



WOMEN IN URBAN ECONOMY: AT WHICH SIDE OF DICHOTOMIES? -CASE OF ANKARA-

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Abstract

Major common point of the considerable feminist body of work focusing on women's activities, labor and status in the city, is that a non-gender-blind urban economy perspective should question and bridge the acute patriarchal conceptual dichotomies like public/private, workplace/home, production/reproduction, working-production / living-consumption (areas), exchange/use value, etc. This text is evaluating the partial results of a research designed from such a critical theoretical stand, and carried on in the urban metropolitan area of Ankara-Turkey. The data indicates once more that the mentioned distinctions (both conceptually and socio-physically) have a function (i) on the one hand explaining women's disadvantaged position within urban economy, (ii) but on the other, reproducing this position in various ways.

Key Words: Women's Labour, Urban Economy, Patriarchal Conceptual Dichotomies.

KENTSEL EKONOMİ İÇİNDE KADINLAR KARŞITLIKLARIN NERESİNDE? - ANKARA ÖRNEĞİ-

Özet

Kentte kadınların etkinlikleri, emeği ve konumuna odaklanan ve kayda değer bir birikime ulaşmış bulunan feminist çalışmaların en önemli ortak noktası, cinsiyet-körü olmayan bir kentsel ekonomi perspektifinin, kamusal/özel, işyeri/ev, üretim/yeniden üretim, çalışma-üretim / oturma-tüketim (alanları), değişim/kullanım değeri gibi patriyarkal kavramsal karşıtlıkları sorgulaması ve bu katı ikilikler aradaki bağlantıları kurmasıdır. Bu metin, böylesi bir eleştirel kuramsal duruşla tasarlanıp Ankara metropoliten kentsel alanında uygulanan bir araştırmanın kısmi sonuçlarını değerlendirmektedir. Veri seti, söz konusu karşıtlıkların, hem kavramsal hem de sosyo-mekansal anlamda, (i) bir yandan kadınların kentsel ekonomi içindeki dezavantajlı konumunu açıklayan, (ii) fakat öte yandan da bu konumu türlü biçimlerde yeniden üreten ikili bir işleve sahip olduğunu bir kez daha ve belli bir yerel özgüllükte ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Kadın Emeği, Kentsel Ekonomi, Patriyarkal Kavramsal Karşıtlıklar.

This article is evaluating partial data and findings of a research carried on in 2000-2003 in Ankara, the Capital and the second biggest city of Turkey. The entire research was aiming to highlight the relations between gender(ed) patterns, urban life, local politics and local governmental organizations, and to search the possibilities of integrating women's gender needs with local governmental practices and policies¹. To these ends, firstly, by using quantitative (questionnaire) and qualitative (in-depth interviews) methods, 18 years old and older women who live at the Urban Metropolitan Area of Ankara have been surveyed to define their demographic and household characteristics, experiences of work in urban life, dynamics of spatial mobility and social relations, urban problems, urban service priorities, gender needs, perception of local institutional politics and the peculiarities of their relations with local governments. In the light of the data and findings of this first step survey, secondly, by using in-depth interviews and documental search, the dimensions of gender awareness and / or sensitivity of the Metropolitan Municipality of Greater Ankara and secondary municipalities were examined.

In this essay certain data and findings of only the first step survey will be analyzed, and only with regards to women's relation to / existence within urban economy. The sample of 605 women constituted for the quantitative survey was designed so as to be representative of 18 years old and older women living in the urban area of Ankara. Keeping in mind that a quantitative survey alone is never capable of highlighting the whole picture correctly in a research concerning women (or a social science research, in a wider sense), complementary in-depth interviews were carried on with women from the same sample.

Introduction: Theoretical Inspirations

Major common point of the considerable body of work focusing on women's activities, labor, status and socio-spatial mobility in the city, is that a non-gender-blind² urban political economy perspective should question the acute patriarchal conceptual dichotomies like public/private, workplace/home, production/reproduction, working-production / living-consumption(areas), exchange/use value, etc.. (for ex.: Bailey, 2000; Greed, 1994; Knopp, 1992; Mackenzie, 1989a; 1989b; McDowell, 1989; 1993a:165-173; 1993b; 1997; Rodriguez, 1994; Rose, 1993a; 1993b; Sandercock & Forsyth, 1992; Wedel, 2001; White, 1999)

The debates on the origins, characteristics and validity of these dichotomies, particularly of public / private distinction, have created a momentum in conceptualizing both gender-economy and gender-space together. The spatio-economic transformations brought by industrialization and capitalism have dismantled the "public world of production" and the "private world of reproduction" deeply and harshly than ever before (Donovan, 1997, p. 19).³ Together with the spatio-economic division specific to different genders, "women's place" has been limited and isolated to home and the neighbourhood (Greed, 1994, p.46), and this "place" has been offering socio-economic resources favoring only activities being defined as "women's work" (Mackenzie, 1989, pp.46-54). On the other hand, it is impossible to explain what women do and can not do with those resources, by the "work / labor" concepts of conventional-mainstream disciplines -including economy, economic geography and city planning- analyzing the economic aspect of the urban. Because these concepts are generally identified with paid labor, or in a slightly larger framework, with activities done for and/or within markets. However, "work / labor", in the largest sense, are concepts comprising all (re)production activities, explaining:

"... good and service providing processes producing use or exchange value by women and men from all ages, and within any place and production relation, for maintaining

lives of themselves or others” (Ecevit, 2000: 119).

