Discourses of Motherhood and Consumption Practices of Turkish Mothers

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Abstract: Being primarily responsible of conducting logistical and emotional work of child-rearing, mothers have agency in formation of the child's future identity, cultural values and dispositions, and serve as role models, sources of social pressure, and interpersonal support. This article aims to discover discourses of motherhood of Turkish mothers, especially educated and middle class, who have children dependent on their consumption decisions and how their discourses figure in their consumption practices of products, such as food and clothing, which they buy on behalf of their children. Discursive and consumption practices of Turkish mothers who are participating in selected virtual communities are analyzed by means of qualitative research methods. Main discourses that can be observed in their told consumption practices appeared to be the "good mothering" and "motherhood as personal achievement". Backgrounding and absent discourses are also discussed.

Keywords: Discourses of motherhood, Dominant and alternative discourses, Consumption practices, Virtual communities, Consumer behavior

JEL Classification: M31, M39

Annelik Söylemleri ve Türk Annelerin Tüketim Pratikleri

Özet: Aile içinde çocuk bakımından lojistik ve duygusal açıdan öncelikli sorumlu olarak görülen anneler, çocuklarının gelecekteki kimliklerinin ve kültürel değerleri ve eğilimlerinin oluşumunda eylemliliğe (agency) sahiptirler. Aynı zamanda rol model olmanın yanında, sosyal baskı kaynağı ve kişisel destek olarak da rol oynayabilmektedirler. Bu çalışmanın amacı özellikle eğitimli, orta sosyal sınıfa mensup ve kendi tüketim kararlarına bağımlı çocu(ğu)kları olan Türk annelerin annelik söylemlerini araştırmak ve bu söylemlerin gıda ve giyim gibi ürünlerin tüketim pratiklerinde nasıl ortaya çıktığını araştırmaktır. Sanal topluluklarda katılımcı olan annelerin söylemsel ve tüketime ilişkin pratikleri kalitatif araştırma teknikleri kullanılarak araştırılmıştır. Tüketim pratiklerinde ortaya çıkan temel söylemler "iyi annelik" ve "kişisel başarı olarak annelik"'tir. Altta yatan ve eksik söylemler de ayrıca tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Annelik söylemleri, Baskın ve alternatif söylemler, Tüketim pratikleri, Sanal topluluklar, Tüketici davranışı

JEL Sınıflandırması: M31, M39

1. Introduction

At early stages of a child's life, parents, specifically mothers, are the most affective agents in the formation of the child's future identity, cultural values and dispositions, and serve as role models, channels of information, sources of social pressure, and interpersonal support and specifically influence child's consumer socialization process (Moore, Wilkie, and Lutz, 2002; Moschis, 1985; Ward, 1974).

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This influence is, however, not one-sided; mother and child constitutes each other mutually (Miller, 1997). Within the context of consumer culture, as Clarke (2004) argues, mother/child relation is mediated by the practice of materiality. Furthermore, Thompson (1996, 390) remarked that "the abstract conception of cultural meanings and ideals related to motherhood is realized concretely through everyday consumption activities". Since child is an element of the mother's extended-self; mother, through productive consumption, engages in a project where she constructs, expresses and negotiates her mother identity as well as the identity of her child. Embedded in the cultural conceptions and ideologies of motherhood, through "authoritative performances" (Arnould and Price, 2000), mother also tries to create a unity between her self and community. Child can reflect the cultural orientations and material and social status of his/her parents (Martens, Southerton, and Scott, 2004) and act as "valves of parents' consumer desires" (Cross, 2002); by buying, for instance, premium brands on behalf of the child, even when children cannot notice and appreciate it, mother may desire to impress others in their social network by reflecting their wealth (Darian, 1998; Prendergast and Wong, 2003). Another, and possibly more significant, motive may be the desire to demonstrate others how caring and devoted a parent she is. A hand-sewed shirt may also convey the same message.

Being a caring and competent mother and performing this role requires immense knowledge of products, such as toys, food, medicines and nursery technologies (e.g. vaporizers, air purifiers, baby monitor, and latest technology thermometers) and keeping pace with innovations and improvements so as to make the "right" product choice (Luke, 1996). Mothering function does not only require carrying out the relational and logistical work, but also requires fulfilling this demanding task by being a very active consumer for addressing the countless requirements of child's development and catching up with the ideals of motherhood. The cultural ideals which are visible in the advice literature are frequently exploit and empowered by marketers.

There are influential studies about the mediating role of consumption within the mother-child relations in London (Clarke, 2004; Miller, 1997) and consumption meanings constructed and negotiated by American working mothers' (Thompson, 1996), however, the materialization of identity discourses of mothers in Turkey, comparatively a less affluent country, through consumption practices needs further attention. This article aims to discover discourses of motherhood (DoM) of Turkish mothers, especially educated and middle class, who have children dependent on their consumption decisions and how their discourses figure out in their consumption practices of products, such as food, clothing, and toys which they buy on behalf of their children in order to construct their identity and create a unity between their self and community.

