EXPRESSIVE AND INTERACTIVE POTENTIALITIES ONLINE: DISCUSSION AND THE REPRODUCTION OF "GOOD MOTHERHOOD" ON INSTAGRAM

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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- I am the sole author of this thesis and that I have fully acknowledged and documented in my thesis all sources of ideas and words, including digital resources, which have been produced or published by another person or institution;
- this thesis contains no material that has been submitted or accepted for a degree or diploma in any other educational institution;
- this is a true copy of the thesis approved by my advisor and thesis committee at Boğaziçi University, including final revisions required by them.

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ABSTRACT

EXPRESSIVE AND INTERACTIVE POTENTIALITIES ONLINE: DISCUSSION AND THE REPRODUCTION OF "GOOD MOTHERHOOD" ON INSTAGRAM

This thesis aims at analyzing the expressive and communicative potentialities that Social Networking Services (SNSs) provide for mothers. Occupying an important position in our daily lives, the SNSs gradually enabled individuals to connect whereas the transformations of urbanization and individualization altered the existing ways for interaction, communication, and knowledge production. The findings of this thesis suggest that mothers' online interactivity enables more open and "honest" expressions about experiences of motherhood, on topics that cannot be openly expressed in their social networks. With its fleeting and speedy nature, Instagram seems to be a digital tool from which mothers can receive emotional validation and support. Moreover, as this thesis will emphasize, Instagram also operates as a tool through which mothers criticize, discuss and resist the particular ideals of "good motherhood." This thesis will further elaborate how the shared struggles give way to a sense of "commonality." In order to provide a balanced analysis, this thesis will also discuss how these "common" problems are often not contextualized and how discourses over mother love, and how using humor are utilized as tools for overcoming these structural problems individually.

ÖZET

ÇEVRİMİÇİ İFADE VE ETKİLEŞİM OLANAKLARI: INSTAGRAM'DA "İYİ ANNELİK"İN TARTIŞILMASI VE YENİDEN ÜRETİLMESİ

Bu tez sosyal paylaşım sitelerinin anneler için sunduğu ifade ve iletişim olanaklarını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bireyselleşme ve kentleşmeyle birlikte dönüşen iletişim, etkileşim ve bilgi üretimi süreçlerinin yanında, gündelik hayatımızda kendilerine sağlam bir yer edinen sosyal paylaşım siteleri bireylerin sosyal ağlar kurmalarına olanak tanıyor. Bu tezin bulguları, annelerin çevrimiçi etkileşimlerinin diğer çevrelerde dile getirilemeyen annelik deneyimlerinin açık ve "dürüstçe" ifade edilebilmesi için alan sağlıyor. Sosyal paylaşım platformlarından biri olan Instagram, uçucu ve seri yapısıyla annelerin duygusal onay ve destek ihtiyaçlarını giderebilecekleri bir mecra olarak karşımıza çıkıyor. Bunun yanında, bu tezde vurgulanacağı gibi, Instagram annelerin "iyi annelik" ideallerini tartışabilecekleri, eleştirebilecekleri ve karşı çıkabilecekleri bir araç olarak kullanılabiliyor. Bunlarla birlikte bu tez paylaşılan deneyimlerin ve zorlukların nasıl bir ortaklık ve birliktelik hissi sağladığını tartışıyor. Bunların yanında, dengeli bir analiz sunmak adına bu tez ortak sorunların çoğu zaman bir bağlam etrafında tartışılmadığını ortaya koyuyor ve "anne sevgisi"nin ve mizahın varolan yapısal sorunlar karşısında bireysel olarak sorunların üstesinden gelme söylemine nasıl katkıda bulunduğunu tartışıyor.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Motivations and aim of the thesis

The idea of conducting a research about mothers' uses of digital media platforms has stemmed from my initial interest in the motivations and influences of daily social media usage. With the research model in my mind, my initial focus was on the alternating meanings of and strategies for privacy and visibility. For this aim, I thought it would be plausible to focus on the mothers' uses of Instagram, which was one of the most popular digital platforms. At the initial steps of my research, I thought I was going to conduct my research about the highly popular and visible accounts that were curated and maintained by "ordinary" mothers, who received visibility due to their curated presentation of daily life events and details.[1]

With these aims, I created an account and started to follow the content presented by these women and how they maintained relationships with their audience. My initial thoughts wandered around how these accounts were establishing "solid" self-representations by reproducing the gendered normativity and appointing themselves as "supermoms" and how they reflected the transformations of the "mommy myth" in the Turkish society. These representations were criticized in various forums and websites on the Internet for representing the "erosion" of the previous norms of privacy, constantly playing on their children's private identity and "exaggerating" their relationships with their children while drawing attention to their

[1] Also called "Instagram moms" (or "Instamoms") these accounts were known for their vast numbers of followers, their thematic contents about themselves as mothers, and their relationship with their children that mostly do not include "backstage" information and constantly foster a positive picture about motherhood while exchanging private details in the "visibility game."

way of "good motherhood," displaying information about their children, themselves, their bodies and different spaces in their houses, as it will be elaborated more later in this chapter. Within this picture, what was excluded from the representations could also give us some hints about what was "privatized" among these mothers and what these implied about the contemporary ideals of "good motherhood." The missing representations of ambivalent feelings, struggles, and confusions, which are mostly thought related (especially to the early stages) to motherhood pointed out to a normative construction of representations that complied with the contemporary norms of motherhood.

With these thoughts, I initially selected the accounts based on their numbers of audience and their engagement with the dominant discourses of motherhood and womanhood and I started to observe their content daily. After some periods of observation and examination, however, I realized what is to be expected, the heterogeneity of the field. As I was fleeting around these accounts, I noticed the usage of particular hashtags by some of the popular accounts occasionally.[2] Observing the content found under particular hashtags, I realized that even though the modes of representations found in the "popular" accounts seem to dominate the representative field on Instagram, there are also accounts that present different personal narratives and experiences of motherhood.

The content found on these "other" accounts together with the comments they receive from their audience provided a potential for observing and analyzing how the digital platform is used to express one's often intimate feelings, rejections towards contemporary expectations, values, and modes of mothering, and how they negotiate,

[2] Some of the hashtags were "#annelikherzamantozpembedegil", "#yardımdegilisbolumu", "#lohusayimfarkindayim", etc. As will be discussed in the Methodology section, uses of hashtags (#) appear as very important for Instagram use and especially for creating a "common language" or contextualizing the content by relating it to a particular hashtag.

legitimize, and justify their own mothering choices and experiences, which seem partially inconsistent with the widespread normative expectations of "intensive mothering." After this point, I decided to shift the focus of the research to these spaces with the aim of understanding how these spaces provide potentials for expression, social solidarity, emotional validation, and a sense of belonging.

As this thesis aims to elaborate, as a part of the digital "ecology," Instagram has the potential to provide different spaces for interaction, expression, confession, and building a sense of community. Through observing and analyzing mothers' uses of Instagram, this thesis aims at making a sense about how the discussions can be initiated, maintained and how criticism can be put forward within a space that mostly fosters the entertainment culture with a "positivity bias" intrinsic to it. Such an observation enables us to view how the contemporary institution of motherhood is understood, complied with, and rejected by different women. For the aims of this research, I will endeavor to elaborate how particular feelings and experiences of motherhood, which are at odds with the dominant discourses of motherhood, are negotiated, validated, and justified through the digital networking platforms. In line with these, this thesis will endeavor to establish a balanced understanding regarding how these platforms open up spaces for negotiation among mothers, which carry potentials for change, while particular aspects of discourses of motherhood and neoliberal subjectivity are reproduced simultaneously.

In line with these research interests, the main research questions of this thesis are

1. How the digital field is utilized in a way that would open up a space for expression for different personal experiences and subjectivities about motherhood?
2. How this field creates a space for establishing relationships between emotional female networks and material conditions of motherhood?

3. How mothers reject and negotiate pre-existing discourses aimed at morally regulating motherhood and mothering practices, while simultaneously relying on and reproducing existing discourses?

1.2 Existing literature and relevance of the thesis

The immense rise in the rates of digital media use throughout the years have encouraged various academic studies that mainly aim at providing meaning for the uses of these digital platforms. While different studies in the digital spheres focused on different ways of using these digital platforms, one body of research draws on the frequency (and the importance) of the parental (and mostly maternal) uses of such platforms especially in the early years of parenting by drawing special attention to the importance of receiving emotional, social and informational support in the process of socialization (McDaniel et al., 2011; Wagner & Gasche, 2018). It is argued that due to the demographical transformations resulted from industrialization and urbanization processes, the traditional transmission of knowledge regarding child-raising has altered and the Social Networking Services (SNSs) carry the potential for easing one's transition to parenthood. This attribution is mainly fed from SNSs' abilities for providing (geographically distant) networks through which mothers can cope with the social isolation (especially in the early years of childrearing), receive and give information about childrearing, providing a vast scope of narratives and experiences of other mothers and having a sense about how to overcome various struggles.

While the existing research on digital spheres mostly focused on blogs or forums to trace narratives and modes of personal expression, it is theorized that the "space" Instagram provided privileged image-production and communication through the images (Serafinelli, 2017). Likewise, the studies on Instagram dominantly revolve around the discussions about the "personal identity" by

emphasizing the utilization of commercial interests and performances of "self-fashioning," which aim at economic and social capital (Marwick, 2015; Abidin, 2016).

In a similar vein, the limited research about Instagram and "Instagram mothers" ("Instagram Anneleri") in Turkey dominantly focused on the highly visible and commercialized accounts. In doing so, these studies aimed at understanding the contemporary discourses, values, and ideals of motherhood, observing the "idealized" representations of motherhood and womanhood on Instagram and what kind of a transformation it points out to (Büyükkuşoğlu, 2017), as well as economic benefits and new consumption practices fostered by Instagram use (Parsa & Akmeşe, 2019; Sine & Parlak, 2017) and how their audience identifies with these women while they operate as "Influencers"[3] (Büyükkuşoğlu, 2017).[4] At this point, it would be useful to take a closer look at these studies to make a better sense of Instagram as a digital platform and to understand which discourses are circulated and reproduced regarding motherhood by mothers themselves.

In her master thesis, Servet Büyükkuşoğlu (2017) analyzes the content shared by 10 highly visible and popular accounts found on Instagram. Conceptualizing these accounts as "Iconic mothers" and "Iconic women," Büyükkuşoğlu argues that these "Iconic women" and "Iconic mothers" present themselves as perfect and ideal women and mothers and that these accounts function as objects of desire and fantasy for their audience (Büyükkuşoğlu, p. 36). Through her research, Servet

[3] The notion of "Influencer" refers to "everyday, ordinary Internet users, who accumulate a relatively large following on blogs and social media through the textual and visual narration of their personal lives and lifestyles, engage with their following in digital and physical spaces, monetize their following by integrating "advertorials" into their blog or social media posts" (Abidin, 2015, p.1). This conceptualization draws attention to the transformations in consumption practices, as well as advertising and marketing strategies as the brands and advertisement companies started to target the consumers via social media platforms.

[4] It is important to note here that other recent studies also focus on mothers' practices in the digital platforms and in Instagram (Kaplan, 2018; Aktaş Kaya, 2019).

Büyükkuşoğlu argues that the perfect familial picture and mothering dominates the representations of motherhood in Instagram and only a little portion of the accounts gain popularity and visibility for their "realistic" content about everyday experiences of motherhood (Büyükkuşoğlu, 2017). Regarding the "realistic" picture, which is mostly absent in the narratives found in these accounts, Büyükkuşoğlu argues that Instagram users are not "accustomed to come across moments of a crying baby, a messy home or an exhausted mother" (Büyükkuşoğlu, 2017, p. 83).

Through their qualitative content analysis of 18 "Instagram mothers," Parsa and Akmeşe (2019) also argue that popular "mommy accounts" operate as "role models" for mothers by presenting themselves as ideal mothers.[5] The role of the "ideal mother" is occupied by their ways of presenting themselves as well-groomed, attentive mothers, who spend "enough" time with their children, conducting the discourse of "supermom," by presenting themselves as individuals who face daily experiences and struggles of mothering with ease while simultaneously emphasizing their ability to maintain their personal development and careers (Parsa & Akmeşe, 2019, p. 128). As Parsa and Akmeşe argue, the appearances of children are curated diligently in a way the children would attract attention to boost the visibility of their content and utilized as a "tool" for getting their audience to choose the relevant product and brand.[6]

[5] The foundations that render these representations as "ideal" will be discussed in the theoretical chapter and further in the consecutive chapters.

[6] These "Instagram mothers" are mostly criticized also in different digital spaces such as forums and blogs with their choices to display images and personal details about their children and lack of privacy concerns. These criticisms are intrinsically related to the evaluations of social media in general: how the previous norms regarding private and personal information transform with the uses of social media and become "shareable" within the current attention economy (Andrejevic, 2002). As the personal and everyday details of life started to attract attention and utilized for gaining social and economic capital and seen not merely as being private and/or mundane details of one's identity, in accordance with the particular rules and encouragements of the social media tools, different experiences started to be "concealed" and excluded from the representations. Within such a picture, it is argued that pervasive representations operated as another "layer" over already existing feeling and expression rules (van Dijck, 2013) of motherhood.

Another research that examines various performances via the "Stories" feature on Instagram also includes two women who perform being "new mothers" similarly argues that these mothers present solely well-groomed, fun, excited, and happy experiences of motherhood (Kırık, 2017). Simultaneously, they idealize their ways of mothering by creating a picture in which they are interested and attached mothers, who spend lots of time for their children and children's development. Conducting acts of impression management, mothers mostly share their children in a highly curated way (Kırık & Yazıcı, 2017, p. 90).

These examinations and researches emphasize the positive and affirmative tone used mostly by the "Influencer" mothers on Instagram, which seems to operate following the norms around positivity bias stemming from the entertainment functions of such digital platforms, and the motivations of self-fashioning that are seen intrinsic to interaction and self-presentation on Instagram. In line with these analyses, it is argued that representations of motherhood and mothering experiences are stuck in a "rosy picture," where the conflicts and ambivalences are either presented in a highly curated way that would emphasize their agency of individually resolving these conflicts or not presented at all.

Existing academic interests in women, media use, and technological developments have mostly focused on how technological affordances are used to marginalize and oppress women, rather than offering complex understandings of how women conduct negotiations through online communities and digital venues (Eble & Breault, 2002, p. 327). The particular accounts that are analyzed for this thesis, however, present a different picture regarding motherhood experiences and subjectivities by reflecting on their experiences about the discourses around "good motherhood", validating different meanings and experiences regarding motherhood,

criticizing dominant discourses, and delineating their oppressive nature. In doing so, this study aims to present a complex understanding of and contribute to the literature on networked publics of mothers in Turkey with its attempt to understand the transformations in mothers' perceptions about what is presented as "good motherhood," how particular discourses are resisted, negotiated and rejected while particular fragments of these discourses are reproduced and reinterpreted.

1.3 Methodology

As the main aim of this thesis is to provide an understanding about various representations on Instagram, how the sense of belonging is established through the (digital) emotional networks, and how various discourses and identities are negotiated and discussed, the primary source of data for this study is determined as Instagram itself. To conduct a structured observation and analysis, this thesis adopts what is labeled as "netnography" as the primary methodological approach (Kozinets, 1998). While similar methodological approaches provided different names such as "virtual ethnography" (Hine, 2000) or "cyber ethnography" (Robinson & Schulz, 2009), these methods are structured rather similarly with the aims for understanding the social interaction within the digital contexts. These methods digitally trace the "naturally" occurring interpersonal communication that is "recorded" by communication networks and adopt these records of interactions and networks as primary data (Kozinets, 1998).

Although the methods modeled for conducting digital researches have their own limits and boundaries,[7] these methods and research models are considered as

[7] One of the most important limits of the netnographic method draws on the "digital divide", which points out to material requirements for accessing social media. Drawing attention to such issues is particularly important for developing an understanding of the underrepresented (or often non-represented) narratives and experiences.

important for understanding different ways of using the social platforms, making sense of current discussions and politics of representation. As such, representations and communicative acts on social media platforms such as forums, blogs, and SNSs are seen as important sites for making observations about individual manifestations and elaborations of experiences of motherhood and the social and cultural norms that are inherent to these reflections.

Whereas the transformations in the traditional transmission of (experiential) information of motherhood took place in a way that would render women in solitude, as will be discussed in Chapter 2, more mothers turned to digital environments for exchanging experiences and information about motherhood and following the digital developments, the research about the parental practices and representations focused more and more on the digital environments such as forums, blogs, and social media platforms (McDaniel et al., 2011; Livingstone 2008; Pedersen, 2016).[8] More than providing spaces for gaining information for childcare, such a use of these digital venues also extracts the experiences of motherhood from the private domains and rendered these visible for a wider audience (Gürçayır Teke, 2014, p. 35). As such, observations through these sites provide novel mediums for viewing and analyzing the contemporary practices, experiences, perceptions, and norms surrounding motherhood in Turkey as reflected in a "public" sphere.

While the mothers' usage of the Internet and different social media tools have accelerated throughout time, the platform engagements and uses have also transformed in time. Blogs and parental websites were initially and widely used by

[8] Because blog posts tend to be longer than other written social media content, the contribution of bloggers to the discourses of motherhood is relatively more obvious. However, by sharing and reflecting on their experiences of motherhood in diverse social media platforms, mothers contribute to the discourse on motherhood also by using different social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

parents (especially mothers) for sharing experiences and interacting with one another and thus, the research about parental practices and interactions in the digital venues were mostly conducted through different websites, virtual "forums" and blogs (Livingstone, 2008). While examining different websites and platforms, however, I realized that Instagram, through its particular features and (immediate) everyday nature, enables and encourages more active interaction among the readers together with its dynamic "comment" section, connects the posts to broader meanings and contexts through the hashtag sections and enables higher visibility than "intimate publics" of "mommyblogging" in the sense that all the networked individuals are "collapsed" into one place.[9]

Further, beyond its popularity and commercial value, Instagram is a device that offers rich possibilities for conducting social research and has the potential for opening up several pathways for exploring sociocultural processes related to the more "mundane" and overlooked aspects of "ordinary" lives (Caliandro & Graham, 2020). Analyzing these self-presentation practices on Instagram (as it is the case for other digital platforms) can be seen important as it surfaces and showcases "diverse representations of femininities, and displaying a variety of mundane everyday lives, often underrepresented on traditional mainstream media" (Caldeira et al., 2018, p. 2). Moreover, these accounts provide rich and vast archives of discussions, elaborations, and descriptions regarding contemporary ideals of motherhood by raising diverse issues and contemplating on the impacts of the existing discourses, which is an interactive process that initiates discussions about the topics that are not explicitly

[9] As it will be elaborated in more detail in Chapter 2, this point is seen as particularly important for online female communities, of which scope is limited as the "intimate" dimension excludes a wider audience and limits their reach (Morrison, 2011).

discussed due to particular values, perceptions, beliefs, and expectations of motherhood within the (Turkish) social framework.

As my main aim is to outlay the discussions over motherhood by individual users and self-presentation dynamics that allow observing how the experiences are interpreted and perceived by mothers, I conducted qualitative content analysis by utilizing 8 accounts that are "public" (or "publicly" available) and are mostly labeled as "Personal Blog" in their "bio section." As this research focuses on Instagram as its particular digital space for observation and analysis, I created an account and spent periodic times almost every day for around 10 months as an (anonymous) member of the platform to conduct structured research. While conducting the observations, I used an account that follows only various mothers' accounts. This, although it was not planned for in the beginning, enabled me also to observe and understand to what extent these women are aware of each other and others' content.

The initial observations were conducted by observing the posts that were shared by using particular hashtags[10] such as "#annelikherzamantozpembedegil," "#lohusayimfarkindayim," "#anneolmak," "#yardimdegilisbolumu," "#annelikdelilik." In the later stages, however, I focused on the particular account for conducting a structured qualitative analysis and therefore eliminated most of the visuals and accounts that utilized these hashtags. The main reason for such a decision was my attempt to eliminate the "irrelevant data" from the analysis; as the algorithm of Instagram encourages using hashtags, hashtags can become "labels" through which users endeavor to gather attention to their posts and render their content more visible. After a while, I realized following these hashtags would make sense only

[10] As it will be denoted later, hashtag use on the SNSs thought to present a unique "tagging convention" to help individuals for associating particular messages with certain events, contextualizing one's content, and for connecting to "ad hoc" communities (Caliandro & Gandini, 2017).

through "macro-scale"[11] quantitative digital projects and would mostly distract the "micro-scale" qualitative research aims. Downsizing the number of accounts, I believe, enabled this thesis to provide a more comprehensive picture regarding the interactions and emotional formations of such networks.

After reviewing most of the content shared with these hashtags, I limited the research with the accounts that predominantly draw on the issues that encompass the discourses around contemporary motherhood, and emphasize various experiences and discussions of motherhood continuously. In doing so, I also excluded various accounts that did not predominantly draw on their own experiences of motherhood and discourses of motherhood and mostly generated mere daily updates about their daily rhythm of life. Such a "manual" route allowed me to achieve greater familiarity with the content and enabled a better assessment of the relevance of each post to my particular research interests. The structured examination included reviewing the accounts starting from their initial posts (although sometimes the first posts were removed, it most of the time provided an understanding for their motivations for generating these accounts), their digital footprints found in other websites and daily tracking of the shared content including the "Stories." Because the content found on the Stories meant to be deleted automatically after 24 hours, however, I excluded such content. I also endeavored to emphasize the textual interaction and communication among the participants and thus, included the comments to the

[11] With the proliferation of online content, researchers studying online platforms and interactions dominantly tended to use massive data sets that are generated by user interactions. Frequently referred to as "big data," these data sets often consist of information collected and archived through computational programs, mostly endeavoring to explore vast amounts of Instagram images and analyze macro patterns explored through visuals (Hu et al., 2014; Tifentale & Manovich, 2015). Although compelling, massive data sets are also perceived as gross summarizations of online behaviors, rendering the outcomes rather abstract (Skalski et al., 2017, p. 204), while qualitative approaches can offer "a granularity of detail that might otherwise be lost in dazzling large-scale data" (Losh, 2015, p. 1650).

relevant content, viewing the comments as additions to the original data point (Highfield & Leaver, 2014).

In line with the aims of this thesis, I mostly analyzed the written content that can be found in the captions and/or the visuals themselves.[12] To keep the integrity of the text, I did not include the visuals of the posts in the main text; rather, I generated an Appendix section, which would display all the visuals that were referred to within the text. The "narrative approach" adopted for this research provided the possibility for analyzing the contradictions between the experiences, constructions of the self, and the impact of cultural metanarratives on the stories and expectations (Miller, 2005).

There are legitimate ethical and empirical concerns about the truthfulness of accounts of motherhood, coauthored by the writers and readers of these "intimate publics." One heavily recounted concern and reservation state that these narratives are far from being representative. Although it would be highly plausible to accept that the findings of any virtual ethnography would necessarily be partial (Hine, 2000), and Instagram data are unlikely to be representative of the broader population in a geographic area (Boyd & Crawford, 2012), through structured examination of the ways these mother accounts understand, reflect on, reject, subvert and (re)constitute existing ideals and myths of "good mothering," we may gain insight for their broader relevance to the future transformations of female agency, gender structures, maternal identity, and so on (Friedman, 2013).

[12] This methodological "choice" can be seen as somehow contradictory to the existing tendencies about Instagram research. As an image-based platform, Instagram encourages interpretation of meanings over the visuals; however, existing studies also argue that such tendency blunts textual descriptions and interactions by "de-emphasizing" the written "dimension" in favor of images (Marwick, 2015, p. 139).

1.4 Organization of the thesis

This thesis consists of three main chapters, aside from this introductory chapter. Chapter 2, will provide a theoretical framework about the representative and communicative motivations and implications of the social media tools, by reviewing the literature regarding the transformations in the practices of collaboration and solidarity on the one hand and contemporary modes and requirements about motherhood and family structures on the other. Focusing on the opportunities that the communicative technologies provide and how these opportunities are also subject to existing discursive and normative regimes, this chapter will also review the literature and existing theories regarding "networked publics" and how "counterpublics" can be formed through such digital utilities. Later, this chapter will also provide practical and theoretical information about Instagram as a platform, by also emphasizing the motivations and implications of its usage. Lastly, this chapter will review the literature on motherhood to provide a sense of how the accelerating online performances and networking practices of mothers are linked to transformations in family structure due to urbanization, how the idealizations about contemporary motherhood are fostered through the media affordances, and how the novel technological affordances are theorized as having potentials for gaining control over one's representation and fostering discussions, which in turn would result in "consciousness raising."

