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## The View from Downstairs

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# 1 The View from Downstairs

EARLY ON a weekday morning in Ankara, people hurry to work as the usual urban scene repeats itself. A middle-class professional woman scurries about her fifth-floor apartment in one of Ankara's elite neighborhoods. She is rushing to prepare her children for school and get herself and her husband ready for the workday ahead. She helps her husband find his blue-and-yellow striped tie while waiting for her crimson nail polish to dry so she can comb her daughter's hair. At the same time, in the basement of the apartment building, another woman also prepares for the day ahead. With work-worn hands, the woman of the basement gently wakes her daughter and reminds her husband that he should not let the child go to school with uncombed hair. This woman does not dress for the chilly morning outside, because she will not join her upstairs neighbors at the crowded bus stops and taxi stands. Instead she takes the stairs to the fifth-floor apartment now vacated by the elegantly attired woman with the crimson nail polish. Here, the woman of the basement will spend her day cleaning and ordering the domestic sphere of the upstairs woman.

In a squatter settlement, on the margin of the city, another woman traverses the sociogeographic boundaries of her neighborhood for work in the homes of upstairs women. She waits at the bus stop with other women from her neighborhood who, like her, are on their way to the middle-class homes of Ankara. At the bus stops linking Ankara's middle-class neighborhoods with its numerous squatter communities, domestic workers stand apart from the women whose homes they clean. Women of squatter settlements appear neither wholly urban nor wholly rural but instead combine elements of both cultures that mark them unmistakably as domestic workers. Ill-fitting outfits of once-fashionable designer skirts and cheap polyester blouses compose the hand-me-down uniform of the commuting domestic worker. Rough, chapped hands clutch plastic bags stuffed with *şalvar* (the traditional work clothes that speak of peasant backgrounds), which remain hidden until the

commute's end when, in isolation from one another, these women prepare to labor in the upstairs apartments of Ankara.

Women of the basement and women of the squatter settlements are the subjects of this book. These rural migrant women, like those in other industrializing countries, comprise an extensive and proliferating informal urban labor sector. They work in private homes, where the terms and conditions of their labor are neither officially determined nor regulated. In fact, neither worker nor employer exists in any legal capacity. Nonetheless, both groups of women significantly shape gender and class dynamics in Turkey—a large, increasingly modern and industrialized nation with a population exceeding 60 million.

Despite their sociodemographic similarities, women of the squatter settlements and women of the basement represent two different modes of entry into the modern world corresponding to their different socio-geographic positions within Ankara's urban landscape. The question of location is central to our understanding of the life conditions and experiences of rural migrant women and the internal transformations wrought by domestic service, as well as of the structure and organization of waged domestic labor in Turkey. The two groups are distinguished by the proximity of their homes to their workplaces. Women of the basement seldom leave their apartment houses and are accompanied by their husbands on the rare occasions when they do leave the vicinity. Squatter women, however, are accustomed to long daily commutes across subcultural and geographic boundaries. The two groups thus experience urban space in quite different ways. While squatter women negotiate the diverse contexts and dynamic pace of urban life and the domestic labor market, women of the basement remain firmly attached to their apartment houses. Indeed, the latter embody the constraints placed on female spatial mobility in Turkey. Location serves as a starting point from which we can conceptualize differences among rural migrant women, who, in most social-scientific accounts, are treated as a homogeneous unit. Moreover, considerations of location allow us to explore important distinctions in the range of experiences that inform migrant women's lives and their encounters with middle-class women. By providing different kinds of opportunities and constraints, location-determined social practices shape these women's lives in ways that inflect their experiences of work, class, gender, community, patriarchy, and day-to-day social relations.<sup>1</sup>

It is impossible to neatly summarize the varied ways in which the lives of these three groups of women interact as basement and squatter women labor for the middle-class women and the middle-class women employ the basement and squatter women as waged domestic workers to substitute for their own unpaid labor. Tracing the incorporation of rural migrant women into the domestic spheres of middle-class women and mapping the economic and social practices that connect these women requires us to look beyond the privatized labor relations that have been the focus of most studies of such informal labor in developing countries. It is also necessary to examine the social and economic practices of rural migrant communities in the city and the gendered division of labor and authority in both middle- and working-class families.

Studies conducted in other developing countries generally assume that employers define both the identity of the domestic worker and the structure of domestic service. I prefer, however, to go beyond the threshold of the workplace to attempt to understand how family and community relations affect the inner workings of domestic service and, in turn, how employment in domestic service shapes family and community relations. In this book I examine the connections between gender relations within the family and the internal workings of the informal labor market by studying the earnings, work schedules, employment and recruitment patterns, and internal transformations required of domestic workers in the renegotiation of patriarchal gender relations. My aim is to locate the interaction between these two spheres and to determine how experiences in one modify and transform those in the other. I also explore the centrality of male power and traditional notions of patriarchy to the configuration of gender and class dynamics, particularly in the ordering of relationships between middle-class women and domestic workers. More specifically, I demonstrate that patriarchal control over migrant women's labor makes their labor expensive and scarce. Thus, traditional patriarchal prerogative limits middle-class women's access to cheap, readily available domestic wage labor. I go on to illustrate how both groups of women strategically use their understandings of domination and patriarchal construction of women's identity in the management of their relationships with one another. By documenting the agency of rural migrant men and women in their relations with middle-class employers, I demonstrate the power of structurally weak actors in cross-class relations in domestic service in Turkey.

This study departs methodologically from other studies of third world domestic workers in that it is based on a representative sample of a group of domestic workers—the women of the basement—thereby permitting generalizations applicable in comparative, cross-cultural studies. While almost all other studies of domestic workers use purposive sampling methods because they lack a sampling frame, my work in Turkey provided the rare opportunity of taking a representative sample of domestic workers. I selected 103 domestic workers in the basement group by using a mixed sampling strategy (systematic and random) within a frame derived from a complete list of buildings prepared by the Construction and Housing (İmar ve İskan) division of the Ankara Municipality. The sampling frame entailed a list of dwellings of which half were located in middle-class residential districts and half in middle-class and upper-middle-class districts in Ankara. I used residential districts as a class indicator because in Turkey residential areas are relatively homogenous and distinguished by social class. In addition, I interviewed 59 domestic workers from four different squatter settlement neighborhoods. Of these, 57 are included in this book. Because of the lack of an adequate sampling frame, though, a representative sampling procedure for this group was not possible. Instead, this group was chosen by a snowball, or convenience, method. My contact with this group was facilitated by employers who introduced me to two domestic workers who further introduced me to their neighborhoods and, thus, initiated my contact with others in the community. The close proximity of domestic workers, enhanced by kinship and ethnic ties, expanded my network and eased entry into these communities. In one case, for example, I interviewed four domestic workers from the same family: my original informant introduced me to her older sister and then three of her sisters-in-law. Two of the communities—Oran and Nato Yolu—are located on the outskirts of the city; domestic workers from these neighborhoods spend considerable time commuting to and from work. The other two—Dikmen and Zafertepe—are located within Ankara's middle- and upper-middle-class neighborhoods and thus are physically integrated with the city.

## SITUATING TWO STUDY GROUPS IN URBAN SPACE

*Outsiders Within: Women of the Basement*

Located in the heartland of Anatolia, Ankara has had only a brief history as an urban center, despite its rich past dating to the Hittite period. Ankara, a provincial town of twenty thousand inhabitants, was designated the capital of the Turkish Republic in 1923 by Kemal Atatürk in the hope of modernizing Turkey's less developed regions and decentralizing its İstanbul-focused economy. The government initiated extensive programs to create a capital city that would symbolize the modernization of Turkey with parks, opera houses, planned housing, large boulevards, cultural centers, and public service facilities (Bozdoğan 1997; Tekeli 1984). Dubbed the country's most planned city, Ankara has grown faster than any other major city in Turkey, housing almost 4 million people as of 1997. Ankara experienced one of the highest rates of urban population growth in Turkey between 1950 and 1970 with an influx of migrants from the country's rural areas. As a result, Ankara now has a higher percentage of squatter settlements than does any other Turkish urban center. The proportion of squatter settlement dwellers to total city population was 60.0 in 1995 (Keleş 2000:387), a slight decrease from an astonishing 72.4 percent in 1980 (Keleş and Daniels 1985:165). Sharp socioeconomic hierarchies are clearly reflected in the city's geography; the lowest income groups are concentrated in the belts of squatter settlements surrounding the city's planned core, modern Ankara. Here, in Ankara's modern core, the more affluent sectors of the population reside in the very same apartment buildings that house, though floors below, the women of the basement.<sup>2</sup>

"Women of the basement" are the wives of the doorkeepers of middle- and upper-middle-class apartment buildings. Unlike the majority of rural migrants, doorkeeper (*kapıcı*) families live and work in middle- and upper-middle-class areas where husbands are employed as doorkeepers<sup>3</sup> and wives as domestic workers, whose entry into the domestic work force is mediated and governed by their husbands. The doorkeeper lives in the basement of the building where his services are required. His main duties include providing building security, operating the central-heating system, taking out the residents' trash, buying and distributing fresh bread<sup>4</sup> twice a day, shopping for groceries for the residents, collecting monthly maintenance fees from tenants,<sup>5</sup> and

performing general maintenance duties, such as disposing of refuse from coal-burning furnaces. Other duties may include walking tenants' dogs, tending gardens, or taking tenants' children to school. The doorkeeper deals with strangers (such as salespeople and beggars) and protects the building and the tenants from potentially disturbing and threatening elements. In short, his job is to provide order by policing the door and insuring its sanctity. Wives of doorkeepers constitute a prime pool from which middle-class tenants recruit waged domestic labor. In this way, women of the basement rarely navigate the domestic labor market but hold a virtual monopoly over domestic service.

The rise of the doorkeeper and his family as a significant figure in the Turkish urban landscape occurred during the early 1960s with the passing of a law that encouraged replacement of single-family homes with apartment buildings in order to house a growing middle-class population.<sup>6</sup> This new collective housing created an occupational niche that initially was filled by migrant men and subsequently nurtured as a source of jobs as more and more peasants came to the city.

The building of middle-class housing in response to the expansion of the urban middle classes contributed significantly to a restructuring of the boundaries between the private and public spheres along class lines. The maintenance of a middle-class culture promoted the incorporation of rural migrants into the interiors of the domestic spheres of middle classes, creating a powerful physical and symbolic space shared by urban and rural classes. While these rural migrants became an increasingly indispensable part of middle-class existence, the middle class came to define itself in contradistinction to the peasants. Indeed, contact between these groups gave rise to intensified forms of boundary-defining activity. The emergence of an occupational role for migrant men also helped to consolidate the definition of the housewifery role for middle-class women, who performed tasks of homemaking, nurturance, and sociability within the confines of the domestic arena. This arrangement generated a gender division of labor that implicitly limited opportunities for women to act and interact within the streets, shops, and markets of the public sphere. Although not ostensibly designed to exercise patriarchal power over female spatial mobility, these structural reconfigurations have often perpetuated it. Doorkeepers who stood between middle-class housewives and the street not only saved the women from the mundane chores of purchasing and daily provisioning but also "protected" them

from the outside world and encounters with strangers, all the while reinforcing spatial gender boundaries.

Doorkeepers create an orderly, comfortable existence for middle- and upper-middle-class urban populations in Turkey. Doorkeepers embody the contact point of modern and modernizing populations, situated as rural “outsiders within” the modern urban domestic sphere. Their status in this realm is clearly symbolized by the location of their apartments in the basements of buildings. Despite sharing the same gate, roof, and neighborhood, building tenants and doorkeeper families understand each other in the classical terms of upstairs and downstairs. The layers of experience attending this encounter make apartment houses unique points of contact that hold different meanings for each type of inhabitant. For doorkeepers and their families, the apartment house is a place of docility, containment, incarceration, and painful stigmatization. But also it offers them a sense of autonomy and the prestige deriving from contact with the middle class and distinction from other rural migrants who reside in squatter settlements.

