Chapter 10

The Family in Turkey:
The Battleground of the Modern and the Traditional

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INTRODUCTION

Turkey is a secular, Muslim society with rapid social change (Aytaç, 1998; World Factbook, 2006) and the uncommon combination of a European modernism and traditional agrarian patterns like those found in developing nations (Aykan & Wolf, 2000). Urbanization, industrialization, employment in the service sector, and the demographic shifts leading to a larger number of children and young people (even as the population ages) all have brought about changes in family structure and life in the last decades (Aytaç, 1998; Vergin, 1985). Rural-to-urban migration has produced the mixture of Islamic traditionalism with urban-based Western values and lifestyles (Erman, 1997). Governmental reforms, resistance by some groups, and the process of social change results in a society characterized by both modernism and traditionalism (Aykan & Wolf, 2000; Aytaç, 1998) with Islamic traditions evident in some regions (e.g., eastern and southeastern areas, in smaller communities, and among the less educated). Indicators of traditionalism are seen in arranged marriages, paying of bride price,
religious weddings, attendance at religious schools, and women’s head coverings (Aytaç, 1998).

Turkey has approximately seventy million people located between Asia and Europe. The population is 80 percent Turkish and 20 percent Kurdish speaking; most people are Muslim (99.8 percent, mostly Sunni) (World Factbook, 2006). Kurdish-speaking people lived originally in the eastern part of Turkey but now live throughout. Slightly larger than the U.S. state of Texas, its territory borders the Black, Aegean, and Mediterranean Seas. Most industry is located in the western part where the major city is Istanbul. About 30 percent of the land is arable and Turkey has been a land of small and medium-sized agricultural enterprises, an economy with modern industry and commerce along with traditional crafts (World Factbook, 2006). The country has been predominantly a peasant society, and in many areas, still is.

Due to a rural exodus, from the 1960s through the 1980s, Turkey was characterized by a vast population movement that continues to some extent today. There is rapid urbanization. Over two-thirds of Turks today live in urban areas, compared with one-quarter in the 1960s. Approximately 75 percent of the population in the western part of Turkey lives in urban areas, compared with 36 percent in the eastern portion (State Institute of Statistics [State], 1995; United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2006; Vergin, 1985). Poverty and tradition increase from western to eastern Turkey (Erman, 1997; Ilkkaracan and Women for Women’s Human Rights [Ilkkaracan], 1998; State, 2001; Vergin, 1985). The State Planning Organization estimates that a per capita income equivalent to US$60 per month is necessary to escape poverty. This represents the cost of purchasing 75 percent of 3,500 calories of food per day. In 1997, 24 percent of the population was classified as poor and this increased to 27 percent in 2003. The poverty rate is two times higher in rural than urban households. The highest rates of poverty are found in the east and southeast Anatolia, followed by the Mediterranean region. There are indications that more recently the poverty rate may be falling (State, 2001; UNDP, 2006). Turkey is considered to have a medium level of human development, and ranks ninety-second of 177 nations.

Primary school education has been mandatory since 1927, but still the literacy rates are not advanced. Overall, the literacy rate is 87 percent (male, 94 percent; female, 79 percent) (Turkish Demographic and
Health Survey [DHS], 1999; World Factbook, 2006). In 1970, 6 percent of women had graduated from at least high school. By 2000 this had risen to 18 percent. For men, the increase was from 13 to 27 percent (State, 2001). A revision to the civil code makes it mandatory for children to attend school through grade eight. Most villages have primary schools but lack middle and high schools. Mostly only males go to urban areas for schooling after the primary level. There is a tradition of keeping girls home and thus lagging in education (Aytaç, 1998).

In western Turkey, nearly 40 percent of women work for pay while in the east approximately 90 percent of women perform unpaid family labor (Ilkkaracan, 1998). Turkey has a strong and rapidly growing private sector. The most important industry and the largest source of exports are textiles and clothing (Berik, 1995; Eraydin, 1999). The unemployment rate in 1997 was 7 percent. In 2005, it was 10 percent with an additional 4 percent under employed (World Factbook, 1997, 2006). In 2001, Turkey faced an economic crisis, inflation soared, and the economy contracted. The country has since adhered to a strict monetary program. GDP grew by close to 8 percent in 2002 and 6 percent in 2003, and was projected to grow by at least 5 percent in 2004. Inflation has fallen to its lowest levels in decades (International Monetary Fund, 2004).

Turkey is a candidate for membership to the European Union; 70 percent of Turks support this decision. To this end, new reforms and laws have been passed. For example, the Turkish parliament approved revisions to 116 articles of the 1,030 article Turkish Civil Code that has been in force for seventy-five years. These changes radically alter the status of women and change the balance of legal and traditional relations between wives and husbands and influence family life. The economic situation, urbanization and Westernization, and the development of employment in the service sector, as well as related development policies, influence family functioning and organization, including possibilities for a better quality of life as well as standard of living.

Husbands are no longer heads of families. Men and women have equal status and both can represent the family in legal matters. There have been increases in the legal age of marriage, women are permitted to use their maiden names in addition to their husbands’ family
names, and women do not have to ask their husbands for permission to be employed. Women are now entitled to an equal say about where the family will live. Shared financial responsibility for the family will ensue, replacing the concept of the husband’s responsibility to provide for his wife and children. The mentally retarded can wed, as long as medical reports show that there are no impediments for the person. Other changes include children born outside wedlock having equal inheritance rights, single persons being allowed to adopt, the age for being able to adopt dropping from thirty-five to thirty years, and changes to the divorce process giving women more protection (“Parliament Approves,” 2001). The revision does not mention issues such as surrogate motherhood, marriage between same sex couples, or legal provisions for couples cohabiting.

**Family in Turkish Context**

Family and kinship are important aspects of Turkish society and social functioning (Aytaç, 1998; Erman, 1997; Ilkkaracan, 1998; Vergin, 1985). In the past (e.g., seventeenth century), some wealthy families established multigenerational families in their *konaks* (large two or three story homes). At the same time, conjugal families predominated. The extended family symbolizes material comfort, prestige, solidarity, and family support, and a nostalgic ideal.

The new bourgeois society prevents the extended family from spreading its wings except in nostalgia and imagination. Because of the commitments created by the modern society, the communal life and solidarity as a basis for the ‘real family,’ the repository of Islamic values . . . , is at present for most city dwellers but a remote idea and frame of reference. (Vergin, 1985, p. 572)

However, little is known about intergenerational relations in Turkey (Aytaç, 1998).

