is good and [it is available] but that is not enough. You still need the normal meal; you need the whole system to work properly so you can trust this institution (Interview 19, Academician, St.Petersburg, 15.11.2011).

Another expert confirmed that maternity capital has not lived up to expectations and not proved to be an effective source of motivation, especially for educated, upper-middle class, urban women. These women have already good salaries to afford the expenses of two or three children (Interview 4, NGO Expert, Moscow, 31.10.2011).

Besides, maternity capital was designed to improve housing conditions but its amount does not fulfill the real costs of living when considering that 5 square meters could be bought with the whole amount of maternity capital in Moscow (Borozdina et al., 2012).

10.000 dollars, especially for [people living in] big cities, is not that big of a sum. So, I know [...] people who receive this amount of money for their second child. It [is] an additional plus or bonus but it is not the main reason. In other words it is not significant or big enough to really make a difference. So you know that even if you could spend the money freely, you cannot buy a decent car or you can't [really expand] your living premises, definitely not in big cities. It still helps; it is obviously nice to get it [and it's] better than not getting it but it is not that [much] money (Interview 2, Feminist Activist, Moscow, 8.11.2011).

Additionally, the restrictions on how to use maternity capital show that it is not a gender sensitive policy either. As mentioned before, there are only three ways to be able to utilize from it. One expert from the Institute of Demography mentioned that these restrictions might be a sign of mistrust of the government on the women. The government should probably think that the families do not spend this money on children but ruin it. However, women would be in need of cash money during pregnancy or after birth to afford health expenses, nutrition and clothing (Interview 20, Academician, Moscow, 8.11.2011). Under these circumstances, it might be hard to claim that maternity capital does ultimately change the reproductive decisions of families.

There are a lot of young women and men and [the population] should be rising, but it [has not been doing so for perhaps 5 years]. [This is not due to financial issues.] They are young, they have families, they have children, but not because of some money. And they couldn't use this money for their own reasons like buying clothes for children or for food for the family. They have to use for three reasons and this money is not [sufficient]. In Russia, 300,000 rubles is not enough for a house. May be it is money for education but every family needs to eat and [every child needs clothes] now, not after 5 years. That's why maternity capital isn't a way to solve this demographic problem (Interview 10, NGO Expert, Moscow, 7.11.2011).

Maternity capital implies traditional assumptions regarding gender identity and relations within family. The lack of economic independence was defined by President Putin as the main reason of women's being dependent on and degraded within the family (Rotkirch et al., 2007: 353). He tried to enable women to meet their productive and reproductive responsibilities, rather than proposing a more equitable gendered division of labor in the home. His approach reveals that women are conceptualized as having no legitimate interests apart from their family and their roles as being mothers and workers (Rivkin-Fish, 2010: 703).

I think there is a kind of picture of a very specific kind of family with very specific needs and very specific resources. They had a very particular type of family in mind when they implemented this policy. Of course, [this type] is a heterosexual family with a man as the breadwinner and a woman, well-educated but mostly a housewife, who is ready to leave her job and stay at home with their children (Interview 19, Academician, St.Petersburg, 15.11.2011).

Maternity capital illustrates that the assumptions about true/proper gender relations are politically and culturally formulated in accordance with biological differences, which determine gender identities and roles in an ideal family. In the post-Soviet gender climate, gendered division of care-work and its implications for men's and women's activities in both public and private spheres and for their access to both formal and informal forms of social security and support are framed by such traditional assumptions and their reflection in policy-making and implementation (Kay, 2007: 5). In other words, the state establishes gendered relations with female and male citizens, and identifies their economic and social contribution to nation's well-being on the basis of sex.

It can be claimed that the pro-natalist policies have crystallized class differences within women. Maternity capital leads to class differentiation on the grounds of economic status of family. As an additional support, it might be a policy more useable by middle class families, who are not immediately in need of cash during pregnancy and immediately after birth, and would not get worried about

guaranteeing the future life of their children in terms of education, health insurance, etc.

I would say that sometimes neo-traditionalism cannot only be seen in patriarchal terms. It can also be seen in terms of liberalization. It could have very devastating consequences for both women and men. But people don't know that. They only see it as a sign of gender traditionalism in family relations, as a sign of the good quality of life, prestige, and good economic situation of the family (Interview 1, Academician, St.Petersburg, 14.2.2013).

As a researcher mentioned, the law on maternity capital has a specific language, which educated people understand, and which is not clear. Additionally, getting this certificate has a bureaucratic workload that only educated people can succeed to do so.

When they develop policies, they take into account a certain type of family. If they take [as a model] the low class families who don't have any resources, maternal capital will make a difference because they [the low class families] don't have the material resources in the first place. They don't have educational resources and they cannot fight the bureaucratic machines and system. But those who are well educated know how to communicate and they know how to find a way to implement their rights and to try to work the mechanisms, like making calls, going to Moscow or other cities and try to find out how they can get what they desire. [...] The lower classes who are not well educated don't know how to search for the information they need or how to find this (Interview 19, Academician, St.Petersburg, 15.11.2011).

4.2.3. Abortion

Another attempt to resolve demographic crisis is related to the regulation of abortion, which again signifies feminization of reproduction as well as orientation to neo-traditionalism. A law banning abortion is not yet issued in Russia but there is a hot public debate promoted by the Duma Committee on Issues of Women, Family and Children and the Orthodox Church. Dogmatically, the Orthodox Church puts the blame on women who get aborted and does not promote sexual education or contraception either; thereby leaving women without no other choice to prevent unwanted pregnancies.

The other [issue] is the law concerning abortion. It is [closely] connected with the tendency in our society for the state to be much more closely involved with the church. There is a lot of discussion about how a religious woman could have an abortion and what she should do if her husband is religious and does not want his wife to have an abortion. Now it is not the right time to vote for this law because the discussion has not finished yet. There are 11 documents [draft laws] to be [proposed for this new] law. When a new Duma [session] starts, they are free to take these drafts or not. If they don't take them, it will be time to start from the very beginning (Interview 21, NGO Expert, Moscow, 31.10.2011).

An expert and an activist summarized the direction and ground of hot public debate on abortion in the last years as given below. She underlined the importance of family planning and sex education to protect women's health and prevent delivery at school ages. She implied that the main motivation behind the attempt to issue a ban on abortion is not to decrease abortion rates and to discourage abortion as a method of contraception but to force an increase in fertility rates.

She [an expert on biomedical ethics] blamed women for their abortion. She did not want to hear that nobody [thinks abortions are good]. I mean we had [at times] in our history a prohibition on abortion. It was an attack on women's rights. That is the point. Women don't want to give birth to many children because they are not sure about their future. If they are living in poverty, they don't want to create more poor people. They [may also] want to give [their children] a good education and they can't rely on men. The big problem is that the Orthodox Church unfortunately is getting more and more influence in my country. The church [supports] the prohibition of abortion. And at school and even in kindergarten it is necessary to disseminate sex education at early age. Schoolgirls and boys are not educated in terms of safe sex. 4 or 5 years ago the situation was better; the big program supported this program [sex education] and the situation in my country was better during the Yeltsin time, *perestroika*. The big problem of family planning was [being dealt with and there was a] 30% decrease in abortions. Now there is no education. All the programs at that time were supported by foreign sponsors. Now they are closed because there is no money. But the government is against family planning because the government needs soldiers and needs workers, because of demography. There is a big campaign against family planning [that tries to paint it as] something brought from abroad, from outside. That is a big big problem because now Russia is in first place in Europe in terms of abortions. It means that it is very bad for health, for

psychology. It creates from the very beginning a relationship of distrust between women and men. Men and boys are not educated in terms of the culture of sex relations (Interview 11, Academician, Moscow, 9.11.2011).

This debate implies that biological and psychological responsibility of reproduction is reduced on the shoulders of women. Women are forced to think twice before making such a decision as if getting pregnant and wanting abortion would be their fault.

We should create families. We should strengthen families. This is the main aim of the state. [People] think they [the state] forbid abortion to make it more difficult for women, to manipulate women to blame them for the abortion. But in reality there is a decrease in the quality of medical system. There is a decrease in the number of [maternity] hospitals for women to [access], especially in rural areas. One side is rhetoric, while the other side is the real situation, including a decrease in the quality of available health care. It is very expensive (Interview 13, Expert of Crisis Center, St.Petersburg, 14.2.2013).

A new regulation regarding abortion also aims to manipulate women not to have abortion by appealing to emotional exploitation.

They created a special week that is called the 'week of silence.' If a young girl decides to have an abortion, she has to go to her doctor and she cannot just [have the procedure done] that day. She cannot [go to a specialist or contact other people for a medical opinion]. She has to think about her decision during this week, the week of silence, and then after this week she has to go once more to this doctor and he will speak with her once more to try to convince her (Interview 14, Academician, Moscow, 6.12.2011).

In addition to emotional exploitation, this regulation brings about some limitation on the possibility of access concerning regional differences. In rural side where access to health services is difficult, the week of silence leads to unwanted pregnancies to continue. They cannot go again after the week of silence ends or they could not find a safe and hygienic clinic to get abortion with anesthesia. The hostility of doctors against abortion confronts women to facilitate bureaucratic procedures.

It [the regulation of abortion] isn't a special law. It is like an amendment to the law on the health of the population, and it makes abortion difficult but looks like [an attempt to take care of] women's health [...]. It includes a week of silence to think about the abortion [and decide whether or not to do it]. It will absolutely work against women's health because for women who are from poor families, who have no money, or who live in rural areas, it is impossible to visit the gynecologist again after a week. During the week [of silence], a state-supported crisis center calls women to manipulate them into not having the abortion. [These crisis centers] have [a lot of] resources. They do consultations on not having abortions, rejecting abortion, and blaming women for abortion. They say abortion is killing (Interview 13, Expert of Crisis Center, St.Petersburg, 14.2.2013).

Same expert draws the attention to rural-urban difference again in terms of doctors' approach to women. Women residing in urban area and especially in big cities meet less pressing approach from the doctors while the conservative concerns are more prevalent in hospitals in rural areas and this leads to another face of oppression and discrimination to emerge for rural women.

Many [doctors], especially in the regions, not in capitals like Moscow or Saint Petersburg but in local cities, are also Orthodox-oriented and that's why they support this idea. [If a woman comes in and says] "I want to do it just now, I decided" the doctor can say that she has to think a little bit, and he has special permission to not write, at that moment, the paper that give her allowance for abortion (Interview 14, Academician, Moscow, 6.12.2011).

Class differentiation appears in the case of abortion again. Legally, pregnant women can appeal to any public hospital to get abortion free. However, as another method to discourage women, anesthesia during the procedure of abortion isn't provided for free. The women have to afford it themselves. As a result, some women might give up getting abortion and continue unwanted pregnancy but this application leads to a class-based discrimination between rich and poor women.

If you want to have an abortion, you need pay for many things yourself: anesthesia, analysis, tests. If you want to have an abortion without any problem, you should go to a private clinic and pay around 175 dollars. This way, you don't have to wait one more week. You pay for everything and everything is good with anesthesia. [With this sort of restrictions] people

think that women could have more children. For women from the middle class it isn't difficult to go have an abortion in a private clinic. There is some influence from Orthodox circles to blame doctors already. Some visit abortion clinics and threaten the doctors. They said they will be in jail because they are killers of Russian people (Interview 13, Expert of Crisis Center, St.Petersburg, 14.2.2013).

Same expert pointed out to devastating impacts of poverty over falling fertility rates. Poverty and the retreat of social services with the transition to market economy discourage women from giving more birth.

The draft law on banning abortion is silly because it will criminalize reproductive health. Such a law doesn't meet the demands of the people. The rate of abortion is high in Russia, but this is not the right way to decrease it. They want the birth rate to grow [...] and the state to resolve the demographic crisis but on the other hand, they criminalize abortion. What happens to women? When abortion was illegal, we had bad results for women's health. If you want to decrease abortion, you should have good sexual education about contraception. They want virgin men and women, [then these people have babies] without money, house, food, etc. Poverty is high in the country. They reach people by this claim that abortion is killing a baby (Interview 1, Academician, St.Petersburg, 14.2.2013).

Alcoholism and domestic violence are issues of great importance. These lead to high rates of divorce and break-ups. Unemployment is more common among men. Women have to work; otherwise they have no sources to afford their lives.

Another very big problem in Russia is money for women who don't work, because [support for] those have small children under a year and a half is not coming from the federal budget but from the local budget. It is not maternal capital, [which] is [coming from] the federal [budget]. If a woman has two children, she could be eligible for this [maternal] capital. If she has one child, she could not. But the first one [coming from the local budget] is also for women with one child. They have the right to have a pension for a year and a half. It is so-called 'payment' for her free time for their child. The money isn't the same across regions. It can change from two to three times [the base amount]. It depends on the regional budget and the regional development level. If the regional budget is full, then there is one sum. If it is a very poor region, then the sum of money is very low. It varies from 758 rubles in rich

regions to 350 rubles. It is too low (Interview 21, NGO Expert, Moscow, 31.10.2011).

If one may capture the whole picture, it seems very unreasonable to catch pro-natalist targets of the government. How President Putin could promote the idea of working-mother under such conditions remains as an important question.

There are two different sides [to the way the debate is presented]: first on TV and second in real life. But sometimes women agree to sign this document [the termination contract for pregnancy]. They know if they don't, they won't get any work. On TV the state declares that everything is going well but in real life, there are not enough kindergartens and no new options for women to combine their professional life and family life. Maternal capital isn't enough either. We can use it for only 3 things and only after some time, not now. Children need medical support, food, toys, and clothes now. So the capital to some extent helps but to other extent doesn't. It is 11,000 dollars. Every year it gets little bit bigger because of inflation (Interview 21, NGO Expert, Moscow, 31.10.2011).

Notwithstanding, the Russian state seems to fail to capture the whole picture. Neither maternity capital nor public debate on abortion focuses on socio-economic reasons of low fertility rates. Rather, the state tries to resolve demographic crisis by embracing religious premises and reinforcing traditional assumptions and patterns, which serves better to neo-liberal concerns and nationalist premises.

By making neo-traditionalism sound like the best, most functional way, another extremely important factor in both promoting very traditional family structure and family roles and promoting higher birth rates is the Russian Orthodox Church. They think that a man is a man: the tsar of the family and the head of the family, and that this is natural. They believe that God gives man this role, so it should not be questioned and God should not be undermined [or his plans] changed. Then they believe that women are submissive because that is again their role [because of] how God created the man and the world. So women get education because they don't know if God will want them to have a family and children, because [...] it is up to God whether you are fertile or not. Whether you would meet somebody and would take her as a wife or not is God's will. For those women who have no family they obviously can work, for those who will be given a husband, thanks to God, then they will quit the work and will raise a family. But they will be

educated enough to be good mothers and to provide their children with advice and care. These women do not know how many children they will have because it is again up to God. As it is against the family planning, you don't use any contraception if you are fertile. [If you are not fertile], you don't use surrogacy. The idea is that God just doesn't give you children. God knows better (Interview 2, Feminist Activist, Moscow, 8.11.2011).

There is a lack of coincidence between political discourse and real situation in post-Soviet Russia. 'The edicts of a gender order based on theories of innate sexual difference may not always suit the needs of production or functionalism nor do they necessarily even reflect the reality of people's lives' (Connell cited in Kay, 2000: 15)

Traditional type of family is not working in Russia. The rate of divorce is very high. They promote traditional type of family as a stereotype. They just don't understand this model will not guarantee the reproduction of the population. I think they don't understand that economic reasons and stability usually constitute the main [reason] for reproduction (Interview 9, NGO Expert, Moscow, 2.12.2011).

4.3. Feminization of Labor Force

Feminization of labor force characterizes the composition of labor force in Russia since the Soviet times. Female labor force participation at high rates was achieved by full employment policy and social services in the Soviet times. The emancipation of women through work was the main ideological premise, and being a housewife was not an option for women. In the Soviet gender climate, the ideal was working mother, who would both work in factory and manage family household. To this end, the Soviet state was in charge of providing working mothers with free access to childcare facilities including nursery and kindergarten. Domestic duties were reorganized on public scale as far as possible by establishing public cafeteria, laundry and nursery.

In the life of our mothers, grandmothers, and great-grandmothers, it was possible to [work and be a mother] at the same time, [...] because [there was a good infrastructure] with kindergarten etc. in the Soviet times and it worked well. It was done. But now the situation pushes people to [work] not

synchronically but diachronically. One [priority becomes more important than] the other. [People first get an] education and work, and after that, [around] the age 26, 27, or perhaps 30 the people try to realize the complex situation of fertility and marriage and work but [can't manage them] synchronically (Interview 22, Academician, Moscow, 28.10.2011).

4.3.1. Feminization of Work-Family Balance

With transition to market economy, the policy of full employment of women was abandoned. Returning women to their purely natural mission (motherhood) and bringing the women back at home was promoted to alleviate the devastating impacts of economic stagnation and social-moral crisis during *perestroika*. The early post-Soviet state started to reduce social services in scope and quality. Its main result is a sort of individualization on both institutional and ideological grounds. On ideological ground, the Soviet state left its ideological mission of being the Patriarch [being the protector of women against inequality inside and outside family] to individual men and redefined them as the head of family. On institutional ground, the state left the women on their own to manage with the work and family balance. Transition to market economy changed the production system and social infrastructure, which was built up into the production units. As the main beneficiaries of social services, working women confronted with a problem of childcare.

Most of these kindergartens were not built under state institutions. They were not straightforwardly supported by the state because we had a kind of system where big enterprises [managed a lot of] social welfare in the Soviet time. They had big system of social welfare, which was supported by the enterprises, metallurgical enterprises or any kind of enterprises. They usually have [...] their own kindergarten; [some of these enterprise-run] kindergartens were very big and some of them were huge. Thousands of people were working [in these enterprises]. And in this situation, women who worked for [these] enterprises, even if they worked for very very low position like cleaning or something, they were within the sphere of social support and they could also receive a place for their kid in the kindergarten. In the post-Soviet time, that system changed and now enterprises do not have as comfortable a budget and it is not very profitable for them to provide the social support. So almost all of them didn't want to have that social sphere and social system (Interview 6, Academician, Moscow, 2.11.2011).

So, feminization of work and family balance becomes a distinct trait of post-Soviet gender climate. Now, the work and family balance is individualized; the social infrastructure and social services have been considerably reduced; the state has imposed loose control over market economy to prevent gender discrimination and segregation. Within this context, the work and family balance has been defined as the problem of individuals and then gained a gendered face. Individual care of children turns into its feminization in practice. Family as a social institution is pushed forward as substitute for social services fulfilled by the state, and the role of women as mothers is reinforced. This balance becomes a feminized problem on the grounds of biological traits again. In my understanding, this properly signifies an orientation in gender climate towards neo-traditionalism.

Women have to survive in a market economy with a traditional ideology and [in spite of] the attempts to discriminate by the patriarchal segments of society. It is difficult. The market helps them. Traditional family helps (such as grandmothers), social institutions help, and fathers help, but it is still very difficult. Men have problems being more integrated on equal terms in family lives. The problem of balance is feminized. For men in public opinion the question about balance isn't considered properly. It isn't their problem. Journalists always ask us how can you combine your professional life and your role in family? Women generally answer "Ok. It is difficult. I am divorced but my children are grown up. I have a help." They don't ask men this question. This divides society and creates kind of double standard in society. It is not only on the level of assessment but also on that of practice (Interview 1, Academician, St.Petersburg, 14.2.2013).

Main reason of feminization of work and family balance is the lack of sufficient institutional support. In the interviews, most experts claimed that setting up more nursery and kindergartens would be gender sensitive and would meet more appropriately the needs and interests of women.

Kindergarten is huge problem in Russia. There are not enough kindergarten spaces. Women have to invent complicated schemes to get their children into the kindergartens, as they need to go to work and not all of them can leave their children with their grandmother, or else they do not have enough money for the nanny. So everyone is complaining about the kindergartens and their poor quality. Women have to use some corruption and go to the director of

the kindergarten and ask [them directly], or [subscribe] or put themselves on a waiting list for the kindergarten when they are pregnant. All so that in 3 years' time, they will have a place for their babies [when their name comes up on the waiting list] (Interview 19, Academician, St.Petersburg, 15.11.2011).

As most interviewees pointed out, opening more kindergarten and nursery might increase fertility rate faster because that is what working women need.

So [regarding] demographics policies; there were not that many children at that time. But still at that time many of the kindergarten were closed. They just ceased their existence. Nobody [set out] to do it but it happened. But now all of the kindergartens have serious problems and they are absolutely not enough. Kindergartens are to support childcare for working women, and most Russian women work. This is a very big problem. There are very long long queues to put their kids in the kindergartens (Interview 6, Academician, Moscow, 2.11.2011).

However, the lack of kindergartens and nursery houses sufficient in quantity is a sort of policy forcing the assumptions of traditional gender roles and identities.

Kindergartens aren't enough, especially in big cities. The [...] traditional way [of dealing with the issue of childcare] is to take women out of labor market rather than [providing women with childcare]. It is traditional gender policy and it is sometimes very repressive (Interview 13, Expert of Crisis Center, St.Petersburg, 14.2.2013).

Individualization as distinctive sign of liberalism implies the hidden idea that family will replace the state and fulfill social functions previously performed by it. In the case of childcare, mothers and/or grandmothers usually perform this function if they have no free access to nursery and kindergarten.

There is a trend towards individuality, towards the individualization of men and women, but on the other hand we see productive interaction between social family-oriented state policy and biological praxis. In my opinion, the situation leads people to become more traditionally [-minded], because [if I have children and something goes wrong in my life], only my husband or my partner, or my family or relatives would come help me (Interview 22, Academician, Moscow, 28.10.2011).

4.3.2. Maternal Leave

Main policy designed by the state to help women balance work and family is maternal leave. Indeed, maternal leave schedule is considerably extended despite harsh neo-liberal recipe. Nevertheless, extended maternal leave, coupled with the lack of nursery and kindergartens, have produced direct and open consequences over gendered patterns of labor force participation of women. On the one hand, this leads to gender discrimination and segregation in labor market like concentration of women in part-time jobs, low-level jobs, for low wages. On the other hand, this normalizes traditional perceptions regarding domestic work and childcare.

[Whether or not a woman] has maternal leave very much depends on her social organization. [The workplace would be] either a private corporation or [...] a state corporation. According to the law they are both nearly the same and there is no discrimination, but everybody knows that in practice they are very different. You will receive something different in private enterprises than in state enterprises. There is pressure on you not to go [on maternity leave] for a year and so on and so on. [One woman] told me [that she was refused] a promotion because of her maternity orientation [pregnancy and/or intention to give birth]. So how does it work? Because there is some discrimination – of course there are also some structural limitations for women –, women who feel themselves responsible for motherhood and parenthood restrict themselves, so they have [less chance of being promoted] and a lower salary and so on (Interview 15, Academician, St.Petersburg, 16.11.2011).

In the Labor Code, women are entitled to go for three year-long maternal leave (half paid, half unpaid). During this period, their right to return their job is legally reserved. This law covers both private and public sector but it is almost impossible for women to retain their legal right in private sector. So, maternity leave leads to occupational gender segregation in labor force.

Strategically yes [women have the right to go back to work]. They should support women but in practice they do so many things that do not support them. Now it is better than 10 years ago, but there is still no guarantee. We have laws like that. Our labor laws guarantee [that women's positions will be kept for them during] the maternity leave. But in practice it is very difficult to

insist on it because those laws do not work well. We have no legal mechanism to support it in real life, and this is the problem. Also the ideological situation is very controversial because now we have the very strong influence of the Orthodox Church. It is very very conservative; they do not say [explicitly] that women should stay at home but they support very conservative, gendered images of women, who first of all should be mothers, wives, etc. (Interview 21, NGO Expert, Moscow, 31.10.2011).

In private sector, expansion in eligibility and amount of maternity benefits makes women inefficient and expensive labor force in comparison to men. These entitlements force enterprises to support a system of childcare, to allow women for sick leave and maternal leave, to accept their long-term absence in case of birth or childcare. They would invest more on women but in turn they would benefit from them less and inefficiently. The new long-leave scheme creates a disincentive on the side of new private sector employers to hire women. Employers often associate the costs of paid leaves with women although the social insurance fund pays the maternity and in-home caring leaves (Teplova, 2007: 297-298).

It is also a big problem for women to get this money from their [employers] if they don't work in state offices. In the private sector, there are some [ongoing] cases on the labor rights of women. Businessmen try to do everything [they can] to avoid paying for women after they learn she is pregnant. If a woman is young and married, she can be told in the first interview "your skills are good but please write a document showing that you will finish the contract with the company and we will use it when we know you are pregnant" (Interview 21, NGO Expert, Moscow, 31.10.2011).

In private sector, exercising legal right to maternal leave is nearly impossible. In order to keep their jobs, women could give up their legal rights to maternal leave even in job interview to catch the position. In other words, women are forced to make a choice between work and family. Despite low wages, therefore, women tend to concentrate in public sector because their rights to maternal leave, to childcare benefits and to return to work when maternal leave ends are guaranteed.

They usually plan according to their care responsibilities. There are different kinds of jobs and [professions]. [The thought process is] "this job will be convenient for me to have maternity leave [...]" If it is a government job, it is

[permanent] and I will have benefits but a low salary. The private sector has higher salaries but I will not be paid every social benefit because companies really don't want to pay for everything." They count everything. And women [turn down] very high-level positions in [...] the private sector and they prefer to go the governmental sectors because they guarantee all benefits, [even] on maternal leave (Interview 19, academician, St.Petersburg, 15.11.2011).

Additionally, public sector provides regular working schedule, which help women allocate sufficient time to fulfill their domestic roles at home and to care their children. Women have to choose public sector, which might be more convenient for childcare and domestic duties while their qualifications and/or aspirations more properly suited or they would be well-paid in other positions in private sector. Put differently, women have to make their professional choices according to their given domestic duties, particularly childcare. This given duty prevents women from realizing equal opportunities in social life.

Yes, maternity leave [exists] but it doesn't work. If a woman works in a private company, often they use a scheme to make the company [seem like it is] closing down so the employer [doesn't have to pay for benefits] but if she [works for] the state, she [does not have a] high salary (Interview 20, Academician, Moscow, 8.11.2011).

Maternal leave has strengthened the employers' hand to appeal women in a discriminatory and subordinative way. Within such a legal system and traditionally oriented socio-political environment, especially unskilled and uneducated women have been left in desperate straits; they have become more ready to accept to work for low wages and under poor working conditions than men (Ashwin & Bowers, 1997: 31-32).

What is appropriate is women's economic rise: the possibility to earn enough or not less than what a man earns and to not pay for this as much as she does [in other ways]. Because a man can be lazy and he can have a low salary or he can think that this job is not for him and choose [to leave or look for another job]. But women [will take] any kind of job that gives them a salary and at the same time provides them with childcare. It is very typical (Interview 20, Academician, Moscow, 8.11.2011).

Under these circumstances, maternal leave works as a discrimination against working women. Long duration of maternal leave, which is presented as facilitating women's double burden, shows up as an obstacle again to working women in climbing career ladder in competitive labor market.

Besides, maternity leave or leave for breast-feeding lasts for 1.5 or 3 years in Russia. So, women are in disadvantageous position in their career in terms of experience. In this period, women do not get as much work experience as men. How can I explain this easily? When women are on maternity leave, men have many chances to improve [their professional skills]. When they return, women are less qualified and experienced than men [who have not taken any leave]. This affects their job and career. Men can improve their career easily but women make slow progress in their career due to their children. Thus, employers prefer to hire men who are qualified and have no responsibility for care work. This is discrimination in Russia (Interview 23, NGO Expert, St.Petersburg, 16.11.2011).

Being away from labor market for at least a time period of 1,5 year restricts their opportunities to find a new job. During this time period, there might happen a weakening in their training and qualifications. This forces them to work in low-paid jobs particularly in service sector. This not only discourages women from working but also motivating them towards family and children where they could feel themselves convenient and available concerning the neo-traditional gender climate.

It mostly depends on education, on market capacities, values. But some women without qualifications are forced into these traditional gender roles because they can't find a good and interesting job [that will be] good for self-realization. A job means sufficient money. Why go to work with the thought of alienation? You can work in a job which you don't like but which brings you money and power, but if it doesn't [bring either of these things], you don't want to do it. With family work, alienation is less often felt because you are involved in it emotionally and it belongs to you (Interview 1, Academician, St.Petersburg, 14.2.2013).

Maternity leave is not designed to promote gender equality and prevent gender discrimination. It seems to alleviate the double-burden of women but at the same time normalizes it. That is why parental leave is issued as optional in Russian Labor

Law. This regulation could not promote gender equality in a traditional society. Rather, it declares feminization of childcare as natural and turns maternal leave into a disincentive before the employment of newly mothers.

In Russia, men can use parental leave upon their request. Men can use or not use this leave but usually they do not. [...] That is why we think that parental leave should be compulsory. If men have to take leave for childcare, the employer will not discriminate between men and women in hiring. This will not make a difference because both will take leave. Nowadays, employers tend to hire more men than women. Men do not need to take this leave. They might not use it. This is the reason for discrimination against women (Interview 23, NGO Expert, St.Petersburg, 16.11.2011).

Regulating parental leave as optional does not change but reinforces traditional assumptions regarding gender roles and identities. Considering the Russian cultural context, men do not prefer to be on leave so as to care their children because of social pressure they would feel, although they are legally entitled to be on parental leave. This is related to the underlying gender order and strengthened by the state policies in the post-Soviet gender climate.

[Even] if men want to be involved as fathers on equal terms, society won't allow him to do it if he wants to make a career at the same time, because, for example, if he is a businessman, he cannot share [domestic/care work]. So it is a gender [issue]. It is not only about women. The family makes the decision. We want gender equality in family life. The man participates, and until birth it is more equal but then after birth, women have to give up their jobs, at least temporarily. Men have to work twice [as hard to] support the family. This is how gender equality is looked upon. In the initial period, it could be understandable during infancy but after 1 year it should change and could. But it doesn't. A man could want to stay with his children half a day, but flexible working hours would make him a very strange employer or employee. This can put him in an unfair position at his job. This kind of traditionalism is reinforced by the market and by official ideology. Gender equality is a very difficult project for the family. There are a lot of structural barriers to prevent it. This is the problem for both men and women (Interview 1, Academician, St.Petersburg, 14.2.2013).

Maternal leave brings about another acute problem, that is, the employment of pregnant women. Being pregnant turns into a disincentive for women in a competitive labor market, which is quite contradictory with the pro-natal policies. Private companies do not prefer to hire young married women and/or pregnant women. Even in job interviews, women are often asked about marital status and children, which discourages the employers' decision to hire. Additionally, women are sometimes forced to sign illegal contracts declaring that they will not get pregnant for a while (ABA/CEELI, 2006: 80-81).²⁷ Some newly mothers might have no choice other than temporarily leaving labor force.

Finding a job is another problem. In practice, it is nearly impossible for pregnant woman find a job. If woman [discloses that she is] pregnant during a job application or interview, or the employer notices this, then she will not be hired. Besides, for women with small children it is difficult to find a job. These women will probably ask for sick leave or leave to care their children. In other words, they might work less (Interview 23, NGO Expert, St.Petersburg, 16.11.2011).

Private sector has appealed to illegal ways to fire women who get pregnant and/or not to pay maternal leave and guarantee their position vacant for one and a half-year long. As mentioned by most interviewees again, illegal contract that young women are forced to sign is a very common practice in Russia nowadays. Private enterprises have tended to appeal 'informal contracts to avoid obligations to provide social benefits' (Teplova, 2005: 7). Working mothers are left to voluntarily give up their right to sick and/or maternal leave or resign in case of pregnancy.

Another part is young girls [young women] who apply for work. They [are asked to put in writing whether] during the first five years or seven years [they may want to have] a child. So, the owner doesn't want to employ her if she is pregnant or [if she plans to] have a child in one year (Interview 4, NGO Expert, Moscow, 31.10.2011).

Private companies appeal to small and invisible tactics, which seem to be abiding to law, so as to escape from providing pregnant women and working mothers their legal

²⁷ Many cases were mentioned during interview with an expert from Consortium of Women's Non-governmental Associations in Moscow in 2011.

rights to maternal leave. The companies make it look like bankruptcy or closing down (Interview 15, Academician, St.Petersburg, 16.11.2011 and Interview 20, Academician, Moscow, 8.11.2011).