Doorkeeper families are not scattered haphazardly throughout middle- and upper-middle-class areas. They migrated in patterns that transposed kinship and geographic communities to the new urban environment. This reconstitution of regional communities in middle- and upper-middle-class urban space is clearly reflected in my survey. Eighty-three percent of the domestic workers interviewed, for example, reside near male relatives or former neighbors also working as doorkeepers in the immediate neighborhood. As doorkeeping became an occupational enclave for migrant men from rural areas, their wives were increasingly employed as domestic workers in the same neighborhoods. The doorkeeper wives, unlike their sisters who settled on the margins of urban space and became full-time housewives, began immediately to work in the homes of tenants. Such employment gave husbands control over their wives’ experiences with waged work and choice of employers. These women now hold a monopoly over the domestic service industry: only 14 percent of the doorkeeper wives interviewed reported never having worked as a domestic. Although apartment house doorkeeping integrates the supply and demand sides of domestic labor, doorkeeping does not insure employment for wives. Recruitment of wives is never the direct result of a formal, legally binding agreement between employers and doorkeepers. In fact, at the time of my survey, 23 percent of



domestic workers had no in-house employers but worked exclusively for out-of-building employers in the surrounding neighborhood.

**SHELTERING TRADITION.** The structure of doorkeeping both confirms and denies continuity with tradition. The apartment building constitutes a spatial zone where tradition can persist: it acts as a container of traditional action along with important social transformations in terms of gender roles. In this book, I explore the complex ways in which the organization of doorkeeping inhibits possibilities for becoming modern and reimposes traditional forms of class and gender servility upon these migrants.

The migration of peasant women often results in their “housewifeization” (Ayata and Ayata 1996; Şenyapılı 1981b). In migrant communities women, especially married women, are not allowed to work outside the home. Squatter settlements would seem to offer an abundant domestic labor pool, yet few squatter women seek employment as domestic workers.<sup>8</sup> Patriarchal opposition to women’s paid work, rooted in deep-seated anxieties about perceived threats to female sexuality and modesty and to men’s honor, drastically limits the sorts of work women can perform and the contexts in which they can work. The institution of doorkeeping, however, spatially unites the supply and demand sides of domestic labor and thus insures the continued presence of the protective paternalistic gaze. In effect, women can undertake paid domestic labor without leaving the home or the oversight of their husbands. And the payment of the domestic worker’s wages may even go directly to the husband.

Tradition is also maintained by the imprecise boundaries between work and home that ultimately involve all household members in the labor experience of the doorkeeper. Despite its formalization as a service occupation, the institution of doorkeeping does not allow the doorkeeper to become an individualized wage laborer. On the contrary, it reconstitutes the migrant family as a laboring unit whose male head directs its combined labor processes. Doorkeepers’ wives partially retain their former unpaid family worker status and attain a new independent earner identity as domestic workers.

Yet, the same institution, by tying the husband to the home, generates changes in the traditional gendered division of labor, especially with regard to childcare. As I show in Chapter 2, most domestic work-

ers with young children are able to work full-time schedules (five to seven days a week) because of their husbands' availability to meet the demands of young children. However, the objective condition of the doorkeeper's domestic availability is not effective in breaking the strong link between household work and gender role identity. In fact, I argue that this link becomes even stronger in such families because the doorkeeper's very occupational role (subserving and feminized) is likely to generate gender anxiety in him.

EXPERIENCING STIGMATIZATION. The doorkeeper always lives with his family, always in the dingy basement apartment of the building for which he works—a job “benefit” that precludes any sense of professional pride and any sense of shared space with tenants. Further, these housing conditions constitute an important element in the formulation of stigma and contempt. Many of the apartment houses I visited, new and old, confine doorkeepers to damp underground chambers with little light and poor ventilation. The majority consist of two rooms with a half kitchen and often no adequate bathing facilities. About 18 percent have one room and only 11 percent have more than two rooms. The average household includes 4.3 people. Doorkeepers and their wives complain that they “are stuffed underground” and that their “children do not see the face of the sun.” Moreover, conditions seldom vary according to employer status. Although my sample group was drawn equally from middle- and upper-middle-class districts of Ankara, there was no correspondence between the luxury of the apartment building and the condition and size of its doorkeeper apartment. Substandard housing conditions are the norm, regardless of the class or location of the apartment building.

Although the layouts of doorkeeper dwellings, like those of squatter settlement houses, display some variety, all have the same unsettling qualities. The typical apartment, for example, has huge, exposed pipes running through the living room. Passage from one room to another often requires that one step around the building's heating-system burner, through which coal dust or refuse are carried to the domestic quarters. Windows, typical of those found in basements, are too small and placed too high to admit light. Such conditions create and perpetuate a sense of discomfort, alienation, and confinement, providing a home often described by its occupants as a prison.

Doorkeepers' feelings of alienation are mirrored in contempt and stigmatization by the upstairs residents. This stigma permeates the doorkeeper's life, extending to his job as well as his family. I argue that this stigma results from the day-to-day proximity of the doorkeeper to the middle-class residents whom he and his family serve. Following Mary Douglas (1989), I argue that the stigma is the residents' symbolical protective barrier against what they perceive as pollution of their dwelling. Not only do doorkeepers have a low status, but, by occupying the physical and cultural margins of middle-class dwellings, they challenge the ordering of class- and status-based inequalities as well as urban-rural-based divisions within the Turkish city. The middle class keeps these dangerously close "outsiders within" in place by acts of contempt. Stigmatization, by structuring the interactions among members of each class, affirms the social distance that the middle class feels is undermined by physical proximity and the lack of ritualized social contacts, especially among children.

The following comments by doorkeepers' wives reflect the contempt they feel from the middle class, especially toward their children and their segregation and alleged uncleanness.

The main problem is with children. As they grow up they become unhappy. They start asking how we became doorkeepers.

They belittle and humiliate doorkeepers' children. They look at doorkeepers as unclean peasants. They treat us with contempt.

They despise doorkeepers. They warn their children, "Don't play with doorkeepers' kids. They will contaminate you with microbes." We're humans too, only our appearance does not fit with theirs.

Regardless of how well you dress and groom your kids, they are still identified as the doorkeeper's kids. They still don't play with our kids.

Through these and other such testimonies the doorkeeper families in the study voiced their profound sense of being stigmatized. To the middle class, perceived poor hygiene is the symbol and symptom of a deeper character structure, sign of an essentially contemptible existence. Their accusations of uncleanness go beyond aesthetics and reflect on the moral character of both the doorkeeper and his family. They are especially hurtful to wives, who are held responsible for family hygiene.

As Douglas (1989) points out, stigma is attached to those persons and groups that reside at the margins of society and thus define those

margins. Douglas says that witches, novices, and unborn children, for example, are threatening, because they have no official place in the patterning of society. Marginal persons, those whose status is ambiguous or weakly defined, are dangerous because margins are the most vulnerable point in any social structure. By policing the margins, the center strengthens itself. Viewed from this perspective, doorkeeper families are marginals in the city because they belong neither in the apartment house (in the same sense that tenants do) nor in the squatter settlements.<sup>9</sup> They are seen as carriers of pollution and disorder.

Even when relegated to the bottom of the class hierarchy and made a subordinate group in cultural and economic terms, doorkeeper families are still feared and avoided because of the symbolic threat of close contact with them. Urban classes worry about the confusion caused by the blurring of class boundaries. This worry, along with the fear of “pollution,” seems greater among members of the middle class whose concern with status distinctions stems from a particular class insecurity that Barbara Ehrenreich (1989) calls “fear of falling.” Social distancing from the doorkeeper families is, in this sense, a typical practice in the self-definition of middle-class identity.<sup>10</sup> But under what conditions are boundaries perceived to be threatened? The location of doorkeepers’ homes at the bottom of apartment buildings and the role of the doorkeepers as order takers do not seem to satisfy middle-class tenants’ need to demarcate social boundaries. I argue that social boundaries are perceived to be undermined when they are permeable, as they are in Ankara with the cross-class interaction of children and the doorkeeper families’ claim to a fair share of city resources and opportunities.

The threat of mixing is countered by established rituals. Social contacts between doorkeeper families and tenants are highly ritualized, asserting and reasserting class and status differences through asymmetrical participation in systems of exchange. For example, tenants put doorkeeper families in a low-status position by giving unreciprocated gifts to doorkeepers. During religious holidays, when social visits are common between relatives, friends, neighbors, and acquaintances, doorkeepers visit the tenants but their visits are not reciprocated. This practice stems from a long-established cultural norm that allows superiors not to reciprocate without appearing rude.

Among children, however, either there are no routinized forms of exclusion or they are more difficult to implement and hence the threat

established by the unregulated mixing of the doorkeepers' children with the middle-class children of the neighborhood. The children attend school together, share desks, play at the same playground, hang out at the same neighborhood corner, get haircuts in the same barbershop, ride the same school bus, and walk the same routes to school.<sup>11</sup> This mixing of children, which may even lead to cross-class romantic attachments, is a function of the structural conditions of the occupation of doorkeeper. Tenants respond to this perceived "pollution" by creating elaborate symbolic means for segregating doorkeeper families.<sup>12</sup> Odor, manners, demeanor, and uncleanness constitute the terms of a symbolic distancing vocabulary, provided by the stigmatized group's actual involvement in "dirty" work, their unhygienic housing conditions, and their peasant background.

Although doorkeeper households establish and maintain communities among themselves, they are physically isolated from squatter settlement communities. And although the two groups have similar patterns of migration and class origin, only doorkeeper families possess a collective, occupation-based identity. Their unique position within the city generates distinctive grammars of life for these people who would otherwise possess a common migrant identity. If we use the metaphor of "outsider" to define the marginalized position of the migrant in urban space, then the doorkeepers appear as "outsiders within" because of their marginality within middle- and upper-middle-class space. Squatter settlement migrants, however, remain mere "outsiders" because their community-based collective experience is distanced from the "within."

### *Third Space: Women of the Squatter Settlements*

The social and spatial structure of apartment house living and the interconnected hierarchical worlds of doorkeepers and tenants within this structure differ drastically from the structure of squatter settlement neighborhoods. Migrant families in Turkey establish neighborhoods in squatter settlement areas that are highly homogenous in terms of family, kinship ties, and village or town of origin (A. Ayata 1989; Ayata and Ayata 1996; Duben 1982; Heper 1983; Karpat 1976; Kartal 1978, 1983; Şenyapılı 1981a). Often an entire neighborhood of squatters originates from the same town. My study confirms this pattern: 74 percent of domestic workers had female relatives or fellow migrants from the same town of origin currently working as domestic workers living in the same squatter settlement neighborhood.

The Turkish word for squatter settlements, *gecekondu* (settled overnight), originated in the 1940s when waves of peasants came to the city and built shelters by night on public land belonging to the State Treasury. Squatter settlement neighborhoods continued to proliferate in the major cities of Turkey throughout the 1950s with diversification of type and method of house building. Local and national governmental response to the housing problem of rural migrants and demands for the legalization of homes was varied and often contradictory, with alternating policies of construction pardons and outright demolition. In an effort to prevent creation of a large proletariat, for example, the government employed a pragmatic politics of containment and responded to the demands of squatter settlements for improved services and public facilities with pardons for houses built illegally. Successful grass-roots initiatives by squatter settlement residents as well as voting power played a significant role in these processes. Through the creation of neighborhood associations called *Gecekonduyu Güzelleştirme Derneği* (Association for the Beautification of the Squatter Settlement), the new urbanities demanded schools, bus service, public utilities, street improvements, and the legalization of individual dwellings. The associations provided an important instrument for political action by linking squatter settlement dwellers, political parties, and the local and national governments. Yet access to basic public services within the city remains very uneven. According to some estimates, more than half of all families in squatter settlements lack some or all of the amenities of water, electricity, decent streets, and accessible schools (Keleş and Danielson 1985). This statistic is especially striking because in 1995, close to 60 percent of Ankara's population lived in squatter housing (Keleş 2000:387).