While the extended family might be an exemplar for working-class families, most households (perhaps 60 percent or more) are nuclear (Aytaç, 1998). Nuclear family households are most common among the landless, those with more education, and migrants (Aytaç, 1998). In cities, the extended family as a housing unit has in many ways disappeared among the middle and upper classes, but it is common for
members of a family—siblings, parents, cousins—to occupy separate flats in the same building. Nuclear households form “functional extended families” (Aytaç, 1998, p. 242). Emotional bonding and contact among family members are strong. For example, people migrating to urban areas typically receive material and emotional support from rural and other kin, as well as having frequent social contact with their family members.

Family type is related to property ownership. In the villages, extended households are less than 50 percent of all households. Extended family households are the “prerogative of large landowners” (Vergin, 1985, p. 571). At the same time, in some areas such as near the Mediterranean, many peasant families are organized into extended households as they either own land or work on large estates. Living close to relatives, especially parents, is common (perhaps half of households). This suggests that families prefer to maintain some privacy while maintaining close family ties (Aykan & Wolf, 2000; Aytaç, 1998; Vergin, 1985).

Family ties are strong (e.g., about 70 percent of adult children either coreside with parents or live nearby) (Aytaç, 1998). Several factors link coresidence of adult children and their parents, that is, living in extended family households. These are indicators of a more traditional set of values and include arrangement of marriage by family rather than the couple, payment of bride price, and the wife having rather traditional views of husband-wife relationships. Couples living in Turkey’s least developed regions are the most likely to coreside with parents while those living in the most developed regions are least likely to. Rural people are more likely to live in an extended household than are city dwellers. The likelihood of coresidence increases if the husband’s father has died. The married couples in such cases are presumably providing assistance or companionship to the husband’s widowed mother. Due to the changing nature of Turkish society, the prevalence of parent-child coresidence might decline in the future. As urbanization spreads, education attainment increases, modern practices regarding marriage become widespread, and perceptions of family roles turn less traditional, then coresidence can be expected to become even less common in Turkey (Aykan & Wolf, 2000; Aytaç, 1998).
The adoption of surnames became obligatory as part of the modernization process. The Family Names Act of 1935 upset, in many ways, the traditional concept of family and pushed Turkey in the direction of a Western model with increased emphasis upon individuals. Until this time, the person’s first name preceded his or her father’s first name. For sons, this was often followed by the patronymic suffix *oglù*, meaning “son of.” With this law, old surnames (*lakab*) used in rural areas showing that one belonged to a *sülale* (or lineage) were outlawed. People were required to take a family name. An entire nation of people had to change their names or find new ones. Some suggest that this was the beginning of a search for a new identity—for the “new” individual within the new, secular Turkish society (Vergin, 1985). Another change is taking place. Women now have the right to keep their maiden names after marriage.

**COUPLE FORMATION AND MARITAL DYNAMICS**

The majority of women (63 percent) in Ilkkaracan’s study of eastern Turkey (1998) were married with 0.6 percent divorced, demonstrating the infrequency of marital dissolution in this region. Seven percent were widowed, somewhat higher than the average in Turkey (4 percent), perhaps because of the armed conflict in the region. Almost 4 percent were separated and 26 percent were unmarried. In Ilkkaracan’s sample, 97 percent of the women over twenty-four years of age, and all women over thirty-four years of age, were or had been married. This suggests that marriage is virtually compulsory for women in this region. In western Turkey, 27 percent of women are unmarried and 64 percent are married. Nationwide, 69 percent of women are married (HS, 1999).

**Marriage Age and Type of Ceremony**

Up to the mid-1980s, marriage took place at a relatively young age; fourteen to eighteen for girls and twenty to twenty-two for boys (Vergin, 1985). According to the Turkish Civil Code, the minimum age for a civil marriage, the only legally valid marriage ceremony, had been seventeen for men and fifteen for women. The age of majority for all other legal procedures is eighteen. Despite this, 16 percent
of women living in the eastern region are married before the age of fifteen in a religious ceremony—even while it is against the law to hold a religious ceremony of marriage before a civil ceremony has taken place. A revision to the code (2002) raised the age of marriage to eighteen for both males and females.

Early marriage and polygyny are still prevalent in eastern Turkey (Ilkkaracan, 1998). Religious marriage, which is not legally binding, still takes place frequently, occurring sometimes in addition to civil marriages. Forced marriages still occur and arranged marriages are still in the majority, though younger women today increasingly expect to be able to choose their partner. Nevertheless, arranged marriages are still common as “they foster family unity and protect property, political linkages and patriarchal authority within extended families” (Aytaç, 1998, p. 245).

Conducting a religious ceremony before the girl reaches the age of fifteen has been a strategy used by families to evade the civil law (Ilkkaracan, 1998). The tradition of betrothing girls while infants appears to be disappearing, although continues to be practiced. Approximately 20 percent of Ilkkaracan’s respondents had only a religious marriage and no civil marriage. This percentage is higher than average in Turkey (8 percent). Approximately 74 percent had a civil and religious marriage, and 1 percent had neither.

**Mate Selection**

Traditionally, endogamy and marriage with the paternal uncle’s daughter were practiced, but less so than in Arab Muslim societies (Vergin, 1985). The 1993 Turkish Demographic and Health Survey indicated that being married to a first-degree relative was most common in the east (about 25 percent) and least common in the west (about 15 percent) of the country (Aykan & Wolf, 2000). The tradition of bride price or “bridesmoney” (i.e., sum of money or goods and services given by the man to the wife’s family prior to marriage) is still widespread, more so in Turkey’s eastern region (Aykan & Wolf, 2000). The money paid affects the grooms’ attitudes. Men assume that through this payment they have rights to their wives’ sexuality and fertility. This tradition of bride price can be considered as women being sold into marriages by their families.
Although 79 percent of married women indicated they were against the bride price tradition, 61 percent reported that their husbands paid bride price for them (Ilkkaracan, 1998). Paying bride price varies by region: about 55 percent of current marriages for women between the ages of fifteen and forty-nine in the east; 25 to 30 percent in the south, center, and north; and 15 percent in the west. The payment is more common in rural (37 percent) than urban (21 percent) areas (Aykan & Wolf, 2000). Families who cannot afford to pay sometimes use the berdel (i.e., the families exchange daughters as brides for the sons or fathers of the families). In effect, a woman is offered as compensation to the family of her father or brother’s wife (Ilkkaracan, 1998).