2. Mothering and Motherhood

Symbolizing creativity and continuity, the mother occupies a respected and cohesive role in traditional families. Although varying historically and culturally in significance, Jones (1994) argued that no role in traditional families is more respected than that of the mother. In Greece, the centrality of mothers' role is derived from their role as the organizer of the family and the guardian of its cohesiveness (Duncan, 2000). In Turkey, predominantly an Islamic country, a very common proverb refers to the paradise lying under the mothers' feet.

The act of bearing a child is obviously a biological fact; however being a mother is commonly referred to a certain functionalization (Sunderland, 2002). It signifies the activities of caring and nurturing the child. Being multifaceted and complex, the term 'mothering' is idealized so as to connote ultimate devotion, affection and importance. In modernity, mothers' primary mission and task is supposed to rear and nurture the child in a self-sacrificing way.

Motherhood refers to the context in which mothering is experienced. Although the practices, and ideals vary according to socio-historical, and cultural contexts, the main task remain the same; "doing the relational and logistical work of child rearing" (Arendell, 2000). Motherhood is a gendered construct; it is based on the thought that bearing a child is a natural instinct which derives from women's biological nature and depicts the birth-giving women as a person who carries out almost all of the mothering work and has the primary responsibility in it.

3. The Discourses of Motherhood

Fairclough (2004) suggests that discourse is an element of social processes, events and practices, though they are not simply discourse. Discourse figures in representations which is "a process of social construction of practices, including reflexive self-construction (Fairclough, 2001)". It is "constituted through social processes, practices, a power and knowledge relation as well as it constitutes them" (Wodak, 1997; 6).

Motherhood is a discursive construct, which figures in "ways of representing, interacting and being" (Fairclough, 2004). DoM is complex and multi-faceted due to its mediation by different agents. For instance, when it is told by institutions and agents, such as media, parenting self-help books, the narrative is about "intensive/good mothering". On the other hand, when it is told by mothers, one can observe multiple narratives; the narrator may be a mother, daughter, sexy woman, wife, homemaker etc. and construct a life narrative embedded in her life themes and a world of preexisting cultural meanings and social conditions (Mick and Buhl, 1992). Motherhood is an identity discourse; it figures in ways of being. It has been supposed to be a primary identity for adult women, and reinforce their gender identity (Arendell, 1999 and 2000). In some cultures, just like that of Greece (Paxson, 2004) and Turkey, childless women can be regarded as second-class citizens or treated, at least, with a feeling of pity. Identity discourses are relational; Women become mothers within the social network of relations. In consumer culture, the DoM is materialized in the instruments of consumption. Through consumption, mothers engage in a production process; constructing, expressing and negotiating the meanings of products they consume on behalf of child, they construct their identity and differentiate themselves from others.

3.1. The Dominant Discourse of Motherhood

As stated by several studies (Hock, Gnezda, and McBride, 1984; Paxson, 2004; Wozniak, 1997) large amount of middle class, unemployed, undereducated and white mothers express remarkable adherence to the dominant DoM (DDoM) and internalize its assumption of that being mother is an essential aspect of women and constitute the main purpose of their lives. The DDoM, in modernity, rests on the power relations and ideology of traditional patriarchic family forms and embraces heterosexual and affluent family household. It takes on the ideology of "good mothering" (intensive mothering)

and sets norms for mothers to follow. Good mother is presumed to be domestic and child-centered and prioritize needs and wants of her children over those of her personal ones. It is associated with utmost devotion, affection, attention and self-sacrifice. Her primary task within the family is to rear well-adjusted the children, by taking care of their logistical, emotional, social, economic, and intellectual needs, supporting her children and spouse in every aspects of their life while setting simultaneously aside her own needs and interests without feeling exhausted. Furthermore, motherhood is assumed to be a woman's primary source of satisfaction and fulfillment and reason for being (Hock et al.1984) due to her biological nature.

Although, every culture and religion regards motherhood as sacred and assigns mothers the task of child rearing as their primary responsibility, social practices and normative ideals and may vary culturally and contextually. The variability also stems from "gender contracts" which differ across space and time (Duncan, 2000). In Greece, being a good mother "is deemed extremely important for the social status of the family taking pride in the proper performance of household duties" (Duncan, 2000). Additionally, in Turkey, good mothering also depends on chastity (Yeşilyurt Gündüz, 2004; Müftüler-Bac, 1999). In South Korea, the enormously strong and self-sacrificing mother could receive considerable respect larger kinship groups and among neighbors (Haejoang, 2001). Due to the temporal changes (accompanying economic, social and cultural transformations) the DDoM is being destabilized; for instance, the ideology of "mothers as housewives" is undermined by "working mothers" (Kleinberg, 1999; Paxton, 2002; Sunderland, 2002).