Despite these problems, urban experts agree that squatter settlements in Turkey should not be considered slums (Keleş and Danielson 1985:183) and that migrants in squatter settlements are "far from a destitute mass" (Özbudun 1976:191). These interpretations are based on the observation that a high proportion of migrants were able to move into urban occupations and that some others joined the urban working class—a pattern reflected in my own work. About half of the husbands of the domestic workers in the squatter settlement group I studied are public service workers: janitors, gardeners, messengers, night watchmen, heating operators, street sweepers, garbage collectors, and government employees. About 13 percent of the husbands are unemployed and 7.4 percent are

semi-skilled industrial workers. Another 13 percent are retired. Only a small percentage (7.4 percent) are informal workers, such as construction workers, and an even smaller group include microentrepreneurs. In short, the majority of husbands of domestic workers I studied possess low-prestige, low-paying but high-security government jobs.<sup>13</sup>

Until recently, two dominant perspectives informed the debate about squatter settlements and their inhabitants: the modernization and the Marxist perspectives. The modernization perspective views the squatter settlement buildings and their inhabitants as undesirable, disruptive forces in the imagined orderliness of the city—transitional forms of living that will soon change into modern urban modes. Marxists, in contrast, tend to romanticize this urban migrant space as fertile ground for revolution. Gülsüm Baydar Nalbantoğlu (1997) offers an alternative perspective. She urges us to understand this place as a space where “the languages of the city and the village clash, and other languages emerge [in] a space of translation across the urban-rural boundaries” (192). It is indeed a third space, and a disruptive language, because the squatter buildings and settlements “interrupt the conventional meanings of such terms as boundaries and walls, inside and outside, and public and private” (206).

Panoramic views of squatter settlement neighborhoods suggest immaculate suburban neighborhoods, while masking the diversity of housing conditions and shifting meanings of home/street, inside/outside, and public/private contained within. On a warm day, one might glimpse a woman bent over washing her husband’s tired feet in their small garden, just off the neighborhood’s only paved road—to an outsider an act of private intimacy performed in the street. One might also encounter scenes of reciprocal aid—services that are not easily afforded in the market and part of what social scientists call the moral economy of the poor. A domestic worker, for example, gives her neighbor’s adult son a haircut in the open courtyard; women take turns helping one another with the arduous task of storing coal for the winter. On wet days, mazelike muddy roads hinder mobility and threaten clean interior spaces. During winter, dwellings shrink as residents move to central rooms, leaving colder outlying rooms vacant. Coal stoves, usually placed in the living room, dictate the rhythm of daily life, inverting notions of public/private and intimate/distant spatialities.

This is not a place where village life is recreated. Nor is it a place that assumes the social and material forms of urban modernity. The squat-

ter settlement creates new roles and values, sometimes mixing incompatible categories, appropriating markers of peasantry and urbanism and merging traditional practices with new ones. This is an interactive and visible community, one that always seems to be open to the moralizing gaze of insiders and outsiders (A. Ayata 1989).

One striking characteristic of squatter settlement communities is that most women, especially married women, in these communities are not allowed to work outside the home. Squatter settlements present an abundant potential labor supply for domestic work, yet because of patriarchal opposition to women's employment they show the lowest urban female participation in wage labor (Ayata and Ayata 1996). In the following chapters, the women who deviated from this pattern by joining the ranks of domestic workers describe their own circumstances and the ways in which they managed to overcome patriarchal constraints.

The social relations of neighborliness and kinship embedded in these communities structure and regulate the domestic labor market and social relations within it, especially with regard to recruitment patterns and development of a work culture. Domestic workers' communities constitute a vital base of symbolic and material resources. Each domestic worker is situated at the center of an extended network in which the members interact frequently and reciprocally. The durability and intensity of these networks result from the low degree of mobility within squatter settlement neighborhoods. Domestic workers use informal networks to control recruitment patterns, develop job and wage standards, and create a work ethic, as well as to play on their employers' class and gender guilt. We should not, however, romanticize these networks as models of egalitarianism. They are simultaneously egalitarian, competitive, negotiable, and always prone to creating their own internal hierarchies. My analysis leaves little doubt that there is no such thing as an objective law of supply and demand. Ankara's domestic labor pool grows from a deeply rooted social context of knowing subjects who recognize a complex system of rules and exercise substantial control over one another's behavior.

## COMPARATIVE PROFILES

Basement and squatter women have in common their class and rural origins along with their employment in domestic service. With a few exceptions, domestic workers come to Ankara with no previous urban



experience. Only two of the domestic workers I spoke with were city-born. Even so, during the time of my survey, a majority of these migrant women had lived in Ankara for a fairly long time, roughly eleven years on average for the two groups combined. Most of that majority came from the squatter settlement group. Also, more squatter settlement domestic workers (28.1 percent) had lived in Ankara for over twenty years (having arrived in Ankara during the 1960s with the first wave of rural migration). To put it differently, 40.6 percent of the doorkeeper domestic workers had arrived in Ankara within the last five years of the survey as compared with 12.3 percent of the squatter domestic workers. In sum, close to half of the domestic workers in the doorkeeper group are recent migrants to Ankara. Old and new migrants, however, are equally represented in the total sample.

The domestic workers range in age from 18.5 to 66.0 years with a mean age of 33.2. The domestic workers in the squatter settlement group are, on average, 6.4 years older than the domestic workers in the doorkeeper group. In the squatter settlement group, the greatest concentration was in the 31-to-40-year-old category, which represented 52.6 percent of the total number of the workers in this group. In the doorkeeper group, the 21-to-30- and 31-to-40-year-old categories show an equal concentration, representing 42.7 and 39.8 percent, respectively, of the total. The mean age of marriage is 17.6 years for the doorkeeper group and 16.7 for the squatter settlement group.

Length of domestic employment ranged from one month to 37.0 years with a mean of 7.7 years. The domestic workers in the squatter group had, on average, 4.7 years more experience in domestic service than those in the doorkeeper group.

Nearly half of the domestic workers are illiterate and only 3 percent have as much as a middle school education (eight years of schooling). Of those who are literate, 38.6 percent are graduates of adult literacy programs. Although the two groups are similar in terms of number of years in primary school and literacy rate, they differ in the proportion of participation in the adult literacy programs. While only 12 percent of the workers in the squatter group participated in these programs, the corresponding figure for the doorkeeper group is nearly twice that. The education level attained by husbands is also low but higher than that attained by their wives. The great majority of husbands had completed primary school (79 percent of the doorkeeper and 71 percent of the squatter set-

tlement husbands). About 9 percent of the doorkeeper husbands were illiterate; the corresponding figure for the squatter husbands—14 percent—was slightly higher. Only 10 percent of the doorkeeper husbands and 12 percent of squatter men had schooling beyond primary school.

The two groups have similar household characteristics. No household in this study included nonrelated persons and the majority of domestic workers lived in nuclear units. Eighty-nine percent of the doorkeeper households and 81 percent of the squatter settlement households were nuclear, and the remainder were households of extended families that included various combinations of husbands' or wives' widowed fathers and mothers and unmarried sisters and brothers. The doorkeeper households were smaller, with an average of 4.3 members compared with 5.3 members in squatter settlement households. The average size of doorkeeper households was the same as the national average and slightly higher than the urban average of 3.7 persons (HIPS 1980). Doorkeeper families have an average of 2.6 children living at home, while squatter families average 3.1. One-third of the squatter families have more than three children, compared with 10 percent of doorkeeper families, reflecting their respective stages in the family life cycle.

## A REAL-LIFE IRONY

At the center of this book lies a real-life irony. It is more specifically about an unexpected parallel between experience of a traditional form of subordination in one sphere and of autonomy in another. Control over women's labor through patriarchal subordination of women within the family creates a waged domestic labor market in Turkey in which domestic workers' labor is expensive and scarce. In Ankara this structure affords domestic workers autonomy in the workplace and negotiating power with regard to middle-class women, complicating simple accounts of the uniformity of gender subordination in economic, sexual, and familial relations. Parallel readings of basement and squatter women's stories illuminate the odd connection between the empowering structure of domestic employment and migrant women's lack of autonomous access to employment. Women's position in the labor market in Turkey is linked to the unequal power relations embodied in the patriarchal structures of marriage and family, where women cannot assert their right to decide their own destiny in the world of work.

Recognizing this patriarchal dynamic is central to understanding domestic service and its configuration of gender and class relations. The Turkish case constitutes an instance in which patriarchy, by not releasing its control over women's labor, has modernized Turkish domestic service, while in other cases domestic workers must struggle to transform themselves from traditional maids into employees. It is also ironic that middle-class women's access to cheap, readily available labor is circumscribed by this patriarchal design. In the following chapters, I demonstrate that at different levels micro and macro forces work together to generate this unique dynamic. Although a parallel reading of the stories of basement and squatter women reveals many similarities, it also exposes differences in the lives of these women. Control over women's labor, for example, is stronger where the challenge to patriarchal relations is perceived to be greater. The contrast between squatter workers and the women of the basement also allows us to explore the ways in which interpretations of women's wage labor and its effects play out within two different social and spatial settings, especially in the realms of gender division of labor at home and relations of money and authority. By bringing their differing perspectives into focus and revealing circumstances under which women resist or refrain from resisting control over their labor, and earnings, I hope to contribute to the refinement of concepts such as "women's subordination" and to add some concreteness to the abstract concept of patriarchy.

### TROUBLING ENCOUNTERS BETWEEN "SISTERS"

An important aspect of this study is its recognition of the agency of women, even when it means an agency for their own subordination. I focus on the self-perceptions and perspectives of domestic workers that emerge from their experiences in the home, workplace, community, and urban space. Migrant women's own responses and self-images are often displaced in accounts of the impact of development on Turkish women by descriptions of their subordination to structures of patriarchy and its intimate ally, capitalism. In such accounts, domestic workers are considered the most oppressed group of Turkish women, subject to the domination of men and of the middle-class women for whom they work. This view of double subordination in terms of gender and class—at the domestic worker's own home and at the home of strangers—mis-

represents these women's lives and fails to acknowledge their agency. In opposition to these simplistic and homogenizing accounts, my data offers a more nuanced portrayal of the interactions of class, gender, and patriarchy in domestic workers' lives. The complexities manifest in their stories defy any simplistic account of oppression or emancipation.

In Turkey, as elsewhere, waged domestic labor takes place at an important junction of gender and class inequality. Waged domestic labor is central to the processes of both the reproduction of class and the traditional gender division of labor. It allows middle-class women to escape domestic work and avoid confronting the traditional gender division of labor within the household. Thus, scholars have argued that one class of women escapes some of the constraints of gender stratification by using the labor of those women who are most severely limited by class, race, and ethnic inequalities (Glenn 1986; Rollins 1985; Romero 1992). Women who buy other women's labor are criticized for not contesting patriarchal gender division of labor and, thus, perpetuating it (Hartmann 1981a).

Waged domestic labor creates a new class of women who perform the heaviest, most repetitious household tasks. In *Servicing the Middle-Classes*, Nicky Gregson and Michelle Lowe (1994) describe this process: "Household cleaning in middle-class households is no longer just a gender-segregated task. . . . It is also being constructed as an occupation for working-class women. The corollary of this position is that in certain middle-class households cleaning is no longer being seen as a suitable use of middle-class women's time-space" (110). What is crucial about this process is that waged domestic labor plays a pivotal role in the creation of polarized middle-class and working-class versions of femininity.

These generalizations, however, miss the lived realities of workplace interrelations. Domestic workers' diverse and often ambivalent responses to proletarianization and new versions of femininity undermine some of these polarizing tendencies. The role played by the domestic service in the construction of contrasting class-based femininities is further complicated in the Turkish case by the fact that class relations between women are also articulated within their urban/modern and rural/traditional roles. In this book, I look at the relationship between domestic workers and their employers in the context of an absence of race category and of a muted sense of ethnicity as the main source of inequality. The main axes of difference and inequality in Turkey are

based on class and the strong distinction drawn between modern, urban women and modernizing peasant women.