In societies like Turkey, the extended family dominates the individual member’s choices and actions (Cindoglu, 1997). Men relate a woman’s “value” to her noncontamination. Virginity is an asset for the woman and her family. Consequently, the whole family is involved. Likewise, Muslim women are expected to only marry Muslim men. Men, however, can marry non-Muslims (Bodley, 1997). There are few mixed-ethnicity marriages in Turkey. Among married women aged fifteen to forty-nine, 97 percent of Turkish, 92 percent of Kurdish, and 80 percent of women of other ethnic origins (e.g., Arab) are married to men of their own ethnic background (Aykan & Wolf, 2000).

The Turkish Civil Code states that the consent of both the woman and the man is a precondition for marriage. Regardless, women often have no influence over the choice of their spouses and often marry against their wills. Even when consulted about the choice of husband, social control over women’s sexuality is maintained through a taboo on premarital sex. Religious and cultural values and norms, as well as violence, also control women (Acar, 1995; Ilkkaracan, 1998). The result is that while women have a right to consent, the ability to exercise this right is often limited. Even when the couple arranges the marriage, the agreement of their families is often a precondition for the marriage (Ilkkaracan, 1998).

In Ilkkaracan’s study (1998), the families arranged most marriages (61 percent); the couple themselves arranged only 25 percent. Half the women were married without their consent, and 46 percent were not consulted about their partner and the marriage. Fifty-one percent had not met their husbands before the marriage. In 5 percent of the marriages, it was a berdel exchange.
Five percent of women had asked their husbands to kidnap them or had eloped of their own free will (Ilkkaracan, 1998). This is a strategy used by women when their families do not allow them to marry the person of their choice, or when the men are unable to pay the bride price requested. Although this would seem to be effective, allowing women to select their own partners, there can be high costs for the women as their families can reject them. In tribal cultures of eastern Turkey, women who have been “kidnapped” or “abducted” by their husbands are usually considered to have eloped by the families of their husbands. This leads to loss of prestige and status and even to violence against these women (Yalçın-Heckman, 1993, 1995). In the western part of Turkey mate selection is relatively more liberal, yet examples similar to eastern Turkey are also present. The berdel practice, however, is a unique characteristic of the east.

While many mothers indicate that they expect their daughters to have a say in their marriages (Ilkkaracan, 1998), another study found that the majority of current marriages of women aged fifteen to forty-nine were arranged (Aykan & Wolf, 2000). The highest proportion (70-80 percent) is in the east, south, and center regions, followed by the north and west (60 percent). Rural-to-urban migration possibly inflates the proportion for areas such as the west. Love marriages are a recent phenomenon in Turkey. Characteristics of love marriages include exposure to urban life during adolescence, education beyond primary school, and later age at marriage for women (i.e., twenty or higher). Love marriages, compared to arranged marriages, are also related to more egalitarian relationships between spouses (Aytaç, 1998; Hortaçsu, 1997).

**Monogamy—Polygyny**

In the eastern region of Turkey, 11 percent of marriages are polygynous, although polygamy was banned in 1926 (Ilkkaracan, 1998). Even in the eighteenth century, polygamous families were rare (more common among the urban rich) and disrespected. The monogamous family was the ideal. Given the law today, only one wife in a polygynous arrangement can have a civil marriage whereas the others can only have religious marriages. The second wife (known as the kuma) is married only in a religious sense. A religious marriage ceremony
confers no legally binding rights under the Civil Code, such as related to divorce, maintenance, or inheritance from the husband. Religious marriages must have the obligatory civil marriage before the religious ceremony. Without the civil ceremony, these are not regarded by the state as legally binding. Many of the religious only marriages involved a kuma who thus became a wife legitimate in the eyes of religion while being illegitimate by the norms of law (Vergin, 1985).

In one study of the women in polygynous marriages, 58 percent lived in the same house as their husband’s other wives, and 65 percent of these women said they had serious problems with the other wives. Despite all the issues involved in polygynous marriage, half of the women in such a marriage were involved in creating the arrangement or entered it willingly. This indicates the acceptance of polygyny by women. The Islamic injunction that a man may marry up to four wives, and the cultural atmosphere that polygyny is a man’s natural right, support the acceptance of polygyny by women (Abd Al-ati, 1995; Ilkkaracan, 1998).

Economic factors help sustain the persistence of polygyny. In rural homes, the wife is an economic asset, essential for the success of agricultural work. A man might seek a second (or subsequent) wife as a means of securing a larger workforce. Vergin (1985, p. 573) explained: “The kuma, always younger and more robust than the first wife, comes, then, to help with the domestic work. Sometimes the first wife herself asks her husband to provide her with a helper, but we must not therefore conclude that the arrival of the kuma is a godsend to her.”

**Living Arrangements**

Patrilocal residence (i.e., living with the groom’s parents) and agnatic relationships (i.e., relatives on the father’s side) are favored (Aykan & Wolf, 2000; Vergin, 1985). In the mid-1980s, the average household was 6.5 people, slightly higher than in industrialized Western societies during the same period. Three generations of families living under the same roof and “sharing the same dish” were rare (Vergin, 1985, p. 571). The prevalence of extended household is dependent upon conditions (e.g., number of children surviving to marital age, age of parents and their longevity, and rules about inheritance and the division of family land). Especially important is the age at
which parents die, as it is not so much marriage of children that leads to large extended households, but the life and death of the head of the family (Vergin, 1985).

The 1993 Turkish Demographic and Health Survey showed that one-fourth of married couples (wives aged fifteen to forty-nine) lived with at least one parent or parent-in-law. The most common (54 percent) residence pattern was coresidence with both the husband’s parents followed with coresidence with the husband’s mother only (34 percent). Only 7 percent of couples lived with the husband’s father only. Therefore, while most couples live independently, the vast majority (95 percent) of coresiding couples live with the husband’s parent(s). As the likelihood of having both his parents alive is highest early in the couple’s marriage, this is when coresidence is most likely to occur. Later, they are more likely to live with one parent (Aykan & Wolf, 2000).

