THE SPOUSAL LOSS EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN AFTER THE SOMA MINE DISASTER: AN INTERPRETIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

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The Soma mine disaster in 2014 was the deadliest industrial accident in Turkish mining history. The present study aimed to examine the experiences of women who lost their spouses in this disaster, considering their grief processes and the changes in their lives after the losses. Seventeen women whose ages ranged between 21 and 47 participated in this study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant. The transcribed interviews were analyzed by using the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Nine superordinate themes were emerged from the analysis. These themes were as follows: 1) Perception of the event; 2) meaning-making of the event; 3) psychological consequences; 4) changes after loss; 5) experiences of spousal loss as a woman; 6) coping with the loss; 7) being a miner family 8) search for justice; 9) psychosocial Support. The researcher discussed the study findings with the existing literature on bereavement and grief. Further, the researcher outlined the study's implications for psychosocial services and clinical interventions. Finally, limitations and future directions were discussed.

Keywords: The Soma Mine Disaster, Spousal loss, Grief, Widowhood, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.

ÖZ

SOMA MADEN FACİASI SONRASINDA KADINLARIN EŞ KAYBI DENEYİMLERİ: BİR YORUMLAYICI FENOMENOLOJİK ANALİZ ÇALIŞMASI

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2014 yılında gerçekleşen Soma maden faciası Türkiye madencilik tarihinde en fazla can kaybı yaşanan endüstriyel kazadır. Bu çalışmada, facia dolayısıyla eş kaybı yaşayan kadınların yas süreçlerinin ve hayatlarındaki değişimlerin araştırılması amaçlanmıştır. Eşlerini faciada kaybeden, yaşları 21-47 arasında değişen on yedi kadın bu çalışmaya katılmıştır. Katılımcılarla yarı yapılandırılmış mülakatlar yapılmış, sonrası mülakatlar yazıya dökülmüştür. Yazıya dökülen mülakatlar Yorumlayıcı Fenomenolojik Analiz yöntemiyle analiz edilmiştir. Analiz sonrasında dokuz üst tema ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu temalar şöyledir: 1) Olayın algılanışı; 2) olayı anlamlandırma; 3) psikolojik sonuçlar; 4) kayıptan sonra değişimler; 5) eş kaybı yaşayan bir kadın olma deneyimi; 6) kayıpla baş etme; 7) madenci ailesi olma; 8) adalet arayışı; 9) psikolojik destek. Araştırmacı bulguları var olan travmatik kayıp ve yas literatürü çerçevesinde tartışmıştır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Soma maden faciası, Eş kaybı, Yas, Dul kadın olmak, Yorumlayıcı Fenomenolojik Analiz

To all the women who lost their loved ones in the Soma mine disaster

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the study

The first mine basin in Turkey, for coal, was established in Ereğli, Zonguldak, around the 1840s, before the foundation of the Turkish Republic (Bütün, 2015). Today, thousands of coal mine workers are employed in the mining sector. According to the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects (Türk Mühendis ve Mimar Odaları Birliği, TMMOB) Chambers of Mine Engineering report (2014), approximately 120.000 mineworkers were employed as of June 2010. It was also reported that 686 mineworkers died because of explosions at different mine basins between 1983 and 2010. This report, however, included only the mine accidents that ended with the death of at least three miners. This report alone, demonstrates the problematic background of coal mine basins regarding workers' health and work safety issues. Unfortunately, these accidents were not the last ones in Turkey's mining sector.

On May 13, 2014, a massive fire in the Soma Eynez coal mine ended with the highest number of miners' death in Turkish history (TMMOB, 2014). Governmental agencies and surviving miners were involved in the search and rescue processes. Families, relatives, and friends of the miners who were trapped inside the basin waited for days to reach the miners. After four days, the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (Afet ve Acil Durum Yönetimi Başkanlığı, AFAD, 2014) declared that 301 miners had died in the disaster. The coal mine was built in a high-risk area in terms of the coal type and the poisonous gas that was released during the explosion Yet, precautions to avoid a potential explosion or fire hadn't been taken. The company that owned the coal mine, Turkish Coal Enterprise (Türkiye Kömür İşletmeleri, TKİ), had pushed for

overproduction and caused the violation of rules that protect workers' health and safety. Overproduction pressure led miners to overwork and gather coal more than legal limits, which ended up opening the previously closed areas in the mine and resulted in the release of dangerous methane gas and a big fire. The report stated that carbon monoxide levels inside the mine had been high for days before the disaster. There were problems with the ventilation system, and miners' protection equipment was insufficient. The report pointed out that Soma Coal Enterprise could have prevented the disaster but failed to take the necessary precautions. According to Topal and colleagues (2018) several factors contributed to the mineworkers' lacking information about institutional information regarding safety in the workplace; mineworkers' reactions to mine working system was limited prior to the disaster; there was inadequate workers' safety education; some labor unions were collaborating with the employers rather than seeking the benefit of the workers, and audits conducted were insufficient. In addition, employers, labor unions and the state neglected to implement the scientific, administrative and legal requirements in the regulation of the mine, and tried to hide their ignorance in spite of the risky conditions in the mine basin by preventing access to institutional information.

The disaster and death of 301 miners affected their families, relatives, people living in Soma, and people from different parts of Turkey (Bütün, 2015). Many people around Turkey participated in demonstrations against the disaster. Moreover, several NGOs and Trade Unions gathered to form a committee named Justice for Soma, to defend families' rights and reveal the causes behind such a disaster. These people visited Soma and the families of miners to give condolences.

1.2. Researcher's previous notes from the field

The committee of Justice for Soma was established with lawyers, labor unions, psychologists, and social workers just after the disaster. The board's purpose was to advocate for the dead miners' families' rights, collect witness accounts, and

obtain relevant expert reports. For this purpose, small groups of lawyers and psychologists visited families and collected their testimonies. I also participated in some activities of the committee and visited families in their homes as a psychologist. Poverty was evident in families' living spaces. They were yearning for their lost family members and crying after their losses. Many women who lost their husbands in the mine seemed shocked, and they could not believe what had happened. They were generally kind towards the visitors, and they opened their houses for everyone who came. Neighbors and relatives of the women were around to help because many women could not focus on their daily chores, such as looking after the children, cooking, and cleaning. Especially younger children seemed to be unaware of what had happened to their fathers, and they generally wanted to play or spend some time with the visitors. Many people gave some money, gifts, and food supplies to the families, which seemed helpful for them.

In many villages, people seemed to have a collective mourning process with the participation of the whole town. On the other hand, even though community members knew and supported the families who had losses at Soma city center, their mourning seemed to remain inside their family. Economic conditions were a significant concern expressed by all the families because the men who died in the mine were the primary breadwinners of their families. Women were questioning how they could manage the finances of the family. At the same time, having relatives around seemed helpful for both social and financial support.

Some women said they were having some problems with their husbands' families and were anxious about possible future issues they had to face. Many women expressed that they have difficulty sleeping alone, and they were worried about either being alone or that something would happen to their children. They also said their children had various psychological problems, such as eating and sleeping difficulties, depressed mood, or persistent anxiety.

During the visits, I also had the chance to listen to experiences of some mine workers to understand their conditions. According to one of the surviving miners

(Ali, personal communication, July 15, 2014), finding jobs that provided a monthly salary and insurance around Soma wasn't easy. Around May of 2014, the wage of an ordinary miner was approximately 1500 TL, with no additional meals or stipends. Mines were described as *the underground* and considered to be a different world. Mines were open both day and night and miners worked three shifts, each lasting eight hours without any breaks to go outside. So, a miner who was working on a day shift could not see the sun for days. He would get in the mine in the morning and get out in the evening without a break. Many miners tried to buy houses with the credits they got from the banks. Even if they wanted to quit their job because of safety problems, they needed to continue working to pay their credit debts and support their families financially.

Many families said they previously resided in the villages and could engage in farming and animal husbandry (Ahmet, personal communication, July 15, 2014). They primarily planted tobacco, but the change in price regulations on tobacco farming introduced in 2006 made it less cost-effective. In husbandry, feeding the animals became more and more expensive with time. These changes urged them to move to the city center and work in mining. The monthly salary and the insurance it provided were important reasons for choosing this sector. Farmers who used to grow tobacco turned their attention to finding new resources, because income from tobacco production decreased (Çelik, 2017). It was also a time of advance for coal companies, and farmers turned into mine workers. In 2005, Turkish Coal Enterprise transferred the management of mine basins to private companies. The Enterprise did not put limitations on the production of coal because they had guaranteed coal purchase for investors. These led to a growing coal mining sector. Therefore, number of mineworkers in Soma increased after privatization.

Before this disaster, many miners had severe accidents and some workers had lost their lives while others were injured severely (Yıldırım & Umman, 2017) . It was common for a miner to die on the job, but Soma incidence was out of the ordinary. Many people said that the conditions in the mine were always

problematic, creating danger for the miners, but it was the worst just before the disaster. The witnesses stated that the temperature in the mine had been increasing rapidly compared to previous days. Even though the workers noticed these changes in the mine's conditions, they did not consider quitting their jobs because of financial issues. Some of the miners who died in the disaster were about to retire. A miner indicated that mineworkers usually prefer not to talk about the conditions in the mines with their loved ones not to cause anxiety because it was anxiety-provoking for them. Still, women generally could understand the changes in the mine's conditions from their partners' physical appearance and their clothes. After the disaster, some miners expressed their concerns about working in the mine again, but they felt desperate because of limited employment options in and around Soma.

Many people seemed confused about the legal issues due to various visitors providing conflicting information about the process, which made them uncomfortable and tense. Many families were waiting for justice and some of them declared that they would do anything to prosecute the perpetrators. According to them, the mining company was guilty of not taking safety precautions for the workers and forcing them to overproduce, which led to this enormous disaster. Yet, other families feared ostracization from their community even though they wanted to seek justice. Unfortunately, neither of these groups was hopeful about the outcome of the court cases.

The way the disaster happened, taking into account lack of health safety procedures and the ignorance of common problems in the mine, led many people to think whether the disaster could have been prevented. It made parents and wives of the miners and the Turkish community question the employer's, the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources' and the government's responsibilities (Yıldırım & Umman, 2017). There has been a debate on whether this incident was a "murder" or the "fate" of the miners. The discussion has its roots in the Prime Minister's words: "Death is a natural course of a miner's life." The slogan for the counterargument was: "Soma was not an accident but a massacre," which

emphasized that miners died because of the employers' ignorance of the danger in the mine. Some families viewed the disaster as a demonstration of fate and God's will, yet others called it a murder. Many of them heard about systematic problems in the mine one month before the incident. They had thought that the employers at the company would solve the issues, but they did not. They were furious at the employers and the dominant labor union among the mineworkers.

According to my previous observation in the field, dead mine workers' families, parents, wives, and children were deeply sad after their losses and angry towards the authorities who did not prevent the disaster. Wives of dead miners had worries about their children and their future. They had a feeling of great sorrow and were hopeless about coping with the absence of their husbands. The support from outsiders seemed to be helpful, but this help's continuity was not guaranteed.

Herman (2015) said that in any kind of atrocity, victims need other people's engagement with the traumatic events and remembrance of what happened to them because the perpetrator generally tries to manipulate the victims and the community. Yet, in the case of the Soma disaster, the privileged and powerful perpetrator defined and changed the reality, tried to deny responsibility, and forced people to forget the incident. Hence, there was a process of searching for justice against the perpetrator which increased the psychological effects of the disaster, especially for the families of deceased miners. Women, wives of the dead miners, were at the forefront of the demonstrations after the incident and the search for justice at the courts. At the same time, they were trying to adapt to their new roles and changing conditions in their lives as a single parent and a widow. The main motivation behind this research project was to understand these women's subjective experiences from both a psychological perspective and in terms of their changing roles in the society.

The Soma mine disaster in 2014 was the deadliest industrial accident in Turkish mining history (TMMOB, 2014). Pressure on overproduction, employers'

ignorance of potential damages in the mine and violation of workers' health and safety procedures ended with 301 mineworkers death in the Eynez basin. Search and rescue processes took several days; families of the workers waited hospitals, around the mine basin or morgues to learn about the consequences. At the same time, the disaster got country-wide attention, many people came to Soma for supporting the families. There were lots of demonstrations against the related liable governmental agents and many people came together for visiting, giving condolences to, and supporting families of dead mine workers. Soon after the disaster, a discussion on whether the death of mineworkers was a kind of fate or could be called a murder which was caused by employers' and related agencies irresponsibility. Families of the dead mine workers were angry and frequently mentioned it was a kind of murder. The incident deeply affected the whole community in the Soma, especially sorrow and grief of families of the dead mineworkers was intense. For the wives of the dead ones, a painful grieving period and a new life as a widow was beginning. The experiences of grieving women who lost their husbands in this mine disaster is the focus of the present study.

1.3. Bereavement

Grief and bereavement are frequently used to point to the state of human experience after loss (Stroebe & Schut, 2008). *Bereavement* refers to the objective situation in which an individual has recently experienced the loss of someone significant through that person's death. Bereavement is defined as the cause of both grief and mourning. On the other hand, grief is defined as the emotional (affective) response to loss, which includes several psychological and bodily reactions. In the Turkish language, there are two words to describe the loss of a loved one: *yas* and *matem* (Türk Dil Kurumu, 2022). Both words are defined as great sorrow that stems from death or a disaster and behaviors and emotions related to this sorrow.

Bereavement is the most common human experience since all people have a relationship with others and all the people are mortal. “Grief is a kind of cost of commitment and love we pay” (Parkes & Prigerson, 2010). People from all over the world from different societies and cultures experience grief with some overlapping characteristics and behaviors unique to their traditions and cultures. One can also find various examples in literature, from poems to novels, the beautiful and detailed description of grieving processes. In T. S. Eliot's book "The Waste Land (1964)," he wrote;

> He who was living is now dead
> We who were living are now dying
> With a little patience
> Here is no water but only rock
> Rock and no water and the sandy road
> The road winding above among the mountains
> Which are mountains of rock without water
> If there were water we should stop and drink
> Amongst the rock one cannot stop or think
> Sweat is dry and feet are in the sand
> If there were only water amongst the rock
> Dead mountain mouth of carious teeth that cannot spit
> Here one can neither stand nor lie nor sit
> There is not even silence in the mountains

Eliot symbolized grieving as standing alone on the rocks where one could not find any water; it could not be drunk even if there were water. The symbolization resembles the desperateness of a bereaved and his/her inability to relieve the sorrow soon after the death. Losing a loved one evokes lots of intense emotions, deep sadness, dysphoria, anxiety, anger, and guilt (Stroebe & Schut, 2008). Reactions of grieving individuals are not restricted to these emotions; instead, lots of difficult experiences are also ordinary, such as feelings of loneliness, sleep disturbances, fatigue, and inability to concentrate (Bonanno and Kelter, 1997; Bonanno et al.,1999).

Stroebe and Schut, (2008) conducted a study with women who lost their spouses and suggested that individuals usually felt dysphoria, sadness, and sorrow after the loss. Additionally, sometimes, the individuals experienced fear of losing

one's mind, inability to cope with the grief, and fear of death. They usually blamed themselves because of not behaving differently or hadn't done something to prevent the death. They felt anger to people around for not supporting them enough in their grieving process. Stroebe and Schut emphasized that negative cognitive outcomes were also common among bereaved individuals. Irritability, losing interest in everyday activities, problems in concentration and thinking processes were reported. Over engagement with the memories of the deceased was also frequent, and sometimes visual and auditory hallucinations of the deceased were evident. There was no specific time frame for grieving; however, the intensity of emotions seemed to be the highest during the first year and decreased over time. Grief was sometimes described using the metaphor of physical injury, and like all injuries, it healed in time (Stroebe, Schut, & Stroebe, 2007). Many people went through grief process alone using their coping skills, with help from their social environment, and without needing professional help. As pain caused by an injury, the pain of the losses decreased and healed in time, but in some cases, grief became much more painful and lasted longer. Bonanno and Kaltman (2001), in their review of grief related literature found that depending on descriptive studies, majority of the grieved individuals experience deficiencies in four areas; cognitive deficits, sadness/dysphoria, health related problems and disruptions in occupational and social lives. In longitudinal studies it was emphasized that 50% to 85% of bereaved individuals demonstrated common grief patterns with moderate deficiencies in cognitive, affective, health related areas and interpersonal relations during the initial months of loss. In first and second years of loss, only 15 % of the participants continued to experience grief reactions with serious disruptions in their functioning.

1.3.1. Variables that predict the outcome of bereavement

Parkes and Prigerson (2010) outlined variables influential on the outcome of bereavement and how one may experience grief. Some of these variables were the relationship with the deceased, the mode of death, personality characteristics,

attachment styles of the bereaved, and the social, cultural, and familial influences on bereaving individuals.

A relationship with the deceased generally demonstrates the degree of attachment to the dead one. Two of the most common types of loss that direct people to search for help were spousal loss and loss of a child, according to Parkes and Prigerson's review (2010). People who lost their parents or siblings less frequently applied for treatment. Because the loss of a child was rare, spousal loss was the most frequent category of grieving individuals asking for treatment. Women generally declared more distress and psychological difficulties than men.

According to Prigerson and Parkes (2010), bereaving widows and widowers with insecure attachment styles experienced grief heavier than the ones who were securely attached. Emotional dependence generally included being dependent on partners in life decisions and everyday problems and losing a partner in these situations would lead to more problematic reactions. The avoidant attachment was more associated with avoidance of emotions after the loss. Avoiding the pain after the loss disrupts emotional processing, which might prolong grief reactions. People with ambivalent attachment styles generally have conflictual relationships before a spousal loss. The bereaved tries to deal with unresolved issues, which probably increases anger and guilt toward the deceased.

Cultural and societal norms are influential on how a bereaved may experience grief processes. Religious beliefs and rituals are interwoven with culture and are influential on grieving process. In Islam, grieving and expressing suffering are considered normal and generally expected after loss of loved ones (Kara, 2016). At the same time, life and death is thought to be determined by fate and being patient in grieving process is generally advised. Funerals and other rituals are frequent and are advised for making the loss more acceptable (Sayar, 2011). In all the religions, especially mono-theist religions, there are teachings and rituals regarding death, as well as an image of afterlife. There are many rituals after

death, such as funeral ceremonies, religious rituals, and condolences in nearly all cultures and societies. Participating in funerals and rituals provides individuals an opportunity for emotional expressions and a chance to say goodbye to dead ones. In some cultures, funerals are thought to serve the deceased's' afterlives. Nonetheless, participating in funerals are thought to decrease pathological outcomes of bereavement (Parkes & Prigerson, 2010)

One's religious beliefs and religiousness can also influence the bereavement process. Religiousness is generally assessed by questions such as how religious one is, how important religious faith is in one's life. Such questions aim to assess individuals' ways of integrating religion to their daily lives and to understand their commitment. Several researchers who used such assessment tools that measure religiosity have demonstrated a positive association between religiousness and better adjustment to the loss. For example, self-rated religiousness was positively related to better psychological well-being (Fry, 2001), better coping abilities, less physiological problems, and low negative affect after a loss (Clarke et al., 2003). Brown and collogues, 2008) conducted a study with a sample of widows and widowers and found that self-rated religiosity was associated with low grief levels at two different points in time after the loss.

