

**‘SELF’ PERCEPTION AND SELF DEFINITION OF WOMEN WORKING IN  
PRIVATE SECTOR IN MANAGERIAL POSITIONS**

by

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PRIVATE SECTOR IN MANAGERIAL POSITIONS**

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## ABSTRACT

### 'SELF' PERCEPTION AND SELF DEFINITION OF WOMEN WORKING IN PRIVATE SECTOR IN MANAGERIAL POSITIONS

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Satisfaction

Towards the end of 20th century and at the beginning of the 21st century, with the entrance of women to the working life more, the direction of the discussion changed from the entrance of the women to working life to one examining their long term presence. Today, in 21st century the agenda consists of the kind of positions women occupy, the kinds of promotions they receive and how they obtain those kinds of positions, which is also triggered by the increase in the number of women in managerial positions. With the occupation of managerial positions by women, women and their success in business life has become more prominent; furthermore, the notion of the importance of work in the life of a woman has also changed. In other words, there was a mutual interaction between work and managerial women and while women affect the dynamics of the workforce, work and working life affect women themselves. My aim in this research is to explore the self-perception and self-identity of these women working in managerial positions as they experience different positions and work environment. In order to understand the self-perception of these women I address the ways in which the work or their job has a role in identity construction of these women, what kind of role it has in subject formation. In this thesis, the mechanisms through which these women managers are represented outside and to what extent the representations of these women are approved by their narration of their own stories are explored.

## ÖZET

ÖZEL SEKTÖRDE YÖNETİCİ POZİSYONLARINDA ÇALIŞAN KADINLARIN

‘KENDİ’ ALGISI VE KENDİNİ TANIMLAMASI

Duygu Deliler

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20. yüzyılın sonuna doğru ve 21. yüzyılın başında, kadınların iş hayatına daha fazla girişiyle birlikte, kadınların iş hayatında uzun süreyle varoluşu daha fazla ön plana çıkmıştır. 21. yüzyılda gündemde kadınların sahip olduğu pozisyonlar, aldıkları terfiler ve bu pozisyonları nasıl elde ettikleri bulunmaktadır ki bu konunun gündeme gelmesinde yönetici pozisyonundaki kadınların sayısının artmasının etkisi vardır. Kadınların daha fazla yönetici pozisyonunda olmasıyla birlikte, kadınlar ve iş hayatındaki başarıları daha fazla önem kazandı ve ayrıca işin kadının hayatındaki önemi değişti. Bir başka deyişle iş ve yönetimdeki kadınlar arasında karşılıklı bir etkileşim bulunmaktadır ve kadınlar işgücünün dinamiklerini etkilerkeni iş ve işhayatı kadınları etkilemektedir. Bu tezin amacı farklı pozisyonlar ve iş çevrelerini tecrübe eden ve yönetim pozisyonlarında çalışan kadınların kendi algısı ve kendi kimliklerini araştırmaktır. Kadınların kendi algısını anlamak için işin ve mesleğin kadınların kimlik inşasındaki ve öznellik formasyonundaki etkileri ele alınmıştır. Bu tezde ne tür mekanizmalarla bu kadınların temsil edildiği ve ne ölçüde bu temsillerin kadınların kendi hikayeleri ile örtüştüğü incelenmiştir.

*Dedicated to my parents*

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## INTRODUCTION

### i. Specifics of Turkey

In this thesis, I will try to contemplate the ‘self’ definition of women between 30-45 working in private sector in managerial positions. The rationale for the choice of these women as participants is that women are able to be managers at those ages apart from a few exceptions. Women who are younger than 30 are generally work in positions between managers and blue-collar positions. Another fact that has impact on that choice is that in Turkey the number of women who have a presence in business life and who have been occupying managerial positions has been increasing recently, which is also proven by current research. According to a latest research, the rate of women working in senior management positions, which is 21% in developed Western countries, has reached to 30% in Turkey. (Sabah Newspaper)<sup>1</sup> This increase suggests that more and more women aspire to managerial positions and a significant proportion of them succeed in acquiring such positions. This situation creates greater incentives for the representation of women managers in media and literature, and these representations in turn become more influential on the women who desire such jobs and those who have already obtained them, shaping their expectations as well as the expectations of their colleagues, families, and the society in general. It is thus crucial to study the self-perception and process of self-definition of these women since they not only currently represent other successful young women in business life but also impact the identity construction of the incoming female generations.

With the increase of feminism in 1980s-90s and the development of Turkey in business life the question of equality between men and women in business life in many positions has come more to foreground. The fact that women have to be provided equal opportunities with

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<sup>1</sup> Grant Thornton'un her yıl düzenlediği Kadın Yöneticiler araştırmasına bakıyoruz. Sonuçlar, bu alanda kendimize haksızlık ettiğimizi söylüyor. Zira üst yönetim kadın oranı Baltık ülkelerinde yüzde 40 iken, G 7 dediğimiz gelişmiş Batı ülkelerinde yüzde 21 düzeyinde. Oysa Türkiye'de bu oran yüzde 30.

men to acquire presence in working life has been a crucial and extensively discussed topic in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, towards the end of 20th century and at the beginning of the 21st century, with the entrance of women to the working life more, the direction of the discussion changed from the entrance of the women to working life to one examining their long term presence. More specifically, while previously the entrance of women to business life was one of the most important topics, today in 21st century the agenda consists of the kind of positions women occupy, the kinds of promotions they receive and how they obtain those kinds of positions. According to many media sources, such as newspapers, magazines and specifically business magazines, in Turkey the number of women who have been working in managerial positions has risen. With the occupation of managerial positions by women, women and their success in business life has become more prominent; furthermore, the notion of the importance of work in the life of a woman has also changed. In other words, there was a mutual interaction between work and managerial women and while women affect the dynamics of the workforce, work and working life was affecting women themselves. Although there are some common shared experiences and effects of work for an average woman worker and a manager, the differences between these two types of women cannot be denied since these women are exposed to different people, environments and also work styles. The relation between work and identity of these women unfolds in different shapes and forms, through the complex dynamics of social empowerment and subjectivity construction.

## **ii. Method**

### **a. The Choice of Women Managers As Subjects**

There are two main reasons why I have chosen women managers. First of all, the choice of managerial positions and a gender based approach offer a study of economic conditions and income, an approach which provides priorities for social and cultural capital. In other words, in the context of Turkey while money and a good income indicate the potential for agency,

poverty implies lack of agency and thus the inability to have access to cultural and social capital. I have chosen research participants who work in managerial positions since they have income provided by their work, meaning that they have means for agency and identity construction through their income and affluence. However, economic capital, which is a significant component of identity construction, is not the only way in which one is provided with agency and decision-making authority. Therefore, by taking women working in managerial positions as a research group, I have sought to research to what extent their economic capital contribute to their subjectivity construction, , whether all the means that provide them agency are related to their economic capital or whether other factors related to their work influence their identity and subjectivity construction. Secondly, subjectivity construction of women or the absence of free subjectivity construction in the patriarchal society of Turkey has been criticized and underlined several times. Women are claimed not to have preference and independence of their own subjectivity. By choosing women managers I want to see, test, and examine if the previously held notion above is eliminated with the entrance of women to the field of work or if work/job has an effect on subjectivity construction in relation to gender role.

#### **b. Aim of the Thesis**

My aim in this research is to explore the self-perception and self-identity of these women working in managerial positions as they experience different positions and work environment. In order to understand the self-perception of these women I address the ways in which the work or their job has a role in identity construction of these women, what kind of role it has in subject formation, to what extent the newly created identities are/can be maintained, whether the changes in identities are short term, whether the newly created identities are repressed or later emerge in different forms. I try to explore the mechanisms through which these women managers are represented outside and try to understand to what

extent the representations of these women are approved by their narration of their own stories.

The reason why Turkey is the place of my inquiry is that it is more or less patriarchal context experiencing economic growth in some sectors, and attempting to enter a globalized market from a local one, in a period of transition which makes Turkish business environment interesting to research due to complex dynamics of social and economic empowerment. In addition, I chose İstanbul as the space of my research because compared to other cities of Turkey, İstanbul is one of the cities where not only the number of working women but also the number of manager women are higher. Moreover, it must be noted that many woman managers who come to the foreground in the newspapers, in the magazines or in the media are all working in İstanbul, which means that this city has more sources for research. Furthermore, İstanbul has many opportunities for women in terms of job and work because there are many international companies besides the local ones for employment.

### **c. The Structure Of The Research**

My research is constituted in two parts. In the first part of my research I wanted to do a media analysis about the women who are between 30-45 years old working in managerial positions and who came to prominence in the media for different reasons. Through this attempt of a media analysis, I tried to comprehend the representation of a woman manager and how they are pictured in the media tools I have mentioned before. It must also be noted that the most significant inspiring point for me while choosing the women who rose to prominence in the media was that these women are important in the decisions and choices of people, particularly of women, due to being their role models thanks to their representation in the media. In newspapers, magazines and also business magazines, not only these women themselves use some images to present themselves through interviews but also there are different types of images used for these women by interviewers, editors and journalists. Thereby, in my opinion there is an 'identity card' that is created for these women as the end-

result of identity construction and shown to the public through media sources. Hence, I wanted to analyze through what kind of images and representations those identity cards are created. In other words, my aim in looking at those kinds of texts is to understand the image of white-collar business women or women in managerial positions and to understand what the incentives are for women encouraging them to work in managerial positions. By reviewing media sources, I endeavor to comprehend how the discourse of satisfaction achieved through work is produced because that discourse is one of the ways affecting the subjectivity of women in high level positions in the companies.

#### **d. Choice of The Subjects of Media Analysis**

In the media analysis, due to the abundance of the number of manager women, I tried to eliminate the number of women by choosing the women I wanted to do research about based on two criteria. One is the age of these women. I restricted my research field to women between 30 – 45 years old. Although it is difficult to find young woman managers, I continued my research within this age range since I thought that it might be easier to see whether their subjectivity is subject to any change, whether their work and position provide them any difference in their identity. To explain, for older aged female managers, it might be difficult for them to realize the change that work provides in their identity because after a long period of working time, changes might be internalized by these women and thereby it might be difficult for them to notice what work has brought for them. It is also for me to comprehend the impact of working in managerial positions. The other inclusion criterion was not having rich and famous family background. I chose these women to omit the effect of economic capital heritage in subjectivity construction because for women from rich and famous families, managerial positions are already reserved. In other words, it seems easier for them to be manager at younger ages when compared to women from middle income families. However, for women from middle income families, managerial positions suggests more

opportunities and differences, an economic distinction which might result in more impact on the subjectivity of these women. Nonetheless, what media analysis unfolded was that women managers are mostly from rich families that can be defined as elites of Turkey. Many women managers are daughters of parents who have big companies and holdings, which means that manager seats are already booked for these women. Güler Sabancı, Suzan Sabancı Dinçer, Begümhan Doğan, Arzuhan Doğan Yalçındağ, Ümit Boyner, Ebru Özdemir, Canan Çelebioğlu Tokgöz are some of these prominent women managers who exemplify it. This does not mean that these women managers do not have to have good education and work experience but in my research I restricted myself with the ones who are not daughters of big companies and holdings to understand what managerial positions bring to the women better.

## **CHAPTER 1**

## **WOMAN MANAGERS IN MEDIA**

### **1.1. Education of the Subjects**

One of the commonalities of the women about whom I did media analysis was that these women are generally from families with middle incomes. Although some are from families with relatively high income, none can be said to have very affluent families. That kind of observation and analysis both in media analysis and in field work contradicts the findings of Kabasal's research in which it is explained that "women top managers in Turkey have high socioeconomic origins, reflected in their fathers' prestigious occupations, their elite educational background, and their urban upbringing." (Kabasakal 3) For instance; Dilek Dölek Başarır who is the General Manager of McDonald's Turkey is from Kırşehir and daughter of a father who was a teacher. (Ekonomi Milliyet) She and her family came to İstanbul after she was admitted to Galatasary High School. Despite a family with relatively high income compared to that of Dilek Dölek Başarır, Demet Mutlu is from a family that can be interpreted as middle income family. She is the second daughter of a banker mother and a builder father. However, in comparison to Başarır she can be said to be luckier since she had to move and live in foreign countries owing to the professions of her parents. Although these women did not have much access to economic capital in the early parts of their lives, they still had the chance for good education. All of these famous women are graduates of good universities. For example, Güldem Berkman who is Novartis Turkey Country President graduated from Chemistry Department in Boğaziçi University, General Manager of Nokia Turkey Çiçek Uyansoy is graduate of İTÜ Textile Engineering Department, or Serpil Timuray who is CEO of Vodafone Turkey received her university education in the management department of Boğaziçi university. Gülfem Çakmakçı who is a graduate of İstanbul University Arabic Language and Literature and who is General Manager of Lenovo Turkey is another example of the fact that generally the woman managers appearing on the front pages of

newspapers or magazines had a good university education. Indeed, this kind of emphasis on education underlines the importance of cultural capital in the lives of these women. Moreover, those kinds of emphasis about the education of these women create the impression that women working in managerial positions must be a graduate of good and famous universities such that whenever and wherever there is some kind of news about the life of these women, the names of the universities and departments are the beginning point of the introduction. It is as if a woman's success in business life requires a degree from a famous university and a good department. Pınar Abay illustrates the importance of education for her with the following words: "I had a very good education. I completed the university education by receiving undergraduate education above average education. When I went to Harvard, I realized that I had learnt many things in Bilkent."<sup>2</sup> In addition, most of the women whose names are mentioned above have masters degree also from famous foreign universities. To exemplify, Demet Mutlu had gone to Harvard for MBA, Pınar Abay had also gone to Harvard for masters in management department after studying in the economy department of Bilkent University with scholarship or Çiçek Uyansoy who is the first woman and Turk General Manager of Nokia had her MBA in the USA in Texas Technical University. According to the picture drawn for these women, it can be interpreted that these women have the cultural capital thanks to their education through famous and good universities. Moreover, they had moral and material support from their families so that they can have a good education. Dilek Dölek Başarır mentions this support by saying:

The fact that I studied in Galatasary is a source of pride for my father. I have two older brothers, my father was very interested in me. So that I can study in better schools. In this sense I do not reflect Turkish reality. He did not imagine for my brothers but aimed Galatasaray High School for me.... he tried hard and

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<sup>2</sup> Çok iyi bir eğitim gördüm. Üniversiteyi normalin üzerinde bir lisans eğitimi olarak tamamladım. Master'a Harvard'a gittiğim zaman Bilkent'te birçok şeyi öğrenmiş olduğumu gördüm

by giving private lessons he prepared me for colleges. He wanted me to go the best university. It is the same in business life.<sup>3</sup>

## 1.2. Social Roles of the Subjects

Pınar Abay, Dilek Dölek Başarır, Çiçek Uyansoy, Gülfem Çakmakçı, Serpil Timuray and Güldem Berkman are all married women and all of them have children except Dilek Dölek Başarır and Demet Mutlu, meaning that these women did not neglect their roles as mothers due to business life. In Turkish society, women who want to pursue their career have a dilemma of a career or a child. In other words, according to the general perception in Turkish society, for a woman to have a successful business life and to reach managerial positions, she is supposed to give up having a child since a work with good career and a family with child is not thought as things that are manageable together. Therefore, a woman is expected to give up one of them and generally that one thing is their career. However, what is underlined in the newspapers, magazines and media about these manager women is that “They had both career and children... Mothers who are successful both at home and at work destroy the cliché that ‘in order to proceed in your work, to be successful, you should put aside private life’ ”<sup>4</sup> (Takvim Newspaper) In the media attention was drawn to the fact that success in business life as manager, CEO or director is not an impediment for successful motherhood and they can pursue their carrier with their children. In a way, even though what is emphasized about these women in the media appears to be something positive- the image of a strong and sufficient women are with both career and children- in my opinion this kind of approach in the media implies that women are not supposed to relinquish motherhood. This frame inserts these women into the roles of motherhood and so their success in business life is not regarded

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<sup>3</sup> Galatasaray’da okumam babamın gurur kaynağı. İki ağabeyim var, babam en çok benim üstüme düşerdi. Daha iyi okullarda okumam için. Bu anlamda Türkiye gerçeğini yansıtmıyorum. ...İki ağabeyim için hayal etmedi de benim için hedef yaptı Galatasaray Lisesi’ni. ...çok çaba sarf etti, özel ders vererek kolejlere hazırladı beni. En iyi üniversiteye gitmemi istedi. İş hayatında yine öyle.

<sup>4</sup> Çocukta yaptılar, kariyerde... Evlerinde de, işlerinde de başarılı anneler, 'İşinde ilerlemek, başarılı olmak istiyorsan, özel hayatı bir kenara bırakmak gerekiyor' klişesini de yıkmış oldu

independently; additionally, they are taken as equals. In one of the news where Pınar Abay and some other different woman general managers are mentioned the sentence “In the most valuable firms of Turkey, even in the world, mothers have the word...”<sup>5</sup> which proves it explicitly. (Takvim Newspaper) In the website “Working mother”, the subheading of an article illustrates the same notion with different words; “It is said that in order to step up onto upper stages in business life, the game should be played according to the rules. However, in Turkey there are many businesswomen who demonstrate that it does not apply.”<sup>6</sup> The subheading insinuates that the rule in the society is that a woman in the society is expected to be a wife and mother and these successful manager women are exceptions to this rule. Even though the seeming message in this subheading is that women can be both successful wife-mother and business woman, it underlines an existing rule in the society for women. As a successful business woman, Güldem Berkman is aware of this rule and advises women in one of her interviews for a business magazine with this brief anecdote:

We, as women, should believe that we can achieve and we must not give up our work after giving birth. Before I became manager, there was no woman manager worldwide in Novartis. I was told “You also do not beat the air”<sup>7</sup>, look, there is no woman CEO worldwide. At that moment I answered that “but I will be.”<sup>8</sup>

As in the case of Güldem Berkman, according to representations for these women in the media, what differs among them is that despite awareness of the already existing ‘rule’ in the society, they tried to eliminate this rule by achieving great success.