Extramarital Relationships

There are no laws in Turkey restricting a woman from engaging in a relationship with a man or woman of her choice before, during, or after marriage. Regardless, extramarital relationships are a definite taboo for women in the eastern region. At the same time, men’s extramarital affairs are widely accepted. The customary penalty in the eastern region for women suspected of pre- or extramarital sex is death (i.e., so-called honor-killings). In Turkey’s eastern region, the majority (67 percent) of women believed that, even with today’s law, they could not divorce their husbands if they committed adultery; 67 percent of women thought that their husbands and/or families would kill them if they committed adultery. This perception was found more often among those with only religious marriages, little or no education, and in rural areas. Most women who believed that their husbands would do something other than divorcing or killing them expected to be badly beaten if they were suspected of an extramarital affair (Ilkkaracan, 1998).

Divorce

Divorce is rare in Turkey (2 percent of women; DHS, 1999). Consequently, there are few single female-headed households (Erman,
Divorces represent about 6 percent of all marriages in a year (UNDP, 1999). Divorce at the request of the wife has a long tradition in Turkey, at least since 1917. Traditionally among Muslims, a wife cannot divorce her husband. He can, however, divorce her by repeating the formula “I divorce you” three times (called *talaq*). According to Shiite law this must be pronounced in the presence of two witnesses. In Sunni law the pronouncement can be either oral or in writing. No reason need be given. The wife does not have to be notified (Divorce, 2001). Divorce by repudiation is uncommon (Vergin, 1985). As noted, religious marriages are legally invalid. Consequently, people in such marriages (e.g., polygyny, women married before the minimal legal age) have no rights to legal divorce. Thus women with only a religious marriage believe that they are less able to divorce than those in civil (and legal) marriages, but the difference is not great (Ilkkaracan, 1998). Women with secondary or higher education are more likely to believe that they could obtain a divorce because of the adultery of their husband, but still about one-third believe this would be impossible.

When a wife obtains divorce, the husband is obliged to pay the *mehr-I müeccel* to provide for her needs. In many Muslim societies the custom of *mehr* is observed; in Turkey, it has rarely been used in divorce litigation. In rural areas there has been a counterpart, known as the *baslik*, derived from Turkish customary law. The *baslik* is a sum paid to the father of the bride by the father of the groom. It can be seen as compensation for their loss of the daughter’s labor. As an aspect of bride price, it belongs to the family and not personally to the bride as in the case of the *mehr*. The amount varies according to the prestige of the bride’s family as well as her characteristics (e.g., health, age, and beauty). The amount and presence of the *baslik* are often the reason for kidnappings and abductions sometimes with the girl’s consent. When this happens, the father is obliged to give his daughter in marriage without any compensation. The State has deemed *baslik* illegal and has tried to convince peasants to abandon the practice. It remains, however, a powerful tradition that helps to maintain village economic life, a visage of family honor, and helps to maintain couple and family solidarity (Vergin, 1985). Upon divorce, the amount stays with the bride’s family if the husband is at fault, but paid back if the wife is at fault.
There must be a legal separation for six months before the couple can file for divorce. Assets accumulated during the marriage are to be equally divided unless the couple decides otherwise (“Parliament Approves,” 2001). The divorce proceedings can be held in a closed court session at either spouse’s request. Due to social values, despite various negative conditions within the marriage, many people still choose to remain married. However, while people do not get divorced easily or frequently, people also do not get married easily. According to the statistics of 1960, 12 percent of women were unmarried and in 1998 this percentage increased to 29 percent (DHS, 1999; Türkiye’de Nufus ve Sağlık Arastirmasi, 2003, on rapor [Türkiye], 2004).

**FAMILIES AND CHILDREN**

The highest fertility rate is in the eastern region (3.65 versus 1.88 in the western region and 2.23 in the country as a whole) (Türkiye, 2004). Approximately 11 percent of women living in the east begin their childbearing between fifteen and nineteen years of age. In the western part of Turkey the figure is 8 percent (İlkkaracan, 1998). In 1992-1993, Turkish women forty to forty-nine years old had an average of 4.6 children and the fertility rate for the age group fifteen to forty-nine ranged from 3.65 children per woman in the east to 1.88 in the west (Ergöçman, Hancioglu, & Ünalan, 1995). Several reasons account for the elevated desire for children in the East—wanting a powerful tribe, expectations of family elders for having additional male children in the family, and a belief that Allah will provide enough food for each person. Boy children are especially valued (İlkkaracan, 1998). Fertility rates also differ by rural-urban residence and educational level. Women living in rural areas will have, on average, one more child than women living in urban areas. Women without education have approximately one child more (4.2) than women with primary-level education and almost two more children than women with secondary-level education (2.4) (Aytaç, 1998; Türkiye, 2004). The total fertility rate declined from five children per woman in the 1970s to 2.7 in 1993, and to 1.9 in 2006. Women with secondary or more education have an average of 1.7 children. The birthrate is 16.62 (Aytaç, 1998; World Factbook, 2006).
Knowledge of modern family planning methods is almost universal among Turkish women. In this context, regional differences are substantial. The levels of current birth control usage are 57 percent in the east and 74 percent in the west, with over 70 percent usage in most other regions (Türkiye, 2004). Of currently married women, 90 percent have used a method sometime during their life. Overall, 71 percent of currently married women are using birth control and among them, 42 percent use modern methods. Most people using contraceptives obtain them from a state hospital (57 percent) or clinic (39 percent). The rest use pharmacies. The IUD and condom are the most widely used methods among married couples, followed by the pills and female sterilization (Türkiye, 2004).

Abortion

In the five year period preceding the 1998 Turkish Demographic and Health Survey, almost 25 percent of pregnancies resulted in other than a live birth with 15 percent being induced abortions. More than 25 percent of ever-married women report having had an induced abortion with women in the east and in rural settlements being the least likely. The law (1983) legalizing abortion guarantees safe conditions for terminations of pregnancies during the first ten weeks of gestation, for a woman who wants the service, at government hospitals for a nominal fee, and from the private sector for a fee. Around 75 percent of abortions are in private clinics (DHS, 1999).

Infant Mortality

Infant mortality varies by region (i.e., east 60.0 and west 42.7) (Aytaç, 1998). The infant mortality rate was estimated at thirty-eight per 1,000 live births, and the under-five mortality rate at forty-four during 1998-2003, and forty for 2006 (Türkiye, 2004; World Factbook, 2006). Infant and child mortality have declined rapidly in recent years; while encouraging, the rate is considered still unacceptably high because countries with a GNP equivalent to Turkey typically have much lower rates (UNDP, 2006).