Of course, we should implement official laws. It must be taken on principle that people will be punished if they don't implement the official laws. But there are zones in society that live according to the law and zones [are more grey zones]. When one of my students had attempted to study discrimination against pregnant [women], for example in places of work, we had no data but everybody knows, it is practical, local knowledge, that pregnant women have a very difficult time accessing labor places. But it is very difficult to prove that this is [because of] her pregnancy because the majority [of people] will not articulate this issue. And businesses will [come up with lots] of reasons to refuse [to hire] a pregnant woman but they will not say that it is due to her pregnancy. And then this is not an issue of discrimination. Somebody said in our seminar, for example, that there are a lot of black [grey areas] and non-legal relations in our economic system, in the business world. For example, a private enterprise employing 10 people, with 1 pregnant woman, could just shut down the enterprise and reopen as a different business, hiring back everyone except the pregnant woman. According to the law that is absolutely legal to do. [This kind of thing is] done because you can't [fire] a pregnant woman from the workplace, according to the law. But if the enterprise closes, everybody loses his or her job. This is according to the law but there are many many many small tactics of discrimination that are not very visible and that are very difficult to prove in a legal context. [...] So in a sense mostly invisible tactics limit the equal participation of women, but according to law everything is in favor of the women. The practice and the law are quite different (Interview 15, Academician, St.Petersburg, 16.11.2011).

The absence of a strategic approach to mainstreaming gender equality and preventing gender discrimination on state level contributes to gender discrimination in labor market. There is no national mechanism to coordinate and monitor the enforcement of existing state policies. The state imposes loose control over the functioning of market economy to protect women against discrimination. All this confines young women, pregnant women and working mothers to insecure working conditions.

The problem is that, for example, in the private sector even the government can't always control how they treat women. For example, there was a [case] of pregnant women losing their jobs because of allowances. The rules state

that companies were supposed to pay maternity leave allowances to women and then get reimbursed by the state. They do not like it because it takes long time. So they prefer either to fire pregnant women or to make women sign a contract that they will not get pregnant while they will work on this position. The state knows this. This was a topic of discussion before CEDAW of Russian Federation here last year. Basically governmental agencies said that [...] women have to press charges privately against these companies in a court. According to the legislation, women have to go by themselves to protect their rights themselves (Interview 9, NGO Expert, Moscow, 2.12.2011).

The bureaucratic procedure regarding the payment for women on maternal leave by the employer aggravates the protection of women's legal rights. Legally, it is the state to be responsible for the payment during maternal leave. However, the Russian state lays it on the door of private companies. The state enforces a two-staged process; first the employer makes the payment to the social fund, which pays women on maternal leave, and then, the state reimburses this payment to the employer upon its appeal.

The employer makes the payment at first hand. For the duration of the maternity leave, the employer pays the state office. If the employer does not pay or delays the payment, then women cannot get the payment. It is legally regulated that the employer makes the payment to the state (Interview 23, NGO Expert, St.Petersburg, 16.11.2011).

Nonetheless, the reimbursement of maternal payment from the state to the employer takes a long time and requires dealing with heavy bureaucracy. This process makes women more inefficient and expensive employees on the side of private companies. The state does not approach to change this procedure in order to make maternal leave payment be more effective in preventing gender discrimination in labor market.

Working mothers are now in a difficult position because [...] we don't have laws to protect women. We have now [large numbers] of pregnant women who work somewhere, and the owner [of the business] should pay for the pregnancy [and post-natal] period. [The owner will then be paid from the] state/social fund. [...] But the social fund returns money after the owner makes an appeal [claim] to them [by stating] that [such and such amount] of money was paid to pregnant women. Because this connection with the social

fund isn't [always very clear], the owners prefer not to pay money. They say that [they] give money [to pregnant women] but nobody [gets money back from the fund]. Many pregnant women just were on state [support] without anything (Interview 4, NGO Expert, Moscow, 31.10.2011).

In the post-Soviet gender climate, femininity is defined in terms of the working mother, which is, the balance between work (production) and family (reproduction) is considered as an exclusively woman's issue. This reproduces gender polarization on the symbolic level, strengthens the inferior/subordinate position of women in the labor market, and strictly divides feminine and masculine spheres (Rotkirch et al., 2007: 356). Particularly maternity capital confirms/accepts discrimination against women in the labor market; it becomes obvious how their freedom of choice comes with a cost of withdrawing from the labor market.

4.3.3. Gender Segregation/Gender Appropriate Work

Feminization is a characteristic of labor force in Russia. Women's employment outside house is a sort of cultural norm. However, the new Russian state promoted 'the view of women as being primarily family oriented and destined to be wives and mothers. This policy and its associated propaganda had no doubt a considerable impact on women's role in the national economy and their position as employers' (Bridger et al., 1996: 46). Traditional notions of masculinity and femininity affect the situation of women in labor force and make labor force widely gender-segregated.

It is hard to claim that there was no occupational segregation in the Soviet labor force though; women workers concentrated in certain feminized sectors on relatively less rates of pay (Mezentseva, 1994). The Soviet state, at least discursively, had always promoted women to compete with men and to sneak into masculine type of professions (e.g. tractor deriving). Discriminatory practices were more or less compensated under an official policy of full employment and protective measures (especially maternity entitlements) (Kozina & Zhidkova, 2006: 58).

These ideas [regarding biological differences] were present in the Soviet era at the level of popular discourse (...) but official state policy nonetheless

encouraged women to ‘storm’ masculine fortresses, and employers were constrained in the expression of their preferences for male and female employees by strong state regulation and tight labor market. Now employer are operating in a period of unemployment and lax regulation and are free to express their previously concealed preferences (...) gender restructuring of employment is being guided by assumptions regarding gender difference which favor men, and that consequently women’s choice of work is becoming increasingly circumscribed (Kozina & Zhidkova, 2006: 58-59).

The distinguishing feature of post-Soviet period is ‘new power and legitimacy [that] deeply ingrained beliefs regarding biological differences’ have gained during the time of transition (Kozina & Zhidkova, 2006: 58). These differences could be used both to justify the ‘discriminatory’ protective regulations or ‘discriminatory’ results (derived from double-shift) for women but they were never declared to be obstacles against women’s equality with men.

In the recent decade, President Putin has revised the notion of working mother again to resolve the problems of women in labor force. In contrast to the Soviet model of working mother, President Putin focused on declining fertility rates rather than emancipation of women through work or their labor force participation. He explained the importance of women’s employment as a necessary basis for establishing respectability within family rather than a way of self-realization.

Participation in the workforce, realization as a mother: it is the classical gender contract for the working mother. During *perestroika* and post-Soviet times, of course, this gender contract changed a little bit in terms of the qualifications of the working mother concept but this combination stays the same (Interview 22, Academician, Moscow, 28.10.2011).

As President Putin’s reformulation shows, main problem of working women is defined as to maintain work and family balance in post-Soviet Russia. The post-Soviet state has no attempt of preventing women from participating in labor force but has not provided sufficient social services to promote their participation either.

People just assume that women will want to fully concentrate on their family or to balance work and family That is a different question. I believe there is also an assumption by the policy makers that there is a fairly high level of

equality for men and women. And the discrimination is not that significant because for women who were willing to advance, you know all the doors are open. I think there is an assumption and from this comes a promise that it is not just a parental responsibility to raise the children. In fact, it is easy to compare with the US, where if you have a family and child this is your personal decision. If you try to rely on the state, they will not help you. The state can and should help women perform their maternal role and this is where you get all the promises [... such as] “more childcare centers,” “we will make easier for you to look after your child,” “we will give you money,” or “we are here to help.” Which I find interesting because that also means again there is something universal in that people get married, have kids, and have the traditional families and again women are the pillars of this structure. Promise is the key word; the state promises to help but it is not like it is really delivering (Interview 2, Feminist Activist, Moscow, 8.11.2011).

Gender-segregated labor force is also supported by normative assumptions on the side of both employer and employees. Definition of men as primary breadwinners and head of family reflects these assumptions. This is the portrait of traditional Russian family. The tendency of men to perform the kind of jobs at the top of hierarchy refers to a matter of status for them, as well. As being taught to reach self-realization through work, they need a kind of job standing at the top of hierarchy to guarantee their self-respect. As the head of household, such a job can secure their authority and respect by their family members. Its implication is the concentration of women in low-paid jobs or normalization of their unemployment.

In public opinion in Russia and in other countries as well, the father or man in the family is the breadwinner. This construct is very very traditional. [The man's salary] is taken as the salary of the family; the salary of women it is only additional money. This is the general tendency. And of course we have this difference in the salary between men and women in Soviet times and now (Interview 22, Academician, Moscow, 28.10.2011).

Traditional assumptions about men's being primary breadwinner, their self-realization through work and their self-respect in choosing a job have shaped the 'gendered structure of employment'. Results of an ethnographic research show that men's self-respect appears as 'a limiting factor in their choice of work', which means, they do not prefer to work in 'unattractive jobs'. They tend to label low-paid

jobs, which are mostly routine jobs requiring no creativity but attention on details and standing up at the bottom of 'gender status hierarchy', as unattractive and humiliating (Kozina & Zhidkova, 2006: 64-66). As earning more means occupying the head of household, it is not a matter of duty but also that of status for Russian men (Ashwin & Lytkina, 2004).

In this setting, the meaning of work for women is reduced to the provision of a secondary source of income to the family rather than a way to self-realization in accordance with their education and life aspirations. This situation circles the boundaries of choice of women in seeking for a job and constrains them to low-paid, low status jobs. This cultural assumption affects the behaviors of the employers under the conditions of lack of strict control by the state.²⁸

There is no real political and social system for women to work and have children at the same time. There is no system to protect and promote women as being women rather than as being mothers (Interview 12, NGO Expert, Moscow, 7.11.2011).

Behind the suggestion that work for women should be optional lies the sexual division of labor in traditional family again. Primary role of women is motherhood while men must fulfill the livelihood of their families. Once motherhood is taken as the ground of true/proper femininity, other way of self-realization through educational or professional career is taken as being incomplete for women and/or providing quasi satisfaction or realization.

You [woman] can choose to work. Many would argue that work should be a choice but they don't have to [work]. They can, but it has to be a choice, whereas for a man the breadwinner role is a must. If you don't perform this role as a man, you are not a man, and that is a bad thing. [...] The state [emphasizes this role], and that the tie between women and motherhood obviously or inherently exaggerates the role of the men as the breadwinner and the gap between the mother role and the father role (Interview 2, Feminist Activist, Moscow, 8.11.2011).

²⁸ For researches about the changing gendered preferences for employment on the side of the employees, please see edited work by Ashwin (2006).

The state puts itself as the agent to fight against family patriarchy, which is defined as the degrading of unemployed women in family life due to giving birth, and as mothers' best friend to promote their labor force participation (Rotkirch et al., 2007: 350, 356).

There is no promotion of neo-traditionalism in labor market. But structurally there are neo-traditionalist effects due to the combination of women's roles and their identity, which is being exclusively responsible for family care (Interview 15, Academician, St.Petersburg, 15.11.2011).

The state seems to support women to work on the one side but does not take necessary measures to this end on the other side. What do women do if they give birth? Who care their children? Behind this situation lies the idea that extended family would support working mothers or mothers would stay at home, at least temporarily.

Women will care [for children]. They [will] stay at home. They have no other option. Sometimes their mothers will do it, but it depends on family relations too. Many young families live in different regions from their parents. Another big problem is kindergartens. There aren't enough (Interview 21, NGO Expert, Moscow, 31.10.2011).

State policies regarding work and family balance do not fit into social reality; economic problems and single motherhood and economic problems could be defined as main obstacles to realize the ideal of traditional family. First, devastating economic conditions are quite controversial with traditional assumptions. Men's salary is not enough for the whole family and women also have to work.

We would like to [have gender equality in the] public sphere, but the market forces us into traditional roles because there are not enough kindergartens for children. For example, the breadwinning capacity of men is very fragile and we need two incomes. So it isn't possible to have natural division of labor (Interview 1, Academician, St.Petersburg, 14.2.2013).

So first thing is to stimulate women to have more children but not put pressure on them to stay at home, because that model of housewife [will not be financially stable] because [few men receive the kind of salary] that will

support the family if he is the only breadwinner. So it is too difficult. Yes, women also have to work. It is a very controversial position. It [doesn't very much encourage women to work] but there is [still] some sort of continuity from Soviet time. There is a sort of understanding that women have the right to work and that their right should be guaranteed. And that it's somehow important for women. Still, there is not enough protection for working women. Because they still have very low maternal support, which they receive when they have their children, and the so-called child money social support is very low (Interview 6, Academician, Moscow, 2.11.2011).

A traditional image of family in which men are breadwinner and women stay at home and take care for children does not work in Russia for economic and social reasons. Economically, one income is not enough to meet life expenses of a three or four person family. Women have to work and earn money. Socially, there is no family security in Russia (Interview 20, Academician, Moscow, 8.11.2011). There is a situation of broken family resulted from high rates of alcoholism, high rates of mortality at respectively early ages - related to alcohol consumption, high rates of divorce or break-up, high rates of single motherhood. Divorce is much easier now than the Soviet times (Interview 24, Academician, Moscow, 8.12.2011). Women cannot rely on their husbands 'often because he does not earn enough and because she is not sure if he will be here tomorrow as he is today' (Interview 20, Academician, Moscow, 8.11.2011).

I would say that economic rise of women is not supported. This is the very stupid idea of the traditional family, which does not work because, I mean, men also expect women to support themselves; they don't want to support women – I mean the majority of men. There are some exceptions, [even within the] so-called traditional family. But in Russia if there is this kind of family, it is already traditional, they have children, and in the majority of these families women still work (Interview 20, Academician, Moscow, 8.11.2011).

Second, single motherhood is an alarming phenomenon of Russia. Due to high rates of alcoholism and of male mortality at younger ages, there are many single mothers caring their children alone. Thus, they have no other choice than working to support their family.

In terms of finding a job, she might have not more prospects because, I mean, if it is private company, the employer doesn't think who will take care of her child. [...] If a woman is from a big family, like she has a mother, she has a father, or parents-in-law, they think at some point she can use some of them. If she is alone with her child, maybe they will consider her an inappropriate worker because she will be responsible for childcare (Interview 20, Academician, Moscow, 8.11.2011).

Nowadays, the broken family characterizes the Russian society. This is mainly related to devastating economic conditions and alleviated with cultural norms, which reduce the whole responsibility of family's maintenance over the shoulders of men.

People who are alienated from the family routine are happier. Breadwinning is a big burden and responsibility. The full time responsibility for children and wife and housing etc. in this fragile economic system is a burden and leads to a masculinity crisis. The lack of men is a big and important topic in Russia. Both demographically and symbolically it is said that there are not enough men. This leads to a specific kind of traditionalism. What kind of traditionalism? People want a civilized patriarchy. They think that is a solution to the problems. It is not easy to have a family and it is a big responsibility. Gender equality is the problem of Russian women but it is formulated in a paradoxical way, like it was a problem of men not only demographically but also symbolically (Interview 1, Academician, St.Petersburg, 14.2.2013).

The focus on traditional family excludes single mothers from the system of provisions and support. This exclusion leads to discrimination within women again.

There is [an attempt to stimulate] a particular type of traditional family, but even that is rather small-scale. Even though the state declares it is doing its best to promote, to enforce the greater fertility and birth rate, it encourages in fact only women who are married and who have more kids. In other words, there is no support for single parenting, unlike in Europe (Interview 2, Feminist Activist, Moscow, 8.11.2011).

This also reinforces an orientation to depend on and stay in marriage for the maintenance of livelihood even if the women are vulnerable to domestic violence. Easier access to divorce increases moral panic on the side of the authorities. For the

sake of society, women are to stay at home and maintain family union and biological-cultural reproduction of future generations.

The state declares that they support family and they provide some money for the first child. When the child is born, they pay some money, around 300 dollars. During the time child is at home (1 and half years), if the mother doesn't work, she gets about 40 dollars per month. But after this time you have to go back to the work or you can stay at home. But [if you choose to stay at home] you can't take this money anymore and you get 150 rubles per month. It is 5 dollars. For this money you cannot buy food, clothes, etc. for children, so women have to work or [otherwise would need to] have a husband who has a good job and covers all these expenses (Interview 4, NGO Expert, Moscow, 31.10.2011).

4.4. Conclusion

Given the underlying gender order in Russia, it would not be reasonable to leave aside the definitions of femininity and masculinity as a set of obstacles to reach *de facto* gender equality. In a traditional society, intangible cultural assumptions and norms have surfaced to determine the pattern of gender relations when the withdrawal of state couples with market economy. When female biological capability is at core, then not only reproduction but also childcare turns into a technical division of labor, which are based on and in turn, reinforce traditional notions of femininity and masculinity. Due to its reproductive function, women are constructed and socialized as caregivers at various institutional-ideological settings (family, education, work place, etc.) while men are portrayed as breadwinners.

Despite all affirmative actions regarding equal access of women to education and work, invisible obstacles, which are much deep-seated and are considered to be very normal, could be explained through shedding light on the notions of femininity and masculinity, which constitute gender order. Otherwise, invisible obstacles are rationalized and justified by the authorities/power circles by the reasons of obstacles themselves, and it turns into a vicious circle. State policies have led to deepening of class differences within women. 'Promotion' of traditional family and full time motherhood could respectively fit the needs and aspirations of middle class women

who have already sufficient economic resources (reach to abortion; childcare; work-family balance-nanny or private nursery; etc.).

Finally, neo-traditionalism gets reinforced on the grounds of liberal claim of free choice. Since *perestroika*, work is provided as an option, as a choice for women and this would signify liberalization from coercive Soviet policies, which were not coherent with nature and natural differences within sexes. In reality, however, families need double income and women have to work. But they have to work in feminized jobs, which are usually low-paid and low-qualified jobs. In contrast to liberal claims, they do not make choices freely.

CHAPTER 5

STATE OF THE ART IN TURKEY IN THE POST-1980 PERIOD

In this chapter, I focus on how the official commitment to women's equality and emancipation has transformed in the post-1980 period. My main argument is that neo-conservatism has been on the rise in Turkey when the patriarchal society oscillating between modernity and tradition has come across neo-liberal conditions and the rise of political Islam. This leads to a change in the official state discourse and policies, particularly in the recent decade. My aim is to draw a general picture of a new gender climate generating in Turkey. To this end, I provide an overview regarding the legal framework and the situation of women in labor force, family, and politics. This chapter starts with the feminist movement emerging in the 1980s and is followed by the legal changes enacted by the state in the 1990s. The impact of the start of accession talks with the EU and the rise of political Islam on gender equality will be discussed. As femininity and masculinity constitute the center of prevailing gender climate, I briefly address on the prevailing notions in the last three decades. In the rest of the chapter, I examine the women's situation in labor force, family, and politics. More specifically, I point out to the state discourse and policies on this situation.

5.1. The Emergence of Feminist Movement

After the long decades of silence, the feminist movement in the 1980s brought up the women's issues comprehensively, drawing both political and public attention. The feminist women, consisted of young female academicians, who completed graduate work abroad, got familiar with the second wave of feminism and were mostly involved in the leftist movements in the 1970s, challenged the legalistic evolutionary approach of the state. They claimed that the women's question was not resolved in Turkey. Behind this claim lies the fact that women's emancipation did not come

through with the introduction of legislative and administrative reforms (Abadan-Unat, 1981: 5, 18). In other words, legal gains could not ensure women's emancipation and traditional norms and patterns continued to prevent women from enjoying legal rights (Özbay, 1990: 2).

With industrialization, urbanization and mass migration, these norms and values gained a new meaning to reshape the lives of women. Import substitution industrialization (ISI) policies stimulated a welfare state model based on a normative model of family in which man was pictured as main breadwinner, woman as homemaker. This model served to limit welfare services and release the burden on the state, leading to low female participation in urban labor force (Dedeoğlu, 2012a: 274). The lack of education and skills of agricultural women to adapt to urban market (Makal, 2012: 183-184) as well as the reservations to interact with urban environment did not allow women to enter urban labor force.

In the feminist literature, the question of women's predicament and subordination in labor force participation, political participation and private sphere including domestic violence, sexual harassment, honor/custom killings, virginity tests, etc. was explained through the concept of patriarchy (Arat, 1993: 126-127). With the emergence of feminist ideas, patriarchal system for the first time became the focus of studies on women. Common point of feminist studies was that 'Republican reforms did not substantially change the patriarchal system prevailing in society' (Özbay, 1990: 8).

5.2. Legal Changes in the early 1990s

Despite the emergence of feminist women's movement in Turkey, it is not possible to observe a change in the state discourse regarding the women's rights during the 1970s and 1980s. The legalistic evolutionary approach was still dominant. In 1973, the state published and encouraged the publication of studies on legal emancipation of women for the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Republic. The legal rights endowed on women and their achievements were cited in these publications (Özbay,

1990: 6). In the 1970s, the political texts prepared by National Education Ministry did not mention about support mechanisms to be provided for working women to achieve work and family balance (Ecevit, 2012). In December 5, 1984, a special session was organized in the Turkey Grand National Assembly for the 50th anniversary of Turkish women's political rights. In this session, legal rights women acquired through Republican reforms were appreciated, and women's role as mothers of future generations was emphasized. Women's low level of participation into employment and politics was touched upon but equality between men and women was regarded as a norm and fact.

In the late 1980s, the state got involved in women's issues by enacting gradual legal amendments due to the strain of feminist movement. The military government legalized abortion up to ten weeks in 1983 but the consent of husband was still required in the case of married couples. The Constitutional Court abolished two discriminatory articles of the old Civil Code in 1990. First one was that women did not have right to decide on the right to choose domicile. Second one was that woman's right to work outside the home was bounded to the consent of her husband. (Abadan-Unat, 1991: 189). Adultery was considered a criminal act both for men and women in the old 1926 Penal Code. The Constitutional Court effectively decriminalized it for both men and women, respectively in 1996 and 1998. Domestic violence eventually entered the state agenda. The 4320 Law on the Protection of the Family defining the content of domestic violence and legal measures to be applied to protect victims in case of violence, unconditional to the complaint of victim, was enacted in 1998 (National Action Plan, 2008).²⁹

Alongside the feminist movement, international obligations (CEDAW, Nairobi World Conference, Beijing Action Plan) that the Turkish state got committed to initiated a process of institutionalization. Women's human rights acquired a critical importance in the international community mainly through the efforts of the United Nations.³⁰ The state became a part of international conventions, had to establish

²⁹ <http://www.turkhukuksitesi.com/showthread.php?t=4436>

³⁰ In 1975, First World Conference on Women was held in Mexico City and 1975-1985 was proclaimed as United Nations Decade of Women. In 1979, UN General Assembly adopted

national mechanism and needed to prepare national action plans, conduct various nation-wide research projects and surveys and subject itself to international monitoring on the gender equality and women's rights issues.

The institutionalization by the state is mostly attributed to personal efforts of a female minister, named İmren Aykut, to establish a national mechanism, to achieve cooperation with feminist movement and to mainstream the understanding women as individuals (Acuner, 1999: 150-151). The Minister personally endeavored and even manipulated her party members to hurriedly pass a draft law to establish a national mechanism called the General Directorate of Women's Status and Problems (Acuner, 1999: 181).

As opposed to the attempts to establish the KSSGM, the neo-conservative wing constructed Prime Ministry Family Research Institution in 1989. The target of Family Research Institution was to re-institutionalize family in a traditional way and redefine women within family, which was thought to be damaged due to industrialization, internationalization, urbanization and mass migration (Acuner, 1999: 137, 144). Women's employment outside the house was seen as to cause the degeneration of traditional Muslim-Turkish family, in which man is figured as the head and woman as mother and caregiver (Acuner, 1999: 147). The State Minister who was behind the establishment of the Family Research Institution made statements that were quite important to realize the neo-conservative understanding of women related issues. He expressed his attitude towards family and women by saying that 'there was no difference between a woman's flirting with a man and the practice of prostitution' (Diner & Toktaş, 2010: 46) and 'feminism is perversion'.³¹

Convention on Elimination of All Kinds of Discrimination Against Women, described as international bill of women's human rights. Turkey signed the convention in 1985 and it came into force by 1986. Following world conferences were organized in Nairobi in 1980 and in Beijing in 1985 to evaluate the national efforts to eliminate gender inequality and discrimination during the decade. In 1985, Beijing Declaration was adopted by many countries including Turkey and the establishment of national mechanism was imposed over all parties.

³¹ <http://www.bianet.org/bianet/bianet/14696-cicek-feminizm-sapiklik-flort-fahiseliktir>

5.3. The Rise of Political Islam and the European Union

In the emergence of new gender climate, the rise of political Islam must be underlined. The Welfare Party as a pro-Islamist party and Islamist women's movement prioritized and politicized the women's issues. The ban on wearing headscarf by women in public institutions served the party to hold a discourse on women and to mobilize women to take part in the party ranks. Islamist women went from door to door, involved women into social events (charity, praying, kermes, etc.) and made party propaganda. Islamist men and women frequently protested the headscarf ban as discrimination against women in the streets and on university campuses. However, the party figured women as only mothers and wives. Necmettin Erbakan, the party leader, did not approve women's employment outside house and called it as a threat to family union.³² After 2002, when Justice and Development Party came to power, the discourse on women still revolved around the headscarf ban.

More or less simultaneously, the EU as another actor shaping gender climate in Turkey entered in the political scene. The Justice and Development Party, which has been still running the country, prioritized accession to EU as a critical target. The impetus of the accession to the EU also served the purpose of the women's rights movement. The women's rights movement used the prospect of full-accession to the EU as an opportunity as well as leverage to enforce the governments to make necessary legal amendments from a gendered perspective. In line to harmonize the Turkish legislation with EU *Acquis*, a number of progressive legal changes in civil rights, women's employment and domestic violence were achieved.

In 2004, however, the Justice and Development Party confronted with the EU. First one happened during the parliamentary debates on changing the Penal Code, when the Prime Minister very unexpectedly expressed his wish to recriminalize adultery. However, this move was stopped by the European Union (Güneş-Ayata & Tütüncü, 2008b: 380-382). The second confrontation with European institutions, leading to the

³² <http://haber.gazetevatan.com/0/48156/4/yazarlar>

estrangement of the AKP, happened on to the negative decision of European Court of Human Rights on the ban of headscarf at universities. In 1998, Leyla Şahin, a female university student, took the Turkish government's ban of headscarf in the university to the European Court of Human Rights. In 2004, the Court decided that the ban could not be taken as a violation of human rights. The Court asserted that it could be justified on the basis of the protection of the secular regime, where the majority of the population is Muslim.³³ The expectation in the Islamist circles was reverse; they were hoping that the Court would consider it as a violation of human rights and would lift the ban. The Prime Minister and the leading party members expressed openly their great frustration with the decision. The Prime Minister said that the Court has no right and competence to say a word on the headscarf issue without consulting on the Islamist jurists. Bülent Arınç, the Speaker of Assembly, stated that the Court decision is not legally binding for Turkey.³⁴

The conjunctural nature of these legal victories, resting as they did on a particular alignment of external and internal factors (EU conditionalities and the joint efforts liberal media and women's groups), attests to their fragility. A reshuffling of the decks in the shape of a crushing AKP electoral victory in 2007, returning the party to power with a 47% majority; the evaporating prospects of EU accession, and, with it, any leverage it might have had (Kandiyoti, January 5, 2011).

Disappointment with Europe has coincided with consecutive electoral success of the AKP and the AKP's consolidation of power in the presidency, justice and bureaucracy, and with the decreasing military tutelage. These situations made the party feel over-confident and quite secure, leading to authoritarian tendencies (Öniş, 2013). A loss in impetus for further democratization has led the party's religio-conservatism.

³³ [http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=3504033&tarih=2005-11-10](http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=3504033&tarih=2005-11-10;);
<http://istanbul.mazlumder.org/yayinlar/detay/yurt-ici-raporlar/3/aihm-ictihatlarinda-din-ozgurlugu-ve-leyla-sahin--turkiye-karari-degerlendirme-raporu/495>

³⁴ http://www.milligazete.com.tr/haber/AIHMdeki_savunma_ayibi/198033#.UpEWLxbaQ6U;
<http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=3528884&tarih=2005-11-16>;
http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/tbmm_basin_aciklamalari_sd.aciklama?p1=30508

5.4. The New Notions of Femininity and Masculinity

In the post-1980 period, the notions of femininity and masculinity have been redefined on biological determinism and natural differences between sexes. Women are figured within the family as mothers and wives. Islam becomes a reference point in these redefinitions, which makes any questioning and/or deviation from them immoral. As early as in the 1970s, the radical Islamist movement emerged and since then became an active force in the social and political domain. For them, Islam provided an alternative [modest and traditional] way of life to new comers. In contrast to the modern way of life, the new Islamists paid special attention to women and the family in formulating its alternative. An Islamist literature, which was being critical of Republican understanding of equality between men and women, and ‘advocating the merits of patriarchal family system as described in Islam’, was produced (Özbay, 1990: 5).

For the Islamists, the major question in the society is morality and they profoundly relate morality with the status of women. In their understanding, the Republican reforms destroyed the natural harmony, which is based on the natural division of labor between sexes as prescribed in the religion. In this setting, primary roles of women as mothers and wives were neglected, and they were directed to work outside the house. This led to a confusion of roles in the family. Women lost their natural identity and duties, and thus, family was dragged into disintegration, thereby producing disastrous consequences for social morality (Toprak, 1994: 299).

... the Western norms introduced in Turkish society were causing degeneration of moral values and of the institution of the family in general. Women were neglecting their traditional roles as self-sacrificing mothers and housewives and thus driving the whole society into social, economic and political disarray. Women’s place was in the home and this was the natural order of society’ (cited in Özbay 1990: 5).

In the Islamist understanding, the natural identity is defined through *fitrat* (nature), which refers to a difference as well as complementarity between men and women. This is not considered as a source of inequality between men and women; rather women are expected to submit ‘their nature (*fitrat*) as the only possible form of

existence'. According to this, motherhood is regarded as natural essence of being a woman; and family is sacred as the sphere to end women's subordination (Sirman, 1989: 23-26).

This understanding presents an overt contrast to the approach of Turkish modernization to the woman's equality. The traditional norms and patterns regulating gender identities and relations were mostly preserved in the legal documents and private sphere. However, biological differences were never officially declared as an obstacle against the formal equality of sexes and public visibility of women. Women were not assumed to stay within the family and house due to their primary roles.

The state discourse and policies reflect the definition of proper femininity by the state. That is, women are to remain in family union and to behave consistent with common values and morality (see Acar & Altunok, 2012: 2-3, 7). New notions of femininity and masculinity place women within the institution of family, identify women only as mothers and/or wives, and bless motherhood as the primary mission of women. Prime Minister Erdoğan adheres to this notion and does not refrain from defending it. In a meeting with the representatives of women's non-governmental organizations in 2010, as the head of government, he declared that he did not believe in equality between men and women but in the equality of opportunity. His arguments depended on *fıtrat* as described in the Holy Quran.

The neo-conservative stance of the government has been increasingly unfolding as a discourse that undermines gender equality by emphasizing the centrality of the family institution by glorifying traditional gender roles (Acar & Altunok, 2012: 3).

In this set up, the survival and strength of family has been brought out as a target by the state. Neo-liberal premises are important here to mention. The understanding that family is the best agent for care work is quite consistent with neo-liberal premises. It is also justified by a nationalist discourse, which underlines the difference of the Turkish family from the West. Turkish traditional family is framed as strongly and emotionally tied, and as the basis of a strong society and country (Yazıcı, 2012: 104). Almost all social problems like domestic violence, increasing number of homeless

people, increasing rate of divorce, burden of social services on state are reduced to poor family relations (ASPB, 2011). The conservative media and broadcasting supports the idea that family is in degeneration/crisis and this would pave the way to serious socio-economic devastations. Employment of women is primarily issued in explaining domestic violence and divorce. In this climate, family and particularly the role of women gain new meaning to resolve social problems and contribute to socio-economic development.

Regarding new notions of femininity and masculinity, the ban of headscarf by public officers needs to be pointed out. In 2013, this ban was abolished; except for judges, prosecutors and police forces, veiled women are allowed to work in parliament, bureaucracy, state hospitals and public schools. Four female MPs from the government party started to attend the General Assembly of the parliament with headscarves. The striking point here is Prime Minister Erdoğan's emphasis on veiling as a requirement of Islam while he himself, his party and his government defended veiling as an individual right and disapproved the state ban on veiling (see Dağı, 2005). Now, he accused those, who state that veiling is not a religious requirement, of not knowing Islam.³⁵ By saying so, he justifies the state intervention into women's bodies by using religion and imposes religion as a regulatory mechanism over the women's bodies. This attitude cannot be evaluated on the grounds of individual rights. As in a neo-conservative gender climate, 'veiling' as a religious precondition could identify proper notion of femininity and be used to label women as good, chaste and honorable or *vice versa*.

5.5. Female Labor Force Participation

In Turkey, female labor force participation is quite low. According to the Global Gender Gap Index 2013 rankings published by World Economic Forum, Turkey is ranked on 127 among 136 countries on women's economic participation. It was 34.1% in 1990, 27.9% in 2002 and 23.3% in 2004. After then, a slight increase

³⁵ <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/25014144.asp>

happened and female labor force participation increased from 23.3% in 2005 to 24.5% in 2008 and 28.8% in 2012 (ASPB, 2012a).