My data on domestic workers' employment patterns reveals that the transformation of peasant women into working-class women is by no means uncomplicated or complete. Ninety-one percent of the workers in this study (145 out of 160) work for multiple employers; only a small number of workers are tied to a single employer. Domestic workers can be distributed on a continuum between "specialists" (proletarianized house cleaners), who sell their labor for rigidly defined tasks, and "generalists" (traditional maids), based on days worked, number of employers, and frequency of work for a given employer. The majority of domestic workers were situated toward the specialist end. Among specialist positions, the most advantageous involve multiple weekly visits to a single employer; these offer shorter work hours, more variety of work load, and better chances for patronage benefits. In contrast, complete specialization—laboring in a different home every day—allows greater autonomy over the labor process but involves repeatedly performing the most dirty and physically exhausting labor. Furthermore, this level of proletarianization in domestic service confers a menial identity to the worker and fosters an image of the physically strong, resilient working woman reminiscent of how they were defined as peasant women. I show in Chapters 3 and 4 that domestic workers do not embrace this proletarianized peasant image, although they equally avoid association with a single employer. Furthermore, domestic workers' preferences for different modes of employment have significant implications for middle-class women. In carving out a work identity between the two undesirable extremes, domestic workers choose those employers who can afford their labor most frequently. This means that middle-class employers are less desirable than, and thus in competition with, upper-middle-class employers.

The central theoretical issue addressed by any study of domestic service is how to conceptualize the relationship between women on either side of the labor relation. Domestic service is an occupational domain that historically has brought members of different races, classes, and nationalities together, not in factories or offices, but within the private spheres of the dominant classes and races. These often troubling relationships tend to defy a conventional class- and race-based analysis, and the actors in them have been described by phrases, such as "domestic enemies" and "distant companions," that evoke the simul-

taneous experience of distance and closeness (Fairchilds 1984; Hansen 1989). This book raises the question, How do increased contractuality and employers' social position affect this distance and closeness? Under conditions in which domestic work resembles rational wage labor should we study these interactions as class struggles (Romero 1992) or must we employ new metaphors closer to "maternalism" (Glenn 1988; Katzman 1978a,b; Rollins 1985)?

The issue of how domestic workers and employers perceive, deal with, and manage class inequality, and how gender identity mediates this class tension in their daily interactions is a focus of this book. I diverge, however, from most other studies of employer-worker relations, which attribute usually oppressive power to the employers and view workers as capable only of resistance. The employer woman is often defined as the actor who has the effective means of eliciting compliance while her domestic worker does not. I do not deny this power imbalance, but I do try to understand the interpersonal processes by which interclass social relations are produced. The social sciences usually analyze power macrosociologically, assuming that individuals' responses to specific interactions express and reflect social-structural forces beyond the boundaries of their immediate encounter. I approach this relationship as a mutual construct in which both domestic workers and employers participate equally, thereby offering a relational concept of power and a less mechanical and less dramatic understanding of resistance. Power relations are enacted in face-to-face encounters between superiors and their subordinates. The latter can respond to domination in mundane, informal, diffuse, and individualistic ways. James Scott (1985) calls such tactics the "weapons of the weak." Developing a vocabulary for understanding confrontations between the powerless and the powerful, Scott attempts to understand the structure of inequalities between agrarian landlords and wage laborers and concludes that peasant resistance is routine and a "constant process of testing and renegotiating of relations between classes." I employ his notion of "resistance as a routine action" here because it is helpful for understanding the dynamics of the relations that I observed in Ankara. I am especially interested in how both groups of women deploy their understandings of women's gender subordination and patriarchal constructions of women's identity in the management of their own day-to-day relationships. I examine the relations between women and how the two groups of women (middle-class and

peasant) relate to men and demonstrate how these relationships comprise an interactive relationship of power.

Domestic workers' class subordination is grounded in a tense relationship between two women who are at once "sisters" and antagonists. Class-bound expressions of gender are constructed and class-based inequalities are actively dealt with by both groups of women in the management of their relationship. By examining some concrete instances of what I call the "class" and "intimacy work" done by these two groups of women, I hope to provide a better understanding of the relations between different classes of women. This question is of critical concern for feminist movements in Turkey and elsewhere. The increasing participation of women in the labor force, with or without equality to men, means that class distinctions become a central source of division among women. Clearly, a feminist politics based on an assumed common identity among women, independent of race, class, and culture is untenable. By bringing these women together, domestic service allows us to examine the lived experiences of class inequality and the implications of difference.

#### THE POWER OF BINARIES: TRADITION AND MODERNITY REVISITED

The study of industrialization and modernization in third world countries has undergone considerable change over the past three decades. Emphasis has shifted from a preoccupation with individual mentality to the study of the internal and external obstacles to structural development. While the modernization approach<sup>14</sup> focused on the extent to which self-oriented individuals, free from the bonds of traditional attachments exist, the dependency perspective,<sup>15</sup> informed by Marxist social theory, focused on the study of the economy and on broad structures of inequality between and within countries.<sup>16</sup> The introduction of gender by feminist scholars as an axis for understanding the interaction between individual practices and experience on one hand and structures on the other and the redefinition of urban economies by scholars working on globalization and the informal sector have significantly altered approaches to studies of women in third world societies. The growing preoccupation with women in third world societies has occurred in the midst of gender theorization in social theory and a rapidly changing

international system since the mid-seventies.<sup>17</sup> The new attention to gender as an important organizing principle of society and a source of personal identity (Connell 1987; Scott 1988) has become a major ground for rethinking or launching criticisms of Marxist and neo-classical theories of labor, markets, class, race-based stratification, statehood, development, labor migration, work, and household.<sup>18</sup>

Recent scholarship expresses extreme discomfort with distinctions between “modern” and “traditional” as a major framework for studying economic and social transformations in industrializing societies and particularly for examining emerging modalities of life and identity (Abu-Lughod 1998; Adam 1996; Luke 1996; Ong 1988; Thompson 1996). It has been argued that this polarity precludes consideration of important sources of difference, complexity, and diverse meanings of modernity and fails to recognize the changing face of modernity. Students of Turkish modernization have also started seriously to interrogate the project of modernity in Turkey and have called for employing the distinction between modern and traditional not as an organizing assumption but rather as a topic for intense investigation (Bozdoğan and Kasaba 1997; Kandiyoti 1997). These scholars seek to study “the specificities of the ‘modern’ in the Turkish context” (Kandiyoti 1997:113): How is modernity variously understood and experienced? What aspects of elite notions of modernity are accepted, reworked, or changed by so-called traditional segments of society and in which domains of life and how? How is the tension between the modern and the traditional expressed concretely in the daily organization of women’s lives and conduct, lives said to be caught between these forces?

These questions have only recently made an impact on the discourses and research agendas of social scientists. It is no accident that the development of feminist theory, on one hand, with its insistence on gender constructions as fundamental aspects of social order and cultural change, and the demise of modernizing and developmentalist projects, on the other hand, have placed these questions on the agenda. These significant questions are largely ignored by the dominant paradigms of Marxist and modernization thought, which focus on changes in judicial, political, and institutional spheres but fail to explore the cultural consequences of these transformations. Marxist and modernization perspectives also fail to recognize the various unequal and contradictory forms of modernization and the “life worlds” (Mardin 1997) of those



people whose subjectivities and social lives were to be transformed by the project. Deniz Kandiyoti (1997), for example, notes that “the assumed inexorable march of society from traditional, rural, and less developed to modern, urban, industrialized, and more developed, or, alternatively, from feudal to capitalist, meant that complexities on the ground could be dismissed as ‘transitional forms’” (129). In the classificatory systems of the social sciences, these rural migrants were placed in a position of liminality and were understood as if in transition or in the process of moving from one fixed status to another and therefore are studied from the perspective of integration and assimilation into modern, urbanized structures and institutions of life.

Now, more and more scholars take a pluralist stance, accepting that fragmentation and multiple combinations of forces of modernity and tradition are indispensable for considering Turkish social order at the end of the century. They call for more intense studies of the new identities and modalities of life engendered by the modernity project. To this end, Joel S. Migdal (1997) suggests that “the effects of the modernity project . . . can be found not in examination of elites and their institutions exclusively, nor in a focus solely on the poor or marginal groups of society, but on those physical and social spaces where the two intersect” (253–54). He draws our attention to the significance of interactive processes, suggesting that the “challenge” is to illuminate “the encounter” of those formerly excluded groups “with the modernity project—the changes in them that this encounter produced and their surprising ability to transform the project itself” (259).

The experiences of domestic workers and doorkeepers reveal important dimensions of cultural change and raise questions about the lives of people who occupy the new social territories formed by the rapid social transformations in Turkey. Apartment buildings and middle-class homes constitute physical and social spaces of intersection and interaction between “traditional,” “modern,” “rural,” and “urban,” where rural migrants encounter urban classes through their work as domestic workers and doorkeepers. The “critical tale”<sup>19</sup> I offer in this book provides a context for close examination of the consciousness of class inequality and how migrants—with a past identity as peasants—imagine, understand, and practice what they perceive as modernity and tradition. I argue that in the process they invent new forms of cultural difference in the Turkish urban landscape that do not fit neatly into the

binary categories of “modern” and “traditional.” Yet, the tension between “traditional” and “modern” permeates the lives and subjectivities of the people in this study. They reinscribe this binary opposition even as they change its form. I wish to advance the debate about the opposition between tradition and modernity by suggesting that these forces exercise a special potency in people’s lives, organizing class, gender, experience, and consciousness. I agree with those who argue that modernity and tradition, as categories of analysis, often fail to explain the complexities of cultural change, but we must not ignore the centrality of the opposition in the constitution of the subjectivities of margin dwellers. How, then, can we simultaneously abandon this opposition yet preserve it within analysis?

I also believe that the time has come to explore the diverse meanings of tradition, the conditions in which traditional practices are sheltered, nurtured, or reconfigured and the meanings attributed to tradition by those who are thought of as its bearers. I examine these questions with particular reference to the relationship between tradition and locality. I follow John B. Thompson (1996) in arguing that traditional practices are not only temporally defined but also spatially specific and spatially defined. What I seek to emphasize is the significance of space and locality in the articulation of traditional practices with regard to gender and authority relations. The experiences of doorkeepers and their wives illuminate alternately inhibiting and enabling aspects of location and how tradition is maintained in practice.

## THE CONFLUENCE OF LABORS AND IDENTITIES IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR

An extensive informal labor market in which a sizeable portion of the urban labor force engages in various income-producing activities characterizes the economies of many developing countries. Such economies have been called “pre-capitalist,” “traditional,” “petty commodity production,” “subaltern,” “shadow,” and “informal sector” (Arizpe 1975; Bawly 1982; Bromley and Gerry 1979; Illich 1981) and cover a wide range of production and distribution activities, such as small workshops, domestic service, industrial homework, and petty trade and services.

Social scientists and development agencies examining the informal sector as it touches upon fundamental problems of poverty, unemployment,

and proletarianization within the context of third world industrialization, as well as participants within the informal sector themselves, have had great difficulty in defining the boundaries, activities, and class locations of workers in the informal sector. The ongoing expansion of informal activities and the decentralization of work in postindustrial countries contribute to this difficulty (see Castells and Portes 1989 for comparative figures of this expansion). Alejandro Portes and Saskia Sassen-Koob (1987) define composite informal work as “all those work situations characterized by the *absence* of (1) a clear separation between capital and labor; (2) a contractual relationship between both; and (3) a labor force that is paid wages and whose conditions of work and pay are legally regulated” (31). Defined this way, the informal sector includes all income-earning production and exchange activities outside the formal and state-regulated economy. The role of state control is particularly emphasized: the informal sector is “unregulated by the institutions of society, in a legal and social environment in which similar activities are regulated” (Castells and Portes 1989:12). Thus, the boundaries of the informal sector move according to changes in state regulations.