The mode of death, the way the deceased died, was one of the most important variables that predict the bereavement experience (Parkes & Prigerson, 2010). There were lots of differences between losing a loved one via traumatic incident or a natural way in terms of outcomes of the bereavement. The sudden, unexpected, and violent deaths caused by any disaster, homicide, suicide, car, or industrial accidents were considered as traumatic and the term traumatic loss was used to point the bereaved experiences in the literature. Losses caused by biological illnesses and old age were not considered under this category because they were somehow predictable (when and how those with a biological illness would die) (Raphael et al.,2004; Rynearson, 2012). Norris and collogues (2002) mentioned that traumatic losses usually associated with human-caused factors

such as technological accidents, murder, mass violence, homicide, or terror attacks. When human actors caused the deaths, it increased resentment and anger, causing more complications in the grieving process for the bereaved. The bereaved had perpetrators to blame and they usually blamed themselves for not preventing losses. Also, after these kinds of losses bodies were sometimes mutilated or deformed and bereaved witnessed the conditions of the bodies. In some cases, such as war-related situations, bodies were not found for the funeral (Kristensen et al., 2010). Deformation of bodies was generally associated with more suffering. Another risk in such incidents was the delay of the confirmation of death. Sometimes it took days to find out and declare death and waiting with anxiety, pain, and desperation became another factor increased the suffering (Boss, 2002). Media sometimes depicted or described violent events related to incidents. Exposing to these details led to imaginations related the conditions that the deceased experienced before death, and created more stress, pain, and guilt for the individuals (Rynearson, 2012).

Neiyemeyer and colleagues (2002) mentioned that as other traumatic event such as experiencing accidents, sexual or physical attacks, traumatic losses led to disruptions of the individuals' general assumptions about the world. It changed the bereaved individual's understandings and perceptions, they previously attributed to the life. Hence, after traumatic losses grieving individuals tried to reconstruct a new personal meaning of life. When the loss was traumatic, affective arousal, anxiety and hypervigilance led to lots of traumatic memories which could not be verbalized. Inability to form narrations led to disruptions in the sense of security, predictability, and trust for the bereaved. Hence, meaning-making processes very much influenced because of the violations in predictability and controllability assumptions about the world which caused problems in the grieving process and PTSD symptoms.

Another feature of traumatic losses were the associations with legal procedures (Prigerson, & Parkes, 2010). These procedures needed too much time and effort and the bereaving individuals sometimes had to come face to face with the

perpetrators in the courts. In such situations, many people experienced feelings of injustice loss of confidence in legal authorities, and people who did not defend and help them. These experiences had the possibility to increase anger towards the perpetrators, the legal system, and anger towards oneself.

Familial influences were another significant factor that predicted grief reactions of widows (Prigerson, & Parkes, 2010). Families were a good source of support to provide a safe space for emotional expression of the widows. Bereaved individuals tended to talk about the deceased and the meaning of death. They also struggled to regulate their ongoing relationships with family members during meaning-making processes (Neimeyer, 2006). If the families were not supportive or restricted expressions of grief-related narratives and reactions, it led to difficulties in grieving. Breen and O'Connor (2011) mentioned three sources of support that would be helpful for the bereaving individuals: proving guidance and advice when needed, economic support in the case of loss of income with the deceased, and affective support including demonstration of empathy and warmth. When the people in the social network of the bereaved provided these essential supports it helped to decrease detrimental effects of the grief.

Prigerson and Parkes (2010) mentioned that having a child or children had both positive and negative effects on widows in the grieving process. Many women relied on their relationships with their children to continue their daily lives and took care of themselves as being mothers. On the other side, being a single mother put additional responsibilities on child rearing practices which could increase anxiety and stress (Bradley, 2007). Having psychological difficulties after the paternal losses for the children were not rare so it could put additional burden and increased the stress of single mothers. Children with young age needed more attention compared to older ones, economic adequacy and familial supports would be helpful for the mothers of young children.

Another risk factor for negative grief reactions were financial difficulties and poverty for widows (Elwert, & Christakis, 2006). Widows who were previously unemployed and financially dependent on their husbands' salaries were affected more than working ones. Their living standards would decrease, they would have additional problems about children via restricted budget, and they could have problems about reaching health care services. When the widows found solutions for economic improvement it increased not only their life conditions but would also increase feelings of their inner strength; however, it would increase feelings of dependence on others if difficulties continued.

All in all, loss of a loved one evokes sadness, dysphoria, anxiety, anger, and guilt as well loneliness, sleep disturbances, fatigue, and problems in concentration. Grief experiences is various and changes depending on both dead related and the bereaved related variables. Sudden, unexpected, and human-caused deaths such as industrial accidents or murder generally evokes much more suffering than the expected deaths which are caused by chronic illness or old ages. For the bereaving individuals, the chance of seeing the bodies, participating in the funeral and other religious ceremonies after death are significant for acceptance of the losses, and become an important component of grieving. For the bereaving individuals having familial and social support become a source of coping with the loss. Religiousness and practicing religious rituals are generally associated with better coping. Financial situation after the losses is also significant especially for the women who lost their husbands. Loss of the husband sometimes accompanies with financial problems. Economic regulations supporting the widows are/were a protective factor for a better grieving process. On the other hand, sudden and violent losses, problems in the appearance of bodies, lack of social and economic supports are generally associated with complications in grieving. All the variables are significant for understanding the women's experiences after their husbands' losses in the Soma mine disaster, hence were covered during the interviews with the women.

1.3.2. Complicated Grief

For the first time, Parkes (1965) conceptualized different types of grief which would be seen as pathological and named them: chronic, delayed, and inhibited grief. He used the term chronic grief to point out prolonged grief reactions with high levels of affective responses such as high levels of anxiety, restlessness, and sleep disturbances. Chronic grief reactions were sometimes accompanied with "identification symptoms" the same symptoms that the deceased experienced before dying. He mentioned delayed grief as the absence of grief reactions for a long period of time, and sudden increase in the reactions after passage of considerable time. Delayed grief reactions could be over-reactive, accompanied by alienation, isolation, or high levels of depressed mood. Inhibited grief was conceptualized as inhibition of grief reactions for a considerable amount of time. After these first categories identified by Parks, many researchers have focused on the development of specific criteria to diagnose complicated grief as a kind of psychological disorder.

Prigerson and collogues (1995), in their research with 82 elderly widows, examined the differences between depression and complicated grief symptoms. They found deficiencies in accepting death and over engagement with thoughts of the deceased were common after the loss which increased sorrow and pain after the loss. Hence, the researchers suggested that complicated grief would better be understood as a different psychopathological category than depression. Researchers pointed out that the bereaved individuals' cognitive disturbances, social isolation, difficulties in forming relationships, and somatic complaints decreased over time without interventions. Some people who experienced loss, however, found it difficult to move on with their lives (Shear, 2015). This could be an indication of complication in the grieving process and could result in intense psychological distress for longer periods of time for the bereaved.

In DSM-V (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), Persistent Complex Bereavement Disorder (PCBD) is categorized under the chapter of conditions for

Further Study, indicating studies on final criteria for the diagnosis was still under research. Diagnostic criteria have their roots in a previous proposition on complicated grief and prolonged grief. For adults, diagnosis may be given only after 12 months of bereavement, pointing out to the time needed for natural alleviation in grief reactions. Accordingly, one of the four symptoms should be evident for most of the days for the bereaved individual: "*1) Evidence of persistent yearning/longing, 2) Intense sorrow and emotional pain in response to the death, 3) Preoccupation with the deceased, and 4) Preoccupation with the circumstances of the death." (p.790).* Additionally, symptoms related to reactive distress after death and social/identity disruption are needed to be detected. Reactive distress is described as problems in acceptance of loss, numbness, high levels of anger, blaming oneself and avoiding specific places or people. Social/identity disruption symptoms include mistrust of people, feelings of loneliness, thinking about meaninglessness of life, confusion in one's identity and roles, and difficulties in usual activities and responsibilities. Similar criteria are used in ICD-11 (World Health Organization, 2018) to diagnose prolonged grief disorder. According to the ICD criteria symptoms should be evident more than six months with a heavy emotional disturbances which lead to functional problems.

These symptoms also have similarities with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms. According to DSM-V (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), PTSD developes after experiencing a traumatic event. A traumatic event is defined as experiencing an actual physical attack or a threat which influenced emotional and physical well-being. A physical attack, sexual abuse, earthquake, war, or any kind of accident is described as a traumatic event. Losing someone loved and witnessing the death of a person is also included in the definition. The literature on PTSD and grief sometimes intersects. Researchers who focused on bereavement symptoms pointed out that post-traumatic stress disorder could develop as a possible response to the loss (Parkes and Prigerson, 2010). Zisook and colleagues (1998) found that only one third of the participants who lost their spouses because of suicide or accidents suffered from PTSD symptoms. Also,

Kaltman and Bonanno (1999) found that bereaved individuals who lost their spouses through suicide, homicide, or accident reported more PTSD symptoms and experienced more chronic depressive symptoms than the bereaved individuals who lost their spouses through natural causes. Kaltman and Bonanno (2003) later argued that violent death of spouses predicted more PTSD symptoms and more depression symptoms, but suddenness of the death through natural causes (such as heart attack) was not related to such outcomes. Malgaroli, Maccallum, and Bonanno (2018) conducted a network analysis to demonstrate interactions of PCBD and common comorbid conditions. They found that role confusion, meaninglessness, and loneliness were the main symptoms of diagnoses and the disorder had different features from PTSD. Even though there were no clear boundaries between PCBD and PTSD, and they had similar symptoms like dissociative reactions or intrusive memories, yearning and emotional pain were mainly related to PCBD, and hypervigilance and hyperarousal were mainly associated with PTSD.

In conclusion, it is evident that PTSD symptoms lead to more severe grief responses. Taken together, researchers have demonstrated that a small proportion of the grieved individuals experience complicated grief, which causes more psychological problems compared to un-complicated grief, and violent and sudden deaths can cause PTSD-related symptoms. The experience of grief and related reactions to loss is going to be examined in the present study. The women's emotional reactions, behavioral and cognitive problems related to grief are not diagnostically labeled but because they become the core of grief experiences, traumatic stress reactions and grief experiences are covered through the interviews.

1.4. Models on Bereavement and Grief

1.4.1. Freud's "grief work" hypothesis

According to Freud's grief work model (1917/1957), death leads to break the attachment bond and creates a challenge for the bereaved for the libidinal attachment. Therefore, the main goal of the grief process is breaking the bond with the deceased and freeing the bereaved from weight of attachment. This is the only way ego can invest libidinal energy in new persons and attachments. The grieving ego tries to manage losing part of itself which is identified with the loss object. After dealing with this identification ego could overcome the loss and form attachments to new objects.

1.4.2. Attachment Theory

Bowlby (1980) stated that attachment with the deceased is the primary source of the pain, anger, and various other emotions after the loss. Also, grief involves apparent demonstration of craving after the deceased, disorganized behavior, and emotional distress such as pain and anger, like an infant's searching for attachment figure. During this process an individual tries to reach a new equilibrium in the environment without the deceased. In his model, a major goal of the grief process is being able to form new attachments with other people in the environment that would counteract with disequilibrium caused by the loss of the loved one.

The attachment style acquired in infancy and early childhood continues and is resistant to change throughout life. After loss of attachment figures, the bereaved individual's specific attachment style is contested. Pang episodes which include expressions of intense anxiety and suffering accompanied by crying, much like an infant, are considered as a demonstration of searching for the deceased include intense anxiety and suffering. The pangs are the most significant demonstration of continuous attachment bond with the deceased after death.

Even though the bereaved usually know that searching for the deceased lead to more disappointment, they cannot stop searching for a while. Frequency of pangs decline by time and the bereaved started to find connection with the death one, in his own memories and daydreams. That was also the time for adapting upcoming life challenges.

1.4.3. Kübler-Ross Five Stages Model

Kübler-Ross (1970), in her famous five stage-model of loss, describes how an individual experiences various emotions related to loss and passes from one emotional stage to another in detail. According to her model, the stages are denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. In the first stage, as the name implies, it is difficult to accept and understand the reality of death and the bereaved is under the influence of denial. Kübler-Ross proposed that denial of death has a survival value. It provides time for the bereaved to prepare for later stages and prevents the individual from facing death before being ready.

At the second stage of bereavement, anger may be directed towards anyone, towards the deceased, other people in the family, or even God. She claimed that during this stage although the dominant, observable emotion is anger, the underlying emotion is pain, specifically the pain of separation. Bonding with other people may help soothing the anger. The bargaining stage follows anger stage, and it may involve bargaining with God. One can think about doing something to counteract death. Guilt is the companion of this stage because the grieving person may start to think that the loved one died because of something that the bereaved had done. The state of depression at the fourth stage is different than clinical depression, but involves feelings of sadness, unhappiness, and emptiness. It is not uncommon that the bereaved feels this way forever. According to Kübler-Ross (1970), all these painful experiences and feelings are necessary to grieve. Only after moving through these stages, an individual may move to the last stage, which is called acceptance.

Accepting that a person is no longer alive, and life is still going on generally takes some time. The grieving process ends with acknowledging new roles and attributing new meanings to relationships with others and life (Kübler-Ross, 1970). At this stage, the grieving individual may think that he or she is betraying the lost loved one but may still accept that transformations in life are inevitable. Kübler-Ross's five stage-model of loss has attracted lots of attention in bereavement literature and leads to a debate whether it is possible to categorize human bereavement and suffering into different stages (Konigsberg, 2011). According to Stroebe and Schut (2010), placing limits on duration and timing of the symptoms may be misleading and grief is a subjective experience during which different individuals demonstrate different patterns of emotionality. Individuals may also differ in terms of the way they cope with grief and may experience various feelings for different durations.

1.4.4. The Dual Process Model

According to the Dual process model, when bereaved individuals start to respond to the needs of their lives, they begin to oscillate between grieving and managing their changing lives (Stroebe & Schut, 2010). The bereaved engages in loss-oriented stressors related to grief, and restoration-oriented stressors related to adaptation to a new environment and oscillates between the two with avoidance or confrontation. A bereaved cannot engage in grieving all the time. Sometimes they need to avoid suffering and pain to respond to other life problems and responsibilities. The model uses the term oscillation to emphasize the bereaved individual's moving back and forth between loss-oriented and restoration-oriented stressors. The grieving individual sometimes experiences lots of pain and suffering, engages in memories of the deceased, and cries, as a demonstration of grief. But sometimes, they engage in work, children, or home duties and reorienting themselves to these responsibilities without the deceased. Both stressors are sometimes avoided and sometimes accomplished. Because avoidance of pain and suffering is helpful in adaptation of everyday life challenges, it is needed. But adaptation would be delayed with over usage of

avoidance strategies (Bennet, Gibbons, & Mackenzie-Smith, 2010). Therefore a balance of avoidance and confrontation is considered to be the better adjustment for the losses in this model. Accordingly, the bereaved has an active role and significant effort to deal with the loss and changes in his/her life. For instance, Strobe and Schut (2010) mentioned that a grieving widow engaged in painful memories of the loss of her husband and effortfully turned her attention to her responsibilities toward children as a single mother. When dealing with motherhood responsibilities, she usually avoided grief, and while dealing with the memories of the husband's duties, she avoided the daily responsibilities.

Beginning with Freud's explanations of grief work, many theorists have contributed to the development of different models of grief. Attachment theories challenged Freud's idea of overcoming grief by forming new attachments. According to Freud, attachment bonds between the bereaved and the deceased exist after the loss, and the bereaved individuals carry the pain of these attachments for a long. According to the attachment theory, the bereaved individuals search for the deceased even when they know the impossibility of finding them. As they later become more adapted to their losses they continue to connect with the deceased in their memories. The dual process model later emphasized the two-sided nature of grieving. In contrast to Freud's explanation, the model mentioned the individuals' oscillation between grieving and adaptation to the changing circumstances after the loss, engaging in both loss-related loss-related stressors and reorientation-related stresses simultaneously. Kübler-Ross model differs from previous models with its stage-based explanations of grieving, emphasizing specific emotions in each stage. Individuals pass through denial, anger, bargaining, and depression before accepting the reality of their losses. In the present study, the grief experiences of the women also are reviewed through the lens of loss orientation stressors and restoration-oriented stressors, and emotions emphasized in Kubler-Ross's five-stage model of loss.

1.5. Culture and Grief

According to Martin and Doka (2000), grief is a highly cultural and social experience. The influence of culture demonstrates is evident via the implementation of customs and rituals and expressions of emotions. Religion and religious rituals in specific contexts usually shape the bereaved individual's understanding of the afterlife, the meaning of death, what to perform in rituals, how to show the sorrow of loss, and how long she/he would mourn (Rubin & Yasien-Esmael, 2004). Religious views give existential explanations to death, and rituals provided essential tools for coping with loss. All religious beliefs have some description of the afterlife and rituals expected to perform after the losses. Rubin and Yasien-Esmael (2004), in their review of the Islamic understanding of death and the afterlife emphasized the belief of God's decision on birth and death. Events, illnesses, and other factors ended with deaths, all instruments of God's will. Death is a process of returning to God and it is not an end. Because death is only the demonstration of God's will, nothing would be changed an done would need to accept God's order. This understanding provides a kind of relief for the grieving individuals in Islam. According to them Muslims, engaging in religious rituals and gathering to pray with the bereaved after the funeral are ways of supporting the bereaved. The bereaved also feels connected to the deceased, who is then on the way back to God via religious rituals. In Islam, expression of sorrow and pain at a moderate level is acceptable for a while. An overemphasis on the pain, publicly overt expressions of mourning, and prolonged grief would be interpreted as unacceptance of God's will and may lead to a decline in social support for the bereaved. Accepting fate, grieving patiently, and returning quickly to daily activities are promoted. Hence, there are specific times for the rituals in Turkish- Islamic culture, similarly. Social gatherings and rituals start with the funeral prayer with the attendance of relatives, neighbors, friends, and other people who know the deceased (Cimete & Kuguoglu, 2006). For a week after the loss, the bereaved gets lots of social support from their social networks; people help cook, organize house chores, and do other necessary activities. They show respect for the bereaved individual's suffering,

express their sadness for the loss, and usually pray together at different times of the day as a part of a religious ceremony. A modest expression of feelings is allowed. After the 7th day of the loss, the bereaved is let to be alone with daily condolence visits, and communal praying rituals are repeated on the 40th and 52nd days of the loss. These dates are essential both for the deceased and the grieving individuals' suffering; engaging in religious rituals at these specific times is a tool for supporting both. After these particular dates, communal religious rituals take place in only anniversaries. These customs, rituals, and beliefs form an image of a proper grieving individual image on the grievers' minds.

Some deaths had more attention than others in Islamic cultures, such as martyrdom. Martyrdom in Islam reflects jihadi understanding (Cook, 2007). In this understanding, there is complete encouragement of God to fight for Muslim communities, in which, if they get killed, they would reach Heaven and have a special place from God. The Muslim community is encouraged to fight and die if necessary for the sake of Islam. Martyrs are viewed as more valuable, and relatives of the martyrs are also believed to be significant. Recently, Değirmencioğlu (2014) explained how the term martyrdom is used by the dominant ideology in Turkey as a myth to sanctify deaths. According to him, labeling a dead one as a martyr is politically used to get the public's and the bereaving individuals' consent and acceptance of the death via emphasizing the wisdom and holiness of dying as a martyr. It is also a good example of Harris's critical analysis of bereavement. Harris (2010) mentions the impact of oppressive forces on social context to point out the proper deaths and proper grieving processes. Accordingly, the expectation from the bereaved individuals is formed by social and cultural normative attitudes about how one would grieve. Still, sometimes these expectations do not correspond with the bereaved individual's actual experiences. In those cases, an individual may feel shame and try to inhibit his/her actual responses during grief to be in line with society. According to this view, the need for social conformity creates a risk of suppression of adaptive reactions to avoid stigmatization and exclusion. Harris mentioned that

in capitalism, production and consumption are the most critical dynamics; therefore, individuals' quick return to these processes is encouraged. As a result, especially in western cultures, expressing grief-related emotions after a limited time is usually considered maladaptive. Hiding feelings, being rational, and denying the painful experiences are frequent after the losses in these cultures because of societal pressure.