In the post-1980 period, a more discernible political focus on low rate of female labor force participation in Turkey was generated with increased integration into the international community and its norms. The women's movement and the EU accession talks were instrumental in this (İlkaracan Ajas, 2012: 201-202). The government changed the legal framework to increase female labor force participation. In 2001, the new Civil Code abolished the article defining men as the head of household (WWHR, 2005: 7-9). As a result, women became no more obliged to have permission from their husbands for their choice of work. However, a traditional clause prioritizing family over individual right to work was retained with a likely limiting impact on women's work outside. It says, 'the harmony and welfare of the marriage union should be borne in mind by spouses when choosing and performing a job or profession', which might be used as to justify the violation of women's right to work (WWHR, 2005: 27) as well as housewifization of women.

In 2003, a new Labor Law was enacted. Discrimination based on sex is defined as a violation of human rights. Different treatment by the employer on the basis of sex, marital status and pregnancy in setting the conditions and terms of contract, in its implementation and termination and in setting wages for equal/same value of job is prohibited (National Action Plan, 2008).

In 2004, Prime Ministry Circular of Acting in Accordance with the Principle of Equality in Employee Recruitment was put into practice. This circular underlined the consideration of gender equality during the process of personnel recruitment in public sector. In 2010, another Prime Ministerial Circular on Increasing Women's Employment and Equality of Opportunity was enacted. It aimed at achieving a sustainable increase in women's labor force participation. To this end, equal pay for job of same/equal value, gender equality in training and promotion, gender-based data collection, monitoring opening up crèche and nursery in both public and private sector were issued. Establishment of monitoring and coordination council at national

level was also decided on to specify and resolve the problems women encounter in public employment.

In order to increase female labor force participation, several legal initiatives were taken by the government. Through the legal amendments (Law 5763) to the Law 4447 on Unemployment Insurance, the state initiated a new application and enacted the payment of insurance premiums of the new employees to be paid by the employer for the following 5 years by the Unemployment Insurance Fund.³⁶ Training programs are conducted by Public Training Centers and Turkish Labor Agency to develop the skills of women and to create employment opportunities for them. Their attendance to these training programs is also encouraged by an additional clause in Law 6111, which regulates the payment of insurance premiums by the state in case of their employment.

Despite the legal advances and initiatives, if one considers gender composition of employment, it is still quite hard to observe feminization in labor force in Turkey (İlkkaracan, 2012). First of all, the unchanging characteristic of female labor force participation in Turkey is unequal distribution on the basis of rural/urban side. By 2011, 40.4% of working women are employed in agricultural activities (Population and Housing Survey, 2011: 139). Despite mass migration and increasing ratio of urban population, female labor force participation in rural side is still higher than urban side. The ratio is respectively 37.5% and 24.8% by 2011. Although 84% of women in rural side participate in labor force and especially in agricultural activities, 80% of them work as unpaid family workers (ASPB, 2012a).

The ratio of women in industry is quite low and increased from 19% in 1992 just to 20% in 2006. Women in industry predominate in manufacturing industry and mainly three main low status sectors – textile industry, garment industry, food and tobacco production industry (Toksöz, 2012a: 190-191). By 2012, women constitute only 15.44% of total employment in industry and concentrate in service sector by 45.9%. Women in service sector work in feminized fields. In 2012, 8% of women work in

³⁶ <http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/kanunlar/k5763.html>

education, 7% in health and social services, 10% in retail trade, and 4% in administrative and support activities (KEİG, 2013: 26).

The employment rate of women is relatively high in public sector and it tends to increase since the late 1970s. The rate of female public workers was 21.62% by 1980; 30.35% by 1990; 34.25% by 1994 and 34.06% by 2010 (Çitçi, 2011). By 2011, women employed in public sector constituted 37% of total employee (ASPB, 2012a: 33). However, there is gender segregation both on horizontal and vertical level. The share of female public workers constitutes only 9.29% of total female labor force participation by 2010. Women predominate in certain branches as education, training, health, advocacy and architecture, which are regarded as feminized branches. The rate of women in academy is 40.9%; in banking sector 38%; in architecture 38%; in advocacy 38.1% while they constitute only 5,6% of police force and 8.3% of prosecution office (ASPB, 2012a: 33). Construction, petrol, metallurgical, mechanical and mining engineering is still regarded as male jobs and sex might be declared as a condition to be employed in these sectors in job announcements. Even when female engineers are recruited in these positions; they are usually forced to do desktop job (Çitçi, 2011).

Women are not equally represented in decision-making position; 86.4% senior bureaucrats and administrators are men while 13.6% are women (ASPB, 2012a: 33). Only 9 of 162 university presidents; 21 of 185 ambassadors; 9 of 165 general directors; 302 of 2108 department heads are women (Ka-Der, 2012). As of 2013, there is no woman in the position of undersecretary; only 1 woman governor and 20 woman district governors are employed in bureaucracy (Ka-Der, 2012).

In private sector, low rate of female labor force participation is coupled with the predomination of women in informal sector, especially in small-scale enterprises, family workshops and at home. Women's employment in informal sector increased by 64.9% between 2000 and 2006 while it was around 15% between 1989 and 2000 (Dedeoğlu, 2010: 3, 9). By 2001, the rate of women involved in informal sector is as

high as 58% and women predominate over men in informal sector on the basis of sector, status at work and wage (Ka-Der, 2012).

Primary informal, low-paid and low-status jobs that women engage in are home cleaning, and child and/or elderly care. These jobs, which are regarded as female, do not require any professional/technical knowledge and/or expertise. On the other side, the lack of public care for women having professional jobs generates a demand for cheap female labor force to perform home cleaning and care-work. These jobs do not allow women to gain new skills, interact with new people and acquire a meaning of work because women continue to perform their daily routines in different houses at quite low wages, for long working hours and without any coverage of social security.

Traditional family structure and traditional norms of femininity and masculinity also determine the employment patterns of women. The consent of husband and/or father is still an important factor on women's participation into labor force. Particularly for the lower class and more traditional families, working outside the home and interacting with strangers can be considered as inappropriate for 'good' women. In this setting, women tend to do piece work at home, or to work in family workshops and/or workshops in their neighborhood at low wages and low status and without being covered by any social protection. (Toksöz, 2012: 58). In other words, they concentrate in informal sector, which does not give them a feeling of self-realization and which devalues their work and reduces it on a contribution. More importantly, such an employment pattern does not change traditional norms and values regarding gender relations and identities.

In this context, housewifization appears as a common norm and mode of life particularly for married women in Turkey. The statistical data shows that single and younger women participate more in labor force than married women. For males, labor force participation rate is the highest in the 35-39 age groups with 95.4% whereas it is the highest in the 25-29 age groups for females with 38.3% (Population and Household Survey, 2011: 131). Even for women with higher education, being housewife as a mode of life can be given preference over work as a way of self-

realization. Labor force participation of women with higher education declined from 79.7% in 1989 to 69.8% by 2006 (Ecevit 2008: 130). There is an increase of 17.8% in non-participation of women with higher education between 2011 and 2012 (TEPAV, 2012). Domestic division of labor, the lack of public care and gender pay gap reduce the attractiveness of working life for married women. The state does not act to eliminate the constraints that working women face. Rather, under the conditions of marriage, being a housewife as a way of life for women is also encouraged by the state. In the new Labor Law, there is still an article that entitles women to a redundancy premium in cases where they leave their jobs for marriage (Kılıç, 2008: 495).

Even if women engage in home-based piecework and informal activities, and considerably contribute to family budget, most of them still tend to consider themselves as housewives (Dedeoğlu, 2010: 9). Neither they nor their families consider their work as ‘work’ but as an extension of and in compatible with their domestic work like sewing, knitting, house cleaning, childcare, etc. Under these circumstances, the status of men as the head of household and primary breadwinner is preserved while women do not cross the red lines, which define them primarily as homemaker and mother (Toksöz, 2012: 60). They do not go outside home to work, interact with strange males, and neglect their house and children. With this tendency, both traditional family structure is preserved and women do not neglect their domestic duties, and cheap labor force is sustained to the survival of such enterprises.

Considering gender composition of labor force, such measures as flexible employment, part-time employment and women’s entrepreneurship by micro-credits offered by the state in the new Labor Law to increase female labor force participation do not seem promising. These measures are promoted as a solution to help women reconcile work and family responsibilities. Altering traditional division of labor towards equality is not aimed at (Dedeoğlu, 2000: 135-136).³⁷ Additionally, these

³⁷ For an analysis of the application and implications of the legal initiatives taken by the government to increase female employment, please see the report prepared by KEİG in 2013 on a research project conducted in several provinces in Turkey. The name of report in Turkish is *Türkiye’de Kadın Emegi ve İstihdamı* (Pro-employment Policies for Women’s Labor and Employment in Turkey). Please visit <http://www.keig.org>.

measures do not seem reasonable. Flexible employment is already common in informal sector in the form daily seasonal and temporary work. Part-time employment is neither available in labor market nor attractive for each sex under the conditions of economic hardship (Tunalı, 2005). Women's entrepreneurship funded by micro-credits does not produce expected results either. In a research project conducted by KEİG in 12 provinces of Turkey to analyze the implications of pro-employment initiatives, it is observed that female entrepreneurs could not be constant on their business due to small amount of credits, huge amount of debts, lack of market area and lack of capability to venture a business. Additionally, training programs for employment and entrepreneurship are classified on gender; training in feminized areas like carpet weaving, lacework, cooking, cleaning, child caring, family health, etc. are provided for women (KEİG, 2013).

Another obstacle to women's employment is that it is understood as a contribution to family budget. This leads to women not only predominate in informal activities but also earn less than men for the same job. Although the principle of equal pay for work of equal value is existent in Turkish legislation, the real situation of women shows that women earn lower wages than men for jobs of same and/or equal value especially in private sector.

According to recent data from the Social Security Institution, women earn approximately 10 percent less than men. It is claimed though that even this calculation is somehow distorted and does not represent the real figures. According to the calculations based on international standards, the difference of wages between men and women increases up to 40 percent, favoring men. There is no doubt that one of the most important reasons of the differentiation of wages is the segregation of men and women in the labor market. In this respect, it is worth mentioning the lack of effective mechanisms to reconcile working and family life and the non-existence of objective job classification and assessment systems (Şenol et al., 2005).

Another report shows that working women registered in Social Security Institution earn less 4% on daily basis than men in the same situation. This percent goes up to 8% in women predominated sectors such as retail business, education, and health, manufacture industry, bureau and secretariat management, counseling management (TEPAV, 2012).

5.6. Family, Motherhood, Childcare, Reproduction

It is acknowledged that the state has enacted important legal changes and taken pro-employment initiatives during the recent years. However, these steps are not supported with such measures as public care, parental leave, and payment of premiums during maternity leave and employment quota, which would achieve a substantial increase in women's employment (Dedeoğlu, 2012b). Despite long history of modernization, care work primarily shouldered by women has not developed towards a more egalitarian way; rather its dependence on and arrangement through traditional family relations has been reinforced in the recent decades (İlkkaracan, 2010: 24). In the section, I shall review the discourse and policies of the state regarding family, childcare, domestic violence, reproductive rights and sexual autonomy of women.

5.6.1. Childcare and Maternal Leave

Legal obligations of the state to provide childcare services are quite weak in Turkey. In the Public Officers Law, opening nurseries for a number of at least 50 children (aged 0-6) was regulated with an amendment enacted in 1984. This regulation was made upon conditional to the approval of the relevant minister. However, there has been drastic decline in the number of these services and facilities. There were 497 nurseries by 2008 but this number is decreased to 322 by 2009 and 149 by 2010 (Ecevit, 2012: 229). In 2004, a regulation on Working Conditions of Pregnant and Nursing Women was enacted. This regulation obliged the establishment of nursing rooms for nursing mothers and day care rooms for children up to 1 year old in work places employing 100-150 women, and of preschool facilities for children (aged 0-5) in workplaces employing 150 women.³⁸ However, the conditionality of sex of worker and number for the provision of childcare services might work against working women. The workplaces should probably escape this obligation by keeping the number of female workers low and/or by not hiring female workers. This conditionality illustrates that care work is regarded as women's responsibility and

³⁸ <http://www.kadininstatusu.gov.tr/tr/19109/Gebe-veya-Emziren-Kadinlarin-Calistirilma-Sartlariyla-Emzirme-Odalari-ve-Cocuk-Bakim-Yurtlarina-Dair-Yonetmelik>

problem, and excludes men from the picture. The disadvantaged position of working mothers is strengthened by an amendment to the Labor Law in 2008. Law 5763 elasticized the provision of childcare services. According to this, the employer can provide childcare services by outsourcing instead of setting up nursery and crèche.³⁹

Institutionalization of care work is also quite weak. Not only the numbers of crèches and nurseries but also the rate of buying these services is quite low. According to the results of nationwide survey of 2006, women do care work in the 91.3% of urban households with preschool age children (0-5) and only 2.8% buy paid care at home or crèche (cited in İlkkaracan, 2012: 16). Another survey of 2003 shows that 37% of women participating into labor force take help from their female relatives (mainly from grandmothers) and only 8% of them benefit from paid care services (cited in İlkkaracan, 2012: 16). In private market, the number of crèches and nurseries increased from 1186 by 2005 to 1505 by 2009. However, only 4% of children benefit from these services. The rate of children age 0-3 going to crèches decreased from 15% by 2008 to 6.6% by 2008. This declining tendency can be explained by very high costs of buying crèche and nursery services (Ecevit, 2012: 228-229).

2003 Labor Law regulated the duration of paid maternity leave for female workers as 16 weeks (8 weeks before birth and 8 weeks after birth). Unpaid maternity leave for 6 months is also regulated upon request following the end of paid maternity leave.⁴⁰ With the amendments enacted by the Law 6111 in 2011, paid maternity leave was extended to 16 weeks for women employed in public sector. Unpaid parental leave was extended up to 24 months and breast-feeding break for nursing women was increased (following the end of paid maternity leave, 3 hours in the first six months and 1,5 hours during the second six months).⁴¹

³⁹ <http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/kanunlar/k5763.html>

⁴⁰ <http://www.kadininstatusu.gov.tr/tr/html/19102/IS+KANUNU>

⁴¹ <http://www.gib.gov.tr/index.php?id=1079&uid=jRfYiUoqqvQOd3Yg&type=kanun>

Regarding parental leave, a draft law, proposing unpaid and non-transferable parental leave for both spouses, was prepared in 2005. However, parental leave proposal was dropped from the government's agenda due to the opposition of the leading employers' association (TİSK) in Turkey. The association referred to traditional understanding of parenthood, which is motherhood, and the high rate of female unemployment. It says that these factors would make parental leave inefficient and useless (Dedeoğlu, 2012a: 284). At the end, in 2011, 10-day parental leave is legalized only for male public officers and is conditioned to the request of the father.⁴²

In this setting, family care is stimulated and women carrying out care work are praised on the state discourse. Family as main unit of care is also promoted through financial incentives; a substantial supplement is given to women who take care of their elderly and disabled children at home (Buğra, 2012: 27). Very recently, the government has announced to initiate new incentives to reward women of more children. Among these incentives, there is early retirement option for mother of 5 children and right to retirement pension for mother of 8 children even if she has no employment record during her life course.

The new focus on family and motherhood perfectly matches with neo-liberal policies. Neo-liberal policies require the shift of welfare services, particularly institutional care, from state to family. Neo-liberal policies reflect on shortening, or to put it more correctly replacing the provision of welfare services by the state. The best agent arising to provide particularly institutional care services in a much cheaper way is the family (Yazıcı, 2012: 104). Lack of public care including children, the disabled and the elderly reveals the attitude of the state to institutionalize the family and women as designated caregivers. This is in quite conformity with neo-liberal policies and neo-conservatism. Replacing the social state with family will lessen financial burdens over the state, as women will provide social services free. Women will continue to provide cheap labor force in informal and flexible labor market. Social and moral crisis, which is related to family breakdowns by the state, will be

⁴² <http://www.gib.gov.tr/index.php?id=1079&uid=jRfYiUoqqvQOd3Yg&type=kanun>

handled by preserving traditional norms and patterns. This is also related to housewifization of women who take care of their children at home and the provision of care by close family circle, including grandmothers, relatives and neighbors, care children of working mothers at home and at very low cost and/or free.

5.6.2. Intimacy, Sexuality and Reproduction

Throughout the recent decade, the governments have achieved important legal advances under the leverage imposed by the EU and the women's rights movement. Legal framework was renewed in a way to eliminate gender-biased articles, to establish gender equality within marriage, and to guarantee women's autonomy over their bodies and sexuality.

The women's rights movement started to change the Penal Code and to expand women's rights over their bodies, sexuality and reproduction. In September 2004, the draft law including more than thirty amendments was adopted in the Turkey Grand National Assembly. In the old law, women's sexuality and bodies were defined as commodities of men, family and society. In the new law, sexual crimes were redefined on the grounds of rights and freedoms of individual, sexual integrity and sexual autonomy. The reference to the patriarchal concepts such as tradition, custom, honor, chastity and morality in regulating sexual crimes was eliminated. In the old law, there was a difference between sexual crimes committed to married and unmarried women. While a sexual crime (like abduction and rape) committed to married woman was regarded as a crime committed against family and society, the same crime for an unmarried woman could be excused on the condition of marriage between perpetrator and victim. Marital rape was criminalized. These discriminatory clauses were annihilated in the new law (WWHR, 2005: 14).

In line with the amendments in Civil and Penal Codes, the related articles of the Constitution were changed to strengthen gender equality. In 2004, a sentence saying 'the State has the obligation to ensure that this equality exists in practice' was added

to Article 10 of the Constitution.⁴³ With a revision to the same article made in 2010, a special clause on affirmative action to the end of gender equality was added, and it was confirmed that ‘measures taken for this purpose shall not be interpreted as contrary to the principle of equality’.⁴⁴ Adding another clause to Article 90 of the Constitution, Turkey accepted the superiority of international law, which brought CEDAW as an international human rights convention to a status of superiority vis-à-vis national laws in gender equality matters.

Since the late 1990s, struggling with violence against women has entered the state agenda. In the new Labor Law enacted in 2003, taking necessary measures to protect women workers from sexual harassment and was imposed on the employees. In 2005, a clause was added to the Law on Municipalities, which ordered metropolitan municipalities and municipalities with more than 50.000 habitants to build shelters for women and children subjected to domestic violence.

Turkish state was actively involved in drafting the ‘Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence’ of the Council of Europe (İstanbul Convention) and was the first country to ratify the Convention in 2011 (Acar & Altunok, 2013: 5). The Convention is the first legally binding document to recognize violence against women and domestic violence on the grounds of violation of individual rights and assign the state responsibility to prevent and combat them (Acar & Ertürk, 2011). By ratifying it, ‘domestic violence against women as a form of violation of individual rights and of discrimination against women’⁴⁵ was recognized on state level.

In 2012, a new law called “Law on Protection of Family and Prevention of Violence against Women” formally in line with the Istanbul Convention was enacted. This

⁴³ Please see also http://global.tbmm.gov.tr/docs/constitution_en.pdf

⁴⁴ http://global.tbmm.gov.tr/docs/constitution_en.pdf, <http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/komisyon/kefe/act.htm>

⁴⁵ Please see Article 3 of the Convention on <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2012/03/20120308M1-1.pdf>

new law issued more comprehensive measures to prevent violence against women and protect them. The distinction between married/unmarried women to initiate legal process against perpetrators was eliminated. The position of the law enforcing authorities to take protection decision was strengthened and the police was provided with the right to take swift action without a court decision in times of emergency.

However, there has been slow implementation in building up shelters. The numerical sub-limit for inhabitants for the municipalities to open up shelters was increased from 50.000 to 100.000.⁴⁶ Women victims of murder increased from 66 to 806 (increasing 14 folds) between 2002 and 2009. The ratio of women victims of domestic violence was 39% by 2011. However, there are shelters only in the 35 of 81 provinces in Turkey by 2012.⁴⁷

To the end of protecting family union, another issue the state pays attention to is divorce, although its rate is quite low with 1,62% by 2012.⁴⁸ The state policy relates divorce to the lack of good communication within family and takes new initiatives to prevent divorce and to decrease its rate. The Ministry of Family and Social Policies organizes trainer trainings and seminars on premarital education and family education in various provinces and in public institutions. Primary aim of these projects is to increase the number of ‘healthy families’ by underlining the importance of intra-family communication in resolving problems.⁴⁹ The Ministry also conducts pilot projects to provide counseling for married couples before and during divorce. Its main aim is to make them to reconsider their decision on divorce and to reestablish family union.⁵⁰ Another pilot project called Family Advocacy and

⁴⁶ http://78.142.150.50/sites/wave.local/files/WAVE_CR2011_TURKEY.pdf

⁴⁷ <http://t24.com.tr/haber/turkiye-44-ulke-icinde-kadin-basina-dusen-siginma-evi-listesinde-23-sirada/223036>, <http://www.haberler.com/chp-li-yilmaz-kadin-siginma-evlerini-sordu-4428724-haberi/>, <http://www.bianet.org/kadin/saglik/100784-almanyada-400-ispanyada-293-siginma-evi>

⁴⁸ <http://tuik.gov.tr/UstMenu.do?metod=temelist>

⁴⁹ <http://www.ailetoplum.gov.tr/tr>

⁵⁰ <http://www.ailetoplum.gov.tr/tr/html/23501/Bosanma-Danismanligi>

Counseling has been recently introduced. Within this pilot project, e-training on awareness raising on family and domestic violence will be given to a target group consisting of families in trouble⁵¹; so that domestic violence within family will be prevented and will no more trigger divorce. In 2013, the Minister of Family and Social Policies has announced the launching of a new legal proposal, where four-session counseling will be given to the spouses, who start a law suit on divorce; so that they will reconsider their decision and save their marriage.⁵²

On the side of the state, women outside the institution of family are invisible; their problems would be addressed on as long as they remain in family union. It is observed in a specific policy issued for only female widows, where the state differentiates between divorced women and female widows in distributing social benefits. In 2012, the Ministry of Family and Social Policy introduced a social assistance program for female widows who lack social security coverage but have to maintain their households. The program targets only female widows whose family union was broken down upon the death of the spouse. The divorced women are excluded from the program and are not secured by the state as they voluntarily broke up the family union. More importantly, the program provides female widows with cash transfers on the condition that they have no unacceptable relations. They are expected to have morally acceptable life style and relations, which are continuously being monitored through neighborhood communities (Özar & Yakut Çakar, 2013: 9). This program stipulates certain notions of femininity and masculinity, which excludes women from being involved in sexual and/or emotional affairs out of wedlock. Confirming to morally appropriate affairs is not only imposed over the people but also institutionalized by such a social assistance program.

In this respect, the government prefers providing social assistance benefits to widowed women rather than advocating a rights-based approach that would act as a guarantee for women who aim at maintaining autonomous

⁵¹ <http://aileavukatligi.org/index.php/faaliyetler/>. For a critical evaluation of the project on media, please see <http://haber.sol.org.tr/kadinin-gunlugu/aile-avukatligi-siddet-magdurunu-evinde-kalmaya-ikna-etme-projesi-haberi-81003>

⁵² <http://www.haberturk.com/polemik/haber/896046-danismanlik-hizmeti-evlilikleri-kurtarir-mi;>
<http://t24.com.tr/haber/aile-bakanligi-bosanmak-isteyen-ciftlere-4-sans-daha-verecek/244293>

households. Thus, any policy orientation that would evolve women's capabilities towards individualization is regarded as a threat to the unity of the family and severely avoided (Özar & Yakut- Çakar, 2013: 9).

Discussion on adultery also shows the intervention and orientation of the state to regulate intimate relations of individuals in a neo-conservative way as well. During the debates to the Penal Code amendments, Prime Minister Erdoğan expressed his wish to recriminalize adultery.⁵³ The Prime Minister explained his aim as to protect family and women against infidelity of their husband's. However, this move was stopped by the European Union by reason of being against the accession criteria (Güneş-Ayata & Tütüncü, 2008: 380-382).

Another area that the state has intervened is reproductive decisions and choices of individuals. On Women's Day Celebration in 2008, Prime Minister Erdoğan made an unexpected declaration and suggested women to have at least three children. He justified his declaration on the basis of the power and survival of Turkish nation and the problem of aging population that the Western countries confront now.⁵⁴ Since then, both Prime Minister Erdoğan and the leading ministers frequently appear in the wedding ceremonies, and advise newlywed couples to have at least three children, preferably five. However, statistical indicators show that by 2012 fertility rate per woman is 2.08⁵⁵ and is still higher than most European countries.

Abortion for non-medical reasons is legal until the end of the tenth week of pregnancy. It is also allowed after the first ten weeks of pregnancy if woman's health is in danger and/or in the case of fetal impairment (WWHR, 2005: 53). A desire to ban abortion was firstly mentioned by Prime Minister Erdoğan in 2012. He stated that 'abortion is murder'. Now, the legal duration of abortion is still same but with a new law under preparation, abortion must be applied only at state hospitals; women

⁵³ Upon the criticism and protests of feminist organizations, Prime Minister harshly reacted to them and labeled them as 'vociferous marginal women' that 'cannot fit to the moral norms of the society' (Güneş-Ayata & Tütüncü, 2008: 380-382).

⁵⁴ <http://arsiv.ntvmsnbc.com/news/438418.asp>

⁵⁵ <http://tuik.gov.tr/UstMenu.do?metod=temelist>

might be forced to reconsider their decision, and the doctors have the right to reject abortion. Even now, the *de facto* situation is quite scary; the state hospitals might restrict legal duration of abortion to 8 weeks and ask for marriage certificate, which is not legal.⁵⁶ The treatment that women encounter at state hospitals shows that the state aims at being disciplinary and punishing towards women who decide on abortion. Anecdotes in media reveal that the doctors at state hospitals apply procedure in poor and unhygienic conditions and without anesthesia.⁵⁷ They humiliate these women due to their decision. In my understanding, the debate on abortion illustrates that in neo-conservative gender climate, pregnancy out of wedlock is not approved and pregnancy within wedlock should not be terminated.

Regarding reproductive choice, caesarian sections was brought up as an issue. Prime Minister Erdoğan again expressed his personal disagreement on caesarian sections. In his understanding, caesarian sections should be restricted to protect Turkish family and national power as women that have caesarian section tend to have fewer children and this would threaten the survival of Turkish nation.⁵⁸ Upon his declaration, a new clause (Law 6354) stating that caesarian sections can be applied only for strict medical reasons outlawing caesarian sections on demand was added up to the Public Health Law.⁵⁹ The Constitutional Court approved the legal amendment to be in conformity with the Constitution and rejected the application of the Republican People's Party, the opposition party, to cancel the amendment in 2013.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/kurtaj_tasarisi_sikintili-1116581,
<http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/id/25408674/#>

⁵⁷ <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/22313236.asp>,

⁵⁸ http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/basbakan_her_kurtaj_bir_uluderedir-1089235

⁵⁹ <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2012/07/20120712-12.htm>

⁶⁰ <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/saglik/24849941.asp>;
<http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/?hn=445320&kn=7&ka=4&kb=7>

Homosexuality is not recognized on the grounds of individual rights either. Rather, homosexuality is disregarded on the side of the state as a moral, cultural and religious norm. The former Minister of State in charge of Women and Family Affairs stated that ‘homosexuality is a biological disease to be cured’.⁶¹ This statement indicates the rejection of sexual orientations out of heterosexuality and its perception as a threat to traditional family structure.

5.7. Women’s Political Participation

Despite the long history of the enfranchisement of women, their political participation in Turkey remains at quite low rates. According to the Global Gender Gap Index (2013), Turkey holds the rank of 91 among 132 countries in terms of the representation of women in parliament and of 121 among 132 countries in terms of the number of women occupying ministerial position. This tendency is mainly related to traditional notions of femininity and masculinity. Despite their increasing visibility in public life, women are expected to primarily perform their domestic duties. This brings unequal participation of women into decision-making process and characterizing politics as a masculine sphere.

5.7.1. Institutional Politics

In the post-1980 period, women started to participate more into political life. The rising women’s rights movement and the address on women’s human rights by the state shed the light on women’s low rate of political participation. In 1993, Tansu Çiller became the first female Prime Minister of Turkey. Tansu Çiller generated a role model for women; her success inspired women to be more interested in politics and showed them the possibility of reaching top political rank. However, women’s participation into institutional politics has not reached satisfactory levels yet.

In the 1991 national elections, there were only 8 women among the 450 members of Turkey Grand National Assembly and this amounted only to 1.8%. In the national

⁶¹ <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/pazar/14031207.asp>;
<http://www.cnnturk.com/2010/turkiye/03/07/bakan.kavaf.escinsellik.bir.hastalik/566620.0/>

elections of 1999 and 2002, the number of female members of parliament rose to respectively 22 and 24 in the total count of 550 members of parliament. With these numbers, female members of parliament constituted only 4.2% and 4.4% of the parliament. In 2007 national elections, the number of female members of parliament doubled and increased to 50 of 550. In 2011 national elections, Turkey achieved its highest rate in terms of the representation of women in the Turkey Grand National Assembly. 70 women were elected as members of parliament and constituted 14.4% of the whole constituency, which was still quite lower than European ratios (Ka-Der, 2012).

Only 14 women held the position of ministry in various governments during the period between 1935 and 2008. In the governments formed between 1987 and 1991, only 1 and same woman became Minister of Labor and Social Security and State Minister. In the governments formed between 1991 and 1993, 3 women were assigned on the position of State Ministry. After the national elections of 1995, 3 women took charge as ministers in the coalition government. They took office of State Ministry for Women, Family and Social Services, State Ministry for Economy, and Ministry of Tourism. In the government formed in 1996, there were 4 women ministers. One of them performed as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, 2 became State Minister, and 1 held the office of Minister of Interior (Sancar, 2008: 220). In the four governments established after 2002, 2007 and 2011 national elections, 6 women as ministers participated into the government. 3 of these women held the position of State Ministry, 1 woman became Minister of Tourism and Culture, and 1 woman did Minister of National Education. In the government in charge, there is only 1 woman minister responsible for Family and Social Policies.⁶²

Women are not only invisible in ministerial positions but are also excluded from permanent commissions in parliament. Even if women hold membership or chairmanship in parliamentary commissions, these are generally feminine ones line family, health, culture, etc. Female members of parliament do not usually occupy position in highly important commissions where hot debate and discussions, for

⁶² <http://www.akparti.org.tr/english/yonetim/hukumetler>

instance, on state budget and defense take place (Işık, 2007: 70). At the Turkey Grand National Assembly, there are 17 commissions. After 2009 national elections, the only commission chaired by a woman is the one on Women's Equality and its members are predominantly female (11 of 17). The Commissions on Environment and Integration with EU have 4 female members. The number of women ranges between 1 and 3 in other commissions such as Justice, Foreign Affairs, Interior, Transportation, Tourism, and State Economic Enterprises. There is no female member in the Commission on National Defense, and Planning and Budgetary (Ka-Der, 2010).

Although the number of women in these commissions relatively increased after the 2011 national elections, still only one woman occupies the chairmanship of 17 commissions. It is again the Commission on Women's Equality where there are 21 female members. The other commissions where female numbers range between 4 and 7 are those on Constitution, Integration with EU, Health, Family, Labor and Social Activities, National Education, Culture, Youth and Sports. There is only 1 female member in the Commissions on Foreign Affairs, and Industry, Trade, Energy, Natural Resources, Information and Technology. There is no female member in the Commissions on Planning and Budget and State Economic Enterprises (Ka-Der, 2012).

Additionally, the structure of political parties does not encourage women's equal representation in politics. The mobility of women from lower echelons to upper echelons in political parties is quite difficult and weak. The women occupying position in decision-making bodies and/or upper echelons are mostly selected and/or assigned by party leaders and do not come from local party organizations. This makes women's political power and legitimacy quite weak and dependent on the party leadership's drive. Thus, female members of parliament could not break the constraints imposed over them by the strong party leadership, could not generate a feminist agenda and could not reflect on the demands of feminist groups in an autonomous way (Sancar, 2008: 226).

In the latest elections, women's rights organizations demand for gender quota to achieve a critical mass in the parliament and to end permanent male-domination in politics. The Association for the Support and Training of Women Candidates (Ka-Der), conducted several campaigns to draw public attention on underrepresentation of women in politics and to pressure all political parties to apply at least 30% quota in nominating female candidates in local and national elections.⁶³ However, the government in power did not pay attention to the demands of feminist organizations to end male domination in politics. Rather, both the party's leadership and the women's auxiliaries stated that imposing compulsory measures is being an insult for women. Their common view is that women do not need quota to climb up the ladders of political career. The numerical supremacy of men in politics continues to be explained through the unwillingness or apathy of women rather than prevalent understanding of politics as male profession (Güneş-Ayata & Tütüncü, 2008: 375-378).