Chapter 3 will elaborate on the findings of the observations conducted in light of the existing theoretical and empirical studies. In doing so, this chapter will initially introduce the accounts that will be analyzed for this thesis. Later, this chapter will shed light on how these digital venues provide important mediums for interaction, widening one's scope regarding the possible experiences and exchanging information

about child-raising, within a context of the cities where the transmission of knowledge and experiences are interrupted and mothers got gradually more vulnerable to isolation. In that sense, this chapter will put forward that these technological affordances are utilized by these mothers in a way that could provide them expressive capacities and a sense of belonging.

Chapter 4 will analyze how these mothers utilize these publicly visible accounts for interpreting, discussing, and negotiating the main premises and ideals of the hegemonic ideal of "good motherhood." Through tracing these narratives, criticisms, and discussions, this chapter will further provide a sense about which discourses that mothers face in their daily lives and environments, how they perceive these ideals, and negotiate through utilizing their circumstances. In doing so, this chapter will provide an understanding of how the particular qualities of motherhood such as overarching dedication and constant voluntary sacrifice, as well as the emphasis on the primacy of the child are negotiated by various women, how these discourses sometimes rejected, sometimes negotiated and sometimes complied with.

The Discussion section of Chapter 4, will endeavor to analyze how particular discourses and narratives are complied with, with special emphasis on the utilization of mother love as a source for endurance and solace and an emphasis on how the narratives imply personal responsibility and personal strategies for overcoming common struggles instead of developing a collective language over structural problems that encompass the daily experiences of mothering practices and familial "duties" that mothers conduct. This section will further discuss how the usage of humor and humorous content gathers greater visibility within a digital venue that emphasizes and privileges "positivity" and entertainment. This section will lastly mention how the discourses about sexuality are absent in most of the accounts and

how we can find different narratives of personal experiences only in anonymous confession pages.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

It is easy to observe that, especially for the people living in cities, the professional and personal daily experiences are now intermingled with social media platforms. The current digital environment, in which computers and smartphones almost have an uninterrupted internet access, offers opportunities for accessing various media platforms and applications from almost anywhere and anytime. These platforms, such as Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Instagram, and many others, drive people to move and reshape many of their social, cultural, and professional activities (van Dijck, 2013) and transform the modes and repertoires of interaction by introducing novel ways for establishing and maintaining personal relationships, generating social networks, altering the processes of knowledge production and transmission (Bargh & McKenna, 2004).

The first section of this chapter will discuss the transformations in communication technologies and the impacts of these transformations on everyday life and daily repertoires of practice. In this section, the main focus will be on the opportunities, characteristic features of these technologies, and the influences of "networked publics" on social and digital networking practices. The second section will endeavor to provide a framework about the dominant discourses of motherhood. This section will provide a theoretical and literary framework for providing contextualization of the novel parental uses of these digital platforms both for networking (and enhancing social capital) and for presentation. With these aims, this section will initially discuss the transformations in the family structure and ideals,

which were subjected to radical changes due to demographic transformations resulted from urbanization and industrialization processes. This section will also give an account of the role of the media in the dissemination of "contemporary" ideals of motherhood and how these novel technologies marked by the "participatory" ideals are evaluated as important for female reclaim over representation and conveyance of meaning.

2.2 Social media, mobile technologies, and Instagram

2.2.1 Digital venues and potentials for self-presentation

With their widespread uses, social media platforms took their places as a "new layer" in the daily rhythm that influence human interactions while online and offline worlds are penetrating rapidly (van Dijck, 2013, p. 4). Although it can be difficult to define and frame, "social media" is generally understood as an online, network-based interactive channel of communication that promotes collaborative creation and exchanging user-generated information (Obar & Wildman, 2015). Also referred to as "Web 2.0," the term social media describes the types of World Wide Web applications such as blogs, microblogs like Twitter, social networking sites (SNSs), and video, image, and file-sharing platforms.[13]

While previous technologies of radio and television enabled one-to-many forms of communication to an indeterminate mass audience just like printing technology, online platforms enabled many-to-many transmission and communication relying on the online networks (Tierney, 2013). The heavy emphasis

[13] Although also mostly referred to as "new media", it is argued that (Scholz, 2008) social media applications are not new and their origins can be traced back to 2005; although blogs were already used by the end of the 1990s, Social Networking Sites such as SixDegrees were already existent and used in 2005. It is argued that although the technologies that constitute what is referred to as "social media" or "Web 2.0" are not new, the level of usage has changed drastically since the 1990s.

on “user-generated” content and information also points out the drastic shift from the existing logic of “traditional” (or mass) media while the dichotomies between “the producer” and “the consumer” blurred due to the technological affordances that facilitate interaction and dynamicity (Seargent & Tagg, 2014). In that sense, the shift from traditional mass media and also from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 resulted in a concurrent shift from a one-to-many model that involved “passive” consumers to s many-to-many model involving active participants, who play a constitutive role in shaping discourses. Although initially designed for computer-mediated communication, extensive use of smartphones and other mobile devices transformed the ways and the scope of media use dramatically. Entangling with the Web 2.0 technologies, mobile devices enabled the creation and circulation of content very easily, with almost uninterrupted access to the Internet and thus, to social networks (Arnold & Martin, 2016).

The shift from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 was also marked with distinctive characteristics of the Web 2.0 technologies from the earlier structure of the Internet, which was initially fostered by the ideals of “pure communication” that will be achieved through “anonymity” that dominated early structure of the Internet (Marwick, 2012). One of the most significant distinctions is the profile-driven logic of Web 2.0 technologies. While profiles are not unique to social networking services and Web 2.0 platforms, they are central to them (Boyd, 2010). Through the user-generated profiles, the participants actively and consciously craft their profiles determining how they wish to present themselves to often ambiguous audiences. While profile creation and maintenance are conceptualized as explicit acts of “writing oneself into being in a digital environment” (Boyd, 2010, p. 43), these new

abilities of personal expression and representation are thought of as potentials for control over individual self-representation (Sanderson & Smith, 2015, p. 344).

Here, the notion of "self-presentation" requires more attention to give a sense of the online practices found on social media platforms. "Self-presentation" traces back to Erving Goffman's seminal work *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, where he posits that people function as performers, expressing their identities through verbal and non-verbal cues with aims for displaying the most credible image to others (audiences) (Goffman, 1959). Being goal-driven, individuals consider how to present their selves by balancing their individual goals and with the "self," which they perceive as desired by the audience (Bortree, 2005). In Goffman's terminology, self-presentation consists of what he labels as "frontstage" and "backstage" performances, where the frontstage refers to cautious performances of the self with the consciousness of being watched and by observing certain rules and social conventions, backstage refers to a more private environment where the performance of the self is less filtered (Goffman, 1974). For Goffman, self-presentation is a continual process of negotiation between these two positions of the self as each contains various presentation strategies to be managed through interpreting audiences, interests, personal goals, and social contexts.

The advent of the internet and online communication adds new layers and strategies to the self-presentation performances, which were theorized by placing the face-to-face interactions at the center. In other words, as indicated above, while individuals do have control over their self-presentation in "offline" contexts, the online environments grant greater abilities and control over one's self-presentation being unbounded by physical social contexts and audiences in the absence of a physically present audience. Accordingly, it is argued that online venues allow

people to generate and maintain "salient" identities, which are perhaps not appropriate and/or desirable to display within face-to-face contexts (Kim & Papacharissi, 2003). In other words, the capabilities of self-presentation that are enabled by the "inclusive" and "public" environments of the digital spheres allow diverse representations and offering potentials for recognition by affording visibility to the narratives that have been marginalized by the societal mainstream (Papacharissi, 2014, p. 7).

These potentials for representative opportunities found on the digital environments and the networked publics, however, are balanced by various researchers with the emphasis on the "offline" influence on the online environments. As such, it is argued that the digital self-presentation practices and the networked publics appear to reproduce many of the existing biases and inequalities including social stratification around race, gender, sexuality, and age (Chen & Wellman, 2005) as well as norms and consumption of femininity (McDaniel et al., 2012). While mostly normalizing itself by constantly humming in the background of daily life especially in the urban contexts, and presenting themselves to users as mere technologies arose within an "ahistorical" context, "[t]he electronic frontier has a history, geography and demography grounded firmly in non-virtual realities of gender, race, class and other cultural variables that impact on our experience of the technological" (Higgins, Rushaija & Medhurst, 1999, p. 111).

2.2.2 Networked publics, "counterpublics" and social potentialities

More than granting individuals potentials for gaining control over self-presentation, SNSs carry expectations of sociability, meaningful connection to others, a sense of belonging, conviviality, and even empathy and support (Wellman, 2002; Parks,

2011). In his seminal book *The Rise of the Network Society*, Manuel Castells pointed out to Internet's unique feature of linking the distant locales around shared functions and meanings by reconceptualizing the "spatial arrangements under a new technological paradigm" by allowing distant, synchronous, and real-time interaction (Castells, 1996). The developments in technological affordances and the rise of social media tools gave way to further elaborations and analysis about the potentials of networking and it is argued that social media platforms are thought to increase people's ability to share, co-operate, and engage in collective action outside the traditional institutions and organizations (Shirky, 2008).

"Networked publics"[14] (Ito, 2008) refers to communities that are formed among some of the members of a social media platform. These networks are defined as "publics" that are restructured by networked technologies and argued to foster imagined communities, which emerge as a result of the "intersection of people, technology, and practice" (Boyd, 2010). Owing to their persistence and replicability, as well as their geographical unboundedness, networked publics are emphasized for their allowance for greater information exchange, making new contacts, raising awareness about new ideas (Granovetter, 1973; Wellman, 2001), promoting "collaboration on a scale never seen before" (Grossman, 2006), and enabling being viewed and engaging with various contents over extended periods (Boyd, 2010).

Here, the notions of "public" and "public sphere" require special attention. With a long history of theorization, the term "public sphere" roughly refers to a set of physical or mediated spaces where people can gather and share information, debate over opinions, express their political interests and social needs with other participants (Tierney, 2013, p. 22). As the "public" entered through the Internet exists only

[14] Social formations that are found in the digital environments are also conceptualized by different names such as "online communities" or "virtual communities" (Rheingold, 1993; Hine, 2000).

through the actions of its agents, who engage in spontaneous, reflexive, and potentially democratic activities, it is acknowledged that accessible communication technologies create and intermediate space for extending the discourses beyond face-to-face interactions. The "democratic" ideals attributed to networked publics are related to potentials for having a share within the visibility regimes and garnering attention. Due to their "open messaging protocols" and accessible interface, it is argued that networked publics carry the potential to be structured as a "nonhierarchical system of social relationships" (Tierney, 2013, p. 35), enabling the formation of "counterpublics," which are defined as "parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter discourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests and needs" (Fraser, 1990, p. 67).

These ideals around the countering discursive regimes and collaboration, however, should be further contextualized by emphasizing the architectural and algorithmic aspects of the social media platforms. The forms of social engagement within the digital venues put the "networked individual"[15] at the core of these "publics" as "people function more as connected individuals and less as embedded group members" (Rainie & Wellman, 2012, p. 12). Further, it is argued that social media affordances and the networked publics, through which people socially and politically engage, typically foster categorical identities rather than dense and multiplex webs of relationships, which have been associated with the term network (Tierney, 2013, p. 2). Remaining connected as individuals and not as group

[15] Various researches across different disciplines suggest that the online practices have been an influential part of the process toward culturally specific, individualized, and diversified forms of social engagement. These processes are theorized as patterns, which are tied to broader trends in the changing structures of sociability and a move toward more individualized and flexible forms of engagement with the media. These structures are theorized as "networked society" (Castells, 1996), "networked individualism" (Wellman & Hogan, 2004) and "selective sociality" (Matsuda, 2005).

members, each individual operates a separate personal community network and switch rapidly among multiple and various "sub-networks" (Wellman, 2002). Informed by these theorizations, the "quality" of the social relationships and participation as found and experienced in the online communities are theorized as "consocial," which again refers to categorical identities found on digital venues (Kozinets, 2015). Conceptualized as "first and foremost by reference to what is held in common by members rather than oppositional categories between insiders and outsiders" (Amit & Rapport, 2002, p. 59), the interpersonal ties within the digital environments are theorized as friendly and sympathetic, but not particularly as "strong."

The economic frameworks and the algorithmic particularities of these technological affordances are also acknowledged. Throughout the last two decades, with the triumph of the profile-driven architecture of the web and with the emphasis on user-generated content, the worldwide web became increasingly dependent on the ongoing flow of content to maintain the dynamicity of the platforms (Ibrahim, 2015) and render these networks "lively" (Papacharissi, 2012). These dependencies are backed up with an encouragement for the voluntary engagement of individuals and the emphasis on "sharing" (Deuze, 2011; Papacharissi, 2010). In line with these thoughts, it is argued that the constantly running stream of content (which is also enhanced with "mundane" status updates by individual users) is what provides "the sense of the public", for the users gain a sense of those with whom they connect and a general sense of those around them (Boyd, 2011, p. 45) within a context where the audience is physically absent.

The ties enabled by network cultures and technological affordances are thought to bind the individuals not merely based on "what they share" (Kozinets,

2015) but also by affect, which "is what accrues from reflexive communication, from communication for its own sake, from the endless circular movement of commenting, adding notes and links, bringing in new friends and followers, layering and interconnecting myriad communications platforms and devices" (Dean, 2010, p. 95). According to Jodi Dean, "participatory media platforms" trap users in communicative loops that are driven by "unfulfilled desire" for collectivity by constantly prompting us to speak and make it seem like these speech acts are forms of interaction, giving the illusion of facilitating political agency (Dean, 2010). The individuals gain instant but short-lived gratification, which arises from the desire to be listened to and meaningfully engaged with, however, the invariably superficial nature of these interactions left these desires unfulfilled in online contexts. Such an unfulfilled desire fosters a constant stream of activity and trapping users in continuous feedback loops to compensate for a perpetual sense of dissatisfaction (Dean, 2010, p. 31). In another vein, drawing on the "fleeting nature" and emphasizing "volatility" as a hallmark of the digital environments, Bjung Chul-Han finds "collective patterns of movement" fleeting and unstable and argues that "because of their fleeting nature, no political energy wells up" (Han, 2017, p. 12).

2.2.3 Some Remarks on Instagram

The telephone was a technology that encouraged sociality and simultaneously maintained intimacy at a distance (Varnelis & Friedberg, 2008). Together with the high-quality built-in cameras that smartphones provide, social uses and meanings of photography have also changed. As smartphones became an undeniable part of everyday life, they also became tools for recording life and "generating a fragmented archive of personal trajectory or a viewpoint on the world by privileging the

everyday and the transient" (Palmer, 2010, p. 159). Such practices also fostered imaging everyday life as an integral part of the contemporary modes of communication, maintaining social relationships and identity construction (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 43). Extensive uses of smartphones combined with online communicative platforms also turned the images into instruments for social bonding and interaction (van Dijck, 2008, p. 62). The popularity and easiness of smartphones and practice of image capturing gave the way to creation of several websites and applications such as Flickr, Pinterest, Instagram, Snapchat, etc. for sharing, presenting the self, and communicating purposes over images (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 43).

Here, it will be beneficial for a better understanding to briefly introduce some statistics and main features of Instagram. Instagram is a mobile photo-sharing application that was launched in 2010 and has more than 1 billion active users with 500 million using the application daily (We Are Social, 2019). Originally designed and created for mobile devices, Instagram allows its users to process and share images and videos; edit and curate the imagery with its internal editing tools (cutting, managing the colors, etc.); write a description ("caption") and add hashtags (#) to narrate and contextualize the image. As a visual-based platform, Instagram limits the textual expression in "captions" and comments with 2200 letters and the "bio" section to 150 letters and seems to focus mainly on the visuals for transmitting the message and sentiment.

As a part of the profile-based digital media environment, Instagram users are required to generate their profiles by selecting a name for their account, a profile icon, and writing what they wish to present in the "bio" section. Complying with the fundamental features of the SNSs (Boyd & Ellison, 2007), each user, as a networked individual, has a personalized list of followers. Bringing all these together, each

profile initially displays the username, the profile icon, numbers of followers/followings, and the images/videos that the user uploaded. When the viewer clicks on an image in a particular profile, the viewer can display a larger version of the image together with its caption, user's chosen profile icon, user's username, and a timestamp that indicates the date of the post.

Once a user profile is created, one can go onto the "home" screen, which hosts two types of visuals: live "stories" and "friend images." The "Home" page displays the visual content that is shared by the profiles that are followed by the account holder. The "Discover/search button" enables users to view the most recent videos and photographs based on one's previous search history that is thought to reveal one's interest areas, by anyone with an account set as "public."[16]

Unlike other image-sharing platforms such as Flickr, which places greater emphasis on images as such, Instagram also uses images for facilitating connections between its users (Laestadius, 2016). Although Instagram lends itself to understand self-presentation and expression, online communities, and everyday lives as mediated through images (Ibrahim, 2015; Lee et al., 2015), the social experience is placed at the center of the platform with the practices of gaining likes and comments (Leaver, Highfield & Abidin, 2020). Further, the shared sense of space, practice, and identity that are attributed to online communities (Baym, 2015, p. 73) are seen relevant for understanding the hashtag-based communities found on Instagram (Laestadius, 2016).

[16] Social media platforms are theorized as dynamic objects, which adapt to the needs of their users and goals of the owners. Being part of such a digital environment, Instagram gained new functions throughout time. In 2013, Instagram started to include videos and introduced "direct messaging" (DM), which enables its users to exchange private messages, comment privately on images while maintaining a dialogue. In 2016, Instagram adopted the "Stories" feature, which allows users to upload and share any photo or video that would be available for 24-hours before they are deleted automatically.

2.3 Contemporary modes and ideologies of good motherhood

As a complex and varied space, social media includes many environments such as specific platforms and websites, targeting specific purposes, interests, needs, and people (Kozinets, 2015). As the observation reveals, the technological affordances are used by the parents as tools in socialization process into parenthood for rapidly reaching to information and easing the transition into parenthood (McDaniel et al., 2011; Brosch, 2016). While being intrinsically related to the potentials and pervasive uses of the Web 2.0 technologies, these particular (parental) practices and uses of the digital environments have their roots also in the "contemporary experiences" of parenting, which is marked by the processes of urbanization, individualization, and the emphasis on the "nuclear family" as the main responsible unit for childrearing. which is far from being a neutral construction.

The predominant family structures and the responsibilities of the parents vary in accordance with particular cultural, social, and historical contexts. "Nuclear family," a family structure that consists of parents and their children, dominates the existing familial values, understandings, and expectations. This particular social formation has its roots in particular historical, political, and social transformations, which also altered ways of parenting with a special emphasis on motherhood as the primary responsible of childrearing (Chodorow, 1978; Ruddick, 1994; Hays, 1996). To make sense of these particular processes and particularly to understand the emphasis on "motherhood" as a functional signifier, an identity signifier, and particular experience framework, it would be useful to briefly introduce the historical context of transition to the "nuclear family" structure as it has laid down by the existing literature.

The contemporary modes and practicalities of motherhood have been analyzed with particular emphasis on the economic, social, and political changes that took place in the 19th century by various feminist scholars (Arendell, 2000; Chodorow, 1978; Ruddick, 1994). As Chodorow (1978) argues, up until the industrial developments, the household persisted as the main productive unit of the society. Women's roles and responsibilities within such an economic framework included taking their active roles in productive labor and were not limited to reproductive work and childcare. As the industrial working logic and mass production transformed, the site and modes of production were taken outside the household, and "home" was separated rather strictly from the "workplace." Within this framework, the house and the domestic labor were excluded from the public sphere and the scope of production, while the labor outside the house was referred to as "work as such" (Chodorow, 1978). Together with this separation, the processes of urbanization were just as influential. While traditionally conducted as a collective activity in many societies, as the social transformations divided extensive families into smaller units of nuclear families, and members of extended family excluded from the instant contact, childbearing practices re-established as parents' own responsibility, with a special emphasis on mothers' role (Chodorow, 1978).

The transformations in the family structure in Turkey presents a somewhat similar picture due to processes of urbanization and industrialization, though with particular and important differences. With the transition to the "Republic" in 1923, alongside the processes of industrialization and urbanization, the family structures and familial behaviors in the Turkish society became subjected to fundamental changes. It is argued that even though the demographic analysis reveals that the society was transformed due to an increase in nuclear family rates, divorce rates and

decline in fertility (Aytaç, 1998), close-knit family relations, solidarity within family members, and social contacts among extended family members continued to be prevailing features of the Turkish family formation (Duben, 1982), rendering the Turkish families structurally nuclear yet functionally extended (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1982). However, more recent studies reveal that these networks of support are transforming due to geographic distances and the changing structures and behaviors due to urbanization and altering tensions between individualism and collectivism (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2005).[17]

With the abolishment of collective practices and activities of childrearing and appointment of mothers as the primary responsible agents of such "duty," it is argued that generational transmission of experiences and knowledge were also dissolved and mothers were gradually isolated in their duties for childrearing (Ruddick, 1989). The digital networking platforms, within this picture, appear as one of the ways, especially the new parents receive emotional and informational support while dealing with new responsibilities while also providing environments through which especially new mothers can ease the impacts of the social isolation (McDaniel et al., 2011; Brosch, 2016).

Maternal search for support is not limited to information exchange and practical daily support. One other dimension is the social and emotional support that is sought in these digital platforms. According to social support theories, receiving social support are particularly significant for well-being especially in times of major life changes (Caplan & Killilea, 1976). "Social support" refers to

[17] Even though the "traditional" family relationships in Turkey are still believed to be strong, it is argued, for example, that almost 40% of the women complain about the insufficient family support during pregnancy (İnandı et al., 2002), while it is also emphasized that there is a negative correlation between depression and perceived social support during pregnancy (Gölbaşı et al., 2010).

> continuing social aggregates (namely, continuing interactions with another individual, a network, a group or organization) that provide individuals with opportunities for feedback about themselves and for validation of their expectations about others which may offset deficiencies in these communications within the larger community context. (p. 200)

The social support and feelings of validation within the digital sphere, it is argued, are provided by numerous likes and comments the parents receive online (Brosch, 2016). Deriving from her study on parental performances on Facebook, Anna Brosch (2016) argues that the motives behind parents' act of sharing information and visuals about their children, parents "declare that they are able to fulfill the parental tasks" (Brosch, 2016, p. 233). These acts of seeking and receiving emotional support and validation and further, motivations for declaring their ability to fulfil the "parental tasks", of course, also have their roots in the contemporary modes and expectations of motherhood, which should be elaborated to give a sense of these online practices.

The particular ideals and boundaries of "good motherhood" are argued to be framed and constructed by the "ideology of intensive mothering" in Western societies (Hays, 1996). Even though this ideology of motherhood is not responded to and embodied in the same way by different mothers, its requirements and assumptions argued to set the normative standards by which mothering and childrearing practices are evaluated (Arendell, 2000) and some sets of parental behaviors are discriminated (Faircloth, 2013). The term "intensive mothering" has been used to describe the current intensification of mothering practices in Western societies (Lee et al., 2014). As Sharon Hays argues in her seminal book, *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood*, in contemporary Western societies, the "*cultural model* for appropriate child care" requires "day-to-day labour of nurturing the child, listening to the child, attempting to decipher the child's needs and desires, struggling to meet the child's wishes, and placing the child's well-being ahead of their

[mothers'] own convenience" and is constructed as "*child-centered, expert-guided, emotionally absorbing, labor-intensive,* and *financially expensive*" (Hays, 1996, p. 8, emphasis in original).

Hays puts forward three main features of intensive mothering. Firstly, it requires mothers to be the central and primary caregivers of the children (which presents motherhood as a "job" for which mothers suit the best). Secondly, the ideology of intensive mothering demands that the mother must put the children's needs above her own needs and she should respond to the child's needs and desires at any time and in any situation. The mother should be supportive of the child's intellectual and emotional development and should be informed by detailed expert knowledge over how to nurture a child.[18] Thirdly, the ideology of intensive mothering places the mother labor outside the scope of market valuation by separating the logic that applies to intensive mothering from that applies to paid work (Hays, 1996).