3.2. Other Discourses of Motherhood

Late capitalist societies have been undergoing significant fragmentations in everyday practices and representations, which lead to fragmentations in discursive formations. Hence, it is difficult to refer to a single, stable and unified discourse (Fırat, 1992). Since discourses can exist in relation to and within other discourses, and readers of the text also recontextualize and appropriate it, it is difficult to mention only one meaning determined by the text. Women of the 21st century have to play many conflicting roles (e.g. woman, wife, mother, daughter, and employee) and live through fragmented everyday practices; hence, a significant plurality in representations occurs. Deviancies from dominant ideologies can be regarded as marginal, alternative and oppositional (Arendell, 1999; Parker, 1997). A major alternative to the DDoM has originated from working mothers. In order to cope with the demands of their career and the cultural ideals of motherhood, many women have adapted to a "juggling lifestyle" (Thompson, 1996) by altering social practices of motherhood. Consistent with Haejoang's study (2001) which reveals the contradictions between mother, motherly wife and sexy woman identities, and their consumption practices in the transition from colonial-modern to postmodern South Korea, Sugiyama (2000; 74) suggested that "[women writers'] maternal voices have demonstrated the postmodernity played out in one of the supposedly most stable identities [motherhood identity] that women have had." Despite the fragmentations, however, it is important to recognize the agency that the DDoM still embodies. The findings of the several studies mostly revealed that the social practices of mothers reflect both dominant and alternative discourses (Aguilar, 1996; Arendell, 2000; Hock et al., 1984; Sugiyama, 2000).

4. Analysis of Discourses and Consumption Practices of Turkish Mothers

After the date of establishment of the Turkish Republic (1923), the state initiated modernization and westernization as main projects. Clothes of women were reconfigured in a Western style and legal rights were "bestowed" to them. Educational reforms were a cornerstone of new secularization, westernization and modernization projects. Girls were given rights for getting educating in public places next to boys and women had the rights to freely participate in public spaces in urban areas. These developments, all together, enabled women to appear in societal spaces, which in turn proved that Turkish Republic had become a part of western civilization (Gole, 2008: 128) The educational system regarded women as "good wives" and "caring mothers" (not as professionals), however, the ideology of "good mothering" was not identifiable. Although biological mother did the logistical work of the whole extended-family, she roughly could participate in relational work of child rearing. Under huge economic problems and poverty, nurturing children was not their primary task. In the late 1950s, Turkey started an industrialization project resulting in migration from rural areas to big cities (Sandıkçı and Ger, 2002). Daughters of the first generation became mothers in 1960-70's. They could live in better economic conditions, but still within extended families. Women of the eastern regions employed in public services as officers, nurses and teachers (Ozbay, 1995). Children's needs and wants were considered as important in purchase decisions, however, just like their parents, they did not have much chance to consume wide variety of products. Women of this generation could identify themselves as "good wife" and "devoted mother". They set aside their needs and wants ;i.e. "did not eat and put on themselves but let their children do". They were socialized into the modern "good mothering" ideology through institutional and societal system. During the 1980's Turkish economy expanded, liberalized and globalized. People could enjoy consumption of wide-variety of goods, especially foreign ones. The values of consumer culture reigned over the ones of the local culture. The ideology of "good mothering" has been adhered and reinforced by most mothers, whereas alternatives to the DDoM began to sprout. They did not mostly derive from mothers with diverse racial backgrounds, sexual choices, and/or unmarried mothers. Having a child without getting married or being a lesbian mother are still not common realities in Turkish society. Although there are ethnic diversities in Turkey, major alternatives have derived from working and/or educated women.

Using longitudinal qualitative data collected for more than 6 months from the discussions member mothers held in online forums and online articles written by them at Bebek.com, Bebekkokusu.com, Annecocuk.com, Annelergrubu.com and Anneyiz.biz, the discourses of Turkish mothers who have children dependent on their consumption decisions with regard to their consumption practices are analyzed. The analysis relies upon close reading and intensive examination of the numerous discussion texts member mothers held in forums and sixty-four articles written by them after 2005. These texts are precious, since they are written by numerous mothers for a long time and therefore, represent a valuable data source to be analyzed for discourses as social practices.