For the time being, only two political parties impose gender quota. Republican People's Party increased gender quota in the party statute from 25% to 33% in 2012. Peace and Democracy Party applies co-chairmanship and 40% gender quota in intra-party elections, local elections and national elections. Other two parties, Justice and Development Party and Nationalist Action Party, do not apply gender quota. Although the government party (Justice and Development Party) supports the participation of more women in politics in discourse, this could not go beyond wishful thinking. The government pursues either to realize women as electorate or to benefit from women members of the party in organizing and mobilizing votes to the party.

Low representation of women in politics is primarily related to the definition of politics on traditional norms and patterns. In this setting, politics is described as a masculine sphere, which is 'filled with and shaped by men' and which is not appropriate for women (Işık, 2007: 71). Involving in politics means cruel competition, long lasting working hours and inflexible time schedule, which are

⁶³ <http://www.ka-der.org.tr/tr-TR/Page/Show/410/kampanyalar.html>

regarded unsuitable for women, as such a life style would prevent them from performing their domestic duties and caring their family (Güneş-Ayata, 1990: 265).

5.7.2. Women's Movement and Feminism

An autonomous women's movement emerged in Turkey in the post-1980 period, where the radical right and left wing movements, which dominated political debate and struggle during the 1960s and 1970s, were abolished by the military intervention of 1980 (İlkkaracan, 1997: 7). The military intervention aimed to depoliticize society to end the social chaos and political polarization. All political parties, trade unions and professional organizations were closed. At the same time, the military intervention started to follow a new economic path along liberalization, which gradually increased the integration of Turkey with the West. After the transition to civilian politics by 1983, new concepts such as democratization, liberalization, civil society and individualism started to enter the political discourse. In this environment, new forms of political struggle/organization such as environmental movement, women's movement and gay rights movement could to appear in the political scenery. Particularly, women's movement was tolerated by the state, as its feminist and anti-state rhetoric was dismissed or not probably understood as a threat (see Arat, 1994; Tekeli 1990).

The motto adopted by feminist women was 'private is political'. They were against the identification of women as mothers, wives and sisters not as individuals, who have right and will to choose their life course (Arat, 1994: 244). To raise awareness on feminist demands, feminist women got organized through informal meetings taking place at homes and discussions on feminist journals and publications (Timisi & Ağduk-Gevrek, 2002; Tekeli, 1986). Feminist women's movement also organized public campaigns, street protests and sit-ins to strike public attention on the violations of equality such as domestic violence, virginity tests, sexual harassment and aimed at mobilizing political action towards necessary legal changes primarily in the Civil and Penal Codes (Acar & Altunok, 2012: 37-38).

Coming to the 1990s and 2000s, a diversified and institutionalized women's movement emerged in Turkey. In addition to secular and feminist women, Islamist and Kurdish women became active and organized actors of women's movement. Both Islamist and Kurdish feminists criticized feminist movement as being ethno-centric and blind to other identities (Diner & Toktaş, 2010). Islamist women's movement mainly revolved around the ban on wearing headscarf at universities and public institutions. Some Islamist feminists disagree on the male supremacy in Islamist movement and community, and search for a religious feminism. Kurdish women's movement has been organized against Republican nationalism and become a part of ethnic Kurdish movement. They have struggled against the male dominance in Kurdish movement and against the discriminatory parts of their culture and tradition (Diner & Toktaş, 2010).

The diversified women's movement along secularism, feminism, ethnic identity and religious identity will definitely produce obstacles to establish a common framework for feminist struggle. In the Turkish polity, ethnic and religious identities can override gender as a focus of political interest. Besides, the state might do clientelism for the Islamist women's organizations and they might be in more advantaged position than feminist organizations in terms of distribution of resources and of establishing dialogue with policy-makers. It is quite suspicious to what extent the Islamist women's organizations would criticize and oppose the state discourse on feminist grounds, especially after the headscarf ban, both the symbol and target of Islamist women's movement, was abolished.

Finally, the number of women's civil societal organizations has been increasing in the recent decades. Its number increased from 10 by 1983 to 64 by 1992 and more than 350 by 2004 (Diner & Toktaş, 2010: 47). However, the extent that women's organizations influence policymaking process is quite suspicious. As the state does not prefer to invest in infrastructure and facilities like women's shelters, it encourages the women's organizations and volunteers to provide service and support to women in trouble rather than enforcing cooperation between the women's organizations and the Ministry of Family. Then, these organizations could not

generate and/or contribute to state policy on gender related issues due to lack of time, human and financial resources (Interview 29, NGO Expert, Ankara, 6.1.2014).

5.7.3. National Mechanism and International Compliance

To achieve gender equality in all spheres of social life, institutionalization and organization under the roof of state is required just as the existence of an egalitarian legal framework and of women's movement. This refers to the recognition of existing inequalities between men and women on the state level. Since the late 1980s, Turkey has progressed in establishing national machinery to guarantee women's rights and resolve gender based inequalities and discrimination despite a set of deficiencies. In this progress, international obligations that Turkish state is committed to and the women's movement should be underlined (Acuner, 2002: 125-127).

In 1990, General Directorate on Status and Problems of Women (KSSGM) affiliated to the Prime Ministry was established 'with the aim of helping women gain their deserved right in social, economic and political fields'.⁶⁴ However, the institution was established with legislative decree and continued its existence for 11 years without a law of establishment (Çitçi, 2011: 426). At the beginning, there were just a few personnel and this limited the Directorate's capacity and activities to produce women policies (Acuner, 2002: 131).

In 2004, the name of KSSGM was changed as General Directorate on Status of Women (KSGM). A law of establishment was enacted and the General Directorate was affiliated to the State Ministry in charge of Family and Women Affairs under the Prime Ministry. 'KSGM was restructured as a national mechanism to "carry out activities aiming at the protection and development of women's human rights, straighten women in social, economic, cultural and political life, and ensure women enjoy equal rights, opportunities and possibilities". Thus, through this legal status,

⁶⁴ <http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/Gender/documents/Beijing+15/Turkey.pdf>

the General Directorate was provided with the opportunity to perform all its duties more efficiently.’⁶⁵

In 2009, Turkey Grand National Assembly Committee on Equality for Women and Men was established to improve women’s rights and to promote gender equality. The Committee was defined as an authorized body of the Assembly. The Committee is expected to raise awareness in the society and in the assembly, to determine deficiencies in the legislation, to resolve issues such as early marriages, bride price, mobbing, violence against women, to issue gender roles promoted in curriculums and media and to produce necessary solutions and measures to the end of mainstreaming gender equality.⁶⁶

In 2011, Ministry of Family and Social Policies was established. The feminist circles argued that the name of the Ministry should include either the term of women or equality, but the government accepted neither. Not unexpectedly, the Ministry’s vision is described as creating a developed society consisted of happy individuals and strong families, which are also supposed to perform social welfare functions.⁶⁷ By doing so, in the understanding of the state, both the social crisis could be prevented and the burden of social services on the state will be diminished. Domestic violence, marriage and divorce are given a high priority in projects, reports, raising-awareness activities, info days and counseling services provided by the Ministry.

With the establishment of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies, the organization of KSGM was changed. It was organized as a department attached to the Ministry rather than to the Prime Ministry. This change leads to a downgrading in the hierarchical position and power of KSGM to reach the government and to influence the governmental policies. Although women’s entrepreneurship, domestic violence, women’s participation into decision-making bodies constitute main fields

⁶⁵ <http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/Gender/documents/Beijing+15/Turkey.pdf>

⁶⁶ <http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/komisyon/kefe/act.htm>

⁶⁷ <http://www.aile.gov.tr/tr/2253/Vizyonumuz>

of interest of KSGM, family constitutes the main focus of the Ministry. Additionally, the cooperation generated between KSSGM, civil societal organizations and the universities in the 1990s seems to disappear.

In the last 30 years, Turkish state has aimed to be in alignment with international principles and directives, which are prepared to ensure gender equality in all spheres of social life. The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the European Social Charter, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Millennium Development Goals 2015, conventions and recommendations of the International Labor Organization (ILO), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Cairo Conference on World Population and Development Action Plan, the 4th World Conference on Women Action Plan and the Beijing Declaration, and the EU directives on equality between women and men and finally the Istanbul Convention are among the international treaties and documents that the state has adopted (National Action Plan, 2008: 12).

In 1985, Turkey signed and then became a party to CEDAW. The Convention is accepted as the declaration of women's human rights and is the only legally binding instrument at the international level regarding equality between women and men. Its main objective is to eliminate all forms and practices that are based on stereotypes regarding gender roles and identities, and that lead to discrimination between men and women. The Convention makes a clear definition of discrimination against women, which is expected to advise state parties in realizing legal amendments and taking measure to ensure gender equality and prevent gender discrimination. Turkish state is obliged to prepare and submit periodical reports to the Committee every four-year (National Action Plan, 2008).

Becoming a party to the Convention might be explained with the official state discourse, which was based on the Republican understanding of equality between men and women. However, Turkish state put some reservations on the Convention

due to the existence of discriminatory articles in the old Civil and Penal Codes at the time. Acar (2000: 207) states that the hesitation on the state level to withdraw the reservations reflects the dilemma between traditional and progressive views on gender equality, identities and relations. However, at the end, the reservations were removed in 1999 as a result of the promise given by the state in World Fourth Conference held in Beijing in 1995 (Acar, 2000).

The legal binding of CEDAW was further strengthened in two steps. First, Turkey signed the Optional Protocol in 2000 and ratified it in 2003. The Protocol enables the Committee to inquire in countries where there are serious and widespread violations of women's human rights. It also gives individuals the right to petition and complain to the Committee about violations of the Convention. Second, by adding a clause to Article 90 of the Constitution in 2004, Turkey accepted the superiority of international agreements in the fields of fundamental human rights, including CEDAW, in case of conflict between international agreements and domestic law (National Action Plan, 2008).

In 1995, Turkey signed the Beijing Declaration and Action Plan, which were adopted in the UN Fourth World Conference on Women, without any reservations (KSSGM, 2004).⁶⁸ Turkish state promised to withdraw the reservations to CEDAW by 2000, to decrease mother and infant deaths, and to increase women's literacy. In that regard, Turkey prepared the first National Action Plan on mainstreaming gender equality in 1996. The Plan was coordinated by KSSGM in a joint effort with relevant stakeholders from civil societal organizations, universities and government bodies. Women in education, health, violence, economic and political participation, and the leading role of national mechanism are mentioned as critical areas of priority in the Plan (KSSGM, 2004).

⁶⁸ The Beijing Declaration and Action Plan is one of the most important international documents which affirm that the rights of women and girls are an indivisible part of universal human rights and that 'violence against women is an obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace'. The Declaration and Action Plan indicates to the state institutions to take necessary actions towards achieving and mainstreaming gender equality. Please visit http://www.stopvaw.org/beijing_declaration_and_platform_for_action

In 2003, the Turkish National Program on the Adoption of the EU *Acquis* was accepted. The Turkish state adopted to harmonize its legal framework and align its policies regarding equality between men and women in the labor market with the *Acquis Communautaire* regarding equality between women and men in the labor market. Additionally, Turkey became a part of the Gender Equality Community Program of the EU, which to guarantee equal treatment in employment, promotion, training and labor conditions regardless of sex.

The second National Action Plan for Gender Equality covering the period of 2008-2013 was prepared in the context of international documents on promoting gender equality such as CEDAW, EU *Acquis* and UN Millennium Development Goals. The Plan was an output of the project called ‘Promoting Gender Equality Project-Strengthening Institutional Capacity Program Twinning Project’. ‘With the aim of enabling women to benefit from social opportunities on an equal basis with men and protecting women’s human rights’, Turkey-European Union Pre-Accession Financial Assistance Program of 2005 funded the project. The Plan addressed on current situation of women in labor force, education, political participation, health, media, and environment and provided a comprehensive agenda including the definition of obstacles, objectives and strategies on the way to achieve gender equality (National Action Plan, 2008: 5-6, 10).⁶⁹

Another two National Action Plans are specifically prepared on combating domestic violence. The first plan was prepared within the framework of ‘Combating Domestic Violence Project’, which was conducted by KSGM, funded by the EU and supported by the UNFPA. It covered the period of 2007-2010. Enacting necessary legal amendments, strengthening institutional mechanisms, organizing and implementing attainable protective services for victims and providing rehabilitation services for victims and perpetrators are defined as the objectives of the plan to struggle domestic violence against women (KSGM, 2007).

⁶⁹ http://www.kadininstatusu.gov.tr/upload/kadininstatusu.gov.tr/mce/eski_site/Pdf/NAP_GE.pdf

The second plan is put into action to ensure the continuation of legal and practical advances achieved in combating domestic violence for the period of 2012-2015. It is updated in accordance with the Istanbul Convention. Its targets are defined as to further legal regulations, to eliminate deficiencies in implementation, to raise awareness in society, to increase intra-institutional cooperation, to improve protective and empowering measures for the victims, and to provide more efficient health services to the victims (APSB, 2012b).

5.8. Conclusion

In this chapter, I examine the shift in the state's ideological commitment to the equality of women. Despite long history of women's rights and recent legal and institutional advances, it is not possible to speak out a shift towards a more egalitarian gender climate. Although the demands of feminist movement and international commitments corresponded on the state, this has been accompanied with a neo-conservative state discourse. The state has not taken a decisive and sincere position to achieve a substantive change in traditional norms and patterns.

I find out that the international commitments including the UN and the EU have decisively contributed to establish the international norms and to meet the international requirements to assure gender equality in Turkey. However, as these norms have not been internalized, the legal advances have depended on the conjecture and have not been accompanied by a real mentality change. All legal advances can so fragile and weak. As discussed, after the confrontation between the government and the EU, the government has generated a religio-based and conservative approach to gender equality.

Considering the state discourse and policies regarding the situation of women in labor force, family and politics, I argue that the shift has happened towards family *versus* women. The family as the basic social unit is brought up to ameliorate the socio-economic crisis and to rebuild the social order. In accordance with religious principles, biological differences between sexes are referenced in reinventing the

notions of femininity and masculinity in new gender climate. In this setting, it is hard to claim promoting and establishing gender equality in all spheres of social life.



CHAPTER 6

PARAMETERS OF NEW GENDER CLIMATE IN TURKEY

In this chapter, I argue that state feminism in Turkey could not necessarily ensure a more egalitarian orientation in gender climate. Rather, gender climate has gained a neo-conservative orientation, which gives reference to family and religion in Turkey. I make this depiction depending on my findings of fieldwork. I examine my argument under three conceptualizations; challenge with official commitment, feminization of family, and the lack of feminization in labor force. In doing so, I depict the parameters of new gender climate around these conceptualizations. In each conceptualization, I examine the generation of prevailing gender climate and discuss its impact on gender equality.

In the first sub-chapter, I examine the challenge of official discourse by the feminist movement and the legal, institutional and discursive changes happened in the following period. In the second one, I discuss the reformulation of motherhood, pro-natal policies and domestic violence under feminization of family. In the third one, I comment on the lack of feminization in labor force and evaluate the way to increase female labor force participation on the grounds of pro-employment incentives, public care, and maternal leave.

6.1. Challenge with the Official Discourse

In 1935, it was declared that the woman's question was resolved; equality between men and women was established. Then, there was an inactive period between 1950 and 1980. Republican educational reforms continued; the role model of modernist woman was declared but there was no other attempt or policy to address on woman's equality and emancipation (Interview 25, Academician, Ankara, 13.6.2013).

Until the 1980s, the state did not do much [to assure women's equality]. Until then, it [women's equality] was not seriously considered. The women's question was always perceived as having less importance than other issues. This is my understanding and observation based on my readings. There were always some other issues having much priority. The women's question was on to-do list but there were more important issues. Women's employment, participation to decision-making mechanisms, election to the parliament, active participation to social life, literacy were not regarded as [problems] by the state until the 1980s when the women's movement stimulated [these issues]. There was no awareness on violence against women anyway. Frankly, women were not perceived as an important agent of social development. On the one hand, men and women were not differentiated on the basis of sex. For sure, the policies covered both men and women. The equality before the law was perceived to resolve any problem. How legal equality worked in practice was not considered (Interview 26, Expert of an International Organization, Ankara, 25.6.2013).

After the *coup d'état* 1980, the emerging feminist movement did not encounter a rejection or suppression from the state. Rather, it was seen legitimate due to the inherited Republican commitment to the women's rights. It is related to the interaction between gender order and gender climate. Despite all deficiencies, the state has inherited a discourse of women's equality. Although *de jure* equality was assumed to resolve all inequalities and *de facto* equality was neglected for long decades, 'woman' as a category still constituted the basis of Republican modernization.

A feminist perspective to gender developed for the first time in Turkey, after 1980, originating not from the state but from civil society. Towards the end of the 1980s, this perspective penetrated into the state policies. To put it more accurately, in this period, the feminist perspective gradually influenced the state authorities to some degree. It is also a fact that in 1980, Turkey experienced a military coup followed by the rule of a military government in the post-1980 period. The military government perceived the 'woman issue' as a relatively benign matter; thus the feminist women's movement was given space to voice its complaints and raise its demands more freely than other civil society groups and movements. This proved to be a window of opportunity for the women's movement. Some progressive and liberal policy steps, related to gender policies were, in fact, taken in this period (Interview 25, Academician, Ankara, 13.6.2013).

In the 1980s, feminist women strongly criticized the Republican understanding as being blind to inequalities in private life for long decades and as preserving patriarchal norms and patterns. They demanded further improvements in public equality as well as introduction of the dimension of equality in private life, including reproductive rights as well as women's bodily integrity.

In the post-1980s, the state had a positive attitude towards women's equality. It could be seen as the heritage of modernization. Probably for this reason, the emergence of a feminist movement was not perceived as a threat to the regime and the feminist demands were relatively fulfilled during the 1990s. The feminist movement emerged as grass-root movement in the 1980s. It demanded substantial changes to assure women's equality. The feminist women brought up public/private distinction and argued that many issues, which would be considered as private, were innately political (Interview 27, Academician, Ankara, 18.6.2013).

In the 1990s, feminist movement in Turkey came across international women's movement and the UN agenda on women's human rights. In the UN conventions, states are identified as main actors to establish and guarantee gender equality, and are pushed to take institutional and legal actions to this end. At the intersection points of domestic feminist movement, international women's movement and the UN pressure, the state started to involve in gender politics again.

Moreover, one of the most important factors, which revived 'the woman issue' and facilitated progressive steps in gender politics, was the pressure of international forces. There were already demands from civil society but there were also international bodies that supported these demands and helped their accumulation. The UN system was the significant international driving force of that period, namely the 1990s. At the time, women's rights and gender equality issues were rising topics within the UN itself; in fact, these were some of the most important human rights issues on the worldwide agenda of the United Nations (Interview 25, Academician, Ankara, 13.6.2013).

In the 1990's, there was a rising women's rights discourse at the international level, at the UN. In that time, a women's movement already had existed in Turkey for almost 10 years. When these [dynamics] coupled together, the institutionalization of gender equality fostered in the country during the 1990s. As a result, KSSGM was established. Various UN projects were

conducted. The violence against woman came to be considered as a violation of women's human rights. There was a right-based approach on [women's equality]. The international [norms] on women's equality seemed to be adopted or at least welcomed by the state (Interview 27, Academician, Ankara, 18.6.2013).

1990s might be identified as institutionalization of women's human rights discourse on the state level. The Turkish state signed the Beijing Action Declaration and made some promises including the establishment of a national mechanism and preparing national action plans (Interview 25, Academician, Ankara, 13.6.2013).

A realistic policy can only be made by [having] realistic data. For the first time, the State Statistics Institute started to set out gender disintegrated data. Gender and Women's Studies Programs were opened at the Middle East Technical University and the Ankara University in this period (Interview 28, NGO Expert, Ankara, 26.6.2013).

In its early days, feminist movement emerged as a grassroots movement and rejected any cooperation with the state. With the commitment to the UN norms by the state, some feminist groups, not all of them, got convinced to cooperate with the state institutions to reach their feminist goals. Additionally, feminist movement already had an academic background and accumulation, and was involved in international women's movement. The newly established national mechanism, which was deprived of any background, satisfactory budget and experienced personnel, was in need of the support and contribution of feminist scholars.

A noticeable facet of the institutionalization in the 1990's was the lack of qualified personnel who had sufficient knowledge of the different aspects of women's rights and gender equality subjects. Although, at that time, some mechanisms were established at the state level, real institutionalisation could not be achieved without the necessary qualified personnel. So, attempts at institutionalization required that the state cooperate with the women's movement. In a way, the new institutions had to be 'nourished' by the movement. The result was that, in the 1990s, institutionalization brought about exemplary state-civil society cooperation in gender equality and women's rights areas. This was mostly owing to the state institutions' need for the leadership and guidance of the women's movements as well as the

expertise of academics in the movement as personnel with such backgrounds were absent at the state level. This was particularly relevant as the new women's machinery (KSSGM) was tasked to conduct research in a variety of topics on gender issues. Every minister in charge of 'women's issues', at that time, had consultants from among women's studies, academics and civil society. Of course, civil society and the state do not always think in the same way. Nor do they approach issues from similar perspectives. However, in the 1990s, one could observe a significant convergence between position of government agencies and that of civil society in the gender policy matters. In fact, I can say that the connection of KSSGM with women's civil society organizations was more substantive than the connection of this institution with other state organs. In that period, the institutionalization of women's rights and gender-equality-policy-making at the state level and the cooperation between the new state institutions and civil society organizations working in this area impacted the latter's politics too (Interview 25, Academician, Ankara, 13.6.2013).

In this process, the aim of acquiring international prestige considerably motivated the state in Turkey. To this end, the state attended the world conferences on women organized by the UN and UN related bodies, and signed up the UN conventions (Interview 25, Academician, Ankara, 13.6.2013).

In my opinion, the perspective of the state in the 1990s was more advanced than today. Not only the field was new but also they [the state] were not fully aware of what they were doing. Because they were saying that women were harmless and they were approaching the issue with this mindset. I think there was a kind of disregard in that period. However, it was still positive because they were considering international documents and the statements made by the women's movement. In that period, KSSGM was established as a requirement of CEDAW (Interview 29, NGO Expert, Ankara, 6.1.2014).

UN has a clear premise regarding women related issues, that is, women's human rights. All UN documents and requirements predicate women as individuals, and target the resolution of women related issues in various fields including education, health, reproduction, family, employment, etc. through this premise (Interview 25, Academician, Ankara, 13.6.2013).

There was a more emphasis on [women as] individual. The starting point was human rights and women's human rights. In Turkey, the sake of society and of family is prioritized [over women's rights]. In the 1990s, the focus was on women, human, women's rights, human rights, women's human rights rather than the sake of society (Interview 30, Public Officer, Ankara, 22.8.2013).

In the 1990s, the state as main actor for ensuring gender equality and prevent gender discrimination reentered the picture. Being a party to UN conventions, participating to UN conferences and increasing project and consultancy-based cooperation with UN and UN related bodies were reflected on the state discourse throughout the 1990s.

There was a gender policy and they [feminist/women's rights organizations] constantly started to make some demands from the state. Public policy [on gender equality] was needed. At the beginning, the state was not interested in it. Depending on literature review, I understood that the establishment of KSSGM was not a deliberate and conscious decision. In other words, the state did not consider the women's issues as a problem. The state did not intend to establish a public policy as a result of women's demands and with an aim to meet them. Selma Hanım [Former General Director of KSSGM] names it 'Infiltration Politics'. This is how it happened. There were [international] developments in the world; there were demands and several initiatives in Turkey. In this context, the General Directorate was hastily established; it did not have [qualified] human resource and an adequate budget. Its tasks were not clearly defined. I think that the issue of women was not [sincerely] embraced by the state organization. Rather, it [KSSGM] worked as an opposition inside the state and with the support of civil spirit (Interview 30, Public Officer, Ankara, 22.8.2013).

However, it is still hard to claim that the state internalized the discourse based on the understanding of women as individuals. Rather, patriarchal mentality continued to exist on the state level. Women's rights have come to the state agenda but at the same time the state preferred to guarantee of the importance of family.

Shortly after the establishment of KSSGM, the Family [Research] Institution was established. Now, its name was changed as the General Directorate of Family and Social Services under the Ministry of Family and Social Policies. Previously, its name was the General Directorate of Family and Social Researches. It was simultaneously established with KSSGM in a thesis/anti-

thesis form. Behind it laid the idea that we should preserve family while protecting women. Indeed, the patriarchal mentality of the father state never disappeared. There was an obvious impact of women's movement. Numerous regulations were made and significant changes were achieved in civil and penal codes but family and women always exist in the thesis/anti-thesis form (Interview 26, Expert of an International Organization, Ankara, 25.6.2013).

In the 2000s, a process of legal amendments started. Due to the start of the accession talks with the EU, major steps were taken to harmonize Turkish legal and institutional system with international norms of gender equality. The requirements imposed by the EU to establish gender equality in education, health, employment and political participation, have principally accepted without significant reservations.

In the 2000s, Turkey's candidacy for the EU membership was declared and the EU has a discourse on gender equality. This required an adaptation [and harmonization] process. In this process, pro-employment initiatives [were taken], legal amendments [were done], new Civil Code and Penal Code [were enacted]. The legal framework was restructured in accordance to the [EU's] understanding of gender equality (Interview 27, Academician, Ankara, 18.6.2013).

The EU candidacy and women's rights movement perfectly coincided. The women's rights movement demanded legal changes for long time. In time, women's rights movement got diversified and institutionalized and different women's groups united to demand legal changes from the state. Women's rights movement increased its power and leverage with the EU. The EU officials addressed on women's rights organizations, in addition to the state officials, in negotiating necessary changes and regulations. Women's rights organizations submitted regular reports and informed the EU officials about their demands and solutions (Interview 31, Feminist Activist, Ankara, 26.6.2013).

Nonetheless, there has never been a total policy change. The state is never much of a volunteer, willing and flexible enough to meet the demands of women's rights groups (Interview 32, NGO Expert, Ankara, 26.6.2013). Although most of discriminatory articles were either abolished or changed, it was a tough struggle

depending on the determination and endeavor of women's rights organizations and members.

While the state gives some rights to women, it imposes some restrictions at the same time. The state puts some reservations on our rights. If you [the state] entitle some rights, why do you [the state] restrict them? So, this means that [the state] is against them. The state does not unconditionally provide anything. As long as the state does not become flexible or try to understand [the needs of] the people, it is really hard to make some progress. We agree on the rights given us by the state but we also ask for the ones that the state has not given yet. We are at that point now (Interview 33, NGO Expert, Ankara, 5.6.2013).

An alliance among various women's rights organizations and groups is quite important to enforce the state to meet demands. The process of legal amendments reveals how the coincidence of demands from feminist, secular and Islamist women's groups successfully worked out. However, the differentiation of women's rights movement still leads some rifts on certain taboo issues such as sexual orientation, pre-marital sexual intercourse, virginity, adultery, etc.

The alliance was on the prevention of domestic violence and [on establishing] a successful agenda setting despite all deficiencies. There are some areas in which cooperation cannot be achieved because there are two important actors in gender politics today. One of them is Islamist women; the other one is feminist women. There are certain fault lines between Islamist women and feminist women. The main fault line is body politics, which refers to the sphere of individual rights in which the body of woman belongs to the woman herself. So, there is a big difference [between them] regarding the women's fundamental, individual and humanitarian rights. There is no parallelism [between them] on issues such as abortion, virginity, marriage, sexual freedoms, pre-marital sexual intercourse and adultery. An agenda setting could not be achieved regarding these issues. However, there are common points regarding the prevention of domestic violence. So, certain gains have been achieved. They [Islamist women] want to protect family and the feminists want to protect women. There are overlapping demands. As being the political actors of two different segments, they [Islamist and feminist women] have successfully convinced public institutions and public opinion. However, except this [domestic violence], a common agenda setting

could be done on some issues such as quota, headscarves, (Interview 34, Academician, Ankara, 14.6.2013).

The cooperation, negotiation and bargaining between the state and women's rights organizations/groups do not usually happen on equal terms. The state tends to contain the demands of women's rights organizations into its patriarchal categories. It does not occur in a win-win way but it is still better than nothing.

The state has been doing much. Women [...] both win and lose. Regarding the issue of violence, women's rights organizations [...] can more or less cooperate with the state. However, it is very limited to cooperate with the state, which declares that 'woman's place is the home', 'let's give birth at least three children', and 'abortion is same with Uludere'. I think there is a considerable increase in women's awareness on their right to exist, rather than only legal and political rights, with the help of popular culture and media. In my opinion, this will have repercussions. Otherwise, it does not work. If there is no grassroots, you cannot have the state make anything. Discourse gets stuck at that point. What are you going to demand? It [the state] takes your demand and contains it. It is always necessary to go one step ahead. First, the society needs to demand, then, it will happen (Interview 35, Academician, Ankara, 16.1.2014).

The notion of femininity adopted and represented by the state constitutes the arduous obstacle in cooperation with the women's rights organizations and in conciliation with feminist demands.

What is the state doing? It merely says that 'women stay in the position, in the place that we want', and this is a male discourse. In other words, woman [...] can be an individual but first of all, you should not hinder your other duties. The main point is that these spheres should not be neglected (Interview 33, NGO Expert, Ankara, 5.6.2013).

It is because internalization of gender equality has not been realized on the state side yet. A holistic and concrete gender policy is missing on the state level. Legal amendments prove to be significant advances but they have to be promoted with a strong and sincere commitment to gender equality. In Turkey, however, legal amendments were made as a part of fulfilling the EU requirements in the field of

gender equality, and thus, assumed as a technical issue and/or a paper work by the state.

The implementation of these laws is quite poor because there is no internalization of the laws. There is a group of members of parliament who say that ‘whoops, have we passed this law?’ after the law was enacted. In reality, there is no internalization and no political adoption. I think that there is not a gender equality policy. It is more like a ragbag, like adopting this-and-that, because a gender equality policy requires a specific mechanism. [Under these circumstances], it would be impossible to achieve this [gender equality] (Interview 31, Feminist Activist, Ankara, 26.6.2013).

The state lacks of an aim of prevailing gender equality in the institutions and society. New legal codes need time to be absorbed by and gain currency in the society. Training and monitoring of the implementation of new legal codes are quite of importance here to mainstream gender equality.

The main problem is that the legal amendments have not been internalized by the society yet and the law enforcement bodies have efficiently not implemented these amendments. So, the picture is this: legal amendments are done but there are deficiencies in the process of implementation, of dissemination to the social base, and of monitoring. For instance, the state [...] assign a duty on someone and you say to him/her ‘if you face with a case of violence, you will act this way’. However, this person does not fulfill his/her duty. The problem is that it is not clear if/when this person does not fulfill his/her duty. This is the shortfall. Police forces, judges, prosecutors, etc., they all go their own ways (Interview 33, NGO Expert, Ankara, 5.6.2013).

Institutional and legal measures have been taken by the state in a sudden way and have not been supported by sufficient infrastructure, resources and personnel. As a result, the transformative capacity of legal amendments remains limited. In the stage of implementation, weaknesses and troubles are frequently observed and encountered.

I consider that the reforms are important advances but there are two main problems addressed on regarding the whole reform process. First one, the reforms have not accompanied with social transformation. Since the early

Republic period, the women's equality discourse remained superficial rather substantial in Turkey. So, it remained at the formal level; it could not be transformative. There was almost no effort to transform the sphere of family in accordance with the objectives of women's equality. Interestingly, we see such an effort for the first time in the neo-conservative period of the AKP. In fact, the state has been trying to transform the private sphere and by tampering something in this private sphere but it works against the gender equality. So, this is one problem. It remains at formal level; it could foster a social transformation. So, there is a discrepancy (Interview 27, academician, Ankara, 18.6.2013).

Gender policy-making is proceeding mostly through personal networks in a temporary and instant manner. From the very beginning, the individual efforts of the ministers for Women and Family Affairs and the general directorates gained momentum to the women's rights struggle. This occurred into a decade of fruitful cooperation between the state and civil society but at the same time led the progress to be bounded to the individual commitment and determination.

The state had a concern for democratization and development. The state officials [...] were trying to be a part of international community and to regain [international] prestige because there has always been an ideal and promise of democratization in Turkish. This made institutionalization possible. It is more accurate to mention about a process, which gained momentum with the personal efforts of the Minister of State and of the General Director of KSSGM, and with the boost of women's movement. Similarly, the good relations established with the women's organizations are an outcome of personal endeavors of Fatma Şahin [Minister of Family and Social Affairs]. A real institutionalization cannot be achieved yet (Interview 26, Expert of an International Organization, Ankara, 25.6.2013).