### **1.3. Support from Outside**

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<sup>5</sup> Türkiye'nin, hatta dünyanın en değerli firmalarında söz annelerin...

<sup>6</sup> İş hayatında üst kademelere çıkmak için oyunu kuralına göre oynamak gerektiği söylenir. Ama Türkiye’de de bunun geçerli olmadığını kanıtlayan pek çok iş kadını var.

<sup>7</sup> Beat the air: try in vain

<sup>8</sup> Bizim, kadınlar olarak başarabileceğimize inanmamız, çocuk doğurunca da işimizden vazgeçmememiz lazım. Ben Müdür olmadan önce Novartis’te dünya çapında kadın genel müdür yoktu. Bana “sen de boşuna uğraşma, bak dünya çapında kadın CEO yok dendi. O anda “ama ben olacağım” diye cevap verdim.”

Another remarkable issue about the lives of these famous women managers is that all have the opportunity to receive some sort of support from their husbands either in bringing up the children or giving them advice in their business lives so that they can manage their two identities both as managers and as mothers or wives accomplishedly. In one of the interviews, Pinar Abay who has been General Manager at the age of 34 and has 2 children states this sensibility clearly: "I have worked a lot in my life; our life order was already a kind of order that was based on my work pace. My husband has been supporting me very much. We move forward by supporting each other, in the days that I am not at home, he is definitely at home."<sup>9</sup> (Working mother website) Although Demet Mutlu does not have a child, her husband was also very supportive of her in her business life. She accentuates that he is very intelligent and tries to advise her about business life. (Quoted from an interview Video) Likewise, Serpil Timuray who is on the "125 Most Effective Women of The World"<sup>10</sup> list prepared by Newsweek, is a businesswomen who received support from both her husband and her father to bridge business life and private life. It is narrated in a short story in one of the news: "Timuray who was working in Danone before Vodafone was able to stay at home very few times during her son's infancy. Her son developed an attitude against her when he was 2,5-3 years old and did not talk to Timuray about 1,5 months. Timuray who was very sad about this situation and even thought about leaving her job was consoled by her husband. Timuray who says; 'My father started to come to our house after the birth of my son. Now my son is over 10 but he is still coming' is grateful for her father."<sup>11</sup> (Aktif Haber) What my reviews indicated is that these women are supported either by their husband or someone from

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<sup>9</sup> Ben hayatımda hep çok çalıştım, bizim hayat düzenimiz zaten benim çalışma tempomun üzerine kurulmuş bir düzendi. Eşim de bana çok destek oluyor. Birbirimizi dengeleyerek ilerliyoruz, benim evde olmadığım gün o mutlaka evdedir.

<sup>10</sup> Dünyanın En Etkili 125 Kadını

<sup>11</sup> Vodafone'den önce Danone firmasında çalışan Timuray, oğlunun bebekliği sırasında evde çok az olabiliyordu. Oğlu ona 2,5-3 yaşlarında tavrı koymuş ve Timuray'la 1,5 ay hiç konuşmamış. Buna çok üzülen hatta işini bırakmayı düşünen Timuray'ı eşi teselli etmiş. "Babam oğlumun doğumundan itibaren her sabah bize gelmeye başladı. Oğlum şimdi 10 yaşını geçti, yine geliyor" diyen Timuray, babasına minnettar kalıyor adeta.

their family members in order to sustain the balance between business life and private life and these supportive forces fill in the gaps that are created due to their responsibilities. It should also be noted down that there are also some of them such as Dilek Dölek Başarır who received outside support such as a helper who cooks the meal at home. (Hürriyet Newspaper) Nevertheless, these women are pictured as “successful mothers both in their home and in their work”<sup>12</sup>(Takvim Newspaper)

#### **1.4. Time Management and Activities**

Despite the responsibilities of business life, motherhood and wifeness, these women are represented as those who are able to effectively manage time. To explain, they can spare time for their children and husbands, they are able to attend social activities and go to holidays. Unlike what is expected from those kinds of women who have many responsibilities due to their positions, these women are able to keep up with different activities and have time for their families. For example; in one of the interviews Demet Mutlu says “Listening to music and spending time with my family are the other things I enjoy.”<sup>13</sup> She also adds that she goes on holidays with her family when she has time and in addition she underlines that she pays attention to spending time with her family. (Daha İyi Yaşam Website) Similar to Demet Mutlu, Güldem Berkman also tries to spend time with her family and family friends. She emphasizes that she and her family “are keen on spending time with friends... [they] definitely schedule an organization with them Friday-Saturday evenings. At the weekends, she goes to a sports club with her family.”<sup>14</sup> Moreover, she manages her time so efficiently that she is able to integrate her business life to her private life or vice versa. To exemplify, the last time she went on a business trip, her son and her husband accompanied her, taking advantage of business trip and staying there longer. In the same way, Pınar Abay is also able

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<sup>12</sup> Evlerinde de işlerinde de başarılı anneler.

<sup>13</sup> Müzik dinlemek ve ailemle zaman geçirmek ise keyif aldığım diğer konular.

<sup>14</sup> Arkadaşlarımızla vakit geçirmeye çok meraklıyız. ... Onlarla muhakkak Cuma-Cumartesi akşamları program yaparız. Haftasonu ailemle birlikte spora gidiyoruz.

to spare time for her children and plan her weekdays accordingly; “weekends are always with children. I also have to be at home at least two days of five days on working days before they sleep.”<sup>15</sup> These woman managers are good managers of time not only to balance business life and private life, but also to be successful in fulfilling their responsibilities in business life. Dilek Dölek Başarır explains in an analysis of her own characteristics; “I am an organized person. I prioritize the urgent and important issues and then move onto the ones that are not urgent and important”<sup>16</sup> Efficient time management might be one of the reasons how Dilek Dölek Başarır can spare time for sports by waking up at 05:30 in the morning. (Hürriyet Newspaper) In the newspapers and in their own interviews, these women are pictured as very scheduled women who thus can spare time both for their families and their hobbies thanks to good management of time. Even in one of the news where Gülfem Çakmakçı is also one of the women about whom there are some explanations, there is a generalization about how woman managers think about the conception of time: “According to woman managers, ‘to be a good manager’ does mean to think about work for 24 hours, to work until very late even on the holiday. On the contrary, a manager can spare time for entertainment and holiday without disturbing her work through good time management.”<sup>17</sup>(Patronlar Dünyası) The notion that is created is that time management and being planned are inevitable parts of their lives and without good time management being successful both as mothers, wives and businesswomen seems impossible. Güldem Berkman summarizes it in one of her interviews for a foreign website; “In the execution, you need to be very organized. This could sound classical, but I am even organizing my private life like a business case. Always, you need to plan your priorities and timeframes, and etc. Otherwise, with such a heavy agenda, you can get lost very

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<sup>15</sup> Hafta sonu tamamen çocuklarla geçiyor. Hafta içi de beş gecenin en az iki gecesi onlar uyumadan evde olmam lazım.

<sup>16</sup> Düzenli bir kişiyim. Acil ve önemli olan işlere öncelik vererek, acil ve önemli olmayan işleri tamamlamaya doğru giden bir düzende çalışırım

<sup>17</sup> Kadın yöneticilere göre, “iyi yönetici” olmak, 24 saat iş düşünmek, geç saatlere kadar, hatta tatilde bile çalışmak anlamına gelmiyor. Aksine yöneticinin iyi bir zaman yönetimiyle işini aksatmayıp eğlenmeye ve tatile de zaman ayrılabilmesi gerekiyor.

easily.” (Pharmaboardroom) Although all of these women are working hard and trying to manage big companies, they have hobbies and can maintain those hobbies. Beside, hobbies such as reading books, listening to music and watching movies, some women also have unusual interests. For instance, Gülfem Çakmakçı, who is a mother of a son, is interested in mountain biking. She and her husband are members of “İki Teker” club and they are biking on difficult racetracks. (Capital) Furthermore, she is also doing Wing Chu, a kind of marital art sport. (Haygroup) Güldem Berkman’s hobby is drawing and thanks to good time management, she can attend drawing course at the weekends when her son is in guitar course. (Kariyer Magazine)

### **1.5. Personality Characteristics of the Subjects**

In the media these women are represented as lovers of their work and as very hardworking women, no matter how much they work and how difficult are their responsibilities. While Pınar Abay underlines her diligence by saying “I have worked hard in my life”<sup>18</sup>, Demet Mutlu highlights it differently; “In my whole working life, I have done all my work with passion and thanks to it, I was able to obtain success. In order to reach aims, it is necessary to work hard. When you do the work that you like, your work turns out to be your hobby.”<sup>19</sup> Dilek Dölek Başarır shares the same thoughts as Mutlu; “I think that success depends on being happy at work and doing your work fondly. In all of the companies I worked, I did my work with love and I never did my work so that I could work between 9 and 6.”<sup>20</sup>

In the media, besides these women’s commonalities, other features that distinguish these women from other working women are underlined with different words and images.

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<sup>18</sup> Ben hayatımda hep çok çalıştım.

<sup>19</sup> Tüm çalışma hayatım boyunca her işimi büyük bir tutkuyla yaptım ve bu sayede de başarıyı yakaladım. Hedeflere ulaşmak için çok çalışmak gerekiyor. Sevdiğiniz işi yaptığımızda da işiniz, zevk aldığımız bir hobi haline geliyor.

<sup>20</sup> Başarının iş yerinde mutlu olmaktan ve işinizi severek yapmaktan geçtiğini düşünüyorum. Çalıştığım tüm şirketlerde işimi aşkla yaptım ve hiç bir zaman 9-6 arasında çalışayım diye iş yapmadım

One is innovativeness. That feature is not only underlined by these managers but also emphasized by different media sources. Moreover, different comparisons and images are used to illustrate those features. Thanks to the e-shopping website which she invested and thanks to which she became one of the 10 best women entrepreneurs of the world, Demet Mutlu was named as “The Young Turk” (Jön Türk) in Fortune magazine.(Fortune) Young Turks is originally the group that emerged in the Ottoman period and was constituted by radical and innovative people who later came to the power. The reason why Mutlu is called a Young Turk is that the e-shopping website she introduced to Turkey was new for the country; in addition, she was very young woman when she made that innovation. Furthermore, she left her masters in Harvard for the sake of entrepreneurship. The same situation is highlighted in a different way in Pınar Abay’s case. In the magazine Fortune, her innovative approach is explained with the following sentence: “ING Bank General Manager Pınar Abay who has the most contrarian profile of banking sector declared war against traditional approach since the day she entered to the sector.”<sup>21</sup> What the writer points out in the article titled ‘The Contrarian Face of Banking’<sup>22</sup> is not only the fact that Abay is innovative and supports changing the traditional style, but also the writer makes an analogy between Abay and a warrior. That kind of analogy creates the image of a very strong and influential woman. Indeed, this kind of emphasis on strength is not particular to Abay. However, the power of others was not indicated by the same type of imagery. Instead of the analogy of warrior, in the changes they brought to the companies they work in the innovative approach of others is offered to the reader. For instance, Timuray worked to bring a technological innovation called ‘Kırmızı Işık’ that was used by Portugal and England. That innovation utilizes mobile communication for violence against women. Thanks to this technology, women who are subject to violence can inform the police or law enforcement-officers by touching a button on their mobile phones. Likewise, the

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<sup>21</sup> Bankacılık sektörünün son dönemdeki en aykırı profili olan ING Bank Genel Müdürü Pınar Abay, sektöre girdiği günden beri geleneksel anlayışa savaş açtı.

<sup>22</sup> Bankacılığın Aykırı Yüzü

innovative approach of Dilek Dölek Başarır is implied indirectly with the changes she brought to the style of McDonald's such as changing the menu, concept of decoration or the music played in the branches. Indeed, Pınar Abay's explanation for the reason behind her success- "The biggest main reason in my success is to go beyond the field of comfort. Since my youth, I have tried to go beyond my field of comfort. It was always difficult for me but when it was difficult I said this; 'I can get rid of this fire somehow'"<sup>23</sup> - which also hints at her innovative approach as well as the strong woman figure that all of these manager women draw.

According to the representations in the media the innovative approach and diligence of these women are so significant for their business life that thanks to "their diligence and innovative approach these women are able to gain a seat well-deserved in business life."<sup>24</sup> (Patronlar Dünyası) Explicitly, those women are represented as successful. Particularly in the media, where otherwise beauty is the main requirement for a woman to be recognized by other people, success in business is offered as an opportunity for recognition to women who are generally deprived of such opportunities in their daily lives. In a monthly business and economy magazine *Capital*, experts draw attention to other features of Turkish business women that "Turkish businesswomen are able to proceed thanks to their hardworking and determined stance."<sup>25</sup> Moreover, this innovative approach and diligence attributes women such a strong characteristic that they have the power to exert innovations to a society and have the ability to create changes on people, organizations and structures. For example, "Pınar Abay encountered question marks in many environments in Turkey because she came from outside the sector. She points out that she had many different reactions from the banking sector when she was promoted, saying that there were people who thought that

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<sup>23</sup> Benim için başarıdaki en büyük temel sebep, konfor alanının dışına çıkmaktır. Ben hep bir şekilde küçüklükten beri konfor alanımın dışına çıkmaya çalıştım. Bana hep zor geldi ama zor geldiğinde şunu dedim 'bir şekilde bu ateşin içinden de çıkarım.'

<sup>24</sup> çalışkanlıkları ve yenilikçi yaklaşımlarıyla kendilerine iş yaşamında haklı bir yer edinen kadın yöneticiler...

<sup>25</sup>Uzmanlar, Türk iş kadınlarının çalışkan ve azimli duruşlarıyla ilerleyebildiklerine dikkat çekiyor.

‘she cannot manage due to being from outside the sector, a woman and young.’”<sup>26</sup> However, after taking the seat of a manager, she was able to radically change the structure; “She changed 25% of the staff, the rate of women increased, hierarchy decreased.”<sup>27</sup> (Finans Caddesi) Thanks to the extent of the e-trade website she created, Demet Mutlu constitutes another example of a strong woman figure drawn in the media; her company’s value reached 150 million dollars in 16 months. (Kigem) It must be noted that the powerful female figure that these women represent is reemphasized through other roles that these women have in different clubs and organizations. In addition to being CEOs of big companies, some of these women have taken the role of chair or vice chair. For example, Serpil Timuray was vice chair of Türkiye Süt, Et, Gıda Sanayicileri ve Üreticileri Birliği SETBİR Administrative Board and Chair of YASED (Uluslararası Yatırımcılar Derneği)’s Administrative Board. (Timiletişim) Likewise, Güldem Berkman was the Chair of AIFD (Araştırmacı İlaç Firmaları Derneği), Vice Chair of YASED’s Administrative Board and Vice Chair of Sweden Chamber of Commerce. (Sağlık Ekonomisi) and also Pınar Abay is a member of YASED’s Administrative Board. (Aktif Haber) Indeed, the headings of news about YASED and its board members indicate the strength of these women through different analogies; “YASED is chaired by Serpil Timuray”<sup>28</sup> or “Women stamp on YASED”<sup>29</sup>. (Aktif Haber)

Besides the innovative approach and going beyond tradition, the other significant feature of these women is that they have had the endless will to learn more and to be active at their work. It might be one of the reasons behind the innovative approach of these women. Pınar Abay emphasizes this will she had when she started her professional life with the following words: “Because I had the will for more active work and to learn different things

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<sup>26</sup> Pınar Abay, sektör dışından geldiği için Türkiye’de pek çok çevrede soru işaretleriyle karşılaştı. Ataması yapıldığında özellikle bankacılık sektöründen pek çok değişik tepki aldığını belirten Abay, ‘sektör dışından olması, kadın ve genç olması nedeniyle yapamaz’ düşüncesiyle yaklaşanlar olduğunu... söyledi

<sup>27</sup> Kadronun yüzde 25’i değişti, kadın oranı arttı, hiyerarşi azaldı.

<sup>28</sup> Serpil Timuray, YASED’i şaha kaldırır

<sup>29</sup> YASED’e kadın damgası.

more.”<sup>30</sup>(Ekonomi Milliyet) Demet Mutlu specifies the will to learn as one of the basic principles of entrepreneurship providing success in one of her interviews; “[In order to be successful] to be curious, to have will to succeed, to have a strong desire to improve yourself and to learn constantly.”<sup>31</sup>(Dahaiyiyaşam Website) Similar to Mutlu, for Güldem Berkman, the reason behind her good career and success is her willingness to learn new things, which she notes as something that can make one different from other people; “I think the thing that makes you different is to be curious about learning. If I learn something about a subject, I like it. A person’s ability to learn is important...the important thing is to be able to learn things in order to adapt to new conditions.”<sup>32</sup>(Kariyer Magazine) That is why, they underline the importance of coaches or mentors in business life.