The communities emanated at these websites can be regarded as Communities of Practice (CoP) (Wodak, 1997). They are formed around an aggregate of mothers who share their experiences and, further, conduct practices that influence their lives and, also, the "real" (offline) world around them. On one occasion, they arranged a campaign at the end of 2003, which though being inherently problematic, produced

unexpected and successful results. Although the campaign was named as "No Violence in TV Cartoons", they demanded the cartoons of their childhood, such as Heidi, Vicky the Viking and Popeye, back. Some of these cartoons, such as Popeye, do include violence; the theme was, in fact, built around nostalgia and moved to the violence in TV cartoons. Despite that, the campaign was successful; the old cartoons they demanded appeared in most of the TV channels.

Members are mostly middle-class, educated (high school or university degree) working-mothers. Others are housewives; they are mostly educated and/or at least have abilities to cope with computer and Internet technology. Some of the chosen websites has some rules for participants; for instance, one of them wants the newcomers to write their mothering experiences and feelings so as to appreciate the newcomers' honesty and initiate them into the community. The DoMs and knowledge and power relations are (re)produced within these communities, where mothers define themselves and shape their practices in respect to other mothers. They are fond of discussing their mothering practices and giving advices to each other about, for instance, where to buy and how to prepare healthy and nutritious meals for children, what products and brands are worth to buy, where to shop. So they acquire and negotiate a sense of competent conduct in mothering and consumption practices.

4.1. The Findings

The analyzed text suggest that the discourses of participants are shaped around two competing discourses; "Good mothering" and "Mothering as personal achievement" (MPAD), where the former dominates and also backgrounds the latter. "Mother as main parent" discourse backgrounds both of the competing discourses. Figure 1 portrays these discourses along with supporting discourses and relations between them. It was recognized that discourses, such as "Muslim mother", "Career woman", "Mother who has sexual needs" and "Mother who feels ambivalences" are absent.

Figure 1. A Model of Relationships between the Discourses of Motherhood
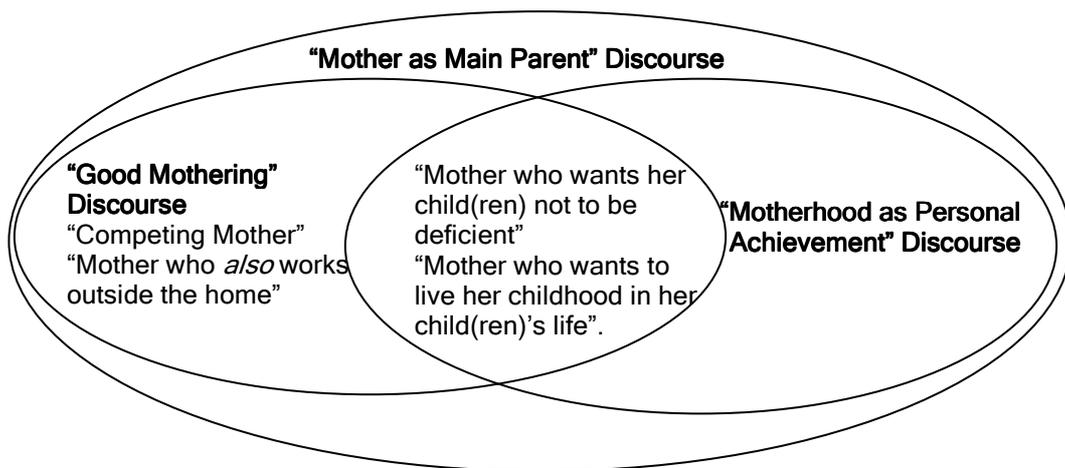
4.2. "Good Mothering" as the DDoM and Consumption Practices.

Particularly housewives with traditional orientation and some of the working mothers, who have to work due to their economic needs, adhere to the good mothering discourse which is dominant within this context. They regard motherhood as a natural instinct. A mother wrote "One of the differences between motherhood and womanhood is that mothers know everything instinctively." Their mothering practices are constituted around the themes of self-sacrifice, ultimate fulfillment, devotion and patience. A good mother is presumed to be strong; "She has to have exceptional strength; even if she gets tired she ought to play with her children". Manifesting scorn for, for instance, feelings of exhaustion or frustration, they also exercise power on other mothers; a mother who called for advice for dealing with the frequent awakenings of her 2-years-old daughter at nights was reminded by some mothers about "the magnificent appearance of the sleeping baby which gives mother the power to overcome difficulties". These findings support the arguments about "good mothering" in the literature (e.g. Hock, Gnezda, and McBride 1984; Paxson 2004; Wozniak 1997).

They manifest proud of prioritizing needs and responsibilities of their children, moreover "building their whole life on children". Each described the ways they changed their life projects and their consumption practices in order to capture the needs and wants of their children. Consider, for instance, this statement: "Our life-style has changed after the birth of our son. We've been more domestic. We used to go out for dinner more often, now we don't have so much spare time and I cannot help myself in thinking about the ingredients of the home-away food."