Despite legal advances and institutional efforts, gender politics proceeds with up and downs in Turkey. But the affirmative picture gets clouded by the diffusion of neo-conservative discourse in the state and society in the recent years. A clear rupture with the official discourse, based on the principle of equality between men and women, became concrete when the Prime Minister Erdoğan personally rejected equality between sexes in 2010. Since then, the official discourse is replaced with a religious discourse based on complementarity between sexes.

There has been a break since 2007. This break was primarily related to the clear refusal of women's equality with men. Rather, there emerged an [new] emphasis on the complementarity between sexes, which was mentioned by the Prime Minister in his speech given in Istanbul. The members of women's organizations opposed his speech and his argument, which assumes that women and men are not equal but complementary to each other. This results in constraining women, as the founding subjects of family, within the private sphere. Thus, there has been a discourse, which defines women on the basis of motherhood and within the private sphere. This has been frequently mentioned in the last six years (Interview 27, Academician, Ankara, 18.6.2013).

A loss in the prospect of EU membership also paves the way a change in state discourse to surface so strongly. This also shows the weakness of state's commitment to and lack of sincerity to gender equality.

When AKP first came to power, it avoided pursuing conservative policies on these issues because it aimed to approach EU candidacy openly. Also, nearly all demands of the women's organizations were responded to and quite strong relations were established. Nonetheless, occasionally the Prime Minister uttered, let me say, 'personal things', for instance, [his support for a proposed] bill on adultery. Yet, Güldal Akşit, who was, at the time, Minister of State responsible for Women did not say a word to support the Prime Minister on TV. On the other hand, Nimet Çubukçu [another AKP women parliamentarian] defended the Prime Minister and later, she became the Minister of State. Her position was changed. So, the stance of women's organization was effective on AKP's women policies for a long time. But in its third electoral term, some factors became more prominent in AKP. [By then,] it had come to power in a more confident way; its conservative identity (became more visible). For me, the most important factor in this was that AKP realized that the relations with the EU would not be maintained in a satisfactory way; so EU membership was not a goal anymore. This rendered AKP freer in respect to the reforms [needed] for harmonization with EU [*acquis*]. In other words, there was no such obligation anymore so they thought that they could have their way. After that, more conservative attitudes and discourses began [to appear] (Interview 36, NGO Expert, Ankara, 31.1.2014).

The change in state discourse reflects both on the name of national mechanism and its administrative reorganization. Considering the successful institutional history of

national mechanism in the 1990s and 2000s, I argue that the state uses the national mechanism to turn down the flood tide in new gender climate. Although the importance of the establishment of a ministry is admitted, its naming gives a symbolic message, which is the orientation of the state to restrict the solving of women related issues with the family. Articulating family to gender politics will definitely not empower women to enjoy their rights and create certain obstacles before promoting gender equality and preventing gender discrimination. The Ministry aims to protect and strengthen family and women within family. Reorganizing the general directorates of women, the elderly and the disabled under the same roof prevents to develop a common and coherent agenda towards and leads deficiencies before gender equality (Interview 37, Public Officer, Ankara, 15.1.2014).

After 2008, the winds of reform got silenced. KSGM was restructured under the Ministry of Family [and Social Policies]. As a result, family has replaced 'women' in policy formulations and practices. Women have come to be identified within family. This has been resided by the legal framework and by [newly] established mechanisms (Interview 31, Feminist Activist, Ankara, 26.6.2013).

Besides, gender mainstreaming from top to down in state institutions is not specifically targeted in the policy documents including development plans and government programs. A concrete policy document to prevail vertically and horizontally in state institutions is not prepared. All state institutions do not coherently develop gender sensitive policies and targets. This prevents intra-institutional and inter-institutional cooperation from being established. Under these circumstances, the impacts of legal changes and institutional measures remain limited and temporary (Interview 37, Public Officer, Ankara, 15.1.2014).

With the aim of raising awareness on gender equality in state institutions and society, the Ministry gets involved in implementation through the projects funded mainly by the EU, UN and UN related institutions. The number of projects as policy-making and cooperation instruments has steadily increased. Cooperation protocols have been signed between the Ministry and other ministries and institutions including General

Directorate of Religious Affairs, security forces, army, etc. Due to the lack of gender streaming in institutions and gender budgeting, the stakeholders do not internalize gender equality. There is no gender mainstreaming in policymaking. They get involved in projects and cooperate with the Ministry but this does not last long. When the duration of project ends, the cooperation falls apart; this experience does not reflect on their own institutional norms and patterns (Interview 37, Public Officer, Ankara, 15.1.2014).

Regarding the new gender climate, a very important tendency of the state should be mentioned to understand the state approach on gender equality. The government does not hesitate to humiliate feminism and ignore women's rights organizations. The cooperation with the women's rights organizations has declined, particularly since 2007 (Coşar & Gençoğlu-Onbaşı, 2007: 326). The government tended to employ conservative consultants for family affairs and to distance itself from feminist circles and non-Islamist feminist civil societal organizations. The Directorate of Religious Affairs is specified as the main ally of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies. Under the roof of the Directorate, Family Guidance and Counseling Bureaus are being established to protect and strengthen family as the most important social institution to protect individual and society under the conditions of change.⁷⁰ Family Guidance and Counseling Bureaus aim to protect and strengthen family, and to resolve family problems through Islamic ethics and religious instructions.⁷¹

In this setting, the state's family discourse starts to dominate the institutional structure and policies, and leaves no room for feminist organizations and groups to voice their demands and influence the policymaking process. This is what the feminist movement was worried about from the very beginning and this is why some feminist groups approached with suspicion to the establishment of a national mechanism and avoided any cooperation with the state in the early days of its emergence.

⁷⁰ <http://www2.diyaret.gov.tr/DinHizmetleriGenelMudurlugu/Sayfalar/Gorevler.aspx>

⁷¹ <http://www.istanbulmuftulugu.gov.tr/aile-irsat-ve-rehberlik-burosu/faaliyetler/506-istanbul-muftulugu-aile-irsat-ve-rehberlik-burosu.html>

6.2. Feminization of Family

6.2.1. Motherhood

Feminization of family features the new gender climate in Turkey. Family was never neglected in the Republican understanding of women's equality. Family and motherhood continued to be the milestones of the underlying gender order but they were adapted in a way to contribute to modernization but the paradigm was different from now. "Instead of modernist and developmentalist discourse, now there is more traditionalist and conservative language" (Interview 38, Academician, Ankara, 11.6.2013).

In my opinion, the family has been prioritized since the Republican period. It is not specific to the AKP period. However, there are very serious differences [between these periods]. I think that the current period is a turning point in gender regime. There are different forms in defining woman on the basis of family. In other words, the [AKP] government and the new discourse do not even recognize the equality before the law. The distinguishing feature of the Kemalist period was its intense efforts to westernize women. However, social dynamics are extremely important. The nature of the family and the way in which gender relations are established in the family are decisive. Thus, the state [...] establish hegemony over them [people] (Interview 39, Academician, İstanbul, 2014).

Neo-conservative critique of Republican modernization fictionalizes that natural harmony between sexes were destroyed and family was weakened due to the Republican reforms. Social and moral troubles are related to the loss of power and importance in family due to the Western aspirations. To deal with these troubles and, more importantly, to keep our social authenticity, family is strongly emphasized as if it was lost or broken in the society.

Throughout the world, especially in the post-Soviet period, there has been an increasing emphasis on family; in fact, an emphasis on 'return to the family'. Particularly after 2007, in Turkey too, I believe we have been observing a version of this phenomenon. Sure, ours does not have a starting point like the former Soviet societies', taking roots from references to [real or imagined]

attempts to eradicate the family institution. In Turkey, the family has always been a cherished institution but in the last decade, gradually a discourse on how the family institution has been underrated or ignored was incorporated in to the state policies. And a glorification of the family institution, which I sometimes call ‘family fetishism’, has started. Now, I see it on the TV Spots of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies (Interview 25, Academician, Ankara, 13.6.2013).

Additionally, a natural connection is established between women and family due to the assumed link between biological features and social roles and behaviors. Biological determinism is used to define true/proper femininity and masculinity. Due to their biological differences, ‘man’ and ‘woman’ are assumed to be complementary to each other. As of her creature by God, woman is regarded as suitable to establish strong family ties and create a warm home environment. The reference to religion attributes a non-negotiable moral superiority and modesty on women, which is directly related to their reproductive abilities.

There was a social conservatism in the early Republican period, as well. The society was already conservative and the Republic had [a sort of] conservatism. This conservatism could be clearly traced in the women’s question. This conservatism was established on the basis of the women’s bodies and their existence in both public and private sphere. The masculine eye is its core. When we question conservatism, masculine eye constitutes the existence of men in public and private sphere on the basis of the criterion of citizenship, specifically the criterion of ethics and virtue. On the other hand, same conservatism mentions the public visibility of women and the existence of women in private sphere with a focus on citizenship. However, at the same time, it pushes forward morality, chastity and motherhood. Here, we are talking about a sort of conservatism, which is embedded in masculinity. In the 2000s, masculinity has continued. However, it is different from the one we had in the early Republican period, which maintained equality on the basis of citizenship along with the criteria of chastity, motherhood and honor. Rather, we have been witnessing a form of conservatism, which defines women on the basis of religio-morality. I need to emphasize its religious basis in order to reveal the differentiation between the moral rules and the ethics. In doing so, it gives reference to and prioritizes the religion-based moral principles (Interview 40, Academician, Ankara, 15.7.2013).

Religion is employed to justify and naturalize the role division between sexes in the society. In other words, religion as an inarguable and invincible truth strengthens the state's hand to limit any argument with those wanting to bring up gender inequality and discrimination, and to justify its interventions into private sphere. In this setting, family is sanctified and idealized as if it could be a sphere independent of any power struggle and violence. This impossible ideal is imposed over women as a sacred role and obligation. In this ideal picture, the rights and interests of 'woman' as an individual are sacrificed for an ultimate goal.

In Turkey, the family is always presented as a happy and peaceful place and traditionally great emphasis has been placed on this institution. Also, we see that lately the extended family model is often emphasized. For instance, not only mothers, fathers and dependent children but grandmothers, grandfathers, uncles, and aunts are included in the TV Spots put out by the Ministry of the Family and Social Policies; there are many people inside that intertwined ribbon depicting the family in these TV Spots. There is a glorification of the family institution and a perception of women as simply extensions of this institution. Women are given the responsibility to take care of and ensure that this glorious institution continues in a healthy way. The family is not only a very important institution but also its continuation until eternity depends on 'our women acting with the right values'. This approach constantly refers to women as 'our women', (as I deliberately emphasized) and the word 'our' implies ownership. The responsibility for the continuation of the family institution and that of being the key agent to provide happiness to all members of the family, including the elderly, the children and the disabled, are laid on women in this parlance (Interview 25, Academician, Ankara, 13.6.2013).

In this setting, self-realization, individualization and emancipation of women outside family are not considered. All rights and interests of women are reduced to and/or identified by family and motherhood. Women's self-realization is primarily portrayed as motherhood. The state assumes the responsibility of preventing the violation of their rights but this protective role is taken to guarantee the sake of family and society rather than promote and enable women to exist as individuals.

Despite the awareness about women, we have been observing an increasing emphasis on the family in the discourse of the Prime Minister, other Ministers

and our Minister [of Family and Social Policies]. For instance, when one analyzes the texts, it is founded out that there is a hidden implication [in the efforts] to solve the problems of the family and to assure a peaceful family. [In this picture], I assume that violence against women, murders and beatings are concerned [by the state] to protect the children (Interview 30, Public Officer, Ankara, 22.8.2013).

New paradigm on family and motherhood is not only built up on discursive level but also on institutional level. Combining family affairs and social services under the same Ministry is not a coincidence either. This choice is a part of neo-liberal strategy that reduces the burden of social services on family and women. Social state has always been weak in Turkey; all women already carry out social services, mainly including caring the elderly, the disabled and children. The traditional division of labor is institutionalized by supportive measures such as cash transfer for care work at home. Additionally, the interests and problems of women are located in the field of social policies as if only derived from poverty, unemployment, etc.

The AKP government has been performing social welfare policies through the Ministry of Family, women, and family. Here, there is a new repositioning of women in the eyes of the government (Interview 34, Academician, Ankara, 14.6.2013).

This formulation reinforces the traditional division of labor and women's restriction at home. However, in practice, it serves to cover the socio-economic expenses of families and to improve the status of women in the underlying traditional setting. The state gains a legitimacy to know and meet the interests of families. It does not prefer to help families deal with socio-economic troubles by creating labor demand for both men and women, and ensuring security and fairness in labor market. Enjoying the underlying norms and patterns regarding gender relations and promoting them through religion, the state has proved to be a remedy to the people in need.

The AKP has some sort of feminism. It directly gets in contact with women. For sure, removing the notion of head of family was symbolic. It was something we fought for. However, it directly makes a contact with women by bypassing the head of family. We need to explain the support of women and female voters [to the party]. They are not stupid conservatives. This is

something that addresses on the lower-middle class and the women from this class. The AKP [...] has introduced a system, in which the state directly encounters with those women, establishes the relationship with them and negotiates with them. For instance, the distribution of social benefits to the women, instead the head of family, by-passes men (Interview 38, Academician, Ankara, 11.6.2013).

Unfortunately, this does not encapsulate an orientation to establish egalitarian relations between men and women. As social policies have gained a gendered face, women do not recognize their right as an individual and citizen to live and work on human, equal and fair conditions. Social policies serve to reinforce the feminization of family and leave all burdens over the shoulders of women as mothers and wives. Their concerns and interests as individuals do not constitute a focal interest for the state.

From the very beginning, we have defended the recognition of woman as an individual and have struggled for it. But now, the government has come up with a huge family logo. It defends that I define woman within the family; woman belongs to the society; woman's honor belongs to the society. So, we would go back 100 years ago and they did. Now, we are confused about where we should start to struggle because they are annoyed even with the word of woman. Firstly, Ministry of State responsible for Woman was replaced with the Ministry of Family. Secondly, there were too many general directorates for women's status and still there are but they have become ineffective. They were restructured under the roof of the Ministry [of Family and Social Policies]. Thirdly, the family has been prioritized in all practices and implementations and they have been trying to remove woman from all spheres including language, vocabulary, legal rights, education, etc. (Interview 32, NGO Expert, Ankara, 26.6.2013).

Social benefits mainly including cash transfer for care work at home and for the widowed women, which the Ministry distributes, depends on a clear notion of femininity. In the short run, this will relieve the socio-economic troubles of families and women in the existing setting. However, in the long run, this will definitely not promote an egalitarian and empowering approach on gender relations and identities. Rather, traditional norms and patterns will gain more legitimacy and influence on the social mindset.

Therefore, a new framework that underlines care-work by women has been brought to the agenda. This new framework redefines the position of woman. Thus, it would be some simple to explain it with the rise of conservatism. For instance, the connection between the increasing violence against women and the position of women should be re-considered. On the one hand, the Law on Violence was enacted; the women's organizations have become more active and made the violence against women visible. On the other hand, the violence against women and murders has been increasing. All this cannot be explained with the increase in [public] visibility of women. It can be associated with the gender policy of the state. They [the state] have been redefining the family. They have been redefining women within the family. They have been stimulating a form of empowerment but this is not a kind of empowerment that we seek for. So, the issue of family is related to the current approach on woman (Interview 31, Feminist Activist, Ankara, 26.6.2013).

The state is also aware that neo-liberal policies severely and deeply depressed the poor. Due to its conservative orientation, the state employs 'strong family ties' as a way of managing the crisis driven neo-liberal policies.

At the level of discourse, they are aware of the fact that neo-liberal policies hit the lower classes. The chains behind thoughts can break free and this is dangerous. As a matter of fact, their concerns stem from this danger. That is why they focus on family so much because they know that if the family collapses, everything gets uncontrolled (Interview 39, Academician, İstanbul, 22.1.2014).

Considering women as disadvantaged group perfectly matches with the distribution of social benefits through housewives and the widowed women. Despite the mentality change in new Civil and Penal Codes towards the understanding of women as individuals, the women together are defined as the disadvantaged group by the state in the Constitutional amendment. By doing this, women, who constitute half of the population, are categorized as a marginal group in need of special treatment. This categorization makes women vulnerable to any kind of state and social intervention, control, manipulation and monitoring because all these attempts will be justified as support and help.

The article of the constitution [...] was changed with the referendum [held] in 2010. An article was added [to the Constitution]. In this article, the elderly,

the disabled (defined as handicapped), children, and the war wounded were defined as the beneficiaries of equality under this article related to the women. In other words, conceptually, it put the women among the disadvantaged groups. While we struggle for equality, the mentality of the Constitution has been totally changed with this legal amendment and women have been considered at the same status with the elderly, the disabled, children and the war wounded. So, that is the point that we have reached so far. We can only discuss the issue of equality of women in the context of the disadvantaged groups (Interview 32, NGO Expert, Ankara, 26.6.2013).

6.2.2. Domestic Violence

The struggle with domestic violence should also be considered in relation to feminization of family. Domestic violence has constituted the milestone of feminist and women's rights women. In the last decade, the state has taken significant measures to eliminate domestic violence. However, the state's discourse revolves around 'protecting family and women within family' rather than bodily integrity of women as individuals, as mentioned in the Penal Code. Here, protection is much of importance. If women are constructed of human beings in need of protection, their rights are always at risk of being violated.

Actually, there is a serious struggle to combat violence against women. The government's violence against women policies mainly aim to protect women. How affective they have been can be debated but this government has been doing something, for a long time, in terms of both new legal regulations and attempts to change mind sets; and it has made some progress. It is unfair to assert the contrary. But do these attempts and measures really work? There is a protectionist approach, which is linked to women's roles within the family (sacred mother, devoted sister image), and with the approach 'do not touch our mothers and sisters'. This is not a gender equality-based approach (Interview 25, Academician, Ankara, 13.6.2013).

The protectionist approach reflects itself on the title of the last law on domestic violence. In its first draft prepared by the women's rights organizations, the term family was not included in the title of the law. Family was added by the Prime Ministry despite the strong objection of the feminist groups (Interview 29, NGO Expert, Ankara, 6.1.2014). Although 'woman' is included in the title in contrast to

the previous law enacted in 1998, the state contains domestic violence to family policy, not as a part of gender equality. In other words, domestic violence is not regarded as a form of gender discrimination and as violation of women's individual rights.

A very complex policy to prevent domestic violence has developed with pluses and minuses. There have been women's shelters, ŞÖNİMs [Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers] and regulations. The Directorate of Religious Affairs and the General Staff have been involved in the process. They all have started programs about the prevention of domestic violence against women. At the state level, the issue of women's rights has turned into an issue of the modernization and the reformation of the family, the issue of the prevention of domestic violence and the maintenance of family peace. So, women's rights [...] have become a part of a family policy rather than a specific women's rights issue because there is actually nothing done regarding the violence against women except the family (Interview 34, Academician, Ankara, 14.6.2013).

The term of family indicates that women are addressed as mothers and wives, not as individuals. That is why they are worth being protected from domestic violence. The law focuses the adverse effects of violence on family union rather than women's bodily integrity. If not protected, women will leave or divorce their husbands, the family union will be broken down and the survival of future generations and society will be in danger. This understanding loads such a moral and social obligation on women that they are not supposed to consider their individual rights and interests, and are supposed to sacrifice their own desires and choices to the end of protecting their family union.

The Turkish government's approach to violence against women is definitely not based on a discourse originating from individual's rights. Yet, the world already has passed this point. All contemporary international standards with respect to violence against women accept this phenomenon's relationship with inequality between women and men. Now, this is admitted by international conventions. Turkey [...] ratified the legally binding Istanbul Convention on this issue. So, what does this mean? Unless you combat every dimension of inequality, inequality in politics, inequality in employment etc., and unless you maintain the equality of women and men in every field, it is hard to expect a serious improvement in the prevalence of violence against

women; the protectionist approach, by itself, is just not enough (Interview 25, Academician, Ankara, 13.6.2013).

The struggle with domestic violence requires awareness that domestic violence is primarily derived from patriarchal relations. It should be recognized that domestic violence as a structural problem related to the subordination of women by men. If so, the state could be able to diffuse in social perceptions that domestic violence is a crime committed against women's rights and bodily integrity. Otherwise, violation of women's human rights is normalized for the sake of family.

The problem is that the issue of violence against women is currently considered as criminal issue. This is an issue of security and should be solved in this way. The police go to the [crime scene] and intervene in. The police say that do not beat your wife, in the simplest term, of course, if he can. The issue is structural though. In the current treatment, this issue is not perceived in structural terms but in cultural or individual terms. In this understanding, men beating their wives are assumed to be marginal subjects. It is believed that they beat their wives because of being alcoholics and/or mentally ill. So, they are suggested to get therapy. However, we do not know whether the therapy service functions well or not. We do not know what its content is either. There are family courts where being a judge requires being at a specific age, having a family, having a child. The judges are expected to convince the spouses to continue the marriage, if possible. Therefore, the law does not question the family as it is. In other words, even if a woman is beaten, she is to take any course, which would endanger the children and the family, and which would break family union (Interview 27, Academician, Ankara, 18.6.2013).

In the understanding of state, domestic violence is related to poor communication within the family. It is to be prevented, not eliminated, by reestablishing communication skills and resolving psychological problems within family. So, domestic violence is not related to the subordination of women by men and not socially internalized as a violation of women's human rights. That's why the number of cases is steadily increasing despite all efforts of the Ministry to prevent domestic violence.

The source of violence against women is the inequality between women and men and this is an issue of power, which is established on the basis of the body of woman. Unless you attempt to remove this power and you admit that women and men are really equal, you do not have a political will to end male violence against women. This government had never such a political will and has still not. That is why everything they have done is just a show-off. Some time, they [the government] claimed that many women were killed before but we were not aware them because the media did not broadcast [on violence]. Nowadays, thank God, our media is very independent! So, we can hear these cases. That is why we assume that the cases of violence have been increasing! No, the cases have been increasing because an interpretation, which is based on the male superiority, has been brought up. This interpretation is claimed to be religious although it is based on the male interpretation of Islam. Besides, this interpretation has been presented as if the sole interpretation of Islam and the children have been indoctrinated with this [male] interpretation (Interview 41, Feminist Activist, İstanbul, 24.1.2014).

As the state's motivation to fight with domestic violence is to reconstruct family union, the legal process does not function efficiently and fast enough to immediately punish the perpetrators and protect the victims of domestic violence either. The number of shelters is quite low. There is a lack of law enforcement officers, who are well trained about the law and its implementation. In most cases, the officers do not want to follow up the procedure and do not provide the victims legal and psychological consultancy. The legal process does not proceed simple and easy in practice.

In the middle of this tough process, women could give up and say that I give up and go back to home or they go to a shelter but after seeing the conditions of and the treatment in the shelter, they would prefer to go back their homes. For instance, the ŞÖNİMs are mostly out of town. The shelter is not the only need in combatting violence. The women, who appealed to the Purple Roof [Mor Çatı Women's Shelter Foundation], mostly do not want [to go to] the shelter. However, the social solidarity centers provide these women limited support; they do not deal with them and direct them to the shelter. So, this does not offer a solution. As I said, the shelters and the social solidarity centers are out of town. The rules are left on paper. It seems that women are not encouraged to come and appeal. The woman can be running away from home; she can have no money and can come from far away with poor transportation. All this affects the women's daily life. Unfortunately, there are

no facilitative efforts to handle these [troubles] (Interview 42, Feminist Activist, İstanbul, 23.1.2014).

In contrast to the Istanbul Convention, the state assigns the role of mediation and stands between victim and perpetrator. In the shelters run by the state, the officials try to reconcile the spouses and convince the victim from entering a suit against her perpetrator. They try to prevent divorce. This reduces the accountability of the perpetrators and does not constrain them from repeating violence against their family members again.

The number of female employees in the Directorate of Religious Affairs has enormously increased because female employees have been hired in Family Guidance and Counseling Offices [Aile İrşad ve Rehberlik Büroları]. They have been providing consultancy and support service to women. There is more than one in every city. There is an idea to unite and incorporate these offices with the ŞÖNİMs. This would be appropriate because the ŞÖNİMs are not so different from the Family Guidance and Counseling Offices. They have been doing a terrible job by providing service to women and men in the same place. To the end of combating violence, the victim and the perpetrator are given services in the same place! Why do they do this? In fact, the aim is to reconsolidate the family. That is why feminists are on pins and needles (Interview 38, Academician, Ankara, 11.6.2013).

I think, domestic violence is related to the degeneration of family and the destruction of natural harmony by Islamists. The ideal of traditional Turkish Muslim family is fictionalized in a never-ending happiness and serenity by them. It is assumed that our 'common values' consisting of Islam and native culture were underestimated by the Republican reforms; thus, the peace and harmony in family gets broken and domestic violence appears.

On one hand, family can provide an inclusionary and compassionate atmosphere that embraces its members with all their differences. On the other hand, family could be a structure, which oppresses people most and makes them miserable. We have sufficient data and cases proving this. This is the case especially for women. We all know that the biggest part of the violence against women is domestic violence (Interview 25, Academician, Ankara 13.6.2013).

The increase in femicide and domestic violence should also be related to increasing awareness among women. Women are resisting and do not easily absorb and/or submit to male superiority. This is a result of women's emancipation. They want to utilize their rights to access education and work, to spend money they earn, to divorce and/or break up, to decide on her spouse, and to have autonomy over her body. I think, the state is aware of emancipation and liberalization in the society but still prefers to keep and impose control over the society rather than accommodating itself to the changing dynamics, which do not necessarily conform to neo-conservative premises.

We have experienced a rapid transition, which has been becoming more conservative and refusing the equality of women and men. As the society has already been ready, it has been easily absorbed. I believe, when the women's struggle for freedom has encountered with this approach, it has ended with blood. This is one of the reasons of increasing femicide. For instance, this is also seen in the case of homosexuality. As their visibility has increased, as they have claimed their existence, they have attracted more reaction. But now, the person at top-level of the state hierarchy declares that I do not believe in the equality between men and women. It is unfortunately so dramatic that it reflects on the whole society and most professionals in the public institutions. For this reason, when a woman would like to divorce, her husband drives crazy. Who you are, they [men] say. It used to be different than it is right now. When women would like to divorce, the judges made their decision on this way. Now, it is different. Women intend to divorce but this time the judges do not divorce the spouses (Interview 29, NGO expert, Ankara, 6.1.2014).

State feminism has accomplished certain changes in the underlying gender order although not completely transforming it. The life aspirations of educated, middle-upper class, professional women are an inevitable result of equality discourse and policies for almost a century. Its implication on the definition of femininity is the internalization of women's equal access to education and work, and its appropriation as another way of self-realization for women in addition to motherhood, especially by educated young women and in feminist circles.

6.2.3. Pro-natalist Policies

Another topic that I relate to feminization of family is pro-natalist policies of the state. New paradigm on family has been reinforced through state discourse and policies regulating reproduction and sexuality. With pro-natalist policies, the state intervention into private sphere has reached to an unprecedented extent in Turkish history.

That is why the Prime Minister has begun to interfere in everything from our private lives to public life. How many children we should give birth, how we will give birth, whether we live in a house with boys and girls together, whether we have an abortion, why we should not have any abortion. We will not have c-section because we can give maximum 2 births with it. So, he interfered in c-section too. This is a government that interferes in our private lives that much (Interview 41, Feminist Activist, İstanbul, 24.1.2014).

The state stimulates at least three children on discursive level. It also weakens the institutional and financial capacity of the health facilities providing information and contraceptive devices for family planning. The info service is totally eliminated and the access to contraceptive devices is not achieved. The state follows a sort of discouraging policy on family planning while blessing motherhood on the other hand.

Regarding health services, the General Directorate of Family Planning was closed. This means that there is no longer a population policy; we do not teach birth control. Such a decision was made and this is an important decision. It is a very institutional decision. This is a passive pro-natalist policy because it does not clearly declare that I will not provide you family planning service. However, with the closure of the General Directorate, women who would like to have birth control are discouraged, on the one hand. On the other hand, with the statement of 3 children, reproduction is encouraged (Interview 43, Academician, Ankara, 16.1.2014).

What differentiates the new gender climate is the degree of state intervention into intimate sphere. The state's approach on abortion, pre-marital sexual intercourse, virginity and reproduction cannot be simply considered as a pro-natalist policy. It has a strong moral dimension, which is used to justify the state intervention in women's

bodies. Behind this intervention lies an effort of constructing an ideal Turkish Muslim member of society, who agrees on and obeys to 'our' common values.

However, this kind of interference is a new form of interference. On the one hand, he [Prime Minister Erdoğan] accepts the existence of individual/citizen; he addresses to individual/citizen but he has so strict ideas about how this individual/citizen should be. How many children s/he has, how s/he makes love, which birth control methods s/he uses, whether s/he drinks alcohol or smokes. These are not just about conservatism; now, they are equipped to do this. They are performing this in terms of language and ideology to the end of controlling people. This is the major difference as compared to the past. And no doubt, this one is much more repressive because it does not leave a room for politics and eradicates the public sphere. I do not think that they are dictators and the others were not. There is continuity but the method is different. There is a difference with the language and [the way of] justification (Interview 38, Academician, Ankara, 11.6.2013).

Besides, for the sake of society and future generations, the state finds it quite legitimate to have a word on women's bodies, to control and manipulate their decisions of reproduction and to limit their contraceptive devices. The debate and new regulation on abortion proceeds in the same line too.

The statement of Erdoğan at least 3 children is not only a conservative discourse. This is not a discourse that locks women at home or highlights motherhood. It is a conservative, nationalist and neo-liberal discourse. The intersection point of these three is the population policies. Although it is not expressed explicitly, it exists behind this discourse. The rate of population growth has decreased in Turkey. Population keeps growing but its growth rate decreased. Considering the regional disparities, they are doing some future projections. For instance, it is assumed that Kurdish population can exceed Turkish population in 30 years. I think there is such a nationalist concern behind this. Conservatism, motherhood, etc., they have already existed; this is obvious but the basic principle is that the population should not be aging or there should always be a younger population that would take care of the aging population and a reserve army of the unemployed. In this context, it complies with neo-liberalism. After all, it happens all over the world. In other words, when social policies are revoked or dysfunctional, conservative discourses are coming into prominence. The state assigns its own duties to the private sphere and to the women. This is the place that neo-liberalism resides in (Interview 44, Academician, İstanbul, 21.1.2014).

6.3. Lack of Feminization in Labor Force

From the very beginning, lack of feminization characterizes the labor force in Turkey. Women's employment was never disregarded but the rate of female labor force participation remained quite low due to social, economic and cultural factors. Despite the generation of a sizeable amount of professional women, women's unpaid employment remained large in rural areas but was mostly regarded as secondary and contributory to the family budget in urban areas. In this setting, housewifization gets settled as an occupation, and working women predominate in public sector, informal sector and limited feminized sectors in private sector.

This situation should be related to the Republican understanding, which assumed emancipation of women through education rather than work. So, education was paid more attention than employment as a goal regarding women's equality and public visibility. In this setting, traditional family structure and traditional division of labor were supported and promoted by the state for socio-economic development. While women's employment outside house was legally recognized, it was not internalized as a prevailing norm for long decades. Man was figured as the head of family and primary breadwinner. Women's employment outside the house was regarded as secondary and as a contribution to the family budget, not as a way of self-realization.

There was the employment of women but the employment of women is a very tragic policy in Turkey. I mention the general norm that the basic function of women is to start a family, to start modern families and to maintain them, which was the norm in the Republican modernization, was also adopted by conservatives, and was opposed to the employment of women, not directly but indirectly. This was not desired. If you examine the dominant texts of every period, you can see a discourse emphasizing that women can work unless they neglect housework or children. Even the most progressive and modernist people have a reasoning, which includes discrimination against women's employment. Although there is not an explicit objection, this reasoning confirms that women should work within the bounds of family responsibilities. It still continues (Interview 34, Academician, Ankara, 14.6.2013).

Additionally, economic growth policies followed by the state are an important factor determining the composition of labor force. Macro-economic conditions did not offer considerable increase in labor force participation of women. Even the industrialization policies carried out in the 1960s and 1970s did not create sufficient opportunities to invite and pull women into labor force in urban areas. Rather, the limited opportunities in labor market were compensated by traditional family model, thereby not leading to feminization of labor force.

So, the sectors, which are to increase employment, specifically industry, have provided limited opportunities [for women]. Even in industry, the departments that women and men work are different, even the entry-exit hours differ for men and women. So, a secure area is created in order to minimize the contact and to make workplace more appropriate for young women. There is the opportunity to enter in professions because having university degree decreases the pressure on women to concentrate in certain fields, which provides service only women. In other words, she studied for years, got a diploma; so, for sure, she will work. Where? Primarily in public sector, where the rules are clear. In this regard, the state is a more reliable employer; professional relations are perceived as more institutionalized. However, for young women having no university degree, service sector provides limited options. There is a gradual increase. It could be observed from statistics, especially there is an increase in the number of women working in retail trade, hotel, and accommodation service. There is a process of social transformation, on the other hand. This is probably limited with big cities and coastal cities though (Interview 45, Academician, Ankara, 10.7.2013).