Intensive parenting and the increased demands and pressures of parental responsibility it boosts are also viewed as part of what is referred to as neoliberal project of subjectivity (Shirani et al., 2012). Emphasizing "individual responsibility" and "self-management" while intensifying such notions with a focus on "managing risk," neoliberalism underlines future success through planning and controlling various aspects of one's life (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995). Parents, who are responsible for risk management and life planning for their children in order to turn their children into responsible citizens (Hays, 1996), fulfill their task through

[18] This point becomes particularly important for contemporary societies, where new information introduced almost each day (Nelson, 2010). In such a framework, the "moral actor" in contemporary societies should not comply with the expert or popular knowledge without questioning. On the contrary, in the case of mothers, one is expected to evaluate all the recommendations and operate within the field information as "an informed consumer" (Murphy, 2003).

attentive parenting within a picture "bad parenting" is thought to lead to various problems for the children "ranging from poor educational and developmental outcomes to criminality" (Shirani et al., 2012, p. 26). Such ideas and discourses lead to "parental determinism" with the belief that parental effort and resources are the determining factors for desirable child outcomes (Shirani et al., 2012).

The existing studies analyzing the social policy structures and interests in Turkey stress that the market liberalization, privatization of state enterprises, shrinking welfare state policies and assistances, and deregulation of finance marked the 1980s and 1990s (Altan-Olcay, 2014; Buğra, 2007). As it is argued, the "neoliberal lens" of the state, which endeavors to withdraw almost all the state-initiated funding and transfers such initiations to responsible moral subjects, also influenced the family policies, which operates rather easily within the "dominant" ideology of motherhood that assigns the mother as the sole responsible agent of childrearing and "domestic affairs." Likewise, it is argued that the existing welfare regime in Turkey consolidates "the dependent status of women which is informed by the perception of women as natural care providers" (Buğra & Yakut-Çakar, 2010, p. 539) by replacing "institutional care" with family care for children (Yazıcı, 2012).

The transformations in the labor force and women's participation in the "productive" labor also operated as another dimension that gave way to current conceptualizations and idealizations about the "good motherhood". In the second half of the 20th century, prioritization of the individual as "homo economicus" under the liberal economic structures enabled large numbers of women joining in the work-force (Hays, 1996). Different studies in Turkey also point out to somewhat similar transformations regarding women's participation into "productive" labor. Together with the "liberal patriarchy," which leans on the assumptions of an individual that

pursues self-interest and rationally orients "himself" within the market, roles of motherhood and wifehood are "de-essentialized" and considered as matters of individual choice concerning the private realm (Yeğenoğlu & Coşar, 2011, p. 559). Among these transformations, women's "re-entrance" to the workforce also meant re-entrance to the public spheres. These re-entrances are thought to be particularly influential on the contemporary understandings and expectations of motherhood. Fatmagül Berktay (2003) argues the re-entrance of women in the public sphere has created a "threat" over the male identity within the public sphere. Within this picture, it is argued that "men" have marginalized the women, who functioned symbolically in the social construction and set the boundaries for women as good wives and mothers (Berktay, 2003, p. 109).

As the social role of mothering has expanded in recent years in a way that would encompass a range of tasks beyond straightforward childrearing practices as parents (and particularly mothers) do much more than simply feeding, clothing, and sheltering children in today's world (Hays, 1996, p. 5). Different studies draw a framework in which "intensive mothering" is understood as a vehicle to personal fulfillment for women (Faircloth, 2013). Charlotte Faircloth (2013), for example, by drawing on her anthropological work conducted in France and the UK, argues that the child becomes "a symbol of maternal devotion and reflection of her [the mother's] diligence" and mother's support and encouragement of the development of their child's social self is also an attempt for developing their own selves through such processes (Faircloth, 2013, p. 214). In this view, mothering occupies a "space" for women's identity work, a "nexus through which they position themselves as social agents" (Faircloth, 2013, p. 17).

In her master thesis, Aksu Bora (1998) points out to a transformation of motherhood by drawing on the generational differences between women living in the cities at least for two generations, educated and upper-middle class mothers in Turkey. As she argues, one of the most notable differences between the two generations of mothers is that the first-generation women think far less about their own motherhood experiences in comparison to younger generation mothers (Bora, 1998, p. 49). As Aksu Bora argues, women from the younger generation thought about their identity, behaviors, and lives more than the older generation, and asking "what kind of a mother am I" is not new for them and they talk more explicitly about "technical" details of child-rearing.

In a similar vein, various studies put forward that while middle-class educated mothers frequently describe their actions in terms of self-sacrifice and devotion, which are in compliance with the traditional gender roles and expectations, mothers also utilize discourse of "motherhood as a personal achievement" and discourse on good mothering (Dedeoğlu, 2010) and recount their child-centered approaches as a choice (Balta & Altan-Olcay, 2017).

2.3.1 "Feeling rules" of good motherhood

As argued, aside from the child-centered expectations and responsibilities, the sociocultural context also imposes the "feeling rules" of good motherhood (Pedersen & Lupton, 2016). Arlie Hochschild (1979) argues that under the "feeling rules," which emotions should be felt, how they should be experienced, and how they should be expressed are learned as a part of acculturation into particular social, cultural, and historical contexts. The feeling rules associated with the idealization of the "good mother" involve embodying genuine feelings of love and affection towards one's

children and their roles as mothers (Kennedy, 2013; Lupton, 2000). Such "genuine" feelings of love and affection do not merely refer to a unique emotion and further conceptualized as an essential ingredient and a tool for appropriate development of the child as the everyday experiences and practices of mothering are re-written as sets of skills that should be perfected for achieving optimum development (Rose, 1999).

Similarly, in the Turkish society, being appointed as the primary responsible agents for raising children, mothers are expected to withdraw from all the areas of life and dedicate themselves completely to the role and demands of motherhood. This total dedication also encloses the "feeling rules" by requiring mothers to be ready to suppress all the anger, disappointment, and potential ambivalences, for such feelings would render a woman less of a mother (Bayraktar, 2011, p. 84).

Contextualizing the "feeling rules" that frame good motherhood is important for understanding how the required mother labor is backed up with required emotional regulation, which is also empowered by the placement of the labor for child-care outside of the market evaluation.

As argued in the literature, as the modes of accumulation, production, and reproduction shifted throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, the new productive framework excluded the "real work" previously performed by the children within the household (such as chores and care work for younger siblings) and the children were moved from the labor market into the consumer market. Alongside this removal, the logic of intensive mothering differentiated the practices of mothering from the logic applies to paid work, placing the mother labor outside the scope of the market valuation (Hays, 1996). In line with this, the relationship between mother and child stands high to symbolize opposition to the competitive pursuits that are seen as

intrinsic to the social relations under "a system of impersonal contractual relations" (Hays, 1996, p. 18).[19]

These "contractual relations" refer mainly to the emphasis on the rational, efficient, successful, and disciplined individuals in industrialized societies. It is argued that such a "rational" and "competitive" understanding of social life pushes individuals to look for "exits" and the child, symbolizing the natural side of life offers an opportunity for "finding a living counterweight to all that soul-destroying routine" (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995, p. 106). Within such a picture, the close relationship with the child comes with the claims of meaning, happiness and a chance for a home:

> The desire for children (is) ego-related and connected with the present: parents want to … get something for themselves from giving birth, nursing, raising and providing for the children … Hope of discovering oneself through one's children is more widespread … it is [typical] of a large number of parents that having children is no longer primarily understood as a service, a kind of devotion or social obligation. Instead it is admitted to be a way of life in which one pursues one's own interests. (Münz, 1983 in Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995, p. 107)

The scholarly works that focus on Turkish society also emphasize the transformations in the conceptualizations and the value attributed to the children. Çiğdem Kağıtçıbaşı's researches about the changing value of children shed light on the Turkish case regarding the family structures, domestic relations, and how the economic and psychological dependencies transform over the years. Çiğdem Kağıtçıbaşı, deriving from her researches conducted in 1970 and 2003 argues that

[19] The assertion of the ideology of intensive mothering is that the children should be protected from the "contaminating logic of out rationalized market society" (Hays, 1996, p. 122). This emphasis on the "toxic environment" that results from the logic of rationalized market society is highly important, and for some scholars, it lies on the basis for emergence of parenting and family with a special emphasis within the society "at crisis." In the contemporary society in which individuals and families are seen as responsible for managing risks, parenting occupies a peculiar place (Hoffman, 2008: in Faircloth, 2013). The mothering is perceived as "the last best defense against what many people see as the impoverishment of social ties, communal obligations and unremunerated communities (Hays, 1996, p. xiii).

while "economic/utilitarian value of children"[20] decreases, we see a sharp increase in the "psychological value of children" over time in the Turkish society. As such, psychological dimensions such as fun, pleasure, and love as reasons for having a child come forward as markedly more important in her recent study (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2017, p. 149).

Here, it is also important to acknowledge how transformations in the conceptualizations of childhood lean also on the psychological discourses on infancy. Together with the acceleration of the psychological interests in the early infancy and infant development also provided a framework for exclusion of the mothers' labor by removing practices of childrearing from the market valuation by reconceptualizing "childhood" and "children" and establishing a discourse around the "priceless child" (Zelizer, 1985). Being one of the most influential discourses on contemporary motherhood, what is labeled as "attachment theory"[21] emphasized the bonds between mother and the child and argued that it is fundamental to have a constant and loving attachment figure for the infants to become healthy individuals. For this conceptualization, "what is believed to be essential for mental health is that the infant and young child should experience a warm, intimate and continuous relationship with his mother (or permanent mother substitute) in which both find satisfaction and enjoyment" (Bowlby, 1995, p. 11). The assumptions and suggestions of "attachment parenting" validates attentive, embodied care especially for infants and puts forward

[20] In her initial research, which is a part of a cross-cultural research that is designed to answer the question "Why do people want children?", Kağıtçıbaşı uses the conceptualization of "value of children" as "the sum of psychological, social, and economic benefits and costs that parents derive from having children" (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1982, p. 1).

[21] The increasing psychological interests in the early infancy and development gained dominance in the Western literature gave way to "attachment theory," which emphasized the bonds between the mothers and child (especially in early years of development) have long lasting effects on the individual. It is argued that the warm, intimate and continuous relationship with the mother ("or permanent mother substitute") is essential for the infant and young children and such a relationship would give satisfaction and enjoyment also to the mother (Bowlby, 1995, p. 11).

a particular set of norms to structure their "identity work" in accordance with the overarching framework of intensive mothering (Faircloth, 2013, p. 17). Together with the psychological discourses, and the emphasis on "enjoyment" found in the role of motherhood itself and the "intimate" relationship between mother and child, parental love conceptualized as the "primary ingredient" for preserving and protecting the innocence and goodness in the child (Hays, 1996). In this way, "love" is converted from being a "spontaneous sentiment manifested in warm affection" into "parental function or skill" (Furedi, 2002, p. 79).[22]

2.3.2 Good motherhood and media

Various scholars have argued that "media" and "popular culture" also took their part in the construction and constitution of the "new type" of mothering. The new ideology promoted economic efficiency within the framework of free-market ideology especially for the working women (especially for middle- and upper-class women) and gave way to what Douglas and Michaels coined as "new momism" (Douglas & Michaels, 2004). While the media promoted ideals about "how to become the ideal and good mother," new momism provided "a set of ideals, norms, and practices most frequently and powerfully represented in the media, that seem on the surface to celebrate motherhood, but which in reality promulgate standards of perfection that are beyond your reach" (Douglas & Michaels, 2004, p. 620).

[22] The theorizations regarding "mother love", however, are far from presenting a homogeneous account. Psychoanalytic writer Daphne de Marneffe, for example, attempts to theorize maternal "desire" and argues that the efforts of second-wave feminism "to some extent mischaracterized its opportunities for enjoyment" "by bringing to light the oppressive aspects of maternal experience" (de Marneffe, 2004, p. 141). Charlotte Faircloth (2013) also puts forward that the informants in her study evaluate their experiences of nurturing and "child-centred" approaches not necessarily as tools for oppression for their individualized selves. Rather, she argues that the mothers grasp these processes as "an extension of agency" (Faircloth, 2013, p. 216).

As Ayşe Saktanber (1993) argues, the female identities constructed by the media reflect the patriarchal discourses, and while women watch the way they are being watched and also learn what is expected from them to become the "ideal women" (Saktanber, 1993, p. 213). She argues that the news presents the mothers only in a way that sacrifice themselves for their children or as mothers that harm their children (Saktanber, 1993, p. 227). Reiterating Saktanber's analysis, Türkdoğan points out to transformations in the content in mainstream media in Turkey and puts forward that the media promotes the ideals of "new momism" by using appearances of the celebrity figures such as singers, actresses, and models in a way that would disseminate the picture of "good mothering" while simultaneously emphasizing the sacrifices a mother makes for her children and importance of privileging the child over herself (Türkdoğan, 2013).

While the potentials of the digital environments and networked publics are emphasized for representative opportunities, it is also argued that networked publics appear to reproduce many of the existing biases including social stratification around race, gender, sexuality, and age (Chen & Wellman, 2005) as well as norms and consumption of femininity (McDaniel et al., 2012).

Büyükkuşoğlu's (2017) research gives us some hints about how the "new" media takes on the assumptions and expectations that prevailed in the "traditional" (or mass) media with particular shifts in women's self-presentation. Being part of the popular culture and the attention economy, these representations take on the "myths" of sacred motherhood and comply with the re-description that represents beautiful and happy mothers who are in love with their husbands. And the picture of motherhood found in these spheres provide a portrait of "desirable" motherhood for they are able to raise a child, take care of themselves (self-care), and doing these all

without complaint (Büyükkuşoğlu, 2017, p. 45). Büyükkuşoğlu contemplates on their wide range of audience (that includes hundreds of thousands of followers) and concludes that these accounts gain popularity and visibility due to their function as objects of desire and fantasy (Büyükkuşoğlu, 2017, p. 36).

2.3.3 Internet, representation of motherhood and potentials for expression

Through the digital "public" spaces that are generated and used by mothers, we can observe how the online female-dominated spheres of support are created and how women utilize their own experiences of mothering to show empathy and help each other. The studies drawing on these practices examined the ability to exchange information and engagement (Drentea & Moren-Cross, 2005), and creating networks of support and solace (Morrison, 2014), which could lead to a sense of community and belonging (Pudrovska & Ferree, 2004). With the information exchange enabled by the "public" sphere found in the digital environment, it is argued, motherhood has brought away from a male-centered medical environment to women-centered environment (Taylor, 1996) for women can explore their "feminine sides," and create and narrate their own versions of motherhood by writing about their own experiences and consulting other mothers (Ruddick, 1983).

The potentials that are thought together with the digital environment are not limited to "democratization of knowledge." The "inclusive" space found in digital spheres allows diverse representations and provides a space for personal expression by offering potentials for affording visibility to narratives that have been marginalized by the societal mainstream (Papacharissi, 2014, p. 7). As such, scholars examining online female communities and digital networks of mothers also put forward that mothers use the technological affordances to create digital networks for

expressing personal experiences, which might not be appropriate to be articulated elsewhere (Pedersen & Smithson, 2013; Brady & Guerin, 2010; Cook & Hasmath, 2014).

Gaining visibility and the ability to generate personal narratives have particular importance in feminist scholarship. “Personal is political” was (and still is) a very significant motto for second-wave feminism, and provided a framework for placing the everyday enactment of feminist subjectivity to challenge everyday structures of oppression and for reorienting the cultural understandings about how and why female experiences carry particular significance. In the essay written in 1969, Carol Hanisch structuralized the already existing recognition that women’s lives were (and are) not an outcome of individual choices, rather what is experienced in “personal problems are political problems” (Hanisch, 1969, p. 4). While the established dichotomy between the public and private (or domestic) sphere seems to exclude the narratives of motherhood from the public sphere, the Internet appears as a novel utility that provides potentials for participation and realization through personal narratives.

Contemplating on “mommy bloggers” in Western societies, Lopez (2009) argues that by utilizing the “public” space the blogs provide, mommy bloggers create a different picture of motherhood. Instead of a “pure” representation of the loving and all-encompassing mothers as frequently represented in mainstream media, in blogs “we see women who are frazzled by the demands of their newborn baby, who have no clue what to do when their child gets sick, who suffer from postpartum depression and whose hormones rage uncontrollably” (Lopez, 2009, p. 732). By reinterpreting and challenging traditional representations of motherhood, these

"nuanced" articulations of maternal identities can afford "voice" to the private realm of motherhood (Friedman, 2010).

Studies focusing on mothers' interaction in digital environments and networked publics in Turkey also suggest that mothers utilize such tools for exchanging information about child-raising. Further, such studies also suggest that mothers utilize the digital platforms and networked publics to generate a sense of togetherness by ensuring each other that "they are not alone in the face of ambivalences of motherhood" and by enabling each other to learn about different perspectives for dealing with the problems and achieving to be self-critical

Instagram, within this picture, provides sort of a messy picture. Being an image-based platform (as it will be elaborated in more detail in the next chapter), Instagram "allows ordinary people greater access to the tools of media reproduction" (Calderia & De Ridder, 2018, p. 324). As indicated above, access to media production tools is seen particularly important for women for they have "traditionally been equated with the consumption of media rather than production" (p. 324). And while the digital control over self-presentation allows greater agency over the processes of creating, editing, framing, and sharing images, Instagram, on the other hand, seems to encourage the contents that have entertainment value and are informed by existing normative codes and rules (Abidin, 2016). As such, empirical studies focusing on women's use of image-based social media platforms such as Instagram, Tumblr, and Pinterest (Olszanowski, 2014; Tiidenberg & Gomez Cruz, 2015) show both compliance and rejection towards dominant discourses.

As indicated in the first chapter, the existing literature on Instagram in Turkey mostly analyzes the content shared by highly visible accounts with vast numbers of followers (Büyükkuşoğlu, 2017; Parsa & Akmeşe, 2017; Sine & Parlak, 2017).

These studies draw our attention to the absence of different discourses and representations and emphasize the ongoing practices of reproducing and displaying compliance with existing normative perceptions and modes of motherhood, revealed by mothers' emphasis on their competence for "doing it all" and presenting themselves as "supermoms."

The emphasis on the absence of struggles, ambivalences, and different narratives about motherhood, however, is not unique to studies on Instagram. Various researchers also pointed out to the "gap" found in digital spaces between the representations of pregnancy (Nash, 2014), mothering experiences (Brosch, 2016; Kumar et al., 2015), and embodied experiences of women. Research in Turkey also emphasizes this issue. Ayla Ozhan Dedeoğlu (2010), for example, finds that there are two dominant and competing discourses of motherhood (discourse of "good mothering" and "mothering as personal achievement", where the former dominates and backgrounds the latter), while discourses on "Muslim mother", "career woman", "woman who has sexual needs" and "mother who feels ambivalences" are absent (Dedeoğlu, 2010, p. 6).[23]

[23] For her research, Dedeoğlu analyzed the consumption practices of mothers and discourses of motherhood found in websites such as bebek.com, bebekkokusu.com, annecocuk.com, annelergrubu.com and anneyizbiz.com (Dedeoğlu, 2010)

CHAPTER 3

SOCIAL MEDIA AND EXPRESSIVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR MOTHERS

3.1 Introduction

As indicated in Chapter 2, online social platforms face us as unique mediums through which mothers can interact, cope with the sense of isolation, gain a sense of belonging, generate and circulate counter-arguments about various discourses of contemporary motherhood. In order to develop an understanding of such uses of Instagram, this chapter will endeavor to establish an understanding about how the digital media tools are utilized by mothers as mediums in search for networking, generating spaces for expression, and acknowledgment, and exchanging emotional validation.

For these aims, first, I will briefly introduce the accounts that will be analyzed in this research. Later, I will how this particular technological affordance provide spaces for expression and emotional solidarity, which are mostly formed together with the "real" and honest expressions and narratives of mothering experiences that are differentiated from the mainstream values and beliefs about motherhood. In doing so, I will endeavor to point out how some of the feelings and thoughts, which seem to be excluded from the discursive possibilities of motherhood in line with the "feeling rules" of good motherhood, are expressed in this digital venue as members of a particular networked publics. This particular section will also analyze how these digital networks can be influential and important for mothers, especially when they are having struggles and in need for emotional support.

3.1.1. Introducing the accounts

In this section, I will briefly introduce the accounts that will be analyzed in this study and provide information about the accounts, their particular themes, and holders of the accounts in order to provide a better sense of their scope, focus, motivation, and aim. The digital environment, especially the social networking services are conceptualized as dynamic objects, and the users ongoingly "fleet" between different platforms and use different media tools. I will also present some of their interviews and writings that can be found on different (and often mother-centered) websites and blogs to provide a more comprehensive view of these accounts.

Uykusuzanneler[24] is an Instagram account that is an extension of a web page named "Uykusuz Anneler Kulübü."[25] The website was created in 2011 as a "digital parenting platform" and the content is produced by experienced mothers and experts (who are also mothers). The aim of the website is defined as "… to provide benefits to parents, make them feel less alone, being there for them in order to assist cultivation of happier generations."[26] In their "manifesto," where they elaborate who they are and what their aims are, they state that "this club is like a shoulder to be leaned and cried on."[27] Through their website, Facebook and Instagram accounts, the members of the network are able to connect with each other, exchange information, share personal experiences of parenting. Their Instagram account, for instance, has gathered more than 170 thousand followers.[28] Their content can be roughly divided to analyze under two main themes; the first type of content consists of practical

[24] Instagram Link: https://www.instagram.com/uykusuzanneler/?hl=tr
[25] Webpage: http://www.uykusuzanneler.com/
[26] Website: http://www.uykusuzanneler.com/uykusuz-anneler-kulubu-nedir/
Translated from: "Amacı ebeveynlere fayda sağlamak, yalnız olmadıklarını hissettirmek, onların her zaman yanında olarak daha mutlu nesiller yetiştirmeye katkı sağlamaktır."
[27] Translated from: "Bu kulüp yaslanıp ağlayabileceğiniz bir omuz gibidir." – (kimse seçimlerinden dolayı hakarete uğrayamaz."
[28] As of January 5, 2021.

information about childrearing (such as eating patterns, what to do in face of an illness, child psychology, etc.), and the second type of content draws heavily on mothering experiences and emphasize the importance of acknowledging the struggles of motherhood. Some of their content consists of the reposts of the foreign posts that draw on mothering experiences. The moderation frequently uses some hashtags such as "#annelikherzamantozpembedeğil" and "#yardımdegilisbolumu," particularly when they aim to narrate about "realities" of motherhood and the aspects of motherhood that are not discussed much.

Blogcuanne[29] is an account generated by Elif Doğan, who initially started to write about her experiences of motherhood through the blog page that is also called "blogcuanne."[30] In her blog page, where she started to write after she had three children, she writes about her personal experiences of motherhood, oftentimes contextualizes her own experiences, and also ponders upon the issues such as domestic division of labor, breastfeeding, sexism, sexuality, etc. In her Instagram account, she also shares her opinions about experiences of motherhood and womanhood and oftentimes contextualizes personal matters and points out to systematical struggles that mothers experience, and criticizes various discourses toward mothers and women. She has a book called "*Annelik Her Zaman Toz Pembe Değil*" and together with Perihan Gürer (founder of the webpage Uykusuz Anneler Kulübü) started to organize annual conferences called "Dijital Topuklar" ("Digital Heels").[31]

Anneitirafları[32] is a confession account that consists of the visuals that are extracted from the confession section that is originally placed on the website of

[29] Instagram Link: https://www.instagram.com/blogcuanne/
[30] Website: http://blogcuanne.com/
[31] Website: https://www.dijitaltopuklar.com/
[32] Instagram Link: https://www.instagram.com/anneitiraflari/

"blogcuanne" (Elif Doğan).[33] This account has more than 13 thousand followers and the purpose of the account is stated as:

> #anneitirafları is a platform in which women can share the personal experiences and feelings anonymously about being or not being a mother, which that they feel shame and guilt from disclosing. The confessions aim to create relief for women by enabling them to shake off what they cannot say to no one. You can read all of the confessions on the site blogcuanne.com/itiraflar and make confessions anonymously.[34]

Calisananneolmak[35] is an account created and managed by İpek Bayrak. Her content mostly focuses on the experience of being a working-mother, and the perceptions and idealizations that the contemporary model of motherhood encourages. She uses the visuals frequently to refer to the topic that would be further discussed and narrated in the captions and comments. She explains her motivations for creating and maintaining the account as:

> I argue that being a working mother is not an obstacle for being a good #parent. And my aim is to discuss about how why and its possibility.
> My problem is never with non-working #mothers.
> My problem is with the mothers, who want [to work] but aren't able to dare or feel inadequate for working. And most of all with whom make them feel inadequate.[36]

Hihieved[37] is an account generated and maintained by Hande Birsay. Most of her content ironically recounts the "modern" suggestions of childrearing, the expectations placed on mothers and women, and reflects on the struggles and underrepresented experiences of motherhood by drawing on her own experiences.