Knowing these social and cultural influences are essential tools for planning intervention with working with widows (Dyer, 2001). Healthcare providers would engage in collecting data related to clients' culture and religion to have a better understanding of the case. According to Harris (2010), the pressure of society also influences the person's expressions in the clinical setting. Hence, identifying interfering forces is critical to enable individuals to discuss their feelings openly. Grieving individuals are prone to hindering their adaptive behaviors not to be criticized by society. Focusing on these responses would increase the coping capabilities of the individuals. Therefore, mentioning the individuals' choices if and when they feel they had to behave in specific ways is essential to understanding the dynamics behind the psychological situation. Being nonjudgmental and avoiding labels toward grieving individuals carries a special significance in this manner. Similarly, Zeybek and colleagues (2022) mentioned the influences of class-related forces in clinical settings. According to them, clinicians would better be aware of the class-specific behaviors of the clients and their class-related attitudes. It needs adding class-related conversations in the clinical process. The clinician's perpetual reflections on his/her privileges and asking about the feelings of the clients about class-related behaviors are significant.

1.6. Gender and Grief

Burke and Neimeyer (2013) reviewed studies on gender differences in grief and found that the studies had controversial results. Previous studies mentioned that women were more likely to develop complicated grief reactions with high rates

of anxiety and depressive problems, and widows also have more health-related problems than widowers (Gilbar & Dagan, 1995). Stroebe (2001) found gender differences in the coping ways of widows and widowers: Widows are more likely to search for and maintain social support hence are more socially integrated whereas widowers depended more on their resources and became more socially isolated after spousal losses. In a more recent study, Lundorff and colleagues (2020), studied the effects of on grief during 12 months of bereavement and found no significant differences between widows' and widowers' grief experiences. However, explaining how patriarchy affects women's lives is important for understanding the widows' overall experiences. In patriarchal cultures, men have a tendency to suppress their emotional reactions, whereas women have the freedom to express emotions and cry; gender roles are contained in the grief experience (Bennet et al., 2003).

The widows' lives, expectancies from them, and pressure on them are culture dependent. In Turkey, women are usually associated with marriage and motherhood; “a proper woman” would marry at a specific age and is expected to have children (Yakut-Çakar & Özar, 2012). Because marriage provides a different status for women, losing their husbands would mean a change in their social category. Before marriage, women's families are thought to be accountable for controlling women's lives, and marriage hands over this duty to the husbands. Accordingly, controlling women's lives means restricting their sexuality because a man's honor relies on a woman's sexual purity. In Turkey, widows frequently experience the pressure of being “moral” and “proper” women and maintaining a good standing for protecting a dead man's and his family of origin's honor. Gedik (2018), in her qualitative research on widows and divorced women, mentioned that the women are exposed to many tests about their appropriateness and face gossip about their living styles. The women usually tried to defend themselves from the tests and gossip, living as if their husbands are still alive. A prevalent strategy for them is employing auto censorship, which means behaving and living in parallel to society’s desires changing clothes, gestures, interacting with people in outside settings. Avoiding people and some social relationships is also

a regular strategy for coping with the pressure. These techniques seem to be shielding the women but are accompanied by constraints on their lifestyles, social isolation, and loneliness. Losing an source of income via loss of a husband is also frequent, and it builds further pressure on the women. Many women rely on their or their husbands' families' financial sources if they are not employed. Social policy regulations transfer a part of the dead husband's salary to widows, and the women's employment increase their economic independence, which becomes a significant way of emancipation.

Van den Hoonard (1997) notes three types of identity changes in an analysis of narrations of widows; changes in the roles in the families, identity changes in the relationship with friends, and in other social settings. Losing husbands represents being single mothers for most women. Among other things they need to fulfill the responsibilities of both mothers and fathers. So, their identities change as mothers with expanding roles and responsibilities. Sometimes their status in the eyes of their friends also change. Many friends have partners, which sometimes leads them to be excluded from meetings involving both men and women. Hence, they may try to reorient their identities in relationships with previous friends. Their image in the eyes of society also change drastically, and they face the challenge of learning the roles of being widows.

Culture and religion and specific religious rituals are significant to understanding one's unique grief experiences. In Islam, believing in fate and death-as-God's-will creates a modality for understanding death, and some rituals are performed with the inclusion of the family of the deceased and social environment. There are some specific dates to be upheld with respect to the ceremonies but reading Quran, praying, and cemetery visits are also private practices of the bereaved. The culture usually determines how and how long one should mourn, so reaching an individual's experiences also means knowing and sometimes questioning the cultural influences. These influences sometimes put pressure on the bereaved, depending on one's gender. Widowhood is a specific social category for the women who lost their husbands. It gives new identities to the women in the eyes

of society. Because controlling women's lives is essential in patriarchal cultures, widows are exposed to lots of social pressure on their lives. Community sometimes tests their "properness" and gossip about them. Widows develop many strategies to deal with these tests and gossip. They include auto-censoring their behaviors, living as if their husbands are alive, and isolating themselves.

1.7. The present study

So far, this summary of the literature on bereaved individuals who experienced traumatic losses of loved ones pointed out that these people experienced grief reactions involving cognitive disturbances, emotional difficulties, social problems, and health difficulties (Bonanno & Kaltman, 2001; (Stroebe & Schut, 2008). If there is a complication in the grieving process, it would lead to more severe disruptions in everyday functioning (Kaltman & Bonanno, 2003). Moreover, complications in the grieving process are more prominent when the loss is traumatic. After traumatic losses, people cannot form new life purposes and make meaning of the loss (Neiyemeyer et al., 2002). Those who manage to rebuild their sense of self also experience personal growth in time. Meaning-making processes of the individual, community support, and ongoing relationships of the person who experienced the loss and the trauma have important effects on the individual in rebuilding a sense of reconnection and searching for new purposes in life (Parkes & Prigerson, 2010; Neiyemeyer, 2006).

There have been some recent qualitative studies in Turkey that aimed to reach the grieving experiences of individuals who lost loved ones (Aslan et al., 2018; Kuş et al., 2022; Maraş & Gençöz, 2018; Özmen, 2014). Özmen (2014) focused on grief experiences, coping methods, and changes and adaptation after losses with a sample of bereaved women from Turkey and the USA. He pointed out some dissimilarities in the American and Turkish women's grieving processes. In his study, Turkish women declared a higher number of explicit behaviors than American ones. The Turkish women mentioned there are condolence visits from

their social environment, which were valuable for their coping, whereas Americans did not mention visits after the losses. All the women benefited from social support; for Americans, the support seemed to be in individualistic ways, such as spending time together or engaging in shared activities, whereas for Turkish women, social support had the function of replacing the role of the dead such as sharing duties of the children or the home. Therefore, American women reported deeper changes in their social networks, whereas Turkish ones stated their social networks remained similar before their losses. Turkish participants reported an attitude and perspective change regarding death and loss. They asserted being more anxious about forthcoming losses, whereas American women did not mention such changes.

In another study, Maraş and Gençöz (2018) focused on how young adults who lost their fathers experienced paternal loss via interpretive phenomenological analysis. They found that young adults experienced the absence of their fathers' protection, authority, and guidance and felt loneliness, sadness, longing, anger, and guilt about their losses. With respect to dealing with their lives without fathers, participants declared they engaged in meaning-making of the loss, emotional expression, or avoidance, having social support, replacing the absence of fathers with romantic relationships, or putting new goals in their lives. Some risk factors worsening the grief process were found to be related to introversion, emotionality, depressive symptoms of mothers, and previous relationship style with the dead fathers. Kuş and colleagues (2022) highlighted the experiences of individuals who lost their first-grade relatives in the COVID-19 pandemic via empirical phenomenological approach. The most prominent themes in the narrations of the participants were found to be the loved ones' death in isolation and the inability to say goodbye to them. The change in the cultural and religious practices emerged as another theme from the study; they could not do funeral ceremonies and gatherings because of the pandemic. All these themes became additional stressors for the grieving individuals.

Aslan and colleagues (2020) examined the influence of spousal loss on the elderly with a phenomenological approach to categorize their grief experiences. They found that elderly individuals mainly experienced cognitive problems after their losses; hence depressive feelings and guilt are also widely mentioned. Participants usually coped with their grief with spiritual/religious activities, and through emotional and social support from the people in their networks. Even though they had difficulty making new plans for their future lives, the urge to do what they wished to do but hadn't done in their younger years was also expressed frequently.

All these current studies focused on the experiences of grieving individuals who lost loved ones, wives and husbands, fathers, and first-degree relatives because of a variety of causes. So, the mode of death and the level of relationship with the deceased were not the same for the participants. The present study is an attempt to understand the mourning experiences of women who lost their husbands via a specific incident. The Soma mine disaster on 13 May 2014 is the deadliest industrial accident in Turkey. The present study is also meaningful in understanding the women's evaluations of this incident, with regards to defining the incident as the Soma “massacre” versus “accident”, and the effect these evaluations have on the grieving processes. Other variables evaluated in this study are its comprehensive coverage in the media and throughout Turkey, the martyrdom title given to the deceased miners by the state, comments by political groups about the event, and the long litigation process. Women who lost their husbands experienced a shift in their social status as widows in the eyes of society. This research aims to uncover specifically how women are affected by this event, how they dealt with grief, and their interpretations of their lives after the loss considering what happened after the event and their experiences of widowhood. The present study aims to explore and understand women's subjective experiences who lost their spouses at the Soma mine disaster. Research questions are:

- How did the women who lost their husbands at the Soma disaster experience the disaster and loss of their spouses?
- What has changed in their lives in regard to both the community members and their significant others?
- How did they cope with their grief and changes in their lives after the losses?

CHAPTER II

METHOD

2.1. Research Design

2.1.1. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was developed to comprehend how one makes sense of an experience (Smith et al., 2009). Compared to more descriptive qualitative analyses, such as thematic analysis, where the emphasis was more on describing the phenomenon, IPA focused on the participants' meaning-making processes. Richardson and colleagues (1999) mentioned that forming specific meaning depended upon an individual's inferences according to previous experiences. Therefore, meaning-making was a subjective process affecting the individual's acts in different circumstances. According to them, one of the critical features of IPA was understanding human beings' meaningful world. According to Smith and colleagues (2009), the meaning-making process was influenced by the events, objects, and related individuals in the environment and included a reflective process of the immediate experiences. IPA researchers situate everyone within their context, focusing on each interview rather than conducting a comparative analysis of interviews. The researcher's role in IPA was to make sense of what the participants were trying to make meaning of their experiences. The individual's experiences were under the spotlight, and giving voice to individuals by considering the context was the primary aim of IPA studies (Larkin & Thomson, 2011). The main objective of the present research was to understand bereaving women's subjective experiences and meaning-making processes in terms of spousal loss due to the mine disaster in Soma and the changes in their lives after the loss. Hence, IPA was the most appropriate approach to reach this aim.

2.2. Participants

Purposive homogenous sampling was used to reach a sample of women living in or around Soma who lost their husbands in the Soma Mine Disaster on the 13th of May 2014. The first criterion of inclusion was the experience of spousal loss, so women who lost their siblings, parents, or children were not included in the study. Seventeen women between the ages of 21 to 42 were interviewed. Fifteen of them resided in Soma, and two of them lived in villages near Soma. Only one of the women did not have any children, three of them had one child, and thirteen of the women had either two or three children. The length of the marriage varied between 8 months and 25 years. Eight had been married for less than ten years, and nine of the women had been married for more than ten years—the women's age when they got married varied between 13 and 31 years old. Three of the women got married when they were younger than 18. Thirteen of the women were from Soma and surrounding villages, and four were from other regions of Turkey.

Five participants graduated from high school, and one was enrolled in university. Four of the participants graduated from middle school, and one of them was continuing with her high school education via distance education. Five of them graduated from primary school, two were continuing their education in middle school, and one had never attended school but was continuing her education in open primary school. Two of the women got jobs after the disaster due to a special regulation provided by the government. Only two of the participants stated that they had been employed before their husbands' loss and were still employed. One woman was a daily wage worker, and the others were homemakers.

Table 1.

Sociodemographic Characteristics of The Participants

Participant	Age	Age at marriage	Length of marriage	Number of children	Education	Employment
Zehra	33	18	12 years	2	HS	-
Kiraz	33	19	10 years	2	HS	-
Medine	41	13	25 years	3	PS	-
Belkıs	38	19	17 years	2	PS	Yes
Emine	30	19	10 years	3	AD	Yes
Hülya	36	16	18 years	2	PS	-
Cemile	28	26	8 months	2	HS	-
Demet	25	18	5 years	2	HS	Yes
Nermin	27	22	3 years	1	HS	-
Feriha	30	24	3,5 years	2	HS	-
Vildan	38	18	18 years	2	MS	-
Songül	26	19	5 years	1	MS	-
Lerzan	41	23	16 years	1	PS	-
Pelin	42	31	9 years	-	PS	-
Yonca	32	23	7 years	1	HS	Yes
Asiye	21	16	3 years	2	IL	Yes
Gülnaz	47	22	24 years	2	HS	-

Note. IL: Illiterate; PS: Primary School; MS: Middle School; HS: High School; AD: Associate Degree (two years)

2.3. Material

The researcher developed an interview protocol with semi-structured questions. The questions in the protocol inquired about the women's experiences before and after the loss. The researcher developed questions following studies on traumatic loss, traumatic stress, and grief and her observations during previous visits to the

field. Questions were about the disaster, psychological distress, ways of coping, familial and social support, and how their everyday lives changed after the disaster. After the questions were reviewed by the dissertation advisor Assoc. Prof. Deniz Canel Cınarbaş and the committee members Prof. Nuray Karancı and Prof. Selçuk Candansayar, the researcher, conducted a pilot study with three participants in May of 2015 to check the clarity and appropriateness of the questions. After a few changes to the wording of the questions based on the feedback from the pilot study participants, the final version of the protocol was developed (APPENDIX B). The protocol began with the demographic questions, and the first group of questions aimed to understand participants' experiences of coming to Soma or living in Soma before getting married. The second group of questions focused on their marriages; their experiences as a couple until the death of their husbands. The next group of questions aimed to understand how the participants' relationships, social status in the community, and sense of self changed after the loss. Then the researcher asked questions about coping and the process of searching for justice after the event. The final question was about participants' sense of growth after the loss.

2.4. Ethical issues

The Middle East Technical University Ethics Committee approved the research. The researcher prepared an informed consent form, and all participants gave oral consent. Oral consent was deemed more appropriate than written consent because several participants were already in a legal battle with the mining company and may have been uneasy about signing a document. A voice recorder was used for recording the interviews and the voice records were kept on the researcher's computer, accessed with a password. As part of the informed consent, the researcher explained to potential participants that they should be away from distractions during the interview and that their responses would only be reported anonymously. The researcher also explained that she would turn off the recorder and stop the interview when somebody, especially the children in

the house, interrupted the interview to protect the intruder from adverse effects of the content and for confidentiality.

The researcher prepared two brochures to be given to the participants. One of the brochures involved guidelines for healthy coping for adults and the other for children (APPENDICES C & D). The brochures also included the contact information for psychiatric and counseling services in and around Soma. The researcher gave the brochures to the participants after the interview and provided brief psychoeducation based on the information on the flyers.

2.5. Procedure

The interviews were conducted between May 2015 and July 2016 during several visits to Soma. Each visit lasted 3 to 4 days, and the researcher interviewed two or three participants during each visit. The interviews lasted between one hour to two hours. The interruptions by others in the household caused the interviews to be longer than necessary. During the first three visits, the researcher stayed in Soma Öğretmenevi, which is located in the Soma town center. After meeting a woman (pseudo name Ayşe) who lost his son in the same mine disaster, the researcher stayed with her during other visits. Ayşe was a key informant and helped the researcher meet potential participants. She is well-known around Soma because of her activities in various support organizations for families. Therefore, her reference for the researcher helped to meet and be accepted by potential participants. Most participants also knew others who lost their husbands in the disaster, and they helped the researcher find new participants by sharing names and contact information. The researcher also observed that psychoeducation after the interviews were helpful for the women. Some of them asked questions about their personal struggles and their children. This process of providing psychoeducation and providing answers to participants' personal questions seemed to increase trust in the researcher, which made access to potential participants easier.

2.6. Data Analysis

All the voice records were transcribed verbatim with a code assigned for each participant. The researcher conducted line-by-line coding and combined emergent themes to form superordinate themes, as suggested by Larkin & Thomson (2004). Once the researcher completed all the coding, another doctoral student knowledgeable about IPA reviewed the coding. The dissertation committee members also provided feedback on the themes, which helped shape the final version of superordinate and subordinate themes.

According to the IPA procedure, first, each case was coded line-by-line. Themes and observable code patterns were identified for each case and then across the cases. Then the researcher combined the coded material based on her understanding of psychological principles and made inferences to the participants' meaning in context. The researcher later combined the themes to understand their relationship to reach a more detailed understanding. Finally, the researcher reflected on her perception, attitudes, and experiences during the research process.

2.7. Validation and quality strategies

In a review to draw a structure for validation in qualitative strategies, Sousa (2014) mentioned some validation strategies, namely, the trustworthiness of the method, coherence, and adequacy of interpretations and transferability of the results. The Thrustworthiness of the technique is particularly ensured by triangulation or peer debriefing. Coherence and adequacy could be provided by interpreting the narrations with a clear perspective of directly connecting to the context, the information's content, and the researcher's observation. Interpretation should give a new perspective and understanding to phenomena to achieve transferability and application of the results.

For trustworthiness issues, peer debriefing was completed with Deniz Yılmaz Zambak, a qualitative researcher familiar with interpretive phenomenological analysis. For keeping contextual information, diaries of self-reflection was used to record vivid reflections of the daily experiences of the researcher. During the interpretation of the results, the researcher used the diaries to combine her observations and the content emerging from the participants' narrations. The researcher contacted four of the participants one year after the completion of the interviews and asked for their feedback. They did not propose any organizations for the transcribed materials.

2.8. Self-Reflection

My first visit to Soma was one week after the 13th of May 2014, the date of the disaster. I remember the exact time and place when I heard about the disaster. I was working at a counseling center and planning to travel to Erzurum for a meeting regarding students with disabilities. I was shocked by the news, although the exact impact of the incident was not clear yet on that first day. I just learned there was a mine explosion in the Soma Eynez mine basin, and many mine workers were waiting for the search and rescue teams. I could not understand the situation in the mine via news. I had colleagues who resided in İzmir and went to Soma to see if they could do anything to help, and they were my primary source of information. The number of deaths increased dramatically on the second day, and there were lots of news about how dramatic the disaster was on television and social media. I heard that the members of psychology, social work, and psychiatric associations were there to help the surviving miners and their families. I wanted to be there with the families of dead miners and the mineworkers to see what I could do for them, but I could not attend during the first week because of my obligation to participate in another meeting. In the first weeks throughout Turkey, we witnessed the tragedy of mineworkers and mourning families and heard stories about miners' lives before the disaster. At the same time, lots of people were visiting Soma to support the miners and their

families financially and psychologically, and the streets of Soma were full of protestors protesting the perpetrators.

I was so sad to witness such a huge disaster and anxious about the mineworkers' families. I was not able to travel to Soma until the end of May. I was a member of the Association of Psychologists for Social Solidarity, and we visited families who lost their significant ones in the mine disaster as a group of psychologists. I remember the atmosphere in Soma; many people came from different parts of Turkey to visit families and give condolences. People were visiting house after house, family after family. During our visits, we came across lawyers, psychologists, teachers, and housewives. Members of various associations and labor unions were there to coordinate both the social and legal support. ; I felt - really sorry for the mourning families and the mine workers who survived the disaster. My colleagues and I sometimes cried between the visits because of witnessing such sorrow.

I grew up in a middle-class Mediterranean family from Antalya and hadn't had contact with a mining community before. In the first place, I was unfamiliar with the poverty they had to live in and the problems related to mining as employment. So, these previous visits helped me familiarize myself with Soma, mineworkers' families, and their experiences just after the disaster. I still remember what a daughter of a mineworker said with great despair: "How can we survive from now on without my father."