After the transition to neo-liberal policies, the volume of service sector grows up in economy but this does not lead to feminization of labor force either. The service sector is not considered as an appropriate sphere for women to work due to cultural reservations. In service sector, communication with strange men, transportation, long working schedule, etc. stand as obstacles before women's employment in the newly rising service sector. Only safe area they are predominantly working is cleaning and care work.

However, in Turkey, service sector has not created a demand to increase women's employment yet. Additionally, there is no serious supply to meet to-

be demand due to cultural reasons. In the service sector, home cleaning is based on a woman-to-woman relation, so this is acceptable in conservative patriarchal circles. Except home cleaning, where can women work in service sector? They can work in service areas, where customers are predominantly men or mixed. In European countries, women predominantly work as maids at the hotels, or as waitress or helpers in restaurants and cafes. In these areas, women's employment is quite low in Turkey. Women's employment in tourism is around 20% in Turkey. Hotel, accommodation facilities, restaurants are not assumed as appropriate areas for women to work. Very serious cultural handicaps pose obstacles in front of women's employment in the service sector (Interview 45, Academician, Ankara, 10.7.2013).

In new gender climate, women's employment outside the house gains a more contradictory and incoherent picture. First of all, with the start of accession talks with the EU, increasing the rate of female participation into labor force is imposed as an accession criterion. To this end, the state has initiated pro-employment initiatives. Secondly, neo-liberal policies require cheap and flexible female labor force. Finally, the state embraces a family oriented discourse and pro-natalist policies.

All the Ministry [of Family and Social Policies] staff agrees that woman should not work. They do not hesitate to say it any more. Woman should stay at home because they think that the children of working mothers are not in poverty but deprived of care. There is such a common discourse and all of them seem to accept it. But I say that there is a Prime Ministerial commission to promote women's employment in Turkey. This is so contradictory; this is related to the lack of internalization. Prime Minister suggests having 3 children, on the one hand, and encourages women's employment, on the other hand. Women are to care the sick, the elderly and the disabled at home. On the other hand, women's employment is encouraged. This is not a coherent, well-defined policy. It is oscillating. According to the EU, Turkey has the lowest rate in women's employment compared to the EU countries and to some other countries having similar economies with Turkey. Let's increase the women's employment now! This cannot be done this way. Poor record in women's employment is related to many reasons. If you do not struggle to eliminate these reasons, women's employment cannot be increased. On the contrary, you instigate these reasons by saying to have 3 children, to care the disabled and the sick, and to stay at home. Then, this becomes rather inconsistent, ambiguous. There is a serious gender politics in Turkey but it is not coherent. For the present, there is a dubious, irrelevant

and amorphous situation in Turkey (Interview 46, Academician, Ankara, 11.6.2013).

The state does not embrace an anti-employment discourse. It is not possible to do so in neo-liberal conditions, which require cheap and flexible labor force. However, pro-natalist discourse and policies continuously reinstall family as main sphere of women and motherhood as their primary role. This inevitably produces discrimination against women in labor market and prevents a considerable rise in female labor force participation under equal and fair conditions.

Society and family are quite emphasized in [policy-making]. In my opinion, if we consider policies, everything is clear. When you consider the statements on the young people, who are between 18 and 24 years old, cash benefits, extended maternal leave, as you would admit, it seems very reasonable. In fact, [these policies] aim to relieve women's burden, which could not be removed. However, as a female scientist, I think, if I were an employer, I would not hire women. She will be away from work for 2 years. Besides, she will give birth to 3 children, which makes approximately 6 years. For example, breast-feeding break is arranged according to female employees; the exclusion of male employees seems well intentioned. However, I think the stones are always pitched with good intentions. So, these policies might serve to withdraw women from employment. This might not be the real intention. Maybe, the starting point is intended well but I think this is the result. I know so many public officials, who think that they [women] would give birth soon and leave for 2-2,5 years but military service is as short as 1 year and for once, so [they say] I will hire men. Therefore, I think there is a transformation in gender policies. I am pessimistic but this is how it is (Interview 30, Public Officer, Ankara, 22.8.2013).

6.3.1. Pro-employment Initiatives

In this the section, I shall address on the pro-employment initiatives and their impact over gender equality and discrimination. Primarily, the pro-employment initiatives do not focus on why female labor force participation is quite low. It is a well-known fact proved by national surveys and scientific researches that domestic division of labor constitutes the most important obstacle in front of women's employment

outside the house. Unequal division of housework and care work makes working outside house less applicable and attractive for most women.

Pro-employment initiatives still reflect that woman's place is home. Even though they seem to be sincere and encouraging, I think, they confine women to domestic roles. Entrepreneurship, flexible employment, etc. address on the traditional roles of woman. The emphasis is put on the [traditional] roles of woman who stays at home and cares for children, the elderly, the disabled and the sick. There is also a connection between the social policies and the traditional roles of woman. In the end, woman should be empowered. But woman is not perceived as an individual. Woman is identified through her status within the family (Interview 47, Academician, Ankara, 13.6.2013).

Despite the pro-employment initiatives, the state does not have a concrete policy to increase female labor force participation. What the state aims to do is to improve the situation in the existing socio-cultural setting. The state does not tend to diagnose the reasons of low female labor force participation, which are mainly related to traditional roles and identities. Nor does the state allocate budget and make investments to radically solve the problem.

This kind of policy cannot resolve the women's issues. The representation of women cannot be increased; sufficient resources cannot be allocated. How could you mention about policy if you do not allocate resources? What does any policy necessitate? There has to be human resource, facility, electricity, etc. For instance, there is a state policy on childcare service. If childcare facilities are opened up, there will be sufficient resources to afford the expenses including social service expertise, psychological support, electricity, food, nutrition, etc. It is not enough to verbally declare to open up crèches. If [the expenses] are not calculated and placed in investment program, there is no policy to mention. These are so-called policies, not transformative. Temporary and so-called policies, which are integrated into the existing system, are being prepared. As far as I understand, there is no coherent policy regarding women, the disabled or the elderly in Turkey (Interview 28, NGO Expert, Ankara, 26.6.2013).

Very popular pro-employment initiative is flexible employment, which is designed to harmonize both neo-liberal and neo-conservative premises. This initiative reflects the state's discourse on family and women. That is, the state aims to strengthen family

and empower women within family. Women as cheap and flexible labor participate into labor force but at the same time they do not have to neglect their family responsibilities, could allocate sufficient time for care work, and could contribute to family budget.

Flexibility in women's employment means to increase women's employment by making it flexible. Flexibility means women's part-time employment but this practice does not work in Turkey, or the marginal sector boosts more. The 65% of women, even more, are already working in marginal sector; we can call it flexible employment too because in my opinion, flexible employment means irregular employment. They [the Ministers] do not think it this way and romanticize it. I see this in the statements of Minister of Labor and Fatma Şahin [Minister of Family and Social Policies]. They assume that flexible employment scheme would provide women with flexible schedule and part-time work after birth for instance. They imagine that flexible employment scheme, which is implemented in some developed countries such as Netherlands, will work in Turkey or they delude us. This is impossible; it cannot be implemented in Turkey. Conservatism in employment comes from here. If one question what has been done in employment so far, there is an agreement on women's employment but some restrictions are imposed in a certain way. It is expected that women should not ignore their home and children, and could be able to work at home. This is a family-oriented way. Women's employment at home is encouraged. Cash benefit is provided for women caring the elderly and the disabled. This also shows how they [the state] perceive women's employment. Women care at home, within the family and we [the state] shall pay for it (Interview 43, Academician, Ankara, 16.1.2014).

Flexible employment is not a measure to promote the qualifications of female labor force and to ensure employment in secure and fair conditions. Rather, it means temporary employment in unqualified jobs when any demand occurs. What is important for the sake of this study is that women constitute the target group of flexible employment. As their paid employment is taken as secondary and contributory, their short-term employment versus long-term unemployment does not constitute a problem for the state.

It is said that it is appropriate for women because there is already a breadwinner [man] at home; if woman works temporarily, it will be a

contribution to family budget. She could work as a maid in a company for 3 months and return to home. What is meant with flexibility is to employ women in temporary jobs, which do not provide sustainable employment and a chance to have a professional career. However, the main target is to extend this into the whole labor market through women. It seems easier to make it [flexibility] acceptable by women and social reaction [to this] remains limited. In other words, [flexibility] is built up on the women and the young (Interview 45, Academician, Ankara, 10.7.2013).

Women's entrepreneurship is another policy promoted by the state in the recent years. The state provides training programs for women and supports women with micro-credits. However, training programs are conducted in female appropriate sectors such as knitting, carpeting, cooking, sewing, etc. Thus, these programs do not up skill and equip women to venture in manly fields. Nor they raise awareness on the meaning of 'work'. Additionally, the main idea behind micro-credits is still to maintain the traditional division of labor. Women are expected to maintain work and family balance while running a small-scale business.

What are women doing? They are running small-scale business. They cannot earn a proper income there and they can easily fail. Women are working as tailor at home for instance. They convert one room into a beauty salon and do hairdressing. They knit bath puff and sell them at the bazaar. This is not even entrepreneurship. So, women's employment is not increasing (Interview 45, Academician, Ankara, 10.7.2013).

An evaluation of pro-employment initiatives reveals that a transformation in traditional roles and identities is not on target. Domestic division of labor constitutes the major obstacle before women's employment. Motherhood is perceived as a way of self-realization. In this setting, a qualitative and quantitative jump in female labor force participation could not be achieved as long as care work is promoted by the state as a female duty. The composition of labor force should probably not change in a way to enable considerable feminization of labor force.

So, the egalitarian laws are not sufficient alone. The issue is also related to their implementation. Thus, what are the support mechanisms, which would relieve the burden on woman's shoulder regarding care work? At this point, we can easily say that the state has failed. As I said, the existing laws are not

implemented and they protect only the employee. What is being provided for the majority of women who do not work but want to work? We see that there is nothing. Nurseries and crèches should be built up by considering the working women who have 0-3 aged children, and by taking into account the women who want to work. In Turkey, a serious development in childcare services will encourage women to participate into working life. Childcare is one dimension. The other one is the care of the elderly and the sick. As this is entirely organized through the family in Turkey, there is not any understanding to relieve women from care work and to encourage them towards paid employment. On the contrary, [the state policies] aim to increase female employment without changing the [women's] responsibilities for care work. In the recent times, [state] policies mostly address on this (Interview 45, Academician, Ankara, 10.7.2013).

The contradictory and incoherent discourse on women's right to work the outside house is mainly related to the traditional perception. The state discourse does not establish women's employment as a way of self-realization and satisfaction, as the only way a woman gets satisfied is depicted as being mother. In that regard, pro-employment initiatives do not function to establish women's right to work outside the house as a requirement of being an equal individual with individual life aspirations. These initiatives do not prevent gender inequality and discrimination either. Rather, they shape gender composition of labor force along traditional roles and identities.

In the recent years, the state has tended to provide social policies through family, assuming women have a crucial role and function within it. It is remarkable. Here, the crucial point is that often women are not seen as individuals. Women's individual rights are not respected; rather, they are perceived as mothers and wives. Their rights are recognized and their privileges are accorded through their roles in the family. Among other things, this has a great impact on women's employment. When the whole burden of home and child care is put on a woman, it is hard for her to go outside the house to work. Recently pro-natal policies are encouraged too. Although the law on family planning is still in force (since the 1980s), as you know, every day, we are bombarded with a political discourse on TV, which recommends having 3 children, 5 children, and more children (Interview 25, Academician, Ankara, 13.6.2013).

Instead of empowering women as individuals, the pro-employment initiatives also reveal the focus of state on family. The state does not completely reject the troubles women encounter due to unemployment and tries to resolve their socio-economic problems. However, its way to resolve these problems goes through empowering women within the family. This tendency perfectly matches with neo-liberal and neo-conservative premises. The state both preserves traditional roles and keeps the burden of social services quite low by supporting family.

Family is functionalized in a more effective way than former governments and state policies. For instance, there was no payment for care services before. It has become a natural part of social policy. We objected many times to the transformation of KSGM into the Ministry of Family. This was not simply symbolic. The establishment of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies signified the unity between social policy and family on the institutional level. This is not in accordance with conservative and traditional understanding, either. Cash benefit for care services is an example. Family is union of love. All of us are a part of a family. On the one hand, there is an ideological discourse saying that mothers take care of their children, the elderly, etc. On the other hand, they [the government] are aware of that this does not work that way in practice. That is why they support family care instead of public care and allocate budget (Interview 38, Academician, Ankara, 11.6.2013).

Pro-employment policies variously effect women from different classes. Women from lower class steadily concentrate in informal market and feminized sectors, which are generally characterized by low wages, long working hours and poor working conditions. In these conditions, most women would not prefer to work if they do not have to.

Probably, the middle and lower classes should more effectively utilize cash transfer than the upper class. One of the problems that the lower classes encounter in employment is the provision of childcare. Cash transfer for childcare seems a better option for many women because we know the situation of women who work in the textile sector. There was a meeting organized by ILO in the past week and this issue was raised. Considering the sectors having recent economic boom, they are labor-intensive sectors and female labor dominates in these sectors. For instance, female labor is intensive the sectors of tourism, textile, etc. Female labor is vulnerable to

exploitation because they work in hard conditions, for long hours and without social security coverage. They work for low wages. When the state offers them the same amount of money in return of childcare, they would prefer staying at home. For that reason, women's withdrawal from employment is understandable; this is a rational choice and nobody can judge it. This is quite understandable because she works for 11-12 hours and earns at most 500-or 600 or 800 liras. If the state pays her, then she works at home in secure and decent conditions because many women are reported to complain about mobbing, etc. There are too many obstacles in front of women's employment. These policies and regulations, understandably, lead women to go back home. Therefore, I think, it should affect lower classes in this way (Interview 27, Academician, Ankara, 18.6.2013).

The poor working conditions cannot mobilize people to work and they cannot generate a feeling of self-realization, satisfaction and happiness. In neo-conservative gender climate, women could normatively escape from this because they do not have to run a household. If not necessary, they would prefer to stay at home, which is comfortable than working in a textile workshop, and perform the domestic duties, which culturally mean more to them.

I think, in practice, most women having children embrace this motherhood policy. So, if their jobs do not mean anything to them except earning money, in other words, if they work in unqualified jobs like secretariat or in exhausting ones like working in a factory, they would prefer being housewives in Turkey, and would say 'give this money to my husband, I stay at home'. There are several dimensions including sexual harassment, mobbing, and low wage. You do not support women's employment just by saying that there, you go work. Unless the appropriate conditions are provided for childcare, and if they work in poor conditions, for instance in the strike, there might happen so many practical problems like going to toilet. Last night, I was reading some researches on sexual harassment and mobbing, so many women are still subject to mobbing in working place and there is no strong mechanism to prevent this. Therefore, in my opinion, most women would always or mostly prefer motherhood to working life in Turkey. I think that is why working life is not attractive for women. However, this is also related to that the state does not conduct efficient policies and provide childcare services. Macroeconomic structure, employment, supply-demand, industrial development, these are quite important too (Interview 36, NGO Expert, Ankara, 31.1.2014).

As long as women's right to work outside the house is not figured as an individual right, women become a target group in case of economic crisis. Their employment is regarded as secondary and contributory to family budget, and men are seen as primary breadwinners. Her unemployment is not taken as a big loss and her efforts and aspirations other than motherhood are totally disregarded.

Especially in the periods of economic crisis, if labor market downsizes and dismissal increases, this primarily affects women because a woman's primary duty is not to maintain her family. Women constitute the first group to get fired because it is thought that someone will take care of them. So, she may not work. Women already have to do their best to promote in working life. Women do not acquire their current positions so easily. They usually encounter with discouraging attempts like mobbing. There is an attitude that women should stay at home and care for children; then, unemployed men could find a job (Interview 33, NGO Expert, Ankara, 5.6.2013).

This is quite in conformity with the rising rates of female labor force participation during the time of economic crises. Global economic crises of 1994, 1998, 2001 and 2008 triggered a slight and temporary increase in women's labor force participation. The rate of women's labor force participation increased from 27.5% to 30.2% by 1994; from 27.6% to 30.4% by 1998; from 26.6% in 2000 to 27.1% by 2001 and 27.9% by 2002; from 23.6% in 2007 to 28.8% between 2008 and 2011. This rate decreased to 27.9% in the first quarter of 2012 again when the impacts of 2008 economic crisis started to weaken (TEPAV, 2012).⁷² Considering the slight increase in female labor force participation during the time of crisis, it is possible to claim that women are forced to work in case of economic need.

To sum up, pro-employment initiatives meet both economic and cultural needs of a large population of women. The state utilizes the underlying gender norms and patterns and reequips them in a neo-conservative climate.

⁷² http://www.tepav.org.tr/upload/files/1343984771-6.Degerlendirme_Notu_Turkiye_nin_Kriz_Sonrasi_Eve_Donen_Kadinlari.pdf

It is because the main purpose is to make flexible employment a norm in labor market and to restructure it (labor market). Here, [the state] gets support from women because they did not take a part in labor market previously and then they make a progress in labor market. So, some women can support this. Additionally, for sure, for centuries, being a woman has not made anybody feminist automatically. In other words, what women internalize is motherhood. There are so many women who are happy for staying at home. Some believe that working from home and earning some money is a good thing. There is already a huge group of people who deeply internalize the patriarchal values and conservatism. Thus, the state policies could influence women (Interview 44, Academician, İstanbul, 21.1.2014).

6.3.2. Public Care

Unequal distribution of domestic work and care-work and the lack of public care services, which are all based on traditional roles and identities, primarily impede women's participation into labor market and restrict them with home (see Buğra, 2012; Dedeoğlu, 2012c; Toksöz, 2012b). The Republican understanding realized the connection between women's employment and work and family balance and attempted to carry out reconciliation policies. Due to lack of sufficient sources and high rate of illiteracy, however, expected and desired investments could be made on nursery services. This understanding was preserved in state discourse until 1980s but then started to weaken. Not unexpectedly, this change in discourse coupled with decreasing rates of female labor force participation in the recent decades (Ecevit, 2012).

In new gender climate, women's participation into labor force is approved as long as they do not neglect their primary roles and duties (mother and goodwife) (İlkkaracan, 2010: 23). Women's participation into the labor force has a secondary importance on the side of state. The state policies do not aim to change traditional division of labor and to eliminate the adverse effects of work and family balance on women's employment. Rather, domestic responsibilities of women are normalized. As Prime Minister Erdoğan stated, to ignore women's nature (*fıtrat*) and to put them in a

competition should be avoided as much as gender discrimination.⁷³ In this setting, pro-employment incentives are not supported by public care policies. Instead, family is pushed forward as the main unit of care (see Buğra, 2012; Dedeoğlu, 2012c; Toksöz, 2012b).

For this reason, as female labor is described within family, it will always be damaged. It is because she cannot leave domestic responsibilities. Due to these responsibilities, she will be in weak and disadvantaged position in labor market. She will continue to be substitute force. She will have to work in unqualified jobs (Interview 42, Feminist Activist, İstanbul, 23.1.2014).

It is worldwide well-known fact that a considerable increase in women's labor force participation could be achieved only if free public care (without any age limitation) is provided for all parents regardless of being married, employed or unemployed. Its best way is to organize public care in the neighborhoods and/or by the municipalities.

It is expected to resolve this [childcare] at the level of local governments. We demanded opening up crèches in the neighborhoods. In our discussions, we pointed out that the local governments should provide public care in the neighborhoods that the parents live in. It should be open for 24/7. Both mothers and fathers, not only mothers, could utilize this service. We also asked for decreasing age limit to enroll in crèche. The child should be at least 3 years old to go to crèche in Turkey. At the end of maternal leave, women get in need of childcare service to leave her newly born and return to work. We also demanded to eliminate the number as a criterion to open up crèche in work place. Now, there has to be a crèche in a work place hiring at least 100 female workers. But the employer keeps this number at 99 and gets exempt from legal obligation. This [number] turns into a disadvantage for female workers. The issue of number is so critical. This reveals that the state embraces domestic division of labor. Childcare is still perceived as a female issue. This approach reflects on social policies. This puts women in disadvantageous position in employment. The employer keeps the number of female workers under the legal limit. Similarly, we suggested naming obstetric leave as parental leave rather than maternal leave too (Interview 42, Feminist Activist, İstanbul, 23.1.2014).

⁷³ http://www.haber53.com/erdogan-dan-asgari-ucretliye-mujde-_d12302.html

In Turkey, perception of women as homemakers constitutes primary factor and obstacle in their participation into labor force and their employment patterns. Employment of women does not shatter traditional norms and values, and lead to more equal division of domestic work. By marriage and children, the burden of women tends to increase. Unequal division of labor at home makes them double-burdened and stuck in between paid and unpaid work. Then, they tend to leave the labor force. By 2011, total employment is 24 million 320 thousand people of which 17 million 862 thousand are male and 6 million 458 thousand are female. Domestic duties constitute main reason of non-participation for 50.5% (14 million 770 thousand persons) of people who are not in labor force (Population and Housing Survey, 2011: 131). By 2012, 61.2% of women who are out of the labor force declare homemaking as the reason of their non-participation (ASPB, 2012a). Additionally, wage disparities, predomination of uneducated women in lower sectors, lack of public care services make work unattractive as well as a cost for women (TEPAV, 2012).

Public care is always very weak and limited in Turkey. Family and women always perform the care work and decrease the burden of state. The state does not support its pro-employment initiatives by investing on public care but rather disintegrates the existing network of public care for children, the elderly and the disabled. The state compensates the limitation in public care by implementing new social benefits such as cash transfer. This benefit undoubtedly makes the invisible labor of women visible. However, this implementation inevitably restricts women to house and perpetuates and normalizes the unequal division of domestic labor and roles.

You can call them passive policies because, as you said, they do not say that woman should stay at home but they say that woman should care the disabled people, the children. The Crèches of SHÇEK [Institution of Social Services and Child Protection] were closed. There is no institutionalization in care work. The existing institutions are being destroyed. Senior centers were closed down. New ones are not opened up. When all these coupled, there is no room left for women to go outside the house. Besides, cash benefit is provided for women if caring the elderly at home (Interview 43, Academician, Ankara 16.1.2014).

Two recent researches reveal that women's paid employment has a declining tendency under the conditions of marriage and childcare. An ethnographic research conducted by Gündüz-Hoşgör and Smits (2008) analyses the participation of women into the labor force by considering the impact of marriage, marriage age and number of children. Main result acquired is that almost two third of married women aged from 15 to 49 do not involve in paid employment; significant amount of married women leave the labor force upon having a child. 37.7% of married and unemployed women declared that they could not engage in employment due to domestic duties and childcare. Another ethnographic research on the patterns of women's and men's time-use in relation to employment, marriage and children points out housewifization of women as a common tendency (Memiş et al., 2012). The findings show that unpaid work is unfairly distributed at home regardless of women's employment status.

In the Labor Code, a minimum number of female workers are defined as a requirement to open up childcare facilities. This requirement reflects the perception that care work is a female duty and obligation. Such a requirement should be independent from sex and number that could increase female labor force participation because a considerable jump requires a transformation in traditional assumptions. Otherwise, this requirement turns into a disadvantage for women; the employer does not want to hire female workers or keep the number below the legal limit. Additionally, the state has a loose control to monitor if the employers fulfill this obligation and/or apply small tactics to escape it.

The laws are egalitarian in terms of language. The problem happens in implementation. How applicable are these laws in practice? In practice, there are deficiencies. What kind of deficiencies? What does the law say? The employer has to open up a breast-feeding room if hiring more than 100 female workers, and has to open up crèche if hiring more than 150 female workers. What is the penalty if s/he does not oblige the laws? It costs approximately 1000 TL. It is good on paper but there is no sanction. Besides, there is no will to impose this sanction. I am not sure whether the labor inspectors check the number of female workers, and fine the employer if there is no crèche. If so, how much does 1000 lira cost? This is another point. There is no data on the number of work place hiring more than 100 and 150

female workers. There is no info whether there are crèches or not in these work places either (Interview 45, Academician, Ankara, 10.7.2013).

The lack of free public care creates a disadvantage not only against women but also within women. Private care is quite expensive to afford for women involved in professional occupations. For women, who have no education, training and skills, working in service sector in poor and insecure conditions, for long hours and on low wages, private care is not affordable. The only cheap and safe way for most working women is to get help from grandmothers, close relatives and neighbors. This support relieves the burden of women but does not change that work and family balance is a feminized problem rather than a social problem.

Generally, they [working mothers] get support from their mothers [for childcare]. Their mothers take care of their children. Otherwise, she has to pay 1/3 of her salary for nursery or crèche. Actually, affording the expense of crèche and nursery is not enough because child's entry-exit hours might not match with the mother's working hours (Interview 33, NGO Expert, Ankara, 5.6.2013).

Cash transfers for women who have to care the elderly and the disabled supports care work at home by women. It is acknowledged that the domestic workload of women is estimated on the state side. But this proves to be a temporary resolution without any transformative capacity. This policy should probably relieve economic troubles of families of single earner (considering the woman could not work outside house due to her care duties) but at the same time perpetuate the underlying traditional norms and patterns.

[Conservatives] do not want woman to be stuck home. But this is not equality. May be a new form of citizenship. I assume this is a different regime of citizenship. Women should participate [into employment] too but in more feminized areas and part-time works. The withdrawal of women from labor force does not serve neo-liberal premises either (Interview 39, Academician, İstanbul, 22.1.2014).

Estimating the cost of care work is not a transformative policy. It has to be appreciated that domestic work is no longer invisible but its long-term effect will be

alarming. As these policies do not concentrate on the sources of low female labor force participation related to the underlying gender order and prevailing gender climate. The state does not consider care work as a social right for both the server and the serving. This serves neo-liberal premises and at the same time is justified by the notion of family.

They are charging for care work at home, making it more technical. For sure, this is a part of general privatization policy. Actually, this is a commercial approach. Public care will be much more expensive. Instead, supporting family [with cash benefits] will cost much less. They are doing this way and its ideology is available due to their conservatism. There is no problem for them. This is a government, which utilizes family as a policy tool for not only social policy but also general policy. Political sphere absorbs public sphere and disseminates family into the whole society (Interview 38, Academician, Ankara, 11.6.2013).

6.3.3. Maternal Leave

Another policy introduced to increase female labor force participation and to help women establish work and family balance is extended maternal leave. In practice, however, it produces discrimination against and among women. There are three points to be emphasized considering the impact of maternity leave on women's employment. First, unpaid maternity leave would not help woman compensate the financial loss during her leave but rather increase her economic dependency on husband. Second, men would not prefer to enjoy their right to unpaid parental leave due to cultural reservations and economic reasons (considering men earn more than women). Third, the extension in unpaid maternity leave would make female workers especially in private sector less attractive and more expensive human source and then the employers would not prefer to hire women.

In private sector, extended maternal leave makes female labor force much expensive and inefficient. The entrepreneurs should not prefer to hire and train female workers, or women are not allowed to enjoy their legal rights and preserve their job positions. Indeed, women are not covered by social security in informal sector.

There are some initiatives to encourage women's employment but they are unlikely to achieve this in the long term. It is because they rather emphasize the roles of women like motherhood or care work. The new maternity leave, for instance, extends the duration of unpaid leave up to 2 years. Any work place allows women to enjoy this right. In our interviews, we see that the women are enforced to make a choice. The employer asks her if she thinks about using unpaid maternal leave. If she does, then the employer says goodbye. This [using unpaid leave] means she already makes a choice. This is what happens in practice. This cannot be ignored. Otherwise, I agree on that women need longer leave. I am in this situation now but this draws away women from working life. Women are restricted to home. Upon her return to work, there is no orientation either. She will be already left 2 year behind. Which workplace would accept this except public sector? It is only acceptable in public sector because this is compulsory. When woman returns work, are there any policies to provide training for her and to facilitate her adaptation to the workplace? No. What does it mean? You are a mother; stay at home for 2 years. When you come back to work, get confused. As you anticipate this to happen, you should probably not return (Interview 46, Academician, Ankara, 11.6.2013).

Under these circumstances, women tend to predominate in public sector. In public sector, their legal rights to maternal leave, to childcare benefits and to return to work by the end of maternal leave are guaranteed. Most women prefer public sector as best serving to their needs derived from domestic workload. So, they might not prioritize their educational, career and life aspirations.

They [the women] tend to work in the sector where they could work easily and peacefully. This is so understandable. For instance, being a teacher is very ideal. There is 3-month vacation. Part-time job. After a while, she can take her child to the school and they can return home together. Because you cannot enjoy your legal rights like breast-feeding break in private sector as it does in public sector (Interview 33, NGO Expert, Ankara, 5.6.2013).

Besides, the employment in public sector is not free from gender discrimination either. First, public sector is quite competitive and the employment of women requires at least secondary education. Considering the education gap between men and women, women are in disadvantageous position against men in occupying a position. Second, due to the burden of work and family balance, women have to

work in feminized branches in public sector and do not easily obtain positions in decision-making bodies.

The white-collar women encounter gender discrimination too. They meet many different practices. They cannot take part in decision-making mechanisms, either. This is really difficult. We see that they usually stand at lower levels. At home, they do not share domestic responsibilities with their husbands. They earn reasonable money to be able to afford childcare and housework. This relieves their burden. They can manage [work and family balance] by getting support for domestic work. But that is all (Interview 42, Feminist Activist, İstanbul, 23.1.2014).

Extended maternal leave produces gender discrimination but it also leads to discrimination within women. This is observed particularly in private sector. Women occupying top positions could have a bargaining power if another employee could not easily replace them. Having a bargaining power also requires obtaining graduate degree, language skills, technical experience, which is still not easily accessible for most women.

For public employee, they have 16-week maternal leave. 1-year unpaid leave was extended to 2-year. Indeed, this discourages the employer from hiring woman. Nobody wants to hire an employee who will probably be on unpaid leave for 2 years because you expect from her/his to fulfill certain duties. Short after starting a job, she says that she is pregnant. For sure, this is her natural right. Under legal conditions, she has 16-week leave, approximately 4 months. Unpaid maternity leave is 6-month in private sector and 1-year for public employee. In practice, 6-month unpaid leave could not be enjoyed [in private sector] because the employer threatens to fire. If she provides an expert labor force, which is hard to replace, the employer might permit not for 6 months but a few months more. Now, there is 4-month paid leave; it should be 6-month paid leave and 6-month unpaid parental leave, which could be used by mother or father. Even, this could be an obstacle for women's employment. So, it should be a parental leave. Even though women will use it in practice, men should have a legal right to use it (Interview 45, Academician, Ankara, 10.7.2013).

So, it is not possible to claim that extended maternal leave in practice covers all women. Rather, it surfaces class differences between women. Women, who lack

education and training, mostly predominate in informal sector where the turnover rate is quite high. They work under poor conditions, for longer hours and without any social and legal protection. Under these conditions, their power of bargaining is quite low and weak to let them enjoy their legal rights and benefits. They are regarded as unqualified labor force, which is easily fired and replaceable.

Working-women mostly concentrate in informal labor market. There is a serious problem. When you work in informal sector, you do not have a chance to negotiate. You can negotiate on neither salary nor working conditions. In Turkey, the extensive informal economy makes women weak and prevents them from working with their all rights (Interview 46, Academician, Ankara, 11.6.2013).

It would be better to issue maternal leave as parental leave. Such a regulation will formulate childcare on the basis of equal share and detach it from biological traits. Then, access to equal conditions and opportunities between men and women will be guaranteed. Women will not fall into a disadvantageous position due to their reproductive function.

Actually, paid and extended maternity leave is a good practice because it is important for the health of the infant to spend a length of time with her/his mother. After one year paid leave, if you are on unpaid leave for another one year, then you will withdraw from work for two years. This means you should probably not find the position you left. This is an important obstacle before woman in terms of her career. In my opinion, it should be distributed between mother and father in a more egalitarian way. It is okay that woman goes breast-feeding for 6 months, receives her salary or gets on maternity leave for one year but father should care his child at the end of one year (Interview 33, NGO Expert, Ankara, 5.6.2013).

Considering gender composition of employment and employment patterns of women, what is expected from the state is to prioritize the right of women outside house and to establish equal and fair working conditions for both sexes. Although the state does not openly declare that women should leave labor force, its discourse praising family and motherhood, and pro-family incentives creates a neo-conservative gender climate in which women's desired role is pictured as mothers

and wives, and encourages women to go back at home. The state generates a discourse glorifying marriage, motherhood and care-work by women and takes relevant incentives to this end. In doing so, in contrast to the Republican ideology, the state refers to the biological differences between men and women as the grounds of femininity and masculinity.