There are significant differences in infant and child mortality between regions and urban and rural areas. Medical maternity care and educational level of mothers are important correlates of mortality (Türkiye, 2004). The health care system is modern and Western.
Therefore, the access to and use of appropriate techniques and methods decrease the mortality rates. As mothers’ education level increases, the infant mortality rate decreases (Cindoglu & Sirkeci, 2001).

**Parenting Practices and Outcomes**

Couples tend to become parents more quickly in family arranged marriages than in couple arranged marriages. After becoming parents, couples are often less involved with their families-of-origin and have more conflict with them. Wives also gain more dominance, especially in the domestic sphere and relative to children (Hortaçsu, 1999). Breastfeeding is widespread (95 percent of children) but this falls to 66 percent at the end of the child’s first year of age. The median duration of breastfeeding is fourteen months while supplementary foods and liquids are introduced at an early age. Almost all children receive supplementary food after six months of age (Türkiye, 2004).

Lower SES families often display more conservative child-rearing practices (Hortaçsu, Ertem, Kurtoglu, & Uzer, 1990). Parenting practices in lower and middle SES families have different effects on children compared with higher SES families. More educated parents are more individualistic, more internally oriented, and have fewer traditional values and expectations concerning children (Hortaçsu et al., 1990). Values and expectations held for girls are more family oriented and less individualistic than those held for boys. Girls’ self-concepts appear to be more affected by parents’ behavior (Hortaçsu, 1989b).

Mother’s education level is one of the best predictors of primary school academic performance. Individual characteristics of children also relate to school performance. For example, the extent to which girls feel lonely has a bigger impact on their school grades than for boys. In higher SES families (fathers having university degrees), these individualistic characteristics become more important. For lower SES families, family factors are more important. These observations support the notion that in Turkey, different SES families adhere to different child-related values and practices. Families with more education seem to encourage more progressive and individualistic tendencies in their children (Hortaçsu, 1995).

The amount of positive praise by parents influences child loneliness, self-concept, and academic performance especially for girls.
Father’s education shapes the amount of praise and extent of loneliness. Turkish families are patriarchal, but educated fathers interact more warmly with daughters; uneducated fathers ignore daughters to a greater extent. Some fathers, when answering the question, “How many children do you have?” count only sons. For example, “I have two children and two daughters” (Hortaçsu et al., 1990, p. 542).

Adolescents are expected to demonstrate familial allegiance while being modest about personal qualities. In-depth interviews with adolescent girls and boys attending high school in Ankara, representative of lower SES families that were more traditional in orientation, showed group membership (e.g., sports teams, friendships) and role fulfillment were two major elements of social identity (Güneri, Sümeyra, & Yıldırım, 1999). Students indicated that they felt secure and close to their friends, some more so than with parents. Peer acceptance was important for self-definition, and friendships allowed for developing social competence. While having a girlfriend or boyfriend can be an important source of positive validation, among those interviewed (ages fifteen and sixteen), some said it was too early for such relationships. Some commented that love can bring happiness, but can also lead to disappointments. While girls and boys believed they may have opposite sex friends, they are more secure with same sex friends. These students were proud of being Turkish and tried to be good citizens. Being a Turk also means being Muslim and religious values were apparent among these youth. Some used religious values to guide everyday life; not smoking, for example, because it is sinful. Self-identity among Turkish adolescents incorporates well-defined values derived from political and religious orientations.

Family has an important influence on Turkish youth self-identities. The interviewed students valued their parents. As one said, “Although I don’t agree with what they think and do most of the time, I believe in their good intentions” (Güneri et al., 1999, p. 543). Lack of family relationships is problematic. For those without a father, loving and supportive relationships with their mothers were related to strong family identity. Parents especially guide females in such areas as opinions about what is right or wrong. Girls perceived that their parents control their social life, including strict limits on relationships with boys. Overall, strict conservative principles of their parents restrict the activities of teens in many ways, especially relations with
friends. Nevertheless, parents were perceived as warm, caring, and loving. “Although students sometimes were in conflict with parental authority, they felt that their parents were doing what parents are supposed to do. Thus, beyond any particular disagreement with parents, there was a certain level of understanding of good intention” (Güneri et al., 1999, p. 544).

Older adolescents (aged sixteen to twenty) have their closest relationships with same sex friends followed by parents (Hortaçsu, Oral, & Yasak-Gültekin, 1991). Boys are closer to their fathers than are girls. Some studies indicate that male and female adolescents are about equal in the degree of closeness to mothers and same sex friends. Other studies, however, indicate a gender difference, with girls having closer relationships with mothers and friends (Hortaçsu, 1989a). For older adolescents, the relationship with the mother is a good predictor of the quality of the relationship with the father. This is possibly a reflection of the focal role played by mothers in Turkish families. If the relationship with the mother is good, the relationship with the father is good. However, a bad relationship with mother does not seem to be compensated for by a good relationship with father; both relationships tend to be of poorer quality (Hortaçsu et al., 1991).

Social and familial dimensions are influential in contributing to adolescents’ definition of self. Physical and personal dimensions were less influential; family and social aspects of self-identity circumscribed these to some extent. Researchers argue that in line with parental expectations, teens had close friends of the same sex and believed they were too young for romantic relationships. This conformity can be problematic as difficulties in the social and familiar realms can lead to distress and emotional disturbances. At the same time, shortcomings in other areas, such as in social identity, can be accommodated to an extent by an emphasis on familial identity, and vice versa. When problems are faced in both areas, more serious identity crises can result. Overall, it can be said that Turkish adolescents have friendships similar to their Western counterparts. Over time, the relationship with parents decreases in intimacy paralleling that found in European societies. Some differences do stand out, especially the important role of the mother, greater control over the adolescent’s social life, and a lower level of communication between children and their fathers than reported in studies done with Western families.
Value of Interdependency

Turks place positive value on family interdependency (Vergin, 1985). Close relationships are especially esteemed in lower SES families because of the economic dependency of the individual on the group. Mutual aid and family solidarity are more important than the success of a person independent of his or her family (i.e., familism). Social mobility of a person is a way of enhancing the status of all family members, as the upwardly mobile relative has the duty to come to the aid of the family. Interdependency, implying sharing material and social success, is essential to a family’s honor as well as survival in precarious economic times.

In middle and upper SES families, there appears to be no reduction in the quality of interpersonal relations among parents, children, and other relatives. This is true even as it is clear that in these families there is less economic dependency. Contrary to what might be expected with modernization and Westernization, in Turkey, intergenerational relationships have become more interdependent on an emotional level (Aytaç, 1998). There appears to be no loosening of family ties, but perhaps even more withdrawing into the family circle as a means of coping with any difficulties associated with social change. Kinship and neighborhood relations are powerful forces in the lives of urban families—both those newly arrived as well as upper SES families.