I visited Soma several times to conduct the project we prepared in the association. I saw many families about once a month for one and a half years. At the end of this time, I had a great deal of experience in Soma, and I met many women who lost their husbands and dead mineworkers' parents and children. When you visit a place regularly, it becomes very familiar, like a place you had lived before. You start to know various streets, cafes, restaurants, and even hospitals.

I prepared my proposal for the current study based on my previous experiences in Soma. I was happy to continue my visits to Soma and to have the opportunity to research once my proposal was accepted. I initially stayed at Soma *öğretmenevi* (discounted lodging for teachers) as I did during my previous visits. I contacted the women I had met before, told them about my research on the phone, and then visited them at their homes if they were willing to participate. Five of the participants were recruited via this procedure. Then, I asked them whether they knew other women who would participate in the research, and they all gave their names and contact numbers. On my second visit for the study, I met a mother of a dead miner. She was very friendly and helpful in finding new participants. She was a well-known woman in Soma because of her solidarity with other families of dead mineworkers, her active participation in organizations that provided help to miners' families, and was active in organizing protests and transportation to court hearings. Her husband was a retired mineworker who had many years of mining experience. I stayed with them during my later visits to Soma and learned many things about the mining sector from them that I could not have known otherwise.

I eventually visited and interviewed seventeen women. Visits for research were somehow different from my previous visits. It was two years after the disaster. They were still mourning, but it seemed they reorganized their lives around the new circumstances. Many of them had moved to different houses in the city center and had better conditions than their previous homes, with the help of the money provided by AFAD. Many of them had support from their families to meet children's needs, such as transportation to school or to the hospital for health care appointments. A few of them started to work, empowering them to be more self-confident. A few of them had problems with their deceased husband's parents because of the money they got and became alienated from them, which seemed to create guilt towards their dead husbands.

I visited all the participants at their homes. They were all welcoming. I was usually offered tea, coffee, or food before the interviews, depending on the time

of the visits. I was always excited to meet the women and was willing to hear their narratives. Some cried a lot during the interviews, some were so angry about what had happened, all were still mourning after their losses, and most were anxious about their children's future. I always tried to listen to them emphatically. I also felt sad about what they told me, especially when they talked about their experiences just after the incident. It took months to accept the death for all of them, and even after two years, they missed their husbands. Witnessing such sorrow and sadness made me gloomy from time to time.

They were also angry that the mining company ignored previous security problems in the mine and forced the miners to continue working despite unhealthy conditions. For me, their anger was very legitimate. I also became angry about the company's neglect which resulted in the incident. Bearing these emotions during the interviews was sometimes challenging, but I believe I handled them well because of the therapy skills I had acquired throughout my clinical psychology training.

My general impression about the interviews was that talking about their sorrow, sadness, and joint problems was painful for the women. But in the end, talking about their ways of coping and strengths seemed to help them feel better. They also stated that talking about the incident, their experiences, and emotions helped them release their pain. I realized that being listened to by a caring interviewer and talking about their strengths made them feel better in the end. So they generally felt better in the end compared to the beginning of the interviews. I also generally left their houses in a good mood. After each interview, I gave myself some time to process my thoughts and emotions. I usually went to a park or a quiet café where I could rest and calm down. Sometimes reading science fiction or mythological books helped me, probably because they provided images of a different world. Sometimes I called a friend who could understand my emotions and talk to me about my experiences. I also asked for help from my friends and colleagues between the visits. Talking about my immediate

impressions and experiences with them has been beneficial, and I am still very thankful to them.

On the other hand, I could not help but question whether it was good for the participants to remember and talk about the entire process since the incident. I sometimes thought I was just a curious researcher who tried to understand their emotions, nothing more. Yet, other times I felt guilty because of class and cultural differences. I was a specialist working in METU during the research and was an economically independent woman living alone and responsible only for her own life. So compared to their economic circumstances, I had a higher SES and a more comfortable life. Most of the women were responsible for looking after their children alone; they were single mothers, so responsibilities were not limited to providing economic support but also needed to take care of them in any circumstances. I was not a mother, so it would also affect how I interpreted their explanation. They were more religious than I; most wore scarves and mentioned their religious practices during the interviews. It made me think about how my presence affected them in terms of talking about their experiences. Once, I visited a woman I knew from previous psychosocial activities I participated in. It was Friday – which is a holy day for Muslims – a group of women was reading Quran and praying together as a Friday ritual. They were so kind to me to invite the house, and we chatted a lot about their lives and drank afternoon tea together. I found myself connected to them probably because I was familiar with these kinds of rituals (I had many relatives doing similar rituals). However, still, I was a foreigner who bumped into their private lives. I questioned both the evilness of human beings and the fragility of human life when I learned about the circumstances in which these men died and how their bodies were when they were found. I frequently thought about the context that led people to become miners and how the company forced them to work under such conditions. I realized that my anxiety increased, I lost my motivation to work and questioned the meaning of life and death. It seemed like I had secondary traumatic stress. After completing all the interviews, I got a one-week break from my work and processed my feelings in my own psychotherapy. I still

have some difficulty describing my experiences and feelings about the incident in Soma four years after. I somehow feel connected to and affectionate towards the people there, but still an outsider at the same time. My dominant feelings are still sadness and despair about what I had heard from the participants. I also feel anger towards the perpetrators, worried about the children who lost their fathers and their future, and both sadness and hope for the women who lost their husbands.

Finally, I should add that I also experienced a traumatic loss in the past. I lost one of my colleagues and a friend with whom I had worked in Soma to help the families. He died during the Suruç bombing in 2015. Moreover, I was exposed to the bombing in Ankara on the 10th of October, 2015. After these incidents, I had to take a break from my research and writing my thesis because I started to feel emotionally overwhelmed. Yet, I visited Soma frequently to see the families and stayed with them for some time. I attended court hearings and commemoration meetings, and finally, I became a member of the association of Soma Mine Disaster Survivors. In conclusion, the process of writing my thesis coincided with my experiences and emotions that cover a significant part of my life.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Through the interpretive phenomenological analysis nine super-ordinate themes were established. The interviewed women's experiences related to their losses were generally shaped by how they perceived the event. Variables related to their perception included suddenness and the violence of the event, knowing previous problematic conditions in the mine, the number of losses and what had happened to dead bodies of their husbands. All of these variables also influenced the meaning of the event for them; most women thought it was a murder that was mainly caused by ignorance of the employer. Yet, the death itself was regarded as a consequence of God's will and the deceased family members were thought to have become martyrs. The women's perception of and the meaning they attributed to the event also influenced psychological consequences. They had great anger towards people who were responsible from the safety in the mine and found their losses unjust, which made mourning processes more complicated and increased women's suffering. Increased suffering seemed to be related to many physical health related problems.

Analyses showed that changes in social and economic conditions had both negative and positive effects on the participants' mourning experiences, and the event also influenced how they viewed themselves. Therefore, *Changes After Losses* superordinate theme involved detailed explanations of such changes. One of the biggest changes involved being women experiencing supposal loss, so being single mothers and widows was categorized as another superordinate theme named *Experiences of Spousal Loss as A Woman*. Feelings of loneliness and increased responsibilities towards their children's lives were included in this superordinate theme. Along with lots of adversities regarding the changes in their lives and psychological distress related to their mourning process, all the

women adopted various coping mechanisms, which formed another superordinate theme called *Coping with The Loss*. The women also emphasized coping for the sake of their children, coping with the help of social support and financial changes, relying on religious practices, and coping by relying on their own abilities, which were the subthemes under the *Coping with The Loss* superordinate theme.

The participants talked quite a bit about their previous experiences when their husbands were alive. They had lots of financial difficulties and some of them engaged in agriculture previously. Mining was an inevitable low-paying job option with high risks due to poor working conditions. *Being A Miner Family* was the seventh superordinate theme to cover previous experiences of the women. These experiences were also related to the participants' perception of the event and their meaning-making processes. A law suit was filed against people who were considered to be responsible for the event. *The Search for Justice* superordinate theme included participating in the continuing court processes in different frequencies and the participants' motivation regarding participation and attituded towards the courts and protests. Psychosocial services were provided by several NGOs and governmental institutions. The kinds of psychological services that the women received and what worked for them were mentioned under the *Psychosocial Support* superordinate theme. The women were also asked for their suggestions for the improvement of the services, which were also covered under this superordinate theme.

Table 2.

Table of Superordinate and Subordinate Themes

Super-ordinate themes	*Themes*
3.1 Perception of the event	3.1.1 Suddenness of the loss 3.1.2 Conditions in the mine 3.1.3 Huge number of losses 3.1.4 Violence of the event 3.1.5 Dead bodies
3.2 Meaning-making of the event	3.2.1 Murder 3.2.2 Fate 3.2.3 Dying for others
3.3 Psychological Consequences	3.3.1 Rumination 3.3.2 Intrusive memories 3.3.3 Fatigue 3.3.4 Affective outcomes 3.3.5 Social Isolation 3.3.6 Health related problems
3.4 Changes after loss	3.4.1 Economic improvements 3.4.2 Changes in relationships 3.4.3 Change in self
3.5 Experiences of spousal loss as a woman	3.5.1 Loneliness 3.5.2 Being a single mother 3.5.3 Changing gender roles 3.5.4 Being a widow
3.6 Coping with the loss	3.6.1 Coping for the sake of children 3.6.2 Religious coping 3.6.3 Social support 3.6.4 Economic sufficiency 3.6.5 Coping by one's own
3.7 Being a miner family	3.7.1. Poverty 3.7.2. Having no option than being a miner 3.7.3. Having a high-risk job
3.8 Search for justice	3.8.1 Attending the court 3.8.2 Participating in protests
3.9. Psychosocial support	3.9.1 What worked 3.9.2 Suggestions for improvement

3.1. Perception of the event

Women's mourning processes and experiences after the loss were mainly influenced by the way they perceived the incident. In the narrations, the event was almost always described as being violent. In terms of timing, it was unexpected and sudden and resulted in 301 mineworkers' death. Many women knew the life-threatening conditions in the mining basin before the event. All these factors formed the superordinate theme *Perception of The Event* and underlying themes

.

3.1.1. Suddenness of the loss

Interviewed women generally narrated the morning of 13th of May 2014 as a usual morning with their husbands. They prepared food and clothes for them and said goodbye to each other until the evening as usual. They continued their daily lives, doing house chores, visiting friends, or cooking until they heard about the incident. It was the afternoon of that day, some got the news from neighbors, some of them from relatives; there was a fire inside the mine, but its influence was not known yet. In a few hours, they learned that many mineworkers were trapped in the mine, and they understood that their husbands were in there. Search and rescue took several days, some mineworkers were reached alive but 301 of them were dead. The wives of those 301 men could not see their husbands alive again.

According to women's narrations, they were shocked and could not believe in the first place. The incident was so unexpected and sudden; they were shocked and could not believe its reality. The wives of the dead mineworkers could not believe the reality of losing their husbands during a regular workday. They were expecting to live an ordinary day and prepared themselves to see their husbands in the evening. As in the narration of J, they did not expect such a loss:

> J: Sordum bağırıyor mu.. diyorum ki hani emin misiniz belki ölmemiştir. Belki bir şey yoktur kalbi atıyordur, sürekli içimde böyleydi. Çünkü ummadım hani hiç ummadım…Sağ gönderip akşama ölüsünün geleceğini hiç ummadım.
>
> J: I asked if he was screaming… I say, you know, are you sure? Maybe he is not dead. Maybe everything is just fine, his heart is beating, that's how it seemed to me. Because I did not expect, you know, never expected such a thing to happen… I did not expect to send him alive and get his dead body back in the evening.

The women were shocked when they heard about the disaster and the losses of their husbands, because both mentally and psychologically, they could not prepare themselves for such a big incident. As L said;

> L: Biri hasta ise onun öleceğini bilirsin, konuşursun vedalaşırsın.
>
> L: You know when somebody is sick and about to die, you would talk to that person and say goodbye to him.

L mentioned that knowing about someone's sickness, and the probability of death enables close ones to prepare themselves for death to an extent. This preparation may include thinking about memories of the person who is dying, praying, talking to him if necessary, and saying goodbye. When death is unexpected as in the Soma mine disaster, it seemed difficult to acknowledge it. It seemed to have a negative influence on the participants' adaptation to the losses because they were shocked, and it took time for them to accept the reality of their deaths. The suddenness of the loss also made it to harder to process emotions related to the losses. Any kind of loss has the potential to create a feeling of sorrow and pain for loved ones but sudden and unexpected losses seemed to increase their suffering.

3.1.2. Conditions in the mine before the incident

In many women's narratives, it was apparent that they knew the conditions of the mine; their husbands had mentioned the problems they had been facing. They had said that the temperature inside the mine increased dramatically for the last few months, which made it harder to work. Some mineworkers experienced

headaches and fatigue after their workdays that had been caused by the released poisonous gas inside. So, many women mentioned that it was obvious that something was wrong with the mine. During the interviews, those dangerous changes were frequently emphasized. G narrated that her husband had experienced lots of physical changes before the disaster:

> G: …mesela gündüz vardiyasına gittiğinde 5'te evde oluyor, yani bir bardak çayı zorla içiyor insan. Altı gibi, çekyat vardı salonumuzda o zaman tv nin karsısında, oraya bir uzanıyordu orada uyuyup kalıyordu, kaldıramıyorduk da. Saat altı gibi yatar, insan altıda kalkıyor, 12 saat uyuyor, geçiyor da bazen. İşe gitcek sabah adamın haberi yok. Ruh gibi. O kadar yorgun, o kadar yani uyuyor bir insan, bu kadar uyuyamaz babam filan diyordu bu adam ölü mü bir bakın buna, bir aydan bir buçuk aydan beri öyleydi. Yattığı yerde kalıyor ve uyanmıyor. O kadar yoruluyor muydu artık gazın etkisi miydi?
>
> G: For instance, when he goes to day shifts he arrives home at five p.m. He hardly drinks a cup of tea. In the living room, we had a sofa facing the TV, he used to lie on the sofa and fall asleep there, we could not move him to his bed… He goes to bed at around 6, one normally wakes up at 6, he sleeps for 12 hours or sometimes more, he will go to work in the morning, but he has no idea. He is like a ghost, hat tired, you imagine, one cannot sleep that long, my dad used to say. Is this man dead, take care of him, he used to say. He was like that for more than one or one and a half months. He stays where he lies at and he would not wake up, was it because of the gas?

G was disturbed by her husband's changing sleeping pattern and oversleeping, and him being tired most of the time after work. After the incident, she started to think that these previous changes in her husband's routine had been caused by the poisonous gas released in the mine. So, she formed a connection between health-threatening conditions in the mine and how the disaster happened. Another woman said that she had to pack more clothes than before for her husband to take to work with him, because of the hot weather inside the mine her husband needed to change more:

> D: Madenin içi genelde sıcak oluyor zaten ama bir tişört yeterdi, son zamanlarda ekstra tişört götürmeye başlamıştı yanında. Bir geliyordu zaten kıyafetler terli, ıpıslak.
>
> D: The mine is generally hot inside but one t-shirt was enough for him for a day, during the last few days he was asking for more t-shirts... When he came home, his clothes were wet with his sweat.

They also thought that even though the employer and the technical staff knew about these problems they did not intervene, they ignored these apparent problems, which led to the disaster. They did not make provisions against the disaster. As F pointed;

> F: Madenleri denetleselerdi verilen sözler tutulsaydı böyle olmazdı. Mesela yaşam odası yoktu, halen yok. Hala bile tehlike altında çalışıyor madenciler.
>
> F: If they had kept their promises, it wouldn't have ended like this. For example, there was no refuge chamber in the mine, and still, they haven't been building it. Mineworkers continue to work under dangerous conditions.

What F said was also mentioned by several women; refuge chambers protect miners in case of a fire or landslide, by providing safe space while waiting for being rescued. Unfortunately, there was no refuge chamber in the mine and the mineworkers didn't have any protection in the case of such a disaster. Thus, knowing previous conditions in the mine made the participants angrier towards the employer and the authorities who were responsible for safety in the workplace. These expressions were the basis of conceptualizing the event as a murder or a massacre rather than an accident.

3.1.3. Huge number of losses

Most of the women mentioned that mine accidents were frequent in Soma. There were lots of other mine basins, thousands of mineworkers working in the mines, and mining jobs had potential dangers to an extent. Deaths or injuries also happened before, but the number of deaths and injuries was not so high per incident. The death of 301 mineworkers was far from what they had heard in other incidents so far. The high number of deaths also meant that this was not an ordinary mine accident: As H mentioned below:

> H: bence ihmal var yani çünkü bir kişi değil iki kişi değil koca bir maden bütün vardiya bu ihmal değil de ne cinayet değil de ne mesela yani bence öyle... Ben öyle düşünüyorum yani açıkçası. Ben hep öyle düşünüyom yani iki yıl olunca çünkü kaza dediğin iki kişi olur üç kişi olur hadi en fazla beş kişi olsun bu kaza değil bence bu bile bile ölüm

> H: I think there is negligence because it is not one person, two persons but a whole mine, a whole shift, what is this if it is not neglect, if it is not murder, for instance, that's how I think. To be honest, I think like that. I always think about it like that, it has been two years. Because what you call an accident happens with two or three people, or let's say five at maximum, this is not an accident, this is killing on purpose.

As she narrated, mine accidents that result in the death of a few people were somewhat expected, but losing so many mineworkers at the same time made her think about it as a kind of murder. It is important to understand that people in Soma know the risks in the mines and expect accidents. According to H, small accidents in the mine may be acceptable, but underlying problems should have been evident long before such a dramatic event, which meant that the employers were negligent. M. pointed out changes in the mine at that time and the number of people affected by the event, to emphasize how she perceives the event.

> M: Devlet madeniydi eskiden kimse ölmedi orada. Ya hadi 5 kişi ölür 4 kişi ölür. 301 kişi nasıl ölür ya, 301 diyorlar hani dilden çıkması kolay, bir sıraya koyun bakalım, sayın. Bu 301 adam bir evin reisiydi, eşi vardı çocuğu vardı bir ev geçindiren bir adamdı. Bunda ne anne var ne baba var ne kadın var ne çocuk var hepsi adam, hepsi evinin erkeği yani. Benim eşim gitti ama kaç kişinin hayatı etkilendi benim mi dersin çocukların mı dersin. Hepsinin yani anne baba mı dersin.
>
> M: It was a government-owned mine before, nobody died there then. Okay, 5 people die, or 4. How on earth 301 people died. Easier said than done, it is 301, put it in line, and count. These 301 men were heads of households, they had wives, kids, they were feeding a house. No mother, no father, no women, no child, they are all men. They are all the men in their homes. My husband is gone but how many lives were affected, mine, kids'. Everyone's, mothers' and fathers' lives.

As M said, the disaster influenced many people, but especially families of the dead mineworkers, which demonstrates the seriousness of the incident. Parallel to what H said, M thought that this kind of a serious disaster could not be considered an ordinary accident, but something different and bigger. She pointed out that privatization of the mine also affected the disaster; when the state was regulating it, the mines were safer, she said. Private companies did not care enough about workers' safety and they did not make necessary provisions.