The fact that most displaced agricultural laborers enter the informal sector and remain there (see Portes and Walton 1981 for evidence from Africa, Asia, and Latin America of this persistent trend) contradicts the predictions of modernization theory. The experience of Western development predicts that informal activities should disappear. Scholars writing during the last two decades of the twentieth century on the informal sector (Benton 1990; Bromley and Gerry 1979; Bujra 1978; Gerry and Birkbeck 1981; Portes and Benton 1984; Portes and Schauffler 1993; Portes and Walton 1981; Portes, Castells, and Benton 1989) share the following observations and premises: informal activities are not essentially separate from the rest of the capitalist economy, informal workers exist within the major axis of production and exchange relations, informal activities do not exist under capitalist social and economic relations as an isolated and anachronistic survival, and workers in the informal sector do not constitute poor, marginal subpopulations with secluded lifestyles.

These authors point out that capital accumulation on a world scale has played a key role in determining the conditions and direction of industrialization in developing countries. They link the persistence of small-scale production and the proliferation of the informal sector in

third world cities to these countries' integration into the world market. Their studies, conducted from the point of view of structural articulation, emphasize the integration of formal and informal sectors and analyze various links between the two. The results illustrate the two basic functions performed by the informal sector. First, it provides cheap labor power in backward capitalist production, which includes small enterprises employing unprotected wage labor and disguised waged workers hired by larger national or international corporations on a casual or subcontracting basis. It also provides inexpensive goods and services to urban classes, with the effect of subsidizing their costs of reproduction as labor force, thereby enabling the formal sector to keep wages and fringe benefits down for its own workers and to subsidize some state provisions necessary for social reproduction (e.g., self-building rather than public housing, domestic workers rather than formal childcare systems). While this literature has made significant theoretical contributions to our understanding of the informal sector by rejecting its transitional and traditional character, it overemphasizes the functions of the informal sector with regard to national and international economies. This overemphasis leads to a tendency to assume an essential and unchanging functional connection between the informal and formal sectors. Emerging research in this field shows, however, that the linkages between these sectors are neither predetermined nor constant.

To understand the social and economic effects of the informal sector on its participants, the differential impact of state policies that regulate them, and the ways in which the informal sector interacts with the capitalist sector we must distinguish between the large variety of groups and types of activities within the informal sector. Furthermore, analysis of gender stratification in the informal sector would greatly enhance our understanding of the workings of this sector and its shifting boundaries, but the question of gender has not yet been integrated in studies of this worldwide process of informalization. Paid domestic work, for example, sits uneasily between "formal" as distinguished from "informal" work at home. Unlike many other informal occupations carried out within the household, paid domestic work does not allow women to combine their work activities with their own domestic tasks and childcare.

Women are incorporated into informal labor and exchange processes in different and unequal ways (Arizpe 1975; Beneria and Roldan 1987; Mies 1982; Moser 1978; Portes, Castells, and Benton 1989; Redclift and

Mingione 1985; Roldan 1985). Gender-based hierarchical relations resulting in the division of labor and the continuation of domestic patriarchy keep women confined to particular branches of the informal sector. Women are excluded from activities that require mobility, flexibility, and independence and provide higher earnings while they are concentrated in those activities that are compatible with their roles within the domestic sphere. The organization of women's work in this sector and its articulation within the social and economic processes of the capitalist sector are ultimately mediated by men.

Furthermore, access to paid work through informal activities does not produce the emancipatory effects one might expect. Such activities generally occur within the home and, therefore, isolate workers from one another, thereby sustaining, naturalizing, or elaborating patriarchal notions of womanhood. Informal activities generally enhance women's domestic roles and reinforce women's dependent status as wives and mothers rather than as income earners. In Günseli Berik's (1987) study of women carpet weavers in rural Turkey, Mine Çınar's (1988) and Jenny White's (1994) studies of subcontracted home workers in İstanbul and Bursa, and Maria Mies's (1982) study of women lace makers in India, we see how women often underestimate their own indispensable contribution to household and to national economies because they consider their productive labor a mere extension of their domestic responsibilities. As Çınar (1988:22) reports, almost all the women she interviewed viewed their subcontracting as temporary and their knitting as a hobby, even though some of these women had done this type of work for over ten years.

A broad range of studies have shown that the dominant pattern of labor participation in developing societies places women in predominantly informal activities, such as sweatshop employment, subcontracted homework, unpaid family subsistence production, and domestic work and small trades in the informal sector (Beneria and Sen 1981; Boserup 1970; Deere 1976; Mies 1982; Moser 1981; Safa and Nash 1976; Sen and Grown 1987). Another pattern—one particularly dominant in South Asia and the Caribbean—involves massive incorporation of young, single females into the wage labor market as a result of the relocation of export-oriented manufacturing to these countries where the cost of labor is lower than in advanced industrial countries (Lim 1983; Elson and Pearson 1981; Ong 1987; Ward 1984). Women's incorporation

into the labor force either as unprotected, disguised laborers or as wage laborers is associated with what is often called the globalization of production or the new international division of labor (Frobel, Kreye, and Heinrichs 1979). The globalization of production involves a redivision of labor within the world capitalist system as well as a restructuring of the capitalist economy in the advanced industrial countries. This new phase involves transferring the labor-intensive phases of production to third world countries where high urban employment and massive female migration to regional industrial zones creates a large supply of cheap labor (Khoo, Smith, and Fawcett 1984; Lim 1983; Sassen-Koob 1981, 1984).

The globalization of production has affected primarily third world women's employment. Research in Latin American countries has shown that most export-oriented manufacturers employ large amounts of informal female labor. They reduce production costs by "utilizing more vulnerable segments of the labor force, such as women, and by circumventing labor legislation designed to protect workers such as minimum wages, fringe benefits, and adequate working conditions" (Safa 1986:135). Beneria and Sen (1982) point out that women are vulnerable because of their role in the reproductive sphere.

The masses of third world women are indeed integrated into that process, but at the bottom of an inherently hierarchical and contradictory structure of production and accumulation [because of] their primary responsibility for the reproductive tasks of childbearing and domestic work. . . . In a system that makes use of existing gender hierarchies so as to generate and intensify inequalities, women tend to be placed in subordinate positions at the different levels of interaction between class and gender. . . . The significance of this argument is that women's role and location in the development process is conditioned by their role in the reproductive sphere. (161, 162, 167)

The earlier investigations of whether women are integrated into the development process have thus evolved into studies of the relations and mechanisms through which they are integrated. The analytical framework of Marxist-feminist perspectives (Beneria and Sen 1981, 1982; Lim 1983; Mies 1986) has guided much of the research in the area of women and development and has established the main parameters for looking at the problem (see Brydon and Chant 1989 for a secondary analysis from this perspective of existing research on women in the third world).

The reproductive sphere, as a critical set of social relations concerned with the sexual division of labor and control over women's labor within and outside the home, emerged as the main focus of scholarship concerning women and development. The investigation of interconnections between women's positions in the productive and reproductive spheres, the two being systematically structured by patriarchy, has become a productive research agenda. This approach poses important challenges to traditional Marxist perspectives and the dependency paradigm, both of which define the gender question outside the gender- and age-based hierarchies of social and economic relations within the household.

Yet, this broad Marxist-feminist perspective, in turn, takes for granted the nature of the reproductive sphere and patriarchy (Jelin 1991). Questions concerning the sphere's construction and how its boundaries and activities culturally and historically change have not yet been fully analyzed. Instead, changes in the reproductive sphere, including those involving family, are explained by their presumed functionality within the structure of global capitalism. An assumption is made that women's reproductive roles are necessary to the creation of a cheap, flexible, and docile labor force in order to explain women's present role as either wage laborers or informal workers in the global capitalist network.

Recent research demonstrates the limitations of this accepted theoretical framework and reveals its overgeneralization of particular trends in some countries. It becomes evident that the boundaries between single and married women on one hand and participation in the informal sector and formal sector on the other are more permeable than thought and that the growth of the informal sector is not always intrinsically tied to global capitalism.<sup>20</sup> These cases tell us that the concentration of women in certain sectors or branches of the economy cannot be explained without a detailed examination of the interactions between varying forms of gender dynamics and global capitalism. The relationship between the economic position of women and their subordination can be understood only through reference to internal dynamics and the immediate material, cultural, and institutional practices in which they are embedded, not by reference to global forces or categories. Recognition of the variety of household forms and of historically and culturally shifting notions of patriarchy helps frame the link between women and economy in a less deterministic way than that achieved by Marxist-feminist analysis.<sup>21</sup>

## THE GLOBAL LANDSCAPE OF DOMESTIC SERVICE

Domestic service as an occupational domain was long ago declared obsolete in the landscape of industrial societies by evolutionary sociological perspectives (Coser 1973) that noted a decline in the number of domestic workers in the United States after the Second World War.<sup>22</sup> Lewis Coser argued that domestic service was doomed to extinction for two reasons: the servant role was no longer necessary because modern household technology and an expanding market eradicated the need for traditional homemakers, and the power imbalance manifest in employee-employer relations was incompatible with democratic society. This unilinear assumption of modernization theory has also been applied to domestic service in developing countries with the prediction that domestic service in these societies also will fade with time (Chaplin 1978; McBride 1974).

The content, structure, and organization of domestic service have indeed changed radically with industrialization and have assumed a more contractual form. But the modernization of domestic work is multifaceted and does not closely fit the evolutionary model.<sup>23</sup> The decline of the domestic work force and other changes in the status and nature of domestic work was the result of a complex interplay of racial, ethnic, and economic dynamics and involved changes in women's relationships to work as well as changing definitions of domesticity. The modernization perspective—which argues that housework ceased to be demanding work following the complete transformation of household work services and childcare into a capitalist labor arena—does not accurately explain this decline (as documented in detail in Cowan 1983). Furthermore, the proposition put forward by Coser (1973) that the servant role as a mode of work and behavior extrinsic to democracy also has been challenged by many case studies that document the survival of master-servant relations under democratic conditions (Rollins 1985; Romero 1992; Ruiz 1987). Moreover, a growing body of qualitative and quantitative evidence indicates that domestic service is far from extinct. On the contrary, it is increasing in both postindustrial and developing societies. Domestic work is a major occupation for women in many third world countries, and in the United States and in many other countries legal and illegal female immigrants constitute a large part of the domestic labor pool.<sup>24</sup>



Gregson and Lowe (1994) document this resurgence of waged domestic labor in the homes of middle-class dual-career couples in Britain beginning in the 1980s. (For most of the postwar period in Britain domestic labor has been performed without pay by middle-class women.) The authors argue that the increased demand for two specific categories of waged domestic labor, cleaners and nannies, was generated by the growth of women's participation in the managerial labor force. Furthermore, they demonstrate that, unlike the situation in the United States, there is no close association between domestic work and transnational female migration and ethnicity. Nonetheless, differences between women based on class and life cycle play a major role in creating the two distinct types of female waged-labor: "The nanny in contemporary Britain is an occupational category characterized predominantly by young, unmarried women from white collar, intermediate status households, whereas cleaning is the domain of older, married, working-class women" (Gregson and Lowe 1994:124). Moreover, the social relations of waged domestic labor continue to be governed by ideologies of motherhood, caring, and false kinship relations, which, when combined, reconstitute a traditional domestic service in Britain, in which class-based definitions of womanhood are sharply defined.

Globally, inequalities that persist in the gender division of labor sustain the growth of those classes who employ domestic workers. But the first world woman's relationship to domestic service is different from that of her third world counterpart. According to Isis Duarte (1989), the prohibitive cost of domestic service in post-industrial societies puts such services out of the reach of many middle-class women, thereby rendering "second-shift" work a necessity for these women. Their third world counterparts do not carry the burden of the "second shift," however, because of their access to a large pool of cheap domestic labor.