FAMILIES AND GENDER

Turkey is in the “belt of classic patriarchy” (Erman, 1997; Kandiyoti, 1995) and is also a Muslim society. In fundamentalist Islamic views, women are considered as legally and morally inferior to men. Husbands and close male relatives must protect women. Staying out of public life and focusing upon domestic roles is prescribed. Legally, in many Muslim societies, women are at a disadvantage. For example, daughters inherit less than sons. Women can have only one spouse at a time whereas men can have up to four as long as they can be provided for and treated fairly. In some societies, female seclusion is required. In some cases, males and females are segregated in employment and education (Abd Al-ati, 1995; Bodley, 1997).
Men, Women, and Social Status

Since the founding of the modern Turkish republic (1923) by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Kemalist Reforms have directed Turkey to western Europe (Aytaç, 1998; Vergin 1985). These reforms were the tenets of a cultural revolution of a traditional society turning into a modern one. With this aim, the State: abolished the Sharia, replaced the Arabic alphabet with the Latin; closed the free schools of religion and installed secular, scientific, and coeducational schools under the Ministry of Education; banned religious brotherhood activities; restricted the wearing of traditional attire and supported Western modes of dressing for both women and men; and imported the Swiss Civil Code (in place of the Ottoman one) that established Western modes of living. Minimum ages for marriages (fifteen for girls and seventeen for boys) were established and suffrage for women occurred in 1934. The restriction of polygamy and enabling property rights for women were brought by the new Code.

Secularization measures have influenced family relationships. Many perceptions have changed and the status of the head of the family, seen at one time as unshakeable, has been challenged. While judicial changes have reshaped family, research through the 1980s showed that in daily family life, perhaps less had changed. Husbands tended to maintain their authority as Turkish families maintained their hierarchal, patriarchal nature. There are some changes evident in the family relationships among the upper, and more liberal, classes. A spirit of camaraderie is developing in the relationship between spouses and between father and child. This has been influenced by Western values in the media (Vergin, 1985).

Peasant women have had less advantage from these reforms. Changes such as emergence of consumption patterns (e.g., availability of washing machines, speedy transportation to the markets), increase in access to communications technologies (e.g., TV, radio, telephone), and utilization of modern energy sources (e.g., electricity and petroleum), are due to Turkey’s incorporation into the world market and the resulting penetration of capitalism into rural areas (Weiner, 1995).

There is rigid gender segregation and an ideology linking the virtue of women with family honor (Moghadm, 1993). Women are “status demonstrators” for their husbands and families. The Muslim concept
of izzat (i.e., family honor) encompasses the modesty and virtue of the wife, daughters, and sisters of a man (Bodley, 1997). Under the classical system, a young bride will live with her husband’s family and work under the control of her mother-in-law as well as the more senior female members of the household. She will also labor in the fields and tend to farm animals (Erman, 1997). In rural areas the family home (hane) is the economic unit for production and consumption. Activities are organized by the age and sex of members (Vergin, 1985).

In eastern Turkey, property and power are exclusively in the control of men and women are traditionally oppressed and controlled by the preeminent extended family structure. As men are responsible for women’s honor in Islamic societies, this legitimizes their control and power. Husbands and other men in a family thus exercise control over women, especially in rural Turkey where religion is an important force around which society is organized (Erman, 1997).

**Gender in Rural-to-Urban Migrant’s Households**

Modernization has mostly addressed women’s public roles, while gender roles, especially those within families, have been questioned less. Primary roles attributed to women are those of being a good wife and a mother to the family. The private realm is the province of women, and the public realm is the province of men. While women have their own hierarchy based on kinship, fertility, and age, within traditional Islamic discourse women live in a “limited space” (Cindoglu, 1997). However, when opportunities are available, women seek to improve their situations. Risks are taken. Women might not openly challenge the patriarchal ideology, yet still go against their husbands as they perceive that such action would provide better life chances for their families (Erman, 1997). One arena for challenging the patriarchal authority and for improving the material condition in which families live, is rural-to-urban migration. Turkish migrant women have a strong preference for city life (Erman, 1997). Women regard the city as a better place partially because they enjoy some comfort there (e.g., educational opportunities, better transportation, less work, and greater availability of consumer products). To many, village life means a lot of hard, filthy work. Village life also means oppression.
When people migrate to urban areas, they often live in one-story dwellings in areas known as a *gecekondu* (i.e., shantytowns or “shabby suburbs”). This is the term used for squatter houses and translates in English as “landed overnight” (Erman, 1997, p. 272). Such housing is incorporated into the housing options sanctioned by the government because of its inability to provide legal housing. Some *gecekondu* owners have been able to obtain title to their lots. These conditions are in sharp contrast to the modern high-rise apartments of the upper-class districts. The household type common among migrants is the nuclear family (Briar-Lawson, Lawson, Hennon, & Jones, 2001; Erman, 1997).

The participation of women in the labor force has declined. In the 1950s around 70 percent of women were in the labor force, but by mid-1990 the rate had dropped to around 30 percent. Much of this decline relates to the high rate of rural-to-urban migration. In rural areas women work in agriculture. After migration to urban areas, women with less education find it hard to obtain employment in the formal labor force (Ilkkaracan, 1998).

Turkish women generally approve of female employment but men hold more restrictive attitudes, views reflecting the ideology that men are to be the sole breadwinners (Erman, 1997). Economic opportunities are restricted for women, especially those with limited education and job skills. While paid work is thus unattractive for migrant women, they do work when family economic conditions warrant it. They will often take on cleaning jobs within the homes of the better off urbanites, or perhaps cleaning offices. Some will also work in the grocery stores that are part of or close to their homes (often run by their male family members). Some women have employment as home-workers producing machine-knitted garments or sewing. Some women also start their own businesses, such as small stores or day-care centers (Erman, 1997; Esim, 2000). Second generation migrant women might have jobs as civil servants. However, as their family financial situation improves, women often cease their employment (Erman, 1997).

Many women seem to have more power relative to men than might be expected; religion and residence appears to be important in this regard (Erman, 1997; Tekeli, 1995). Among the Alevi, the religious group of the heterodox Islamic interpretation, women are often influential in the decision to move their families to urban areas. In some
cases women are also enterprising and entrepreneurial in establishing homes, finding jobs, and starting businesses. Urban living also appears to shape household division of labor and decision making.