What these women purport as another important point of their success is teamwork. All of these women give importance to teamwork and draw attention to teamwork as their source of power in business life. While Pınar Abay illustrates it by saying: “It was always the people around me who made me stronger. I take my energy from people. In the morning I come to work with the excitement that I will have a meeting with the team and I will see them. It gives great energy. ... Because the thing that will take me to somewhere is this team.”<sup>33</sup>, Demet Mutlu accentuates the significance of teamwork in her company’s innovative approach; “new ideas appear thanks to teamwork”<sup>34</sup> Likewise, Dilek Dölek Başarır underlines its importance in managerial positions; “one of the important points to be successful in

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<sup>30</sup> Çünkü içimde daha hareketli bir iş, daha fazla değişik şey öğrenme isteği vardı

<sup>31</sup> Meraklı olmak, başarıma isteği, kendini sürekli geliştirmek, öğrenme isteğinin yüksek olması da çok önemli.

<sup>32</sup> Bence fark yaratmanızı sağlayan şey öğrenmeye meraklı olmak. Bana herhangi bir konuda birşey öğretsinle bu çok hoşuma gider. İnsanın öğrenme kabiliyeti artık çok önemli... önemli olan yeni şartlara uyum sağlayabilmeniz için yeni şeyler öğrenebilmeniz.

<sup>33</sup> Hep çevremdeki insanlar bana güç kattı. Ben enerjimi insanlardan alıyorum. Sabah işe, ekiple toplantı yapacağım, onları göreceğim heyecanımla geliyorum. Müthiş bir enerji veriyor....Beni bir yere taşıyabilecek olan bu ekip çünkü.

<sup>34</sup> Yeni fikirler takım çalışmasıyla oluyor

managerial positions is to work with a good team with team spirit and energy.”<sup>35</sup> (kariyer.net)

That is one of the reasons why Serpil Timuray does not like ‘One Women Show’ and for her “to do something as ‘we’ not as ‘I’ is important.”<sup>36</sup> (Milliyet Newspaper)

The interesting thing that draws attention about the representation of these women in the media is that these women are always put on the foreground thanks to their success and innovations in business life. However, the fact that there is the constant emphasis on what they achieve as women and underlining their achievements as very important accomplishments creates the impression that women are actually weak and those achievements are not expected from them. Therefore, what these women have done requires more appreciation. But to talk about the achievements of these women by highlighting their being mother and wife in addition to being businesswomen accentuates the weakness of women. That is why the achievements of these business women are crucial.

## **1.6. Women Managers as Representatives of Modern Turkey**

Besides the representation of these women in the media to Turkish society as role models, in terms of the crucial role they play in the structure of the companies they work, these women occupy an important space for the representation of Turkish women managers out of Turkish media. It is obvious that there are Turk woman managers who are working in different countries and who are seen as the source of proud for Turkish culture. On the other hand these managers working in different local and multinational companies in Turkey are also seen as the representatives of modern Turkey both with their achievements and their lifestyles. The position of Çiçek Uyansoy in Nokia exemplifies it clearly. She is not only the first Turkish but also the first woman manager of Nokia. (Ekonomi Haber Türk)With that kind of managerial

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<sup>35</sup> yöneticilik pozisyonunda başarılı olmanın en önemli unsurlarından birinin, iyi bir ekiple takım ruhu ve sinerji içerisinde çalışmak olduğunu aktarıyor

<sup>36</sup>One Women Show’dan hoşlanmıyorsunuz yani... Hoşlanmıyorum. Ben değil biz olarak her şeyi yapmak çok önemli.

position, she is not just a role model for young generation but also the representative of secure and modern Turkey. Dilek Dölek Başarır's achievement was underlined with her being list in the most successful 50 woman CEO. (Kariyer.net) Moreover, she is in charge of Turkish leg of a very valuable brand. (kariyer.net) In addition to the representation of these women in Turkish media, these women are also drawn attention and depicted as the source of modern Turkey in foreign media. For instance, Demet Mutlu is able to be among "The Most Powerful 10 Women Entrepreneurs of the World" according to American magazine Fortune and she represents Turkey successfully outside the borders of Turkey. Likewise, in one of the foreign interviews she had for pharmaboardroom, Güldem Berkman is "named one of Turkey's most influential business women", which indicates the representation of these women managers are the picture of modern Turkey for the foreign media. Not only the fact that they have been leading very large companies that constitute important place in Turkey as women but also through their life style these women are displayed as the picture of modern Turkey. As it was mentioned previously, all of these women have hobbies and different interests, which is not very usual for a traditional Turkish woman for whom hobbies are always secondary in their lives. Moreover, traditionally most women are expected to leave their work after they have children, meaning the roles attributed to women are prioritized against career path they walk on. However, in the media with their hobbies and interests as well as having children, these women managers eliminate the traditional working women picture and become the face of modern Turkish women who are able to both work and spare time for themselves.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **WOMAN IN MANAGERIAL POSITIONS**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

This chapter illustrates the method of my anthropological research. My aim is to explain the framework of my research and the choices I made before and during my research. The focus of my research is to comprehend the subjectivity construction process in which there are the effects of different the dynamics encountered in work, in society and at home. In the research, I try to examine the interaction between subject and distinctive, discursive practices that shape one's identity. In this examination, I look at the relation between work and identity as it reflects on the subjectivity construction of Turkish business women working in managerial positions. According to Lash and Friedmann, "in modernity, identity becomes more mobile, multiple,...self-reflexive, and subject to change and innovation" and in the era where there are 'mobile subjectivities', I desire to see to what extent those manager women have shifting identities and whether they fit the definition of 'mobile subjectivities" and what are the ways or influences to construct themselves as subjects. (Lash-Friedman 141) Women in managerial positions are the core figures of my research since owing to their position both as influential figures and at the same time as role models for the society, particularly for the incoming generations.

Subjectivity construction has been a crucial topic in social theory. Barbara Grant points out with reference to Foucault "Always in process, ... subject is constituted within multiple socially produced and changing discourses, each of which produces a range of subject positions" which inevitably results in a range of subjects and identities which are produced with respect to the requirement of the discourse. (Grant 103)

Within the light of these theoretical bearings, I examine the interaction between subject/work and woman/businesswoman with respect to white-collar woman managers whom I had interviewed about their education, daily experiences and practices at home as well as their practices and lives at work. In the first part, my interviewees were asked questions about their educational background, their upbringing and their marital status. In the

second phase of the interviews, questions about their daily lives at home and at work are directed to my interviewees to understand how they perceive their work and its influence on their lives. In the last part of the interviews, my informants were asked questions related to the characteristics or representations of the women managers about whom I did media analysis in magazines, newspapers and other media tools by comparing with their own lives. To understand the subjectivity construction of these women and to compare it with the representations in the media, I have conducted semi-structured interviews in depth.

## **2.2. Choice of Sites**

Because my research was based on the question of identity and construction of subjectivities through work, besides the media analysis about these women in managerial positions, it was better to understand through real life people and institutions to what extent pictures in media represent the women managers in real life. Although I have restricted my participants to women with the title of managers, I did not limit the site of anthropological research to specific kinds of companies to understand whether multinational and local companies are distinct in terms of influencing the subjectivity construction of these women. Even though it is as if that “compared to small enterprises, corporations have greater impact on the society as a whole” as well as their employees, local companies are also able to shape the subjectivities of their employees through different structures, work environment and approaches to their employees. (Yıldız’s Thesis 20) Moreover, multinational companies and local companies can add to the subjectivity construction of these women through the difference in economic and cultural capital in these companies.

## **2.3. Choice of Informants of Field Work**

In the anthropological part of my research, I interviewed ten women who work in different sectors and different managerial positions, which provided the variety in my research. What I aimed through interviews was to demonstrate to what extent what is

represented in media tools about women is realized in the life of woman managers, whether something or some things are missing or added in the representations of these women and how manager women understand the images and representations in the media. As in the media analysis part, my interviewees are also between 30 and 45. Some work in international companies; some, local firms. Besides, the marital status of these women also varied, but mostly married. Four of these women are corporate account managers in the field of information technologies; one is finance manager, one is information technologies manager, one is sales and marketing manager, one is marketing and communication manager, one is software group chairman and one is regional sales manager. While four of these women are from multinational companies, the remaining six women are from local ones. Although I have tried to get variety of women from different sectors and positions, seven of these women are from information technologies sector. The reason why the rate of women from IT sector is high compared to the other sectors stems from the fact that I started to search interviews from my own students to whom I teach English. Most of these women are from IT sector and thanks to these women I had the chance to have interviews with their friends most of whom are also from the IT sector. Although at the beginning of my research I did not have the intention to have interviews with women mostly from IT sector, during the field work I had the opportunity to have interviews from a sector which is thought as a male dominated sector, which provided to see the identity and subjectivity construction of women managers in a sector where women are relatively low. However, not all of seven interviewees were from the same type of IT companies and positions. While four of these women are from a local IT company that sells hardware, software besides developing software, the other two of seven women are from IT departments of different sectors; one is from an international insurance company and the other was from an automotive company.

As I have explained before, all of my interviewees are from middle income families.

Except three of them whose mothers are an instructor, a psychologist and a teacher, mothers of my informants were housewives. Their fathers are soldier, engineers, tradesman, carpenters, and policemen. All of my interviewees are from İstanbul except three of them who are from Diyarbakır, İzmir and Cyprus. However, two of these three women came to İstanbul at very young ages.

Unlike what is expected according to the representations of women managers in the media, not all my informants are graduates of very good and famous universities. The ones who are graduates of such universities graduated from Boğaziçi University, Ege University, İstanbul University, İstanbul Technical University. One of my informants is a graduate of 2 – year undergraduate program from a university in the USA. In addition, four of my interviewees had masters. Moreover, some of my informants are working in a sector that is different from the field that they studied in the university. In addition, except one of them, all of the informants went to state schools both in primary school and high school.

#### **2.4. Methods Used in Interviews**

Before choosing this topic as my research subject, I was talking with my woman students in the English Course about their working life and their daily experience as well as their family lives. What I learned from those conversations showed me that there are different dynamics and discursive practices than what the media represents to us about women managers.

Therefore, my conversation with those women inspired me to understand how representation in the media is reflected on these women. The interviews I arranged with these women were semi-structured in-depth interviews. I requested one to one interviews with my informants. However, in two of these interviews, the woman who arranged those meetings was present and that woman was also one of my informants. Despite my reservations about the situation due to the nature of the interviews, the presence of the other woman contributed to my interviews since they felt themselves more relaxed when there was a person whom they knew

and thus, were more willing to talk about their stories. The interview locations were either their offices or cafes. Because my interviews were semi-structured, my informants could narrate stories of their choices independently as well as the ones related to the questions that I prepared. Thereby, the interviews took between 45 minutes to two hours. During interviews my informants talked about their educational life, their parents' background and what type of families they were brought up in; their work career beginning from their entrance to professional life after university to their being a manager; the types of companies they have worked in and what kind of effects those companies' cultures have had on their life and also their identity; their families and children; also their thoughts about working women managers and approaches to those women managers in the media and the society. In the rest of my analysis of the interviews, I start by comparing the differences and similarities between the picture drawn in the media and my informants.

In the rest of the thesis I will use pseudonyms due to respect for the lives of my informants.

## **2.5. Comparisons of Subjects In The Media Analysis with Informants**

### **2.5.1. Education life:**

As I have highlighted in the previous chapter where I illustrated the representations of women managers in the media, those successful women are expected to be graduates of good universities and also it is better if they have master's degree. In a way that kind of portrait imposes the notion that managerial positions are reserved for women graduates of good universities and departments that provide more opportunities in business life such as engineering, management. On the other hand, my interviews revealed that unlike the portrait of women manager in the media, being a graduate of well-known university is not a must. The effect of a good education is not deniable in terms of its contribution to cultural capital of

women. However, my informants' education background indicated that as a graduate of an average university, one can manage to be a manager as a woman. For instance, Rezzan and Beyza are graduates of Sakarya University but they have managed to be corporate sales managers in a local IT company. Similarly, Kayra is a graduate of Mimar Sinan University which is in the lower ranked university degrees and is also a corporate sales manager in the same company. One interesting interview that I had was with Ayfer. Although admitted to Istanbul University management department, she had to leave university in the second year due to familial issues, which is an important exception among my informants demonstrating that even without being a university graduate, it is possible for women to be managers. In my opinion, the media's creation of a graduate from a good university image discourages many young females who are not studying in such high ranked universities. Even though my informants are aware of the contribution of studying at a good university in business, they do not perceive the absence of it as an impediment. Selda who is Software Development Manager in an international insurance company is a graduate of Ege University Maths Department. She is from İzmir and when she narrates her university entrance story, it becomes more explicit that for women to be manager a good university degree is not compulsory. She claims that in the period of choosing university after the exam, her parents did not allow her to attend a university out of İzmir. Therefore, she had to choose Ege University despite the fact that her gpa was enough for the department that she wanted in the universities in İstanbul and Ankara. However, she says that she did not give up her aim and succeeded in having a manager position in the sector she desired. As to the education of women managers in the media, there is another point that should be stressed, that is the choice of department in the university. Besides being graduates of good universities, prominent women managers shown in the newspapers and magazines generally studied either in engineering or in management departments. The only exception is Gülfem Çakmakçı. She

graduated from Arabic Language and Literature Department. Interestingly, there is not much news or information about her department in contrast to other women managers I have mentioned before. That kind of impression insinuates that one of the requirements of being a manager is to graduate from an engineering or a management department, which in a way may discourage the students studying in different departments. However, my interviews revealed that managerial positions can be occupied by women irrespective of their departments. The clear examples are Beyza, Rezzan, Kayra, Mina and Nesrin. Despite working as managers in IT sector, Beyza, Rezzan and Kayra graduated from completely different departments from the sectors they have been working. Beyza studied at a Machine Picture Construction Department; Rezzan at an Import-Export Department; Kayra at an Architecture Restoration Department and Mina at an Astronomy and Space Science Department. Nesrin represents another important point with respect to studying in a different department. In the media women managers who are graduates of different departments are put into the foreground. It is known that if a woman wants to be manager, she is supposed to study engineering, management or economy in the university. Nevertheless, it does not mean that women from other departments cannot be managers. One of my informants Nesrin who is working as Marketing and Communication Manager in an International Company discloses the fact that in the media managers of different departments are ignored. In other words, women managers who are graduates of different department from engineering and management are not preferred as much as those with graduate degrees from these departments, a finding which reveals to incoming generations that engineering or management departments are inevitable for managerial positions. In the media such a picture is drawn that the ones who did not get education from good universities and from good departments cannot be successful managers. Thereby, in the mind of people success, a good education from a famous university and engineering or management departments are

connected to each other. Another issue to be drawn attention is that managerial positions should not be regarded the reason behind success is thought to be just good university and department. How individuals, particularly women, begin their careers does not always reflect a clear cut process of identity construction. Sometimes how individuals end up in a particular position or company is arbitrary, depending on their educational levels, family expectations and influences and the job market itself. Sometimes people choose their works and positions depending on their expectations from the work and the company where they want to work. However, media picture managerial positions as reserved for certain universities, departments and educational levels.

### **2.5.2. Support From Outside:**

A similarity between the prominent figures in the media and my informants about their access to education is that besides coming from middle income families, my informants are also supported by their families in their education life. Parental encouragement for their daughters for education can be exemplified in the best way with Mina's university department choice story. She explains that she has had interest in space since her childhood. That is why she wanted to study in a department related to the space. She asserts that her older brother did not let her study in that department due to difficulties of employment after university. However, thanks to her father who said "Whether you will find a work does not matter, study in the department you want."<sup>37</sup>, she talks about how she and her father secretly changed her choice paper and how she was able to study in Astronomy and Space Science in Marmara University. Although my informants were not restricted in their choices of departments, there were some restrictive attempts by my informant's families under the guise of guidance and advice. In addition to Selda's parents who did not allow her to choose a university out of İzmir by explaining the difficulties of living alone, Selma was also influenced by her parents

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<sup>37</sup> Boşver önemli değil iş bulup bulmayacağın ama istediğin bölümü oku.

in her choice of the department. She says that she wanted to become a dentist but by her family she was suggested to choose a department such as management so that in the professional life she can find work at a desk job. Likewise, Sinem who is a sales and marketing manager in one of the important medicine companies of Turkey was also led by one of her family members in her choice of Industrial Engineering Department in university. She says that she was influenced by her sister who was studying in maths engineering department, which made her want to study at an engineering department but she was not sure about the type of engineering. She claims that due to her father who searched about different engineering types, she chose industrial engineering. Even though she illustrates it as positive guidance, her choice was not completely her free decision.

When it comes to the comparison of roles of motherhood and wifehood, similar to women managers my interviewees also did not neglect the roles of motherhood and wifehood. Among ten informants, eight of them are married, one of them is engaged and one of them is single. Seven of the married ones have children and one of them has twins. Indeed, my informants also went against the expectations of the society in which women are supposed to choose to have children instead of pursuing a career. Although they did not give up their career after giving birth, one of the main reasons preventing them from having a second child is their work and business life. Kayra, Rezzan and Fulya who is an IT Manager in an automotive sector points out that due to the difficulties of maintaining both business life and private life at the same time, they did not think about the second child.