In third world countries, the structure of domestic service continues to be shaped by the dissolution of rural traditions and framed by patterns of gender-specific migration, according to which, women migrate more easily than men because of the availability of domestic work (Jelin 1977). This pattern of migration sustains a live-in mode of domestic service that inhibits the development of a more contractual employer-employee relation. Some studies of domestic service in Latin America (e.g., Chaney and Castro 1989), however, point out an increasing tendency toward "casualization," or a live-out mode of domestic service.

Yet, although live-out domestic work removes some of the oppressive dimensions of domestic service, as noted in Kuznesof 1989, it can become much less regulated and usually less secure than a live-in position when there is a large labor pool.

In the United States, the growing numbers of immigrant women who enter domestic service are stratified along lines of race, ethnicity, and migrant status. In this occupational domain, race, class, gender, and ethnic differences not only structure the labor process but also frame the nature of exchanges between mistress and maid. These differences are reflected in domestic workers' wages and conditions of employment. A dual wage system reflects the racial and ethnic differences between domestic workers. Undocumented immigrants are paid far less than other groups of domestic workers (Romero 1992).

Current immigration patterns seem to support the continuation of live-in arrangements. Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo and Ernestine Avila's research (1997) among Latina domestic workers in Los Angeles signals the reemergence of this old pattern of participation in domestic service. They argue that live-in nanny arrangements attract the most vulnerable segment of the immigrant population, recent arrivals without immigration papers, and encourage temporal and spatial separations of working mothers and children. "Transnational mothers" work in the United States to support their children at home in Mexico or Central America, creating new meanings and practices of motherhood in these families. Thus the institution of domestic service not only has endured but continues to grow and transform under different labor regimes. The interplay between the internal structures of third world countries from which immigrants originate and the international structures within which they operate constitutes the critical starting point for an understanding of the processes restructuring domestic service and the emergence of multiple domestic worker roles. These new categories of domestic worker include Mexican immigrant women who commute daily across national borders in El Paso (Ruiz 1987), live-in West Indian childcare workers in New York City (Colen 1986, 1989), Chicana day workers with multiple employers in Denver who fit the role of petit-bourgeois (Romero 1988, 1992), Central American immigrant workers who are members of housecleaning cooperatives (Salzinger 1991), live-in Latina workers who work in the United States and practice "transnational mothering" (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997), and female and male employees of cleaning companies (Bickham Mendez 1998).

We are confronted with an occupational domain in which several different labor processes and work relations coexist and in which boundaries of work relations are shifting. Although most workers sell their labor in informal ways with terms, wages, and conditions, negotiated orally, informality can no longer be considered the defining characteristic of domestic labor. In the United States, for example, and in some third world countries, such as Peru, Brazil, and Martinique, social security benefits have expanded to include domestic workers, though state enforcement of this policy remains uneven (Colen and Sanjek 1990; de Oliveria and da Conceicao 1989). In several Latin American countries, domestic workers have even formed unions and associations (Chaney and Castro 1989).

Domestic service is changing in both the first and the third worlds, but sociologists of work and occupation have not yet developed a consistent and integrated model to account for these transformations and their effect on work structures and to interpret their meaning for those involved. In what way and to what extent do the workers themselves shape the emergence of different work structures? How are the structural changes expressed and experienced by different groups of domestic workers? In the United States, for example, for immigrants with skills who need to learn a new language, employment in domestic service may be a transient stage; for others it may become an occupational ghetto. We must ask whether the work trajectories of third world immigrant women will be similar to those of the Issei studied by Evelyn Nakano Glenn (1986), of the African American women who filled the ranks of domestic service for so many decades, or of white European immigrant women. Recent historical studies demonstrate that racial and ethnic origins affect domestic work careers in different ways, in terms of life changes, work conditions, and cultural characteristics. Furthermore, as mentioned above, the legal and cultural conditions under which current labor movements occur are very different from those of earlier domestic worker cohorts as well.

We must also examine the relationship between domestic work and the general trend of informalization, which, according to its leading theorists, is structural and universal rather than cyclical (Portes, Castells, and Benton 1989). This phenomenon invites a rethinking of the imagined course of industrial development and employment structures. If conventional employment based on the centrality of rationalized labor is

declining and class and social markers such as “blue collar,” “white collar,” “menial,” and “manual” are collapsing, then where does domestic service stand in this new ordering of the relationship between work and its bearers? It might be appropriate to suggest that employment in domestic service is becoming more like other jobs in terms of deskilling, falling wages, and the absence of institutional evaluation of skills, autonomy, and job security in the present situation of postindustrial societies.

## RESEARCH CONTEXT

### *Industrialization and Modernization in Turkey*

This section presents a brief history of industrialization and modernization in Turkey to explain the context in which migration and recruitment of migrant women into the informal sector of the economy occurs. It outlines the key structural transformations that have taken place since the foundation of the Turkish Republic and the main consequences of these processes for the social and economic status of women and the family structure.

Turkey is a large developing nation undergoing social transformation so rapidly that it has been described as a society “on the brink of a social mutation” (Tekeli 1990:3). One aspect of change is an ongoing urbanization that is drawing the rural population into the big cities in a process one social scientist calls “depeasantization” (Kıray 1991). The impact of these social and economic transformations on women and gender relations is not uniform in Turkey.

Two historical processes have made Turkey unique in the third world: it has never been colonized, and it was the first Islamic country to accomplish the transition to a secular state. Turkey does not readily fit a postcolonial society model. The absence of influence by an outside, colonial power means that the indigenous dynamics and politico-cultural meanings attached to modernization should be given weight in an explanation of the Turkish socioeconomic structure and its gender relations. Students of Turkish modernization, in emphasizing the distinctiveness of the Turkish experience, often point out that modernization is considered synonymous with Westernization, a process that began with the Tanzimat reforms of 1839 and the subsequent adaptation of western European norms, styles, and institutions. Such characteristics as “elite-driven, consensus-based, [and an] institution-building process

that took its inspiration exclusively from the West" (Bozdoğan and Kasaba 1997:3–4) have been cited as evidence of the viability of the project of modernity even in an overwhelmingly Muslim country. In addition to making the transition to a secular state, Turkey was among the first countries in the world where the political rights of women as citizens were recognized. These events initiated irreversible processes that positioned Turkish women in a far more Westernized context than the women of other Islamic societies.

Industrialization, since the establishment of the Republic in 1921, has provided the means to build a modern nation-state out of the ruins of the Ottoman Empire. Turkey, like its Latin American counterparts, employed two main strategies in its project of industrialization (Barkey 1984; Eralp 1990; Keyder 1987). Between 1960 and 1970, the government adopted an import substitution model characterized by protectionist economic policies aimed at achieving independent industrialization. Later, in 1980, austerity measures were passed to help initiate export-oriented manufacturing, with the aim of integrating the Turkish economy into the global market and in the hope that Turkey would be admitted to the European Economic Community. The export-oriented industrialization strategy was directed by Turgut Özal, who was the economy czar after the military coup of 1980 and then became the democratic leader of the vastly liberalized economy. He promised not only to avert economic crises and high inflation but also to usher Turkey into a new era of economic development by transforming the protectionist state into a liberal one. Most interpretations of Turkish modernization emphasize the fundamental and active role of the state both in economic and social development and in the production of regulatory discourses and policies on modernity, especially concerning gender relations and private life (Kandiyoti 1997).

The early years of the Republic were devoted to nation building. The 1920s constituted a period of economic reconstruction characterized by state-centered development of an essentially inward-looking economy (Keyder 1979). Until the Second World War, large increases in production and industrial employment were achieved through adapting a doctrine of statism controlled by the military bureaucratic elite. The omnipotence of the state, which inhibited the emergence of a strong industrial bourgeoisie, has been attributed to the tradition of Ottoman bureaucratic rule. The economic practice of statism led to an increase in

industrial production while the peasants' real wages and terms of trade declined (Boratav 1988; Keyder 1979). Not only did the surplus obtained from peasants go to the bureaucrats and the industrial bourgeoisie but militant secularism also antagonized the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie of Turkey's small towns.

The founding of an opposition party—the Democrat Party (DP)—in 1946 and its accession to power with the votes of peasants after the 1950 election marked the beginning of a new period in Turkey. Çağlar Keyder (1979) sees it as a transformation from elite rule to full class rule and from “one pattern of capitalist modernization to another” (20). The DP lessened state control over the economy, privatized some of the state economic enterprises, and created capitalist agriculture. During the early 1950s, the agricultural sector experienced a boom through the commercialization of agriculture, which increased export earnings. Within four years, the area of land under cultivation increased by more than 50 percent (Keyder 1979; 1987). The dramatic change in agriculture resulted from extensive mechanization and changes in production methods. Small land-holding peasants were no longer able to secure their subsistence by farming. The vast majority became agricultural wage-workers or migrated to urban areas. The large-scale internal migration increased the urban population from 18.5 percent to 25.0 percent (Keyder 1979). A period of stagnation ensued that was due to a decline in agricultural exports followed by government restriction on imports in the early 1960s. Here began the import substitution period in Turkey, which lasted until the late 1970s. During this period industrial production was directed exclusively toward the internal market and the industrial sector was allowed to develop in a well-protected environment. Agriculture continued to undergo rapid change, and even though there was not a trend toward concentration of land, the existence of properly capitalist forms and the domination of capital in agriculture predominated. Displaced agricultural laborers continued to move into services and industry.

Rural out-migration has been one important response to the mechanization of agricultural production and the decline of agricultural employment accounting for the rapid growth of cities in Turkey. The percentage of people who live in urban areas rose from 18.5 percent in 1950 to 33.2 percent in 1970, 45.4 percent in 1980 (Keleş and Danielson 1985),<sup>25</sup> and 65.0 percent in 1997 (KSSGM 1998). In more rapidly

expanding urban centers (such as İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir, Adana, and Bursa), the population increase outstripped these cities' capacity to provide housing, employment, and other infrastructural elements, forcing migrants to build their own houses and to create their own employment opportunities.

As peasants came to the city, the number of squatter settlement houses mushroomed rapidly from 100,000 units in 1950 to 1.25 million in 1983 (Keleş and Danielson 1985:41). Although during the past decade this upward trend has slowed down—there were 450,000 squatter houses in 1995 (Keleş 2000:387)—the majority of Ankara's population, 60 percent, live in squatter housing. In Turkey, as elsewhere, squatter settlement housing continues to represent a low-cost solution for the state, both economically and politically.

### *Modernizing Gender*

During the early years of the Republic, women as a focus of the radical Westernist program represented the crux of modernity (see Kandiyoti 1989; Göle 1997). The most important social reforms of this period centered on women. The conception of women's emancipation and the construction of women as citizens (including a limited sexual equality) were prioritized among Kemal Atatürk's official ideology: "Our enemies claim that Turkey cannot be considered a civilized nation because she consists of two separate parts: men and women. Can we shut our eyes to one portion of a group? The road of progress must be trodden by both sexes together marching arm in arm" (quoted in Abadan-Unat 1991). The early republican state under the leadership of Atatürk passed laws and implemented policies aimed at redefining women's social and legal status and the relationship between men and women.

Polygamy, the segregation of sexes, traditional arranged marriages, and divorce laws leading to easy repudiation of wives were seen as the major obstacles preventing the enlightenment and liberation of women (Sirman 1989). As the leaders of the nation tried to create a Turkish as opposed to an Ottoman identity, they contended with the power of Islam. These reforms were directed at undermining the basic Islamic way of life that formed the legal basis of the Ottoman state (Tekeli 1981:144). Thus, in 1926, a modified version of the Swiss civil code was adopted. Monogamy was declared the only officially recognized form of marital union, and women were given the right to initiate divorce.