In urban areas, as men see other men helping their wives, there is less reliance on conventional ideologies to support gendered and age graded divisions of labor. In addition, the wife having a paid job brings some sense of equality to the marriage. Even those without paid work handle money in order to run the household. Likewise, urban households tend to be nuclear in form, and thus lack the extended family matrix for reinforcing gender roles. Even in those cases where parents live with, usually, a son, or visit for part of the year, the relationships tend to be of a different nature than found in village households. Yet, some women seem surprised by another woman mentioning that her husband contributes to housework (Erman, 1997).

Traditional gender roles of migrant families might still remain intact ideologically, but urban living produces changes in family organization and functioning that can be beneficial to women (Tekeli, 1995). Wives become companions and husbands become more dependent upon their wives in the more competitive urban environment. Both spouses need each other’s cooperation and support, more so than when living in a village. They also spend more time together, and men are more inclined to ask for their wives’ opinions on a variety of matters (Erman, 1997).

In conclusion, while there is some change in gender relations among those who migrate from rural-to-urban areas, it can be argued that radical changes in gender roles on an ideological basis are not taking place. Rather, husbands help their wives when conditions require it. They do not want to publicize their help in order to protect their male image (“invisible helping men”). While the changes might seem trivial or not positive, placing a “double burden” on women, the women themselves perceive the changes as significant improvements (Erman, 1997).

**FAMILIES AND STRESS**

Violence is used to socially and sexually oppress women. Many husbands subject wives to domestic violence (Yuksel, 1995). In many regions there are no shelters or institutions offering help to victims.
Almost none of the women in one study had sought legal recourse against domestic violence or marital rape, though these were commonly experienced (Ilkkaracan, 1998). Customary and religious laws and practices, such as religious marriages, are often contrivances for controlling women’s sexuality and maintaining the imbalance of power. Turkish is the official language. That 19 percent of the women in the study could speak little or no Turkish, but rather an ethnic language such as Kurdish or Arabic, meant they had little possibility of applying independently to legal institutions in case of violations of their rights within the family.

In Turkey, women and their bodies are controlled. The control sometimes takes a more violent course. “The crime of honor is the killing of a woman by her father or brother for engaging in, or being suspected of engaging in, sexual practices before, or outside marriage” (Abu-Odeh, 1996, p. 141). These kinds of events occur in families with low-income levels. Social pressure frames the violence in the light of honor. This kind of savage crime can occur because of thoughts of being honorable or to walk with one’s head held high. One of most insidious aspects is that those who are not yet of major age are used as executioners in these murders. By this method, the imprisonment process decreases to two to three years with extenuating reasons like good conduct at the court and maximum provocation. It is argued that honor crimes and the way that they are dealt with are new ways of reproducing an old ideology (Abu-Odeh, 1996). In other words, although the legal systems and jurisdictions are different in the Arab and Turkish societies, dealing with honor crimes end in the same results. The Arab and the Turkish jurisdictions do not provide full punishment in the cases of murders; instead, they provide an excuse, exception, or reduction for the punishment on the grounds of honor and tradition.

Provocation is a concept in every country’s legal system, but in the Western countries there is nothing like honor as a reason for provocation. In the Universal Law, every human being can use his or her body however they want. This is a basic human right. If this use is against marriage rules, then it is possible to be divorced. However, with this reasoning, if someone commits a crime, his or her imprisonment is not reduced. As long as Turkey’s perspective of killing women for honor is not changed, this society will have many victims.
Akman and Yirmibesoglu (1999) concluded that: (1) Judges under the coercion of traditions and aspects in the criminal law and unapplied laws even promote honor crimes; (2) women (typically those with inadequate education) can kill their own daughters with the decision of the family assembly; (3) doctors cooperate with criminals when giving medical reports for women who are badly beaten, and then their husbands are released; and (4) when women go to a police department to complain, they are faced with comments from police officers like, “he is your husband, he can both beat you and love you.”

**FAMILIES AND AGING**

In Turkey, life expectancy at birth is 72.6; for males 70.2 and for females 75.1 (2006 estimate). The age structure of the population is 26 percent between birth and age fifteen and about 7 percent above the age of sixty-five years (UNDP, 2006; World Factbook, 2006). A number of factors influence life expectancy, such as health care and morbidity. High infant mortality contributes to a lower average life expectancy.

The retirement and pension system is state administered and financed. Private pensions began in the 1980s but could not replace the state. The law restricts working after retirement in order to provide job opportunities for younger generations, but the pensions are low and retired people seek jobs to support themselves. The law on retirement and pension changes frequently. After nearly every election, the government tries to install a different program for social security. The retirement age for women is fifty-five and for men sixty. These previously were forty-five and fifty, but the law was changed due to high unemployment and scarce national budget for pensions.

**Caregiving**

There is limited research on aging and family life, especially in regard to caregiving (Aytaç, 1998). The treatment of the elderly varies by family SES. As Turkey is not a welfare state, the number of public retirement homes is insufficient and private homes generally target higher SES groups as clients; less than 1 percent of elderly Turks live in nursing homes (Aytaç, 1998; Toktas, 1997). The support provided
within the family and kinship group remains the only choice for many people. Generally, daughters and daughters-in-law look after the elderly. This traditional expectation will likely decrease as the modernization and institutionalization of the models of caring develop (e.g., establishment of more retirement homes and the use of paid women labor for domestic care) (Aykan & Wolf, 2000; Toktas, 1997).

Historically, based on Islamic precepts and cultural values, older family members were provided and cared for regardless of whether they were living in an extended or nuclear family household. While women often provided the daily care, sons especially were seen as security in old age. Increases in the aging population are challenging these traditional values (Aytaç, 1998). However, data suggest that due to the prevailing gender roles, men continue to work as the household breadwinner and are unlikely to give physical care to their elderly parents. Their wives or other female relatives do the caregiving for the elderly (Aytaç, 1998).

Consideration of the family life cycle can help explain traditional coresidence patterns. A newlywed couple will first live with the husband’s parents (patriarchal extended). At some point, perhaps with the birth of the first child, the couple forms their own household (nuclear). Later, as parents become old and need care, they might live with the man’s parents again, perhaps this time in the couple’s household. Over time, this pattern repeats as the couple ages and their children grow, marry, and have children of their own (Aykan & Wolf, 2000). This coresidence with children is a manifestation of the “old-age security” motive for having children.