In terms of disobeying the common rule in the society by having both career and children, my informants are real life examples of the representation in the media. The main supportive power behind these prominent figures that enabled them to actualize their roles both as wife/mother and as businesswomen is their husbands. In the previous chapter the effect of supportive approach of these husbands was highlighted. In my interviews, my

informants also underline the importance of the support that they receive from their husbands. Without exception, all of my married informants talked about how their husbands have supported them either in maintaining their roles as mothers /wives or as successful managers. Some of my informants like Ayfer and Sinem are the ones who receive that support in the form of advices related to business. Ayfer who is 42 years old expresses her gratitude to her husband due to his advices and guidance. In addition, she mentions that because her husband is working in the same sector, his advises are very useful. She also points out how he affects her approach and attitudes in business life. She explains that she is very aggressive and ambitious person and it is reflected in her business life but she specifies her husband's warnings about her excessive ambition and anger and how he helps her look at the situation from different perspective. On the other hand, she complains about the fact that her husband is not supportive in managing the house. While talking about her appreciation of her friends' husbands who help their wives at home and also about household chores, she explains how her husband is not interested in house chores. She says that although they do not have a child, sometimes she needs help in the management of their house. However, her husband is neither supportive nor refrains from saying that "o işin sahibi sensin (you are responsible for that work)" for house chores such as cooking or doing shopping. While being very supportive in her business life, Ayfer's husband is not supportive in the management of house, which illustrates an issue ignored in the representations of private lives of business women in the media. In the media, the husbands of women managers are described and pictured in such a way that they support their wives in all of the roles attributes to them. In other words, according to the representations, husbands support them both in the house management, in bringing up children and also in business. The sentence in the magazine which talks about Serpil Timuray summarizes it clearly; "While it is accepted that there is woman behind every successful man, in the list of 'The Most Effective 125 Women' the secret of being a

successful woman was revealed...The secret of our women who are in the list of 'The Strongest Women' of the world' is that their families are with them."<sup>38</sup> (Aktif Haber)

However, Ayfer's case indicates that husbands are not always supportive of their manager wives in all the places they need. Moreover, his attitudes imply that even though his wife could exceed the limits of roles attributed to women in the society even by being a manager, obviously he is not able to think of her outside of her roles. That is why; he says "o işin sahibi sensin". Likewise, Sinem draws attention to how her husband displayed his support in the form of encouraging her to have masters in Germany. She says that they were able to see each other very little since her husband was in Turkey during her study in Germany. Nevertheless, he supported her very much so that she could have more opportunities in business life by having a masters. However, she does not say a word about her husband's supportive attitude in the management of house. Although husbands are exhibited as constantly supportive of their wives in the media, in addition to Ayfer's and Selmas's case in which partial support of husbands were indicated, there are also other examples in which partial support of husbands are discussed. In the case of Rezzan, who is a mother of one and a half years old girl, explains that previously her husband was not very supportive of her in managing the house. Moreover, she emphasizes her responsibility of managing the house through an analogy of managing a business at work and managing the house. She says that in her work she is responsible of purchase, logistics of the products sold by her company. Similarly, at home she is responsible of purchase (meaning shopping), logistics (meaning carrying home the things bought). She underlines that after giving birth, her husband started to be more supportive of her but that support is just for looking after the child when she is not at home. Meaning that, she is able to receive partial support thanks to their child. My other informant Kayra who has a son of four and a half years old explains the relationship between her and her husband in terms of

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<sup>38</sup> 'Her başarılı erkeğin arkasında bir kadın vardır.' sözü kabul görürken, 'En Etkili 125 Kadın' listesi de, başarılı kadının arkasındaki sırrı ortaya çıktı ... Dünyanın "en güçlü kadınları" listesine giren kadınlarımızın sırrı, ailelerinin yanında olması.

receiving support differently. She says; “ He is tolerant [but] I am not always supported... he is trying to be tolerant as much as he can, he is trying to be helpful about the child if I come late, which he has been doing recently.”<sup>39</sup> She highlights that although he is tolerant about her being busy due to business, he is not very supportive and he has started to be supportive not immediately after the birth of her son but “recently”. Fulya’s case is a little different since she claims that she is very much supported by her husband. Fulya highlights the support she received with the following words; “In fact, I was supported by my husband very much. Of course, every woman’s husband cannot be that much supportive...Because we are patriarchal society...but my husband ... is much more modern. That is why; I was able to work easily.”<sup>40</sup> Although she emphasizes her husband’s support, her husband’s support is more about tolerance because during the interview, she emphasizes how he got used to her being late for home due to work, her phone calls at 2:00 a.m. in the morning or her business trips. However, she says that he looks after their child when she is out of home due to work. In other words, he is not supportive in household chores like Ayfer’s, Rezzan’s and Sinem’s husbands. What is misrepresented in the media about successful business women as my research illustrates is that besides the examples of women whose husbands are supportive, in real life there are also other women managers who are not able to receive that much support. It must be noted that among my interviewees there are also women managers who get support from their husband; Selda, Selma and Mina. Except Mina, who has twins, the other women have a daughter. Different from the previous informants, during their interviews these women claimed that they have been supported very much by their husbands since they married and they are grateful to their husbands. Generally “due to strong familial ties prevalent in Turkish society, [it is thought that] grandmother and aunts provide support in household responsibilities,

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<sup>39</sup> Anlayış gösteriliyorum, durmadan desteklenmiyorum...elinden geldiği kadar anlayış göstermeye çalışıyor, geç geliyorsam mesela çocuk konusunda yardımcı olmaya çalışıyor, o da yeni yeni biraz.

<sup>40</sup> Aslında ben eşimden çok destek gördüm bu arada. Tabiki herkes bu kadar destekçi olmayabilir kadının eşi, öyle söyliyim. Çünkü erkek egemen bir toplumuz biz... ama benim tabi eşimde ... çok daha modern biri. Öyle olduğu içinde tabi ben çok daha rahat çalışabilen [biriyim]

particularly in child rearing” but both in the representation of women managers in the media and also the interviews with women managers unveiled that the efforts of husband cannot be ignored in the support of their wives. (Kabasakal 3) In other words, unlike what the research about women managers in Turkey in which Kabasakal attended suggests, the existence of supportive attitudes of husbands help these women move up. Selda expresses her husband’s support with one of her past experiences. She says that in 2009, she had a problematic year in terms of her business which lasted one and half years and she was going home the earliest at 24:00. She says that her husband helped her and made sacrifices in that period.<sup>41</sup> However, she also talks about how her husband suggested she not to work after she had given birth, which she did not accept and continued to work. Similarly, Selma’s husband suggested she leave her work and stay at home. But Selma who is a successful finance manager in one of the international FMSG companies in İstanbul did not give up working. She narrates what her husband suggested her as following: “When my child was born he said to me: “stay at home and look after your child”. He did not give much support at that time. But later as he saw what I did; in business life my discipline, my interest in my child, work, my point of view, the education I give to my child. He saw that my child is not deprived of anything, she is improving much more and it is more useful. He supported me after that very much. He is seriously proud of me. I heard that he says about me when I am not present ‘she went there, she did this, even I cannot go’. Namely, he supports me very much.”<sup>42</sup> Selma’s and Selda’s case shows that their husbands were not very supportive at the beginning of the birth of their children. However, thanks to strong minded stance of these women managers they could pursue their career as well as their roles as mothers and wives. Moreover, their husbands

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<sup>41</sup> Eşim bile...2009 ne oluyor, yok 6 yıllık evliymişim- şeydi çok çok fedakarlık yaptı, hani çok şey yaptı.

<sup>42</sup> Yani çocuğum olduğu zaman bana demişti ki ‘Evinde otur çocuğuna bak’ demişti. O zaman çok desteklememişti beni. Ama sonrasında benim hani yaptıklarımı gördükçe hani hem iş hayatında, disiplinim, çocuğuma bakım, işler , bakış açım, çocuğuma verdiğim eğitim; gördü ki çocuk hiçbir şeyden eksik kalmıyor, çok çok daha gelişiyor, çok daha faydalı oluyor, o beni ondan sonra çok destekledi. O da çok ciddi benle hani gurur duyduğunu, hani benim yanımda olmasa da ‘şuraya gitti, şunu yaptı, ben bile gidemem’ falan dediğini duydum. Beni ciddi anlamda çok fazla destekliyor yani.

supported them, to some degree. However, Selma’s discussion of her feelings and actions until her husband started to support her shows that sometimes it is not that easy for women to get support from their husbands. She says that she could not complain about exhaustion even for one day in order not to hear “I suggested you leave” from her husband though it is a difficult to both bring up a child and at the same time continue the work. <sup>43</sup> Even though Selma did not need to work for economic capital, because her husband can maintain their family, she insisted on working in spite of unsupportive attitude of her husband at the beginning. Indeed, Selma’s decisive stand of against her husband does not only illuminate that sometimes women are not able to get support from their husbands particularly after childbirth, which puts women into the dilemma of choice, but also underlines the importance of work in the lives of women, which will be analyzed in the next chapter. Among my informants Mina’s experience of a husband support differs from those of the other informants. Mina is a successful Regional Sales Manager in an international company. Thanks to support of her husband who said “do whatever is required”<sup>44</sup>, she was able to have masters in Marmara University after the marriage. She emphasizes that her husband is not like a ‘classical Turkish Man’ which she defines as a man who wants a clean house, regular cooking and taking care of home. Nevertheless, despite that kind of tolerance and support she received both in her education and in the management of house, she had to have a deal with her husband after the birth of their twins. Because she thought that it was not possible for both of them to work very hard and to look after the twins they have, one of them was supposed to sacrifice from her/his

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<sup>43</sup> Ama ben dedim ki “hayır ben çok iyi bir bakıcı bulucam, annem gelicek, kontrol edicek bakıcıyı”. Ben hani bütün zemini hazırladım. Ve ben 2-3 sene boyunca çok zor bir dönem o –bebeğiniz doğuruyorsunuz, işe devam ediyorsunuz, o süre çok zor bir süreç. Ben bir gün olsun ağzımı açıpta eşime şikayet edemedim. “Ben de bugün çok yoruldum” demedim. Desem diyecek ki bana “ben sana bırak demiştim” ve ben o lafi duymamak için hiç konuşmadım, hep kendim. Yani zor bir süreç yaşadım aslında

<sup>44</sup> Tam tersi “ne gerekiyorsa yap” dedi

own career path. Unlike what is expected from a man, her husband accepted the deal in which they decided that Mina will pursue her career and provide the income of the family. It cannot be denied that that decision is the most important support a woman can receive from her husband.

For my informants the support of their husbands emerges as a way to keep the balance between business life and private life. It cannot be denied that these women managers receive support from outside such as from a cleaning person in the management of the house or their mothers /in law in bringing up their children. Nevertheless, when the question of maintaining business life and private life successfully comes to the stage, these women deal with this issue in the frame of sharing the responsibilities with their husband. For my interviewees who are married, they think about keeping the balance in connection with receiving support from their husband. When the question whether they need any support to keep the balance between business life and private life was directed to them, they came up with the answer of help of their husband. In contrast to Kabasakal's research, the priority of the women in terms of the support is their husbands, which they emphasized during the interviews. For these women, that kind of expectation and receive from their husbands seems to be the display of 'modernity'. That might be the reason of putting forward the help from husbands as the answer of the question. In traditional Turkish society, men are not expected to be included in the management of house and their responsibility is only affording the expenses of the house and family. Therefore, for the women of traditional society, the support of the husband in the management of house is perceived as the way of being a 'modern' family and for my informants support of husband is one of the standards for 'modernity'. That is why; Fulya defines her husband as 'modern'; In fact, I was supported by my husband very much. Of course, every woman's husband cannot be that much supportive...Because we are patriarchal society...but my husband ... is much more modern. That is why; I was able to work easily."

In contrast to old generation of women for who support from cleaning people, old women members of the family such as their mothers or aunts was very important, for new generation the support of husband comes to the foreground as one of the criteria of modernity. Indeed, that also helps the representation of women managers in the media as representatives of ‘modern’ and secular Turkey. Bringing the support of husband to the foreground might be the reason behind modern women manager representation in the media.

### **2.5.3. Time Management and Activities:**

According to the media, successful woman managers of big companies are also successful managers of time. Besides being very planned people, the image of these women in the media is that they are able to spare time for themselves, for their families and their business such that they have hobbies which are not very ordinary hobbies like reading book or listening to music. In addition, they attend social activities and they do not suffer from the restriction of time. However, in the field research I conducted the picture represented in the media was not proved to be very realistic in real life. Most of the women I interviewed suffer from the restriction of time and therefore, the first thing they do to prevent the restriction of time is to sacrifice the time they spare for themselves. Most of my informants do not have hobbies. Furthermore, they also clearly put it into words by mentioning that it is inevitable as Fulya did it:

Indeed, I do not have a special hobby, because you do not have time to do some things, hobbies. In order to actualize your hobbies you need to spare certain amount of time. Maybe, I am a little more sacrificing. In addition, I spare all of my time out of work to my family. I am not even able to spare time for myself very much...I do not have hobbies such as taking photographs, drawing etc. I read book, that’s it.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Aslında çok özel hobim yok diyebilirim yani, çünkü vaktiniz yok ki bir takım şeyleri, hobileri yapmak için vakit ciddi vakit ayırmanız lazım. Ben biraz fazla fedakarım herhalde. Bir de yani. İşin dışındaki bütün vaktimi aileme ayırıyorum. Kendime bile çok fazla ayırmıyorum... fotoğraf cekeyim, resim yapayım falan, öyle hobilerim yok, hiç yok yani. Kitap okurum, yani o kadar.

Similarly, Sinem, after thinking a while, also admits that she has not had any hobbies for two years: “I solve puzzles very much, apart from it I had the hobby of reading book but for two years I have been doing nothing...I do not have hobby, namely”<sup>46</sup> Unlike Sinem and Fulya, Rezzan and Kayra who had hobbies had to quit them after giving birth to their children. Kayra tells that she was acting in amateur theater but is not able to do it anymore because play rehearsals are in the evening and she cannot find a person to look after her son in the evening. She also complains that she does not have time even for doing sports and she talks about how she tries to prove that to other people: “I cannot say that I have many hobbies. I really want to do sports but there is no time. Some say ‘you can do if you want’. I tell them my conditions; really it is not possible to do.”<sup>47</sup> During the interview Rezzan’s reaction to the absence of hobbies was different from those of all other women. Compared to her current life, Rezzan had different hobbies such as flamenco, going to the concerts and attending to photography club. However, she had to leave them after the birth of her daughter. During the interview while saying “Yes we can count it [watching flamenko] as my hobby, but apart from it I do not have a very serious hobby”.<sup>48</sup> While explaining the absence of her hobby, the intonation of her voice gets lower and she says it very quietly as if she hesitates telling it and feels embarrassed. The most entertaining activity that is shared by most of my informants is to go out with their friends. They perceive it as the most important activity such that although it is not a hobby, it turns out to be hobby for Ayfer who says that she and her friends try to arrange some activities.<sup>49</sup> Mina and Selda are also the ones who enjoy going out with their friends. Furthermore, they try to spare time to regularize that activity of going out with their friends.

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<sup>46</sup> Hobilerim; arada spor yapmışlığım var. Eee hobilerim onun dışında hani (burda biraz düşünür) o bulmaca çözerim çok fazla, ndan sonra hani kitap okumam filan vardı ama 2 senedir hiçbir şey yapmıyorum dediğim gibi. Hobim şu anda yok yani.

<sup>47</sup> Hobi olarak fazlaca bişeyim kaldığını söyleyemeyecem. Hani eee şu anda hakaten, atıyorum bi spor yapmak istiyorum ama vakit yok yani şimdi diyolarki bazen “istersen yaparsın” , anlatıyorum şartlarımı; yok hakaten yapılacak gibi değil

<sup>48</sup> Evet, onu biraz sayabiliriz ama bunun yanında çok ciddi bir eee şeyim yok hobim yok.

<sup>49</sup> Arkadaşlarım var, hepsi hemen hemen aynı sektörde çalışan, onlarla çok sık şeylerimiz oluyor olursa işte hafta içleri bir akşam, bazen haftasonu onlarla birlikte hem sektör bazen gene iş oluyor, bazen bakıyorum hani gene iş konuşuyoruz,... onlarla bazen aktivitelerimiz oluyor.

While Mina emphasizes that she wants to regularize that activity by saying “To be with my friends is very important for me. One of my evenings is reserved for my friends every week.”<sup>50</sup>, Selda underlines that although she does not have much time for other activities such as going to cinema or concerts, she tries to create time for that activity; “I like going to the concerts if I have time. I like going to the cinema very much but I do not have time very much. But I like doing something with my friends such as eating together etc. more”<sup>51</sup>.

Though sewing is Selda’s another hobby, she is not able to do it regularly. Beyza is one of my two informants who have the most hobbies whereas she also underlines that she has not been going to salsa nor doing sports. The reason why these women do not have hobbies or do not continue their hobbies is that they give priority to the requirements of the roles they are supposed to actualize. Because they have to manage the house or to be interested in their children, they adopt more the role of mother or wife instead of actualizing their own identity as Kayra, Rezzan, Ayfer, Selda, Mina, Beyza, Sinem. As these women go out of the home, they try more to accomplish the roles attributed to them. In addition, managerial positions impose the responsibility to actualize those roles more successfully. In a way, as they are promoted to higher levels in their business, the burden of their roles are felt more by them, which results in ignoring their interests. During the interviews I directed the following definition of a ‘good manager’, which I mentioned in the previous chapter; “According to woman managers, ‘to be a good manager’ does mean to think about work for 24 hours, to work until very late even in the holiday. On the contrary, a manager can spare time for entertainment and holiday without disturbing her work through good time management.”