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[33] Website: http://blogcuanne.com/itiraflar/

[34] Translated from: "#anneitiraflari, kadınların anne olma ya da olmamaya dair, açığa vurmaktan utanç, pişmanlık ya da suçluluk duydukları kişisel tecrübe ve hislerini isimsiz olarak paylaşabilecekleri bir platformdur. İtiraflar kadınların kimseye söyleyemediklerini üzerlerinden atıp rahatlamaları amacı gütmekte olup, yargılayıcı yorumlara izin verilmeyecektir. Blogcuanne.com/itiraflar adresinden itirafların tamamını okuyabilir, siz de isimsiz olarak itirafta bulunabilirsiniz."

[35] Instagram Link: https://www.instagram.com/calisananneolmak/

[36] Translated from: "Çalışan anne olmak yeterince iyi bir #ebeveyn olmaya engel değildir diyorum. Ve amacım burada nasılını nedenini olurunu tartışmak. Derdim hiçbir zaman çalışmayan #anneler olmadı. Benim derdim istediği halde cesaret edemeyen yahut çalıştığı için kendini yetersiz gören annelerle. Ve en çok da onları suçlu yetersiz hissettirenlerle."

[37] Instagram Link: https://www.instagram.com/hihieved/?hl=tr

While conducting criticisms towards different issues, her account follows a particular narrative style that mostly contains humor, sarcasm and irony. Being popular due to her unique style for mocking and utilizing a "humorously critical" tone in her narratives, the account has more than 151 thousand followers. After her account became popular, she wrote a book called "*Emiyor Mu? Mükemmel Annelik Beni Teğet Geçti*." In an interview she explained her motivations for creating and maintaining such an account as:

> I created this account not as a space for validating my way of mothering or as a space for getting applauses, but as a space for narrating the experiences that are often unspoken and left behind the scenes. …
> In the beginning, what I tried to do was to mock around over my own experiences [of motherhood]. I didn't realize that we were this crowded. … While I was searching a voice for myself through Hihieved, I also became a voice for others. The issues we were quietly talking among ourselves, the "contradictory" voices are much stronger now.[38]

Fazla_anne[39] is an account created and managed by Sabiha Gürkaynak. As a mother of four who lives abroad, she mostly draws on the struggles of childrearing by herself and her own daily experiences, struggles and joys as a mother. Her account has more than 17 thousand followers. She recounts her motivations for starting to write about her motherhood experiences in an interview shared through a blog by emphasizing the inconsistency between her own experiences of motherhood and what is narrated about motherhood experiences. In the interview, she stated that she started by writing a blog in search for other mothers who go through the similar

[38] Translated from: "Bu hesabı, anneliğimi onaylatma veya alkış alma alanı olarak değil, pek de konuşulmayan, perde arkasında kalan tecrübeleri aktarma alanı olarak kurguladım. … Yapmaya çalıştığım şey, kendi yaşadığım süreçler üzerinden dalgamı geçmekti en başta. Bu kadar kalabalık olduğumuzun farkında değildim. … Hihieved ile kendi sesime ses ararken, başkalarının da sesi oldum. Eskiden sessizce aramızda konuştuğumuz şeyler, tek tük çıkan o "aykırı" sesler artık çok daha gür."
Interview Link: http://moicocuk.com/?p=622

[39] Instagram Link: https://www.instagram.com/fazla_anne/?hl=tr

struggles.[40] After her blog gathered some level of support and visibility, she wrote a book called "*Y Kuşağı Anneyim Ben!*"

Thelohusas[41] is an account created by 14 (anonymous) mothers from different geographical locations, who experience(d) postpartum depression. With their almost 3 thousand followers, this account particularly provides an "intimate" sphere for support and validation for mothers. In their first post, they draw on their motivations for generating such an account and state that they wish to discuss the "realities" of motherhood no one mentions about and they emphasize their belief in importance of such a digital space for establishing the emotional solidarity to overcome the struggles of motherhood. Their initial content mostly included their personal experiences, feelings, and ambivalences. In time, as they gathered more (and active) audience, the account turned into a more "intimate" space and they started to share the messages they receive anonymously through Instagram. The messages, as well as their original content, mostly ponder upon maternal ambivalences especially of the new mothers, complex feelings towards oneself, one's child and material conditions and daily experiences of motherhood. Their contents mostly use language of empathy and solidarity by frequently emphasizing the "normalcy" and "commonality" of various ambivalent experiences, and frequently drawing on the differences between their personal experiences of motherhood from what is "told" to them.

Annenin.icsesi[42] is an account created and managed by Aslı Kocaeli, who worked as an advertiser before becoming a mother. She mostly reflects on the clichés of motherhood, the relationship with "the father," behavioral and mental changes that

[40] Interview Link: https://www.ensonhaber.com/kitap/bir-annelik-hikyesi-y-kusagi-anneyim-ben
[41] Instagram Link: https://www.instagram.com/thelohusas/?hl=tr
[42] Instagram Link: https://www.instagram.com/annenin.icsesi/?hl=tr

are experienced when one becomes a mother in a humorous way. Her account is one of the most popular thematic "mother accounts." Her content draws on various issues regarding the transformations that mothers experience after becoming mothers mostly in a humorous way. She frequently utilizes "before" and "after" comparisons, comparing changing habits and rhythms of life. One significant detail about her account is her way of differentiating "oneself" and "one's motherhood." After gaining visibility and popularity through Instagram, she wrote a book called "Çarşamba Çikolataları" ("Wednesday Chocolates").

Although their content, focus, and interests differ,[43] one of the common characteristics of these accounts is their attempt to create an emotional solidarity and a language of understanding among the mothers while simultaneously elaborating and criticizing the existing ideals and requirements of contemporary institution of motherhood. Most of the content stem from personal narratives, which in turn generate spaces for female expression and discussion about existing norms, values, and expectations from contemporary mothers. The representations and "authentic" narratives of motherhood often use sarcasm, irony, and humor together with an emotional tone, mostly receive positive and/or emotional reactions. Some of the content found in these accounts also provide strategies for coping with various struggles of motherhood.

At this point, the differences among the accounts should also be briefly introduced. The main and most obvious difference among the accounts is either the accounts are generated and conducted by one individual user or multiple users: 4 of the accounts (*blogcuanne, fazla_anne, calisananne, hihieved, annenin.icsesi*) are

[43] While some accounts particularly deal with struggles of working mothers while others problematize the unacknowledged problems of postpartum depression, while some of them establish critical dialogues with the existing norms and official discourses of motherhood.

managed by a single mother and represent their mothering experiences and their personal reflections about the ideals and experiences of motherhood, often engaging in dialogues with often taken for granted issues and struggles of mothering practices and norms of motherhood. 3 of the accounts (*uykusuzanneler, thelohusas, anneitiraflari*), on the other hand, operate as "umbrella accounts" that are managed and curated by multiple women (moderators), often aiming to provide informational and emotional support for mothers and for opening up spaces for exchanging personal experiences and emotional support and validation. The moderator is often known to the audience and often refers to her/their own experiences.

3.2 Expression and sense of belonging in digital platforms

As indicated in Chapter 2, together with the demographic and productive transformations, the nuclear family structure became more and more widespread and extended family members have mostly been excluded from instant contact especially for families living in cities. As the organization of the society structured around the nuclear families, the child-raising practices gradually became parents' own responsibility with a special emphasis on the mothers' role (Chodorow, 1978). Such an arrangement, which appoints mothers as the primary care-givers (Hays,1996), gradually rendered women more and more vulnerable to isolation and dependence (Rich, 1995).

Existing studies put forward that social and emotional support are very important and deeply related to better maternal health, relationship satisfaction, and the development of the children (McDaniel et al., 2012). Within the contemporary networks of relationships, one way the parents can receive support while navigating through their experiences as parents is through becoming a member of online

networked publics that enable digital networking practices among distant others (Pedersen & Lupton, 2016). Providing virtual spaces for interaction, the technological utilities also provide abilities to perform different identities as the physical existence is absent (Pitts, 2004), and this point becomes very important when we consider the narratives that can be found in these public accounts, which consistently point out the uses of such platforms for fulfilling one's need for expression. The analysis of such expressions can provide an understanding about the existing discursive frameworks that limit mothers' expressions and how the digital venues are utilized as a substitute in the lack of physical and immediate social support networks.

This section will endeavor to make a sense about how a technological tool that is mostly identified with self-fashioning practices can be used for supporting each other, providing emotional validation that mostly cannot be found in their already existing "offline" social networks. Further, this section will endeavor to make an account of how mothers interpret the lack of support and validation they experience, and relate their experiences to the existing requirements of emotional regulation that surrounds, defines, and frames contemporary motherhood. The different narratives that can be found on Instagram explicitly put forward how the existing feeling and expression "rules" structure and limit women's expression in their daily environments.

One of the most common problematizations conducted by these accounts is related to the limited expressive opportunities regarding one's role as a mother. In their first post, *thelohusas* (Figure 1) explain their motivations for generating an Instagram account that would reflect on their experiences, feelings and thoughts of motherhood by drawing on the problems of expressing themselves in their social

environments and their wish to generate a sense of community. As they state, they aim to

> [V]oice the mother moments no one can mention anymore or abstain from mentioning; we will get angry sometimes and sometimes we will curse and regardless of who tells what, be sure that everyone [reading these] will say "I am like that too."[44]

In a post (Figure 2) where they directly reflect on such issues by using the headline "Realities of Mother: I do not enjoy every minute of motherhood," *uykusuzanneler* emphasizes different aspects of limits for expression and their relations to the broader discursive frameworks. The main "reality" highlighted in the visual uses first person language and states mothers' inability to "express one's feelings because of the people, who think I should be enjoying each moment of being a mother." In doing so, this post emphasizes the social frameworks that render particular feelings and thoughts inexpressible. Such limits to the expression valid for negative feelings as well as the struggles of isolation and expectations of maternal sacrifice. In the comments section, the commentators further elaborated the limits of expression by narrating about their own experiences within different social settings. One of the comments, for example, describes the reaction she received when she talked about the "truths"; as she stated, in her experience, talking the truths gives the impression that the mother is ready to abandon the child (Figure 3). Another comment to this particular comment recounts that "The attitudes of some of my co-workers are even like that. And I no longer talk about these issues. Whereas one is relieved when one talks. One wants to share."[45]

[44] Translated from: "… kimsenin artık dile getiremediği ya da getirmekten çekindiği o anne anlarından bahsedeceğiz size bazen kızacağız bazen sövüp sayacağız ve kim ne anlatırsa anlatsın o an herkes ' ya ben de ben de ' böyleyim diyecek emin olun."
[45] Translated from: "evet iş yerindeki bazı arkadaşlarımın dahi tavrı öyle. Artık bahsetmiyorum ben de. Oysa insan anlatınca rahatlıyor. Paylaşmak istiyor."

Reflecting on the messages she received from several mothers and her own experiences on the struggles of childraising, *fazla_anne* discusses the limits for expression that are resulted partly from the habit of comparing the struggles of the others (Figure 4). Recognizing the diversity of experiences of motherhood, *fazla_anne* states that she acknowledges the emotional and material hardships of motherhood and that she is "granting their right to complain." In almost all of the 60 comments this post received, various women "thanked" *fazla_anne* and stated that expressing their ambivalent feelings and complaints are often responded with claims of "ingratitude" of having healthy children and family by their close social networks.

As mothers recount the social limits for expression, which also include judgment they need to face in response to their expression, their narratives also draw light on how different social agents conduct such discourses in daily settings. As such, fathers' approaches and responses to mothers' expressions are recounted as problematic especially in the confession account of *anneitiraflari*.

Various confessions that can be found in *anneitiraflari* draw attention to the limits for expression that encompass different or ambivalent feelings toward their roles and responsibilities as mothers. For instance, one of the confessions (Figure 5) state that

> I have two kids, one 2.5 years old and the other 5 months old. Housework, childcare, teething, diseases all overlap. When I tell my husband that I am unhappy, he says thank God, our children are happy, what else do you want? There is no reason for me to be unhappy [or] tired when he complains about his job. Because I am a mother and my children are healthy. My psychology doesn't matter.[46]

[46] Translated from: "Biri 2.5 yaşında diğeri 5 aylık iki çocuğum var. Ev işi çocuk bakımı diş çıkarma hastalıklar hepsi üst üste geliyor. Kocama mutsuz hissettiğimi söyleyince çok şükür çocuklarımız sağlıklı ya ne istiyosun başka diyo. O işinden yakınırken benim mutsuz yorgun olmam için bir sebep yok. Çünkü anneyim ve çocuklarım sağlıklı. Benim ruh halim önemli değil."

Most of the responses to this confession emphasize the normalcy of such expressions, while the moderator's comment in the caption section states "of course having healthy children gives happiness; it does not mean we are not having hard times."[47]

Different posts also reflect on how the social anxiety of possible exclusion from society puts limits to female expression and how these discursive regimes are also complied and conducted by mothers, who oftentimes appear as "carriers" of the existing ideals of good motherhood by performing the "mask of motherhood" (Maushart, 1999). One of the posts that can be found in *thelohusas* (Figure 6) refers to other mothers as the carriers for such discourses and argue that they conceal their ambivalent feelings, personal needs, frustrations, and yearning for their old lives that are undermined by the new responsibilities of motherhood.

> After I became a mother, I realized that many women were lying about the role of motherhood. … When I was puerperal I wanted to scream "AREN'T YOU MISSING YOUR OLD LIVES AT ALL?" They were missing their old lives, often they even cried that "I guess I was not ready to be a mother" but they were keeping quiet with the fear of being excommunicated by the society.
> But all those feelings are normal and belongs to us.[48]

These expressive limits and the judgment women face are inherently related to the structures, requirements and ideals of "good motherhood," which seem to encompass almost all the experiences in one way or another. As the dominant and hegemonic ideals of "good motherhood" encompass the experiences of motherhood by defining, framing, and structuring the potentials for expression, the mothers are

[47] Translated from: "Çocukların sağlıklı olması elbette mutluluk verici; bu demek değil ki zorlanmıyoruz."
[48] Translated from: "Anne olduktan sonra birçok kadının annelik rolü üstüne yalan söylediğini fark ettim. … Lohusayken avazım çıldığı kadar bağırmak istiyordum; "HİÇ Mİ ZORLANMIYORSUNUZ, ESKİ HAYATINIZI HİÇ ÖZLEMİYOR MUSUNUZ?" Özlüyorlardı, hatta ara ara "Ben anneliğe hazır değilmişim sanırım" diye ağlıyorlardı ama toplum onları aforoz etmesin diye susuyorlardı. … Oysa her his öyle normal ve öyle bize dair ki."

required to entangle with the "emotional regulation" through which she should manage and direct her feelings to bring such feelings and thoughts in line with what "should be felt" (Arendell, 2000; Hochschild, 1979). Such performances of emotional regulation point out to the feeling landscape where the negative emotions, frustrations, questions, and complaints do not comply with the ideals of the "good mother," and such expressions are often shamed and therefore repressed (Kennedy, 2003). The idealizations around "normal" and "natural" transition to motherhood render the act of voicing difficult experiences mostly problematic because such feelings would render a woman less of a mother (Bayraktar, 2011).

It is possible to observe through different posts and accounts that while expressing their personal experiences and feelings, mothers frequently differentiate their emotions toward their role as mothers from the responsibilities and practicality of mothering. Using a visual that states "because there are aspects of mothering that we don't love it doesn't mean that we don't love [our] motherhood," *uykusuzanneler* (Figure 7) state that while they "don't love being unable to sleep," "smelling like milk and sweat," "being unable to stay alone in the bathroom," "drinking cold coffee," "walking around with a bag like a traveling case," they "love [their] motherhood."

In a similar vein, various confessions in *anneitiraflari* also conduct such differentiation. One particular post found on *anneitiraflari* (Figure 8), for instance, uses the nickname "Possible" and states that "It is also possible to become a mother and regret [it]. It is possible to love your children very much and not to love motherhood at all…"[49]

[49] Translated from: "Anne olmak ve pişman olmak da mümkün. Çocuklarını çok sevmek ama anneliği hiç sevmemek de mümkün…"

Within such a structured field of expression, mothers' discursive strategies for expressing such feelings and thoughts are also important to acknowledge and analyze. In that sense, the emphasis almost always found on the "humaneness" of such feelings makes more sense about how these feeling rules are experienced, interpreted, and attempted to be transformed both by the owners of the posts and for their viewers.

3.3 Social networks, emotional validation and potentials for immediate relief

Online social groups, it is argued, can have a real existence for their participants and have consequential effects on various aspects of behavior (Kozinets, 1998, p. 366). An observation of the online interactions among mothers shows us that these social groups are especially important for receiving a sense of support and togetherness while facing daily struggles. As *thelohusas* (Figure 9) state,

> Don't ask us why we always shed out tears here. It is the purpose of this space. Cause it is not enough to shout at the bathroom tiles anymore, because we wish to share our [feelings] with more people who understand us, because we want to pat each other on the back and say "it will pass sister."[50]

In another post, *thelohusas* (Figure 10) emphasize how isolation influences women and how these digital platforms carry the potential for emotional support. In the comments, different women have contributed to the original post by stating how this account provided them relief while they were going through hard times as new mothers.

> Before generating this account, we, as 16 women found each other, became friends, talked, cried, laughed, rebelled…
> More or less, we were experiencing similar things. Motherhood was so hard, our lives were off-track, we forgot about ourselves.
> We were sleepless, tired, from time to time unhappy and desperate.

[50] Translated from: "Sormayın neden hep buraya göz yaşımızı akıtıyoruz diye, buranın amacı o. Banyo fayanslarına bağırmak yetmiyor artık çünkü, çünkü bizi anlayan daha fazla insanla paylaşmak istiyoruz, çünkü birbirimizin sırtına vurup 'geçecek kardeşim' diyoruz. … Çünkü senin bana geçecek demen beni ayağa kaldırıyor"

> We didn't know there were other women like that before finding each other. … This wasn't the case sisters, it seems that there are tens, hundreds, thousands of women who had hard times, cried, blamed herself on the road of motherhood. While creating this account we said lucky us, if we can reach even to one woman. [heart emoji] thank God we reached to, talked with many mothers. we received messages saying "your writings make me feel very good."[51]

As such, the posts and comments that can be found on Instagram give us significant insights about how the immediacy of social networking services (and in our case, particularly Instagram) has the potential to provide "relief" at the moments of despair and emotional outburst.

Reflecting on the "reality" and commonness of the struggles experienced by the "sleepless mothers," a particular post by *uykusuzanneler* (Figure 11) emphasizes the commonness of being tired, lagging, and being unable to endure by encouraging mothers to "go easy on themselves." Most of the comments this post received reflect personal experiences and broaden the pool of experiences, seemingly contributing to the feelings of commonness and togetherness. While one commentator replied to this post by stating "[this is] just what I needed right now… I was just about to throw the antibiotic bottle to the wall. … It felt good to read this."[52] Another viewer commenting on this particular comment stated that "[this is] what I just did about 10 minutes ago. [sad face] I also said I wasn't alone"[53] (Figure 12).

[51] Translated from: "Bu sayfayı kurmadan önce 16 anne kadın birbirimizi bulduk, arkadaş olduk, konuştuk dertleştik ağladık, güldük isyan ettik… Hepimiz az çok aynı şeyleri yaşıyorduk. Annelik çok zor gelmişti, hayatımız sanki rayından çıkmıştı, kendimizi unutmuştuk. Uykusuzduk, yorgunduk, zaman zaman mutsuz ve çaresizdik. Birbirimizi bulana kadar yeryüzünde böyle hisseden başka kadınlar da olduğunu bilmiyorduk. … Değilmiş kardeşlerim, meğer onlarca, yüzlerce, binlerce kadın varmış annelik yolunda zorlanan, ağlayan, kendini suçlayıp duran. Bu sayfayı açarken dedik ki tek bir kadına bile faydamız dokunursa ne mutlu bize [kalp emojisi] Şükür ki burdan birçok anneye ulaştık, dertleştik, konuştuk. "Yazılarınız bana çok iyi geliyor" mesajları aldık."

[52] Translated from: "tam da şu an ihtiyacım olan… antibiyotik şişesini duvara fırlatçaktım az önce … bunu okumak iyi geldi"

[53] Translated from: "yaklaşık bi 10 dakika önce yaptıklarım [üzgün surat] bende yalnız değilmişim dedim ya"

In a similar vein, *hihieved* reflects on her own motivations for creating her own account, the responses she received, and how a sense of togetherness is formed through the humorous and critical content she provided by saying "My main motivation for creating this account was to comfort myself, and to say "I am here, some things are wrong but this is normal! I said "my life [as a mother] is like that" and I realized hands started to raise saying "me too.""[54] In another interview, she elaborates how she realized she was not alone in her experiences of motherhood:

> In the beginning, what I tried to do was to mock around over my own experiences. I didn't realize that we were this crowded. … While I was searching a voice for myself through Hihieved, I also became the voice of others. The issues we were quietly talking among ourselves, the "contradictory" voices are much stronger now. We are so beautiful together![55]

While the spontaneous and mostly mundane comments are thought to have very little communicative efficacy, it is also argued that comments are performances of social connection before a broader audience and can be seen as "a form of social grooming" (Boyd, 2010, p. 45). While many of the comments include mere validation, congratulation, or sympathy with the user in these mother accounts, it seems that the number of short but affirmative responses are also important for generating an emotional network that is mostly based on validation of different experiences, feelings, and thoughts. Further, the online interactions seem to generate relief not merely because the posts are thought to be honest and relatable, but sometimes also because they are viewed and engaged at exactly the right time, when

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[54] Translated from: Amacım aslında başta kendimi rahatlatmaktı, 'buradayım, bir şeyler yolunda gitmiyor, ama normali de bu' demekti! Yani ben 'hayatım böyle' dedim ve bir baktım 'benim de', 'benim de', 'benim de' eller kalkmaya başladı."
Kelebek, "Sosyal medyada #hihieved diyen bir anne!":
https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/kelebek/keyif/sosyal-medyada-hihieved-diyen-bir-anne-40553812

[55] Translated from: "Yapmaya çalıştığım şey, kendi yaşadığım süreçler üzerinden dalgamı geçmekti en başta. Bu kadar kalabalık olduğumuzun farkında değildim. … Hihieved ile kendi sesime ses ararken, başkalarının da sesi oldum. Eskiden sessizce aramızda konuştuğumuz şeyler, tek tük çıkan o "aykırı" sesler artık çok daha gür. Birlikte çok güzeliz!"
Link: http://moicocuk.com/?p=622

something difficult is happening. As such, although it seems that most of the comments include short and validating responses, we also see how the viewers share their own experiences about particular topics, expand the discussions and reflect on how the posts influence and "find" them. As it is made visible by various comments, it seems that the social practice of exchanging information and personal experiences (especially underpinned by empathy, solidarity and support) create momentary relief for the mothers.

Such a potential is not novel or unique to Instagram. Blogs are also though important in that sense. Through her study on mommy blogs, Yelsalı Parmaksız (2012) argues that

> … emotional need for recognition or identification is a strong motive for reading other blogs in a way that identification with a blog post, then with the blogger and feeling as part of the mamasphere can be accepted to result in having the pleasure of finding themselves in another person, thus of relief. (p. 128)

Instagram's working logic and its usage, however, seems somehow different from the websites, forums, and blogs. While digital platforms seem to be particularly useful for getting quick feedback, both by asking questions and mining already-existing information, as Instagram is checked almost daily by most of the users and used not merely for seeking information but also for purposes of entertainment (Alhabash & Ma, 2017), mothers also coincide other narratives spontaneously, regardless of one's aim to be engaged with other mothers and/or mothers' experiences. It seems that such momentary reliefs often fostered by interactions that mostly provide nothing more than a "judgment-free" space for expression, empathy, solidarity, validation, and encouragement. As such, it is dominantly stated by mothers that realizing that she is not alone, that others care, she is listened to, and others are experiencing (or have experienced) the same problems lead to relief within

one's immediate material conditions. These moments of relief seem to occur mostly without the problem being solved, and oftentimes advice and recommendation are not even sought.