Gender relations, however, were conceived of in terms of complementarity, not equality. This distinction appears clearly in the civil code. According to the code, the husband is the head of the family and he alone has the right to choose a domicile. Furthermore, according to a clause that, thanks to feminists, was revoked by the constitutional court in 1992, a woman may not obtain gainful employment without the consent of her husband. Compulsory universal primary education—for both sexes—was introduced early on, and in 1934 women received the right to vote and to seek election in general elections (Abadan-Unat 1990, 1991). Legal reforms and the granting of political rights to women were the products of efforts by the modernizing elite, not the women themselves. The strong point of Kemalism was that it drew on educated, modernized, Westernized cadres to represent and impose modernity. The existing state machinery and the popular conception of the state as an authoritarian protector of the populous also helped solidify modernity's hold on Turkish society, despite its contradictions and despite, as Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba (1997) comment, "how shallow Turkey's 'civilizational shift' from Islam to the West has actually been." "Institutional, ritual, symbolic, and aesthetic manifestations of modernity," they point out, "have become constituent elements of the Turkish collective consciousness since the 1920s" (5).

The emancipation of women from the constrictions of tradition was a prerequisite to the successful transition to the modern nation that the Kemalists envisioned. Since women themselves did not consciously seek such major modifications in the position of women, however, this reform is referred to as "state feminism." During the debate about the value of these reforms that began with the resurgence of fundamentalist Islam in the 1980s, it was generally agreed that women were used as symbolic pawns in the process of nation building (Kandiyoti 1989; Sirman 1989)<sup>26</sup> and that women—excluding the urban elite—did not benefit from legal efforts to improve their position in society. As the experience of masses of women from different quarters reveals, these imposed reforms did not in any simple way guarantee the liberation of women.

Despite free and compulsory primary education, the literacy rate still reflects a wide gender gap: 72 percent of women are literate, compared with 89 percent of men (KSSGM 1998:5). This gap increases at higher levels of education: 54 percent of middle-school graduates are women,



compared with 75 percent of men, and only 42 percent of those with higher education are women. Yet, the proportion of female students in universities is large (39 percent in 1996–97, according to Women’s KSSGM 1998:8), indicating a growing number of university-educated women. Also, a significant proportion of women pursue training for professions in medicine, engineering, and communications. In 1997, women represented 41 percent, 23 percent, and 56 percent, respectively, of those enrolled in these subjects (KSSGM 1998:8–9). The proportion of women in academia is also high (33 percent).

Although Turkey has seen a shift from rural to urban employment for both men and women over the past three decades, women’s participation in economic production still occurs predominantly in agriculture, where they work as “unpaid family laborers.” In 1955, 96 percent of women were engaged in agriculture. This figure dropped to 79 percent in 1985 and 37 percent in 1997. Nonagricultural participation rose to 21 percent in 1985 from 5 percent in 1955 (Özbay 1990).

According to statistics, women’s labor force participation declined significantly, from the 72.1 percent of women economically active in 1955 to 32.7 percent in 1985 (Özbay 1995). This decline can be attributed to such factors as the decreasing significance of agricultural production in the Turkish economy that led to the massive migration of rural populations to urban areas in the 1960s and 1970s. Yet the conclusion that women’s participation in the labor force has declined might be unwarranted, because there is no reliable information about the extent and forms of women’s unregistered participation in the informal work force. Studies conducted in the 1980s on women’s informal occupations in urban settings do suggest that the labor of migrant women was becoming increasingly informalized (Çınar 1991; White 1991). Piecework and workshop production of textile and leather garments for international markets boomed in that decade under export-oriented economic policies (White 1991).

The Turkish urban labor force shows a marked gender differentiation. Only 16.5 percent of the female population in metropolitan areas was employed in 1994. This distribution of the female urban labor force suggests, on one hand, a high proportion of unskilled female labor (about half of the total), and, on the other hand, abundant highly qualified professional female labor. In 1985, 29.4 percent of those employed in professions were women (UNICEF 1991), but women were relatively absent

from semi-skilled occupations. One study (Öncü 1981) suggests that one in every five practicing lawyers in Turkey is female, and that one in every six practicing doctors is female. About one-third of the lawyers listed in the İstanbul Bar Association in 1978 were female.

Ayşe Öncü (1981) argues that the higher proportion of professional women found in Turkey than is found in most Western industrial countries can be explained by recruitment patterns initiated by the Kemalist reforms and state policies that aimed at expanding the professional classes and actively filling the ranks of the professions with women. This initiative perpetuated itself through the systematic recruitment of professional women with elite backgrounds. Kandiyoti (1997) adds, however, that recruitment of these women into professions was a way of preventing the recruitment of men of humble peasant origin and thus to insure the continuity of a homogenous state elite. Öncü (1981) also links the significant number of women in professions to the availability of a large pool of female migrant labor in cities. Inexpensive domestic workers enable middle- and upper-class women to combine their career and family roles without disrupting the existing gender division of labor in their family (see also Erkut 1982).

As studies of squatter women conducted in the late 1970s indicate, migration of peasant women often results in their “housewifeization.” In one author’s harsh words, they become “[self- and] home-decorating machines” (Şenyapılı 1981b:214). During the first wave of migration in the early 1950s, the demand for male labor was low because of the insufficient development of the industrial and service sectors in urban areas. Some squatter women therefore had to work in domestic service for the expanding numbers of newly employed middle-class women. This work was generally considered temporary, ceasing once the women’s husbands found secure and stable jobs. Two representative surveys conducted in the squatter settlements of Ankara and İstanbul in 1976–77 found that only four out of eighty-one employed female members of the İstanbul squatter households and two out of sixty in the Ankara households were working as domestic workers in private homes (Şenyapılı 1981:211, table IX). Women’s participation in both formal and informal sectors was low —only 5.5 percent of women between 15 and 64 years of age in İstanbul and 6.0 percent in Ankara. The low level of employment among women is explained partly by the concentration of working women 25 years old and younger. Female participation in

the work force was limited to unmarried daughters of migrant families, who entered and then left the work force after marriage (Kandiyoti 1982). This trend is further explained by the low pay and low prestige of women's jobs and by the relatively stable and high income of factory-worker husbands, who owed their good wages to successful labor movements. In Turkey, during the 1970s, unionized workers received higher wages than civil servants. Furthermore, wages in the organized sector in Turkey were probably higher than those of any comparable developing country in that period (Keyder 1979).

Women's positions in Turkey's agricultural sector have become more diverse since the 1950s with increased mechanization and the modification of production.<sup>27</sup> Studies of rural women in agricultural production systems offer similar descriptions of the organization of production and women's places within these systems (Berik 1987; Kandiyoti 1990; Sirman 1988). All reveal that although female labor is central to the production process in a predominantly household-based peasant economy, this production system is characterized by the absence of autonomous female economic activity and independent female earnings. Women's many economic activities, whether in the form of agricultural production, small-scale manufacturing, or husbandry, are organized under a patriarchal structure of authority. Women are central actors in the formation and maintenance of the kinship and intra-household relationships upon which production operations rely, but they have no independent access to the market and depend on men's representation. Furthermore, when women are employed as wage laborers or in small-scale manufacturing, such as carpet weaving, their wages are negotiated by and paid to the head of the household, and, as a result, women have no control over cash flow.

Since the early 1970s, Turkish scholars interested in the question of modernization and its impact on the family have focused on the replacement of a posited traditional extended family with a nuclear one deemed the epitome of modernization (Kıray 1964; Kongar 1972; Magneralla 1972; Timur 1972). This approach reduced the description of the family to an enumeration of the number of individuals living together, confusing the concepts of family and household. Furthermore, authority relations within this unit were taken as a given. The main goal of these scholars was to gauge the extent of modernization, measured in terms of similarities between the Turkish family and a presumed West-

ern model. Thus, the widespread existence of nuclear family households, especially in urban areas, has been taken as a sure sign of the modernization of the family structure.

According to the results of the first nationwide survey conducted in 1968, the patriarchal extended family constituted only about one-fifth of all households in Turkey (Timur 1972). They were relatively more common in the villages (25.4 percent) than in metropolitan areas (4.6 percent), indicating a change of family structure with urbanization and modernization. Furthermore, it was pointed out that the ownership of land was the determining factor encouraging the constitution of extended patriarchal families of two generations in rural areas. While landless agricultural families were predominantly nuclear (79 percent), extended patriarchal families were more common among rich landholders (58 percent).

Data concerning past forms of family and household structure in Turkey have only recently been studied systematically, however, and many of the early assumptions about changes in family structure associated with modernization were based on conclusions drawn from a few monographs on villages written in the 1940s and early 1950s (Berkes 1942; Boran 1945; Yasa 1953), all of which reported that patriarchal extended family life was the norm in Turkish village households. More recent historical work on the demographic and structural trends of Ottoman and Turkish families between 1880 and 1940 (Duben and Behar 1991), however, offers a detailed description of family and household structure and debunks the patriarchal extended family argument. These researchers found that households in preindustrial Turkey had a rather simple structure and, in fact, mostly included nuclear families (Duben and Behar 1991). Patriarchal extended families, in both Istanbul and Anatolia, were common only among upper-class families.

Nationwide studies undertaken in the 1980s indicate an increasing proportion of nuclear households in Turkey (Esmer, Fişek, and Kalaycıoğlu 1986; HIPS 1989; Özbay 1989). The most distinctive factor differentiating present patriarchal extended families from past examples is that they are found predominantly among lower classes, indicating that the social and economic basis of patriarchal extended families has changed.

Ferhunde Özbay's extensive review (1989) of studies undertaken in the 1980s on household and family structure led her to conclude that household size, structure, and composition in Turkey is now contingent

upon changing economic circumstances and that the establishment of extended households should be regarded as a survival strategy. She argues that the emergence of such households was prompted by the need to overcome economic uncertainty and does not represent a “traditional life style,” especially in urban areas (16). She further demonstrates that the nuclear family is the normative choice of the majority of the Turkish families. Yet, beneath the nuclear family structure, mutual aid and affective kinship ties remain very strong in Turkish households (Duben 1982; White 1994).

All of these studies make clear that nonfamily households are extremely rare in Turkey. Marriage and the family are the only legitimate institutions within which sexual and reproductive relationships can take place (Tekeli 1990:151). Very high marriage rates and low divorce rates corroborate this conclusion. Turkish divorce law is one of the most permissive in the world, yet the proportion of divorces in Turkey has never exceeded 2 percent (KSSGM 1995:4) and is lower there than in any other Mediterranean Muslim country (Levine 1982:325). Thus, the family with its economic foundation and patriarchal ideology constitutes a major structural obstacle to women’s achieving an identity apart from that of wife and mother.

Even so, the social transformations initiated by the transition from state-controlled capitalism to a privatized and liberalized market economy since the early 1980s have restructured women’s relation to the home and altered their traditional ties to domesticity. The structural transformations most relevant to an examination of the relations between middle-class women and domestic workers include the development of the modern public sphere, the rise of new forms of consumption, and changes in the education system (Özbay 1995). This is not to say that old sources of identity, including mothering and house-keeping, have given way to radically new ones. Attention to these changes is necessary to understand the divide between public and private and the changing roles women play in the articulation of class distinctions and social mobility.

By the mid-1980s the liberalized market economy, with its expansion of advertising, mass communications, consumer credit, and commercial leisure, had cultivated an important change in the Turkish urban classes’ relationship to consumption, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Changes in consumption are dramatically altering the way in which

middle-class women now use their labor and time. The emergence of new consumption sites, such as malls, mega-markets, shopping centers, and department stores that combine leisure, entertainment, and shopping, represent an important example of how an expanding global market economy is changing women's activities outside the home while recasting definitions of female sociability. The immense increase in packaged foods available in Turkey, for example, has led to a corresponding decrease in the amount of time women spend in the kitchen.<sup>28</sup> Women's activities increasingly take place outside the domestic sphere, marking the end of women's sociospatial exclusion from urban public life.