Although my informants confirmed that a woman manager should fit to that definition but it is not easy to fit that definition. Therefore, they did not think that definition is realistic. They

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<sup>50</sup> Ama arkadaşlarımla mutlaka olmak benim için çok önemlidir. Haftada bir akşamlarım mutlaka arkadaşlarıma ayrılmış durumdadır

<sup>51</sup> Yani fırsat buldukça konsere gitmeyi severim. Sinemaya gitmeyi çok severim ama çok fazla bulamıyorum fırsat. Ama daha çok şeyi severim, arkadaşlarımla birlikte birşey yapmayı severim, yemeğe vs. ye gitmeyi çok severim

underline the fact that even reading a book is not possible very much. While Mina is saying that she is able to read books in the plane during travel, Sinem says that she has never been able to read books for two years since her son was born. Even going to the cinema or theatre turns out to be the activity they actualize mostly but in order to entertain their children not for themselves. Although my informants are supported by their husband in one way or another, they are not able to spare time for themselves. Indeed, they receive support not only from their husbands but also from their family member, mostly either their mothers or their mothers-in-law. Nevertheless, they are not able to manage time as efficiently as it is displayed in the media. Besides the absence of hobbies, they are not able to attend social activities. The only ones who talk about the social activities they attend are Sinem and Nesrin. Sinem says that she attended in NGO which works to find sources for an Armenian Hospital. She adds that she was also attending an Armenian women platform. However, after marriage, she had to leave attending those organizations. Namely, she had to sacrifice from her own life. Thanks to not being married and not having child, Nesrin who is a Communication and Marketing Manager in a German Company, is the most active one among my informants in terms of hobbies and social activities. Jogging, diving, skiing, puzzles are among her hobbies. In addition she goes to yoga, tries to attend activities of Armenian clubs such as Hrant Dink Vakfı, tries to contribute LGBT clubs, tries to attend conferences about history and she also mentions that she is writing in a political magazine anonymously. However, Nesrin underlines the fact that she learned to spare time for her interests and hobbies and to think less about work thanks to advices, warning and reminding of her fiancé. She even says that “If I am able to spare time for myself, it is thanks to him.”<sup>52</sup> The identity of women managers in the media and the identity revealed through my interviews differ in a way. Interviews showed that due to being busy and having many responsibilities, women managers are not that much

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<sup>52</sup> Yani bugün kendime daha çok zaman ayırabiliyorsam onun sayesinde.

social and active people in their private life. Although the reason of being less social is time restriction, it cannot be said that business life is the main reason for these woman to be less social because the responsibilities brought by the roles of mother and wife can be also restrictive. Moreover, these women managers underline the contribution of work to their social lives, which is going to be analyzed in the following chapter.

#### **2.5.4. Balance Between Business and Private Life:**

The main reason why these women sacrifice from their own interests, hobbies and activities is to keep the balance between business life and private life whereas they complain about the time restriction and not being able to keep up with everything unlike the representation of women in the media. Besides good time management, women managers in the media are the figures who are able to keep the business-private life balance perfectly. Thanks to support from their husbands or from their family members, they are claimed to maintain that balance and they do not steal from the time they spare for their family due to business. Unlike in the field work, what was revealed is that these women are not able to claim that they keep the balance between business life and private life easily. Furthermore, most of them assert that work occupies most of their daily life since they are not able to work from 9:00 in the morning to 18:00 in the evening. That is why; Rezzan admits that she is not able to keep balance between business life and private life. Nevertheless, these women endeavor to keep that balance and find their own solutions such as forgetting about the work after leaving the office –which is not that much possible due to the mobile world-, not opening the computer at home, not talking about business at home, not going to work before finishing the work in order not work at home or working at home after the children sleep. Selma who has a 12-year-old daughter admits that she is able to keep the balance between business life and private life after her daughter was grown up. Similar to Selma, Selda who has a 7-year-old daughter says that she is also able to keep the balance between business and

private life. However, she has a different kind of definition of balance which is generally defined as sparing equal time both for work and family. According to Selda who stays in the office late instead of going home and working at home, the definition of balance is as follows:

You work according to a plan, therefore you have to put your home and your work to certain places. Sometimes, one steals from the other's time, sometimes the other does. It is important to arrange it well. It is significant not to make a habit out of it. Namely, you might be doing a project during a certain period, so you can work until very late but when project becomes a routine, it is necessary to return your home at certain time.<sup>53</sup>

On the other hand, Mina's balancing is not about just being time, it is more about not thinking about the work when she is supposed to work on other issues. Unlike Selda who prefers staying in the office until she finishes her work instead of going home and working there, Mina claims that due to being in IT sector, her computer is always open at home. But she says:

If I am thinking about the works I have to do while my children are talking in front of me, it means that I am not able to keep the balance between business and private life. But if I listen to them at that moment and open my computer after they sleep, it means that I keep business-life balance. If working at home means disturbing the balance, I do not agree with that.<sup>54</sup>

It is clear that these women try to create their own way of balancing business and private life but that way of balancing is different from the picture drawn in the media.

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<sup>53</sup> Bir plan dahilinde çalışırsınız, dolayısıyla evinizi ve işinizi belli yerlere koymanız gerekir. Bazen birisi diğerinin zamanından çalar, bazen diğer diğerinin zamanında çalar. Bunu iyi ayarlamak önemlidir. Süreklilik haline getirmemek önemlidir. Yani dönem dönem proje yapıyorsunuzdur çok geç vakitlere kadar çalışırsınız ama rutine döndüğünde evinize gitmeyi bilmek gerekir belli bir saatte.

<sup>54</sup> Ama karşımda çocuklarımla konuşurken kafamda yapacağım işleri düşünüyorsam iş ve özel yaşam dengemi sağlayamıyorumdur. Ama ben o an onları dinliyorsam, onlar uyuduktan sonra makinemi açıyorsam, bence ben iş ve yaşam dengemi sağlıyorum. Evde çalışmak iş yaşam dengesini bozmaksa ben buna katılamıyorum.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **MEANING OF WORK**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

In this chapter of my thesis, I analyze the meaning of work and being in managerial positions for these women, a topic which is not discussed or mentioned in the media about women on whom I have done media analysis. In addition, I analyze what kind of gains and losses these women have due to their work and the importance they attribute to their work. In the media, generally the characteristics or life styles of women are judged as news worthy. Additionally, the image of successful women which I described in the first chapter is implied

to be a woman's only gain through working in managerial positions. In other words, according to the picture in the media the only thing that women obtain appears to be "success". Besides the successful and powerful woman image, in the interviews I conducted, my question to my informants revealed that work and managerial positions provide more than success for these women. In addition, in the media mostly the positive sides of working in managerial positions are mentioned; losses in the lives of these women stemming from work and being in managerial positions are not mentioned. It goes without saying that the losses experienced by the women managers due to their work are not expected to be revealed because that disclosure would be destroy the ideal image created in the media and also in the minds of people. Indeed, the image drawn in the media is so idealistic that these women are presented as if they have problems of just bettering their business and they encounter problems just in the sector they work in or due to economic conditions of Turkey. As the perfect image is brought more to the foreground, that image is more alienating to the general female population and particularly to the incoming female generation. However, besides positive sides, mentioning the losses and difficulties would not only create a realistic picture but also represent these women managers as more powerful figures, thanks to their ability overcome difficulties. In addition, creating an image that is far from being realistic can vitiate the aim of making women envious about these prominent CEOs.

### **3.2. Difficulties and Losses of Business Life**

During the interviews it was revealed that although all of my informants like their work, their work led to some losses in their life. Fulya is one of my interviewees who takes her work as her hobby and loves it very much. While talking about bringing up her daughter she says "In fact, I did not experience many things about my daughter in person, I witnessed most on the phone; I heard eruption of her teeth on the phone, I heard on the phone that she

took her first step since I was not present.”<sup>55</sup> Although she missed important moments from her daughter’s life, she is not sure whether she is sad about it or not. She specifies it as a way of life. Selma is another informant of Mina who had the difficulty of being manager such that, as I mentioned in the previous chapter, she has never been able to say that she is tired. Rezzan talks about the difficulty of bringing up her child but the type of difficulty she talks about is mental difficulty. When she was directed the question whether she has any difficulty of the fact that her daughter is being brought up by a babysitter, she answered:

There are lot of difficulties actually because you trust someone else and allow your child to be brought up in their culture ...there is always a question mark. You get paranoid and apply to bugs or cameras in the home. Because you are not able to bring up your child on your own, there is always a question mark in you.<sup>56</sup>

Indeed, in her answer she underlines the restlessness and anxiety due to not being able to look after her daughter. Nevertheless, she says that she does not want to give up working and become just a mother and a wife. Besides missing some important moments or feeling the unending anxiety, among my informants there are those who had health problems due to work. Interestingly, while the difficulties in work experienced by the informants who are mother are related to children, the problems/difficulties experienced by the informants who do not have children are related to their health. Ayfer points out that she had health problem due to being ambitious in business life. On the other hand, Beyza and Nesrin had health problems owing to stress and overwork. Beyza tells how one day she was exhausted and was not able to get up from the bed due to exhaustion and stress. Moreover, she points out that it was a bad

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<sup>55</sup> Ben Zeynep’in hiçbir şeyini aslında çok böyle kendim yaşamadım, telefonda yaşadım; dışı çıkmış dedi telefonda, ilk adımını attı telefonda duydum hani, yoktum çünkü. Şey yapıyor muyum, aslında hani üzülüyor muyum, bilmiyorum hani bu da bir yaşama şekli aslında

<sup>56</sup> Çok zorlukları var. çünkü bilmediğiniz bi insana emanet ediyosunuz ve onların kültüründe bi şekilde yetiştirmesine izin veriyosunuz ... hep bi soru işaretleri var. İşte paranoyaklaşıyorsunuz, eve dinleme cihazı, kamera ee işte gibi seçeneklere başvuruyosunuz. Ya kendiniz yetiştiremediğiniz için çok şey ee içinizde hep böyle bi ukte kalıyo hep böyle bi soru işareti kalıyo.

period in her life and she broke up with her fiancé at that time.<sup>57</sup> Nesrin had a very different health problem called vitiligo in which a part of the body such as hair gets white. She says “Once I was very stressful at work, half of my eyelashes got white and they are still white... However, I continued. I had an operation and 4 days after the operation I went to work with 52 stitches on my leg, which cost me a big scar on my leg.”<sup>58</sup> Unlike the woman manager image in the media who are pictured as powerful and determined thanks to their success and diligence, in real life women managers indicate their strength through their endurance for difficulties they encounter. Despite the absence of difficulties experienced by women managers in the media, during the interviews it was revealed that their existence in the managerial positions is also dependent on how they deal with the difficulties.

Despite the difficulties or problems related to either children or health, these women did not want to give up their work. Moreover, the reason why they want to continue working is not economic capital provided to them with work, which was proved by the answer they gave to the question of whether they want to leave their work if the money they earn is given to them without working regularly. None of my informants accepted leaving work, not even Beyza and Nesrin. Nesrin said that she could accept it only if it is a 1-2months holiday, not more than that. I directed the same question to the interviewees who are mothers and asked whether they want to look after their own child instead of babysitter if the money they earn is given to them. Nevertheless, they also claimed that they do not have the personality of a person who can sit at home and just look after a child. Fulya says that she was able to stay home just two months after giving birth. Both Rezzan who was complaining about not being able to spare time for her daughter and Sinem who has 20 month-old-son did not want to stop working. For these woman managers, work means more than earning money such that Selda

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<sup>57</sup> Ben bu şartlarda çalıştım. ... Ama farkında olmadan o sürmenaj dedikleri ee yorgunluk, stres. Ya şunu hatırlıyorum; bi sabah yataktan bacaklarımın tutmadığını ve kalkamadığımı hatırlıyorum yorgunluk ve streten.

<sup>58</sup> Benim iş yerinde çok stresli olduğum bir zamanda 2 gün içinde benim bu kırpıklarımın yarısı beyazlaştı ve hala da öyle...Ee ona rağmen ben hala da aynı şeye devam ettim. Ameliyat oldum, bacağımda 52 dikişle ameliyattan 4 gün sonra işe gittim ve o benim neye kaybıldı; şu anda benim bacağımda kocaman bir yara izi var

underlines that she employed two babysitters but did not give up working. She says that in 2009 when she had a difficult period at work, she had to employ two babysitters. She says:

My child was very small, 2 years old, 2,5 years old. While I and my husband was not at home in the afternoon, there had to be an educated person at home since I was not able to provide anything for her, just love. Because that educated baby sitter had to go to home in the evening, I employed a boarding assistant. That assistant made it possible for me not to do house chores at home. Thus, I was able to be with my daughter when I went home...When I employed these two assistants, I was not earning terrible amounts of money; I mean, perhaps with half of my salary I was paying them.<sup>59</sup>.

Selda's case shows that the primary cause of working is not income. By paying half of her salary to child care and remaining in the work force she believes that she builds a career and while also bringing up her child (being a mother) Selda tries to construct subjectivity apart from the roles attributed to her. Thanks to work, these women can have another identity that is out of the already ascribed identity of mother or wife. In spite of the difficulties they encounter, the insistence of these women to continue underlines that work is inevitable for them and provision of income is not the main reason. It can be claimed that these women do not want to give up the identity of their own free choice, meaning their identity as manager is not something that is attributed to them, different from the identity of motherhood and wifehood. Therefore, their income is secondary when the question of their gains thanks to work comes to the stage.

### **3.3. Gains Provided By Work**

Above it was illustrated that unlike the representations in the media, women managers also experience difficulties stemming from work or excessive working hours whereas for

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<sup>59</sup> Çocuğum çok küçüktü, 2 yaşındaydı, 2,5 yaşındaydı. Gündüz ben evde yokken, babası evde yokken eğitilmiş birinin olması; çünkü ben hiçbir şey veremiyordum o sırada ona, sadece sevgi verebiliyordum. Akşamda o kişi belli bir saatte gitmesi gerektiği için yatılı bir yardımcı almıştım. O da benim evde hiç iş yapmamamı sağlıyordu. Böylece ben eve gittiğim anda kızımınla beraber oluyordum.... Mesela ben o iki yardımcı ile çalıştığım dönemde korkunç paralar kazanmıyordum, yani maaşımın belki de yarısı onlara gidiyordu.

these women what they gain through work is more important than their losses in spite of the fact that these losses cannot be underestimated. Although Smart purposes that “work has become a less prominent feature of people’s lives and less significant in determining their identity”, in the field work I conducted, it was revealed that this observation is not valid in the same way and same degree for all countries in their processes of development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. (Smart 56) For these woman managers “work takes precedence over home as a source of friendship, accomplishment, meaning and even relaxation.” (Kiecolt 23) Unlike common employee perception which defines Monday as one of the worst days of the week due to the beginning of work week, Sinem points out how she looks forward to Mondays. Because she claims that her son tires her very much at the weekend since they do not have babysitter at the weekends, she says “ohhhh in Monday mornings”.<sup>60</sup> Likewise, Kayra complains that Friday is not the beginning of a weekend holiday but the beginning of two difficult days for her. In a way, work turns out to be a way for these women to escape from the difficulties of the maternal roles. Ayfer explains her gains through work as follows:

You have a network. When you stay at home or in your private life you can find things to do but people around you are in working life one way or another. In the old times, maybe it was not like that, there was a different order during our mothers’ time but today everybody is working, you have nothing to do. Therefore, you are pushed to work, I do not know but I do not want to leave business life.<sup>61</sup>

For Ayfer, working is a way for her to belong to her society in that she implies she does not have any other choice than working since people around her are working and to be part of that group she has to work. Explicitly, Ayfer’s identity is defined with respect to ‘Other’. Lash and

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<sup>60</sup> Bizi haftaiçi öyle bol bol görmediği için haftasonları full bizimle ve şımarıyor, extra hani hareketler içerisinde. Pazartesi sabah ooohhh diyorum yani hani.

<sup>61</sup> Bir networkünüz var. Şu an baktığımızda evde oturup tabi evde de veya özel hayatınızda da yapacak şeyler buluyosunuz ama etrafınızdaki herkes bi şekilde çalışma hayatının içinde. Eskiden belki yoktu annelerimizin zamanında, daha farklı bi düzen vardı ama şu an herkes çalışıyor, yapıcak başka da çok bişeyiniz yok. Eee dolayısıyla mecburen de itiliyosunuz belki ona bilmiyorum ama ben hani çalışma hayatından kolay kolay çekilmeyi düşünmüyorum şimdilik.

Friedman states “the Other-directed character is familiar type in late modernity, dependent upon others for recognition and thus for the establishment of personal identity.” (Lash 142) In order to conform to the rule like expectation of her habitus, she regards work as indispensable. That is why; she believes that she is pushed to business life. Therefore, for Ayfer working means to have presence. Fulya who is 41 years old shares the same thoughts with Ayfer in terms of having a network. While claiming that work brings her friends and she enjoys it, she talks as if success is less important than gaining friends through work; “Of course, you do work, projects, it brings you success, provides you with some things but apart from it you have a social environment and friendship and these are important in the life of a person.”<sup>62</sup> Unlike Ayfer and Fulya who talk about the contribution of work in their social beings, Kayra talks about the contribution of work in to her identity. She claims that she has lacked self-confidence since her childhood; “I always thought that there is a better person who can do work better than me and I wanted to play the second or third fiddle. I did not put myself forward in different things ranging from riding bicycle to being able to do a lesson in the school or to sell a project in the business life. I have the anxiety of not being able to do.”<sup>63</sup> Moreover, she says that changing the work constantly, failures at school and disappointments she had in business life made her question “Is there problem with me?” However, she draws attention to that thanks to the projects she finishes and success she had in her work, her work provided her self-confidence and made her say “I am able to do some things, I am not that bad.”<sup>64</sup> Similar to Kayra, Nesrin also talks about the importance of work both for her identity construction and for her social development. She says that her work contributes to her

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<sup>62</sup> Ben sosyal ve dışı dönük olduğum için bana çevre getiriyor, arkadaşlık getiriyor ve bunlardan da keyif alıyorum. Yani hani bu başka birşey aslında hani...tabiki iş, proje yapıyorsunuz, başarı getiriyor size, bir takım şeyleri sağlıyor ama onun dışında bir sosyal çevreniz de oluyor ve bir arkadaşlığınız oluyor ve bunlar da bence oldukça önemli insan hayatında.