While carrying on the mentioned research and analyzing the data, this critical perspective has been appropriated. Thus, it was intended to overcome and bridge the mentioned dichotomies so as to highlight women’s labor, and their limits to control economic resources. Considering variables like domestic labor division, unpaid work, gender distribution of the household properties or “private” barriers to participation to urban labor force are a consequence of such a critical theoretic point of view. The target, at the same time, was to identify “the gender of income, wealth, economic power, mobility and independence”.

The Poor of the Household, the Dispossessed of the City...

The first sphere of variables concerning the gender distribution of disposal of and control over economic resources is the ownership of household properties. In 2007, women’s real estate ownership in urban Turkey is 13%, while it is 9% for whole Turkey. In Ankara, 22% of women have some kind of ownership rights over the winter or the only house (14% on her own alone, 4% shared with the husband, and 3% shared with inheritors). This percentage rises to 35% for summerhouses (21% on her own alone), and to 31% for second winter houses (17% on her own alone). Women’s ownership percentage is 12% (9% on her own alone) for automobiles and 29% for urban or rural land (16% on her own alone). Thus, for the real estate ownership both the proportional distribution, and the priorities –when we consider the gradually increasing percentages from the first house to the second and finally to the summer house- are prominent. This imbalanced distribution is undoubtedly related to women’s “non-earner status”, and to their unpaid labor. When the ownership distribution is analyzed with its cross relation to women’s work-status, considerable differentiations appear: For instance, 72% of retired women, 46% of presently earning women, and only 22% of non-earning women have some kind of ownership rights over the first or the only house.

On the other hand, only 6 out of the 72 declared bank accounts are in the name of women. Positive answers concerning the bank account possession counting only 72 (only 12% of the households) are far away from being persuasive. Yet this probably “false information” can be interpreted as one of the indicators exposing women’s weak power over the disposal of the household’s economic resources. Besides, 8% of women reply as “I do not know” concerning the household’s income, which is again an indicator of the gendered limits of economic control. More interestingly, another result of the survey, when investigated “the barriers to be out of home whenever, however they wish”, 30% of presently earning women (that makes 9% of presently earning women) point out to “not having an income of herself”. This datum brings into mind that the income of a considerable female population is at the disposal of other members of the household, or the income is totally allocated to needs other than the earning woman’s. Finally, as it will be seen just below, women’s relation to forms of spending money is highly intense in meeting daily needs of the household. Data on both the gendered ownership distribution and the disposal of and control over the household income, highlights that “women’s poverty” is never identical to “household poverty”.

“Woman’s work at home, never finds favor in anyone’s eyes...”

The most explicit analytical sphere where socio-economically invisible work can be highlighted is domestic labor division. Besides housework, activities for caring of

children and other household members are carried by women, reaching to 100% for daily housework activities like cooking, cleaning, and washing (see Table-1). When domestic labor division is checked relationally to women's earning / non-earning position, only 6-7 units of percentage differentiations realize. Thus, a woman's paid work means –at least- doubling of their work load.

Table-1: Domestic Labor Division (%)*

- (1) One of the female members of the household does alone
- (2) One of the male members of the household does alone
- (3) Female members of the household do collectively/cooperatively
- (4) Female members of the household do collectively/cooperatively with male members
- (5) A woman from outside the household does
- (6) A man from outside the household does
- (7) There is no such activity for the household

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Cleaning the house	72,6	0,2	19,6	2,4	5,3	-	-
Cooking	79,2	-	19,1	0,3	0,2	-	-
Washing the dishes	78,5	-	20,0	1,3	0,2	-	-
Doing the laundry	80,7	-	18,2	0,8	0,3	-	-
Ironing	78,7	0,3	17,9	1,9	1,0	-	0,4
Caring of child/ren	62,0	2,6	12,6	2,5	0,5	-	19,8
Helping the homework of child/ren	30,6	7,8	8,3	12,6	0,2	0,2	40,5
Taking child/ren to and picking them from school or creche	28,6	5,3	6,5	8,2	-	0,3	51,1
Taking child/ren for entertainment like cinema, park, etc.	28,3	7,8	7,6	15,0	-	-	41,2
Seeing child/ren's teachers, participating to school meetings	42,7	7,7	6,5	9,3	-	-	33,9
Taking child/ren to hospital	31,7	18,1	7,8	22,7	-	-	20,0
Shopping for child/ren's needs like clothing, stationary, etc.	35,9	12,5	7,1	20,6	-	-	23,8
Health care activities of needy household members like the elder, the ill	19,3	9,9	3,0	8,6	-	-	59,2
Daily shopping for the household	50,2	19,3	9,3	20,7	-	0,2	0,3
Paying the invoices (gas, telephone, etc.)	29,3	40,9	5,1	23,1	0,2	0,3	1,2
Buying durable goods like furniture, etc.	15,7	30,6	5,9	42,1	0,2	0,2	5,3
Participating to apartment or neighbourhood management meetings	10,7	31,0	3,3	17,2	0,3	-	37,6
Trying to solve a problem related to a public institution (like the municipality, police station, etc.)	16,7	50,3	4,6	23,2	0,2	0,2	5,0