3.1.4. Perceived violence of the event

In narrations, there were lots of information about the conditions of mineworkers in the mines. Women generally talked about these heavy working conditions to emphasize how the event became so violent in the end. Mineworkers had to work underground in small tunnels to dig and get to coal for eight hours in their shifts. They were not allowed to go outside of the mine before their shift was over because it took lots of effort and time to go out of the mine and come back. They worked, ate, went to the toilet, smoked inside the mine. Sometimes they needed to dig narrow tunnels and move inside the tunnel in which moving became more effortful. Women heard that the fire caused them to be trapped in the mine with no way out and many of them had images in their minds about how their husbands were stuck in the mine. They were very disturbed while waiting to receive their husbands' bodies. As K mentioned:

> K: Allah biliyor öldüğünü ben sürekli dua ediyorum, hatimler dağıtım. Kaç tane 30 kusur hatim dağıttım hadi çıksın çıksın madende dediler çamur, su basmış dediler Yunus peygamberin duası ateş iste yanıyor maden dediler ateş içinde kalan peygamberin duası hep böyle çıkıyordum dağlara ufluyordum. Rabbim hangi tepenin hangi dağin ardındaysa onu kurtar, o bekleyişi unutamıyorum o bekleyiş mahvetti beni hep bir umutla.
>
> K: God knows that he is dead, I constantly pray, I read the Koran, I prayed for him to get out, they said it was all muddy, they said that there was a flood, the prayer of Prophet Jonah, it was burning, they said, the prayer of the prophet who was stuck in a fire, I used to get out and blow towards the mountains…My God, save him, behind whichever mountain he is, wherever he is. I cannot forget that waiting. That waiting with hope devastated me…

Even though K did not lose her hope until she received her husband's body, she imagined and thought about her husband's experience in the mine. She knew the fire, and the release of gas; she imagined how her husband would burn or get smothered. During the fire extinction process, the mine was flooded for a while; it became another threat for mineworkers underground. The news about those conditions increased women's anxiety and tension while waiting. First, they thought that their husbands could be found injured but alive. Even though the possibility of death was high, and they knew it; they said that they tried to stay

hopeful about the consequences. While they were waiting, they went to hospitals, to the mine where search and rescue were going on, or morgues to get some information about their husbands.

> D: O gün yalınayak gittim hastaneye nasıl attım kendimi bilmiyorum çocuklarımı bile gözüm görmedi. Hastaneye bi gittim sanki mahşer yeri gibi ana-baba yeri. Küçük bir şey değil dedim içimden, gelcek diyom ben bekliyom ama gelcek. Benim kocam uyanıktır diyom, benim kocam akıllıdır zekidir diyom, bir şekilde gelir diyom, senin de burada ne işin var bu çocuklarla zebil olmuşsun buradader diyom. 30 saat bekledim gelcek diye, 30 saat. Anladım ama gene de kendime yediremedim.
>
> D: I went to the hospital barefoot that day. I do not know how I got myself there, I did not even mind my kids, I went to the hospital and it was a bust at the seams, I said to myself this is not something small, I say that he will come, I wait, but he will come.My husband is always vigilant, I say, my husband is smart, intelligent, he will make his way back somehow, he will ask me what I am doing there with the kids all miserable.I waited for 30 hours for him to come back,30 hours.I understood it but I was unable to bring myself to accept it.

D waited 30 hours trying not to lose her hope in the hospital like other relatives, and family members of the workers. She said that it was unbearable to accept his death, so she was still hoping for good news. Search and rescue lasted for four days, which meant that some dead bodies were reached two or three days later. During the process, many women felt the same way as D, they thought lots of things:

> M: Ama gece de diyom hastanede mi bu aç mı susuz mu yeraltında mı o da bana çok koydu. Bir gece ama bana bin gece gibi geldi, acaba hastanede mi, bize ulaşamıyor mu, acaba yer altında mı diyom, ne yapıyo diyom can mı çekişiyor? Acaba yer altında bir şey göçtü de kimse onu bulamadı mı. Bekliyor mu ki beni kurtarabilse diye, çocuklar girebilse biz girebilsek onu çıkarırız. Hep yeraltı hastane düşünüyordum ama yeraltında öldüğünü düşünmüyordum. Yani bi yerde sıkışmış çıkamıyor diyordum acaba ne yapıyor ne hissediyor diyordum, hastanedeyse bize ulaşamıyor diyordum ama maalesef hepsi yalanmış.
>
> M: But then, at night, I say “is he at the hospital, is he hungry, thirsty?" That was hard for me… One night felt like one thousand nights, maybe he is at the hospital and cannot reach us…what if he is under the earth? What if something collapsed on him and nobody found him What is he doing there? Is he waiting to be saved, if we, the kids, can go there, can we take him out? I thought as if he was underground or in the hospital, I didn't think about his death. I thought he was stuck somewhere in their mine and nobody reached him, I tried to figure

> out what he was doing or what he was feeling. He couldn't reach us if he was in the hospital. Unfortunately, all of those were lies..

As time passed without any news about her husband, H started to imagine his condition; being stuck under the earth without food and water. She continued to imagine his conditions for days, desperately. She could not attend the search and rescue process. It seems, for many women, the inability to do something to rescue their husbands increased their feelings of helplessness. According to participants, the mining basin was a dangerous, dark, and horrible place to work. They also associated fire, landslide, and the poisonous gas inside the mine with these images, which made their images of the situation violent and brutal.

3.1.5. Dead bodies

In many cultures and Turkey, people respect dead bodies and try to keep them in appropriate conditions in morgues or their houses before the funerals. After the disaster, because the number of dead bodies was so high, morgues in Soma did not have enough space to keep the bodies. They were put in other morgues in nearby districts or cold storage depots. There were also coordination problems to refer people to accurate places to identify the bodies. Women narrated that it took some time to find their husbands' bodies in this messy situation. Most of the women had vivid memories of how they found the bodies and how they saw their husbands. As M said:

> M: Morgdaymış ama morgda değil biliyon mu direk soğuk hava deposuna; soğuk hava deposu, ne kavun deposu doldurdular da...Öyle yani kavun deposuna bir de naylon sermişler sıra sıra sıra geçirmişler üstüne koymuşlar. Bana söylediler soğuk depo, ne soğuk deposu bir de işkence ettiler. Ölmüşlere saygısı olmuyor. Bi buraya hastaneye getirdiler bir de mezbahaneye koydular, hayvan kesilen yer aşağıya mezbahaneye baktılar çok almıyor, tekrar Kırkağaç'ta depoya koydular. Burdan alıp oraya koydular oradan oraya. Götürmeyin yerinde kalsın artık oynatmayın. Hani ben eşimi bulmuş olsaydım gece evine getirirdim, ölmüş olsaydı da evine getirirdim yatağına koyardım

> M: They said he was in the mortuary but he wasn't, directly to cold storage, not even cold storage, melon storage… so, yes, they laid out nylon on the floor, they put them in a row. They told me that the storage is cold, what cold storage, they tortured too on top of everything. They do not respect the dead. They brought

> them here to the hospital, they took them to the slaughterhouse, it did not take too many, they moved them back to the Kırkağaç storage again. They moved them around here and there. Do not move them, let them stay where they are. If I were to find my husband, I would bring him to his home, even if he was dead, I would have brought him to his bed.

M thought people did not show enough respect to dead bodies. According to her, changing locations of the bodies, putting them in cold storage depots where generally melons were kept, or slaughterhouses were in a way torturing the dead bodies. She was so angry with the procedures and felt so sad about her inability to bring his body home. Many women complained about the procedure just like M. It prevented them from practicing their rituals like bringing the body home before burying and reading Quran near him. The way the disaster happened, in addition to the coordination problems that took place afterward, seemed to prevent the wives from performing culturally and traditionally necessary rituals that would have facilitated the acceptance of death and their grief.

The women especially emphasized the appearance of dead bodies. Some women could see their husbands' bodies and some of them could not. Women who could see said there were evident signs of the disaster such as some injuries or carbon marks on the bodies. Some of the bodies were deformed, some of them were in a normal shape but the gas had changed their appearances. Nearly all of them said it was hard to identify the husbands' bodies.

> M: Sakalları beyazdı benim eşimin saçı sakalı beyazdı, burası böyle kömür yaptığı için, yüzü siyahtı kömürden, tanıyamadım. Şu gözlerinden tanıdım, mavi gözlü bir de saatinden giydiği tişörtünden bildim. Ben de hiç öyle görmediğim için dedim o değil dedim önce.

> M: My husband's beard was white, his hair and beard were white. I could not identify him, his face was black because of the coal. I could only identify him from his eyes, his blue eyes, and his watch, and the t-shirt that was on him. But I hadn't seen him like that before, I thought it was not him in the first place.

It was hard for M to identify her husband's body because his hair and beard had turned black because of the coal, Witnessing how he changed seemed to increase her suffering. Still, women who could see the bodies one last time, also

mentioned that they were glad to see them. Some of them could not see the bodies because the bodies were very deformed. As D said:

> D: Ben de dedim görcem, gitmeden önce sarılcam son bi kez koklayacağım dedim kapının önüne geldiler, orasını çok iyi hatırlıyorum göstermediler açmak istedim bakmak istedim tabutun üstüne yattım ama açtırmadılar. Gittiği şekilde hatırla güzel hatırla dediler. Sen kaldıramazsın sevdiğin insanı o durumda gördüğüne dayanamazsın. (ağlıyor).
>
> D: I said I wanted to see him, I wanted to hug him for the last time. They came in front of our home in the coffin. I tried to open it and see him, but they did not allow me. They said, remember him as you last saw him, remember him well. You cannot bear to see him like that (crying).

Even though she didn't see the body, D knew that it was very deformed, probably became unrecognizable. She could not hug him for the last time and she felt like she could not say goodbye to him. Additionally, the violence of the event became apparent, and thinking about his experiences before death was so painful for her. Other women also shared similar experiences with D. It also affected their mourning process later. Because they could not see or touch the body; it became harder to believe in the reality of death. Probably seeing the dead bodies made it easier to understand and accept death.

Women's perception of the event was shaped by their knowledge of the conditions in mine, the way the event happened, what they experienced while waiting to get the bodies, and how they saw and received their husbands' bodies back. In the end, they all agreed that the event and their husbands' losses were unexpected and violent, and was highly traumatic for them. These factors affected their meaning-making processes, which are explained in detail in the next superordinate theme.

3.2. Meaning-making of the event

The meaning-making process of the women is directly related to how they perceived the event. Two opposing views emerged after the incident when the prime minister said "death is a natural part of mining job". Supporters of this

view said that it was a mining accident and mineworkers' destiny. The opposers insisted that it was not an accident but a murder. Interviewed women also discussed these two arguments in their narrations. Most of the women agreed that it was not an accident but a murder caused by the ignorance of the employer. In their explanations, they generally mentioned the ways the event occurred and the ignorance of the employers. A few women said it was their husbands' fate to die via this disaster. Their mutual explanation was that the husbands died for other people, and they are martyrs. The meaning they attributed affected the way they mourned and felt after the losses.

3.2.1. Interpreting the Event as a Murder

Many women called the incident a murder or a homicide. As written in *The Perception of The Event* section; knowing about the previous problems in the mine, the way the disaster happened and 301 mineworkers died, and the things that happened to the dead bodies influenced the women's perception of the event. Accordingly, most of the women emphasized that the event was a murder. Another strong argument for its being murder was employers' ignorance of bad and hazardous working conditions in the mine.

> M: İnan ki ben de hiç anlayamadım, normal bir ölüm değil bence. Normal bir ölüm olamaz, bir aklın mantığınla düşünecek olsan hiç normal bir ölüm değil, benim şeyim bunlar başındakiler hiç paraya doymadı, ne paraya ne kömüre. Benim eşim ölmeden bir iki ay önce müfettiş gelmişti. Müfettiş gelmeden arıyor onları, müfettiş gelecek denetim yapın diyorlar, orayı temizliyoz, iyi telefon koyuyoz müfettiş buraya kadar geliyor bakıyor bir yere kadar gelip dönüyor

> M: Believe me, I did not understand this at all either, it is not a normal death, I think. It cannot be a normal death, if you think logically, it is not a normal death at all, my issue is that the people in charge never got satisfied with the money, nor the coal… My husband used to say that the inspector would call them before he arrives, they say the inspector will come, do some inspection, we clean that space up, we put a good phone there, the inspector comes up to a certain point and looks and turns back…

M. also mentioned that regular inspections were fake and served to continue the usual operation in the mine. Masks that were supposed to be used in the case of

gas leakage were useless because the employers bought cheap and ineffective ones. Moreover, many women also thought that rescue processes were problematic and increased the number of deaths. What M said was like a summary of most of the women's narratives. The employers had always valued money and production more than workers' safety and lives. As L narrated;

> C: İhmal yani kaçacakları hiçbir şey kalmadı. Bir savaş olsa düşün düşmanını görürsün ya vurursun ya vurulursun. Çok çok ihmal varmış. Kimisi kazanıyor böyle kanını iliğini terini döküyor, maden sahiplerinin karıları kızları yiyor.
>
> C: It is neglect, they don't have a place to escape. If it was a war, you may see your enemy, you may shoot or be shot down. There was too much neglect. Some people like these mineworkers worked tooth and nail, mine owners' wives and daughters spend it.

Even in a war, people have choices to shoot or to be shot L said to explain the despair of mineworkers in the mining basin. There was no way out in case of an emergency and yet, employers had to ensure workers' safety. So, the event is directly related to employers' neglectful attitudes. Like other participants Z also thought that the main reason behind employers' neglect was their urge to earn more money from the mine.

> Z: Ben ilk önce şimdi Allah'ın işi derim, Rabbimden geldi diyorum yani olacakmış ama sen tedbirini alacaksın ki takdirini Allah'a bırakacaksın. Sen gidip şuradan atlayıp ölür müyüm ölmez miyim diyemezsin. Tedbirsizliklerine kızıyorum, suçlular. Anlatılanlara göre çok fazla sorumsuzluk var.
>
> Z: First of all I said it is will of God, It comes from my God, it would have happened any way, but you need to take precautions and then expect God's will. You cannot test whether you will die or not by jumping from there (she is pointing the window). I am really mad at their neglect and recklessness, they are guilty. Depending on what they say about the mine there were lots of irresponsibility

Z, along with many interviewed women, declared herself as a religious woman. Z explained that only God can decide the time of death for everyone. She also explained how her religious understanding doesn't conflict with the idea of it being murder. According to her, one cannot expect the protection of God without taking precautions. She underlined that the employers were guilty of not

preventing the incident and emphasized their irresponsibility. Like Z, some other women also pointed out the guilt of the employers by saying that believing in fate does not mean that the event is not a murder.

Women who thought that the event was a kind of homicide also had to deal with the idea of their husbands being killed. It seemed to increase their feelings of injustice and insecurity toward life. Parallel to their feelings, they tended to attend protests and the court hearings related to the event more, compared to the women who thought that the event was a kind of accident.

3.2.2. Interpreting the event as an accident and God's will

As stated at the beginning of this part, the opposing view to the event being a murder was it being an accident. This view was generally associated with death being a pre-determined event as an order of God. According to this belief, everyone is born with a written fate, and the timing of death is pre-determined. Explanation of the women who viewed the event as destiny mainly relied on this belief. A few of the interviewed women said it wasn't a murder but the fate of the mineworkers.

> E: Normal çünkü bu kayıp da normal yani esimin ölmesi gerekiyormuş onu kaybetmem gerekiyormuş. Bugün ben yasadım yarın Ayşe yasayacak öbürkü gün Fatma yaşayacak bunu evet çok acı ama yaşamamız gereken. Yani bizim garantimiz yok ki evet ben bugün esimi kaybettim ama o gün ölmüş olan ben de olabilirdim orada

> E: …normal because this loss is normal too, I mean my husband was meant to die, I was meant to lose him. I had this experience today, Ayşe will have it tomorrow, Fatma will have it the other day, yes, it is very painful but it is something we need to go through, I mean we do not have a guarantee, yes, I lost my husband that day, but it might have been me who died there that day.

E said it was a normal death because it was in her husband's destiny, and no one could have changed it. It doesn't mean that she is not mourning or feels pain like others, but her point is that death is a command of Allah and when death comes, only the way of death will change, nothing else. This explanation seems to

provide a basis for soothing herself. In general, religious explanations seem to have a positive effect on the acceptance of death. If it is God's command, no one can be responsible for deaths, and no one can change it. It also decreases feelings of despair and anger towards the employers.

3.2.3. Dying for others

All the women agreed that their husbands are martyrs now. They explained why they must be martyrs in two different ways. Most of them said that their husbands were the breadwinner of their families and they died while they were working to support their children. Even though they knew the risks of their jobs, they continued to work in the mines risking their lives. As Y said:

> Y: Sonuçta onlar çocuklarının rızkı peşinde, insanlar için öldüler diyom. Bütün kış insanlar onların kömürlerini yaktı ısındı. Şehit oldular diyom avunmaya çalışıyorum
>
> Y: they are after their kids' livelihood, I say that they died for the people. People burned their coal and got warm all winter. I say they became martyrs and try to console myself.

Y. also thought that her husband's job was important to support other people who used coal as the main way of heating. It made her proud and she found some relief in this explanation. In Turkish culture, calling someone a martyr is a way of honoring the dead. Martyrs are rewarded in the afterlife and their families are expected to be proud of them. So, calling them martyrs increased the value attributed to dead mineworkers.

> E: Benim çocuğum en azından babam maden şehidi diyecek onların (işverenlerin) çocukları gibi suçlu bir babanın boynu büküklüğünü yaşamayacak.
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> E: My kid will, at least, say that my dad is a mine martyr. Unlike their (the employers') kids, he will not experience shame caused by a guilty father.

E. pointed out the way her husband's death made him a martyr. This may have provided a basis for her children to be proud of their father, unlike the employers'

children. Being the wife of a martyr is preferable according to her. We may infer that naming dead mineworkers as martyrs became a way to honor and soothe the mineworkers' families.

3.3. Psychological Consequences

Many women declared that they had various psychological problems after their losses. These problems included rumination, experiencing intrusive memories, fatigue, high levels of tension, anger, sadness, loneliness, and health-related problems.

3.3.1. Rumination

Even though labeling the event as either murder or a result of fate provided a kind of explanation to the women, this traumatic event made them ask why it happened, why it happened to them and their families; again, and again. It seemed to be a kind of rumination that was painful. Many of them cried a lot when talking about their ruminative thoughts during the interview. As H said:

> H: Soruyorum kendime neden böyle oldu neden biz neden böyle olduk diye yani işte...hiçbir cevap bulamadım hala da bulamıyom yani çünkü cevabı yok ki kim diycek cevabını
>
> H: I ask myself why we became like that... I could not find any answers and still cannot. There is no answer to my question, who can answer it?

As the narration of H. indicated the questioning was a long-lasting process, and it was hard to find an answer; because there is no answer about the event.

> B: Eşim diyordu çocuklar okusun okusun okusun diyordu ben de istiyom evlatlarım okusun diye de onda daha fazla heves vardı hele oğluna diyordu büyük bir adam ol, ben de senin arkandan geleyim babam dersin gururlanırım diyordu. Diyom kendisi böyle öldü diyom, oğlu ölümünden sonra verilen bursla iyi bir okula okumaya gitti diyorum, kafamda böyle pekiştiriyom da bu niye acaba böyle oldu bi bağlantı varmış gibi

> B: My husband always said our children must study and continue their education. I also wanted it but he was more passionate than me. He said especially to his son, be a big man, I will walk behind you and feel proud of you. Now I think, he died and his son was accepted by a known private high school with a scholarship due to his father's death. I form a connection between these two events.

As in the narration, there was a tendency among the participants to associate some of the changes in their lives with the loss. In B's narration, the meaning of loss was associated with her son's acceptance to a prestigious high school because of being an orphan. Her husband had placed great importance on their children's education, and due to their economic conditions, their son could not attend a prestigious high school before. After the loss, it became possible because he received a scholarship. She tried to associate these two separate events in a positive way which could bring some relief for the pain of her loss.

3.3.2. Intrusive memories

Nearly all the women's narrations included statements about waiting at home, in the hospitals, or around the mine, and some of them also stated that they had flashbacks or intrusive memories related to hospitals or morgues. Waiting without any information for a long time, witnessing injured and dead mineworkers and their relatives' reactions, and any other related scenes in the hospitals may have caused high levels of anxiety and made the process highly traumatic for them.