Furthermore, statements such as "improve herself in her cultural capital by reading, and listening to music so as to develop common points with child" can be interpreted as cues of devotion. The following passage illustrates that they have not simply altered their life style, but also transformed their life projects; "Every topic, that my son is interested in, has become my topic. We are breathing with Winnie the Pooh and Peter Pan. His friends, Ro, Tiger, and Piglet, are also my friends. I wish I could fly like Peter Pan and tell stories like Wendy. I do not know what is the future will bring, but I am planning to adopt his hobbies as long as I have the capacity and power for it."

They consider rearing a child as a major responsibility; taking care of their own health is taken for crucial not due to their personal concern, but children's. Supporting Hock et al.'s (1984) suggestions that motherhood is a woman's primary source of satisfaction and fulfillment and reason for being, every situation and activity, such as getting sick, having leisure time, cleaning the house when the child is awake, is assumed to steal "the children's time" in mothers' life and should be eliminated and/or postponed.

Their ambition is to rear a super-child; a child, who is very healthy, smart, and talented and has the best education, i.e. has or does the best of everything. Hence, they always care about the cleanness and tidiness of the house, and hygiene of the places and foods. They want the foods, tools (such as feeding bottle, pacifier), toys, i.e. every material that their child touches, eats or drinks, to be very hygienic and natural. In the current market context where unnatural foods are proliferating, they are obsessed about the ingredients of the foods; foods ought to be very nutritious, healthy, fresh and organic. Several mothers reported that they examine the food for its taste

and freshness in advance for the benefit of the children. Consider this statement; "I don't allow my daughter eat much butter, salt, sugar, meat and such things, that may cause health problems such as high cholesterol and cause her to put on weight. I use liquid oil in meals, once in a month I cook rice with butter following doctor's advice." Most of them report that despite their high prices, they prefer buying fresh and organic vegetables or fruits. They disdain commercially processed and convenience foods and prefer to prepare foods at home form real scratch. Fermenting yogurt and cheese and grinding rice to powder are some of the practices they perform at home on a daily basis. They extract fruit juice at home, not by means of a juice extractor machine, but using grater made out of glass, since they presume that steel damages the vitamins of the fruits. Instead of unhealthy snacks, home-made substitutes are preferred. As the child grows up, their tolerance for commercially processed and convenience foods improves slightly. Topics just like "appropriate foods for fostering their intelligence" are frequently discussed. By controlling each products and processes, they ascribe, communicate and negotiate meanings and symbols of good mothering. The good mothering practices become signifiers to construct their actual and ideal social self, maintain specific life themes and reach desired life projects

They prefer orthopedic and well-known branded shoes which are also fluffy and good-looking. Some of them stated that although their doctor did not prescribe and recommend orthopedic shoes particularly, they preferred orthopedic shoes. They also buy well-known branded clothes. They are very eager to declare the name of brands they buy on behalf of their children. They care about the fabric and the stitches; Clothes should be made out of cotton and the stitches of the clothes should not irritate the child's skin. Girls' outfits ought to be pink or red colored, mostly with drawings such as Barbie on it and combined with hairclip, vest and handbag. Furthermore, as following passages demonstrate they sacrifice their own outfit needs; "I go out to buy something for myself to put on, but I come back having bought for my son." "I went shopping and bought an expensive jacket for myself. But, I could not deal with guilt and returned the jacket. Instead of it, I bought a new baby-carriage." Another mother wrote that she sews clothes of her four children and so, she, personally, feels more satisfied with the healthier clothes her children wear and she contributes to their family budget, although they actually do not need that.

They frequently discuss about toys. Toys are chosen on the basis of its potential to develop the child's skills, creativity, handicraft and intelligence. They mostly prefer educational toys, such as a puzzle or model toy and by well-known brands. Selecting the safest toy is one of their major concerns.

They have obsessions in almost every mothering and related consumption practices. There are many messages sent to discussion groups, for instance, about the inappropriateness of buying furniture which is dyed or using detergent when washing the child's clothes. Consider the plans of a pregnant woman who is socialized among other mothers; "I plan to balance the temperature of the room by means of a thermometer which does not contain mercury. For Gods sake, it can break down, mercury is toxic, you know. It is also hard to sweep the mercury away. I am going to eavesdrop her room via a baby monitor and control the temperature by using a digital thermometer. In order to keep to the room humid, I plan to use Tefal vaporizers. I reserved the biggest room of the house for her. It is better to buy a big couch for her room; I can change her napkin on it."