* For calculating the percentages of women-only activities, columns 1, 3 and 5 were summed up after subtracting column 7

It is critical to recall here that, following 1980s, neo-liberal politics and diminishing of the social welfare perspective have become perspicuous in Turkey's economy-politics like almost elsewhere in the world. Certain changes as part of the governmental and economic restructuring have been put on the agenda. Several of those changes have comprised deregulation, non-public-budget administrative units, privatization, etc., which have specific negative effects on disadvantaged groups like women. For instance, the initial privatization initiatives have generally been targeting local services that were standing at the edge of the "public services" notion, such as child and elderly care. The second stage of the Ankara research showed that, for example, one of the secondary municipalities have privatized its 11 crèches after 1998, whereas the Metropolitan Municipality has privatized one out of two crèches. Thus, the burden of "private responsibilities" over women re-grows due to the collapse of social welfare perspective and acceleration of the privatization process. Similarly, increasing urban poverty and neo-liberal politics expose gender-specific effects over women, like increase in goods and services of use-value.

The common characteristic of all those "feminine work and activities", as two interviewee women expressed very similarly, is their social consideration as "valueless and natural", as "non-work", although they occupy a significant part of a woman's daily life:

"For instance, we say that women and men are equal... For instance, the equality of a woman who doesn't work, never happens. Because why? *Woman's work at home never finds favor in anyone's eyes*. No matter how much effort you pay, rinse, pilfer, clothe, iron, those are nothing at all! But when you go and bring five or ten kuruş [Turkish piastre], that happens to be 'the wife is working'..." (Naciye, 9 December 2000).

"Albeit we are at home, we contribute at home too. We are the ones who manage the home, who make the budget, who spend for home I mean. However, that *never finds favor in anyone's eyes*. Are you working? When you say 'no, I'm a housewife', that's over!" (Hacer, 6 June 2001).

The consequence of this invisibility is that all the mentioned work and activities are never subject to mainstream socio-economical and political analysis, that problems related to these activities are never represented at the level of urban policies / politics. Moreover, at the level of discourse and social practices, the fact that the city's "public mechanisms" lean against this invisible it is ignored to a great degree.

Another interesting point regarding domestic labor division is that, percentages gradually decrease starting from care activities of home and household members to activities requiring money. Likewise, for money-related activities, women's intensity lessen starting from daily shopping to needs requiring much more money: 60% of daily shopping, 35% of paying invoices, 23% of shopping for durable goods are done by women alone. Similarly, percentages decrease considering activities that require standing in the public sphere: These data shows that women's mobility, control and existence lessen gradually from domestic activities to outside ones, from less-money-activities of home's daily maintenance to more-money-activities of seldom shopping.

In-depth interviews done with women participating to the research have been focusing on this theme much more than other discussion points. Even though I have been trying to manipulate the stream of the interviews to more mainstream issues of urban policies / politics from time to time, I observed that returns to this unpaid, unvalued labor sphere were inevitable:

“In general, it is me who does the week’s shopping. Because my husband, for instance, if you ask, he buys, but if you do not he doesn’t. ... For instance, I mean, I say ‘buy some tomato paste, Haydar’, and he forgets today, tomorrow he goes and buys. And I don’t like such thing; I immediately go and buy myself” (Naciye, 9 December 2000).

“My mother is a woman who wakes up very early. Still she does so. She used to leave for work after cooking our food and doing all the things. And me too, I was tidying up the beds and so on as soon as I woke up... Naturally, the burden was rather on my mother” (Hatice, 24 November 2000).

“If I see my own mother once in two weeks or once a month, I see my mother-in-law every second days. If she has to be taken to the hospital, or if her medicals are over, I don’t know, she is ill, it has been a week for instance, and everyday I take her to her doctor, for her injection, for her pills...” (Ayten, 5 June 2001).

“There used to be a classical hour of my father, lets say 7:30, at 7:30 dad’s raki and, he is asked, whatever he wishes, cheese or tomatoes, two plates of something get prepared and my father drinks. I don’t remember a time that he took his own raki. He used to ask either from my mother, or, as we grew up, from us. He never took his second glass himself... And of course this used to be a ritual and I don’t think that my mother liked it so much” (Zeynep, 23 November 2000).

“Those times [the period of 1978-80] conditions were too hard... No automobile, no telephone, there was nothing to facilitate the life. No baby diaper, no feeding bottle, no baby food. Such times. Every day you have to boil, wash, rinse, dry and iron diapers. Everyday you have to do this. If you do not, there is no diaper for the baby” (Zerrin, 6 December 2000).

The burden of such “works, services and duties” becomes heavier related to the quantity of the household population (30% of Ankara households consist of 5 and more people), especially at households where more than one family lives (15% of Ankara households). What Edibe -who has had to live with her husband’s relatives for quite a long time- narrates exemplifies this situation:

“They were 19 people... Work at home, work till the evening, washing the dishes, cooking, laundry, any work... The greatest work on me. ... I mean I was ironing at least 20 trousers from morning till night. I was washing the dishes on hand. Beautifully scrubbed.... Men’s boots, shoes should be washed, polished and put in order. If even one of them is wrong, it is all over!... There used to be an open market on sundays, I used to go, I was collecting papers, wood, cartoons, I used to tell my sister-in-law, ‘come on have a bath, wash your son, your children’, I was staying awake till morning, only at about 5 o’clock I was being able to wake my children up, and washing them. And so, it was over” (Edibe, 2 December 2000).