Moreover, further than providing "digital" emotional support to each other, the networked publics can also operate as mediums for initiating physical support networks. Some of the posts by *thelohusas* (Figure 13), for instance, reflect on how their accounts operated as a "space" through which different mothers reached out to each other and created a "support line." Such "support lines," as their posts put forward, are created by gaining visibility in time and gradually reaching out to different mothers in different geographical locations.

As indicated, this chapter endeavored to provide a sense about how Instagram, which is mostly identified with self-fashioning practices can be utilized by different women for supporting each other and providing emotional validation that cannot be found in their "offline" networks. Previous studies within the digital venues for maternal support and expression have drawn attention to the importance of such venues as mechanisms for recognition, developing coping with mechanisms. In line with these ideas, it can be argued that Instagram also operates as a medium through which mothers seek validation and support, which mostly cannot be extracted from their immediate social networks. The different narratives that can be found on Instagram explicitly put forward how the existing feeling and expression "rules" structure and limit women's expression in their daily environments. Further, it can be argued through the observations that the fleeting nature and immediacy of Instagram (as well as other SNSs) have "real" potentialities for mothers in the sense enhancing their expressive capacities, networking with other mothers, and

experiencing instant relief while facing immediate struggles in the daily rhythm of their lives.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION OF THE IDEALS OF "GOOD MOTHERHOOD" IN FRAGMENTS

4.1 Introduction

Drawing on the digital environments, Manuel Castells (2012) has pondered upon the role of the Internet in collective debates and decision-making processes and argued that the Internet, by enabling "networks of resistance" might contribute to the production of "counterpower," which "challenges the power embedded in the institutions of society, for the purpose of claiming representation for their own values and interests" (Castells, 2012, p. 15). These arguments about the digital environments can be thought of alongside the discussions about the "counterpublics." As discussed in Chapter 2, "counterpublics" refers to unique sites and methods through which the members of underrepresented or marginalized groups utilize to produce outlaw forms of knowledge. The importance is attributed to counterpublics not merely for their roles in voicing "marginalized" communities, but also for their acts that explicitly and strategically seek to challenge the dominant knowledge and beliefs that are inherent to "mainstream public sphere" (Felski, 1989). Following the existing arguments, it can be valuable to consider the digital networking platforms as potential "counterpublics" through which different identities can be displayed and "normalized," and various established forms and norms of knowledge are resisted.

It has already been argued that various digital environments have the potential to provide spaces for discussion and developing critical discourses. In that sense, the digital venues are idealized for their potential for generating collective action against

the patriarchal discourses and the institution of motherhood (Lopez, 2009). Such initiations almost inevitably include narratives that go beyond "masks of motherhood" (Maushart, 1999, p. 2) and provide narratives and discourses that are different from existing sets of knowledge and norms, with the aim of intentionally situating mothers' (personal) experiences within the framework of established discourses that justify and are justified by the patriarchal institution of motherhood. In light of these theoretical frameworks, this chapter will endeavor to provide a discussion about how particular norms, ideals, and discourses of the institution of motherhood are discussed by various mothers. In doing so, this chapter will give a sense about how these networked publics can be utilized as tools for building counter-narratives, criticizing, and contextualizing the existing structures that encompasses the discourses about motherhood.

4.2 Evaluating and discussing the myths of "good motherhood"

As Sharon Hays (1996) argued, the contemporary mode of mothering (or "intensive mothering") boosts the idea that mothers should be the central and primary caregivers of the children, who are seen as in constant need for attention. The requirements of contemporary motherhood, as it is already discussed in Chapter 2, have their roots at particular idealized perceptions towards women, mothers, and female subjectivity. Looking at the "core" of the attributions to and expectations from motherhood, the theoretical accounts put forward how the existing discursive framework attributes "naturality" to motherhood. The existing positive and desirable images regarding motherhood mostly yields on such discursive argumentation that perceives women as "natural" caregivers, who are naturally able to take care of their child(ren), connect with them immediately. Such accounts, however, overlooks the

"learned" dimensions of mothering and draws a framework in which women are "ideally" fulfilled through their roles as selfless caregivers and nurturers (Woollett & Marshall, 2000). Such expectations put forward particular requirements to be a "good mother," as this particular adjective operates as a constant for evaluation and valuation of women and mothers (Faircloth, 2013). Within such a framework, in which the child has the utmost primacy and mothers, who possess natural abilities for raising children, are constructed as agents that should (and would) selflessly dedicate themselves, their time, and energy (Hays, 1996). The positive correlation between the dedication and sacrifice, and the "value" of motherhood seems to be firmly established also in Turkey (Selçuk, 2015).

As the role of the mother preferably takes precedence over all other roles that women conduct, the sacred "myth" of motherhood draws a portrait of a mother who has no other "desire fields" other than her child(ren) and her family's well-being (Bayraktar, 2011). As such, one of the very solid beliefs and ideals attributes "superhero" qualities to mothers by praising their endurance and natural compatibility for child-raising. Such an understanding, as it is interpreted by different women, limits their range for acting and feeling, excluding any possibility of making mistakes by yielding on the picture of "innate ability," and favors the idea of constant and voluntary dedication.

Drawing on the attributions regarding the "super-human" role and sacredness of motherhood, various mothers construct their arguments mostly with the aim of "humanizing" the practices of childcare and their roles as mothers. In doing so, these women seemingly aim at emphasizing their identities and humaneness. In one of their posts, *thelohusas* (Figure 14) draw on this particular issue by referring to existing "clichés" regarding motherhood and state

> Mothers are not superheroes. Mothers are mothers. Mothers are humans. [They] get tired, fall, get up, get bored, need wax, sleep, play about etc. in other words they do whatever you do. Don't attribute meanings and don't let them attribute meanings to it. Cause we are all following the same roads and subject to same language. Motherhood is motherhood; it's not sacred, it's not special to you, it's not being a superhero.[56]

Blogcuanne, on the other hand, draws on the utilizations of such discourses at official levels of the state (Figure 15). She compares the expectations toward mothers and differentiates such expectations towards fathers by asking

> Have you ever heard one single declaration from state level how fatherhood is a sacred position, how fathers are sacrificing, how fathers work hard to please, saying "place of the father is next to his child?" … But I got very bored by hearing how mothers sacrifice themselves, how sacred motherhood is, and even a career (?) from male administrators.[57]

While *blogcuanne* reflects on the sacrifice that is framed as natural, in the comments section, the participants also contributed to her complaint by referring to a general Turkish saying, "paradise lies beneath mothers' feet,"[58] also drawing attention to how these expectations are normalized by established "clichés."

The total dedication that is expected from mothers also encloses the "feeling areas" for mothers by requiring being able to suppress all the anger, disappointment, and potential ambivalences (Hochschild, 1979). Such an emotional regulation is treated by various actors in mothers' everyday lives as a necessary and normal condition, and further, diverse and ambivalent feelings are seen as qualities that would render a woman less of a mother (Bayraktar, 2011). Forming a contrary

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[56] Translated from: "Anneler süper kahraman değildir. Anneler annedir. Anneler insandır. Yorulur düşer kalkar ağlar canı sıkılır tuvaleti gelir ağdaya ihtiyacı olur uyur gezer tozar vs vs yani sen ne yaparsan hepsini yapar. Anlamlar yükleme yüklemelerine izin verme. Çünkü hepimiz aynı yollardan geçip aynı dillere maruz kalıyoruz. Annelik anneliktir ne kutsaldır ne sana özeldir ne süper kahramanlıktır."

[57] Translated from: "Siz hiç, devletin üst düzey yöneticilerinden, babalığın nasıl kutsal bir mertebe olduğunu, babaların ne kadar fedakar olduklarını, saçlarını nasıl süpürge ettiklerini söyleyen tek bir söz, "Babanın yeri çocuğunun yanıdır" diyen tek bir açıklama duydunuz mu? … Ama annelerin nasıl kendilerini feda ettiklerini, anneliğin ne kadar kutsal bir mertebe ve hatta bir kariyer (?) olduğunu - üstelik erkek yöneticilerden – duymaktan çok sıkıldım"

[58] Translated from: "Cennet anaların ayakları altındadır."

account of such ideals, *hihieved* reflects on such requirements of emotional regulation and reveals how the existing expectations require mothers to "absorb" the struggles and hardships together with the discourses that attribute "super-hero" role to mothers (Figure 16).

Within such a framework that attributes "mystical" qualities to mothers as natural and fully competent agents for child-raising, getting (external) help for daily care practices also becomes problematic as such an act puts a reservation on women's competence and adequacy as mothers. Asking "Does raising a child without getting help makes you a better mother?", *calisananneolmak* (Figure 17) discusses the existing correlations between being a "good mother" and raising the child without getting (external) help and further elaborates on how these frameworks influences women. She states that "Everyone agrees about how tired the mothers are" and continues, "In our society there is a perception that sleeplessness, exhaustion, fatigue and tedium are inherent to the nature of motherhood. Everyone says get some rest to the mothers. … But together with this, people who get help for childcare are looked down." Arguing for the circumstantial materiality and uniqueness of mothering experiences, she states that "Good #parenting is doing the best in line with your circumstances."[59]

Drawing on this issue, *hihieved* (Figure 18) utilizes the discursive tools of the hegemonic discourses that constantly evaluates the competence and appropriateness of the mothers and states "If a person cannot take care of her own and only child, she

[59] Translated from: "Herkes annelerin ne kadar yorgun olduğu konusunda hem fikir. Toplumumuzda uykusuzluk, bitkinlik, yorgunluk, bezginlik anneliğin tabiatında varmış gibi bir algı var. Herkes anneye dinlen diyor. … Ama sonra çocuk bakımı için yardım alan insanları bir aşağı görme, bir tuzu kuru görme, onda da ne var ki şeklinde bir dudak bükme de beraberinde yapılıyor. … İyi #ebeveynlik koşulların doğrultusunda en iyiyi yapmaktır."

shouldn't do anything else! Who is the babysitter, a hero with super powers? Whatever she does, the mother can do better."[60]

Together with these narratives, we can have a sense of how and to what extent mothers' needs are (still) overlooked, how such an overlooking is rationalized yielding on the qualities attributed to mothers, and how mothers' continuous sacrifice and deprivation (material and/or emotional) are normalized by the existing discursive frameworks. These discussions conducted by different accounts and mothers also put forward how these discourses and evaluative criteria often overlooks the circumstances of different individuals, where the "official" institutions no longer provide any programs or systems for assisting the processes of child-raising.

4.3 Evaluating the politics of domestic division of labor

The discourses around "doing it all" and "doing it alone," which appoints mothers as the primary and often sole responsible agents for child-raising, are also inherently and inseparably related to the existing gendered structures of the domestic division of labor (Hays, 1996). Further, the ideals and requirements of "good motherhood" are not only related to mothers' labor invested in care work; rather, these requirements expand to include also the (daily) domestic labor. While housework has no "sacredness" by itself, the contemporary requirements include domestic labor by establishing links between care-work and housework: the "good mother" should feed her baby well and provide a "hygienic" environment for the fragile child. While these tasks consume significant amounts of time and energy, they are evaluated as unpaid and unacknowledged domestic labor (Maier, 2015).

[60] Translated from: "İnsan kendi doğurduğu hem de tek çocuğuna bile bakamayacaksa hiçbir şey yapmasın bence! Bakıcı kim süper güçleri olan kahraman mı? O nasıl yapıyorsa anne misliyle yapar."

As discussed in Chapter 2, the capitalist mode of production deepened the distinctions between the public and private spheres, and excluded the private sphere and labor within private domains from the framework of productive and paid labor (Chodorow, 1978; Hays, 1996). Such an undervaluation and exclusion from the formal framework of "labor" mainly results from the framework that presents mothers' care work as labor that is based on love. Such conceptualizations and formal frameworks that establishes particular links between material labor that is required for child-raising and (natural) female sentimentality encompasses female labor as a "mere emotion" and devalues the materiality of the care labor (Bayraktar, 2011). As we can observe through the narratives found in the accounts analyzed, such devaluation reflects itself in women's daily relationships in different ways.

Various posts exemplify how the exclusion of the domestic labor and care work from the paid labor schemes have their marks on their daily lives. One confession found in *anneitiraflari* (Figure 19), for example, draws on the micro-scale negotiation fields regarding the gendered labor structures and how mothers' labor is ignored within these frameworks.

> Wake up, work for changing diapers and clothes. Work for making [the child] eat. Work for playing games, entertaining the child, teaching things. Work for taking the child outside, work for getting the child inside the house. … Work for preparing meals, doing laundry and when you say something the father says 'but I am working'!!! Anyone seen where the division of labor went?[61]

Conducting a discussion about the conditions and limits of the domestic division of labor, *blogcuanne* (Figure 20), by referring to Arlie Hochschild's work, recounts how particular activities are "fetishized" as appropriate for "male" labor and

[61] Translated from: "Uyan bezini ve üstünü değiştirmeye çalış. Oyun oynamaya, onu eğlendirmeye, bir şeyler öğretmeye çalış. Yıkamak için ikna etmeye ve en zoru yıkamaya çalış. Hastalandığında ilaç içirmeye çalış. Uyutmaya çalış. Yemek, çamaşır, temizlik için çalış ve bir şey dediğinde baba kişisi 'ama ben çalışıyorum' desin!!! İş bölümü nereye gitti, gören var mı?"

how the perceptions and arguments around men's "incapability" of doing house works solidifies such domestic power relations.

One particular post that can be found in *anneitiraflari* (Figure 21) and the comments it received exemplifies such domestic power relations are experienced in daily lives and provides particular (personal) strategies different women develop in face of such struggles. While the confessor emphasizes the hardships of doing everything about the maintenance of the house, the meals and childcare practices on her own, and emphasizes mothers' strength as the reason for being able to endure everything. The response of *anneitiraflari,* however, states in the caption that "we don't have to endure. Now, we are offloading all these extra burdens slowly on the floor all together."[62] In response to such a comment from the moderation, some of the commentators asked "how" to offload such burdens; one of the viewers responded such questions by utilizing the "strategies" she "learned from Elif Doğan (*blogcuanne*)" and put forward that "socialization of men" into domestic division of labor requires continuous and daily negotiation about the conduction of house works (Figure 22).

In one of their posts, *thelohusas* (Figure 23) discuss this exact topic alongside the negotiations about how to include their male partners into the division of labor regarding the domestic tasks and responsibilities of childrearing. In the post, they narrate on a message they received, which states how they are "getting into conflicts with her husband about distribution of the tasks," and asks for advice on "what kind of an organization should be built". Holder of the message also states that she thinks maybe she can extract something out of the experiences of other women who would like to answer in the comments. As a response to this message, *thelohusas* states

[62] Translated from: "Dayanmak zorunda değiliz. Şimdi hep birlikte, üzerimize aldığımız o fazladan yükleri yavaaaaaşça yere bırakıyoruz."

what Elif Doğan (*blogcuanne*) discusses about "not help, but division of labor," and how important this is to be understood both by women and by men. While this post received 32 comments, almost all of the comments are stating they are "in the same situation" and it seems that a collective strategy for arguing for division of labor is absent.

The language of domestic economics, in which husbands are still "helping" their wives, suggests how little conceptual change has taken place (Hochschild, 1989). In a similar vein, these mothers' accounts on Instagram and their various posts refer to the terminological negotiations over the "help" and "division of labor." Such a perception is an obvious extension of the ideals of motherhood and norms of parenting under patriarchal social and economic systems. As such, through some of the contents, women aim to convert the language that encompasses these issues by rejecting the terminology that encompasses the domestic power relations and attempt at replacing "help" with "division of labor."

It is argued that while the existing norms regarding women's employment are transforming, women remain their roles and responsibilities as the primary parent and also the primary responsible agents for keeping the house and conducting the house works (Hochschild & Machung, 1989). As she further argues, being different from the conceptualization of male labor (which are referred as "careers"), women's paid work is considered a mere job. Within such a framework, Hochschild argues, female employment is likely to be devalued and such devaluation serves for rationalization of her continuing responsibilities at home, which refers to "the second shift." Even though the employment structures in the Turkish society have transformed throughout time and the existing norms that attribute the "breadwinner" role to men have been challenged by the economic realities in which female

employment became important for the maintenance of family economies (Bolak, 1997), it seems that these transformations are hardly translated in the family structures and domestic power relations.

The gendered structures that are framing and defining motherhood are also problematized through the frameworks of expectations that are encouraged by the cultural and social perceptions and discourses. Referring to the different "recommendations" that women and men are subjected to, *annenin.icsesi* (Figure 24) problematizes these differences. As she argues in her post, while the social discourses around marital relationships suggests women to "lower their expectations from men," the men are suggested to accelerate their expectations from their wives. She further elaborates that these frames of expectations are further rationalized by yielding on the "naturality" of housekeeping for women, which leads to taking the female domestic labor for granted. As she states, these performances and labor are normalized with the simple definition that states "she is a mother."

Whether mothers stay at home for conducting childcare or participate in the paid workforce, they are expected to organize their lives around home and family. However, the discourses, values, and judgment that are fostered by child-centeredness of the contemporary practices of mothering seem to be intensified in case of working mothers with a special emphasis put on the "stolen time," as the conditions of working outside the house are frequently associated with privileging oneself and neglecting child's needs.

Drawing on these discussions, *calisananneolmak* (Figure 25) uses a visual extracted from a digital platform that quotes "It is a grave dilemma to say that one is working for the sake of her children and to live without spending time with them! Is

there a greater livelihood (rızık) than love?"[63] In response to this quote, *calisananneolmak* criticizes such a discourse by emphasizing the economic requirements, necessities and also one's interests towards her own career and her own life. Ending the post with a critique of the discourse that perceives motherhood as independent from any kind of materiality and counters such an argument that deduces mother labor into a mere emotion by drawing attention to material responsibilities of care work by stating "It is obvious that we will provide the love for livelihood and Mr. Nureddin will provide livelihood for school, health, transportation, courses, books, clothing, sheltering."[64] This post received 1.502 likes and 222 comments and the comments almost univocally agree with the way *calisananneolmak* criticized this particular quote and emphasized the lack of knowledge about personal circumstances that is inherent to such discourses. Various comments also emphasize the "inappropriate" correlation that is established between the lack of love and being a working mother. In the comments, we also see that various women state how bad they feel in face of such discourses and how *calisananneolmak* responds them by stating "we should learn to laugh away."

In a relatively similar vein, in one of her posts, *blogcuanne* (Figure 26) entangles with the different discourses towards working mothers and fathers, and conducts her criticism by drawing attention to the "lack" of any discourses towards working fathers. In doing so, *blogcuanne* also points out to the structural reasons and contextuality of such problems and emphasizes the lack of social care initiatives at state level.

[63] Translated from: "Çocuklarının rızkı için çalıştığını söyleyip, çocuklarına vakit ayırmadan yaşamak, ne yaman bir çelişkidir! Sevgiden büyük rızık mı olurmuş?"
[64] Translated from: "Belli ki biz sevgi rızkını sağlayacağız okul, sağlık, ulaşım, kurs, kitap, giyim, barınma rızıklarını da bize Nureddin Bey sağlayacak. Ben öyle anladım. Ya siz?

> Have you ever heard people saying "having a working father is not good for the kid"? I haven't either. But I have heard people saying "having a working mother is not good for the kid" a lot! …
> But these know-it-all [people] are overlooking something, it is not the mother's work that harms the child or the relationship, but the lack of a qualified care/support system.[65]

Utilization of such discourses aiming at (dominantly moral) evaluation of working mothers, however, are not limited to "official" discourses at state level or publicly known figures. By observing the accounts, we also can have a sense about how these discourses are reproduced and utilized by various agents within the rhythm of daily life of mothers, and how other mothers and women also contribute into reproduction of such discourses. Speaking as if she is a woman expecting to become a mother, *hihieved* (Figure 27) sarcastically elaborates the existing stereotypical perceptions that are not merely emphasized by the official discourses, but adopted, utilized and reproduced also by various women. Establishing a correlation between the differences in the discourses towards working mothers and fathers, *hihieved* emphasizes how these discourses target working mothers and not working fathers while recounting how working mothers' "choices" for working is thought alongside attributions regarding working mothers.

> At this time of the night, there are still mothers working overtime in the workplace. There are also fathers, but I am interested in mothers. My problem is with them. Because [it's] motherhood. …
> They are having an insidious pleasure in staying away from their children. They even prefer this situation voluntarily and they are happy about it. Otherwise they wouldn't, they couldn't [do this]. Could they?[66]

[65] Translated from: "Siz hiç "Babanın çalışması, çocuk için iyi değil" denildiğini duydunuz mu? Ben de duymadım. Ama "Annenin çalışması çocuk için iyi değil" denildiğini duydum, hem de çok! … Ve fakat bu çok bilmişler bir şeyi gözden kaçırıyorlar ki çocuğa ya da ilişkiye zarar veren annenin çalışması değil, nitelikli bir bakım/destek sisteminin olmaması."
[66] Translated from: "Akşamın bir vakti olmuş, hala işyerinde mesai yapan anneler var. Babalar da var ama annelerle ilgileniyorum. İşim gücüm onlarla. Çünkü annelik. … Çocuklarından uzak kalmaktan sinsi bir haz duyuyorlar. Bu durumu bile isteye tercih ediyorlar ve bundan dolayı mutluluk duyuyorlar. Yoksa yapmazlardı, yapamazlardı. Değil mi?"

Placing the headline in the visual as "Expectations from Mothers," *annenin.icsesi* (Figure 28) reflects on mothers' feelings of inadequacy and its relation to the existing expectations for being "good mothers." Recounting the accelerated expectations from mothers in the contemporary setting, *annenin.icsesi* states "[You] expect mothers not to be exhausted when they come home as if they are not working [and] act as if they don't have children and any other responsibilities in the workplace." In the comments, various women reflect on these expectations and feelings of inadequacy and pursue the discussions also by reflecting on the acceleration of the expectations by the fathers who "do not understand mothers' needs." As a response to one of the comments, *annenin.icsesi* states "all the discussions end with "you're a mother." It would be better if it ends with "you are also a human.""[67]

As it can be seen, already existing gendered division of house works and care works are still carried on by the families and through these posts we can see how the "domestic" burden of the mothers are continuing, how these issues are evaluated by women, and how these expectations are understood by them. Further, through the narratives we can see how the daily and emotional implications of such discourses are often seen as experienced as feelings of inadequacy and result in labeling oneself as a "bad mother." The materiality of conditions for child raising are blunted by many actors within the society and we see that the mothers reject the attributions of mystical "motherhood" in search for "humaneness."

[67] Translated from: "Her tartışmanın sonu 'ama sen annesin'e bağlanıyor. 'Sen de insansın'a bağlansa çok daha iyi olacak.'

4.4 Discussions about child-centered care

As discussed in Chapter 2, the contemporary ideology of motherhood promotes the idea that the "good mother" is required to be "domestic," child-centered, and constantly prioritizing the needs of her children over her personal needs (Hays, 1996). Further, the contemporary model of mothering promotes an identity that fosters a correlation and comparison among different roles in social life, and fosters the idea that the women's roles as mothers are more important than any other role (Faircloth, 2013). Further, as indicated previously, motherhood and mothering are seen as fundamental duties of women and there exists an already-established positive correlation between the so-called "value" of motherhood and the sacrifice that is made (Selçuk, 2015). Although all the changes in life would require some levels of adaptation, the role of motherhood requires mothers to adjust and reorganize almost all of their daily activities and habits in order to meet the child's needs. And within the framework of contemporary motherhood, such struggles that result from attempts of adaptation and reorganization of all spheres of life are mostly overlooked or regarded as normal.

Various narratives found in the mothers' accounts can enable us to have a sense about how the struggles of adapting into the new responsibilities are understood and interpreted by different women. Further, such narratives and discussions can provide us a sense about how mothers' individual needs and female subjectivity are rhetorically (re)claimed by various women.

Two consecutive posts by *calisananneolmak* can give us strong hints about how the required child-centered performances of mothering are interpreted, conducted, and almost taken for granted by many mothers (Figure 29). In the first post she published, she asked the viewers "how many of these have you done?" and

listed 7 questions. Implying the norms, values and practices of child-centered care, the questions included whether they are constantly taking care of their children (even in times when they are "getting help"), whether they leave their children with the father or someone else, whether they are getting presents to make their children happy when they are turning back home after leaving their child with someone else, and so on. Almost all the 165 comments replying to this particular post stated that they are "doing all of them and doing even more" by using smiling and/or heart emojis. In the latter post (Figure 30), which was posted two days later, *calisananneolmak* reflected on the comments the first post received and stated that while a group of members ("of their group," in her words) engage in "overparenting" even in times they spare for themselves and are not with their children, another group do not leave their "ranks" of motherhood even when they are sleeping and think such an act is not a necessity. Another part of the members, she says, feel guilty for working and cannot spend any time away from their children. Generating an "overall" argument about such practices and ideals, *calisananneolmak* interprets the "results" of the survey by emphasizing "good enough" motherhood and draws on the importance of sparing time for themselves as mothers and its importance also for their children.