> D: Ne kadar kalabalık olduğunu unutamıyorum oranın, herkes birilerini arıyor, ambulanslar gidip gelip sürekli ölü ya da yaralı madenci taşıyordu. Ana baba günüydü.

> D: I could not forget how it was crowded, everyone was searching for someone, ambulances were going and coming back carrying injured or dead mineworkers. It was bursting at the seams

D was crying when she was talking about the hospital, she was shocked by the news, and waiting at such a place with lots of people in pain and anxiety was still one of the dreadful memories for her. A sound, a scene, or talking about the

incident easily provoked these memories. Sometimes an ordinary object would stimulate it. As M said;

> M: Benim eşim ölmeden önce torunuma oyuncak ambulans almıştı, küçük oyuncaklar oluyorlar. Yine biz çocuklayız oyuncak torunla benim aramda kalıyor. Ben onu görüyom gerçek sanıyorum benim eşim onun içinde gidiyor sanıyorum. Bütün ölüler o ambulansın içinde geçiyor sanıyorum, bakıyor araba gidiyor içinde böyle. Orada gördüm ya böyle madenin önünde aynı böyle açıyorlar atıp atıp götürüyorlar

> M: My husband bought a toy ambulance for my grandkid, just before he died, they are these tiny toys. We are still with the kid, the toy is between me and my grandkid. I see that, I imagine it to be real as if my husband is in it and he is going away. I consider that all the dead people are in that ambulance, the car goes like that. I saw it there, you know, in front of the mine, they open it just like that, they put them in it, and they take them away.

M explained that a toy ambulance provoked her memories the day after the incident. She saw the entrance of the mine and how they carried it the bodies the hospitals. She said that she started to cry after this flashback and it took some time for her to be soothed. She threw away all the car toys afterward. Just like M, many women declared that their memories could easily be triggered in their daily lives. Not only memories related to the incident but also memories of the husband when he was alive were vivid for them. Sometimes memories of their husbands being still alive dominated their feelings. Feeling as if he would come home in the evening, or as if he was still at home increased their longing, sometimes made them feel their husband's presence. It was a common experience for the women. As H stated;

> H: İki yıl geçti bak hala bi ses oluyor kapıdan girecekmiş gibi hissediyorum.

> H: Now it has been two years, I still feel like he may come when I hear a noise at the door.

Even after two years without him H continued to feel his presence and this feeling made her both excited and disappointed at the same time. Moreover, many women also said that before their husbands' death, health workers injected the wives with a kind of tranquilizer. As D said;

> D: Onun öldüğünü söylediler neye uğradığımı şaşırdım. O an bana bir iğne yapmışlar hiçbir şey hatırlamıyorum, uyandığımda bir süre kafamı toparlayıp durumu anlayamadım
>
> D: When they informed me about his death, I was shocked. They injected me with a tranquilizer, I did not remember anything after then. When I woke up it was really hard to understand what was going on.

Many other women mentioned that they got an injection just after they learned about the loss. It made them confused for a while, which affected their emotional processing in the first place.

3.3.3. Fatigue

Many women declared that they experienced fatigue that caused an inability to function effectively. Generally, relatives and close friends helped prepare meals and clean the house.

> K: Çorbamı yaptılar getirdiler. Yemek yaptılar getirdiler, biri sarma sarar getirir sen bugün yemek yememişindir, zaten üç ay boyunca hiç kalkmadan yattım ben. Hiç kalkmadım, kalkamadım. Kayınvalidem bile bak kocan öldü gitti, sana da bir şey olacak yemiyorsun içmiyorsun korkuyorum diyordu.
>
> K: They made soup and brought it to me. They cooked meals and brought them to me, one of them brought stuffed vine leaves, says that you probably did not eat today, I did not get up for about three months, I was in bed. I did not get up, I could not do it. Even my mother-in-law said 'your husband is dead, he has gone but I am afraid something bad going to happen to you, you are not eating, drinking.'

K was one of the women who experienced fatigue and loss of interest in life for a long time. She described her situation as not having the energy to get out of bed, eat or take care of herself. Other women also narrated that they were in a similar situation after the loss. The duration of this heavy fatigue varied from one week to three months. A significant outcome of this state was losing their physical health because of not getting enough nutrition or sleep. Another outcome was their inability to look after their children. Some women said they felt guilty towards their children. Some of them also felt guilty towards their dead husbands because of not taking care of their children.

3.3.4. Affective outcome

The most dominant emotion expressed by the women was great sadness related to their losses. Sadness was expressed in various degrees in the narrations. Their sorrow was hard to soothe soon after the incident. They all remembered how painful it was. The degree of sorrow decreased in time but still had painful effects on their lives. As E. said:

> E: Acının ta dibine vurmuşsunuz o yüzden başka hiçbir şey eskisi kadar da acı vermiyor.
>
> E: You hit the bottom in pain. that's why nothing else hurts as before.

She described the pain as incomparable to anything they experienced before and things that made her sad changed in time. She said that after such sorrow, her attitudes also changed toward people. Many of them said that they cannot enjoy their relationships with other people, even sometimes with their children. Losing the sense of joy with their sorrow led them to feel indifferent towards relationships.

> Y: çocuğumun dahi şeyini yasayamıyorum anladın mı zevkini çıkaramıyorum o olsaydı böyle aa ne konuştu aa ne oldu o çok sevinirdi böyle şeylere hani tekrar hani ne bileyim şuradan biri geçiyor baba kız el ele, eskiden annem yok ya anne kız geçti mi içim cız yanardı şimdi baba kız geçti mi içim cız yanıyor, anne kızı görmüyorum artık baba kız geçti mi içim yanıyor en çok işte yasayamadıklarımıza çok üzülüyorum o kadar yasayabileceğimiz yasayacağımız şey vardı ki daha..
>
> Y: I cannot even enjoy my child's thing, you know… if he was around, he would be very happy with things such as things she said, what happened… You know, I do not know, a hand-to-hand dad and daughter walk over there, before I would be sad when I see a daughter and a mother, because I have no mother, now, I feel sad when I see a dad and a daughter. I do not see mother and daughter anymore, I get upset most when a daughter and a dad walk by, I feel sad for the things that we could not experience, we had so much to live together…

As Y said, having fun or playing with her child does not make her happy anymore. She felt so sad for not finding enough energy to accompany her child.

She also felt sorry for her child not having a father anymore. Seeing a father and a daughter together, thinking about her daughter's future without experiences with a father increased her suffering more. Some women said they suffered so much and nothing made them happy again. As K narrated;

> K: şu an artık beni mutlu edecek hiçbir şey yok hayata karşı. Bakıyorum artık benim eşimle başladı eşimle bir bitti hayatım. Şu anda sadece düşündüğüm şu cocuklarım bir meslek sahibi olana kadar hatta lise sona kadar okutsam yeter bana, ondan sonra beni rabbim uzatmasın canımı alsın.
>
> K: Now, there is nothing to make me happy. My life had started with my husband and ended with his loss. I only care about my children's future occupation, it is even enough for me if they complete their high school education. After that, I wish God would not take too long and end my life.

K was one of the most affected women. She explained that her life before marriage was very problematic and that she had lots of conflict with her family. She was so happy to be away from her family of origin when she first got married and her marriage brought her unexpected happiness. She felt like she lost her in life and interest in the future. Only concerns for her children made her life meaningful and helped her continue living. Like K, other women said that they live like there is no future for them anymore. Hopelessness also seemed to increase their suffering and increased suffering led to more depressed feelings.

> K. Geleceğe dair hiçbir beklentim yok yani şu olsun bu olsun. O zamanlar gelecek düşünüyordum, artık ileriyi hiç düşünmüyorum. Bu yüzden benim hayatım hiç değişmedi çünkü hiç beklentim yok bundan sonra beni hiçbir şey değiştiremez para olsun pul olsun yığsınlar yere…
>
> K: I do not have any expectations about my life, I used to think about it before but not anymore. My life didn't change after my husband's death because nothing can change me, Money, wealth nothing.

K continued to talk about her hopelessness about the future, many women also mentioned being without expectations for their futures, which made them more depressed in their current experiences. Wives of the dead mineworkers were paid a certain amount of money for their loss and people around them knew about the money. This created social dynamics between them and people in the

community, which will be explained in more detail under the financial development subtheme. This charity money led to many unpleasant experiences and emotions among the participants. The money was provided only for the widows but not for other survivors of the disaster. So, other survivors found this unfair and became angry towards the government. Other survivors and people in Soma started to gossip about the widows for enjoying the money and not caring about their husbands' deaths. There seemed to be hidden pressure on the women to continue mourning, feeling sad, and demonstrating it to other people. Otherwise, others might think that they forgot about their husbands and were enjoying the money they got. For sure, they experienced lots of pain and felt sad about their losses; but the image of a mourning widow in the society also influenced their feelings. The image of a mourning widow included being sad, powerless, and miserable. This expectation was interwoven into the women's mourning experiences. So, many women emphasized that their attitudes and life styles didn't change after the losses. Changing attitudes of people who were previously in their social environment made many women angry towards them. Nearly all of the women narrated that they were very exhausted about the gossip and angry towards people in the community. As D said:

> D: O gitti, dedim ki kendime seni savunacak koruyup kollayacak sana destekçi olacak onun kadar destekçi olacak kimse yok artık sen kendini savunacaksın. Bu sefer konuşmaya başladım kötü oldum. İnsanlardan çoğu kez kaçmaya çalıştım yalnız kalmak istedim hani o insanların bizim eşlerimizi ne şartlar altında çalıştıklarını görünce insan nefret eder mi, nefret ediyor işte. Nefret duyuyor hayata kin duyuyor.

> D: He has gone, there is no one to defend and to support you, you should defend yourself. Then I started to defend myself against people but I became the bad one. I tried to avoid people, I wanted to stay alone. When thinking about in which conditions our husbands had worked, one can hate everything. Feel hate and grudge toward life.

Some women said that they experienced bursts of anger when they were trying to deal with their children.

> L: Her şeye çabuk sinirleniyorsun bağırıyorsun ya oğlum mesela durduk yere sen bana niye bağırıyon diyor, her zaman şey yapamıyorsun ağlıyon, sonra neden ağlıyon sen diyor. İçine de attığın zaman olmuyor.
>
> L: You get angry with everything, you yell, for instance, my son asks me why I yell at him for no reason, you cannot do the same thing all the time, you cry, then why you are crying, she asks. You cannot always bottle it up.

As L said, anger burst sometimes continued with crying which generally stemmed from feeling desperate and powerless. Anger sometimes led them to feel guilty about not preventing their husbands from going to work on that day. As mentioned under *conditions in the mine* theme, many women knew the problematic conditions in the mine before the incident and this information led them to feel responsible for their husbands' loss. Some of them even declared that they felt angry towards their husbands because of not quitting their jobs before. As J, described in detail;

> J: Bazen kendim kızıyorum eşime, sen giriyorsun ben bilmiyorum ki mesela. Siz çalışıyorsunuz siz giriyorsunuz, niye bilmiyor muydunuz? Bazen o da eşimle sanki konuşur gibi küstüm sana diyorum hani. Kızıyorum hani neden böyle yaptın bilmiyor muydun?
>
> J: Sometimes I get angry with my husband, you go in there, I do not know. You work, you enter, why, did you not know. Sometimes as if I am talking with my husband, I tell him that I am upset with him. I become furious, you know, didn’t you know, why you did you do that?

Some of them also said that they were also angry with themselves because of allowing their husbands to work under these conditions. They wished they had known the consequences and didn't let their husbands go to work. A woman also said that she was angry toward her husband for working in the mine despite knowing all the problems inside. Some of them also talked about their anger toward the employers and authorities regarding their responsibility for the incident, but it did not prevent them from being angry at themselves.

3.3.5. Social Isolation

Almost all the women mentioned that they felt socially isolated in different levels. They spent most of their time with their children or alone. Social isolation experienced by women had different causes. Mourning itself and high levels of unmanageable emotions led them to isolate themselves. Their isolation generally started just after the loss because of the shock. Some women declared that they did not talk to anybody for days. Others said that it was their preference not to relate to other people.

> G: Ben dediğim gibi yine de konuşurum, çok konuşmayı seven misafirperver insanlarla ben mesela şu yandaki evin birinci katında oturuyordum kendime bulamazdım ama biz orada bahçeye otururduk bu konu komsu toplanırdı orada, kız da artık isyan ettiğini biliyorum, yani akşamüstü oldu mu kahve çay muhabbet birbirimizle komsularımla. Eşim öldükten sonra ben şu anda hiçbir komsumun evine adım atmadım. Onlar oturuyor orada sesleniyorlar çay içelim gel, komsular sesleniyor, akrabalarım da mecburiyet dışında artık hastalık ölüm düğün bayram oluyor bunun dışında gezme işim yok gezmek istemiyorum. Yoruldum artık aynı şeyleri insanlara anlatmaktan.

> G: For example, I used to live on the first floor at that building next to us, we used to sit in the garden there with all the neighbors, I know that my daughter would protest it, in the afternoons we would get together and have tea, coffe. After my husband died, I did not visit my neighbors, not even one. They sit there, they invite me to have tea with them, my relatives too, unless it is compulsory, like illness, death, wedding, fest, I do not want to visit anyone, I got tired of telling everyone the same stories.

Before the loss G was a socially active woman who visited neighbors, liked to chat with them. But after the loss, she started to isolate herself because she did not want to talk with them about her problems and pain again and again. Another reason she mentioned was that even her friends started to talk about money issues.

> G: Arkadaşlarım mesela kahve içerdik önceden birlikte, telefon ediyor mesela ben gelemiyorum sen gel diyorum. Gitmek istemiyorum artık gezmiyorum da yani yalan yok. Mecburiyet dışında çıkmak istemiyorum bir de çok konuşuluyor da burada her şey, Her şey batıyor insanlara, adamlar öldü mesela on kere diyorum aynı şeyi 156 milyar da çok para değil bir ev parası ama burada madenci kadınlarına her türlü şey söylendi, adamlar öldü boş buldular yok

> paraya şey oldular kimi araba aldı herkes keyfinde duymak istemiyorum artık bunlardan.
>
> G: For example, we used to drink coffee together, Now, she calls I say she may come because I don't want to go. I don't want to go anymore; I don't want to go anywhere. I do not want to go out if it is not necessary. Everything disturbs me, men died, I said it ten times 156 billion liras is not huge amount of money, you may only afford a house. In Soma lots of things are told about women, men died the women changed, some of them bought cars, they are enjoying life now. I don't want to hear anything related to it.

Another cause of social isolation was the pressure of being a widow. Almost all of the women mentioned that they realized the negative attitudes of people around when they went out for a walk or shopping by themselves. These attitudes were evident in people's glances and their words. Sometimes they heard that people talked about another widow in a bad manner and they were suspicious that people also gossiped about them. It was not only other people's attitudes, but some women also applied this pressure on themselves; according to them being a widow required proper behaviors such as not going out alone or not talking to strangers, especially to men.

Social relationships were also influenced by the absence of their husbands. Family gatherings generally consisted of couples and their children. Many women said that they did not want to visit their previous family friends, because they felt sad about being alone while others were still with their spouses; they felt lonelier. Also, being in the presence of others' husbands made them feel uncomfortable, probably because being friends with friends' husbands is not culturally accepted in Soma.

3.3.6. Health-related problems

Many women talked about their health-related and physical problems during the interviews. Common problems were hypertension, heart-related problems, and gynecological diseases.

> K: Ben bilmiyorum ya ben bu ilaçlara başladım ettim işte, ondan sonra kanamam geldi hasta oldum, sonra üç ay adet gördüm. Kanamam artik böyle pet koymaktan yara oldu bacaklarım şeylerim. Yemiyorum zaten hiç çay sigara çaysigara.,çay gördüğüm zaman sigara gördüğüm zaman içiyorum ama yemek yemiyorum.Manisa'da 8 eylül diye bir hastane var oraya gittik kan değerlerim düşmüş sürekli yemek yemediğim ama kanamam geldiği için.
>
> K: I do not know, I started to take those pills, then I had bleeding, I became sick, then I had menstrual bleeding for three months, three… My legs and my private parts got scars because of using too many pads. I do not eat anything anyway. Tea, cigarette, tea, cigarette… I drink tea and smoke cigarettes when I find them, but I do not eat any food.

What K said was a good summary of what most interviewed women told. In the first months, many of them did not take care of themselves both psychologically and physically. Many of them lost their appetite and did not eat enough, which led them to lose their health in time. This malnutrition led to mainly vitamin deficiencies and anemia. These were accompanied by gynecological bleeding or continued menstruation, which led to more deficiencies and anemia. K's experience was one of the heaviest ones, some others experienced milder versions of her sufferings.

> G: Yok işte bu üzüntüden çıkıyor tansiyonum normalde tansiyon hastası değilim aslında ama çok üzüldüğüm çok şey olduğum zamanlarda çıkıyor, ilaç kullandım bir ara psikolojik küçük tansiyonum devamlı yükseldi düşürtemedik. O kayınbiraderimin üzüntümün içine bir de bunlarla (eşin ailesi) atışınca sonra doktor, psikolojikmiş meğerse, bir ilaç verdi.
>
> G: I don't have a chronic hypertension problem, but my tension increases when I am sad or stressed. I used to take psychiatric medicine to decrease it. I was sad related to my loss and when we argued with my husband's family, my tension increased so much, later I learned that it was psychological.

G, one of the older women narrated that she did not have any cardiovascular or hypertension problems before, but after her loss she started to have chronic health problems. She had to use permanent medicines afterwards. Sudden medical problems were also frequent among women, A was pregnant when she heard about the incident, she narrated as;

> A: Öğleden sonra 3 sularıyla ilk önce haber bize geldi biz Kırkağaç'ta oturuyoruz en uzak yerdeyiz, o gün paşa vardiyası şeye gelecekmiş,

> sokmamışlar onlara demişler ki patlama var girmeyin. Arkadaşımın kocası diyor ki biz de parktan geliyoruz, ben duyar duymaz yerle bir. O günlere dönmek istemiyorum benim hala içim yanıyor. O gün benim suyum gelmiş, elimi yüzümü yıkadılar ya o su sandım ben, çocuk içimden çıktığına kupkuruydu böyle simsiyahmış ben de esmerleşmiştim kapkara olmuştum... 23 gün kuvözde kaldı çocuğum sonra.
>
> A: We heard the news first at around 3 pm. We live in Kırkağaç, the furthest point. On that day miners from evening shift was going to mine basin but they did not let them in, they said that there was an explosion, my friend's husband said to me. We were coming from the park at that time, when I heard it I was shattered into pieces… I do not want to go back to those days. That day my water has broken, they washed my face and hands, so I confused my birth water with tap water, when the baby came out of me it was dry, it was dark, I got darker too, I became black as coal… Then my baby stayed in the incubator for 23 days.

With the shocking news, the birth of her baby started earlier than expected. Her baby needed to stay in an incubator for 23 days because it was a premature delivery. So, A not only experienced the loss of her husband but also experienced premature birth, which made the situation harder to deal with.

3.4. Changes after loss

3.4.1. Economic improvements

The money provided by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies was very helpful for the women who became the breadwinner of the family after the losses. Most of them preferred to buy houses both for living and for investing in their children's future. Previously, they used to rent a house or live in shantytowns or outskirts because they could not afford anything better as mineworker families. The new houses were generally newly built and closer to the city center. Besides, they started to get a monthly salary due to the loss of their husbands.