At certain cases, the existence of a dependent person at home increases the work-burden of women’s reproductive work-load. What makes one aspect of Nermin and Edibe’s lives, the former living in a rich neighbourhood and the latter in a moderate one, surrounded by rather different socio-economic conditions, is their obligation to take care of a semi-paralysed husband:

“It has been 12 years that my husband is dependent. This is my life... Perhaps temporarily I accept the help of others. But, till when that others will take your responsibility? ... The person whom you look after doesn't only have physical needs, but also psychological ones. Can others be so sincere? You think about all these... I take him out for a walk, I talk a lot, for keeping him lively, we play puzzles together... [If she were in such a situation?] He wouldn't be able to manage things, absolutely. He would do none of these. Probably we would separate our ways...” (Nermin, 1 June 2001).

“I can't keep him satisfied. For instance, whatever I do, whatever I cook, he puts me in unrest. ... These make me very depressed. ... I mean he makes me repeat one thing a thousand times a day, I'm sorry for these, he calls me a thousand times. ... He demands tidiness, cleanliness inside home just to spite me. I do my best, he makes things dirty, he himself doesn't go and take his pills for instance, I get angry because of that for instance.... He and I go to the hospital. Sometimes we go on foot... I go at 7 o'clock to queue up, I wait at the queue, he sits and waits on the bench, again I queue up to take the recipe, and he sees the doctor. I take him by the arm, up and down, that's it. Of course, it's difficult, very difficult for me” (Edibe, 2 December 2000).

In fact, it is more exact to claim that all those activities defined as reproductive, are not done by atomic women, but by women as a whole. Women who obtain the opportunity of a job outside, transfer housework and care-work partially to other women through creating an informal employment sphere. And, at times when the “main responsible woman” can not cope with those works, other women –daughter, bride, mother, neighbor, etc- enter the circuit through informal solidarity networks:

“We had female acquaintances; they used to visit us... Sometimes... I don't remember if they were being paid ... Let's say, if a sack of this and that, half of it was given to them, those times such things were much more useful for them. They were helping the housework” (Şükran, 21 November 2000).

“You see, I have to take care of everything. Albeit I do have a visitor, you see, I have to do the laundry at the same time; there is no one to help even for hanging them up. ... After I started working, as the only way and the only guarantee of keeping myself in good health physically and mentally, I hired a woman immediately. ... I mean, because I have to think of everything, from leaking – no leaking taps of home to the heater that is out of order, I don't know, from the door which you can not open to the cheese at the refrigerator, to etc. Or I don't know, from the detergent to the bills to be paid; and the requirement to earn money...” (Zerrin, 6 December 2000).

“Mama did not use to go to the shop: The work came from the shop to home...”

Women's uncompensated / unpaid work inside and outside home for the maintenance of home and the household is not limited to activities traditionally coded as “women's work”. Particularly (i) in situations where the husband / father is a tradesman or artisan, helping his work, (ii) producing certain products that can also be bought from markets for the consumption of the household, can also be counted for such category of work. In the context of the former, there exists unpaid contribution to paid visible work, whereas the latter is production for direct consumption, and both forms are invisible within traditional / mainstream urban economy analysis:

“My husband used to be a grocer, I was helping him. I was sharing out food substances like sugar, flour to small pouches. Besides, I was doing the outside affairs of the grocery, I mean its tax to be deposited and so on, it was me who used to do such things” (Ruşen, 10 December 2000).

“We had a restaurant, and occupations of the restaurant. Although cooking was totally my father’s job, but at home too, various things were done... Let’s say, rice to be picked, sugar to store, let me say, certain parts of the meat comes, and that was my grandma’s job, inner fat, cartilage. Moreover, neighbors used to come, fat was leaked out, frost fat was burnt, poured into bowls... Those were all for the shop. ... The restaurant ran all throughout 50s, 60s and 70s... My mother didn’t use to go to the restaurant, the work used to be brought from the restaurant to home, and back from home to the restaurant... Apprentice boys were bringing and taking back... [After sometime, the family moves to the flat over the restaurant]... My father had table clothes sewed, napkins and so on, in order to render the shop first class, second top clothes over the clothes. And those, for instance, would be washed, there was the home over the shop, napkins were immediately washed and ironed, taken down to the shop, we would prepare the tables, arrange the napkins as like at first class restaurants... All was washed manually... My mother and grandma were responsible for this work” (Şükran, 21 November 2000).

“My mother was rather uncomfortable due to lack of an income of her herself. ... I mean, that’s, she used to be careful about spending the money, in small amounts and appropriately, trying to save a little, and so on, because she considered it as my father’s money. She used to sew dresses for us from her own dresses, etc., albeit as far as I know our income was quite OK... During my childhood, the majority of my clothes were such. And still she sew, when I ask...” (Zeynep, 23 November 2000).