The replies to this particular content give us some hints about how the existing norms, ethos, and ideologies are adopted by the mothers, and how being unable to fulfil such ideals result in feelings of inadequacy and guilt, which seemingly stems from the operation of the "good motherhood" as the constant for evaluating different feelings, practices, and behaviors.

Stating that she realized that she wandered around all day with the question "am I a good enough mother?" in her pocket, a post by *uykusuzanneler* (Figure 31)

compares this question with thorns of a cactus that constantly reminds her that "motherhood should be sacrifice." The caption further indicates that she decided to replace the cactus with the "first tiny leaf she sees in the street" and concludes the caption with an affirmation by stating "I AM A GOOD ENOUGH MOTHER, ALSO WHEN I AM DOING THINGS JUST FOR MYSELF AND ENJOY THEM."[68]

Whereas what is expected from a "good mother" is to mobilize all the opportunities for the child, women's need for performing in a social environment or sparing time for herself are accompanied with the feelings of guilt, for these automatically means "stealing" the time, energy, and care from the child (Selçuk, 2015, p. 115). Operating as a constant, the discourse of intensive motherhood (Faircloth, 2013) fosters a moral criterion for evaluation and constitutes the "good mother" as the ideal character. The narrative by *uykusuzanneler* resonates Jane Ribben's (1998) description, where she ponders upon the process of subordinating "maternal feelings" to moral evaluation and stresses that her "moral voice" overcomes her "maternal feeling voice" through a process of monitoring that occurs rather automatically (Ribbens, 1998, p. 33).

Another post by *uykusuzanneler* (Figure 32) that uses the headline "Reality of Mother" again and elaborates on mothers' experience of "losing oneself in one's motherhood." The post further elaborates the headline by asserting the experience of "losing one's identity" that is interpreted as resulting mainly from practice and requirements of the child-centered care. The caption asks the viewer "what kind of a person [she] was before she became a mother," "if motherhood means forgetting themselves," and reminds the reader to "remember herself." Attracting 4.586 likes and 243 comments, this post fostered various interpretations and reflections on this

[68] Translated from: "BEN YETERİNCE İYİ BİR ANNEYİM, SADECE KENDİM İÇİN BİRŞEYLER YAPTIĞIM ve KEYİF ALDIĞIM ANLARDA DA…"

issue and provides a complex picture: on the one hand, some of the commentators argue that such a representation is an exaggeration, on the other hand, however, different commentators state that the post directly expresses their experiences. Although the comments do not reflect a consensus among the mothers regarding the material experience of child-centered care, the viewers emphasize the importance of getting "help" from their husbands, neighbors, or grandparents.

The requirements of child-centered care are also deeply related to the task of rearing well-adjusted children, for which the utmost attention to child's emotional, social, economic, and intellectual needs should be given (Hays, 1996). While the posts and discussions draw attention to mothers' personal needs and "normalcy" of reclaiming one's individual needs and wishes, what we often coincide is that these elaborations frequently yield on the correlation that is found between the "happy mother" and "happy child."

Two consecutive confessions in *anneitiraflari* (Figure 33) (made by the same confessor) explains how her wishes for individual time is perceived and responded by her social network. The confession states that her social network perceives her expression of her needs as "asking too much, ingratitude, selfishness," and states "I didn't give up on being a human after becoming a mother. I need to rest from time to time [and] do things for myself." The responses to this particular confession also resonate with the confessor's circumstances regarding how they are expected to "do it all" and "do it without complaint" (Figure 34). In the second confession (Figure 35), the confessor also ponders upon the importance of fulfilling her own needs with relation to its impact on her baby. In doing so, the confessor also emphasized one of the most important aspects of the mothering role, which is to raise the child into a "well-socialized" member of the society:

> Otherwise, I will go crazy with spending so much time within four walls with a creature who cannot express itself properly and dealing with housework, etc. We cannot expect a mentally ill mother to bring a healthy individual to society.[69]

In one of their posts, *uykusuzanneler* (Figure 36) state that sometimes the children cannot find the happiness in their mothers' eyes, and it is important to privilege and give primacy to one's own happiness as mothers and states "it is the right thing to choose protecting your happiness and [find] balance even it is really hard." In the comment section mothers shared their personal experiences and the importance of their own happiness by establishing the links between the "happy mother" and the "happy child." One of the comments, for instance, state that "… If we generalize, only happy people can provide happiness to their environments. We don't ever think about ourselves as mothers [and] say our children [come] first but in fact, we should choose to make ourselves happy again for their happiness."[70]

In a similar vein, reflecting on how life changes after having a baby and the daily experiences of mothers gets "locked" in an endless repetition of care and house works, *thelohusas* (Figure 37) reminds mothers not to neglect themselves and states "your baby needs a happy and peaceful mother [heart emoji]."[71]

While such discourses and narratives attempt at raising consciousness and normalizing such individual needs by promoting a more balanced notion of care, the possibility and attainability of such a reorganization of priorities are also discussed by different women.

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[69] Translated from: "Aksi takdirde sürekli dört duvar içinde kendini doğru dürüst ifade edemeyen bir canlıyla vakit geçirip ev işleriyle vs uğraşmaktan kafayı yiyeceğim. Akıl sağlığı yerinde olmayan bir annenin de topluma sağlıklı bir birey kazandırmasını bekleyemeyiz."
[70] Translated from: "Genelleme yaparsak ancak mutlu olan insanlar çevresine mutluluk verebilir. Anne olarak hiçbir zaman kendimizi düşünmüyoruz önce çocuklarımız diyoruz ama aslında yine onların mutluluğu için önce kendimizi mutlu etmeyi seçmek gerek."
[71] Translated from: "Kendini ihmal etme canım anne, bebeğinin mutlu ve huzurlu bir anneye ihtiyacı var. [kalp emojisi]."

Constructed as a form of "recommendation" for women, one particular post by *uykusuzanneler* (Figure 38) suggests that taking care of one's motherhood also requires prioritizing one's own mental health, socializing, remembering oneself, and resting. In the caption, the moderator indicates that it is significant for mothers to "take care of themselves" in order to be able to take care of "one's motherhood." the significance of this post is twofold. First, as indicated above, importance of mothers' individual and social needs are expressed in relation with their role as mothers and their mothering practices. While the visual is curated in a way that would emphasize one's individual needs, the caption explicitly links the importance of such self-care practices with the importance of taking care of one's motherhood. Second, the recommendations were perceived by most of the viewers as unattainable and it seems that such a discourse is also interpreted as a version of "having it all" in a different fashion. Such a discourse, it is argued, again overlooks unique conditions and various women responded to this post by emphasizing their huge amounts of responsibilities in the house and at workplace and unattainability of fulfilling such individualistic ideals.

In a similar vein, drawing on such recommendations and the materiality of daily care-work, *fazla_anne* (Figure 39) states "Yes spare time for yourself first, you are always the most important; these are easy to say [and] very hard to implement, especially in the early years of mothering it is nearly impossible."[72]

While the mode and perceptions of "modern motherhood" requires women to comply with various requirements in order to be a "good mother," it is also argued that the discourses over individualization and ideals of "feminist motherhood" came to be aligned with the premises of intensive mothering (O'Brien Hallstein, 2010).

[72] Translated from: "Evet önce kendine vakit ayır, önce hep sen önemlisin; dile kolay uygulaması epey zor, hele anneliğin ilk yıllarında neredeyse imkansız."

The alignment within these discourses, as it is argued, reinforced by particular concepts such as “choice” and “having it all individually” (Nash, 2012). Different scholars problematized such ideals and discourses and argued that such discourses seemingly require a mother, who is still idealized “in her capacity to simultaneously “claim herself” (as she is enjoined to do) and to navigate her baby’s needs” (Kraemer, 1996, p. 768).

As discussed in this section, the child-centered idealizations and requirements of the ideology of good motherhood are highly pervasive and constantly utilized by different agents in the social environments, as well as mothers themselves. The established “nature” of such discourses and expectations require mothers to give up on their “older” lives and dedicate themselves totally to raising their children and boosts the idea of having no other “desire fields” (Bayraktar, 2011), including sparing time for oneself. As we can see, the digital venues enable us to observe and understand how these ideals are interpreted, understood and how different strategies are developed by different women, in search for expanding female agency within their roles as mothers. Circulating the discussions around mother-centered and child-centered care practices with the aim of “normalization” of women’s individual needs and desires seem one of the discursive practices that is entangled with. Further, the correlation between the “happy child and happy mother” also seems one of the strategies for (re)claiming mothers’ individual needs and interests. Claiming such an individual time, however, with the pervasive rhetoric around “you are important” can also lead to feelings of inadequacy, due to the unchanging materiality of the mothering practices and conditions.

4.5 Evaluating the representations on Instagram

The role of the media in framing, defining, and disseminating the idealizations around motherhood has already been argued by different scholars (Douglas & Michaels, 2004). Although the digital networking platforms are thought alongside the idealizations regarding participatory and democratic ideals, it is also argued that the content found on these platforms are not exempt from existing norms and ethos. Due to their high visibility, dominant representations of motherhood that comply with the ideology of good motherhood can be seen as a "new layer" that contributes to framing women's storytelling, and limiting and silencing alternative discourses (Friedman, 2010, p. 199). As elaborated in earlier chapters, the dominant discourses and representations found on social media platforms also contribute in reproduction of "myths" and hegemonic discourses of motherhood mainly by privileging certain narratives and visuals in a way that would contribute to the picture of "perfect" motherhood and family (Büyükkuşoğlu, 2017; Parsa & Akmeşe, 2019).

For having a better sense of the politics of representation in the digital venues, however, we should also observe how these representations are understood, interpreted, and discussed by different women and different mothers. In other words, the digital venues provide us the ability to observe not only what these mothers say, but also what is said about them, both in the comments section and in other accounts. The representation of motherhood in the social (as well as in the traditional) media affordances is one of the topics that is most frequently reflected on. These reflections are conducted through the posts but also made explicit by mothers as they recounted their motivations for starting to write about their mothering experiences. These potentials of the digital venues, about how viewing and observing different narratives change the imaginary field and normalize different experiences, have also made

explicit through different women while explaining their motivations for starting to write about their own mothering experiences. In one of her posts, for instance, *fazla_anne* explains her main motivation with the words

> We were living in Istanbul and our families were in different cities. While I didn't know what to do with a baby that cries most of the day and didn't sleep at all, I started to search for other mothers of my generation who would feel like me. At the time, being a mother on social media wasn't this popular and mothers who shared their experiences were not talking about my experiences. Either they really didn't experience these or they wanted to share only the beautiful ones. Then I said I would write. The blog I started touched many hearts than I initially thought in time. And these writings became a book in time with the intention of preventing them from disappear and reaching to other mothers and assure them that "*you are not alone, don't you worry, it's going to be alright!*[73]

Also emphasizing the "lack" of representation of her particular experiences, *hihieved* states that

> Yes, there were some sporadic alternative voices in social media but I was feeling alone. I was saying "I can't be the only one with a t-shirt covered by vomit, a baby that cries for hours, couldn't take a shower in three days." I was aiming to mock around with these and there a mass generated in social media.[74]

These accounts and representations are reflected on by these mothers often by utilizing sarcasm and humor, mostly by pondering on the "aesthetic regime" that is carried on by such accounts (which is related to the common biases found on the visuals that represent ideal mother body, pregnancy, relationships with the child and

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[73] Translated from: "İstanbul'da yaşıyorduk ve ailelerimiz başka şehirlerdeydi. Hiç uyumayan ve günün büyük çoğunluğunu ağlayarak geçiren bu bebekle ne yapacağımı bilemezken bizim kuşağın mensubu her anne gibi benimle duygudaş olabilecek başka anneler aramaya başladım. O dönem sosyal medyada anne olmak bu denli popüler değildi ve yaşadıklarını paylaşan anneler de benim yaşadıklarımdan bahsetmiyorlardı. Ya gerçekten bunları yaşamıyorlardı ya da sadece güzel olan anları paylaşmak istiyorlardı. O zaman dedim ben yazayım. Açtığım blog zamanla düşündüğümden daha çok insanın kalbine değdi. Bu yazılanlar uçup gitmesin başka annelere de ulaşsın, onlara da ***'Yalnız değilsin, merak etme geçecek!'*** desin niyetiyle en sonunda bir kitap oldu."
https://www.ensonhaber.com/kitap/bir-annelik-hikyesi-y-kusagi-anneyim-ben

[74] Translated from: "Evet sosyal medyada vardı tek tük alternatif sesler ama kendimi yalnız hissediyordum. 'Ya şu an, şu kusmuklu tişörtle, bebeği içerde saatlerdir ağlayan, üç gündür yıkanamamış, bir tek ben olamam' diyordum. Bunlarla dalga geçeyim derken sosyal medyada bir kitle oluştu."
Kelebek, "Sosyal medyada #hihieved diyen bir anne!":
https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/kelebek/keyif/sosyal-medyada-hihieved-diyen-bir-anne-40553812

husband, and neat spaces of the house), criticizing how they present their experiences of motherhood (presenting themselves as ideal mothers, who are attentive and fully focused on the development of the child by following the existing professional discourses of motherhood), language that is used by such accounts (that is dominated by the heavy discourse of love, affection and competence) and the "selective" representation of motherhood found in these profiles (which is related to the emphasis on continuous joys and fulfillment of motherhood, and lacking narratives of struggles).

Referring to the pervasive language and aesthetic regime used in these accounts, *hihieved* sarcastically narrates as if she is one of those mothers and reflects on the stereotypical "idealized" representations of motherhood found in these accounts (Figure 40). Reflecting on how these women define themselves and present their identities as overlapping with their children, how they constantly narrate on joys of motherhood, how the primacy of the child (and child-centered care) is promoted, *hihieved* states that

> Hi I'm Kerem'in annesi/Kerem's mom/mom of a Kerem/mother of a prince (queen emoji) Being a mother is the best thing ever happened to me. Everybody comes to the world with a purpose; I came to be a mother (pregnant emoji) After having a child time, world has stopped and now everything revolves around him. We are doing everything for him. And I talk about it everywhere as if this is skill. And when I see semi-adults who think world revolves around them I condemn by saying "her mother is the responsible for this, s/he has no fault.
> I publish my child's pictures on social media and cover his face with hearts, monkey, butterfly, amulet. I also don't know why I do this.
> … Under these photos, I make my a few months old child: he says things like "my dear mother, why did you make me wear this, my dear mother I am ready to go to the park. …
> I talk about my child like crazy to women who don't want to be mothers. Because our funiculus did not break off during birth, we are acting like one.
> …
> Motherhood is an intensive and unique emotion.[75]

[75] Translated from: "Merhaba ben Kerem'in annesi/Kerem's mom/ Bir Kerem annesi/bir şehzade annesi. Anne olmak başıma gelen en güzel şey. Herkes dünyaya bir amaç için gelir; ben anne olmak için gelmişim. Çocuktan sonra zaman, dünya durdu ve artık her şey onun etrafında dönüyor. Onun

These representations are also interpreted by several mothers as a part and extension of the broader politics of representation that is seen as inherent to the digital social environments. For instance, *fazla_anne* (Figure 41) reflects on such practices by referring to the "general condition" on social media, which for her refers to continuously presenting "the best" almost by everyone. Regarding the representations of motherhood, she recounts how they present a pervasive picture of perfect motherhood by also emphasizing having the perfect children and husband. Such representations can be thought in relation with the particular discourses over how the visual curations of children and family life are projected as evidences of good mothering.

The "mainstream" representations found on Instagram are also criticized and "made fun of" by contrasting the material experiences of motherhood and the ideal female and mother body that they present. Using the visual for displaying such comparison, *annenin.icsesi* uses headline "Instamom vs Normalmom" (Figure 42) and directly refers to the gap between the beauty ideals that are complied with by these accounts and the lack of time the "normal" mothers deal with by stating "feeling lucky that I could wash my face this morning" under "Normalmom."

A confession found in *anneitiraflari* (Figure 43) also problematizes the representations found on Instagram by comparing the narratives and struggles that can be found in their confessions. This confession refers to the account as "our page" and asks "who are these people always sharing their children, husbands and always

için yapıyoruz her şeyi. Bunu da marifetmiş gibi her yerde söylüyorum. Sonra dünyanın kendi etrafında döndüğünü sanan yarı yetişkinleri gördüğümde "anası bu hale getirmiş, onun suçu yok ki" diye sövüyorum. Çocuğumun fotoğrafını sosyal medyaya koyup yüzünü kalplerle, maymun, kelebek, nazar boncuğu emojileriyle kapatıyorum. Niye böyle bir şey yapıyorum ben de bilmiyorum. … bu fotoğrafların altında çoğunlukla birkaç aylık çocuğumu konuşturuyorum: "Annecim bana bunu neden giydirdin, annecim parka gitmeye hazırım" gibi şeyler diyor. Anne olmak istemeyen herkese deliler gibi çocuğumdan bahsediyorum. Çocuğumla göbek bağımız doğumda kopmadığı için bir kişi gibi hareket ediyoruz. … İşte annelik böyle yoğun, böyle eşsiz bir duygu."

neat houses while [their] confession page is full of people who got tired of their husbands, child and housework?" Through the comments, this post seems to stimulate a discussion about these mothers. While the caption states that they are living "in a parallel universe," the comments also state how they are differentiating themselves by using the language provided by the "supermom" discourse and living everything "as they are supposed to be lived" perfectly. Further, some of the comments argue that they believed "these pictures are the visible face of the iceberg, we should also see the face that is not visible" (Figure 44).[76]

The criticism towards such popular mommy accounts also includes the similarity of the content and their practices as "Influencers," aiming at economic benefits. As such, *annenin.icsesi* lays out the "clichés" that are found in these Influencer accounts by thematizing the stereotypical content (Figure 45). Most of the comments for that particular post draw sarcastically on their performances aiming at promotions of products and "recommendations," and further imply their "uses" and curation of their children for such promotions. The comments also emphasize their way of presenting themselves as "beloved for their husbands" and "having the most perfect child and husband in the world." These points support the argument regarding the transformations in family life and identities as mothers by stating how they describe themselves as mothers not merely unconditionally dedicated to their family, but also as beautiful and happy mothers, who are in love with their husbands and children, while embracing all the hardships of motherhood because "she is a mother."

Using a visual that raises the question "Why no one talks about these?" *calisananneolmak* ponders upon the issues over what is told/untold about

[76] Translated from: "O fotoğraflar buz dağının görünen yüzünde çekiliyor bence bir de görünmeyen yüzüne bakmak lazım"

motherhood (Figure 46). In this post, *calisananneolmak* reflects on a message she received from an audience and states that she also wished to be informed about experiences of motherhood for better or worse. And she wished "to be ready about what could happen and wished to read that not each process is in colors of the rainbow" but "not everyone wants to talk about these." This post started a discussion about the "perfect picture" that is prevalent on Instagram and also about why the narratives about "negative experiences" are expected from such accounts. While some of the viewers found such expectations unnecessary by arguing that people use these platforms to have fun and distract themselves, some of the comments emphasized the "normalcy" of such expectations by arguing that they are sharing all the mundane, private, and "product-based" information and details about their children.

As Susan Maushart (1999) elaborates, because the image of effective motherhood is so unattainable and simultaneously presented as natural and inevitable, women respond to the dilemma by pretending, wearing a "mask of motherhood" that allows them to appear as if their "mother work" is derived authentically and from their own convictions, and flows effortlessly from them. Similar with these arguments, the posts and comments found in various accounts emphasize the "gap" between the existing dominant representations that provide ideal pictures of womanhood and motherhood, and the "real" experiences of motherhood.

By their utilities, the digital environments provide spaces in which mothers can witness and surveil each other's conditions, and sympathize with and/or resist various representations of motherhood that can be found in these platforms, which seemingly can be traced back to one hegemonic ideal of "good motherhood."

Through the evaluations and criticisms found on these accounts, both by the owners of the accounts and the comments of the viewers, we can make sense how social media provides conduits and conditions for continually strengthening the discourses of perfection and personal responsibility, which seem to require continuous effort for optimizing the experiences and achieving idealized supermom status. In this sense, it would be plausible to argue that Instagram, as a part of the contemporary digital environment, operates as a "new layer" for idealized presentations of motherhood. Here, it is important to acknowledge that these representations are not generated by one individual influencer, but rather as characteristic of the system that produces influencers who share normative scripts about what it means to be a mother. Without a doubt, the discourses are provided within a larger rhetorical construction regarding what it means and takes to be a "good mother" based on the institutions of family, education, media, religion, and popular culture and circulated continuously.

4.6 Discussion

As argued in this chapter, the digital venues provide "open" and accessible "public" spaces through which different groups in different societies can connect and interact in unprecedented ways. It can be seen that the digital spaces of a frequently used social networking platform enable mothers to exchange experiences, display their individual circumstances, create networks with other mothers who go through similar experiences or at least acknowledge and validate the struggles that are faced daily without judgment and by using an affirmative and empathetic tone. While mothers have always discussed their experiences of mothering with other mothers, social media tools provide an unprecedented level of access to information about others' experiences. They actively engage in the process of generating representations of

their own ways of mothering, and their experiences and thoughts about motherhood. And the broader "pool" of experiences of motherhood can assist mothers to contextualize and normalize their own experiences while many mothers seem to be experiencing isolation.

Conducting such aims, these accounts are different from the "dominant" representations on Instagram especially from the visual aesthetic rules employed by those accounts; these mothers do not display very curated photographs of their children, of themselves or their houses. Rather, they mostly reflect on their own feelings and experiences in face of various situations, how becoming a mother influenced them and how they keep pace with these transformations.

While personal mommy blogging offers a model for politically and personally empowering women's cultures, it is also argued that "personal mommy blogging blunts the political force of its critique of the nature of experience of womanhood in contemporary society by maintaining a rigid separation of its intimate public from mainstream public culture" (Morrison, 2011, p. 38). By widespread use of pseudonyms, the aim of securing an audience of sympathetic, like-minded strangers to such writings, and endeavoring to keep these writings secret from their "real-life" social networks, it is argued that these blogs minimize their visibility to a broader audience (Morrison, 2011). In our case based on Instagram, it is possible to argue that these narratives have the potential to reach a broader audience even though they also use pseudonyms. One of the main reasons for this seems to be Instagram's working-logic that collapses all the content in one particular space, the uses of hashtags, which lead the user to different contents generated by different women, and Instagram's algorithm that provides users unique content based on their particular "search history" throughout the Internet.

This section aims at elaborating further on the complex meanings that can be derived from these spaces, how the discussions are conducted, how particular aspects of the institution of motherhood are maintained through different narratives, impacts of the humorous language used by different accounts and audiences, how judgment are not absent in these spaces, and how the discourses and narratives about sexuality (after having children) are "squeezed" in anonymous and confession accounts.

4.6.1 Reproduction of Particular of Ideals of Motherhood

Although the networked publics provide novel spaces and networks for expression, discussion and negotiation of individual experiences of and reflections about motherhood, it would be plausible to bear in mind that these representations and narratives are also bound to existing discursive regimes, idealized norms, and meaning frameworks provided by the cultural narratives and beliefs about motherhood.

One aspect of this argument is based on the ways the complaints and narratives about experienced struggles are structured. Although it would be misleading to conduct such an argument for all of the posts and accounts, basing on observation, it would be plausible to argue that even though the "commonness" of the problems are emphasized either in the posts themselves or by the comments of audiences, the structural conditions underlying such struggles and hardships are often not contextualized, and mostly the interaction aims at and seemingly results in providing emotional support and not at establishing a common language of collective action. Rather, it can be observed that the mentioned deprivation (physical or emotional) experienced by mothers, which stem from the materiality of motherhood (together with mothers' responsibilities as primary caregivers), are not discussed

through contextualization and structural reasons for such experiences are frequently left undiscussed (except for some content generated by *hihieved, blogcuanne, calisananne* and *uykusuzanneler*), and narratives are oftentimes ended with recommended strategies for overcoming such hardships individually.