Supporting Discourses. The texts include cues of a competition between these mothers, signaling "Competing Mother" discourse. They compete in rearing super-child and want to demonstrate their child-rearing and consumption practices. Children are supposed to reflect the success of mothering practices and social and material status of their mothers. A "super-child" causes immense pride while the opposite causes guilt and shame and makes them reconsider their mothering practices. Ambitions to do their best and cope with normative ideals of their environment, make them anxious; "My son began walking when he was 9 months 27 days old, and he had his first tooth at his 10th month. But he has lost weight. I always doubt whether he is sufficient fed. I found menus on the Internet. So, why is this kid still skinny like a cat? Everyone I know says that he is skinny. I wish just a person would say that he was normal". Moreover, the texts give the idea that they like revealing their consumption practices so as to manage impressions about their material status. They enjoy writing about the names of stores they shop at and the brands they buy on behalf of their children, especially the luxury ones. They can "do any devotion", "try to overcome the economic difficulties they face" or "wait for sales" in order to buy well-known brands for their child even when they cannot afford it.

"Mother who wants her child(ren) not to be deficient" discourse can be recognized in the texts. They want their children to have/do everything the children want and need provided that it is healthy and safe. Along with their ambition to rear a super-child, some mothers wrote that they want their children to play a musical instrument, perform ballet, and have the best education and so forth.

"Mother who wants to live her childhood in child(ren)'s life" discourse can also be distinguished in the texts. Some mothers who tell stories about their amazing childhood want their children to have/do everything that they had/did in their childhood just like living a natural and healthy environment. The statements of mothers that couldn't have a pleasing childhood and consume goods, such as toys they longed for, reveal clues of their desire to compensate their childhood in their children's. For instance, a mother wrote that she could not buy a roller skate when she was a child, and she bought one for her son, even though he was too young to roll it.

Furthermore, "Mother who *also* works outside the home" discourse emerges from the texts. Not only most of the housewives, but also some of the working mothers express the "necessity" to stay at home and devote their times solely to childcare in order to rear children "properly". Mothering is regarded as the main "occupation" which is the primary reason of their being. They long for times in the past when mothers did not have to work and stay at home. These working mothers often articulate their feelings of guilt due to working outside. A working mother accused herself of not being a good mother, since she could not devote all her time to her son and share his first moments. The feeling of guilt and the pursuit of spending "quality time" also affect their consumption practices. They spend some of their leisure time in shopping malls where the children may have their most favorable foods, buy toys, books and crayons, can play with electronic toys and so forth, and in playgrounds where they can substitute the time they spend at work with the time children enjoy more.

4.3. "Mothering as Personal Achievement" Discourse and Consumption Practices.

The texts suggest that especially housewives with modern orientation together with some of the working mothers experience motherhood as a personal achievement

(MPA). MPA can be seen as an alternative route to modernity. Similar to the mothers who reflect the DDoM in their statements, they appreciate the greater meaning that motherhood puts in their life and articulate personal fulfillment. The discursive practice of MPA differs from the discursive practice of "Good mothering" in terms of ultimate fulfillment, devotion and child-centeredness. Moreover they do not reveal obsessions in mothering and related consumption practices.

The mothers who reflect the MPAD appeared to have changed their lifestyle, and prioritized needs and responsibilities of their children too, but their writings connote that they still have a personal life and identity next to their motherhood life and identity. The following passages illustrates the ways working mothers recontextualized the DDoM by juxtaposing both life themes, i.e. working and mothering; "I try not to think of my son when I am working and not to think of my job at home. I detach working, mothering and being a wife. Because I don't want to get exhausted, I want to be somewhat comfortable and be a peaceful mother." "Currently, I consider the hours I spend at work as time for recreation. I take a break and stay alone with myself. Everybody around me has 'Monday syndrome' but I have 'Friday syndrome'. Don't get me wrong; I love my son and I really like mothering and spending time with him. I can do anything he needs and wants, but I, as a person, disappear at home".

They regard motherhood more as personal achievement than a natural instinct and do not assume that a mother is the one who must be strong and know mothering instinctively. They discuss about the mothering practices and try to get advice. The difficulties they face and their feelings of exhaustion are also articulated; "After being mother, I don't have any time even to experience depression". However, consistent with Arendell's (2000) suggestion about mothering ideology forming the backdrop for action and assessment even when resisted, they do not resist the assumptions of the DDoM related to the fulfillment and enhanced meaning in the life. The difference rests on juxtaposing competing life goals. Similar to mothers who reflect the DDoM, they discuss the way they changed in their life-style and consumption according to their children needs and wants, their attempt to learn the proper ways in e.g. feeding, entertaining, leading. They report that they buy the child-care books and see the children movies. However, they lead their life as independent persons, e.g. read other books, (novels, professional material etc.), and see the movies they, as grown-ups, like. Unlike the mothers who reflect the DDoM, they aim to "show respect" (not "adopt") to their children's hobbies and encourage beneficial ones. Consider, for instance, this statement: "I aim to encourage my daughter to discover her interests and talents and grow up as an optimistic person who knows how to be happy. At the same time, I aim to form my life on a flexible ground so as to allocate as much time as possible to my family".