“We used to go to bazaar with my mother quite frequently. She was very handy in sewing, knitting. For all of us, for papa, me. And in that sense, I mean, those times things like ready-made were not widespread; besides there wasn’t enough resource of the family to allocate to such things, to be honest. But, at any feast and any birthday we were able to wear new things. But how? Because they were made for us. She was working half-day. She was very hardworking. ... While she was listening to the radio-theatre, she used to sew or knit” (Zerrin, 6 December 2000).

Women independently from their earning/non-earning position carry on such "supportive" and/or use-value producing activities. However, women’s paid work within urban economy is also embedded with certain characteristics related to gender asymmetries. Below will be exposed these distinctive features.

Income Generating Activities⁴ and its Gendered Limitations

According to the quantitative survey, 19% of women living in Ankara are occupied in some kind of income generating activity (medium for urban Turkey is 17%). Nearly 1/3 of those women’s occupations can be categorized as informal work (see Table-2). A positive correlation (r.v. +0,2) is observed between the quantity of women doing income generating activities and the socio-economic development level of the neighbourhood. The percentage of women carrying income generating activities nearly doubles the average (19%) in rich neighborhoods (37%), while in moderate neighborhoods

approximates to the average (%21), and in poor neighborhoods remains very low (%9). Besides, there exist no retired women in poor neighbourhoods, which can be evaluated as an indicator showing that temporary and insecure work is a more significant characteristic at poor neighbourhoods (which are generally squatter settlements at the surroundings of the city).

Table-2: Distribution of Income Producing Women Activities according to their Occupations*

	N.	Percentage (%)
Working full-time at a private sector institution	26	22,8
On the permanent staff of a public sector institution	25	21,9
Piece-work at home (sewing, embroidery etc.)	16	14,0
Small artisan or craftswoman	10	8,8
Full-time worker at public sector	9	7,9
Doing housework at others' houses as day-laborer, housemaid	8	7,0
Employer	6	5,3
Child-care or private teaching	4	3,6
On full-time contract at a public sector institution	3	2,6
Working half-time at a private sector institution	2	1,8
Marketing towels, underclothing, cosmetics, etc. individually	2	1,8
Other	3	2,7
Total	114	100,0

* Bold lines show the activities grouped as “informal”

There is also a strong correlation between the quantity of women doing income generating activities and the distance of the living environment from the city-center: As the living environment becomes more distant, the percentage of women involved in income generating activities decreases (r.v. -0,2): In neighbourhoods categorized as “far from the center”, the percentage (14%) is rather below the average, while in moderate distance neighborhoods it is 22%, and in living environments at or near to the center, the percentage nearly doubles the average (35%). This negative correlation can be explained by the scarcity of job opportunities at distant districts, transportation difficulties to / from the center –where job opportunities are better- and related time and financial cost problems for women, who have to carry out housework and income generating activities in parallel⁵. In-depth interviews have confirmed the validity of these factors:

“If there was textile business in Etimesgut [a rather far district of metropolitan Ankara] where women can work, I don't know, perhaps cleaning work, from the cradle to the elderly everyone would work, there would be no one unemployed. We are all in great straits. Already a minibus ticket costs 6-7, go and come back, it's going to be 1,5 for travel, and my man says in this situation, ‘it is better to stay at home’” (Ayşegül, 28 May 2001).

Thus, “staying in her place”, distance of the neighbourhood to the city center, and inability to do some income generating activity are intertwined, and reproduce the former and the latter

ones. Several studies concerning certain urban areas of Turkey offer indicators that women's activities, social relation networks and mobility weaken from home to the near environment, and finally to the whole city, from informal to formal relations, and from neighborhood administrations to local governments (Ayata, 1999; Gökçe et al, 1993, pp. 220-349; KASAİD, 2000, pp. 23-9; WALD, 1998a,b,c,d). One of the most striking results of our research too, was that 42% of women in Ankara were getting out of their neighborhoods once a week or less (Alkan, 2005: 113-7). This very high percentage was especially valid for low-income / poor squatter settlements (*gecekondus*) and / or areas far away from the city center.

One more positive relation exists, which is between educational level and women's income generating activity, especially after primary school graduation (r.v. +0,3): 11% of illiterates, literates and primary school graduates, 13% of secondary school graduates, 27% of lycée graduates, 39% of university students, and 64% of university / high school graduates are presently active in income generating activities (However, this last percentage means that, from the other point of view, 36% of well-educated women are dependant economically).

“When I married, as he didn't want, I stopped working, I wish I hadn't...”

There exists an un-linear relation between marital status and women's income generating activity: 43% of single women, 38% of the engaged, 17% of the married-and living with the husband, 33% of the married-but separate, 27% of the divorced, and 16% of the widow are active in an income generating activity. Relatively low percentage for the widow can be explained by the age variable rather than the marital status. Marriage seems to be a critical point for women's “participation to active labor-force”. Thus, the percentages are lower than the average (19%) only for women married-and living with the husband, and the widow.

Albeit the quantitative survey study put forth the percentage of women who have the experience of income generating activity (presently working, worked, and retired) as 29%, in-depth interviews have exposed that nearly all women, including women who have answered as “no” to the questionnaire, had done so at least for short terms. However, when compared to men's experience in general, this experience is rather irregular, discontinuous, and provisional. Thus, women themselves rarely define that as “work”. Celibacy, depart of the husband for military service, a period apart from the husband, husband's health problems impeding his working or his death exemplifies such “casual situations”:

“I used to work, I mean when I was celibataire... I worked at textile firms. When I married, as he didn't want, I stopped working, I wish I hadn't...” (Ayşegül, 28 May 2001).