> Z: Tabi farklılık oldu yani, ekonomik derken tabi değişiklikler oldu yani şimdi nasıl diyeyim. Aylığımız bağlandı, çok şükür evimiz kira değil, rahatız. Aşırı derecede olmasa da eskiye nazaran daha iyi. Bu böyle olmasaydı keşke de ben keşke ekonomik sıkıntı çekseydim, yani eşim olsaydı da keşke bir çardakta

> otursaydım ben. Bunu derim yani, değişir misin hiçbir zaman değişmezsin. Ama her şey de gerekiyor. Çocuklar için okula gidicem diyor ihtiyaç, hepsi ihtiyaç, bunlar da insanın hayatında olması gereken şeyler, ihtiyaç yani bir şekilde. Pazara gitmek istiyor, markete gitmek istiyor faturan yatmak istiyor, olmasa da sıkıntı. Çalışmak zorunda kalsam zorlanırım. Bayadan beri çalışmadan, evlendikten sonra hiç çalışmadım. Hatta bize iş hakkı verinildi, ama çalışmak bana bu saatten sonra zor gelir. Allah hani şey yapmasında hem çalışmak hem çocuklara şey yapmak çok zor bir şey.
>
> Z: For sure, there was a difference, financially, of course there were changes. We got our allowance, thank God our home is not on rent, we are comfortable. If not very good, it is way better than before. I wish it wasn't like that and I had economic difficulties, I mean I wish my husband was alive and we lived in a tent. I say that, would you trade, no you would never trade. But you need everything. For kids, they go to school, needs, everything is needed, these are all necessary things in life, I mean it is a necessity in a way. Bazaar waits to be visited, grocery store needs to be visited, your bills wait to be paid, it is a problem if you do not have it, too. I would find it difficult to work if I have to. I did not work for a long time, I never worked after I got married. They provided opportunities to work but it is difficult now. I hope God won't make it necessary you know. It is very difficult to both work and take care of the kids.

Z's narration is like a summary of what most women said; economical improvements enhanced their living conditions. In this way, they could afford their and their children's needs without getting financial support from other people, and they did not have to work. As Z, nearly all the women said that they wished their husbands were still alive and they still lived under previous economic conditions. This explanation also demonstrated that they felt guilty about the economic changes in their lives. Yet, the financial aid made it easier to live as a single mother and as a widow and provided a kind of freedom. If they needed to ask for financial support from their families, their families would have intervened and controlled their lives. Maybe some of them would have to marry again to sustain their lives.

Another opportunity provided by the government was providing job options in the public sector for the deceased families. Only one member of the family could use this option to be employed. Individuals were placed in jobs depending on their education level. If women did not prefer to work themselves, they could transfer it to their children. A woman said:

> H. Maaş bağlandı bir de ev aldım verdikleri parayla. İş hakkı verdiler ama oğluma bıraktım hani kendim çalışmak istemedim çalışcam zaten ilkokul mezunuyum ya çaycı olurum ya temizlikçi olurum mesela ama oğlum okuyunca o kullanır değerlenir.. Ben çalışsam da iyi olurdu kafamı dağıtırdım ama belki oğlum liseyi bitirse baktım okumayacak başvursun o da bir yere gidebilir belki, oğlan çocuğu sonuçta.
>
> H: I get my husband's salary and bought a house with the money they provided. They also enabled me to apply for a job but I do not want to work and kept it for my son. I am a primary school graduate; they will only give me cleaning jobs or something like that. But when my son graduates from high school, he will use it for a better job. It would have been good for me to focus on something different if I were working, but it is better for him if he won't continue his education he will easily find a job.

However, financial aid also created problems between women and the community around them. Almost all the women said that they have been accused of not mourning enough for their husbands. These accusations included the money provided by the government. People in the community claimed that the financial aid that the women received negatively influenced their lives and changed their attitudes towards other people by making them rich and happy. All of them were exposed to these kinds of judgments several times by their relatives, neighbors, friends, or people whom they did not know before.

3.4.2. Changes in relationships

As many women said their relationships with relatives, friends, and other people changed after the incident; some started to be closer, some previously intimate relationships become more distant.

> D : İnsan zor gününde kim dost kim düşman daha iyi ayırdına varıyor. Bana en büyük destekçim ablam oldu.
>
> D: You understand who is a friend who is enemy during difficult times. My biggest supporter was my elder sister.

As D said, almost all the women said the incident influenced their relationships in a way and it made it difficult to distinguish who are real supporters, friends, and who are not real friends. As a result, women become more sensitive about

their relationships and it became more important to distinguish with whom they will be closer. The biggest change generally occurred in the relationships with the husbands' families. If the relationship changed positively, it contributed to the women's and their children's wellbeing. As Z mentioned;

> Z: Mesela şimdi eşimi kaybedince eşimin ailesi daha çok şey yapıyorlar mesela ne diyeyim sana çocuklar var daha iyi davranıyorlar kırmamaya çalışıyorlar sürekli, mesela ben daha iyi yaklaşıyorum onlara. Zaten bizim çok bir şeyimiz olmadı büyük bir tartışma anlaşamama olmadı onlarla ama şimdi daha bağlar kuvvetli. O yüzden gideriz geliriz, yemeğe çağırırlar ben onları çağırırım. Kendileri çıkar gelirler, öyle bir sıkıntımız hiç olmadı daha çok kuvvetlendi yani, Öyle yani daha çok kuvvetlendi

> Z: For example, when I lost my husband, my husband's family did a lot more things, for instance, what I can say, the kids, they treat us better, they try not to upset us all the time, for instance, I approach them in a better way. We did not have a big sort of disagreement anyway with them but our ties are stronger now. So, we visit each other, they invite us for meals, I invite them. They show up at our place, we never had such problems, it became stronger, I mean.

According to Z, her relationship with her husband's family improved after the loss. Their positive attitudes and behaviors seemed to please her and she said that she also treated them well. It made her and the children feel better. Similarly, other women also declared that they have a positive relationship with husbands' relatives which made them feel being cared for and valued. It also became an important source of social support; children could relate to their grandparents, uncles, and aunts; and if their relationships were good, women could ask for help when they needed it for themselves or their children. They also said that they can ask for help for children's education, transportation when needed, or could ask for some leisure activities. Another positive effect of such good relationships with the in-laws was that it was valued culturally, and women generally felt that they could still fulfill their responsibilities toward their husbands.

When the relationship with husbands' families was problematic it created additional emotional disturbances. The idea of not being loved and cared for by their mother and/or father-in-law seemed to make them feel disappointed. They could not get support for their children, and some of them felt like they betrayed

their husbands' memory by not having good enough relationships with their husbands' families. They sometimes felt guilty about it. For some women, it felt like losing a tie with the dead husband. As Y mentioned:

> Y: Ben istemedim onlarla aramız böyle olsun (eşin ailesi), çok üzüldüm ağladım ilk başta. Hatta eşimle konuştum aklımda, hep senin emanetin onlar biliyorum ama sen de görüyorsun bana nasıl davrandıklarını diye. Beni en çok etkileyen olaylar hep onlarla yaşadıklarım oldu. (ağlıyor).
>
> Y : I don't want to have problems with them (husband's family) I was so sad and cried a lot in the beginning. Even I talked to my husband in my mind and said; I know they are your family but you also see how they behave towards me. The most disturbing problems were related to them (crying).

Her narration demonstrated how she was negatively influenced by the changes in her relationship with her husband's family. She felt so guilty and she talked to her husband to explain these negative changes. According to the participants, problems started with the money given by the government. Because the women got the money, some families of the husbands tried to control them or asked for some money, thinking it was their right to get money also. There were also a few women who had more significant problems with their husbands' families. For instance, one of them said that she was exposed to physical and psychological abuse from her husband's family when she was forced to live with them. A narrated as;

> A: Eşimin ablası yeğeni kardeşi kaynanam bana psikolojik şiddet uyguladı. Uykudan uyandırılıyorum, gecenin üçüne kadar uyumuyorlar ben onlara mısır patlatıyorum bir de bebeğim var. Avludan dışarıya çıkarılmıyorum. Bakkala gidicem kaynımla gönderiyorlar sırf her yere kaynımla gidiyorum diye adım bile çıktı imam nikahı kıymışlar diye. Ev alacağım çocuklarımın üstüne diyorlar ki oğlumun üstüne yapalım sen gider evlenirsin. Bir kere polise gittim şikayetçi olamadım son seferinde oldum ama. Abimi de aradım, abim polisle geldi beni almaya.
>
> A: My husband's elder sister, his niece, his mother subjected me to psychological abuse. I used to wake up during my sleep, they don't sleep until 3 a.m. and I prepare pop-corn for them, I have a baby at the same time. I was not allowed to go out of house garden. When I wanted to go to the market I used to go with my brother-in-law. Even people gossiped about us and said we had an imam marriage... I wanted to buy a house for my children, but they ask me to register it on my brother-in law-saying, you will go and marry another person.

> Once I went to the police but could not complain about what they did. In the end, I called my older brother and he came with the police to get me out of this house.

A said that the problems were mainly about controlling the money and her labor at home. She had to deal with these experiences just after the loss, and she had a premature newborn baby at the same time. It took 9 months for her to get rid of their pressures. She managed to move to another district and said that she did not have any communication with them anymore. In the end, her experiences related to loss became more traumatic. Probably because widows are considered a part of the deceased husband's family; the way their relationships will change generally depends on the husband's family's attitude towards the widows. If a family is a caring and loving one, they behave in a caring and supportive way towards the widow and the grandchildren but if the family is controlling and excluding one, lots of problems arise.

Many women also experienced changes in their relationships with their friends. Some said that their relationships became more supportive and closer and others said that their relationships became more distant compared to before. In both cases, the outcome was generally related to having more or less feelings of loneliness for women. H's experience was a negative one:

> H : Arkadaşlarım vardı eşim varken geliyorlardı olay oldu sonra herkes elini ayağını çekti bende ona bir şey anlam veremedim yani ben sonuçta bu evdeyim bu ev açık hadi bana bir şey olsa eşime gelemeyebilirler erkek ama onlar ellerini ayağını çekti ben de gitmiyorum artık. Çok kafama taktım önce neden gelmiyorlar diye. Ben kimseyle konuşmadım zaten ya ilk başlarda arkadaşlar kendini çekti, arkadaşlar belki kendilerini çekmeseler benimle konuşsalar beni dinleseler daha iyi olurdu.

> H: I had friends before my husband died, but after the incident everybody stopped visiting. I couldn't make any sense of it. I am still in the same house, and it is open to anyone. Let's say; If I were dead, they would not visit him because he was a man (she was talking about her female friends). I didn't visit them anymore. In the beginning I was concerned about it so much. I didn't talk much with people, if friends didn't stop visiting, I would have talked to them, it would have been better for me if they listened to me

According to H, when her friends did not show support, it made it harder for her to talk about her sadness, pain and other difficulties that she experienced after the loss. With this change, she lost trust and felt lonelier than before. In contrast, when friends continued to visit and give their support, participants felt more powerful and supported to cope with the mourning process. In some instances, friends became caregivers by cooking and helping with cleaning in addition to their emotional support.

> Y: Arkadaşımız çoktu hala da biri aramasa bir diğeri arar beni. Hadi gel şuraya gidelim derler, şunu yapalım derler. Her şeyi konuşuruz eşimden de konuşuruz benim çok hoşuma gider bahsetmeleri.
>
> Y: We had lots of friends and I still have a good connection with them. One day one of them calls and the other day another one. They call me to go somewhere together or to do something together. We talk a lot and we also talk about my husband which makes me happy.

Y did not lose contact with her friends. Her friends increased their interest in her which became a source of support and their offers to engage in some activities together prevented her from feeling alone. Because her friends knew her husband, she also had opportunities to talk about him which made her happy and grateful.

3.4.3. Change in self

Many women answered the question of "how did you or your life change after the loss of your husband" as "I did not change at all," but when they were asked about specific changes such as their relationships with children or changes in financial situation, they mentioned various changes. Their initial answer possibly reflected their intention to emphasize that they did not change in terms of their feelings towards their husbands, they did not forget their husbands, and they continued their lives as if their husbands were alive. Many women narrated that people in their community judged them for changing with the money they got after the losses. Sometimes they were even accused of changing and not

mourning anymore about their losses. These prejudices made them sensitive to the word "change" because it implied being morally inferior.

> K: Benim hayatım hiç değişmedi yine kaldığım yerden, çünkü bir beklentim yok ya hani beni hiçbir şey değiştiremez bundan sonra para olsun pul olsun yığsınlar her yere. Giyinmeye bile bir şeyim yok yani görüyorum hani giyiniyorlar alıyorlar renkli renkli. Ben öyle değilim. Daha çok çöktüm sanki, esim varken yoktu giyinemiyordum su anda var ama almaya canım istemiyor.
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> K: My life did not change at all, I continue from where I left off because I do not have an expectation, from now on nothing can change me, bring money, piles of money, does not matter. I do not even have anything to wear, I see others buying and putting on colorful clothes, I am not like that. As if I collapsed, even more, I was not able to wear it when my husband was alive, because we did not have money to buy it. Now we have it but I do not feel like buying.

Although these women faced prejudice, they also judged other women, as was evident in K's narrations. Wearing colorful clothes would be a sign that they did not mourn anymore. It seemed that society put lots of pressure on them by expecting a mourning woman stereotype, any variations from this stereotype could make them feel judged. They also judged themselves by internalizing society's stereotypes. Thus, having fun, buying new clothes, or other items became a source of guilt. We can interpret that this dynamic made their mourning process more painful by suppressing the desire to engage in enjoyable activities. The internalization of society's prejudice towards themselves may have affected their mourning process and prevented them from feeling better in time.

Despite societal pressures, many women stated that they felt more independent compared to times when their husbands were alive. Dead mineworkers were the breadwinners of the families and most of the women were not previously employed. After the losses, they were concerned about their family's financial situation. So, they feared being dependent on someone else after the disaster. In time, with the financial support they got from the government, they got rid of this fear of being dependent on somebody and they began to feel independent. So, improved financial conditions seemed to empower them and they could

manage their families' needs without asking for help. Culturally, getting money from someone implied giving the financial supporter the right to be involved in their decisions so having their own money also gave them freedom of deciding on their own. It also seemed to provide the feeling of being self-sufficient.

For instance, one of the participants, G, mentioned that nobody can meddle in her decisions anymore. This statement also meant that she was more open to other people's ideas and influence before. Before getting married, their fathers were the ones who made decisions for them, and after getting married their husbands were in charge of the families. This was more or less the case for all the participants. Therefore, these women probably had their word for the first time in their lives.

The most concrete demonstration of feeling independent for them was learning to drive. Almost all the women attended driving courses and bought cars for themselves. They said that it was essential to drive when they or their children became sick. They could go to the hospital by themselves, or they could visit their friends or relatives who lived far away. They all mentioned that their families didn't approve of it in the first place. S said:

> S: Keşke arabam olsa dedim. Alırsam acaba insanlar benim hakkımda ne düşünür dedim ama kötü bir şey yapmıyorum ki. Neden istemedi insanlar anlamıyorum. Ama aldım sonunda oğlumu okula götürüyorum, köye götürüyorum bir şeye ihtiyacım oldu mu kendim gidiyorum.
>
> S: I wished to have a car, but I thought about what people would say about me if I bought. But I didn't do anything wrong. Why did they not want me to buy a car I did not understand. In the end, I bought it, now I take my son to school, to our village, when I need something I buy it by myself.

S took some time to reflect on buying a car because she didn't want to be criticized by people around her. Many of the interviewed women experienced these criticisms to a certain extent. Driving and having one's car provided a kind of freedom to the women. S also mentioned that she does not depend on anyone when she needs to go somewhere. In Soma, it is difficult to go from one point to

another without a car, especially in the evenings when public transportation is rare. Being a woman also restricts their travel; it is inappropriate for a woman to get in the car with another man. In this case, a woman needs to get permission from her parents to travel to prevent misunderstandings or gossips. Having their cars enabled them to travel without asking for permission or informing their parents about their transportations. This was also the reason why their families and other people did not like the idea in the first place. Culturally, many people think that widows should be under the control of their families to protect their dignity. The women buying cars may also mean that they do not want to live under such pressure.

The bereaving experience created changes in how women considered themselves. Most of them said that they acknowledged how strong and competent they are to cope with the loss. Many women said that they did not think of living without their husbands before. Even though the experience was painful, they could manage to live on their own. Some of them earned a living, looked after their children as single mothers, managed to tolerate other people's negative attitudes, and coped with the psychological and physical effects of the loss. It could be said that all those experiences contributed to their inner strength in the end. Learning new skills such as driving also provided them self-confidence. They felt more powerful than before.

> E: Eşim sağken bu imkanlara bu kadar imkana sahip değildim. Bu kadar güçlü değildim, bu kadar kendime güvenim yoktu eşim yanımda olduğu için, bana kattığı olumlu yönleri de oldu.
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> E: When my husband was alive, I did not have that many opportunities. I was not that strong, I did not trust myself that much, because I had my husband with me, there were positive aspects that I acquired.

As E. mentioned, many women said that they generally relied on their husbands while they were alive; however, being a single woman enabled them to rely on themselves. They had more responsibilities, they became the decision-maker at home, and they controlled their and their children's lives by themselves. These

were previously husbands' responsibilities; now fulfilling these responsibilities increased their self-confidence. According to cultural norms, men were responsible for making major life decisions. Even though women had the right to share their opinions when there was a decision to be made about the children, husbands probably had the last word on the families' lives. Women were expected to accept their husbands' major decisions. So, this dramatic change provided women the chance to be independent in their decisions and have control over their lives more than before. They probably realized their power for the first time in their lives. It seemed to make them feel more powerful and increase their self-confidence. Z said:

> Z: Bu süreçte kimseye yaslanmamayı öğrendim, ben mesela annemi kaybettim sonra eşimi kaybettim. Annem varken ona yaslanırdım çok güvenirdim ona erkek gibiydi çok sorardım öyle mi yapalım böyle mi diye. Onu kaybettim. Ondan sonra bu sefer eşime dayandım, onu da kaybettim. Dedim ki yani kimseye dayanmak yok bundan sonra kendi başımın çaresine bakmayı öğrendim.
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> Z: I learned not to rely on anybody, for instance, I lost my mother, then I lost my husband. When I had my mother I trusted her very much, she was like a man, I used to consult with her about stuff… I lost her. Then I relied on my husband, I lost him, too. Then, I told to myself that there is no more relying on anyone, I learned to take care of myself.

Many women needed to get approval from their families or their husbands throughout their lives. Talking and asking for help also provided them a sense of support. As Z said, losing a family member also meant losing a kind of social and emotional support. But this negative event was a chance to learn how to rely on her own resources.

3.5. Experiences of spousal loss as a woman

For the women, losing husbands generally meant losing their closest social support, romantic and sexual partner, and the person with whom they could share responsibilities of children and the house chores. They became single mothers with lots of work to do for the children and the house, responsible for the decisions regarding their children's future and financial matters.

3.5.1. Loneliness

Nearly all the women declared their feelings of loneliness. When asked, the husbands were generally depicted as being good-natured, supportive, and caring towards their vives and their children. Many women narrated that they had friendship-like relationships with their husbands. It seemed that if the relationship with dead partner was good, losing the partner also meant losing a friend and a good source of support. They could share their problems and happiness, ask for advice, and take joint action against adversities in their lives with their husbands. As Z said;

> Z: Biz görücü usulü evlendik ama sonra çok sevdik birbirimizi. Her şeyi birlikte yapardık, bizsiz bir yere gitmezdi. Çarşıya birlikte giderdik, akşam eve gelir çocuklarıyla ilgilenirdi, ödevlerini yaptırırdı. Çocukları alır bazen motoruyla gezdirirdi. Bizim tek tük anlaşmazlığımız olurdu genelde uyumluyduk. İyi vakit geçirirdik birlikte.
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> Z: We had an arranged marriage but then loved each other so much. We used to do everything together; he did not go anywhere without us. We used to go outside together, he took care of his kids, helped them with their homework. Sometimes he showed them around by his motorcycle. We had small arguments, but we generally got along well.