<sup>63</sup> Her zaman benden daha iyisinin olduğunu hani birinin o işi benden daha iyi yapabileceğini düşünüp kendimi hep ikinci üçüncü plana çekmeyi isteyen biri oldum. Hani bu bisiklete binmekten tutta işte okuldaki bi dersi yapmaya, iş hayatında bi projeyi satmaya kadar çok kendini böyle öne atan biri olamadım. Öyle bi şeyim var hani yapamama endişesi var.

<sup>64</sup> Ama son dönemde işim bana bunu geri verdi, “ben de bişeyler yapabiliyomuşum o kadar da kötü değilmişim” hissiyatımı alabiliyorum.

creativity. Besides, according to her, working together with international companies improved her vision as well as her environment. She also adds that it is a work in which you know people better “because you are always with them and after a while you start to see who can behave how in which context, how they will approach you.”<sup>65</sup> Thanks to her work, Nesrin is able to have relationship with people more easily and also she becomes more prepared for different attitudes of people. Furthermore, that kind of benefit of work is also applicable to life outside work. While Nesrin says that her work contributes to her general analytical ability, Beyza says that thanks to work “you realize the abilities in you.” She points out that through work “for example you realize that you are a trustworthy person, you realize that you can empathize”<sup>66</sup> as well as thanks to the IT sector in which she works, she claims that she learns many new things related to technology. Mina underlines her gain provided by her work with respect to economic capital. She states her most important gain as “providing a qualified life style for her family.” The general perception about working women is that when a woman commences work she will be more independent from her husband and the roles attribute to her by the society since that woman has her own economic freedom. However, with her explanation, Mina seems to be more attached to her family because of the requirements of the ‘deal’ or arrangement she had with her husband. On the other hand, her attachment to her family indicates that her work enabled her to adopt a male role. When she explains how she took the responsibility of managing the house financially, she says:

We clearly defined it with my husband. If both of us had pursued our career, some things would have been interrupted. If he had worked in the tempo I work, some things in our family life would have been interrupted...Mina is the

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<sup>65</sup> Çünkü sürekli onlarla birlikteyiz ve bir süre sonra hangi konuda kimler nasıl davranabilir, size nerden yaklaşacak, onları görmeye başlıyorsunuz.

<sup>66</sup> Mesela kendinizdeki yetenekleri fark ediyosunuz... Mesela, güvenilir bi insan olduğunu fark ediyosun. Ondan sonra ee empati kurabildiğini fark ediyosun. Karşıdaki insana ben baktığım anda ...o insanın her anlamda; maddi ve manevi boyutta.

person who will work hard, who has to get higher positions. He [Her husband's name] is the person who has to be interested in the family.<sup>67</sup>

Although Mina's gain through her work appears to be related to money, it made her 'the father' of the family even if partially. In a way, she was included in the male domain by taking over the responsibility of her husband and assigning some of her roles of motherhood and wifeness to her husband. The inevitable result of that kind of inclusion is self-confidence. In other words, like Kayra, work enabled Mina a certain type of self-confidence which is not clearly defined with the word 'self-confidence' by Mina. When Rezzan who works in the IT sector illustrates her gains through work, she also implies that work is a means to infiltrate the male domain. In addition to talking about the benefits of work in terms of social network and learning different things about technology, she also says "You improve in terms of relationships, you are confronted with different environments, you communicate with people from higher levels."<sup>68</sup> With her explanation of "people from high levels", Rezzan implies people in managerial positions. Despite the increasing number of women in managerial positions, still in Turkey managerial positions are mostly occupied by men. Rezzan indicates that thanks to her work, she can be included in this male domain of business life. Moreover, it must be noted that my informants who are in IT sector are also in a male dominated business life compared to the other ones because computer science and technology is still a sector preferred by men. Selda illuminates her gains from work by comparing it to the life of a woman at home. By emphasizing the importance of productivity in a person's life, she says:

A person should be productive. Does a person become productive only in here[work]? No... you can experience it in different points but you can

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<sup>67</sup> Herşeyden önemlisi kaliteli bir yaşam sunma aileme. İşin o kısmını ben üstlendiğim için diyeyim. Hani eşimle biz bunun adını net koyduk. Eğer ikimizde kariyer yapacak şekilde ilerleseydik birşeyler sekteye uğrayacaktı. O da benim tempomda çalışsaydı bu sefer aile yaşantımızda birşeyler sekteye uğrayacaktı. Adını net koyduk. Mina çok çalışacak kişi, Mina hani yükselmesi gereken kişi, Selçuk aile ile daha çok ilgilenmesi gereken kişi. Dolayısıyla iş hayatımın bana en büyük getirisi bu özveriyi veren insanlara kaliteli yaşamı sağlamak

<sup>68</sup> İlişkiler anlamında geliyorsunuz, farklı çevrelerle tanışıyorsunuz, üst düzey insanlarla bir şekilde bir iletişiminiz oluyor.

experience it here the most clearly. It is easy to experience that satisfaction by doing house chores, cooking, but not sufficient in my opinion. Here, you always produce something, endeavor to produce, some people benefit from what you produce and they produce results according to your production. It is very important to be part of it. It is also significant to experience the feeling of success.<sup>69</sup>

What she insinuates with her explanation is that productivity at home is not as noteworthy and what makes a woman different from others is her productivity at work because in that way the satisfaction is felt more due to getting appreciation of other people and at the same time being able to see your effect on the lives of other people. . In the review of the literature of the self-confidence in his article Effects of Feedback on the Self-Confidence of Men and Women, McCarty draws attention to the importance of feedback:

A review of the literature of the self-confidence indicates that at least one situational variable-feedback-seems to moderate women's tendency to denigrate their chances for success. (Lenny, 1977) Women's level of confidence have found to be significantly lower than those of men in the absence of feedback, but they can be equal to those of men in the presence of externally mediated feedback.(McCarty)

If feedback is supplied to the performer with respect to her act, behavior or performance, the self-confidence is provided in return to the evaluation of performative act of the performer. In the case of these manager women, that feedback is offered in the form of appreciation. Moreover, they do not only have the satisfaction of appreciation but also experience the agency which "requires that... the actor possesses the ability to observe the consequences of an action and be *reflexive* in evaluating them."(Dietz-Burns 194) Through their work, these

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<sup>69</sup> Bir kere bence her insanın üretken olması lazım. Ya sadece burda mı üretken olunur, hayır. ...Bir kere, tabi bunu başka noktalarda da yaşayabilirsiniz ama en bariz burda yaşayabilirsiniz. Evde ev işi yaparak, yemek yaparak bu hazzı yaşamak çok kolay, yeterli değil bence. Hani burda sürekli birşey üretiyorsunuz, üretmek için mücadele veriyorsunuz, ürettiğiniz şeyden birileri faydalanıyorlar ve onlarda onunla birlikte bir sonuç üretiyorlar. Bunun parçası olmak çok önemli birşey. Başarma duygusunu yaşamakta çok önemli bence.

women have the opportunity to see the results of their struggle to achieve something and as Selda stated how people benefit from that. Similar to Selda, Sinem underlines the insignificance attributed to house chores. Although she says that her perception about house chores has changed from being invaluable to valuable (she confesses that in the past she thought that they were invaluable), for her to be productive outside of home is more valuable since she is not able to see the results of house chores due to fast consumption of what is done at work. She underlines that there should be an order at home so that business life can be maintained without interruption whereas she asserts that being at home does not fit her character:

My character is not appropriate for it. That is, I have to produce outside. House chores are constantly consumed; you cook and it is finished in that evening and your success is not talked by anyone...it is not something outspoken, it does not go anywhere. However, here [in work] there is a ladder; you are climbing it, reaching a result, producing something, doing some things with people. I cannot be a type of a woman who stays at home and produces nothing in social life.<sup>70</sup>

Sinem dwells on the fact that what makes working life different for women is that achievements of women are appreciated and in that way women become more realizable. In other words, production in work provides women with more presence in the society. Moreover, Sinem draws attention to the ladder in business life. While life at home is monotonous, which does not give the opportunity for women to prove themselves, in business life women have more chances to prove themselves not only in male domain but also to the society that gives priority to male domain. Furthermore, Sinem adds that the desire to achieve, to see your achievements and to be able to reach some results and being promoted based on

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<sup>70</sup> Ama benim karakterim uygun değil. Yani ben dışarda birşeyler üretmem lazım. Ev işi sürekli tükeniyor; yani bir yemek yapıyorsun, o akşam bitiyor yani ve onun başarısını kimse konuşmuyor... ama onun bi şeyi yok yani biii öyle çok outspoken birşey değil. Bir yere gitmiyor o. Burda en azından bir merdiven var, o merdiveleri yürüyorsun, bir sonuca ulaşıyorsun, birşeyler üretiyorsun, insanlarla birlikte birşey yapıyorsun. Ev de hele yani evde sadece oturarak sosyal hayatta birşey üretmeyen bir kadın modeli hiç olamam herhalde yani.

them gives her enjoyment. In a way, thanks to work, she experiences the satisfaction of being successful, which she is not able to do at home where her achievements are not appreciated. When Selma was asked what work provides for her, similar to other informants she also underlines the benefits of social network, of friendship. She also explains the difference that work creates in her life by comparing herself with her friends who do not work:

The gains of being in business life; I have many friends who are not working. When I compare myself with them, I am more social, I have more information about daily issues, I am able to express myself more easily and therefore, I gained the respect of many people around me. Particularly, my husband respects me very much.<sup>71</sup>

Selma is not only aware of her positive differences from other women in the society, but also she underlines how she has become more acceptable in the society and gained respect. She emphasizes how the perception of her husband about her daughter changed. Furthermore, she underlines how the attitude of her daughter against her and her work changed while narrating a conversation between her daughter and her babysitter in which her daughter was commanding to the babysitter to look after her own child since she [her daughter] also will go to work. That kind of comment from her daughter not only draws attention to the fact that these women are role model for the new generation but also that the positive approach of children to their mothers' working.

In contrast to what is believed by the society about the children of working mothers who are thought to be negatively affected due to the fact that their mothers are working. My research disclosed the fact that these women have a positive influence on their children. Even though there are moments in the interviews that these women complain about not being able to spare time for their children, not being able to educate them in the way they want or

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<sup>71</sup> İş hayatında olmanın bana kazandırdığı; çevremde çok çalışmayan arkadaşlarım var, onlarla kendimi kıyasladığımda çok daha sosyalim, çok daha günlük hayat ile ilgili birçok konuda bilgi sahibiyim, kendimi çok rahat ifade edebiliyorum, etrafımdaki birçok insanın da saygınlığını kazanmış durumdayım bu anlamda; özellikle de eşim bana çok saygı duyuyor, bu da benim için çok önemli birşey.

missing some significant moments of their lives as in Fulya's case, these women claim that their children are different from the children of women who are housewives. Selda points it out with the following words for her 7 years old daughter; "In total, I see that my child has stronger personality, is less dependent on me, is freer."<sup>72</sup> Similarly, Selma illustrates the same perception she has about her daughter with comparison to children of housewives. "My child knew that her mother went to work, she was more disciplined. She did not behave capriciously as the children of mother who look after their children on their own did."<sup>73</sup> That might be one of the reasons why Fulya thinks that her daughter did not get unhappy although Fulya missed some important moments of her life; moreover, she underlines that her daughter got used to it since their lives were always the same.<sup>74</sup> In a way, the fact that these women are working impact the characteristics and the identity of both women and their children. In addition, obviously working outside the home helps these women maintain their maternal roles better than housewives, a benefit which motivates these women to continue their work.

For these women, besides the money they earn, work opens various ways for to prove themselves and to have existence in different domains. Thanks to work and their positions they are able to communicate with other people easily and they are accepted in an environment which is constituted mostly by working women, men and by managers. Sometimes, the proof of the self for these women emerges in the form of the respect received from their husbands or family member due to their being manager and carrying out the responsibilities of managerial positions successfully. Besides these gains related to existence and self-proof, for these women work also is a way to escape from the roles of

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<sup>72</sup> Ama toplamda bakıldığında, ben kendisi büyüten annelerin çocukları ile karşılaştırdığımda daha güçlü bir kişiliğinin olduğunu, daha az bana bağımlı olduğunu, daha özgür olduğunu görüyorum.

<sup>73</sup> Benim çocuğum biliyorki ben çalışıyorum; akşam eve geldiğimizde çok kaliteli bir zaman geçiriyorduk küçük olduğu dönemlerden bahsediyorum. Çok kaliteli bir zaman geçiriyorduk. Annenin işe gittiğini biliyordu, çok daha disiplinliydi o anlamda. Hani o diğer bakan annelerin çocuklarının yaptığı kaptisleri hiçbir zaman bana yapmadı.

<sup>74</sup> Ben Zeynep'in hiçbir şeyini aslında çok böyle kendim yaşamadım, telefonda yaşadım; dışı çıkmış dedi telefonda, ilk adımını attı telefonda duydum hani, yoktum çünkü... O da çok etkilendiğini düşünmüyorum,... Çünkü öyle gördüğü için.

mother/wifeness and to refresh one's mind.

### 3.4. Contributions and Losses of Managerial Positions

In this part of the thesis, the contribution of managerial positions in the lives of these women and what kind of changes it creates in their own identity as well as the perception of people are analyzed. However, despite the perfect picture of being woman in the media, there are also some difficulties that these women encounter in their work. Sinem explains the difficulties of managing people with the following word:

Of course, the fact that some people are dependent on you is a big responsibility. You are responsible for everything about them; their salary, social opportunities, motivation, their performance at work. This is really a burden. You do not do work in management and you make people do things and you have to care for them. This means extra time, extra effort, and extra brain power.<sup>75</sup>

Unlike what is seen in the media, there are some burdens of being a manager irrespective of gender. Fulya also underlines the difficulties as follows: "You think more since you have more responsibilities and more responsibilities disturb you, tire you and keep you busy if you are a responsible person...but you feel different stress, different responsibility. As you are promoted, your problem grows, your responsibility grows."<sup>76</sup> Nevertheless, my informants did not complain about it. Moreover, they emphasized how being a manager contributed to them. For instance; Ayfer states that being a manager improves "practicality" and "the ability to manage and organize many things at the same time". She elaborates on it by comparing herself with her friends; "Sometimes I look, I have friends working in different sectors. There is an issue but she sees it as a problem. For me, it is nothing. I look and see that she is not able

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<sup>75</sup> Tabiki hani sana birilerinin bağılı olması bir kere çok büyük bir sorumluluk. Onların herşeyinden sorumlusun, yani hem maaşı, hem sosyal imkanları, hem motivasyonu, hem işi iyi bilmesi, herşeyi...Yöneticilikte işini sen yapmıyorsun direk, işini başkasına yaptırıyorsun ve extra onları da care etmek durumundasın. Bu hem extra zaman, extra effort, extra kafa gücü

<sup>76</sup> Çok şeyi düşün, çünkü daha fazla sorumluluk alıyorsunuz ve o daha fazla sorumlu da eğer sorumluluk sahibi biriyse sizi rahatsız ediyor, daha çok yoruyor, daha çok kafanızı meşgul ediyor... ama bir farklı bir stres, farklı bir sorumluluk hissediyorsunuz. O yüzden büyüdükçe de derdiniz büyüyor, sorumluluğunu büyüyor

to solve that very simple thing. For me it is just a phone call. I think that organization ability and your approach to the problem and to find solutions fast are great experiences.”<sup>77</sup> Similar to Ayfer, Mina also explains the effects working in a managerial position on her abilities. She claims that there are different abilities created by being manager:

“One is greater tolerance, you learn how to make people do what you want with different methods. It has effects on all parts of my life. I even do not say to my children ‘do this, it will be like this’. In my private life and in friend environment I see the effects, productivity of my experiences in work by creating discussion environments and leading them to results.”<sup>78</sup>

According to Dietz and Burns, “agency requires that actions be effective in changing material and cultural conditions.” (Dietz-Burns 194) In fact, it can be interpreted that by being manager Mina has more agency on her private life and also she is able to manage and persuade people to make them do what she wants more easily, as she confirms and to change the conditions she was in. Moreover, owing to providing a qualified life to her family and for herself –like other informants- she is able to change the material conditions in her life.

Although Fulya talks about the burden brought by the responsibility, she also claims that she feels the satisfaction-which is the word that she uses with emphasis during the interview- and the happiness by being a manager since “having a title or social status, glances of people at you in your family, friend and colleague environment gives me enjoyment.”<sup>79</sup> Due to biased approach to women in the society, prestige provided by work or position can be a way for them to compensate for discrimination and prove themselves with their own subjectivity by

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<sup>77</sup> Bazen bakıyorum mesela arkadaşlarım daha farklı sektörde çalışan arkadaşlarım ya bi konu var ve onu bi sorun olarak görüyo. Benim için o hiçbirşey o an tamam mı? Ya bakıyorum ya bu kadar basit bişeyi çözemiyo, bizim için anlak bi telefon bi bişey yani. Organizasyon yeteneğiniz ve o soruna bakışınız ve ona hızlı çözüm getirmeniz bence bizim burda kazandığımız çok büyük bi deneyim ve tecrübe diye düşünüyorum

<sup>78</sup> O da biraz daha tahammül, biraz daha yaptırtmak istediğinizi farklı yöntemlerle yaptırmayı öğreniyorsunuz. Bunun benim hayatımın her alanında etkisi var. Ben şu an çocuklarımın yapmasını istediğim şeyleri bile “bunu yapın, bu böyle olacak” demiyorum....Dolayısıyla ben iş yerimdeki tecrübelerimi hem özel hayatımda hem arkadaş ortamında çok güzel bir takım tartışma ortamları yaratark aslında, sonuca ulaştırarak görüyorum.