“Earning money, perhaps when my husband was away for his military service, I sewed for others, a little. However, for a very short time... The state never pays to reserve conscript officers. Thus, financial problems occurred” (Nermin, 1 June 2001).

“I started working for a computer company, that, at the period when I lived separately from my husband. ... The job was good, I was working, but he didn't let then. I was cooking and delivering tea. I worked for 1,5-2 years. Then I left. I regret so much. My husband didn't consent after we have made it up” (Sati, 28 May 2001).

“He had an accident. I worked for 3-4 months. ... Then he recovered, and I stopped working... I mean, we fell out with him. To be honest, he didn't want. He said 'there's no need'. ... He started working, and then I stopped. ... He felt himself powerless, me too, I know, I experienced those feelings. I assume he didn't want the money to be in my hands, my strength. Still he doesn't. ... I don't know, perhaps things change from man to man but... I mean, freedom, they want the control of the money. He wants to be able to oppress whenever he wants, ... to have total control concerning financial issues” (Hacer, 6 June 2001).

Many of these expressions, when considered together with quantitative data, point out to mainly three inter-related deeper phenomena: The first is the process known as “housewife-ization” in literature (Ilkcaracan, 1998, pp. 285, 90; Ecevit, 2000, pp. 130, 153-4). In Turkey, since late 1940s where migration from the rural to the urban started to accelerate, women's “participation to labor-force” constantly decreased: Women working as unpaid family workers in the rural areas have been excluded from urban labor markets to a large degree, and transformed into housewives (Kalaycıoğlu and Rittersberger, 2001, pp. 31). In Turkey of 1955, 95% of women were working in the agricultural sector, whereas in 2006 that percentage is 54%. However, “women's participation to labor-force”, which was more than 80% just before 1950, is only 26% in 2006. This percentage is 17% for the urban areas, whereas 38% for the rural. The gap between the percentages discloses quite clearly the category of “housewives”, who are visible as neither participants to urban labor, nor the unemployed via statistics.

Secondly, the housewife-ization process parallel to urbanization is a consequence of not only women's exclusion from urban labor markets, but also “urban forms of masculinity and masculine domination”. In other words, exclusion is created via not only the market, but also the family. In her research targeting new migrants to İstanbul of 1990s, Kümbetoğlu (2001, p.276) determines that discontent concerning the idea of women's working outside depends on the anxiety to control the “woman's chastity”. Thus, the fear of “releasing women to insecure places” may outstrip “the city's imprisoning aspect rather than its emancipating potential”.

Thirdly, expressions above, at the same time, indicate that a woman's income generating activity often requires “a legitimizing reason”. In this context, one of the most striking cases where multiple peculiarities concerning “being a woman in urban Turkey” interact in a complex way is the experience of Aysel S. On the questionnaire, her marital status was marked as “widow”. However when I visited her for an in-depth interview, I learnt that her “husband” had died 11 years ago, and she was his second wife on religious (unofficial) betroth. Aysel S. told that they all (the husband, first – official- and second wives) lived together until the man's -who used to be an officer on contract- death. However, she and her sons entered a process of impoverishment then, because the title deed of the house (a *gecekondu*) and the widow pension were normally on the name of the official betrothed wife. At the time of the interview, Aysel S. was unemployed and looking for a job. Contradictory consequences of being a widow were overt in the case of Aysel S. She expressed, on the one hand increasing socio-economic pressure after the husband's death; and on the other, the legitimacy for income generating activity brought again by the position of being a widow as:

“In the evenings for instance, after dinner, I go out for a walk. I visit the neighbors every two or three days, that's it... I go nowhere outside the neighborhood... Actually, I mean, cause I do not have my husband, for instance if you take your bag, dress, and go,

go for a friend, for a visit, they'll gossip, 'she doesn't have her husband, where does she go', etc.... I forbear I mean... But there is nothing if you go for working. That's a requirement, you'll earn. They know my situation" (25 May 2001).

After her husband died, she looked after an old ill man for about 8 months until his death. Afterwards, she worked for a cleaning firm until the owners of the firm changed and they employed "their own men". As understood from this case, especially for unqualified women, being positioned at the margin of the work-life manifests itself as a repeating characteristic. However, gendered barriers for participation to "urban labor force" is not limited to being unqualified.

"If I were a man, they would say 'of course, that's a good idea'..."

In the framework of the quantitative survey, women who are not engaged in an actual income generating activity were asked (except the retired) if they would want, to which 56% replied positively. 46% of them were primary school graduates, 21% lycée, 13% secondary school graduates, 8% illiterate, 7% literate, and 3% university students and graduates. From this profile, it can be concluded that the majority of women willing to earn money, are not highly educated and / or are not professionals. More than ¾ of them are members of households living under poverty line.

When investigated why they can not realize this desire, 55% in total put forward domestic and/or "private" barriers (24% husband's or another relative's disapproval, 26% hesitation considering child/ren's care, and 4% hesitation considering housework) (see Table-3). Such barriers are more significant for women living in poor and moderate settlements.