6.4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I depict that the prevailing gender climate has been oriented towards neo-conservatism. I find out that biological determinism features the prevailing gender climate and constitutes the basis of new femininity and masculinity. I conclude that the state discourse and policies are quite determining in this shift towards neo-conservatism. In this setting, a new focus on family and motherhood generates. Women's rights and problems are resided within family. Despite all these progressive legal advances, the understanding of women as individuals and of gender discrimination as violation of women's individual rights is not embedded in the state discourse.

This shift happens in contrast to the Republican understanding of women's equality. Although *de facto* equality between sexes was not achieved, the official discourse did not let the biological determinism be voiced against *de jure* equality. In other words, biological differences were by no means officially declared as an obstacle against the formal equality of sexes and public visibility of women.

CHAPTER 7

COMPARISON AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

7.1. Gender Climate in Republican and Bolshevik Times

In this study, my main question is why/how relatively equalitarian gender politics has been shifting towards neo-traditionalism/neo-conservatism after long decades of state feminism in Turkey and Russia. I try to figure out these transformations in their historical trajectory. To this end, I utilize the theoretical tool pair of gender order and gender climate. Assuming the existence of an underlying gender order, which could underpin and influence social relations and structures, enables me, to discuss political struggle for hegemony that revolves around reconstituting gender relations and identities in a changing social context. In other words, gender relations become a sphere of hegemony and become vulnerable to state authority and influence in a wider social context.

That is how I explain the transformation of gender climate from state feminism to neo-traditionalism in Russia and neo-conservatism in Turkey. In the Republican and Bolshevik times, gender climate oriented towards women's equality in the context of modernization. In the recent times, religion/tradition, national tunes and authoritarian tendencies surface as the new elements of hegemony, then gender climate orients towards neo-traditionalism in Russia and neo-conservatism in Turkey despite long history of women's rights. In this intellectual setting, gender order signifies the existence of gender relations as a separate and autonomous entity on its own and gender climate depicts to the context of hegemonic struggle over gender relations by the state.

In this chapter, I start with summarizing the gender climate in the Republican and Bolshevik times. Then, I shall figure out the historical trajectory of both cases in

order to chase main traits of gender climate during the time of Republican and Bolshevik revolutions, and the interaction between the underlying gender order and the prevailing gender climate in these times.

My argument regarding the gender regime set forth by the Republican and Bolshevik revolutions is ‘continuity in rupture’ and/or ‘oscillation between modernity and tradition’.⁷⁴ Both the Republican and Bolshevik revolutions were modernization projects despite the difference in their ideological routes (capitalism and communism). Women’s equality constituted the center of both modernization projects. A new gender climate, which could be depicted as state feminism and/or official commitment to woman’s equality, generated mainly through legal amendments. The first wave feminism should not be neglected here in the understanding of equality, which was assumed to correspond to legal equality. While in the Turkish case women’s emancipation was assumed to be through education, in the Soviet case it was through work.

In both Turkey and Russia, however, the underlying gender order might be depicted as patriarchal and it was reconstituted under the new conditions and in accordance to the interests and concerns of the newly established states. Although the Republican and Bolshevik reforms brought in radical shifts in the prevailing gender climate, the patriarchal gender order was considerably preserved. That is why I argue that the prevailing gender climate oscillated between modernity and tradition. The revolutionaries in both cases did not completely dismiss the pre-revolutionary gender order and its notions of femininity and masculinity but reformulated these notions alongside Republican and communist premises. The prevailing gender climate could be observed in public sphere and the underlying gender order predominated private sphere.

On the way to establish equality between sexes, both the Republican and the Soviet states issued new legal codes regulating the women’s rights in marriage, labor force, education and politics. Although the formal equality before law was achieved and

⁷⁴ For similar assessments please see Özman (2010); Coşar (2007); Stites (1991).

liberated women to a large extent, gender roles and identities did not radically change. Even in public sphere, education, labor force participation, political participation, family relations, traditional norms and patterns continued to determine gender relations and identities.

The existence of such contradictions is not limited to a specific historical period. Many persist today. Nor do these contradictions occur only in those societies where revolution led to the imposition of a state-backed ideology of institutionalized egalitarianism (Kay, 2000: 16).

In the articulation and mobilization of men and women into new regimes, the traditional roles and identities were modified. In Turkey, both men and women were expected to contribute to the social, economic and political life as equal citizens but women were assigned an extra role of being devoted and enlightened mothers of the nation. The Soviet state prescribed distinctive roles and duties for female citizens and male citizens in the building of communism. The Soviet woman was defined as worker-mother who combined the duties of mother and worker. Sexual division of labor at home continued to be a cultural norm in both countries.

In both countries, gender and gender relations constituted the center of hegemony constitution. Modernist efforts to reorganize gender relations were significantly motivated with the aim of breaking the old social relations, and establishing a new social system. In the immediate post-revolutionary period, the Communist Party attempted to destroy the pre-revolutionary culture in order to consolidate their hegemonic rule. The disruption would symbolize the triumph of the new regime. Here, not only biological but also cultural reproductive function of women gained importance. The reproduction of future communist generations, ideal comrades who might not resist the new Soviet order, was in the hands of women (Ashwin, 2000: 1-3).

However, the 'new woman' presented more of a problem than the 'new man'. It was acknowledged that women had suffered oppression on account of gender as well as class, and that this had left them with a lack of confidence and a greater degree of political backwardness than men. ... They would clearly be a threat to communism. It was important to instill in women a

sense of their own worth, an awareness of their strengths and abilities. ... The revolutionaries agreed that women had to be freed from domestic servitude and drawn into social production. This would ensure, as Lenin put it, that they enjoyed 'the exact same position as men'. However, women clearly had a duty, which men could not perform. As well as being workers themselves, they also had to produce the next generation of workers (Attwood, 1999: 1-2).

Similarly, in Turkey, the Republican revolution confronted with the Ottoman past and the dominance of religion in state affairs and public life. To ensure a break with the past, the revolution aimed at a whole transformation in which women were given a special place. Women's liberation signified nationalist and secular pillars of the new regime. Their new identity was assumed to ensure the establishment and consolidation of new regime. In addition to being active and visible in public life, ultimate role attributed on women in private sphere was being an 'enlightened mother' (Coşar, 2007: 118). Education and employment would contribute to being enlightened for women. Here, the role of cultural reproduction was emphasized for women, who were to raise nationalist and secular children for the sake of the new regime.

The reproductive function of women played a determining role in the both cases as it did in most modernization projects and nation building processes (see Gal & Kligman, 2000).⁷⁵ Due to reproductive functions, the new Republican and Bolshevik states continued to establish a link between women's reproductive functions, and their individual and social characteristics. In Turkish context, similarly, new type of femininity was based on wifehood, motherhood and sexual morality (Kandiyoti, 1998). Both biological and moral-cultural reproduction of loyal generations was charged on new Turkish women. In Soviet Russia, 'women's proper role as mother and wife, her sexual objectification, her softer, gentler approach and her subordination to men' continued to underlie the new type of femininity (Kay, 2000: 19). Despite the radical attempts to break with pre-revolutionary culture and to construct a new life style along communist lines, traditional assumptions and patterns regarding gender relations and identities did not entirely change.

⁷⁵ Please see Gal & Kligman (2000) for the role and meaning of reproduction in the nation building process of post-communist countries.

Radical doctrines of equal rights could easily coexist with highly conventional views about “true womanhood”, about the proper work of men and women and about their heterosexual destiny. These contradictions were made possible precisely because ‘what Engels took for granted, as did all the reformers of that generation, was the naturalness of the categories of “woman” and “man”, and indeed the conventional attributes of women and men (Connell, 1987 cited in Kay, 2000: 16).

I believe, ‘rupture in continuity’ in gender relations was primarily related to the focus of Republican and Bolshevik leaders on religion and capitalism as the main source of women’s inequality and oppression. Neither of them could catch the patriarchal gender order as source of subordination of women to men. Breaking the socio-economic order organized around religion and capitalism, reconstituting a new legal system and institutional structures along secular and communist lines, and endowing women with formal equality before the law, the Republicans and the Bolsheviks assumed the women to get liberated. Since they only related the inequalities to the previous orders, they could not notice the pre-revolutionary society had been full of gendered traditional patterns. Additionally, despite all radical efforts, both inherited the underlying norms and patterns regulating gender relations and identities from the pre-revolutionary past. Both of them reinforced and revisited traditional norms and patterns underpinning many of social relations under the conditions of new gender climate.

A comparison using the concepts of gender order and gender climate enables me to ascertain some points for the Republican and Bolshevik gender regimes. In both cases, 1) modernization and/or industrialization constituted the core of the new gender climate, 2) gender and gender relations served as an organizing principle and a constitutive element to hegemony constitution, 3) gender and gender relations were to make sure the establishment and consolidation of new social and economic order by the notions of new femininity and masculinity, 4) biological and cultural reproduction by women was utilized by the newly established states, 5) the understanding of equality as equality before law constituted the state’s approach to gender, 6) there did not happen not a sharp rupture with the pre-revolutionary past, 7) public equality and visibility were achieved but traditional norms and patterns

continued to survive in private sphere, and public sphere and the legal framework were not independent from the impact and influence of traditional norms and patterns, 8) gender as an autonomous entity was regarded as a threat to newly established regimes and it was made submissive to the grand social projects. Thus, in the 1930s, it was claimed that the women's question was solved.

In the light of these presumptions, I shall argue that such arguments as instrumentalization of women and/or using women as window-dressing regarding the gender regime established by the Republican and Bolshevik revolutions might seem as reductionist as the emancipatory argument. These arguments do not allow us to examine the interplay between the state and gender in particular context. It was not women but gender and gender relations, which were utilized by the newly established states to consolidate a new social and economic order. So, the legal amendments and other measures taken to ensure women's rights could not be regarded as a simple derivative of state policies. This was a part of constituting a hegemonic gender climate and new notions of femininity and masculinity at the intersection of the underlying gender order and new socio-economic conditions.

Both the Republican and Bolshevik revolutions' discourse regarding gender relations were defined as a commitment to women's equal rights. Newly established regimes found the source of hegemony in this commitment. Equality of sexes was defined on the grounds of being equal citizens and comrades. Motherhood and family were never denied or neglected but this did not provide a basis for *de jure* inequality. Different treatments were issued in legal documents but they were not regarded as embodiment of inequality. Biological differences were never overtly declared as a source of inequality between women and men. Undeniably, the official commitment and discourse influenced and managed the social perceptions and relations towards women's equality.

In the recent decades, this oscillation moves forward towards the re-invention of tradition under the conditions of neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism. The experience of state feminism and the long history of women's rights did not

transform into a shift on the state level towards considering women as individuals or towards a more egalitarian way. The women were not regarded as individuals either in the Republican or in the Bolshevik periods but modernization and industrialization occupied the center of the women's equality discourse. As modernization was located at the center of hegemony, then official commitment to women's equality was inescapable. In recent times, as hegemony constitution is envisioned by authoritarian manners. Family replaces modernization and stays at the core of state discourse on women's equality. As the basic social institution, family is to function as a watchdog to keep individuals under control and loyal with social interests. The states continue to intervene in gender related spheres and think to have the right and legitimacy. Women's issues are contextualized in regard to the interests of the states again. Priority is given to the interests of state and society rather than the women's human rights.

Although the importance of equal rights for women is still recognized, its ranking among political priorities has been downgraded. Strong discourses continue to support equality and the advancement of women's rights in Russia, but in the post-communist environment the concept of 'equality' is being reinterpreted (Chandler, 2009: 23).

For the time being, we are witnessing the generation of a state discourse in Turkey and Russia, which revisits and resurfaces the underlying gender order on the grounds of family and motherhood. This is done by giving reference to biological determinism between men and women, and to the end of protecting family and society. Under the neo-liberal conditions, the state needs to protect and strengthen family versus woman as an individual. On the side of state, this serves to establish and consolidate hegemony in an authoritarian way and in reference to religion and nationalist tunes.

Gender – our perceptions of masculinity and femininity – pertains to politics as much as to any other sphere of human interaction. In political life, gender is enacted and wielded in contests over power and policy, in forms we could refer to as 'political masculinity' and 'political femininity'. Given the dominance of patriarchal culture that lauds machismo for men and rewards traditional (non-subversive) femininities for women and (punishes the reverse), political actors can employ gendered statements and symbols when trying to bolster their own political positions and undermine those of their

opponents. These authority-building strategies are designed to legitimate the actor and undercut opponents. Political actors of all kinds (including social movements, political organizations and politicians) attempt to shape the rhetoric and actions in order to take advantage of cultural understanding and 'frames' that resonate with the population. These include gendered frames of relying on masculinity, femininity and homophobia (Sperling, 2012: 5).

I shall explain the recent orientation in Turkey and Russia towards neo-conservatism and neo-traditionalism by the underlying gender order. By saying so, however, I shall not deny that there is a unilateral relationship between gender order and gender climate. Rather, gender climate has a considerable transformative power over the underlying gender order. I believe that the emergence of women's movement critical of state feminism in the 1980s in Turkey and in the 1990s in Russia might be explained with the influence of gender climate over gender order. Additionally, the internalization of work as a way of self-realization in Russia and the challenge of women against domestic violence in Turkey should be related to this.

It [gender climate] does not fundamentally change the underlying gender order. [...] The gender climate should not, however, be dismissed as irrelevant since it can have a significant effect on very tangible aspects of women's lives: their legal rights and/or the attitudes they face at home, at work and on the street for example. Not only that, the gender climate also determines attitudes and approaches to the gender order itself. In this way it creates conditions, which either makes a concerted attack on and transformation of the gender order possible, or support and protect the latter by presenting it as a vital and immutable component for the survival of society (Kay, 2000: 17).

Despite the mutual interaction between gender order and gender climate, the underlying norms and patterns are still influential and strong to reconstitute social relations. Depending on the assessment of Kay, it can be assumed that if the gender order is patriarchal, then the gender climate could ensure an evolutionary change towards a more egalitarian discourse or unleash the traditional norms and patterns. It is mostly related to the interests and concerns of the state combined with a new hegemony constitution. So, I interpret what has been occurring in Turkey and Russia in the recent years as corresponding to the second scenario set forth by Kay in the quotation above. The Turkish and Russian states appeal to the underlying norms,

notions and patterns regarding gender relations in the establishment and consolidation of their hegemony.

7.2. The Rise of Authoritarian Tendencies in Turkey and Russia

In both Turkey and Russia, the 1990s was a decade of political and economic instability and crisis. Both societies retrieved stability at the turn of 21st century with the single party government and strong leadership embodied by President Vladimir Putin in Russia and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in Turkey.

In the 1990s, Russia suffered from growing inflation, deficits of consumer goods, lack of investment, foreign currency debt and fiscal crisis. Russian people were terrified with sharp reduction in quality of life, unemployment, increasing criminality, problems in housing, medical and education (Marsh, 1998: 88-89). In 2000, President Putin came to power in such a catastrophic environment, which would enable him progressively set up an authoritarian rule. Under his rule, Russia's recovered in political and economic terms. President Putin imposed control over the oligarchs who got over-proprietary in the 1990s using the state sources (Sperling, 2012: 8). President Putin also consolidated the already strong presidential rule. As Sakwa (2010) identified, he created a dual state, which is a mixture of constitutional government and presidential administration, in which separation of powers is undermined and executive power represses other branches of government. Under Putin's rule, political rights, civil liberties and the rule of law have been largely eroded (Cameron & Orenstein, 2012).

From the very onset, President Putin calls for a consensus 'around basic national values and tasks' (cited in Evans, 2008: 904), serving to justify his rule. Close alliance between the Russian state and the Orthodox Church has become a characteristic of Putin's regime. The alliance is grounded on a common nationalistic ideology dedicated to restore Russia's national power and pride.⁷⁶ President Putin appealed to nationalism and patriotism to restore national identity, unity and pride. In

⁷⁶ http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/24/world/europe/24church.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

his understanding, Russian nation is an organic and singular unity and it rejects pluralism. He claims that any opposition to his regime is unpatriotic and hostile, and aims at destroying Russian state and people. To this end, Putin's regime appealed to the Orthodox Church to establish national unity and gain legitimacy (Cannady & Kubicek, 2014; see Evans, 2008: 904-905). He combined a sense of patriotism and traditional moral values, and promoted the Orthodox values, depicted as national religion, to contribute to spiritual and moral restoration of the country (Anderson, 2007: 195, 188). Considering the nationalistic and anti-Western perspective of the Orthodox Church as well as appealing to national tradition and moral values, largely embodied in the Orthodox values, should serve to legitimacy of President Putin's regime (see Verhovsky, 2002).

The relationship between Putin and the church leadership is rooted in a shared Soviet-era experience and has been largely characterized by common values about Russia, the importance of traditional values, and pride in the country's heritage. The president is happy to allow Orthodoxy a position of *primus inter pares*, so long as its leaders continue to use that position to play a generally supportive role in society (Anderson, 2007: 198).

In global politics, Russia's place in global arena as a primary player is restored under President Putin's regime. President Putin has struggled to reinstall Russia as a great power abroad, restoring national pride and legitimizing his authoritarian regime (Cannady & Kubicek, 2014; see Verhovsky, 2002). Against the attempts of the US to constitute a unilateral hegemonic power in global arena, President Putin stood up to the expansion of NATO in Eastern Europe and the Baltic states, and sought for new alliances with Iran (Graham & Doğangün, 2011). Russia under the leadership of President Putin intends to keep and/or restore its authority in Russia's near abroad. To this end, expansionist policies and military interventions have been followed towards Georgia as happened in 2008 and Crimea in 2014.

In Turkey, fragmentation of center right and center left, short-term coalition governments, consecutive economic crises, corruption, devastating impacts of neo-liberal recipe and marginalization of rural immigrants in urban areas led to nationwide electoral success of political Islam in the late-1990s (Tuğal, 2009). In 2002, Prime Minister Erdoğan's party won the general elections with a strong

parliamentary majority after a long decade of political and economic instability. Prime Minister Erdoğan successfully combined market-based approach with community values, religious beliefs, local customs and societal norms (Öniş & Keyman, 2003: 99, 101). Fulfilling the full accession to the European Union was prioritized as a critical target by the first Prime Minister Erdoğan government (Dağı, 2005: 31-32). Under his rule, Turkey has achieved significant economic progress and stability.⁷⁷ His administration took measures to curb down the military tutelage, improve democracy and achieve major economic developments (Soyarik, 2012). At the same time, Prime Minister Erdoğan consolidated his power in executive, legislative, presidency, bureaucracy and lastly judiciary (Öniş, 2013).

The clues on how Prime Minister Erdoğan makes his authoritarian rule acceptable for the majority could be found in his understanding of democracy. Prime Minister Erdoğan identifies his understanding as conservative democracy, which is assumed to suit best in Turkish national interests and values. Conservatism is ‘shaped by the ideas of Turkish nationalism and religion as a moral/value system’ (Atacan, 2005: 195). This line of thinking also includes a perception of the West as imperial power, deprived of justice and modesty (see Tuğal, 2009). A vision of neo-conservative order depends on religion and tradition as the main source of authentic moral order and ‘common values’ to be shared by all segments of the society.

Since 2007, patriarchal and moral notions and values, often framed by religion, have increasingly become dominant in the party’s rhetoric regarding the regulation of social and cultural domains and even political and international relations (Acar & Altunok, 2013: 1).

Additionally, Erdoğan’s understanding of democracy is based on electoral majority, giving him the claim to be real representative of the nation will and common values against the elites (see Heper & Toktas, 2003). Then, he acts as if he ‘knows’ and is the sole political representative of the moral order of the Turkish nation. Prime Minister Erdoğan has envisioned a religio-conservatism as a shared set of moral values over all segments of society or *millet* (nation) in the party’s terms. In other words, ‘a religiously-imbued nationalism’ constitutes the core of Turkish identity for

⁷⁷ <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD>

Erdoğan's administration (Coşar, 2012: 80). Accordingly, he establishes legitimacy for his rule on the grounds of Turkish culture and moral values, which are supposed to be shared, accepted and internalized by all in Turkey despite various ethnic, religious and class differences.

The AKP defines itself as democratic, conservative, reformist and modern. With the democratic aspect, the emphasis is on a vision of Turkey ... where differences are perceived not as a source of conflict but as richness. The conservative feature of the party is expressed in the perception of Turkish society as a big family with a common fate, sharing bitter and sweet memories. The party promises to provide the means for 'the reproduction of the values that form the identity of this family in the light of contemporary developments (Coşar & Özman, 2004: 62-63).

In global arena, the country started to follow a proactive foreign policy in Middle East and tried to play the role of elder brother on the grounds of religious and cultural similarities (Demirtaş, 2012). This strengthened national power and pride in domestic context. Turkey is to prove the compatibility of Islam with democracy, and to be a model, uniting religion and democracy, to newly emerging democracies in Middle East.⁷⁸ Despite the long alliance between Turkey and the US, Prime Minister Erdoğan did not hesitate to confront with the Israeli Prime Minister in World Economic Forum held in Davos in 2009. Then, he got aggressive towards Israel after the intervention aboard Blue Marmara. These exemplary cases contributed to national pride and increased political and personal prestige of Prime Minister as a strong leader in the country. All these factors, coupled with disappointment with the EU and a loss in impetus for further democratization, have led the Erdoğan's administration to feel over-confident and secure, to follow authoritarian manners and to shift to religio-conservatism overtly (Öniş, 2013).

The regime under the leadership of Vladimir Putin and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan share another trait: there is the little room for political liberalization and pluralism. From the very onset, President Putin seems to acknowledge the benefits of contemporary political values such as democracy, liberalization, human rights and civil society but

⁷⁸ <http://www.thewashingtonreview.org/articles/turkeys-role-in-post-revolutionary-middle-east.html>; <http://www.economist.com/node/14753776>; <http://www.economist.com/node/9549614>; <http://www.economist.com/node/21525408>

he prefers to modify these values in accordance with the priorities of the state and society. President Putin defines these priorities by invoking in Russian history (Cannady & Kubicek, 2014). He is not simply against democracy and liberalism but is against the imposition/import of a Western-based model on Russia, which is to ignore historical and cultural traditions of the country. In his understanding, the model of democracy suiting well in Russia has to arise from national traditions and moral values of the country (Anderson, 2007; see Evans, 2008). Similarly, Erdoğan's administration was committed to the EU membership while strongly emphasizing the Muslim identity of the country (Coşar, 2012: 81). Another trait both countries share is the superiority of the state and unquestioned loyalty to the state in each political culture (Cannady & Kubicek, 2014; Coşar, 2012: 85), which in my understanding paves the way to ignore pluralism in the name of protecting national unity and to justify authoritarian manners.

Besides, given the challenge with the West and the rise of radical Islam in North Caucasus, President Putin's administration progressively appealed to the Orthodox values to reestablish national unity and to redefine national identity in mono-cultural and ethnocentric sense (Warhola, 2007). Russian and Turkish nations are imagined as cohesive and independent of any inequality, conflict and violence. Reference to religious dogma, tradition and nationalist tunes makes it possible to envision Russian and Turkish nations cohesive and sharing a set of common values.

Lastly, both leaders have no tolerance to any sort of social opposition. In Turkey, an environmental protest, the Gezi movement, took place in Taksim, Istanbul in 2013 summer. The Gezi movement started by a small group of opponents having environmental motives to protest the destruction of very old park in Taksim and the construction of a shopping mall in its place. Upon the harsh attacks on the opponents, the movement spread out the whole country but the government did not take a step back and accused the opponents of breaking the rules and the social order. In Russia, three female members of a feminist rock group, known as Pussy Riot, protested the Putin's regime in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. They composed a song and begged God to save Russia from President Putin. However, the Russian state accused them

of religious hatred and hooliganism and they were arrested. Both leaders have not hesitated to control social media to destroy the emergence of social activism through it. In Turkey, youtube and twitter were blocked in 2014. Upon the decision by the Constitutional Court, which finds it against human's rights, these websites were reopened. In Russia, bkontakte (Russian version of facebook), facebook and twitter were used by the Kremlin to pro-Putin bots and spams (Johnson, 2013: 27).

In the rest of this chapter, I shall present and discuss how we observe authoritarian tendencies under the rule of President Putin and Prime Minister Erdoğan in gender and gender relations. How does neo-traditional gender climate serve the authoritarian regime? How does neo-traditional and neo-conservative gender climate couple with authoritarian regimes led by President Putin and Prime Minister Erdoğan?

7.3. Generation of Neo-traditional and Neo-Conservative Gender Climate under Authoritarian Rule

To realize hegemony constitution, the authoritarian way of rule requires the consent of the people. At this point, the Turkish and Russian states utilize gender and gender relations with reference to religion, tradition and national/common values. The authoritarian rule is coupled with a traditional resurgence in gender relations especially during the rule of President Putin and Prime Minister Erdoğan. In other words, in already patriarchal societies, the authoritarian tendencies of both political leaders lead to the reconstitution of neo-traditional and neo-conservative gender climate so as to ensure legitimacy. As they both find a strong source of legitimacy in the underlying gender order; they reframe it around national identity, national/common values, religion and tradition.

Authoritarianism embodies the intervention of state in intimate sphere and the life styles of people, including marriage, sexual relations, violence, reproduction, etc. in accordance with common values, suggested to be shared by all segments of the society, and for the sake of societal interests and national survival. This paves the way for a new gender climate to generate around traditional notions of femininity

and masculinity in the recent decade in both countries. At the center of neo-traditional and neo-conservative gender climate lays a normative understanding of traditional family, femininity and masculinity. In reframing these notions, both states apply to religious dogma (Orthodoxy and Islam), which justifies biological determinism and naturalizes inequalities, and cultural and national authenticity, which put the burden of national survival on the shoulders of women due to their function of biological and cultural reproduction. Depending on my interviews and desktop research, I also depict neo-liberal premises as another dimension of neo-traditional and neo-conservative hegemonic gender climates in Turkey and Russia. 'Family' is pushed forward to decrease the burden of social services and replace the social state services.

As my major question, I find out the reasons of transformation in gender climate from the women's equality to neo-traditionalism and neo-conservatism in the need of authoritarian rule for legitimacy. At the core of hegemonic gender climate during Republican and Bolshevik times were modernization and industrialization. Women as citizens and comrades were motivated and mobilized along the Republican and Bolshevik premises and aims. That is why both revolutions had an egalitarian discourse. Despite all deficiencies, both states created and managed social perceptions regarding women as equal members of state and society. However, at the core of neo-traditional and neo-conservative gender climates lay family. Now, women are categorized within family for the survival of state and society. In both cases, the family-oriented and pro-natalist policies implemented with the aims of increasing fertility rate and of ensuring national survival perfectly match with the main theses proposed by Yuval Davis, Gal and Kligman. That is, the state utilizes biological and cultural reproduction to gain legitimacy. Furthermore, the state establishes hegemonic power by deploying gender and constituting a hegemonic gender climate. A renewed focus on family to keep citizens loyal and under control serves both neo-liberal conditions and authoritarian tendencies.

In Russia, demographic crisis that the country has been dealing with since the late 1970s and the re-nation building process after the dissolution of the Soviet Union

make it quite easy to revisit traditional gender order and reframe it, serving to authoritarian tendencies and hegemony constitution. Transition to market economy and the following socio-economic chaos dominated Russia's national self-image. In this context, demographic crisis is regarded as a matter of national security/survival; low fertility rate envisioned an image of nation dying out or facing extinction (Rivkin-Fish, 2003; 2010: 707-709). Dealing with the demographic crisis acquired a cultural and moral dimension. Fostering traditional values and increasing the prestige of traditional family and values gained importance to reverse the crisis (Nechemiasn, 2009: 23).

Here, the way that demographic crisis is understood is crucial to the generation of neo-traditional gender climate. National and cultural meanings assigned to it pave the way to break up with the Soviet commitment and to revisit traditional norms and patterns. First of all, demographic crisis makes it possible to put all the blame on the over-emancipatory Soviet discourse and policies, which were to distort traditional notions and to liberate women from biological and social obligations to society and nation. This was to lead to an increase in divorce rates, loss in maternal instincts and decline in fertility rates (Rivkin-Fish, 2006: 155-157). In this understanding, a connection between low fertility rate and family values is established. Pro-natalist policies that intervene in family matters and label distinct family forms as either beneficial or destructive for national interests are promoted since the late 1990s (Rivkin-Fish, 2003: 290).

In this process, the Orthodox Church becomes a major ally of President Putin's government. Its impact on gender relations is the generation of a new focus on Orthodox values in public life, glorifying traditional family and traditional notions of femininity and masculinity.⁷⁹ In one of his speeches, President Putin mentioned about the involvement of the Orthodox Church in resolving demographic crisis and called it 'to revive family values and change people's attitudes towards the family'. In this setting, interventions in reproduction and/or reproductive health are to serve

⁷⁹ <http://in.reuters.com/article/2013/04/09/russia-religion-feminism-idINDEE9380FX20130409>

the end of reviving tradition and family or vice versa (Nechemias, 2009: 24). According to the Orthodox Church, the moral decline in the society is related to the expansion of unlimited freedom and individual autonomy, ignoring public good and traditional values (Anderson, 2007: 190). The state and the Church have shared concerns about traditional family, demographic crisis, moral decline and homosexuality (Anderson, 2007: 196).⁸⁰

The turn to traditions is justified by the conspiracy theories against the Western countries, which are to utilize family planning measures ‘as tactical weapons’ to weaken Russia and wipe out the Russian nation. It revolves around the authenticity of the Russian culture and the otherization of the Western culture. As Rivkin-Fish (2006) states, the Westerners are fictionalized as living in selfish, egoist, promiscuous way and they do not have any time or interest in having children and family. On the other hand, the Russian people love family and children. The link between traditional gender identities and relations and the Russian national identity and culture is also inherent to this discourse. The authenticity of Russian thinking and culture (Russianness) is established by traditional norms and patterns regarding gender (p.166).

In Turkey, the critique of Republican modernization and the spread of conservatism alongside with the rise of Islamist political parties gradually prepared the conditions towards a neo-conservative turn. The rise of political Islam as a counter ideology to Republican modernity revolves around the debate on non-Western modernization and proposes a traditional and conservative life style (Göle, 1997: 54). Islamists argue that the Westernizing reforms that emancipated women caused women’s exploitation and moral degeneration in the society. In the alternative life style they proposed, women would be obedient wives and good mothers and work in case of need (see Acar, 1995; 1991).

Neo-conservative social order, emerging in the mid-2000s, comes to be based on traditional family and modesty and chastity of ‘women’ for the sake of societal

⁸⁰ For the definition of traditional Russian family on the state side, please visit <http://rt.com/politics/russia-family-code-traditions-764/>

morality. To this end, women are portrayed within the ‘nest of family’. From the very beginning, family and motherhood are defined as corner stone of Prime Minister Erdoğan’s conservative rule. Turkish society is to be a morally upright one, depending on Islam as the main if not the only source. He assumes national values to be in accordance with religion and tradition and to be shared by all. Traditional family is reconstituted in a cultural and moral approach based on the holiness of Turkish family tradition (see Coşar & Yeğenoğlu, 2012: 199-200). Prime Minister Erdoğan establishes an organic tie between family and society; defines political activity in terms of the ‘revelation of national will’ and a ‘consensual platform that excludes conflict’ (Coşar & Özman, 2004: 64). Political identity he aims to constitute is indexed to family, which is to protect individuals against external threats (Yazıcı, 2012: 112-113). He excludes pluralism from the content of political identity and activity, and justifies this tendency by imagining society as a big family without any conflict, inequality, difference, etc. This explains and justifies Prime Minister Erdoğan’s authoritarian tendencies, especially in the policies concerning women and family.