<sup>79</sup> Bir title edinmeniz veya sosyal statü olarak insanların size bakışları, çevrenizdeki, ailenizdeki, arkadaşlarınız veya işte hani iş arkadaşlarınız arasındaki özel hayatta da tabi çok büyük bir keyif veriyor.

bringing their roles as managers. The notion of prestige is very important for the society and there are different ways in which people may try to indicate that they possess prestige such as class, social life, work, the position in work, expenses etc. For women working in managerial positions the concern of prestige is related to self-satisfaction. Working in a position which is thought to be prestigious may be seen as a way to prove oneself in the society such that being a manager no matter how much one earns or whether that work pleases that person has always been perceived as prestigious. Besides the prestige she experience, she feels the pride of saying “I am the head of this work, I am in the team that signs this work”.<sup>80</sup> In fact, what she is proud of is the existence as ‘I’ in important works. That is why; she feels the satisfaction since she is able to prove her existence as women not only in work but also in her environments as manager. Thanks to their work those women may consider that they are able to change, at least to some extent, the cultural conditions and what the cultures and socially defined roles allow them to do and that might be one of the reasons, besides income, why those women want to work and to have higher career. In other words, these women can act authoritatively on their own lives and being manager gives them the opportunity –unlike the middle positions- to be defined as ‘I’ in the work. For Nesrin that satisfaction does not come from being identified as ‘I’. According to Nesrin, self-confidence provided by work comes from the satisfaction of ego which is provided by “being in higher position, sharing the responsibility with others, making people do things.” In addition, she claims that ego is more satisfied in managerial positions and she illustrates it explicitly:

When I become a manager, the person lower than me does the things that I do not want to be interested in or the things that I do not want to deal with because of the change in my responsibilities so sometimes I assign the things that I think are very long or boring. It creates the feeling of ‘I did not have to deal

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<sup>80</sup> Ama tabi getirileri de çok fazla. Yani hani insan kendini gerçekten veya hani gururlanıyorsunuz. “Bu işin başında ben varım, bunun altındaki bu işe imza atan ekibin içindeyim”. Hani bunları söylemek çok güzel.

with it and I assigned it', which increases the ego... [and] you become happy by saying 'I got rid of it'.<sup>81</sup>

In a way, she demonstrates that what women are not able to do in social life that is getting rid of the work they do not want to do or cannot assign to other people can be actualized in business life, which makes women feel that they have the authority. Furthermore, Nesrin's attitude with respect to the authoritative work she has indicates that agency is gained, modified or shaped according to work identities of those women in managerial positions. As Hitlin and Elder puts, "over time, the various identities we internalize motivate our actions, and we exercise agency in the very performance of those identities. We internalize our recurrent identities and they guide subsequent behavior." (Hitlin and Elder 180) With that kind of assumption, the implication is that not only the identities but also agency is subjected to a change process and inevitably it modifies the behavior and the intentional actions. She has another interesting analysis about the satisfaction that women and men get from managerial positions. According to her, "because women are imposed the idea that they are secondary, men are more active in business life and women also should be active there." Therefore, she claims women are more stressful and ambitious in business life, which results in showing the satisfaction of ego more. Similarly Kayra, who had self-confidence problem, also underlines the fact that "if she had not been manager, it would have been difficult for other people to take her seriously."<sup>82</sup> Selda explains the satisfaction felt thanks to authority provided by the managerial positions. She says that in managerial positions "you can make your own decisions; you can do the things you want to do more easily."<sup>83</sup> In fact, authority which women in the society are deprived of is given through managerial positions. That is

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<sup>81</sup> Daha müdür olduğunuz zaman ben açıkçası çok ilgilenmek istemediğim, sorumluluklarım ve yapmam gereken şeyler daha farklılaştığı için, uğraşmak istemediğim şeyleri altımdaki kişi yapıyor. Bazen de sıkıldığım, çok uzun iş dediğim şeyleri de veriyorum doğrusunu söylemek gerekirse..., bir yanda da sıkılıp uğraşma istemediğim şeyleri veriyorum. Bu da insanda "oh ben uğraşmadım, verdim gitti", bi egoyu yükselten bişeyi oluyor... "Sonunda rahatladım" deyip o mutlu olmak ayrı birşey.

<sup>82</sup> Bişeyleri yaptırtmak işi seni hani kaale almaları demiym de hani ciddiye almaları belki daha zor olurdu, bi zorluk olurdu.

<sup>83</sup> Daha çok kendi kararlarınızı kendiniz alabiliyorsunuz, yapmak istediklerinizi daha kolay yapıyorsunuz.

why, similar to Selda, Selma also underlines the importance of having right to say more. In addition she underlines the respect shown compared to women who are working in not managerial but intermediary positions:

When you are a manager, you are respected more, that is important. You can see the results of what you do, results of your decisions. These are what satisfy me...To be close to decisions. In a way, according to what you say some decisions are taken, according to what you say decisions are taken in management boards. These are the things that satisfy you.<sup>84</sup>

### **3.5. Perception of Woman as Managers**

Although all of my informants agree about the contributions of being a businesswoman in their lives and identity, they are still not sure whether all women want to be a manager. The dubious approach of these women does not stem from the fact that the contributions of business are not that much important. In the interviews three types of answer appeared; while some of the informants agreed with the notion that all women want to be managers, the ones who did not agree with this notion came up with two different reasons.

In Turkey which is defined as a patriarchal society, in family life men are thought to be the head and in business life men are thought to be the manager. On the other hand, the common idea shared by informants is that even though men are thought to be the head, women are the 'real' and the 'secret' head of the family. In other words, women are defined as the managers of the house by my informants. Moreover, they claim that women have the innate ability to manage such that Selma claims that "to manage is in the genes of women."

Ayfer who has the same thoughts with Rezzan underlines it by saying "I think that it

[management] is in the soul of women...it starts in the house, it starts with the management of

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<sup>84</sup> Hani yöneticiyken daha saygınlık sana duyuluyor hani, o da önemli birşey. Ve de hani bir iş yerinde senin yaptığın, senin yönetici olarak yaptığın aldığı birçok kararların hani sonucunu görebiliyorsun. Onlar beni tatmin eden yönler... karar mekanızmalarına çok yakın olmak; sonuçta senin söylediklerinle bir takım kararlar alınıyor, senin söylediklerinle yönetim kurulunda kararlar veriliyor. Bunlar tabiki insanı tatmin eden şeyler.

house, a woman manages a house though men seem to be the manager of house.”<sup>85</sup> Rezzan expresses the same thoughts with different words; “maybe you are already the manager behind. Though there is the patriarchal family life, in fact you are the manager. Even if it is thought that men are dominant in the family, if the women do not want, nothing happens.”<sup>86</sup> Similarly, Fulya also draws attention to how women are the covert managers at home; “In fact women manage very much... women manage the family, actually. No matter how much a man seems to be the head of the family, how much they feel themselves as the head of the family, you manage a small boy, your husband, your father.”<sup>87</sup> Despite this explanation, Fulya is not sure whether all women do want to be managers. Besides believing in the nature of women in which management is an important ability, she says that only a minority can aspire to be manager because according to her “the woman figure that is pushed to the house is the majority” and therefore they may not want to be managers. She implies that women still did not get rid of their dependent nature. Because women have that kind of dependent nature, they generally do not demand managerial positions. Moreover, due to dependent nature they do not attempt to prove themselves and indicate that to manage is in the nature of women. Örucü defines that kind of attitude as “handicaps formed by the individual herself.”<sup>88</sup> Örucü stresses that the absence of attempt to might stem from the absence of will, belief and opportunity to improve oneself; the belief that system cannot be changed and the feeling the obligation to support the system.”<sup>89</sup> (Örucü 119) Although Örucü draws attention to the unwillingness in women stemming from themselves, there is also the issue of approach of other that create the

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<sup>85</sup> Bence bütün kadınlar bi şekilde hani evde başlıyo bu iş, evi yönetmekle başlıyo, baktığınızda aileyi yönetiyo, ondan sonra her ne kadar erkek görünse de

<sup>86</sup> Çünkü, arka planda belki zaten yöneticisiniz siz. Biraz ataerkil gibi gözükken bir aile yapısı olsa da aslında yönetici sizsiniz. Bugün eee her ne kadar erke egemen de düşünülse aile içerisinde kadın bişeyi istemezse biliyorsunuz hiçbişey olmuyor.

<sup>87</sup> Aslında kadınlar çok yönetiyorlar... aileyi kadın yönetiyor aslında. Hani erkek her ne kadar aile reisi gibi gözükseler, kendilerini öyle hissetseler bile yani küçük bir erkek çocuğunu da, eşinizi de babanızı da yönetiyorsunuz.

<sup>88</sup> Kişinin kendi kendine koyduğu engeller.

<sup>89</sup> Kendini geliştirme, koşullarını değiştirme isteği, inancı, veya imkânı olmamak; Sistemin değiştirilemeyeceğine duyulan inanç, sistemi destekleme zorunluluğu hissetmek... kadınların üst düzey yönetici pozisyonuna yükselme konusunda kendi kendilerine koydukları engeller içerisinde.

unwillingness in these women. Although they are aware of the fact that women are ‘going out of home’, they claim that it is not sufficient for women to occupy managerial positions. The other reason my informants suggest as the reason why all women do not want to be managers is the approach to these women in business life. My informants do not complain about working in male dominant sector or environment. Furthermore, they emphasize their contentment with the communication with men while doing business since they utter that men behave more respectfully if the person in front of him is a woman. However, they express the gender discrimination in business life and underline that they can receive that kind of respect if they are able to prove that they do their work well despite being a woman. Rezzan underlines it with the following words;” until you gain their confidence, they do not perceive you as sufficient; at the beginning they may have approaches such as ‘you do not understand’ or ‘you may not know’ but when your prove this [the fact that you can understand and know], they surrender in you.”<sup>90</sup> Nesrin narrates the discrimination story that she encountered both being a woman and not being a graduate of engineering department. She states that she experienced the difficulty of being women in her current company when she began working there:

Ours is a male dominant sector and previous marketing managers were always from engineering department. Therefore, they know many technical details such as watt of a bulb or the rate of illumination, which a marketing or communication manager does not have to know. When I came, first they [men sales managers] tried to satisfy their ego through me because they thought that I am not sufficient owing to not being an engineer and do not have enough experience. But I know how to conduct marketing communication thanks to my 14 years of experience. However, later they realized that I do not need to know watt of a products as long as I know how to express it to the people, they

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<sup>90</sup> Tabi ki ilk etapta o güveni kazanana kadar ını sizi çok şey görmüyolar [erkekler]. Hani sen anlamazsın işte ne biliym iii bilmiyo olabilirsin filan gibi bi yaklaşımları oluyo ilk başta. Ama bunu ispatladığımız zaman da teslim oluyolar size.

retreat a little bit now... When I did not submit to their discriminating attitudes, they regress.<sup>91</sup>

What Nesrin draws attention is that women experience discriminative approaches even in managerial positions; however, they are able to eliminate those kinds of approaches if they do not give up. The other informant Beyza's answer to the question whether all women want to be manager displays that women managers have the awareness of gender discrimination and restrictive attitudes against them. She exemplifies it by her rhetoric question "Can the chair of Türkiye Şoförler ve Oda Birliği be a woman? In our society, it cannot happen. However, you can be the manager or CEO of a holding or a small company. In our country, man-woman discrimination is still present. [Therefore,] you cannot be accepted, you cannot do."<sup>92</sup>

According to her, being a manager for a woman depends on the environment she will work in. Nevertheless, sometimes it is indispensable for the companies to promote a woman to managerial positions due to her achievements in doing the work and the profits she provides for the company. She says that is how she was promoted to sales manager position in one of the previous companies she worked in and in that way she became the first women manager of that company. Rezzan, Nesrin and Beyza indicate that women are able to be present and succeed in the world of men through their diligence, persistence and achievement.

Through their persistence and decisive character, women manage to prove themselves as 'I' in managerial positions, there are also other ways in which women use to exist in the male world as Sinem does in business life. She defines herself as 'poker face' when she

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<sup>91</sup> Başta bizim sektör çok erkek egemen bir sektör ve benden önceki tüm pazarlama müdürleri mühendislikten gelmiş insanlardı. O yüzden de işte bir ampülün kaç watt olduğu, işte aydınlatma bilmem ne oranı gibi çok fazla aslında bi pazarlamacının bilmesine gerek olmayan ya da iletişimin teknik detaylar biliyorlarmış. ... Ben geldiğimde ilk şeye çalıştılar; ben teknik bilmediğim için, sektöre yeni girmiş olduğum için kendi 5-6 senelik, 10 senelik deneyimleriyle orda yaşayacaklarını – şimdi benim diğerine göre ne eksikim var, mühendis değilim, ama bilmiyorki ben 14 senedir pazarlama iletişimi yaptığım için olayın nasıl dönmesi gerektiğini biliyorum- başta işte söylediğim o ego tatminini bende yapmaya çalıştılar. Ama sonra baktılarki aslında ben ürünün kaç watt olduğunu bilmeme gerek yok, onlara onu nasıl insanlara anlatacağımı bildikten sonra fark etmiyor, şimdi mesela biraz daha geri çekildiler... Ben ne zamanki onlara kendimi ezdirmeyip aslında bildiğimi gösterdim, onlar böyle bir geri çekildiler

<sup>92</sup> Türkiye Şoförler ve Oda Birliği'nin başkanı bir bayan olabilir mi hocam bizim toplumumuzda, olamaz. Ama nezih bir holdingin yöneticisi, CEO'su olabilirsiniz ya da ufak çaplı şirketlerin yöneticisi olabilirsiniz ama erkek ve kadın ayrımı hala bizim ülkemizde mevcut, kabullenilemezsiniz, yapamazsınız

started her career as management consultant. She claims that it was a requirement for her so that what she did can be accepted and perceived as valuable. She explains the need for the mask of poker face with the following words:

It was a must for a management consultant because you always go to the customer or you are always in customer environment. You try to reflection the image of seriousness and maturity so that what you did could be accepted – since you are providing a service- you need to impose something to the managers...To make yourself accepted [in that environment] was the reason of it [poker face].<sup>93</sup>

Her attitude manifests that not only the achievement but also the appearance and attitudes are significant in order to be ‘seen’ in male dominant environment of managerial life. Moreover, she emphasizes that she has always adopted that kind of attitude and appearance in her business life not just at the beginning of her career. To illustrate, Selma has tried to discipline herself, her body not in the sense of surveillance or punishment but in the sense of ‘normalization. That is why she says; “You are always in suit, I have never worn even business casual while working. I was always composed...I have never put my husband’s picture, my boyfriend’s picture on my desk.”<sup>94</sup> She underlines that there is always a border between business life and private life. Therefore, she admits that there are two Sinems; one in business life and the other in private life. She also emphasizes that her colleagues with whom she goes to business trips are astonished when they see the difference in her out of the work because she is not that serious and poker faced in the life out of work. In a way her position and work is also brought into the foreground as another regulatory element in her identity because it emerges both as a way to free from prejudices against her gender and also as way

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<sup>93</sup> O yönetim danışmanlığını bir must’ıydı. Çünkü sürekli müşteri ortamındasın, müşteri ortamına gidiyorsun...Hani onu biraz daha hani olgun gözükmeye, şey gözükmeye tarzı. İşte bir ciddiyet, bir olgunluk yansıtmaya çalışıyorsun ki karşı tarafa ki yaptığın iş -sonuçta ona hizmet sunuyorsun- kabul görsün diye üst düzey yöneticilere birşey empoze etmen lazım filan...Kabul ettirtme kendini, hani onun o altını dolduran şeylerdi.

<sup>94</sup> Takım elbiselisindir. Ama ben casual, business casual bile giyemedim hayatım boyunca iş yaparken, her zaman kompozeydim ... ben hani kocamın resmi, sevgilimin resmi, öyle birşeyler koymadım.

to constrain her decisions and preferences by taking her work and position into consideration. In other words, in order to prove herself as 'I', she adopts 'I' in the sense of the restrictive impositions of business life on people stemming from the culturally defined expectations from women and the way of resistance against not being defined as 'I' by adopting a masculine picture (through serious and masculine outlook) becomes very similar to what is resisted; that is gender discrimination. Indeed, she concedes that applying that kind of 'mask' solution is unnecessary because "you understand that you can handle everything somehow with your knowhow by showing 'I'"<sup>95</sup> Nevertheless, Sinem is one the women managers who maintains her career with the double identity she has. Similar to Sinem, Beyza underlines that appearance is an important constituent of women manager picture to gain acceptance and to be taken serious in business life. She claims "a man definitely does not accept a woman manager, if he is older than you, he never accepts and you are always in defense position due to being woman and feminine. You have to be careful about everything"<sup>96</sup>. That is why, women managers are thought as 'erkek Fatma' owing to both their attitudes and their wearing style. In the media and in daily life the analogy of 'erkek gibi kadın (a woman like a man)' for woman managers has been encountered very frequently and Beyza also uses that same analogy during the interview to emphasize that in order to proceed in business life in managerial positions that kind of masculine image is a must otherwise "the woman is 'consumed, swallowed'"<sup>97</sup>

Recently, many policies are developed and put into practice to increase the existence of women in managerial positions. Many companies and organizations try to create new approaches in order to have various points of view and notions. During the interview Selma

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<sup>95</sup> İlla hani o bi maskeyi bürünmene gerek olmadığını, aslında sen kendin know-how'ınla tecrübenle bir şekilde herşeyi handle edebileceğini de anlıyorsun "ben"i de göstererek.