Table-3: Reasons for not doing Income Generating Activity although Wished *

	N.	Per. (%)
Because she can not find a job	82	31,3
Thinks that her child/ren would be deprived of care	69	26,4
Her husband doesn't approve	53	20,2
There is no job at her living environment	13	5,0
Thinks that she wouldn't be able to carry on together with housework	11	4,2
Her son doesn't approve	5	1,9
Thinks that she doesn't possess appropriate skills or education	5	1,9
Because of her age	5	1,9
She is a student	4	1,6
For reasons of health	4	1,5
Her fiance doesn't approve	3	1,1
She doesn't assume that time to be spent at work would worth its profit	3	1,1
Her father doesn't approve	2	0,8
The family of her fiance doesn't approve	1	0,4
Not replied	2	0,8
Total	262	100,0

* Bold lines expose domestic and/or "private" barriers

Not surprisingly, these domestic / "private" barriers are effectual for women married and living with the husband (92% of women pointing out to such barriers). And women who are able to participate "work life" can often succeed in this only by maintaining a stable struggle against those barriers, moreover, as will be seen in the following case, by trying to match their income generating work choices and arrangements with domestic demands. The following quotation offers a typical example of "double work-day" and "sewing the patchwork of different urban activities" (McDowell, 1993a, pp. 166):

"I have always thought to work, so much, but I was very lonely. I mean, there were no acquaintances around to look after the children. ... Afterwards, my little son finished the second class and I was observing that he was tidy, and so on. ... So, I worked at a store for about two years... I was delivering tea and do the cleaning... Then... He used to receive appreciation certificates when he was at primary school... But, when he started secondary school, he had a bad mark at the end of the first semester. I said to myself that this bad mark was a consequence of my job. Because I used to leave home at seven in the morning and return at eight in the evening. ... I quitted the job, because I couldn't have the opportunity to take care of the children. ... Afterwards I stayed at home for about one year. When he started the second class, I said, I saw that he was OK, the first semester his school report was good. I decided on this house-cleaning work. ... Because I would stop work at two in the afternoon, and I would have spare time for the children. So I started... And my husband consented too. Before he didn't. 'Who will take care of the children, I don't like women working', so on, 'the place of a woman is her home'. But I struggled a lot. ... You can work, you can not, we quarreled a lot. In the end I could make him get used to the idea. At first step, I only worked for three days a week. After several months I made it four. And then, now, I work five days a week. Such a struggle. And, still he is not so tolerant in fact.

(...)

I return home earlier, burn the coal-heater, and put food on the cooker. My daughter comes and does ironing, then she studies. My son comes and makes all untidy! That's it, that's it I mean. Men do not help too much... Arranging my time is very important. For instance, from certain houses I work... I leave at five in the evening, when I go to the older woman's house I leave at three in the afternoon, and so I compensate the day before. When I stop working at three, whatever to do at home, ironing for instance, I immediately do the ironing until five, then I cook, and then, when I leave at five, I have to do no housework, because the food is ready from the day before" (Naciye, 9 December 2000).

Further than such "patriarchal bargains" (Kandiyoti, 1988), 31% of women, who want to be engaged in income generating activity, simply mention that they are not able to find a job. Together with the ratio of women who declare that they can not work due to lack of job opportunities in their near living environment (5%), a high ratio of unemployment (36%) occurs. This ratio, according to official statistics, is 10% for Turkey, and 19% for urban Turkey –which absolutely underestimates. Concerning women's unemployment, in-depth interviews indicate that, differentially from men's, factors like dissuasive attitudes from the social environment, lack and/or insecurity of employment and consultation institutions, insufficiency of financial support mechanisms for women are influential:

“I have always wanted to establish my own business... I wasn't divorced yet, and my daughter was little, I was not able to set things right yet. ... And perhaps, at that period such things were influential: I was afraid. Why was I afraid? Everybody warned me about 5th April economic decisions, about taxes, etc., they said that it would be very difficult, they asked if I would be able to overcome credits. And all those frightened me... Why, if a man is able to pay credits back, why couldn't a woman? ... Undoubtedly, you have to get benefit of others' experiences, and when all those others are men, they talk to you in a distorting manner. ... I mean, you decide to establish a business, and because you are a woman, you can not succeed; but if I were a man they would say 'of course, that's a good idea'. I was planning to open a bakery at that corner of the street... Everybody reacted as 'are you crazy?' And now, very fine, exactly at the same place there is a shop selling bread etc., the man runs his business. But I assume, when that man was at the very beginning, everyone must have said, 'very good idea, there is no such bakery here!'” (Filiz, 25 November 2000).

“I can not trust to job announcements in newspapers. It may be good, but it may be bad too. You are a woman. You can not be sure if that will bring trouble upon you, or not... The world around has degenerated” (Aysel S., 25 May 2001).

Concluding Remarks

In order to understand women's relational position within the economic life of the city – here Ankara-, analyzing main (re)production mechanisms and refraction points of male-dominance, in other words gender-biased patterns, at various levels of urban structures and processes is required. Those patterns, which occur in forms like naturalizing, externalizing / rendering invisible, rendering secondary / marginalizing, partializing, inevitably become related to public-private dichotomy and its derivative dichotomies.