These narratives could also be thought of alongside the contemporary discourses over "self-responsibility" and "individual choice," which stem from the discourses around individualization and eliminate collective discourses that could "socialize" the problems. As it is stated in Chapter 2, the discourses around self-responsibility appoint the individual as the bearer of one's personal conditions (Bauman, 2000; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002) and encourage the ideals around "proactive" and "empowered" subject that is expected to be a resilient one, who must cultivate capacities in order to cope with the shrinking institutional resources and support (Wilson & Yochim, 2017, p. 14). Such discourses, it is argued, encourage the women to perceive their individual circumstances as given and use their individual resources to improve them (Altan-Olcay, 2014). Within the framework where mothers are expected to be fully encompassing responsible agents whereas the "neoliberal policies degrade social and economic support for care work," women's "gendered response" is often to turn these structural struggles into "personal obstacles" (van Cleaf, 2015, p. 260).

Here, it can also be argued that what accompanies such discourses is the narratives of and emphasis found on "mother love," which is an inseparable part of the contemporary mode of intensive motherhood, and how such feelings enable mothers to endure. In one of her posts, *fazla_anne* (Figure 47) narrates on her physical problem and the dialogue she encountered with the physiotherapist and states

> Today I went to naprapathy for my dear shoulder pain that is never getting easy.
> You, said physiotherapist lady, what is your occupation; I wondered?
> I said I am a full-time mother, they are three!
> I presumed, actually I was going to ask how many children you had but I didn't want to be rude so I asked like that, she said.
> And then she added, the name of your problem is called "mother back."
> She said, because you don't sleep well, rest and probably carry your children continuously with this side.
> … Where did you know I said, it has more and not less.
> … I didn't say the tip of this knot is in my heart.
> I didn't say if you untie the knot, its name is not motherhood anymore.
> … I smiled, when it finished I got out and sat right in the middle of the knot.
> I got the ointment out of my wound that would heal my wound.[77]

In a similar vein, in one of her posts (Figure 48), *annenin.icsesi* states in the visual that "the source of energy a mother needs is to know that her baby needs her" and in the caption she recounts:

> When you are tired, feel exhausted, when your tolerance decreases, when you say that's all from me, you gain your strength to continue not from what you eat or drink, but from your baby's need for you. To realize what s/he lacks, feeling his/her sadness, charges you with a magical energy. Every time you say "that's all from me", you understand "that's not all from you", your strength limits expands continually. You get startled if you raise him/her or he/she raises me…[78]

One other important aspect of the language that is observed in these accounts is about how these women interpret their roles and responsibilities as "madness." The phrase "motherhood is insanity" (#annelikdelilik) is used frequently by various accounts and posts (which are not limited to the accounts analyzed in this research)

[77] Translated from: "Aylardır, hatta iki yıldan fazladır asla ve kat'a tam olarak açılmayan canım sol kulunç ağrım için bugün masaj terapiye gittim. Siz, dedi fizyoterapist hanım,ne iş yapıyorsunuz acaba; merak ettim? Dedim tam zamanlı anneyim ben, üç taneler! Tahmin ettim aslında kaç çocuğunuz var diye soracaktım ama kaba olmak istemedim o yüzden böyle sordum,dedi.
Sonra da ekledi, sizin şikayetinizin adı 'anne sırtı'. Hiç güzel uyumadığınız,dinlenemediğiniz ve muhtemelen sürekli bu tarafınızla çocuk taşıdığınız için olmuş,dedi. … Aaa dedim, nereden bildiniz, eksiği var fazlası çok. … Çözemezsin o düğümün ucu kalbimde de demedim. Çözsen adı analık olmaz da demedim. … Gülümsedim, bitince çıktım geldim geri düğümün tam göbeğine oturdum. Yaramdan yine yarama şifa olacak merhemi çıkardım."

[78] Translated from: "Yorulduğunda, tükenmiş hissettiğinde, toleransın azaldığında, benden bu kadar dediğinde, devam edebilme gücünü; yediklerinden, içtiklerinden değil de yavrunun sana olan ihtiyacından alıyorsun. Bir eksiğini fark etmen, bir hüznünü hissetmen, sana büyülü bir enerji yüklüyor. Her "benden bu kadar" dediğinde aslında hiç de "senden o kadar" olmadığını, kuvvet sınırlarının hep daha da büyüdüğünü anlıyorsun. O mu beni büyütüyor ben mi onu diye, şaşıp kalıyorsun…"

while narrating on their experiences, ambivalences, and struggles. What follows this phrase is usually a narration about the illogical and irrational "nature" of motherhood, where the unconditional love towards one's child have the magical power to "erase" the material hardships and enables endurance and resilience. Such a deliberation in the narratives gives the feeling that "there is no other explanation for enduring such a massive responsibility and struggle" (Figure 49).

Through observation, one can see that discourse of "maternal love" is utilized frequently while talking about the material and emotional hardships of motherhood. The narratives that reveal and elaborate ambivalent feelings towards one's role as a mother, new responsibilities that should be fulfilled as an extension of this new role, and one's own child often accompanied with one's love towards one's child(ren). Likewise, discourse of unconditional maternal love is circulated by various mothers also in the comments while talking about their experiences and feelings. This linguistic utilization resembles the arguments about reconceptualization of "mother love" as a parental function or skill while almost magical powers ascribed to unconditional love (Furedi, 2002).

While the posts that are elaborated in Chapter 3 exemplify how mothers discuss their position and responsibilities together with the implications in their daily lives, the comments mostly provide a complex picture and showcase how the different discourses and narratives that are laid down by these accounts are interpreted and decoded by the audience. Various comments under the post by *uykusuzanneler* with the title "Realities of Mother" (Figure 2) that is elaborated in Chapter 3 for example, emphasize their tiredness, sleeplessness, and depressed situations but end their narratives mostly with an emphasis on their overall gratitude for having healthy child(ren) who they love very deeply.

In one of their posts, of which the initial part of the narrative reiterated above, *thelohusas* (Figure 10) ponder upon the importance of these digital spaces for generating social and emotional support that are highly needed in maternal isolation. Their post they state that

> Would you also like to write something to new mothers who feel bad?
> … I'll start then;
> "Dear new mother, I know your life is really hard, you are very tired, these are not what you expected but believe me you are doing really well. Just know that what you feel is very normal and temporary, don't hesitate to ask for help and don't seclude yourself. Everything will get easier and you will get used to your baby and motherhood in time. Just a little time [heart emoji]"[79]

In the comments, many mothers replied by narrating their own experiences, validating "how hard it is" to become a mother especially in the initial periods, and ensuring mothers that it will pass in time when they get used to mothering. In the responses, we can see that almost all of the comments draw on the love felt towards one's children as their power source for enduring such struggles. One of the comments (Figure 50), for instance, states

> Hello beautiful mother, I know you are very tired and sometimes you even give up, but I want you to know that in the future, you will look back at those moments and wish to enjoy those moments. You are tired, sleepless and sometimes hungry [but] nonetheless, it's worth it, how a tiny smile of your baby makes you forget everything, right?[80]

Such interpretations and narratives can also be seen as related to the changing meaning and value of having children. As indicated in Chapter 2, Çiğdem Kağıtçıbaşı's consecutive studies reveals the transformations regarding the Turkish

[79]Translated from: "Yeni anne olmuş ve kendini çok kötü hisseden, zorlanan kadınlar için siz de bir şeyler yasmak ister misiniz? … Ben başlayayım öyleyse; "Canım yeni anne biliyorum hayatın çok zor, çok yorgunsun, hayal ettiklerin bunlar değildi ama inan bana çok iyi iş çıkarıyorsun. Sadece hissettiklerinin çok normal ve geçici olduğunu bil, yardım istemekten çekinme ve kendini eve kapatma. Her şey kolaylaşacak ve sen zamanla bebeğine ve anneliğine alışacaksın. Birazcık zaman [kalp emojisi]"

[80] Translated from: "Merhaba güzel anne, biliyorum çok yorgunsun hatta bazen pes ediyorsun ama şunu bilmeni isterim ki ileride pes ettiğin günlere geri dönüp o anların tadını çıkartmak isteyeceksin. Yorgun, uykusuz ve kimi zaman açsın her şeye rağmen değer, miniğinin ufacık bir tebessümü nasıl da unutturuyor değil mi?"

family structure (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1982, 2005).[81] As her work elaborates, alongside the social transformations such as urbanization and declining rates of infant death, psychological value of having children has accelerated and more frequently iterated, while the economic value of having children has decreased. As such, the "rural" emphasis on "having someone to help you in your old age" is replaced with "having someone to love" among the urban middle-class respondents (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2003). Although collectivistic and communal values have not disappeared, it is argued that these values have been moderated among the urban middle-class with new emphasis on love, personal fulfilment and happiness (Sunar, 2002).

4.6.2 Critical Capacity, Potentials and Limits of Humorous Language

While the most obvious communication "tone" utilized in these accounts is the empathetic one, which seemingly provides a tone of understanding, emotional validation and support, the observation through these accounts and posts explicitly reveal that the humor-themed accounts and posts that include humorous visuals and narratives gather more visibility (through likes, comments and view statistics). This point is in compliance with Instagram's working-logic and motivations for use, both of which emphasize the dimension of entertainment and fast consumption (Alhabash & Ma, 2017). At this point, however, discussing about how these linguistic twists are utilized for negotiation, rejection and resistance to various discourses.

Here, in the case of these posts and networked publics, I believe we need to handle such a utilization of humor and humorous content in two ways. Firstly, we need to consider how the humorous language can be utilized as an act of "social

[81] Kağıtçıbaşı's studies argue, also indicated by other studies, that there has been a difference between the urban and rural contexts regarding parenting behaviors and value attributed to children (Sunar, 2002; Kağıtçıbaşı, 1982).

solidarity" (Billig, 2005). As the prior research on humor puts forward, humor plays a role as a symbolic resource that is employed to cope with, resolve, and/or overcome difficult situations, whereas "shared laughter" is utilized as an act of "social solidarity" (Billig, 2005). Further, existing research on female social circles and usage of humor put forward that humor and humorous language provide a supportive and appropriate medium for the women in expressing their shared experiences of parenting, hardships, and adversities while creating a sense of "common experience" and community (Robinson, 2009). Secondly, previous research on humor have long been emphasized the "critical capacity" of humor, which is thought to be derived from the potential for "playing" with social and cultural meanings, which structure our everyday lives (Zijderveld, 1983, p. 9).

Especially the content that can be found in the account *hihieved* can be thought alongside these theorizations, in the sense that her way of sarcastically elaborating on the commonsense issues generates contextualized critique to existing norms and expectations and further in the sense that her unique language of recounting creates a sense of community. This last point is made visible in the comments section, where her audience "know" each other through the comments section and "surveil" how the ironies are misunderstood and rejected by "others," who are not familiar with the ironic tone and sarcastically structured narratives *hihieved* uses in most of her posts. Her content, further uses the "critical capacity" of humor by contrasting the visuals and content; she mostly uses visual-content combinations in which the content would reiterate the "commonsense" or "normativity" of motherhood and womanhood in a sarcastic tone, the visuals mostly constitute contradiction with the caption section.

At this point, however, we also have to bear in mind another dimension of using humorous language. Together with these "capacities" for solidarity and criticism, it is also argued that when it is thought alongside the social pressure for being "a good mother," mothers' ambivalences, struggles, and complaints are mostly expressed in form of humor, as it is something that can be overcame easily (Brown, 2010, p. 51).

For most of the posts, it seems that humor is utilized merely as a form of coping with mechanism and creating a common ground for exchanging similar experiences. I believe that the humorous visuals that *annenin.icsesi* uses can be thought in this way. One of the most striking examples of utilizing such a language and how such a language serves for solidarity and criticism can be found in one of the posts *annenin.icsesi* (Figure 51) shared about "weekend plans", where mothers' weekend plans reflect all of the domestic labor, fathers' weekend plans is reflected as "I am bored of this chair, let me lie a little on that chair." In the caption, *annenin.icsesi* asks and states "Are the comments enough for writing our weekend plans? Let's write them anyways and motivate each other thinking everyone has so many things to do. Fathers' plan is fixed :P"[82] Here, while other posts by *annenin.icsesi* states contradictory statements to such a gendered structure of house works, together with the comments section, it seems that this is presented not something to be rejected but merely as something to be laughed at.

Further, the humorous visuals that mock with the contradictory moods and "mother conditions" (as she refers mostly as "annelik halleri") mostly draws on how differently her "womanhood" and "motherhood" talks inside her head. Her content elaborates how these two subjectivities and roles contradict with each other, whereas

[82] Translated from: "Hafta sonu planlarımızı yazmaya yorumlar yeter mi? Yine de yazalım da herkesin ne çok işi varmış diye motive oluruz. Babaların planı sabit :P"

the mood of "being a mother" almost always implies norms fostered by "intensive mothering". Such a contradiction is mostly reflected by *annenin.icsesi* as an "inner voice" (as the name of the account implies) and how that "inner voice of her motherhood" contradicts with her "individual" inner voice (Figure 52). In the comments, what we see is how these contradictions poke a hole in discussions regarding motherhood and how these statements are "decoded" by the viewers and interpreted personally. The interpretations seem to reveal the commonality of the hardships with the validating responses in the comment section and establishes a sense of having a "common experience," having a "moment of light" (as suggested by the post itself) by realizing a common situation and mostly ending up turning into a narrative of resilience by referring to being the sole responsible, the ways of individually dealing with the problems, and the importance of love in all these processes.

4.6.3 Judgment Online

Although the digital venues has the potential for enabling open, honest and "judgment-free" spaces for expression through online interactivity in which they can receive social and emotional support and validation, negotiate particular conditions and experiences and experience a sense of belonging (Madge & O'Connor, 2006), these contexts are also able to reinforce prevalent ideology of intensive mothering through mothers' enactments, which can also include expressions of criticism and judgment toward other mothers.

Such activities of peer surveillance among mothers are emphasized by various scholarly works by relating such acts to the patriarchal power relations (Tardy, 2000; Oliver, 2011). As it is argued, in the online communities, as it is the case in all social institutions, particular social structures that "generate rules,

sanctions against the violations of those rules, and systems of governance to enforce sanctions, headed by empowered individuals or groups" are formed (Herring, 2003, p. 626). As such, online negativity and peer judgment in the digital venues are mostly actively resisted and rejected both by the audience and moderators of these accounts. However, the existing judgmental discourses and responses especially to anonymous confessions are actively discussed by the active members of these accounts.

One of the posts shared by *anneitiraflari* (Figure 53) paved the way for a discussion about the negative comments found on Instagram and asks its followers if they should disable the comments section. In this particular confession, the confessor used the headline "Shocked" and stated "I look at the comments made on the Instagram account of Anne İtirafları, it is really the case that women have no bigger enemy than the [other] women. Shame on us."[83] The discussion is started by the moderation by reiterating the purpose of this particular account, which dominantly draws on the "democratizing" potential of the absence of physical existence and open communication and expression by women, who cannot express particular feelings/experiences otherwise. These ideals are stated as their purpose with the words "enabling women to confess whatever they wish to confess without the fear of being judged." As stated, while the comments are disabled in the blog, they opened it for the Instagram account in order to be coherent with the "nature" of the platform. They acknowledge that the comments can be enriching and jacking each other up, while they can also hurt the readers who feel close to the confessions. Through this post, they opened up a space for discussion and evaluation of the comments; and the comments under the post provide complex approaches to such issue. Such a suggestion of "banning" the comments are favored by some of the readers although

[83] Translated from: "Anne itiraflarının Instagram hesabında yapılan yorumlara bakıyorum da gerçekten kadının kadından büyük düşmanı yok."

"comforting the confessor by saying "it will pass" is the utmost support for the confessor," with the thoughts of comforting the confessors and with the idea that confessions are made "not for learning about others' thoughts, but for letting what inside into the abyss" and "without the judging eyes in the society." On the other hand, the comment section is found important and empowering by some of the readers for "commenting on particular confessions makes us realize that we are suffering from the same problems and enables us to become one."

4.6.4 The Missing Narratives and Discourses: Sexuality

Although many different experiences that are shadowed or overlooked by existing representations of motherhood, it can be said that the female sexuality is also excluded from the narratives of many women as they take place in the digital venues. Except for limited content that provides information about sexuality after marriage, after having children and in the postpartum period in the content of *uykusuzanneler* (Figure 54, 55) and confessions of individual experiences about sexuality that can be found in *anneitiraflari* (Figure 56, 57, 58), it seems that sexuality after having children is rarely spoken out loud. These practices are in line with findings of Dedeoğlu (2010), who put forward that sexuality is one of the missing discourses within the framework of parenting websites.

Understanding the reasons for such an exclusion is important and requires some theoretical framework. The constant and ongoing emphasis on the role of motherhood, as indicated above, can result in "forgetting" or "missing" other roles one can occupy and perform. Elizabeth Badinter argues that motherhood does not seem to be compatible with "romantic love" between partners; the overwhelming tasks and tiredness that accompanies these tasks, loss of privacy after having a baby

and organizing daily rhythm around the child's needs, emotional burdens and daily responsibilities are seen as "dynamites" for the lovers (Badinter, 2011).

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This thesis attempted to provide an account of how mothers discuss, negotiate, reject, and comply with various premises and discourses around "good motherhood" by tracing the recordings on Instagram, an important component of the digital networking platforms. In doing so, this thesis provided an account of the expressive, representative, and interactive practices of mothers on one of the most frequently used digital networking platforms. The representative practices and the interactions conducted through the digital platforms offer novel potentials for making an account of how the hegemonic ideals and norms of motherhood are negotiated and discussed by the mothers themselves. The accounts and the content found within these domains provide rich archives of discussions, elaborations, and descriptions of the contemporary requirements and ideals of "good motherhood" mainly by contemplating on existing discourses and their own experiences. Such practices, as this thesis aimed to put forward, lead to interactive processes that initiate discussions about the topics that are not explicitly discussed because of particular values, perceptions, beliefs, and expectations of motherhood within the Turkish social frameworks.

In order to conduct such a research, this thesis employed the tools of methodologies designed for the digital social platforms. Particularly, this thesis adopted the tools of "netnography" and utilized the potentials and research possibilities that the technological affordances provide by recording, storing and displaying different discussions, representations and interactions. In that sense, this thesis digitally traced the naturally occurred interpersonal communication as they are recorded by the communication networks and adopted these records as its primary

data. These methodological research choices rely on the beliefs that structured examinations of the social media uses, interactions, networking practices, and discussions of women can provide insights about their relevance to the future transformations regarding female agency, gender structures, maternal identity and so on. This methodological choice, however, also results in some limitations for the analysis. As it is the case for variety of researches conducted through the social media platforms, such a digital research can "know" what is represented by the users and what users wish to be known about themselves by the others. Such a methodological choice with the recognition of its limitations, however, can provide us broader meanings and possibilities of analysis regarding the ongoing discussions conducted within the frameworks of digital media tools, which occupy an important role especially in contemporary urban landscapes.

The observation shows us that, as has already been argued by different studies, the digital networking platforms, just like the parenting websites, utilized as tools of socialization by parents into their new roles. The dynamic interactive capacities of the digital networking platforms, however, seem to provide the users a broader pool of different experiences, and a more active space to start discussions or ask questions. Such a broader pool also seems to form particular representations through which mothers can relate their experiences to and "normalize" different experiences that do not fall within the scope of hegemonic and intensive motherhood. Through such practices, it is argued in this thesis, mothers validate different meanings and experiences, aim at reflecting critically the ideals around "good motherhood," a sum of discourses that operate as the evaluative criteria for mothers in order to interpret, review, and adjust their own practices and deeds in order to fill such requirements ongoingly.

One of the main contributions of this thesis to the relevant literature is about how we can gain insights about the intersection of the meaning and expression frameworks of the intensive motherhood and the neoliberal and "individualistic" premises and meaning frameworks through an observation of the representations and interactions of mothers within the digital domains. As argued in detail, the discussions around child-centered care and its impacts on mothers are frequently formed as attempts for reclaiming and legitimizing mothers' individual needs, emphasizing the importance of taking care of oneself and its importance for taking care of "one's motherhood." These discourses that emphasize mothers' individual needs, however, evaluated as "being unattainable" by several mothers. At this point, it is important to recognize how different discourses around motherhood (almost all of which fall under ideology of intensive motherhood) also entangle with the broader discourses and rhetoric of individualization, which can result in an even deeper feelings of lack and inadequacy. And these responses make sense when we consider that the problems expressed by mothers mostly result from structural problems that leave them vulnerable to isolation, that interrupt the networks providing experience exchanges, and that frame mothers as the best suited and natural agents for child-raising. The rhetorical field on Instagram, however, generates discussions and provides tools for reclaiming one's individuality without any of these material struggles are changed. I interpreted such contents and the responses these contents received within the framework of existing studies that point out the convergence between the ideals of feminist motherhood and neoliberal subjectivity.

One other contribution of this thesis to the already-existing literature is the discussion I conducted about the mother love, which has also an important place in the literature of intensive mothering. Even though the discussions and negotiations

regarding the premises and beliefs about motherhood and what is labeled as "good motherhood" are critically elaborated, reinterpreted, and resisted, as this thesis puts forward, the discussions about the emotional bonds between mother and the child, and frequent utilization of the discourses around "mother love" are mostly not interpreted in critical manners. Further, as it is elaborated in the Discussion section of Chapter 4, expressed material and emotional struggles are validated, understood, and often responded with a special emphasis on the mother love, which seem to be put forward as an ingredient that provides endurance to the existing circumstances and a block in the way of attempting to change the conditions that lead to physical and emotional deprivations. At this point, it can be said that the unconditional love, which is associated immediately with the ideal of the "good mother," and appears as a primary ingredient for the ideology of intensive motherhood, gains a particular importance for deriving a meaning framework regarding the structural struggles and oppressions that the mothers face and an emotional and psychological tool for overcoming such material problems and enduring. At this point, the analysis of Çiğdem Kağıtçıbaşı regarding the transformation of value of children becomes again meaningful. Deriving from the data of this research I believe it would be legitimate to argue that increasing psychological value of children also carries a particular importance for deriving a meaning framework regarding the structural struggles and oppressions mothers face and psychologically overcome such material problems in order to endure.

Further, the discourse of individualization that presents each act as a choice that are independent from one's particular material conditions seem to eclipse the struggles that are being experienced and frames the structural problems as if individual issues that can be overcame by individual responsibility and competency.

In our case, we can see how the laid down common oppressions, problems and struggles are mostly not elaborated as structural problems, and how it is mostly emotional validation and understanding what is sought for eclipses the laid down struggles and substitutes infinite and unconditional mother love as a secret ingredient and a substitute for structural demands and solutions.

I would like to end with some humble recommendations for possible future research. One of the recommendations is about the topic that I believe this thesis could not emphasize enough. The point about I made int his thesis about the convergence between the discourses and ideals of feminist motherhood, intensive mothering ideology, and individualization process came very late, and left a little underdeveloped. However, I believe that the penetration of the neoliberal ideals into our everyday lives and observing how these ideals add up to already-existing forms of thought and practices can be very elaborating for understanding how the practical, emotional, and moral landscape of motherhood transforms.

For me, what is most striking about this study was to realize how established and firm the discourses around the mother love were reproduced. Even though these mothers reinterpret and mostly reject the existing gender roles, inequality, and the burden loaded on mothers' shoulders, it is very common for the account-holders and the audiences to conceptualize mother love somewhere different than these complaints and think of motherhood as something almost definitely irrational, having only to do with an almost "mystical" emotion. In line with these, my other recommendation for the future research would be to explore how these discussions are conducted in different regions and by different mothers, for such an analysis would provide the researchers a further meaning about how the idealizations around the motherhood are prevailed by the consent of the mothers.

One last recommendation would be about how these digital venues can be utilized as mediums for witnessing differentiations and convergences among the different mothers from different societies. As mentioned in this thesis, some of the accounts utilize some content that are found in accounts from different (mostly Western) societies. At this point, I believe that it could be meaningful to broaden the study to include also different discourses in different societies.