Another equally important transformation taking place in modern Turkish society is the growing privatization of education at all levels, with enduring effects on class stratification and middle-class social mobility. Fierce competition for entrance to the best schools demands parents' close attention to their children's curricular and extra-curricular activities. Parental oversight of education, which now includes identifying and securing private tutors and finding the best prep-class schools, has become a primary preoccupation for both housewives and working mothers.<sup>29</sup> All these activities take women away from the home, expand the public sphere in which they perform motherhood, and put them into new relations of sociability and competition with their peers. It should be stressed here that these new roles entail new definitions of good, successful motherhood while strengthening women's identity as autonomous actors in the public arena.

The fact that women acquire identity through the family is more clearly defined with the expansion of capitalism. As women shoulder additional responsibilities connected with the social status of the family in 1980s Turkey, they appear to take over from men the capacity to act as family representative. . . . As women identify their social status with that of the family, the rise or fall in status of any member of the family confers new status on them, and gives the impression of social mobility. They consequently direct their activities toward increasing the status of the family, especially that of its male members. (Özbay 1995:109–10)

There is yet another trend, however, that is potentially at odds with women's family-bound class identification: women engage in a very individualized process of self-construction in their focus on bodily health and beauty. The focus for women's consumption is no longer limited to family and class. A growing emphasis on cosmetics and other beauty

products, reinforced by the proliferation of advertising, advice literature, and health and beauty magazines has increasingly changed the terms of the cultural constitution of female identity. The proliferation of private gyms (*jimmastik salonları*) and diet centers that cater mainly to women, especially housewives, also marks an increasing body-centeredness. It signals the emergence of a new feminine self that is centered on the body. Middle-class women's investments in this domain are made possible, in large part, by the availability of domestic workers who save them from physical labor. Moreover, these new cultural practices of femininity also play a key role in accentuating differences in appearance between "traditional women" (domestic workers) and modern women. Domestic workers who are deprived of the means of participating in this individualized body-focused culture do not, however, remain unaffected by it. As I illustrate in the following pages, middle-class women's investment in modern feminine identities powerfully affects their daily relationship with domestic labor. It is with such contexts in mind that we must view the emergence of new modes of femininity and new ways in which gender and class are articulated through domestic service. These changes speak to the rapid socioeconomic reconfiguration of Turkey and, in turn, individual responses to them.

## EMPIRICAL FOUNDATION

Four sources of field data—a survey, participant observation, in-depth interviews, and focus group research—provide the foundation of this book. The absence of any previous study or data on domestic workers and the structure of domestic service in Turkey influenced my method of investigation in important ways. It called for a survey of domestic workers that would provide a significant amount of reliable information regarding the earnings, work schedules, recruitment patterns, and household organization and dynamics of domestic workers, about which very little was known. My aim was not limited, however, to obtaining information about the extent and forms of women's unregistered participation in domestic service. I wanted to understand subjectivities and self-definitions of domestic workers that emerge from their experiences with earning wages, confronting modernity and urbanity, and working for middle-class women. I also wanted to examine the ways in which gendered social and economic relations embedded in

family-kinship and neighborhood networks regulate the operation of domestic service. These two important dimensions of the study required my collecting intimate accounts of domestic workers and maintaining a sustained involvement in their daily lives. While a survey questionnaire with structured questions is a useful and efficient tool for discovering and accounting for patterned, structured aspects of people's lives, it is limited in two important respects, as stressed by the proponents of qualitative research (Statham, Miller, and Mauksch 1988). A survey cannot easily account for processes, and, by imposing preconceived categories that may have no meaning to the individual, it disregards the individual's definition of the situation. Participant observation and open interviews as well as focus group interviews allowed me to move beyond these limitations.

The fact that a majority of domestic workers in Turkey are wives of doorkeepers allowed me to draw a representative sample. The apartment buildings that house this group of domestic workers and employers provided me with a frame for random sampling (see Appendix for a discussion of sampling procedures).

*Avoiding Husbands Who Know Better:  
Interviews with Doorkeepers' Wives*

Efforts to obtain agreement for interviews with doorkeepers' wives began with an introductory statement that included a brief description of the purpose of the research, emphasizing confidentiality and the scientific nature of the study. I explained the sampling procedure in lay terms to assure them that they were not particularly chosen but selected randomly, "as in a lottery" (*kurada çıkmak*, a common Turkish phrase).<sup>30</sup> Although my fear of rejection never ceased to haunt me throughout the study, the response rate was quite high; the proportion of domestic workers who were contacted and agreed to be interviewed was 93 percent in this group.<sup>31</sup> In fact, initial contact for the survey interview led to many invitations for subsequent visits and sustained interactions with some of the families. Six women from this group later became the subjects of in-depth interviews.

An early consideration in interviewing doorkeepers' wives was the problem of privacy. Because the doorkeeper's job requires him to be home, it was inappropriate to ask the doorkeeper husbands to leave while the interviews were conducted, especially considering that they



live in small apartments with one or two rooms. Besides these practical considerations, some of the husbands suggested that they should be the ones interviewed by asserting their authority and superiority, using such reasons as, "I know better than my wife," "I can give better, more correct, reliable answers," or "She's ignorant, illiterate." In some other instances we met husbands who wanted to stay and listen to the interview by invoking the notion of oneness—"We don't have any secrets from each other." Women's own responses to their husbands' attempt to silence them also varied. Some simply remained silent while others hinted at their agreement with their husbands by exhibiting self-doubt about their abilities, mostly conveyed by the expression, "But what would I know?" The latter group of women at the end of the interview usually asked whether their performance had been satisfactory. Yet there were some others who took the initiative and told their husbands that they should leave. It is also important to note that this group of women's responses marked a sharp contrast with those of the women in the squatter settlement group, of whom all but one felt no need to ask their husbands' permission to be interviewed or to explain my presence in their homes in instances when the husband happened to be home.

In response to comments suggesting that the husband should be present, we reemphasized the nature of the research and how important it was for the purpose of the study to get the wife's own account. I also instructed my research assistants that if the husband insisted on staying, they should change the order of some questions, posing, for example, questions about fertility and birth control early on so that the husband would become uncomfortable and leave on his own account. This strategy proved successful, and in no case did we have to complete the entire interview in the presence of a husband. The interviews with doorkeepers' wives started in November 1989 and ended in July 1990. All the interviews, with few exceptions, took place in the home of the respondent. The interviews lasted on average ninety minutes and ranged from forty-five minutes to three hours.<sup>32</sup>

#### *Interviews with Squatter Settlement Women*

The interviews with the squatter settlement women were completed between May and July 1990. My initial plan was to start interviewing the squatter settlement group on Sundays in early January. However, weather and the practical constraints of squatter settlement life made

this plan impossible. After several visits to the squatter settlement neighborhood Nato Yolu in early January, I realized that achieving privacy would be impossible. At that time of year, when all the homes in squatter settlement neighborhoods are heated with coal stoves, only the room with the stove, usually the living room, is habitable because of the bone-chilling cold. Since I was treated as a guest, I was unable to persuade the respondents to move to another room or the kitchen so we could conduct the interviews in private. Even if I had been successful, the relocation would have created an uncomfortable situation in which respondents would have been inclined to give quick answers.

Besides, I realized that Sunday visits were not always appropriate. In most families, Sundays are set aside for heating the thermosyphon (if there is one) so the family can have running hot water for baths and the women can do laundry.

During the cold-weather months, although visiting and interviewing went on as the research progressed and friendships formed and consolidated, making contact seemed to be especially difficult in Nato Yolu and Oran, because the women from these neighborhoods spend long hours traveling to and from work. When they get home, it is already dark, and so in a few instances when I did stay late, the male members of the family escorted me to the bus stop, despite my gentle objections. To avoid imposing this extra burden, I decided to wait until early May to continue the research when the days would be longer and transportation easier.

In this group, only two domestic workers out of a total of sixty-one, to whom I was referred by their friends, refused to be interviewed. One of them declined because of the length of interview and the other one, a Kurdish woman who was a recent migrant, feared that I might be researching her political views.<sup>33</sup>

The interviews with this group averaged a little over one hour and ranged from twenty minutes (an incomplete interview) to two hours. The majority of the interviews took place in the homes of domestic workers and most were completed in a single visit. I also conducted in-depth interviews with four women in this group.

### *Participant Observation*

For another source of field data, I took part in many informal gatherings of domestic workers for drinking tea and chatting. I was also

invited to circumcision and wedding ceremonies and to women's periodic "acceptance-day" (*kabul günii*) gatherings. I spent a considerable amount of time in their homes, casually socializing, watching television, and eating meals with them, their husbands and children, and their neighbors. Some of the domestic workers also visited my home. My interaction with these women, in some important respects, resembled the kinds of interaction carried on between close neighbors. I became a "neighbor" by virtue of my constant presence in their communities. This status allowed for considerable informality: participating in daily routines without setting-up particular meeting times and without radically interrupting the rhythm of work or leisure. For example, I assisted women as they folded laundry, prepared food, and bargained with the street peddlers. On a few occasions I accompanied them on visits to a doctor's office or to stores. As they shared their lives with me, I told them about my life. They often questioned me about life in the United States and my anomalous position as a married but childless woman. Their comforting remarks, such as, "Who knows, Gul, one day you might find yourself pregnant," made it clear to me that I was not able to convince them that I chose to be childless. All these interactions not only allowed me a deeper understanding of the fabric of their lives but also provided valuable information on the establishment and maintenance of informal social networks among domestic workers.

### *Focus Group Interviews*

I used focus group interviews with domestic workers to corroborate data developed in the survey. I planned two focus group interviews, one with the doorkeeper group and the other with the squatter settlement group, but only one was successful. Both times I invited a group of wives of doorkeepers to my apartment no one came. Why they did not attend, whether because something indeed came up as they claimed or their husbands did not allow them to go, will remain unknown. The focus group interview with eight domestic workers in the squatter settlement group whom I previously had interviewed, however, took place in one of the participant's home. My role was to bring up certain key issues that had emerged in the preliminary analysis of the survey data and to generate discussion on these issues, rather than to pose specific questions.

Focus group interviews were also conducted with eighteen employers representing three different groups of employing women, with six women in each group. I designed focus group interviews with employers as an ancillary aspect of the study to explore a range of issues entailed as women of different classes come into contact in domestic service, as well as to explore the effect hiring a domestic worker has on gender role negotiations in her family. The questions dealt with the privatized nature of the labor relations, social security benefits, and issues of wages, patronage, recruitment, and the double day.

I conjectured that work relationships and how the domestic worker comes to define herself with respect to her employer would be different for each of three main groups of employers, feminist women, professional women, and full-time housewives. The six, self-identified, feminist women are all active in the feminist movement in Turkey. Three are university professors, one is a housewife, and two hold executive positions. The six professional women included an architect, two lawyers, a high school teacher, and two executives. Of the housewives, all from the upper-middle class, two had had paid work in the past but were currently full-time homemakers.<sup>34</sup>

Although it is not possible in any measurable way to determine the level of sincerity achieved in the survey, I believe that a high degree of sincerity and openness on the part of the respondents was achieved. The traditional sociological insight on this crucial aspect of the data-gathering process tells us that people have a tendency to confide in a stranger in ways they never would with those they know and, therefore, the position of the researcher as a stranger produces sincerity when it is coupled with assurance of complete discretion. I believe that the openness and sincerity of the respondents in this study can be explained by this general principle in only a broad sense. There is another factor to be considered.

Mirra Komarovsky (1967) argues that the respondents' openness and sincerity signifies the absence of what she calls "the capacity to be an object to oneself" (15), a kind of psychological sophistication that allows one to imagine the attitude of the other. In the course of an interview, it describes the respondent's strategy: responding to a question while at the same time taking on the role of interviewer, imagining the interviewer's attitude and reaction and thereby manufacturing the answer accordingly. While I would not venture to attribute lack of such

sophistication to my respondents, it still seems that the possibility of manufacturing insincere answers by the respondents was reduced by the fact that for all the women in the sample, this was their very first experience with a scientific study. They had no preconceived ideas about how to “properly” present themselves to me and no knowledge about my position to guess what constituted a desirable answer.