They buy foods in accordance with their children needs and wants, look for organic, nutritious and healthy ingredients and care for freshness, however, they are not obsessed about them. The difference rests on child-centeredness. They buy commercially produced convenience foods, mostly the frozen ones, yet, disdain canned food. They do not always cook food from real scratch; they also buy the commercially processed ones, which they trust in their nutritious value. They prefer extracting fruit juice at home by means of an extractor as long as they have time; otherwise they prefer buying the brands which they trust in their naturalness. Similar to other mothers, working mothers with small children, especially, do not want their

children consume unhealthy snacks, however, being aware of the fact that they cannot always be in charge and control other caretakers, they show tolerance. Furthermore, some of them wrote that they buy such foods even by themselves, mostly as a compensation for their absence; "In the way to home, I like buying snacks for my son. He waits for it. I don't like to go home with nothing in my hands".

Hygiene is important for them, however being aware of their physiological limits they do not obsess about being a supermom; "My mother was a working mother, too. She intended to be a supermom, got easily exhausted and became aggressive. When I was a child, I decided not to be just like her. Nothing can be perfect. I neglect house cleaning, but try not to neglect my child".

Similar to other mothers, they prefer handier, safer and manageable furniture and orthopedic and well-known branded shoes. They believe in importance of wearing quality shoes. In clothing they prefer well known brands, too. Some of them, however, also utilize hand-me down clothes. They are not obsessed about the details of shoes and clothes. They demand comfortable and quality products which can be easily cleaned. Indoor and outdoor games and toys are frequently discussed. They do not have any preference between branded and unbranded toys. Toys are chosen not only on the basis of its potential to develop the child's skills, creativity, handicraft and intelligence, but also according to their children's desires; "My first criterion in toy selection is the interest of my son. Then comes the material the toy is made out; it should be of high quality. Further, it must enhance his intelligence and be age-appropriate".

These mothers articulate their purpose to rear a normal, but happy child and state that they want their children to have prestigious and well-earned professions, however they plan to "show respect" to their children's choices. They want the best of everything for their children, too, but the texts they write do not include cues of ambition. The texts indicate, however, anxiety which arises out of paradoxes they experience between their mothering practices and the cultural ideals of motherhood; "I catch disapproving glimpses from other people around me when I feed my baby with [commercially processed] convenience foods. I try not to take care of them, but they really annoy me. People have limits, you know. I cannot always cook at home".

Statements just like "After the job, I try to spend my time as much as possible", or "I configure the time we spend together, so that we enjoy both" frequently occur in texts. For these members "spending quality time" is of more importance than devoting all their time to the children. They attempt to create more free time and enjoy themselves with or without their children. Similar to other mothers, they spend some of their "quality time" in shopping malls where the children can have fast foods, snacks, toys, books and can play with electronic toys and see movies. Distinctively, however, they attempt to spend their quality time indoors. They try to play games, chat, and talk about how they spent the day. The following text illustrates the attempts of a working mother to spend "quality time" and shield her son from consumer culture: "As far as it is warm, I allow him to play in playground, follow cats, and observe ants. But, in winter we mostly spend our time at home, grandparent's house, and neighbors. I regret to spend time at shopping centers. I don't want my son to learn consumer culture".

Supporting Discourses. "Mother who wants her child(ren) not to be deficient" and "Mother who wants to live her childhood in child(ren)'s life" discourses can be

recognized in the texts written by these mothers, too. Similar to other mothers, they want their children to have or do everything the children want and need provided that it is healthy and safe. Some of them also wrote that they want their children to have or do everything they, as mothers, had/did or could not have/do in their childhood.

Consistent with Thompson's (1996; 397) suggestion, these working mothers "gain a sense of satisfaction from providing their children rewarding experiences that would not be affordable without their income." The products they choose signify devotion which they can not reveal through their physical existence, but which are materialised as an outcome of their work life; "Yesterday, I quit from the job. I am upset because I will not be able to buy expensive toys and outfit for my son, but I will be able to spend all my time with him".

They often discuss ostentatious consumption practices of "other" mothers and accuse them with being agent for the spread of materialistic values; "I have friends who constantly buy well-known brands for their children, even if they cannot afford it. I hear them complaining about their credit card loans. But they keep on buying expensive items. I cannot understand them".

4.4. Backgrounding and Absent Discourses

Backgrounding discourses are discourses that are pushed into the background, i.e. excluded since they are too obvious to be mentioned (Sunderland, 2002). The DDoM backgrounds MPA discourse. Since mothers participate voluntarily in the chosen websites, it is reasonable to assume that these mothers typically identify themselves through their motherhood identity and that the DDoM forms the background regardless of the reflected higher-order discourses. Furthermore, "Mother as main parent" (Sunderland, 2002) discourse backgrounds both of the competing discourses; father's role in child rearing is identified or described via the verbs, just like "help" and "support". The participants, even the ones reflecting MPAD, do not question their role as main parents, although they sometimes complain about it.