The renewed focus on family also eases to indicate the authenticity of Turkish society and culture versus the West. Depicted as consisting selfish, egoist and anti-family individuals, the West is imagined in moral and demographic decline and as lacking the benefits of strong family ties. In Prime Minister Erdoğan’s understanding, strong family ties are what making us ‘us’; strong family is required for being a strong society. Traditional family at least with three children is to contribute to economic development and demographic trends (Yazıcı, 2012: 108-117). This assumption also denies the import/imposition of Western culture and signifies an authentic way of modernity for Turkey. As declared by Prime Minister Erdoğan himself, ‘we’ have to combine our national values and the Western science.⁸¹

Charisma is also determinative in reconstituting hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity in Connell’s terms or ‘traditional’ in Sperling’s terms (2012:

⁸¹ <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/8092765.asp?m=1;>
<http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2008/01/25/haber,8B601321AE6D4C2287A5CBC5E777E323.html>

4). For Connell (1987), the victory of hegemonic masculinity requires the creation of cultural ideal of masculinity, which does not albeit confirm the majority of men (p.185). In a similar line, in analyzing Putin's authoritarianism, Johnson (2013) makes a crucial assessment that performance of masculinity by political leaders provides a symbolic cover and makes authoritarian discourse and practices acceptable by public mass (p.3). President Putin and Prime Minister Erdoğan install their political charisma through masculinity, drawing a picture of a powerful, invincible and macho man, having a fit body and masculine body language, and being dynamic and energetic all time. Masculinity embodied in the personalities of President Putin and Prime Minister Erdoğan becomes a powerful vehicle to normatively emasculate the state and to envision it as an ultimate protector of the whole nation, thereby legitimizing anti-democratic practices or at least making them acceptable for the majority. Coupled with being tough, stubborn and ill humor, their masculine appearances might give the people a feeling of national power and pride. The reasons of strong female support for both leaders should be sought here despite the reinforcement of a traditional regime and/or submissive femininity, which will function at the expense of gender equality.⁸²

So, my insights on neo-traditional gender climate in Russia and neo-conservative gender climate in Turkey are as follows: both states' framing regarding gender and gender relations 1) hardly considers women apart from family and their roles of being mother, 2) assumes an organic connection between family and nation, 3) assumes a connection between family, women's traditional roles and moral society, 4) serves state legitimacy, 5) reveals the manipulation and intervention into intimate lives by state policies, 6) distract citizens from recognizing gender inequality and discrimination by touching upon traditional family in reference to religion, tradition and national/common values.

In neo-traditional and neo-conservative gender climates, the notions of femininity and masculinity have been redefined on the grounds of biological differences between sexes. The new definitions signify the appropriate roles and identities of

⁸² <http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/europe/07/19/russia.putin.support.video/>;
<http://www.adrants.com/2011/07/russian-women-disrobe-in-support-of.php>

women and at the same time the natural division of labor between sexes at home, at work and anywhere. Social perceptions are managed along these lines. Almost all incentives touching upon women's problems in labor market, family, domestic violence, childcare, reproduction, abortion, political participation, etc. are formulated around a family oriented approach. The main motive is protecting family and society and empowering women within family rather than empowering them as individuals.

Both Russian and Turkish states attempt to reformulate reproduction and sexuality on the grounds of traditional family structure. Both states find it quite legitimate to get involved in reproductive issues, define problems, suggest solutions, restrict options and manipulate reproductive behavior. They put themselves as the protector of women; they generate a protectionist approach on gender equality, preventing necessary steps for full gender equality. The incentives do not shatter gendered norms and patterns, rather reinforce them.

In Russia, demographic and moral crisis makes the Russian state intervene in reproductive rights but at the same time manage the crisis in a neo-traditional way. Family and motherhood is reformulated at the intersection of pro-natalism, neo-traditionalism and neo-liberalism. Dealing with demographic crisis in a neo-traditional way might prove to be more suitable, cheaper and easier for the state interests than challenging widespread traditional norms and patterns. Pro-natalist policies including maternity capital, long maternity leave and raised childcare benefits are assumed to encourage women to have more children and to help them combine work and family duties.

In Turkey, pro-natalist discourse and policies are quite new and contrary to the population planning that was followed for long years in the country. Although there is not a considerable decline in fertility rate per person, the state aims to preserve the continuity of young population for future decades. A young population is regarded as crucial to national power of the country and advantage compared to the Western countries which are facing with an aging population.

In both countries, the restrictions on abortion signify the surveillance and intervention of state on women's bodily autonomy. Restrictions on abortion combined with practical obstacles including humiliation, emotional pressure, lack of anesthesia, lack of contraceptive devices, denial of procedure by physicians, etc. These are instruments of the state to impose disciplinary power over reproductive decisions and women's bodily autonomy to reach higher rate of fertility. As the state's desire to increase fertility are envisioned around nationalist [extinction of nation] and combined with moral [sin] and criminal [murder] elements, women who want to apply for abortion might be condemned and categorized as sinful, murderer and unpatriotic. Indeed, both in Turkish and Russian social and printed media, I read with stories about the rejection of practice, humiliation and brainstorming that women encounter by medical staff.

On the basis of my interviews, I can define the most acute problem in both countries as domestic violence. In Russia, domestic violence is not regarded as a violation of women's human rights rather accepted and justified as a private matter and as being a part of traditional Russian family.⁸³ On the side of the state, there is resistance to issue a law on domestic violence. The leverage by the international bodies to issue such a law is regarded as an imposition of the Western powers to destroy the traditional Russian culture. In Turkey, there is a law on domestic violence almost for two decades. A marked improvement is taken in the recent years. However, the main motive is to protect the family union rather than women's human rights including women's bodily autonomy. The state tries to prevent divorce due to domestic violence and to keep and protect women within family.

Pro-natalist discourse and policies clearly reflect on female labor force participation in both countries. Female labor force participation is already high in Russia; so, it is possible to talk about feminization of labor force in Russia. However, it is more appropriate to identify its composition as gender-segregated labor force. Women concentrate in feminized sectors, generally low-paid and low-prestigious jobs. They encounter serious discrimination due to their reproductive role and its social

⁸³ <http://themoscownews.com/russia/20130121/191161252/Till-death-do-them-part.html>

attributions. Maternalist policies reinforce their disadvantageous position in labor market; extended rights and benefits make women inefficient and expensive labor force compared to men. This increases the existing inequality and discrimination against women in terms of acceptance, promotion, training, etc. There is a shortage in the number of capacity of public kindergartens. Private kindergartens are hardly affordable. The common perception is the care work is a female duty and issue. They become the first to go in case of shrinking of labor force as being ‘secondary earner’.

In Turkey, female labor force participation is considerably weak and low. Lack of feminization in labor force identifies the situation in Turkey. Even working women predominantly concentrate in informal sector, in low prestigious jobs, on low wages and poor working conditions and without social security coverage. However, an increase in women’s participation in labor force is necessarily expected; as the state requires cheap and flexible labor force. In that regard, the state takes some pro-employment initiatives including training, paying premiums, micro-credits, flexible and part-time employment opportunities but public care is not regarded as an option to promote women’s labor force participation. However, these initiatives are proposed to enable women to participate in labor market but at the same time do not lead to any loss in their duties and responsibilities for family, children and home. This discourse will not empower women as individuals but rather restrict them within family and traditional roles.

Both states utilize the financial and material incentives to make family and motherhood more prestigious and improve the life conditions of family. With a sole focus on family and motherhood, both states also affirm the assumption that women are in need of protection by the state. This assumption might be related to assume women as a disadvantaged group, as both emotionally and physically weak, as vulnerable to violence, rape, harassment, etc., which does not seem to constitute more egalitarian gender relations in either Turkey and Russia at least in the near future.

In both countries, promoting care work by family and women serves to the state's interests in three ways. First, family replaces the social state and performs the social services including public care in a freeway. This serves to neo-liberal premises. Second, both states utilize the uniqueness of Turkish and Russian culture from the West and strengthen nationalist sentiments by pushing up family. Third, family is assumed to be the basic social institution to keep individuals loyal and under control in accordance with the interests of society and state. Accordingly, both states establish and consolidate hegemonic power by instrumentalizing gender relations.

In neo-traditional and neo-conservative gender climate, femininity is primarily defined and promoted on the grounds of motherhood and family. Women are conceptualized as having no different interests from their family roles and duties. Gendered composition of labor force naturalizes social perceptions regarding the feminine character of domestic work and care work. Parenthood is still perceived as motherhood; fathers are not forced to assume responsibility for childcare and domestic work. Both states reinforce feminized vision of care giving. Neither of the states proposes a more equitable division of labor in the home. The balance between work (production) and family (reproduction) is considered as an exclusively woman's issue. With the above-mentioned incentives, some of practical needs and problems of women are resolved for present; the state and the political power gains legitimacy as being friend to and/or protector of women. But traditional roles and identities are entrenched, ensuring the hegemony of neo-traditional and neo-conservative gender climate.

This polarizes social perceptions about gender relations and strictly divides social life into feminine and masculine spheres. Politics is framed as a masculine sphere in both countries while civil society is regarded as feminine. Women are nominated on low places on party lists and not assigned for leadership positions. Although being members of political parties, women rarely obtain political office. Main reason behind this framing is that politics is not appropriate for women who are involved in domestic duties. Women are assumed to be physically and emotionally weak and unwilling to deal with dirty relations, harsh competition, long working hours, etc.

Additionally, their involvement in politics leads them to neglect their family and children.

In both countries, the state enforces women to match their way of life and life aspirations with its own concerns and finds it legitimate to intervene in intimate sphere. Both states justify this for societal interests and national survival. In doing so, the state instrumentalizes traditional notions of femininity and masculinity and gender relations. In neo-traditional and neo-conservative gender climate, political discourse on gender is based on natural differences between sexes. In discourse, both states give reference to religious dogma and nationalist sentiments in constituting a neo-traditional and neo-conservative gender climate. Their discourses are supported with the financial and legal incentives and disciplinary policies. In this setting, gender inequality and discrimination is naturalized in public and private spheres, and the existence of power struggle between men and women is denied. All these enable the state to obscure the reinforcement of gender inequalities and discrimination and gain consent for their authoritarian rule.

To sum up, I shall emphasize that gender discourse is very influential and penetrating in modifying the prevailing perceptions regarding gender identities and relations. When the existing deficiencies couple with traditionally oriented political messages, legal advances do not settle in the state and society. All advances get trivialized, dysfunctional and meaningless as political messages claim the reverse. Both Turkish and Russian societies have been patriarchal for long ages. So, neo-conservative and neo-traditional gender discourse is easily absorbed and function more efficiently than legal reforms.

Neo-conservative and neo-traditional orientation of gender climate unleashes the traditional norms and patterns in the society and trivializes the validity of legal amendments in the social mindset. This orientation shows that the state's discourse is quite important to reshape gender climate in Turkey and Russia, which oscillated between modernization and tradition. In this situation, the state could either suspend or unleash traditional forces. So, political language that the political leaders employ

is very important to deflect gender climate into either a neo-conservative/neo-traditional orientation or an egalitarian way.



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APPENDIX A

Interview List in Moscow and St.Petersburg

Center for Supporting Women's Initiatives, Moscow

Consortium of Women's Non-governmental Associations, Moscow

Council for the Consolidation of Women's Movement, Moscow

European University at St.Petersburg

Higher School of Economics National Research University, Moscow

Moscow Center for Gender Studies, Moscow

National Center for the Prevention of Violence (ANNA), Moscow

Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow

St. Petersburg Public Organization Juridical Aid for Socially Unprotected People (EDIGA), St. Petersburg

Union of Russian Women, Moscow

UN Refugee Agency, Moscow

UN Women Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Moscow

Women's Crisis Center, St.Petersburg

APPENDIX B

Interview List in Ankara and İstanbul

Ankara University, Ankara

Capital Women's Platform, Ankara

Foundation for Women's Solidarity in Ankara

General Directorate of Women's Status, Ankara

Hacettepe University, Ankara

İstanbul University, İstanbul

Middle East Technical University, Ankara

Turkish Women's Union in Ankara

The Association for the Support and Training of Women Candidates in Ankara

United Nations Population Fund, Ankara

Yıldız Technical University, İstanbul

APPENDIX C

Interview Questionnaire

1. How do you identify the main characteristics of gender politics in Turkey/Russia?
2. What are the main differences between pre-1980 period and post-1980 period regarding the Turkish/Russian state's approach to gender question?
3. What are the main discourses about gender in Turkey/Russia?
4. What are the main priorities of the Turkish/Russian state regarding women?
5. How do you identify the main characteristics of masculinity and femininity?
6. How do you evaluate the approach of the Turkish/Russian state to family and motherhood?
7. What is the situation of women in labor force in Turkey/Russia?
8. What is the situation of women in politics in Turkey/Russia?
9. What do you think about the women's movement in Turkey/Russia?
10. How do you evaluate the legal amendments or decrees issued in the last years?

TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü	☐
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü	☒
Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü	☐
Enformatik Enstitüsü	☐
Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü	☐

YAZARIN

Soyadı: Doğançün
Adı : Gökten
Bölümü: Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) : From Early Modernization to Authoritarian Politics:
Gender Climate in Turkey and Russia

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans ☐ Doktora ☒

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

TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ:

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Erasmus Mundus ECW 02/2009 – 8/2009. St.Petersburg State University, St.Petersburg, Russia.

Erasmus Exchange 9/2007 – 12/2007. Institute for Social and European Studies Foundation, Közseg, Hungary.

M.Sc. 02/2002 – 12/2005. Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey (C.PGA: 3.80/4).

B.S. 09/1996 – 06/2000. Department of Public Administration, Hacettepe University, Ankara, TURKEY (C.PGA: 2.70/4)

High School 09/1993 – 06/1996. Yükseliş College, Ankara, Turkey.

SPECIALISATION AREAS

- Contemporary Turkish Politics
- Gender and Politics (Turkish and Russian cases)
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WORKING EXPERIENCE

7/2007 – Present. Research Assistant, Centre for Black Sea and Central Asian Countries, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey.

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9/2005 - 7/2007. Research Assistant, Office of European Union Affairs, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey.

1/2004 - 6/2004. Researcher in the project entitled "The Impact of Male Recurrent Migration on the Women Left Behind", Scientific Research Project, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey.

10/2003 - 12/2003 Project Assistant in the project entitled "Women in Rural Development in Black Sea Region" , Japan International Cooperation Agency, Ankara, Turkey.

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TURKISH SUMMARY

Türkiye ve Rusya’da son yıllarda belirginleşen toplumsal cinsiyet politikası bu çalışmanın konusunu oluşturmaktadır. Çalışmanın ana sorusu toplumsal cinsiyet politikasının Türkiye’de yeni muhafazakarlığa, Rusya’da ise yeni gelenekselciliğe doğru olan dönüşümünün neden ve nasıl olduğudur. Hem Türkiye’de hem Rusya’da uzun yıllara dayanan kadın hakları tarihi ve/veya ‘devlet feminizmi’ vardır. Her iki ülkede 20.yy başlarında yaşanan radikal devrimler, Cumhuriyet ve Bolşevik devrimleri, kadınların eşitliği ilkesi benimsemiş ve kadınların özgürleşimini hedeflemiştir. Kadınların Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Çarlık Rusya dönemlerinde maruz kaldıkları yasal ve sosyal eşitsizlikler hedef alınmış ve bunları ortadan kaldırılması için ciddi adımlar atılmıştır. Her iki ülkenin Medeni Kanunu, Ceza Kanunu, İş Kanunu ve Anayasasında kadın erkek eşitliğini içeren hükümler yer almaktadır.

Yapılan yasal düzenlemelerle, kadınların evlilik, eğitim, iş hayatı ve siyasal hayatta erkekler ile eşit olmaları sağlanmıştır. Kadınların kamusal alandaki görünürlükleri artmıştır. Eğitimde, iş hayatında ve siyasal hayatta kadınları geniş çaplı katılımı sağlanmıştır. Türkiye’de siyasal hayata katılmak isteyen kadınların inisiyatifleriyle Türk Kadınlar Birliği kurulmuş. Sovyet Rusya’da ise Sovyetler Birliği Komünist Partisinin bünyesinde, kadınların siyasal hayata katılımı teşvik amacıyla *Zhenotdel* kurulmuştur. 1930’ların başında hem Türkiye’de hem de Sovyet Rusya’da kadın erkek eşitliğinin tesis edildiği ve kadın sorununun çözüldüğü ilan edilmiştir. Türk Kadınlar Birliği ve *Zhenotdel* kapatılmıştır. Bu tarihten itibaren, kadın erkek eşitliğini güçlendirmeye yönelik çok ciddi adımlar atılmasa da, uzun yıllar boyunca Türkiye ve Sovyet Rusya’da devlet kadın erkek eşitliği ilkesine resmi olarak bağlı kalmıştır.

Türkiye ve Sovyet Rusya’da Cumhuriyet ve Bolşevik devrimlerinin benimsemiş olduğu kadın erkek eşitliği ilkesi ilk defa 1980 sonrası dönemde eleştirilmeye başlanmıştır. Türkiye’de 1980 yılında gerçekleşen askeri darbe sonrası dönemde bütün siyasi partiler ve faaliyetler yasaklanmıştır. 1983 yılından itibaren

sivil siyasete geçilmesi ile birlikte, yasaklar görelî olarak kalkmaya başlamış ve bu ortamda çevre hareketi ve kadın hareketi gibi, toplumsal düzene bir tehdit oluşturmayacağı düşünülen toplumsal hareketlere alan sağlanmıştır. Bu dönem ve ortamda ortaya çıkan feminist kadın hareketi Cumhuriyet devriminin kazanımlarının sadece yasal zeminde kaldığı, kamusal alan ile sınırlı olduğu ve ülkenin bütün bölgelerinde eşit olarak yerleşmediği eleştirisini getirmişlerdir. Sovyet Rusya’da ise resmi söylem 1970’lerin sonlarından itibaren, demografik krizin ortaya çıkması ile birlikte, devlet nezdinde sorgulanmaya başlamıştır. Kadınların zorunlu olarak istihdama katılmalarının nüfus artışına olumsuz etkisi olduğu dile getirilmiştir. 1991’de Sovyetler Birliği’nin dağılmasından sonra kadınların istihdama zorunlu katılımı esas alan bu söylem terk edilmiştir.

Türkiye ve Rusya’daki toplumsal cinsiyet politikaların arasındaki benzerlik her iki deneyimlenen kadın hakları tarihine ve/veya devlet feminizmi dayanmaktadır. Cumhuriyet ve Bolşevik devrimlerinin modernleşme hedeflerinin tam bir kopuştan ziyade devamlılık içinde bir kopuş içinde gerçekleşmiş ve bu devrimlerle kurulan yeni toplumsal düzen modernite ve gelenek sarkacında kalmıştır. Bunun en belirgin gözlendiği alan toplumsal cinsiyet politikalarıdır. Yasal kazanımlara ve sosyal hayattaki radikal dönüşüme rağmen, Cumhuriyet ve Bolşevik rejimleri kadın erkek ilişkilerine dair ataerkil norm ve kalıpları muhafaza etmeye de devam etmiştir. Bu tezde benimsenen teorik kavramlarla ifade edilecek olursa, hem Türkiye’de hem de Sovyet Rusya’da devrim öncesinden miras alınan ataerkil toplumsal cinsiyet düzeni, Cumhuriyet ve Bolşevik devrimlerinin modernleşme hedefleri doğrultusunda yeniden şekillen(diril)miş ve ortaya kadın erkek eşitliği ilkesine dayalı, kadınların eğitim ve istihdamına odaklanan, eşitlikçi bir toplumsal cinsiyet iklimi çıkmıştır. Eşitlikçi toplumsal cinsiyet ikliminin oluşumunda her iki devletin de modernleşme hedeflerinin olması ve hegemonyalarını modernleşme üzerinden kurmalarının etkisi büyüktür. Bu sebeptir ki, her iki rejim de, her ne kadar ataerkil özellikler barındırsalar da, kadın erkek eşitliğine dayalı bir resmi söylem benimsemişlerdir.

Türkiye ve Rusya’da genel olarak 1980 ve 1990 sonrasında, özel olarak ise son yıllarda toplumsal cinsiyet ikliminde yaşanan dönüşüm de aynı teorik kavramlar ve argümanlar çerçevesinde açıklanmaktadır. Ataerkil toplumsal düzene sahip toplumlarda devletin resmi söyleminin oldukça belirleyici olduğu argümanından yola çıkılarak, son yıllarda Türkiye’de ve post-Sovyet Rusya’da devletin resmi söyleminin sorgulanması ve terk edilmesi ile beraber eşitlikçi söylem de terk edilmiştir. Cumhuriyet ve Bolşevik rejimlerinde ortaya çıkan eşitlikçi toplumsal cinsiyet ikliminin, süregelen ataerkil toplumsal cinsiyet düzeni üzerinde dönüştürücü bir etkisi olsa da, ataerkil norm ve kalıplar hala çok güçlüdür. Devletin resmi söyleminin terk edilmesi durumunda ve hatta kadın erkek arasındaki biyolojik farklılıkların devlet tarafından vurgulanması sonucunda, süregelen ataerkil düzen yeniden yeryüzüne çıkmaktadır. Bunun sonucunda da, Türkiye’de yeni muhafazakarlık, post-Sovyet Rusya’da ise yeni gelenesclilik olarak tanımlanan yeni toplumsal cinsiyet iklimleri ortaya çıkmaktadır.

Bu dönüşümü 1980 sonrasında tüm dünyada yaygınlaşan neo-liberal politikaları göz önünde bulundurmadan açıklamak imkansızdır. Devletin finansal yükünü hafifletmek sosyal politikalarda azalmayı öngörmektedir. Bu çerçevede, aile ve muhafazakarlık ön plana çıkarılmaktadır. Geleneksel aile ilişkilerinin yeniden kurgulandığı ve sunulduğu bir sosyal düzende erkekler eve ekmek getiren kişi olarak tanımlanmakta, kadınlar ise esas olarak ailenin bakımından ve mutluluğundan sorumlu tutulmaktadır. Bu sayede, kadınları güvencesiz, esnek ve ucuz işgücü olarak iş piyasasına katılmaları sağlanmakta ve yaşlı, engelli ve çocuk bakımı gibi devlet tarafından ücretsiz sağlanması gereken sosyal hizmetlerin aile ve kadınların sorumluluğuna bırakılmaktadır.

Bu dönüşümü açıklarken, hem Türkiye’de hem de post-Sovyet Rusya’da dinin yeniden yükselişi de göz önünde bulundurulmalıdır. Türkiye’de siyasal İslam 1990’lardan beri hızla yükselmiştir; İslamcı siyasal partiler iktidara gelmiş ve hatta son 12 yıldır muhafazakar bir parti olan Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi ülkeyi yönetmektedir. Rusya’sa ise Sovyetler Birliği’nin dağılmasından sonra Ortodoksluk yükselişe geçmiştir. Ancak Ortodoks Kilisesinin hükümetle ilişkilerinin

güçlenmesi Başkan Vladimir Putin'in iktidarı dönemine rastlamaktadır. Her ülkede de mevcut liderler döneminde dine (İslam ve Ortodoksluk) toplumsal birlik ve bütünlüğü sağlama işlevi yüklenmiştir. İslam ve Ortodoksluk toplumun bütün üyeleri tarafından benimsenmesi beklenen milli ve/veya ortak değer ve yargıların referans kaynağı olarak tanımlanmıştır.

Son olarak, bu tezin esas sonucunu da oluşturan, Başbakan Recep Tayyip Erdoğan ve Başkan Vladimir Putin'in, özellikle son yıllarda sergiledikleri otoriteryan eğilimler toplumsal cinsiyet ikliminin yeni muhafazakar ve yeni gelenekselci bir çizgide ilerlemesini sağlamıştır. Otoriteryan eğilimler neo-liberal politikalar ve dinin siyasallaşması ile birleşince, bunun toplumsal cinsiyet üzerindeki etkisi iç açıcı olmamaktadır. Süregelen ataerkil toplumsal cinsiyet düzeni bu koşullar etrafında yeniden şekillen(diril)miştir. Yeni muhafazakar ve yeni gelenekselci toplumsal cinsiyet ikliminin temelini kadın erkek eşitliği değil, kadın erkek arasındaki biyolojik farklar oluşturmaktadır. Nasıl ki Cumhuriyet ve Bolşevik devrimleri toplumsal cinsiyet iklimlerini modernleşme ve kadın erkek eşitliği üzerinden kurmuşlar ve bu sayede hegemonya tesis etmişlerse, Başbakan Erdoğan ve Başkan Putin'in iktidarı döneminde de otoriteryan politika sosyal hayatın her alanına nüfuz etmekte ve aile, din ve milli/ortak değerler vurgusu ile meşrulaştırılmaktadır. Bunun toplumsal cinsiyet rejimine yanısıması ise toplumsal cinsiyet iklimlerinin yeni muhafazakarlık ve yeni gelenekselcilik etrafında oluşmasıdır.

Hegemonya tesis etmek için siyasi iktidarlar insanların rıza göstermesine ihtiyaç duyarlar. Toplumsal cinsiyet ilişkileri yeni hegemonya kurma sürecine içseldir. Bu amaçla, siyasi iktidarlar hegemonya tesis etmek için toplumsal cinsiyet ilişkilerinden faydalanır. Toplumsal cinsiyet ve toplumsal cinsiyet ilişkileri dinle, geleneklerle, milli/ortak değerlerle, vb. ilişkilendirilir. Başbakan Erdoğan ve Devlet Başkanı Putin'in özellikle son yıllarda sergiledikleri otoriter eğilimler toplumsal cinsiyet ilişkilerinin geleneksel şekilde yeniden canlanmasını beraberinde getirmiştir. Bir başka deyişle, süregelen ataerkil toplumlarda ortaya çıkan otoriter eğilimler, yeni muhafazakarlığın ve yeni gelenekselciliğin yeniden inşa edilmesine yol açmaktadırlar ki, bu sayede siyasi iktidarlar meşruiyetlerini tesisi etmekte ve

güçlendirmektedirler. Türkiye ve Rusya’da siyasal liderler, süregelen toplumsal cinsiyet düzeninde güçlü bir meşruiyet kaynağı buldukları için toplumsal cinsiyet ilişkilerini milli/ortak kimlik, milli/ortak değerler, din ve gelenekler çevresinde yeniden şekillendirmektedirler. Bunun sonucunda, ise Türkiye’de yeni muhafazakar ve Rusya’da ise yeni gelenekselci toplumsal cinsiyet iklimi ortaya çıkmaktadır.

Yeni muhafazakar ve yeni gelenekselci toplumsal cinsiyet iklimlerini en belirgin özelliği otoriter eğilimler sergileyen devletin insanların hayat tarzlarına ve mahremiyetlerine müdahalesidir. Daha da önemlisi, bu müdahale toplumsal menfaatler ve toplumun bütün kesimleri tarafından paylaşıldığı varsayılan ortak değerler üzerinden meşrulaştırılmaktadır. Bu, son on yılda her iki ülkede de geleneksel kadınlık ve erkeklik nosyonları etrafında yeni bir toplumsal cinsiyet ikliminin üretilmesinin önünü açmaktadır. Yeni muhafazakar ve yeni gelenekselci toplumsal cinsiyet iklimi, normatif olarak geleneksel aile, kadınlık ve erkeklik anlayışına dayanmaktadır. Her iki devlet de, biyolojik farklılıkları doğallaştıran ve olumlayan, ve milletin/toplumun biyolojik ve kültürel devamlılığını kadınların omuzlarına yükleyen dini dogmalara (Ortodoksluk ve İslam) başvurmaktadır.

Bu tez 7 bölümden oluşmaktadır. 1. Bölüm tezin amaçları, araştırma sorusu, argümanı ve yöntemi konusunda okuyucuya bilgi veren giriş bölümünden oluşmaktadır. Ayrıca, tezde benimsenen teorik çerçeve ve kavramlar da bu bölümde tanıtılmıştır. 2. Bölümde, erken Cumhuriyet ve Bolşevik dönemlerinde kadın sorununa ilişkin tarihsel arka plan verilmiştir. Kadın erkek eşitliğinin nasıl ele alındığını ve kadınların özgürleşmesinin nasıl başarıldığını kullandığım teorik kavramlar, toplumsal cinsiyet düzeni ve toplumsal cinsiyet iklimi, üzerinden tartışılmıştır. Bu bölümdeki ana argüman, devlet nezdinde kadın eşitliğine dair güçlü ve samimi bir bağlılık olsa da, devlet söyleminde ve politikalarında süregelen ataerkil toplumsal cinsiyet düzeninin oldukça muhafaza edildiği ve Cumhuriyet ve Bolşevik devrimleri ile ortaya çıkan toplumsal cinsiyet ikliminin modernite ve gelenek arasında kalmış olduğudur.

3. ve 4. Bölümlerde Türkiye'deki ve Rusya'daki toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliğini rejimini literatür taraması üzerinden incelenmiştir. Bu bölüm Sovyet Rusya'da 1970'lerin sonundan ve Türkiye'de ise 1980'lerden itibaren günümüze kadar olan süreyi kapsamaktadır. Fakat özel olarak Başbakan Recep Tayyip Erdoğan'ın ve Başkan Vladimir Putin'in iktidara geldiği dönem olan son 10 yıla odaklanılmıştır. Bu iki bölümdeki asıl amaç, toplumsal cinsiyet ikliminin yeni muhafazakarlık ve yeni gelenekselciliğe doğru nasıl değiştiğini irdelemektir. Bu amaçla, iş gücünde, ailede ve siyasette kadınların haklarına, sorunlarına ve durumuna ilişkin devlet söylemine ve politikalarına odaklanılmıştır. Biyolojik farklılıkların hem devlet söylemine ve politikalarına ve geleneksel norm ve kalıpların toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği ile ilgili konulara yansıdığı görülmüştür. Yasal düzenlemeler anlatılmış ve bu düzenlemelerin eksiklikleri dile getirilmiştir.

5. ve 6. bölümlerde Türkiye ve Rusya'da yapılan derinlemesine uzman mülakatlarından elde edilen veriler incelenmiştir. Bu veriler ışığında yapılan kavramsallaştırmalar 3 ana başlık altında toplanmıştır. Bu başlıklar şöyledir: resmi söylemin eleştirilmesi ve resmi söylemden kopuş, istihdamda kadın iş gücü, ve aile, annelik, üreme ve çocuk bakımında kadınladın durumudur. Bu başlıklar altında tezin ana argümanı ve soruları tartışılmıştır. Birinci başlıkta resmi söylemin eleştirilmesinin ve resmi söylemden kopuşun getirdiği değişim üzerinde durulmuştur. İkinci ve üçüncü başlıklar ise karşılıklı olarak toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliğini teşvik eden veya engelleyen alanları kapsamaktadır. Türkiye ve Rusya'da kadınların iş piyasası ve aile içinde karşı karşıya kaldıkları eşitsizlik ve ayrımcılık tartışılmıştır. Her iki devletin özel alana ve mahremiyete müdahalelerinin milli/toplumsal çıkarlar etrafında şekillenmesine vurgu yapılmıştır.

Son bölüm, Türkiye ve Rusya örneklerinin karşılaştırmasını ve sonuç değerlendirmelerini kapsamaktadır. Türkiye ve Rusya'da Başbakan Erdoğan ve Başkan Putin'in iktidarlara döneminde otoriter eğilimlerin ortaya çıkışı anlatılmıştır. Otoriter eğilimler, neo-liberal koşullar ve İslam'ın ve Ortodoksluğun yükselmesi ile de birleşince, toplumsal cinsiyet ikliminin yeni muhafazakarlık ve yeni gelenekselciliğe doğru dönüşmesini sağlamıştır.

Bu tez birincil ve ikincil kaynaklar kullanılarak hazırlanmıştır. Birincil kaynaklar derinlemesine mülakatlar, yasal dokümanlar, demeçler, resmi internet siteleri, Birleşmiş Milletler ve Birleşmiş Milletlerin ilgili organları tarafından hazırlanan raporlar, Türkiye’de ve Rusya’da toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliğini destekleyen ve kadına karşı ayrımcılığı engellemeyi hedefleyen uluslararası ve ulusal sivil toplum örgütlerinin hazırladığı raporlar, elektronik medya materyalleri ve istatistiksel verilerden oluşmaktadır. İkincil kaynaklar ise Türkiye ve Rusya’da kadın hakları tarihine ve mevcut duruma dair literatürden oluşmaktadır.

Tezin saha araştırması hem Türkiye’de hem de Rusya’da gerçekleştirilmiştir. Türkiye’deki derinlemesine uzman mülakatları kadın hareketi içinde bulunmuş ve bulunan ve çalışma alanları Türkiye’de ve Rusya’da toplumsal cinsiyet olan akademisyenler, kadın sivil toplum örgütlerinde çalışan uzman ve feminist aktivistler, Birleşmiş Milletler, Aile ve Sosyal Politikalar Bakanlığı ve Kadın Statüsü Genel Müdürlüğü’nde çalışan uzmanlar ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Mülakatlarda yöneltilen sorular ile Türkiye ve Rusya’da toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliğine ve ayrımcılığına dair devlet söyleminin ve politikalarına dair doğrudan ve kapsamlı değerlendirmeler edinmek hedeflenmiştir. Öncelikle olarak her iki ülkede de kadın hakları tarihi serüvenine ve son yıllarda devletin söyleminde bir kopuş olup olmadığını anlamaya dair sorular yöneltilmiştir. Takip eden sorularda ise Türkiye ve Rusya’da mevcut yasal çerçeveye, kadınların iş piyasası, aile ve siyasal hayattaki durumlarına ve problemlerine, ve devlet ile feminizm arasındaki ilişkiye odaklanılmıştır.