**OTHER FAMILY SITUATIONS**

Women are the carriers of tradition in Turkey, but there is rapid social change through exposure to Western lifestyles through media, tourism, and migration. One way Islamic patriarchal societies cope with this change is by keeping a close watch on the lives, bodies, and sexuality of women. Women’s bodies are sites where gender identities are constructed and reproduced. With social change, a woman’s sexual purity and family’s control over her sexuality produce more anxiety than before. In addition, with social change, these personal and
family acts are no longer local events. Local media attention and that of various organizations focuses on issues of importance to women.

**Sexuality—Women’s Bodies and Control**

Virginity is a crucial arena that provides useful information in understanding the family institution in Turkey. Despite the State directed modernization project, the material conditions in which people live change more easily and speedily than the values that people have. Traditional values continue to persist though the forms as well as their adaptations differ. The virginity issue is significant in that although families modernized, traditional values including those that require women should be virgins at the time of marriage, still prevail.

Research in other countries suggests that it perhaps is a mistake to perceive young women as helpless victims under male control of sexuality (Holland, Ramazanoglu, Sharpe, & Thomson, 1998). Similarly, it is argued that Turkish women are not in so vulnerable a situation as perhaps anticipated. At least for higher SES women, sexuality can be not only the means of subordination and exploitation, but also an arena of power. Women are not passive victims of their destiny.

There is control by kin members over women’s heterosexual desire. In Middle Eastern societies, women’s heterosexual desire poses a threat to patriarchal, penetration-oriented, sexuality. It is dishonorable for women to become sexually active before or outside marriage. Conversely, such activities are a cause for celebration among men. The control over women’s bodies is reproduced through shame and honor codes. Honor is primarily concerned with the legitimacy of paternity (his “seed” in her “soil”). A man’s honor is related to his power to protect what is his (Cindoglu, 1997). Social recognition of a woman’s purity depends upon the men under whose protection she falls. Significant means to create and reproduce this control are religion and modernization which interact in interestingly, collaborative ways. Modern institutions such as law—jurisprudence and medicine cooperate with tradition and religion to reproduce the patriarchal control over women’s bodies. This concern and patriarchal control has led to two interesting medical procedures—virginity tests and virginity surgery.
Modernity and Virginity

Women’s relationship to their bodies in Islamic countries is multi-layered and highly complex (Abu-Odeh, 1996). Women’s bodies seem to be a battlefield. The Western attire, which covers their bodies, carries with it the “capitalist” construction of the female body—sexualized, objectified, and commodified. However, these bodies are simultaneously constructed as trustees of family (sexual) honor—conservative and asexual. As one of the first modernizing nations in the Middle East, Turkey carries traditional Islamic, nationalist, and liberal discourses simultaneously. This cohabitation of traditional and Islamic gender ideology, along with a liberal gender ideology, is crystallized in virginity tests and virginity surgery (Cindoglu, 1997).

In contrast to traditional expectations, some women do not wait until their wedding nights for their first sexual intercourse. The wedding night often turns into a nightmare for a woman, as the husband and families discover (or perceive) that she is not a virgin and virginity is still an asset in contemporary Turkey and the rest of the Middle East. Suspicion over a woman’s purity can lead to the bride being required to provide proof of virginity (i.e., through a medical report) even after the wedding night. “Women’s purity before marriage is not only an individual choice but a family matter. Therefore, the family controls women’s bodies. The virginity of the women is not a personal matter, but rather a social phenomenon” (Cindoglu, 1997, p. 254).

Virginity tests have a legal status in Turkey. When there is a legal dispute, such as in the cases of attempted rape or the absence of bleeding on the first intercourse with one’s spouse, the Forensic Medicine Department of the Ministry of Health can take up the issue (Frank, Bauer, Arican, Fincanci, & Iacopino, 1999). While this Department has the only authority to furnish a report, virginity tests are widely conducted in hospitals and in private practices. Examples of how virginity tests have been used indicate that women are considered the responsible party in heterosexuality (Cindoglu, 1997). Even in order to protect women from male abuse, women’s bodies need to be controlled, rather than those of men.

However, in some ways, women now have some control over their bodies and destinies. Due to the social anxiety and the structural transformations that women are experiencing, women have come to
use medicine to “repair” their virginity. For a woman with premarital sexual experience, repair by a physician through reconstructive virginity surgery becomes necessary if she is to exist “properly” in a patriarchal society. She becomes “pure” again, and the honor of her family, as well as her hymen, is repaired (Cindoglu, 1997).1

There are different ways to conceptualize her choice. One is that it is empowering, allowing her to have some control over her life, sexuality, and marriage chances. Another is that her choice is made within and as a reflection of a patriarchal society. She can have sex before marriage, but she must be a virgin at marriage. Thus the choice of having the surgery is made under duress and due to perceived negative consequences if not a virgin.

**CONCLUDING COMMENTS**

In Turkey, the local values about sexuality and honor clash with the now commonly known Western code of ethics. Traditional closed communities are no longer closed. In the last decades, massive migration to the urban centers and internationally have exaggerated anxiety over women’s purity. When the community borders blur due to physical mobility of people through migration and exposure to Western media and Western people through tourism, women’s bodies become the arenas to reproduce the cultural boundaries. Women’s possible promiscuity becomes the most threatening aspect for the social and biological reproduction of the community and becomes a contested arena.

This anxiety produced through modernization and globalization results in brutal local responses to women’s bodies, as in the case of honor crimes. Usually, it is a family decision to clean their honor by her blood and usually a young male in the family is appointed for the task to avoid long-term jail imprisonment. Paradoxically, globalization on the one hand brings the formation of a single universal identity, while on the other hand, ethnic, religious, and national identities gain dominance in local politics.

The relations within families and the relationship of families with society compose a matrix where practices and worldviews are at stake in different regions and socioeconomic classes. The tension between modern practices and traditional worldviews certainly affects family
life and family structure. However, the path that families will take in their attempt to harmonize traditional values with the threat perceived by modernity will probably lead the family structures in Turkey to develop a hybrid-like structure. That is, new meanings, resistances, and practices will continue to develop through the tension between tradition and modernity.

NOTE

1. Virginity surgery (hymenoplasty) consists of stitching together what remains of the hymen. After being sutured, the hymen heals, will often then bleed after the next intercourse, and thus the woman becomes virgin-like once again.