There are also absent discourses: those that remain either unrealized and/or suppressed; these are "Muslim mother", "Career woman", "Mother who has sexual needs" and "Mother who feels ambivalences" discourses. Members of these virtual communities did not interact on a basis of religiosity. Although, one can suggest that mothers have a strong religious orientation will derive their motherhood identity from their social self identifies along with Muslim identity. As a religion, Islam, obviously, provides rules and tools form identity construction. According to Gole, Muslim identity in Turkey is also modernizing, but in its own trajectory. Furthermore, the texts written by working mothers do not signify their pursuit of the goal of career progression. The identity of being a mother predominate over other possible identities in the studied CoP. Consistent with Thompson's (1996; 398) suggestion, "the pursuit of career outside the house is reconfigured in terms more consistent with the traditional association between motherhood and management of the family's domestic (and consumer) affair." Cues signifying mothers as persons who have sexual needs are also absent. The reason may lie in the DDoM within the context of Turkish culture; good mothering is assumed to depend on chastity. Moreover, sex-related issues are sensitive and suppressed topics in Turkish public culture. Furthermore, there are no cues signifying ambivalence due to frustration and other strong negative feelings, such as anxiety, loss of self-confidence and self-esteem, disappointment, isolation,

resentment and anger (Nyström and Öhrling, 2004). Utterances about feelings of exhaustion and guilt deriving from working "outside" occasionally appear in the texts, nonetheless, none of the statements about negative feelings refer to an expression considered merely as ambivalence.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that most of the interactions are shaped around the "Good mothering" and "Mothering as personal achievement" discourses where the former dominates and backgrounds the latter, and both are backgrounded by "Mother as main parent" discourse. The supporting discourses explored are: "Mother who also works outside the home", "Competing Mother", "Mother who wants her child(ren) not to be deficient", "Mother who wants to live her childhood in her child(ren)'s life" discourses. Absent, however, are the "Career woman," "Mother who has sexual needs," and "Mother who feels ambivalences" discourses.

The mothering and consumption practices of mothers who reflect the "good mothering" discourse are centered on the themes of self-sacrifice and ultimate fulfillment, devotion and child-centeredness. They have obsessions in almost every mothering and related consumption practices; along with their ambition to rear super-child, who has or does the best of everything, they always care about, for instance, the cleanness and tidiness of the house, hygiene of the places and healthiness of foods. They compete in rearing a super-child and want to demonstrate their mothering and consumption practices. Children reflect success of mothering practices and social and material status of their mothers.

The practices of housewives with less traditional orientation together with most of the working mothers who reflect the MPA discourse can be regarded as more "spontaneous". They differ from others in the scope of ultimate fulfillment, devotion and child-centeredness. They articulate their purpose to rear a normal, but happy child. They want the best of everything for their children, but their statements include comparatively lesser cues of ambition and obsession.

All of the mothers want their children not to be deficient anytime and anywhere. Mothers who did not have a pleasing childhood and consume goods reveal clues of their desire to compensate their childhood in children's childhood. These two discourses may stem from the fact that most of the informants were children during a deprivation period in 60's and 70's. They may subliminally try to deserve their family from deprivation. Besides, along with amazing memories of their childhood such as living in a natural and healthy environment, they would like their children to have opportunities

Considering the historical background and the findings, it is only natural to assume that the DoMs as experienced within the Turkish consumer culture is not only based on long-standing cultural narratives, but also evolved as Turkish society moved along modernity. Despite that, the faith (sometimes obsession) in naturalness together with distrust in outcomes of technology contradicts with modernity. Since fragmentations can not be interpreted as postmodern, the findings support the notion of multiple routes to modernity, as suggested by Sandıkçı and Ger (2002). The traditional family roles in a patriarchal social system are internalized, but the discourses and practices are evolving in a trajectory that can be read as an alternative route of modernity. Findings also indicate significance of mothers' agency in children's

socialization as consumers. Any public policy aimed to overcome the dark side of consumer culture may target mothers.

This study is not without limitations; the texts chosen to be analyzed are written by anonymous mothers who are member of mothering websites. The users of Internet in Turkey are more educated and/or affluent than others. Therefore, the sample might not represent the "ordinary" Turkish mother, particularly the ones who are less affluent. A problem about the data is that the exact date of some of the texts cannot be retrieved. Yet, by trying to scan nearly all relevant data, this problem is tried to overcome. Furthermore, motherhood is not analyzed through a societal lens.

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