Thus, an urban (economy) comprehension and conception that could explain women's specific position can be developed only from a perspective convenient to question and overcome the traditional dichotomies, and to render visible the connections between the two sides of those dichotomies.

At the conceptual level, distinctions like public-private, outside-inside, production-reproduction, economic-noneconomic, exchange value-use value, workplace-home, etc. have a function (i) on the one hand explaining women's disadvantaged position within urban economy, (ii) but on the other, reproducing this position in various ways. Firstly, women relate to the second side of such dichotomies to a large degree. For example, in the context of social division of labor, the burden of housework, child-care and daily maintenance of the household is on women's shoulders, independently from their earning/non-earning position, reaching to 100% for daily care activities. On the contrary, only 14% participate to formal work-life. When included informally working women, that makes 19%. Thus, women are connected with inside rather than outside, home rather than workplace, reproduction rather than production, and the so called non-economic rather economic.

However, above-mentioned dichotomies with their traditional /s (slashes) are not enough for understanding women's lives. Two sides of dichotomies relate to each other at various levels. For instance, the limits to benefit from the social, economic and spatial

opportunities offered by the city are drawn from inside, from home, from private sphere, to a great degree. Those limits repeatedly become manifest in the context of many indicators such as the imbalanced distribution of household properties and wealth, the relation between deprivation of individual income and the freedom of being outside, domestic and near social environment barriers to be active in income generating activity, etc. Again, it is impossible to define activities like helping the work of men, or (use value) production for direct use, simply as “reproduction or non-economic”. Alike, workplace is the home for 26% of women who are engaged in income generating activities; and distinctions like home-workplace, working zones-living zones or work-recreation offer too little for comprehending those women’s lives.

The fact that women’s relation to the second side of dichotomies is stronger than to the first, and that these dichotomies are essentially permeable and reciprocal, renders many gender(ed) problems and needs invisible or –at best- renders them secondary. Thus, these needs and problems happen to be conceived as the subject of the so-called private sphere rather than public socio-economic policies and intervention. In this sense, the situation of public/municipal crèches offers a typical example: Public crèches – including the municipal ones- s4evice exclusively to the children of public sector employees in Turkey. Here, child-care is conceived as a private responsibility rather than a social/public one, and the “status of working” is defined as paid-formal labor within the public sector. Consequently, child-care facilities are offered as not social service, but as employee support service. However, the area examined here brought out that, for instance, 26% of women who like to be engaged in an income-generating activity, can not realize their will do to their hesitation concerning children’s care. Again, 34% of al the sample has declared a low-cost public crèche or student study center in their neighborhood, and this percentage includes women who are not actually involved in income-generating activities too.

It is possible to amplify the exemplars. However, my insisting focus on the central but contradictory importance of private-public and derivative dichotomies for comprising women’s urban (economic) lives depend on a strong assumption that an urban economy-perspective and policy-set could only be built on a basis conceiving the connections between those gendered distinctions. The establishment and improvement of such a comprehensive perspective is a necessity for not only rendering women, their activities, labor, needs and problems visible, but also due to huge transformations in production economy and labor processes since 1970s. Henceforth, in “women’s place”, resources are mobilized for not only private familial life, but also for social services and formal-work life. This can also be evaluated as an outcome of women’s efforts for meeting new needs and developing new forms and uses of space. Thus, suggesting to overcome the conventional distinctions of gendered urban environment, to conceive the public and the private, the work-life and domestic life in an integrated framework, is also a necessity for conceiving the actual socio-economic and spatial transformative processes, let alone conceiving “women’s world”.

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[¹] The entire research project has been evaluated and published in Alkan, 2005. The results of this academic work have not only been the source of several publications and papers, but also been articulated to efforts of women's movement through a campaign process targeting women's empowerment in local politics (Ka-der Ankara: 2004), that is one of the epistemological principals of doing feminist academic work (shortly, "returning women's knowledge back to women" or "contributing to positive change of patriarchal structures and processes") (Alkan, 2004).

[²] The concept of 'gender-blindness' or its more innocent version as 'gender-neutrality' implies that the living conditions, needs and problems of different genders are the same. However, as long as power, resources, and opportunities are distributed asymmetrically between men and women (as gender categories), this claim to neutrality (re)produces gender-biased structures and processes, which are pro-men. A basic assertion of academic feminism is that 'gender' should be conceived as one of the main factors establishing and interpreting the societal phenomenon. In other words, the sphere named as the 'societal' is entirely structured and restructured by gendered relations; there is no other sphere external to this structuration.

[³] Davidoff (2002, pp. 159-60) brings out that, prior to widespread industrialization, this separation of "public production" and "private reproduction" has been a consequence of the dissociation of household and business budgets, rather than a physical separation. Following the invention and adoption of double-entry accounting method in the 17th century Holland, commercial activities became independent from domestic life, and this split has made systematic capital accumulation possible.

[⁴] I use the term of "income generating activity" not in the sense of its widespread use (generally informal, micro-credit based, and/or irregular) but in order to distinguish paid work from unpaid work of women. In other words, I prefer this term instead of the conventional concept of "work", which associates only public, paid, visible labor.

[⁵] Cf. McDowell, 1989, pp. 140-1, for a detailed example displaying how the daily time-space table and job opportunities of a woman working or wishing to work outside are narrowed due to the urban spatial organization.