<sup>96</sup> Yani bizim sektörü ele almıyorum, geneli ele aldığımda hiçbir erkek bayan yöneticiyi belki son yıllarda evette, bundan önce kesinlikle kabullenemiyor hocam. Hele ki yaşça sizden büyükse asla sizi kabullenemiyor ve sizde bir savunma halindesiniz siz, bayan ve dişi olduğunuz için siz. Herşeyinize dikkat etmek zorundasınız.

<sup>97</sup> Öyle değilse zaten olmuyor çünkü, devam edemiyor hocam. Yeniliyor, yutuyorlar yani, anlatabiliyor muyum?

underlines that her company aims to increase the rate of women in the company. Fulya states that she was given her current managerial position due to the fact that she is manager.

Although there are those kind of studies and efforts to increase the number of executive women and the fact that the disadvantageous position of women is not eliminated is proven by the different identities -as in Sinem's case- and images-such as 'erkek Fatma- that women try to adopt in managerial positions. Nevertheless, the struggle of women to prove themselves does not stem from the fact these women managers are weak to carry out the requirements of their positions. Moreover, it is the struggle against the notions in the mind of men who believe in nature and characteristics of women as impediment in their being successful managers.

### **3.6 Gender as Business Strategy**

Despite all the impediments they encounter in business life and all disincentive approaches and notions in the society due to their gender, these women managers are able to take the advantage of their being woman. Both in the media and in the interviews it was revealed that these women managers have achieved their positions through their diligence. However, these women use their gender as a strategy to be successful in business life. Indeed, their gender helps them to create an identity as successful managers. Ayfer underlines how she uses her being woman in her work. By mentioning that she is 'lucky' for being a woman, she says "when you call a new customer to arrange a meeting, they show more tolerance for women and really they behave differently. I know that my male friends have difficulties about arranging meeting and they have problems about that. As a woman, I have the advantage."<sup>98</sup> While Aynur is drawing attention to the benefit of being woman in the specific requirement of her work, Kayra talks about a more general benefit that women can have in business life. She claims that "women are able to communicate more easily than men [and] opposite sexes can communicate more easily. Women communicate with men more differently. For example a

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<sup>98</sup> Ne biliym yeni bi müşteri aradığımızda, randevu almak istediğinizde bayanlara hep daha ılımlı ve hep daha gerçekten farklı davranıyorlar. Erkek arkadaşların hep bu konuda daha zorlandığını ve sıkıntıları olduğunu biliyorum. Bayan olarak ben kendi sektörümde bayan olmanın avantajlarını yaşadım.

male customer behaves to woman account manager and man account managers differently.”<sup>99</sup> Thereby, she uses her gender strategically to have better communication with the customers compared to men. Although communicative ability of women is criticized in business life under the title of ‘talking too much’, Kayra is able to utilize it as part of her work. In a way she uses an attitude that is defined as negative to be successful in her work by having good relationship with customers who buy the projects that she manages. Different from Ayfer and Kayra, Nesrin emphasizes the type of respect she has for being woman. She asserts that due to the requirements of her work as marketing and communication manager, she has to communicate with people who are the owners of the branch. However, she says that sometimes these owners of the branches who are generally the men are not educated people. She claims that thanks to her gender, she is able to manipulate these men and eliminate some of the requests of these men related to business and she says “people who make many and unnecessary requests can stop when they see a woman in front of themselves.”<sup>100</sup> Rezzan also makes use of the kind and tolerant attitudes of men against women in her business life. In spite of the fact that she works in a male dominated sector, she alleges that it is very pleasant to work with men because “they behave you very gently since you are a woman... they say ‘no’ less than they say to a man.”<sup>101</sup> She also points out another remarkable issue with respect to attitudes of men in business. According to her, “men trust women in business in times of crisis... because she believes that women are able to concentrate on different things at the same time and they think broadly... Therefore, women inspire more confidence than men.”<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Aksine eee kadınlar eee daha eee kolay iletişim kurabiliyor. Çünkü karşı cins ile karşı cinsin iletişim kurabilmesi daha kolaydır her zaman. Erkeklerle bayanların iletişim kurması daha farklıdır. Mesela bi müşteri bayan satışı ile erkek satışıya birbirinden farklı davranır. Bence öyledir yani

<sup>100</sup> Bunun tam tersini yaşayıp, erkekken kaba tavirle çok el ense olup, işte “hadi abicim şunu da bize yap, abicim bunu da bize yap deyip çok gereksiz ve fazla isteklerde olan, fazla taleplerde olan insanlar karşısında bir kadın gördüğü zaman böyle bir durabiliyor

<sup>101</sup> Çünkü ııı bi kere bi bayan olduğunuz için size daha kibar davranıyolar ... daha kibar davranıyolar ve bi şekilde hayır deme seçenekleri daha az oluyo

<sup>102</sup> Çünkü... sadece tek bişeye odaklanmıyoruz. Biz biraz daha geniş düşünüyoruz. Acaba şu ihtimalde olabilir mi, bu ihtimalde olabilir mi diyerekten veya o o sorunu çözmek için biraz daha fazla seçenekleri biraraya getiriyoruz. Bence o anlamda biraz daha güven telkin ediyoruz onlara ve bundan hoşnutlar.

Rezzan uses gender specific behaviors in the mind of men and is able to manipulate customers with her gender. Moreover she underlines the relaxation of the customers has by working with women due to the fact that” women are more organized, more careful and loyal.”<sup>103</sup> Indeed, in the media there is almost no information about how women manipulate the gender-based approach against them. Moreover, there is always constant emphasis on the equality between men and women in business life for all positions. Nevertheless, my interviews with my informants revealed that they are able to use those kinds of approaches against them for their own advantage.

## **CONCLUSION**

In this thesis I tried to indicate why for women managers in the media an ‘ideal’ image is drawn and the ways in which this picture is similar to and different from real life characters

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<sup>103</sup> Bunun yanında biraz daha derli toplu çalışıyoruz, bi şekilde daha dikkatliyiz, daha sadığımız, bu onlara bi rahatlık veriyö.

in the field work. Due to the imposition of that ideal woman image and its constant emphasis, the efficiency of these images in creating role models for future generations is put into question. In addition, my informants disproved the general notion that women are not sufficient for managerial positions.

In the media, the picture of business women is drawn always with the scenes after they become managers. In the interviews, business magazines or newspapers people are exposed only to their achievements and their plans for the future of the sector and company they work in as managers. With respect to their lives before being manager, only their education life in high school and university are narrated. In other words, people and particularly women are given a picture of business woman after she becomes successful. However, talking about the positions they occupy or the names of the famous companies they have worked do not create 'real' success stories. With that kind of imagery in the media, a picture of ideal business women with perfect life is obviously drawn. The absence of the path they passed before becoming manager prevents the creation of real success stories that can encourage women. In the media, highlighting just the positive sides of being managers such as receiving support from outside, being successful, being able to present in the world of men, being good at time management, to have the opportunity for different hobbies and activities fixes women managers in a scheme and invent the subject of woman manager according to a structure. Thereby, my informants do not believe that the women manager picture was not realistic. They emphasize that the picture presented is the way a woman manager should be but due to real life conditions they think that to actualize that kind of imagery is not very possible. Thanks to her having worked in communication and public relations sector, Nesrin explains how that ideal picture is drawn in the media and what the story is behind that drawing. Nesrin claims that she also prepared news about famous women managers and created fiction about them. She tells how they [she and her colleagues] built fiction for one woman manager as

follows: “We always said her ‘we want to make news about you in Capital and write that Young Turk mother who is proMinant in her work is drawing’ and we took photograph of her while drawing. That is, we constructed the fiction.”<sup>104</sup> Besides talking about how fiction is prepared by the interviewer, she also illustrates how fiction is created by business women themselves as well:

[as a business woman] you take the questions [of the interviews] from the beginning, you study them...if the journalist is someone whom you can affect, after the journalist prepares you take the news before it is published, read and edit and make it in the way you can give your messages, you have a photographer to take your picture on that day and in that way a success story is produced. It is 100% fiction.<sup>105</sup>

On the other hand, characteristics, points of views, life styles, familial and business life of my informant shows the ways in which women prove to be appropriate for managerial positions unlike the generally approved notion that due to feminine features and characteristics women cannot achieve executive positions. Even though the experiences, approaches and life styles of these women mentioned in the interviews cannot be generalized, they open the way for the discussion whether women are qualified to hold executive positions. In the article *Attitudes Toward Women Managers in Turkey and Pakistan*, prejudices against women are compiled in different stereotypes. The general notion about the working women is that they work to contribute to the budget of the family and because “women work for supplemental income; as a result they lack the necessary drive to succeed in business.” (Güney et.al 194) My field

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<sup>104</sup> Mesela biz ona her zaman şunu söyledik; seni işte Capital’e çıkartalım, işte Capital’de işte genç Türk anne, işlerinde öncü ama aynı zamanda işte atıyorum resim yapıyor diye haberlerini yapalım derdik, işte resim çizerken bir fotoğrafını çizerdik. Yani bunların hepsini biz kurgulardık. Bunun kurgu olduğunu bildiğim için hepsi bana kurgu gibi geliyor.

<sup>105</sup> Ya soruları baştan alıyorsunuz, çalışıyorsunuz ...nazınızın geçtiği bir gazeteci ise haberi hazırladıktan sonra basmadan önce alıyorsunuz, okuyup ona edit ediyorsunuz, daha güzelleştirip sizin vermek istediğiniz mesajlar haline getiriyorsunuz, fotoğrafları da profesyonel fotoğrafçıya o gün birşeyler hazırlayıp çektiriyorsunuz, böylece başarı hikayesi çıkıyor. Gerçekten %100 kurgu yani.

work eliminated this notion in two ways. All of my informants are working just because they want not because they need additional income, which was specifically emphasized by Fulya and Selma. Selma even talks about the criticism of her friends who suggest Selma leave the work by putting forward the reason that she does not need money and her husband can maintain their family: “Still many of my friends who are university graduates and who are not working say ‘do you have to work?’, those people are around me...Working is not just for money but to improve yourself. If it was just for money, why would we study in the university?”<sup>106</sup> In addition to emphasizing that women are not working just for money, Selma also touches upon a very important topic, that is personal development. Besides the contribution of work in the construction of subjectivity, for my informants the other crucial gain they obtain through work is personal development. She claims that “ I need to understand and interpret cultural studies and cultural differences since she is working with different countries. I work with different people; therefore I have to internalize cultural. I need to empathize in order to be successful...Thereby, I try to receive extra trainings and I always try to update myself. ”<sup>107</sup> Similarly, Ayfer points out how she is able to learn about different sectors thanks to her work and her position which requires her to go to different companies. She states her contentment and happiness of learning different things through her with the following words; “You learn many different things. I go to a company and say ‘I have not known their business’. One company is producing chewing gum, another one is producing another thing... That is so nice that it contributes to every day , you learn something new

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<sup>106</sup> Hala bile birçok arkadaşım- yani çalışmıyor çoğu ama, hepsi okumuş insanlar, üniversite mezunu- “senin çalışmaya ihtiyacın mı var” diyen insanlar var benim etrafımda hala... Yani çalışmak para için değil sadece, kendini geliştirmek için. O zaman biz niye okuyalım ki o zaman, niye o zaman üniversite bitiriyoruz

<sup>107</sup> Kültürel çatışmaları, kültürel farklılıkları çok iyi anlayıp, harmanlayıp yorumlamam gerekiyor çünkü farklı ülkelerle çalışıyorum. Çok farklı insanlarla çalışıyorum. O yüzden gerçekten kültürel anlamda o diversity olayını çok iyi hazmetmiş olmam gerekiyor, çok iyi empati kurmam gerekiyor başarılı olabilmem için...bu konuda da sürekli extra eğitimler alıp eee eğitimler alıp kendimi sürekli bu konuda dinamik tutmaya çalışıyorum

everyday. That made me happy and I liked it.”<sup>108</sup> In contrast to general perception about reason why women work is proved to be not applicable through my informants’ approach and their expectations from their work.

Another general prejudice with respect to the notion that women cannot succeed in managerial positions is that “women tend to place family demands above work considerations.” (Güney et.al 194) Due to maternal attitude they possess, women are thought to prioritize their family. However, Selda’s criticism of her team members whom she is managing indicates that if it is necessary, family demands can be secondary for her. According to her an employee may not come to work due to illness of her/his child but that illness has to be something serious and she also exemplifies it with her own life and says that in her life she has never done something like ‘My daughter is sick and I will not come to work for two days’ and she adds that in that kind of situation she takes her daughter to doctor, takes the precautions and come to work.<sup>109</sup> Although health is a very important issue, Selda asserts that if it necessary family can be secondary. As illustrated in the previous chapter, Fulya’s absence in the important moment of her daughter’s life exemplifies that work sometimes can be more important than family demand. The fact women tend to place family demands above work considerations is associated with the emotional nature of women. Women are believed “to mix their personal and professional beliefs/feelings.” However, that notion is not something negative in terms of carrying out the requirements of managerial positions. In other words, the fact that women are emotional can have positive influence in their work such as for the ones who are working service sector because being emotional and

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<sup>108</sup> Çok yeni şeyler öğreniyosunuz...Bir yere gidiyorum aa adamlar diyor bak bu işi yapıyomuş, hiç bilimiyodum bu sektörü mesela diyorum. İşte adam birisi sakız üretiyö, birisi lastik üretiyö, biri başka bişey...Bu o kadar güzel bişeyki hergün size yeni bişey katıyo, yeni bişe öğreniyosunuz. Bu da beni çok mutlu etti ve hoşuma gitti.

<sup>109</sup> Mesela hastalandı ateşi var, ben 2 gün işe gelmiyorum gibi birşey hayatım boyunca yapmadım. Ama sabahleyin doktora götürmem gerekiyorsa eğer götürürüm, bütün alacağım tedbirleri alırım, ondan sonra işyerime gelirim.

empathize easily in a sector which requires communication abilities are crucial. Moreover, being emotional is not an impediment for success such that in one of the interview Pinar Abay express clearly that her emotional nature while talking about the ; “I give importance to people, I am an emotional person, I like people because they are people”<sup>110</sup>

Besides, being emotional is “lack of some qualities [that are thought as masculine] necessary for managerial positions such as aggressiveness, risk-taking and decisiveness”, which is another barrier accentuated by Güney that makes managerial positions unsuitable for women. (Güney et.al 194) Explicitly, the decisive nature of my informants can be explained in relation to the difficulties that these women. Despite the difficulties they encounter in business life such as health problems or stress stemming from the responsibility, the insistence of these women to continue to work exhibits the decisive nature of these women. Although interviews did not concentrate on aggressiveness, the awareness of women about risk taking was disclosed in the interviews. For instance, while talking about why she took her previous woman manager as role model, Fulya draws attention to the fact that she learnt how to take risks from her but she defines that risk taking ability in that role with different words; “she was someone who cuts big and thereby not failed.”<sup>111</sup> Selda exemplifies the existence of risk-taking ability in the women by explaining her attitude in business life and how a woman manager should be; “If you are afraid, move hesitantly, do not take risks, you cannot be productive. You should not hesitate. You can do everything.”<sup>112</sup> The existence of risk taking quality implies the presence of self-confidence in these women since generally those who have self-confidence takes risks. However, during the interviews it was revealed that self-confidence in these women is provided by work and their positions thanks to the social prestige and authority to take decisions at work. Another prejudiced approach against women

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<sup>110</sup> İnsanlara çok önem veren, duygusal, insanları insan olarak seven biriyim

<sup>111</sup> Büyük kesen, büyük kestiği için de fail etmeyen; işte bunlar bana hep kazandırdığı şeylerdir.

<sup>112</sup> Korkarsanız, çekingen hareket ederseniz, risk almazsınız; risk almadığınızda da üretken olmazsınız. Tereddüt etmeyeceksiniz yani. Herşeyi yapabilirsiniz

managers is that they “are not well-educated and experience to undertake managerial positions.” In the interviews, unlike the representations in the media, it was revealed that education from well-known universities is not a must. Those who graduated from average universities can also achieve being successful in the executive positions. Moreover, Ayfer’s case indicates that even the ones who are not graduates of universities can be managers. The fact that education is the primary cause of being manager draws attention to the management ability in the nature of women. Despite the lack of education from well-known and good universities, my informants were able to become managers, which implies that there is more in women that enable them to achieve executive positions even in the absence of sufficient education.

While the representations in the media fail to indicate how women succeed in being good managers by ignoring the difficulties and the lives of these women before they become managers, the field work I conducted indicated that women can be good managers as well as eliminate the bias as to their insufficiency in achieving managerial requirements. Although “women face greater barriers ..., in order to be a successful executive, women have to overcome... sex-stereotyping and performance pressures.” (Akpınar 3) Ideology imposed through media tries to create disciplined subjects from these women by showing life based on time tables, drawing a masculine appearance in terms of clothing. However, due to real life conditions, sometimes it is not that possible for women to be subjected to the normalization aim of ideology and women have the opportunity to eliminate “think manager-think male phenomenon”. (Balgiu 331)

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