APPENDIX

Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

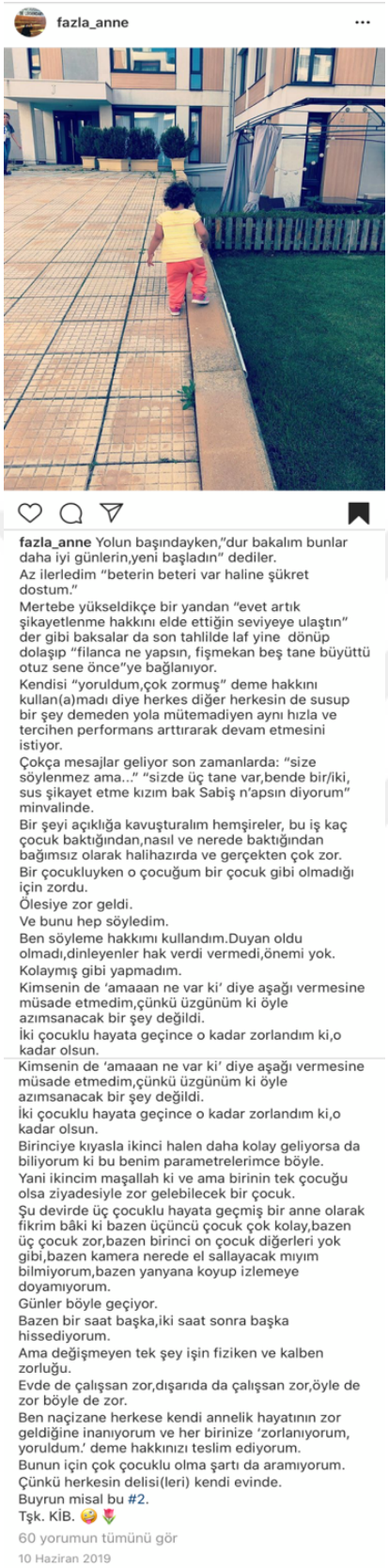


Figure 5



Figure 6

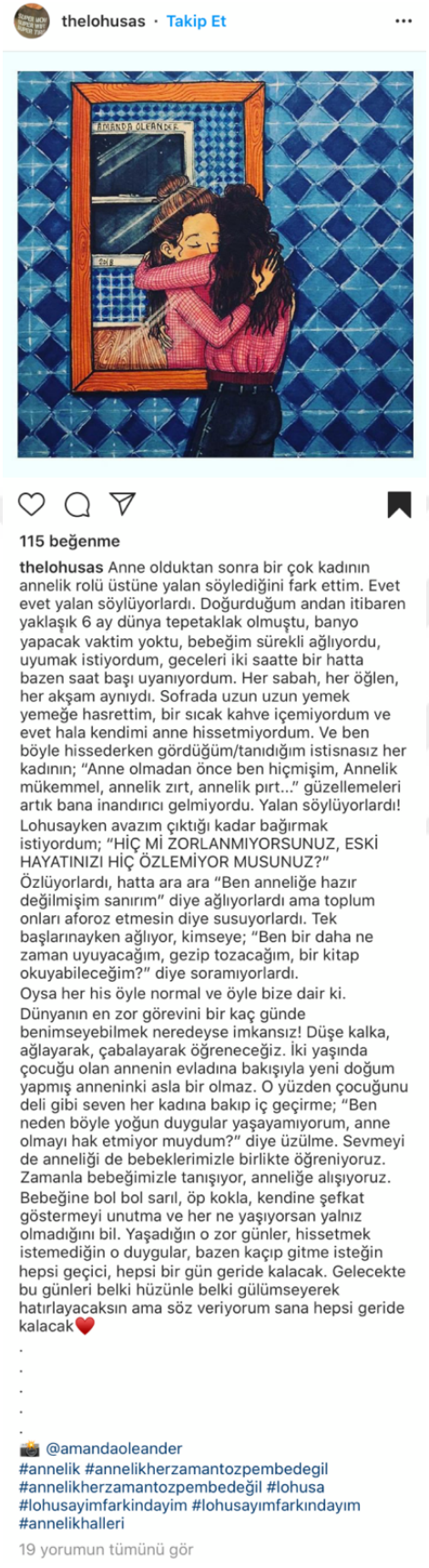


Figure 7

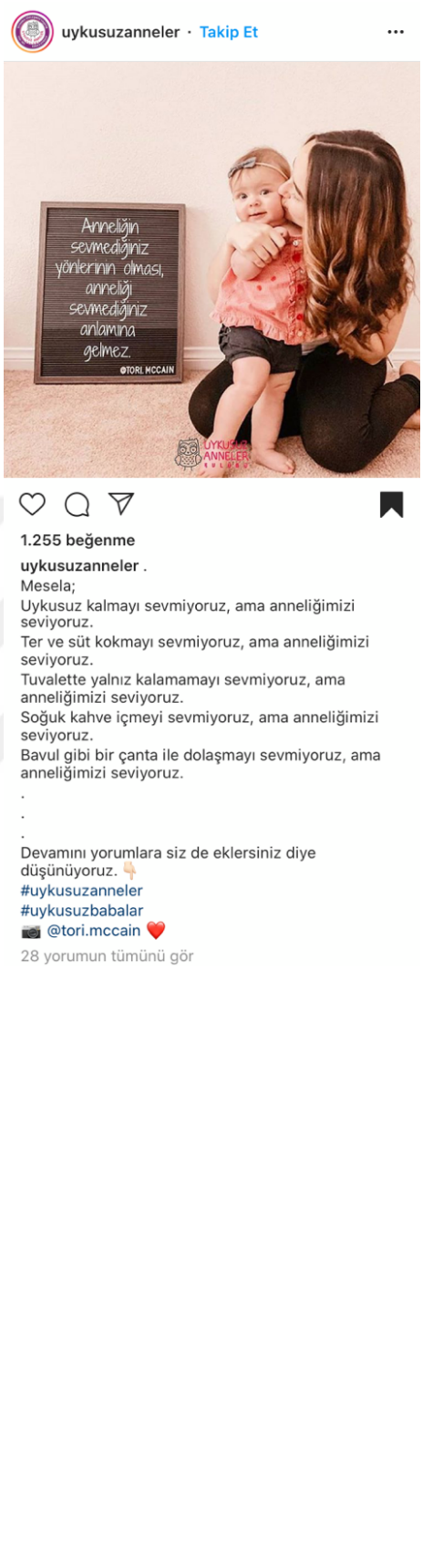


Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10

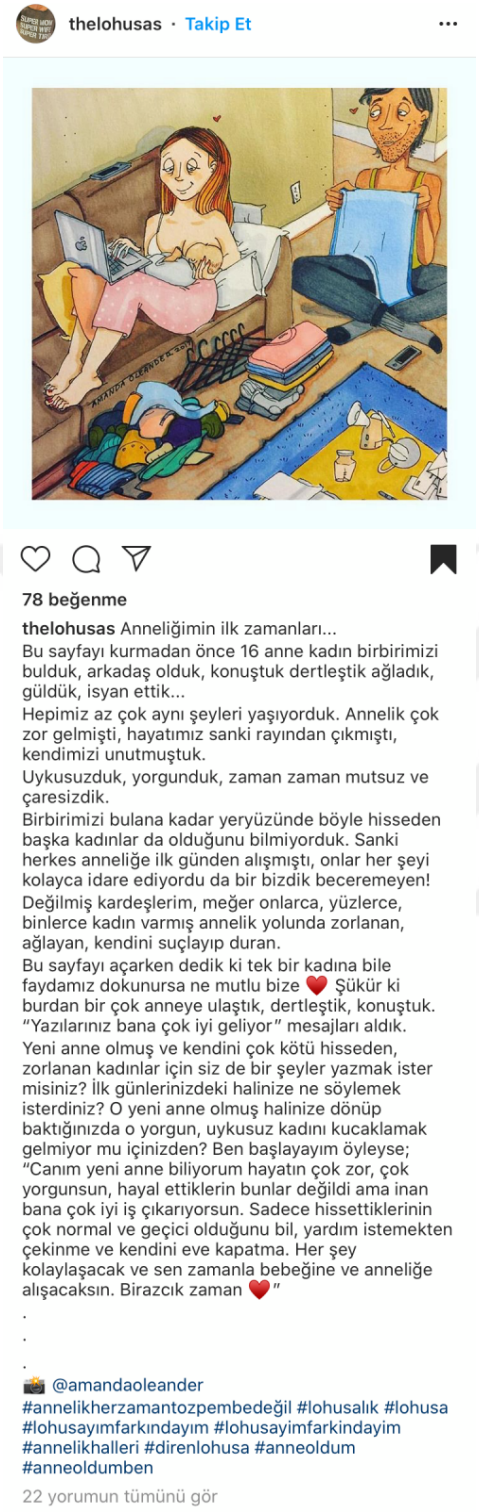


Figure 11



Figure 12

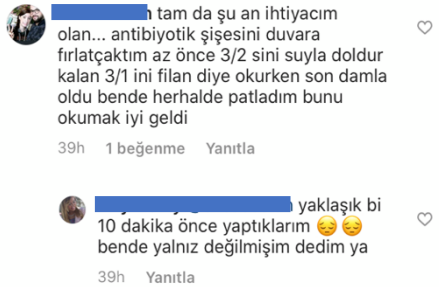


Figure 13

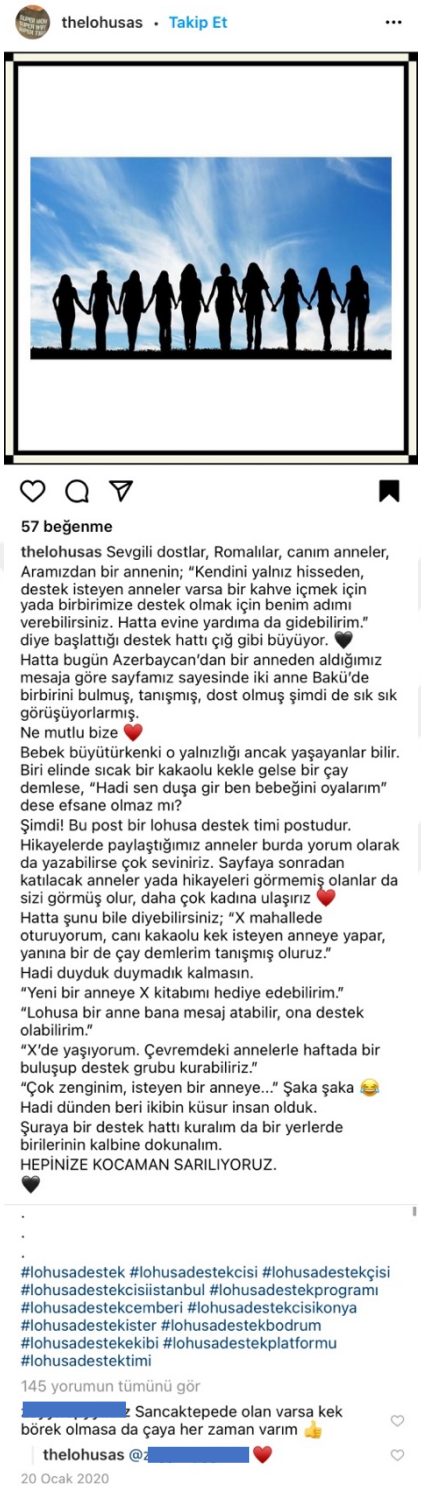


Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18



Figure 19



Figure 20

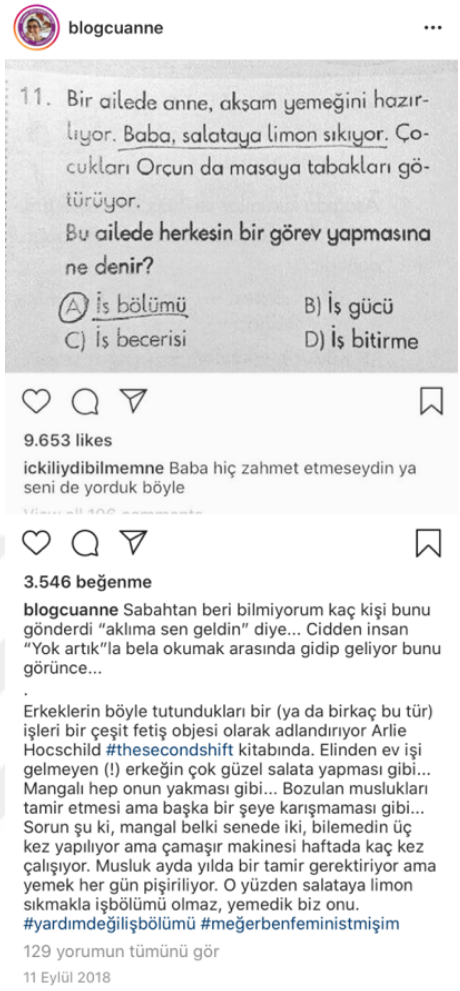


Figure 21



Figure 22

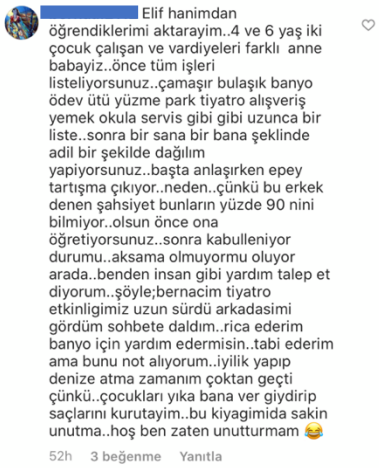


Figure 23

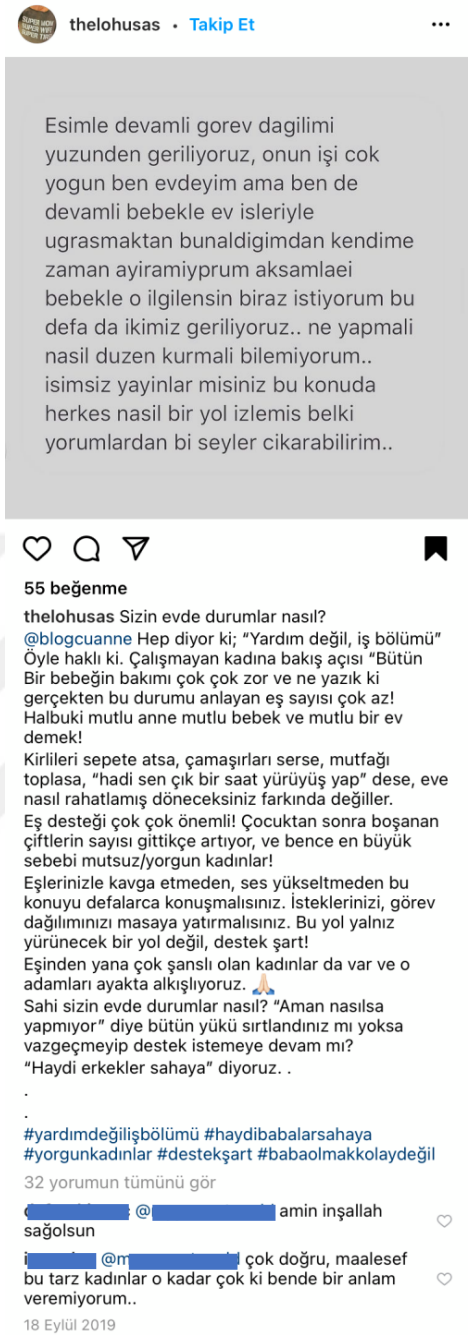


Figure 24



Figure 25



Figure 26



Figure 27



Figure 28



Figure 29

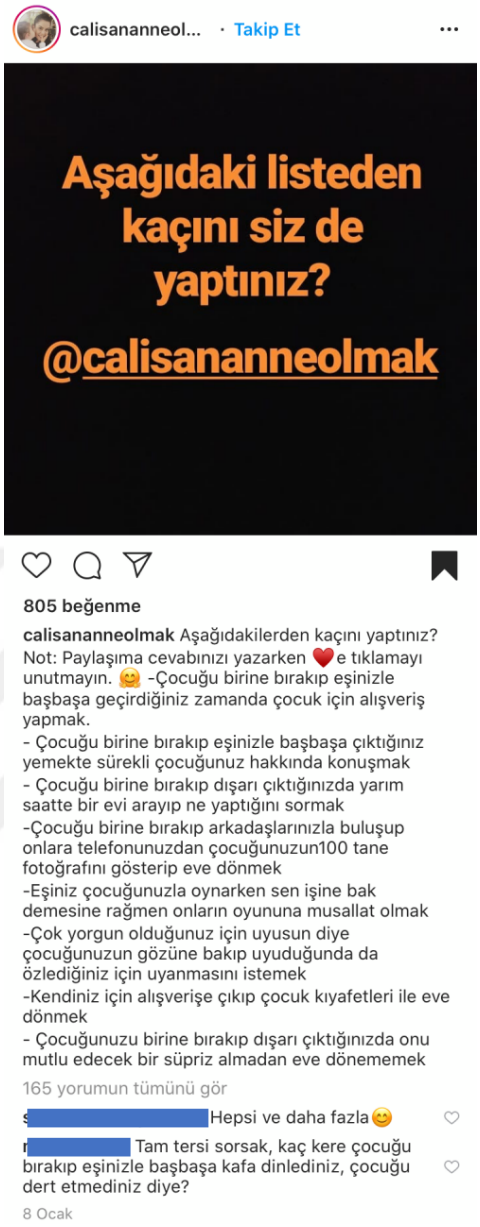


Figure 30



Figure 31



Figure 32



Figure 33



Figure 34



Figure 35



Figure 36



Figure 37



Figure 38



Figure 39



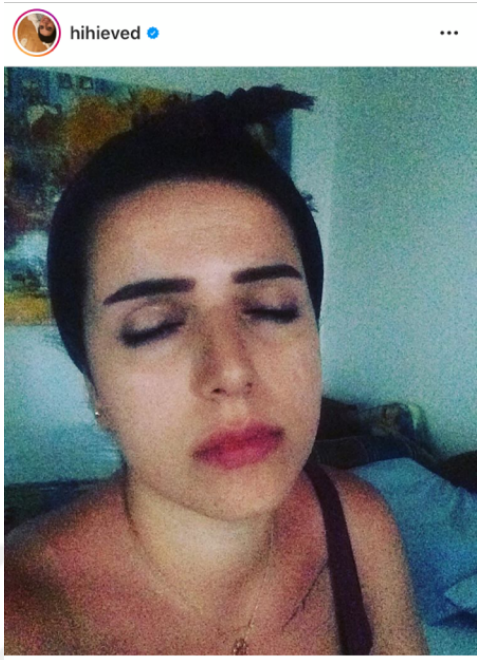
fazla_anne • Takip Et

555 beğenme

fazla_anne Çoğu zaman böyle bir şey annelik.
Daldan düşmemek için var gücüyle tutunan o son yaprak olmak, herkes gitse hep orada olmak.
Herkes uyusun diye uyumamak, çoğu zaman hasta olmaya bile hakkı olmamak, onlar yesin diye uğraşırken en son yemek, onların vaktinde onların istediklerini, ihtiyaçlarını karşılama çabasıyla hep kendi vaktinin geleceği güne kadar sabretmek durumunda kalmak.
Bu bir saçını süpürge etme hali de değil üstelik.
Böyle.
Bu işin gereği böyle, doğası böyle, adına ne dersen de,
Evet önce kendine vakit ayır, önce hep sen önemlisin; dile kolay uygulaması epey zor, hele anneliğin ilk yıllarında neredeyse imkansız.
Her şey bir süreç, her şey geçecek, geçiyor elbet;
Sonra başka şeyler oluyor,
Aklına gelmeyenler başına geliyor,
Kara kara düşünmekler, böyle sevmekten yüreğim yırtılacak sanmaklar, Dünya üzerime geliyor kesin bilgi yayın diye balkondan bağırmak istemekler, Allah'ım benimle ilgili planın ne merak ediyorum,affet diye için için kıyılıp kahveyi tek mi duble mi içsem diye kararsızlıklar ve zamanı tam olarak şimdi şurada durduralım n'olur hiç büyümesinler, ha geçti ha geçiyor derken düne eklenen günler ve geçen seneler, hepsi bazen beş dakikada esen rüzgarın içinde karmakarışıklar.
Ve anne dediğin o rüzgarda, türlü çeşit yağmurda, fırtınada o daldan kopmamak için sıkı sıkı hayata tutunan bir kadın, kendi de çocuk, kendi de yarım, kendi de muhtaç ve nereden bakarsan bak hep büyümek mücadelesinde, hep 'anne olmak' çabasında;
Elinde oyuncaklar, boyalar, ardında kim bilir ne türlü hayaller, gözleri gizliden nemli bir hafif tebessüm dudağında, çünkü biliyor ki geçecek -inşallah sağlıkla,hayırla-, ama dilinde hep aynı dua;
Allah'ım kolaylaştır, zorlaştırma!
Amin.
💛 #oyunadevam {🎧: Bülent Ortaçgil - Oyuna Devam}

34 yorumun tümünü gör

Figure 40



hihieved

2.869 beğenme

hihieved Merhaba ben Kerem'in annesi/ Kerem's mom/ Bir Kerem annesi/ bir şehzade annesi 👸
Anne olmak başıma gelen en güzel şey. Herkes dünyaya bir amaç için gelir; ben anne olmak için gelmişim 🤱 Çocuktan sonra zaman, dünya durdu ve artık her şey onun etrafında dönüyor. Onun için yapıyoruz her şeyi. Bunu da marifetmiş gibi her yerde söylüyorum😊 Sonra dünyanın kendi etrafında döndüğünü sanan yarı yetişkinleri gördüğümde "anası bu hale getirmiş, onun suçu yok ki" diye sövüyorum😍😍😍
Çocuğumun fotoğrafını sosyal medyaya koyup yüzünü kalplerle, maymun, kelebek, nazar boncuğu emojileriyle kapatıyorum. Niye böyle bir şey yapıyorum ben de bilmiyorum. Bir keresinde yine böyle bir fotoğraf koydum ve altına "aynı babası" diye yorum yazdılar. Sanırım patiklerinden benzettiler. Bu fotoğrafların altında çoğunlukla birkaç aylık çocuğumu konuşturuyorum: "Annecim bana bunu neden giydirdin, annecim parka gitmeye hazırım" gibi şeyler diyor.
Anne olmak istemeyen herkese deliler gibi çocuğumdan bahsediyorum. Çocuğumla göbek bağımız doğumda kopmadığı için bir kişi gibi hareket ediyoruz. "Kustuk ablası", "uykumuz var", "kakamız geldi", "biz bir üstümüzü değiştirip gelelim" diyorum. Kerem olmadan önce ne yapıyorduk inanın bilmiyorum. Öğlene kadar uyuduğumuzu söyleyenler var ama duymazdan geliyorum.
İşte annelik böyle yoğun, böyle eşsiz bir duygu. Bana gelip "Ayakkabın rahat mı?" der gibi "Çocuk sahibi olmayı düşünüyoruz; olalım mı?" diye soruyorlar.
Bakın ben her şeyi kolay kolay tavsiye etmem; anne olmayan herkese anneliği tavsiye ediyorum. İndirimi de bekleyebilirsiniz ✌🏻
Son olarak, her fırsatta dile getirdiğim o sihirli cümleyi tekrarlamak istiyorum: Bizi seçtiğin için teşekkür ederim oğlum💛Başka daha pek çok seçeneğin vardı ve sen bizi seçtin. Sağ ol🤗 #hihieved

291 yorumun tümünü gör

1 Şubat 2017

Figure 41



Figure 42



Figure 43



Figure 44



Figure 45



Figure 46



Figure 47



Figure 48



Figure 49



Figure 50

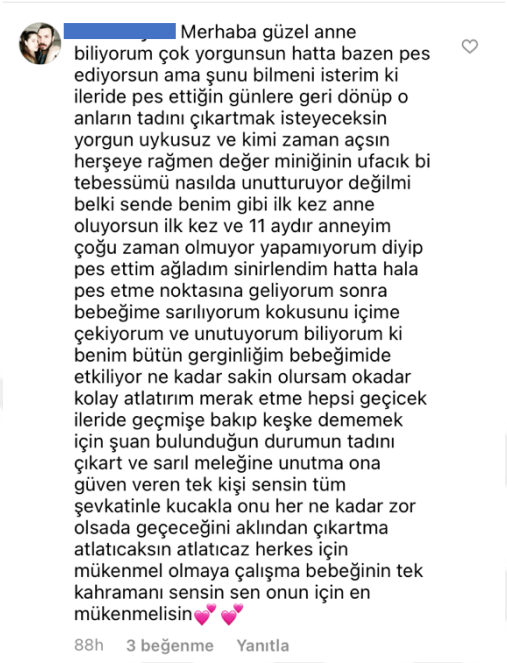


Figure 51



Figure 52



Figure 53



Figure 54



Figure 55



Figure 56



Figure 57



Figure 58



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