Z mentioned how they spent time together, they generally went out together, shared lots of activities. She also said that they loved each other. Similarly, other women also said that even though they had arranged marriages, they loved each other and loved their husbands in time. Arranged marriages were frequent in Soma, probably because women were not allowed to have an affair before marriage and they had an restricted environment to meet and get to know a man. Women's parents' approval for marriage was also essential, and arranged marriages were generally considered a culturally appropriate way to form families. But it was not the only way and several women said that they knew their husbands and were lovers before they got married. As S. narrated:

> S: Biz çok severek evlendik, beni başka biriyle nişanlayacaklardı madenci diye vermek istemediler ben kaçtım ona. Ben onu çok sevdim, hiç pişman değilim.

> S: We married with great love. My parents wanted me to get engaged with another man, because my husband was a mineworker. They did not allow me to marry him, but I ran off with him. I loved him so much, I am happy with my decision and I have never regretted it.

In her narrations, S. emphasized how she loved her husband, she opposed her parents, and married her husband by taking lots of risks. All the women said that they had lost loving partners. Husbands were their romantic and sexual partners with whom they could experience love and affection. They usually mentioned how they missed being with their husbands both day and night. As E narrated;

> E: Ve en çok zorlandığım anlardan biri de gece yatağa yattığım zaman da tek yalnız olmak. Yani esimin sıcaklığını hani onun yanımda yatmasını onun nefesini o kadar alışmışım ki yani sürekli bir insanla yatmaya onun hani nefesini hissetmeye o artık yok sürekli tek başınayım biraz daha kendimi şey hissediyorum ot gibi derler ya, gerçekten öyle hissediyorum.

> E: And one of the hardest times for me is when I go to bed alone at night. I was used to my husband's breath, warmth, him lying next to me, was used to sleeping with a person all the time, he does not exist anymore, I am on my own all the time, I feel a little bit like a thing, you know, they say like a plant, I really feel like that.

E used the phrase "feeling like a plant" to emphasize lack of affection and positive feelings related to loving and being loved. It was not only physical absences of husbands, but also the loss of emotional warmth that affected the participants. Talking about sex after partners' losses was a kind of taboo, therefore, it wasn't asked during the interviews and nobody spoke about sexual feelings openly. But as E, many other women also narrated their sadness for sleeping alone, implicitly mentioning the sorrow of losing sexual partners. All of the women were single and lacked sexual partners after the incident, because having sex without marriage is culturally inappropriate. They might also think that they will be alone until the end of their lives, increasing their feelings of loneliness. Being someone's wife was a kind of identity for the women. In this cultural and social context, being a married woman seemed to give a sense of security. As G narrated;

> G: Eşim öldü ben pazara çıkamadım, gidiyorum sonra ağlaya ağlaya geri dönüyorum. Yalnızım bunu insanlar biliyor eve dönünce kocam olmayacak, hem ben onun yokluğunda ne alıp pişireceğim içimden bir şey gelmedi. Kaç yıl oldu ben daha oturup çocuklarımla kahvaltı yapmadım.
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> G: My husband died, I did not feel comfortable going to the bazaar by myself. I go but then come back crying. I am alone, people know it when I come back my husband is not there.

Parallel to what G said, many women did not prefer to be outside alone. They restricted their visits to friends or relatives in which men also participated even though they used to visit them when their husbands were alive. For instance, visiting a married woman when her husband is at home was considered an inappropriate act. As A mentioned;

> A: İnsan kocası olmayınca dalsız ağaç gibi hissediyor. Öyle her yere gidip herkesle görüşemiyor
>
> A: It feels like to be a tree without branches being without a husband. You cannot go wherever you want to go or see whomever you want to see.

In her expression, she declared that her perception of herself in the social contexts had changed. It seemed she felt awkward and alone, like a tree without branches. Culturally, women might describe themselves with their husbands, and losing being a man's wife seemed to affect their presence in the social environment, which increased their feelings of loneliness. Some women lost social contacts to husbands' relatives. Some of them declared that they did not want to visit friends who are married in order to not see friends' husbands. A few of them started to live a more isolated life. It seemed that they felt more related to other people when their husbands were alive.

3.5.2. Being a single mother

Being alone at home also meant that women were alone in child-rearing. They could not share the responsibilities of children with husbands anymore. Even there were other people, relatives, or friends, to help them in some cases, it was not comparable to a husband's support. Many women lived on their own with

their children, so generally, they were the only adult to care for children's needs. As G narrated:

> G: Çocukların sorunları oluyor annelik yapıyorsun ayrıyeten babalık yapıyorsun. Babanın yapacağı şeyleri de sen omuzlarına alıyorsun. Bu sene çok çöktüm yapılacak işlere de ev yaptırıyor elektrikçiyi de sen bulmak zorundasın suya da sen koşmak zorundasın. Evin oranın ayrı işleri oldu buranın ayrı işleri oldu çocuklar ayrı bir şey kendim zaten yok saymıyorum zaten kendimi ne olursa olsun onun yokluğu farklı çöktüm çöktüm ağır.
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> G: Kids have problems, you become their mother, and you become their father. You shoulder the things a father would do, too. I collapsed this year, I am having a house built, you have to find the electrician, you have to run after water, that place has different work and this place has its work, kids work is separate from those, no matter what his absence is different, I collapsed, heavily…

Being the single authority for their children's decisions sometimes became a heavy burden for the women. Most of the women said that their husbands had been responsible for the education of the children, they gave financial support for the school, followed up with their schools' successes, and participated in parent-teacher meetings in schools. It changed drastically with losses. The women became the only ones responsible for educational and other needs. Even though some women said that they had support from their parents or siblings, they were still the guardians in legal processes. It made them the only decision-makers for their children and put pressure on them to choose appropriate schools, provide financial support for schooling, and attend meetings with teachers. As H stated;

> H: Dayanabilecek hiç kimsem yok yani hayatın zorluğu mesela şu an bizim omuzlarımızda bütün yük benim omzumda, çocukların okuması ıvırı zıvırı her şeyi hepsini kendin omuzlamak zorundasın. Önce eşim varken eşim yapar o olur bu olur diyordum ama şimdi her şey kendine kalıyor kendin bir şeylerle mücadele etmek zorundasın
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> H: I have nobody to rely on, the difficulty of life, for instance, is on our shoulders, all the burden is on me, kids' school and stuff, everything, you have to carry them alone, my husband used to do things before, I used to ask him about this and that when he was alive but now everything is on me, you have to struggle with things on your own.

Most of the interviewed women also mentioned that they felt responsible for providing fathers' love and interest for their children. They felt the pressure of compensating for the fathers' absences. As H narrated;

> H: Hani çocuklara hem anne hem baba olmak zorundasın yapmak çok zor ama yapmak zorundasın çocuk hem anne hem baba sevgisini senden almak zorunda. Hayatımızda böyle baya bir zorluk var daha da zorlaşır ileri doğru çocuklar büyüdükçe onların sorumlulukları şimdi daha küçükler senin aldığınla yetinebiliyorlar yaptığınla yetiniyorlar ama yarın yetinmezler büyüdükçe kendi istekleri olur.
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> H: You have to be both a mother and a father for the kids, it is very hard, but you have to. The kid has to receive both mother love and father love from you. We have many difficulties like that in our lives, it will get more difficult when kids grow up, their responsibilities are small now, they are happy with what they get, but won't be easily satisfied later, they will have their requests as they grow up.

Parallel to H's narrations, it seemed that responsibilities changed depending on the children's ages and genders. All the women interviewed had at least one child and most of the children were younger than seven years old. Several women had children between seven and twelve years old. A few of them had adolescent children. Mothers of younger children mentioned being responsible for their children's psychical and psychological development, providing good food and nutrition, and dealing with children's reactions to fathers' absence. For adolescents, responsibilities shifted more towards protecting them in their social environments and preparing them for their adult lives. They would choose universities, approve children's choices of vocations and marriages. F said:

> F: Sen hem anne oluyorsun hem baba oluyorsun çocuğa. Ona bazı şeyleri öğretmek zorundasın. Eğitimini terbiyesini kendin vermek zorundasın. İnsanın tabi sorumluluğu artıyor.
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> F: You have to be a father and a mother at the same time. You must teach him lots of things about life. You must educate and discipline him alone. Your responsibilities increase.

Being a mother and a father at the same time was a kind of responsibility both the society and women themselves expected, which increased their worries about

being single mothers. With these kinds of responsibilities, many women had concerns and worried about their capacities to fulfill them. For children under seven years old, mothers felt worried about choosing adequate schools and supporting them appropriately in their education. Compared to mothers of older children, they hadn't had practice of dealing with school with their husbands, so it was a new area for them as single mothers. Mothers of adolescents observed changes in their children related to adolescence and they worried more about whether they could understand and support them enough.

> G: Mesela oğlum şu an ergenliğe girdi, tek korkum baba yok anne olarak ne kadar destek olabilirim. Kızım ergenliği geçirdi, bir de kız çocuğu ne olursa olsun farklı oluyor, erkek çocuğu her şeyi anneyle paylaşmıyor.
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> G: For example, my son is now an adolescent. My biggest fear is that without his father, how I can support him. My daughter got over those ages. Daughters are generally different, and sons do not share everything with mothers.

As G. said, gender differences became more apparent when children were adolescents. Types of worries changed depending on children's ages and gender. For boys, problems were more about getting information about their lives, whereas for girls it was more about protecting them from the environment. When a child was a boy, controlling them became an issue. The absence of fathers increased their worries about being inadequate to manage and supervise them. L also narrated:

> L: İşte benim oğlum elektrik bölümünde lisede, okul uzak her zaman gidemiyorsun. Arkadaşlarına güvenemiyorsun, şimdi bir de çalışıyor işe gidip geliyor bazen eve geç geldiği de oluyor, anne olarak onunla işim zor
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> L: My son is in an electric program at vocational school. His school is far away, you cannot visit there whenever you want. You cannot trust his friends, now he is working and sometimes comes home late. As a single mother, I may have lots of problems.

In the case of L's son, he had a kind of freedom to work, come home late or plan his actions on his own. He was working and had a sort of freedom to come home late or stay with friends when he wanted. For adolescent girls, these were

inappropriate. Girls were expected to be more dependent on mothers' decisions on where to go, whom to meet or when to return home. As G. implied it was easier to know and control their daughters' lives. All the mothers had worries about the future of their children, they worried whether children can find a vocation or not, whether they can go to a university or could find an appropriate partner for themselves.

Fulfilling all of the responsibilities seemed to be their criteria for being a good mother. Women also had struggles in their mind, checking whether they could fulfill their children's needs appropriately. Many of them said, this struggle sometimes became so stressful that they could not find spare time for themselves. Having interest in different things other than children sometimes made them feel guilty. As J narrated;

> J: Hani diyorum ya gözünün içine bakıyorum sanki o bana bakıyor. Öyle yani işte. Bazen de işte düşünüyorum yetiyor muyum diye. Kızımıza iyi bakıyorum belki o görüyordur diye. Nasıl diyeyim sanki görecek bakmıyorsun ilgilenmiyorsun diyecek, hep öyle geliyor bana..
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> J: You know, I look into her eyes as if he is looking back at me. It's like that…Sometimes I wonder whether I am enough for her. I take good care of our daughter; maybe he is seeing it. How shall I say this, as if he will see and tell me 'You are not taking care of her'? I always feel like that.

Like J, other women also narrated that they felt being watched by their husbands, being judged whether they were good mothers or not. They considered that being good mothers was not only important to bring up good-natured, educated children, but was also important for getting their husbands' approval in their minds.

3.5.3. Changing gender roles

Changing gender roles was apparent in the new house chores and the unique responsibilities related to financial matters. Previously, husbands were responsible for the repair of any kind of broken things at home. For most of the

families, husbands went to the market, bazaar, or any governmental offices when needed. Women were new in those areas, but they were trying to adapt to such chores that were previously their husbands' responsibility. As K narrated;

> K: Tuvaletin sifonu kaçırıyor mesela yap yap yap derdim hadi yarın yaparız aşkım, öbür gün yaparız aşkım, bir gün soktum elimi sifonun içine çıkardım kopardım attım. Madem dedim yapmıyorsun, sonra baktım gitti onları topladı gitti yaptı. Şimdi yapsana. Yap diyecek kimsen yok mecbur kendin yapacaksın bir şeyleri öğreneceksin erkeğin yapacağı işi de öğreneceksin kadının yapacağı işi de öğreneceksin

> K: For example, water is leaking from the flush in the toilet, I used to say to him, 'do it, do it', 'we can do it tomorrow, my love, we can do it the other day my love', one day I put my hand down in the flush, I took it out and threw it away, I said if you are not taking care of it, then I saw him gathering them back together and fixing the flush. Now I have nobody to ask, you will do it on your own, you will learn things, you will learn to do things a man does and things a woman does.

What K described were apparent and distinct gender roles they followed before the death of her husband. K like other women were responsible for cleaning, cooking, preparing an optimal home environment for children and the husband. Her husband's role was working, doing repair jobs at home, and providing food, clothes, and other needs from outside. It drastically changed and women needed to learn new things that were previously attributed to the men. It increased their daily tasks, some of them found it time-consuming and tiring, but some women mentioned that learning those new things increased their self-confidence.

3.5.4. Being a widow

Being single mothers, increasing responsibilities, engaging in new activities were related to being widows, but none of them seemed to influence women as much as the pressure from the community for being an appropriate widow. Even though nobody declared the proper ways of being a widow, many people around criticized the women's behaviors and gossiped about them. All of the interviewed women mentioned how they tried to control and limit their behaviors and changed their lives according to the criticism of others. As H narrated;

> H: Mesela onun hakkında konuşuyorlar ya senin hakkında da konuşabilirler gibi bir şey yaratıyorlar iyi de olsan mesela sen demek ki konuşulabiliyor diye çekiyon kendini.
>
> H: For example, they talk about her and they create the impression that they can talk about you, too, even if you are okay for instance, you think that it is okay to talk then and you back off.

As indicated in this quotation, generally, women said, people did not speak directly to their face. However, they talked about other women in their absences so they could also gossip about the participants. The central theme was the money women got from the government and people said the women spent that money to enjoy their lives after losing their husbands. As E. mentioned:

> E: En basitinden giyiniyorlar, süsleniyorlar, geziyorlar, eşlerini unuttular. Son model arabalara biniyorlar son model evlerde oturuyorlar.
>
> E: To give a simple example, they put nice clothes on, they get all dolled up, they visit around, they forgot their husbands. They use expensive cars; they live in the newest model apartments, they say.

What E narrated was a good summary of what women heard from other people; they enjoyed the money by wearing better clothes, visiting around, residing in new homes, and driving new cars. Most of them bought cars and new houses for themselves to invest the money for their and their children's future. Cars became very important to be independent of their families and social environment, and not depending on other people for their needs. However, women said no one understood them; rather many people, in some cases even their families, became judgemental and tried to discourage them. People's attitudes sometimes led to social isolation, because they could not trust people around them. As C. mentioned:

> C: Dul olmak beni çok etkiledi. İlk yani bu eve taşındığımda balkona bile çıkmıyordum mecbur olmayınca giydiğine dikkat ediyorsun zaten kapalı insanlarız, mantoyla çıkıyoruz veya şey çok çok her şeyini, attığın her adıma diyelim.

> C: Being a widow influenced me so much... When I first moved to this house, I avoided even going out to the balcony. I wear scarves and an overcoat and try to be so careful about it. You need to be more careful whatever you do.

C always tried to control what she wore or where she went to avoid other people's judgments. She also mentioned how people around misunderstood the amount of money they got and assumed they became millionaires. Accodingly, it seemed that even going out to pay the bills sometimes became an issue. Culturally, what other people thought and said was important for C to protect her honor and she did not want to hear anything about herself. This was the same for all the women. Even though they knew what people said about themselves was not true, they tried to avoid such gossip as much as possible. As J mentioned;

> J: Kendimi biraz daha sakladım o konuda, hala eşim varmış gibi hareket ediyorum. Hani başım önde, şey olmasın. En çok korktuğum şey bana gelmesin de. Çünkü farklılaştı tabi dul olmak eşinin olmaması o kadar kötü bir şey ki.
>
> J: I hid myself more in regards to that topic, I still act as if I have a husband. I do not want to be like, you know, ashamed… Just so that the thing I am frightened about most stays away from me. Because it is different now, of course, it is very hard not to have a husband, to be a widow.

J said that it was potentially shameful or sinful to be a widow so she found a way to behave as if her husband was alive. She was so terrified to hear anything about her appearance or gossips about herself. As J, many women tried to control their behaviors to avoid people's judgmental attitude, which influenced their lives, well-being, and relationships with their social environment. It seemed to affect their mourning process, making them feel more alone, isolated, and misunderstood. L narrated an event she experienced recently;

> L: Geçen gün minibüse bindim konuşuyorlar, madenci karılarına on on beş milyar veriyorlar ayda bize emekli parasını vermediler diyor bir kadın yanındakine. Tepem atıverdi, sen de yaşa ki gör dedim kadına hem söylediği doğru değil hem de her şey para değil öncesinde huzurumuz yerindeydi, idare ediyorduk yeterdi yani.
>
> L: I got on minibus the other day, women were talking, one said to the other; wives of the dead mineworkers were given ten-fifteen billion, but we could not get our retirement pension. I lost my temper I said to her that she shall

> experience the same thing and see. What she said was wrong and not everything is about money, we were in peace before and got by.

As L, some women heard or were exposed to people's comments about themselves. Nearly all the women tried to manage their anger and sadness at what people said about them. According to women's narrations, experiences of being a woman after spousal loss included increasing responsibilities towards children, having new roles in the house, and the pressure of being a widow in the Soma community. All of them also worried about their children's current and future lives as mentioned before.

3.6. Coping with the loss

The women, challenged by the traumatic losses of their husbands, found various ways to cope with their sufferings. The most frequently mentioned theme was dealing for the sake of their children. Religiousness, using religious rituals for relief and social support from relatives, friends, and other people were some of the coping methods they used to deal with their losses and psychological difficulties. With the money provided by the government, they became economically self-sufficient, which also became a source of support for coping.

3.6.1. Coping for the sake of the child/children.

Under the *Experiences Of Being A Woman After Spousal Loss* theme, narrations related to being single mothers, responsibilities toward children, and worries about their future were explained in detail. The role of children in the women's lives was more than creting caregiving responsibilities. The children also gave the women a sense of meaning and goal for living. The children motivated the women to move on with their lives. Almost all of the mothers interviewed mentioned that they could bear adversities for the sake of their child or children. As E narrated;

> E: Dayanmamı sağlayan şeyler sadece çocuklar, çocuklar ve yani düşünüyorum mesela hani onlar olmasaydı ne olurdu diye.Mesela benimle çalışan arkadaşımın hiç çocuğu yok ve o da dayanıyor. Acaba onun gibi olsaydım benim de çocuklarım olmasaydı ben de dayanabilir miydim diyorum
>
> E: The only thing that makes me endure is the kids and I sometimes think, for example, my friend who works with me has no kids, and she endures, too. I wonder if I was like her and did not have kids, could I endure?

E said that her main motivation to cope with adversities was her children; she could not imagine what a woman may experience without a child after such a loss. E, along with other women, said that after having really difficult times in the first phase of mourning she felt very powerless and helpless in her life. The only thing that kept her going was her children. The idea of not leaving children alone was a recurrent theme in the narrations. All of the women had this concern after experiencing an intense mourning process soon after the incident. Then, they convinced themselves to recover for their children. As K narrated;

> K: Yani bu çocuklar zaten babalarını kaybettiler bi de annesiz kalmasınlar, o zaman onları hiç toparlayamam
>
> K: These children lost their father, they should not lose their mother as well. If that happens I can never pull them together again.

K explained that after months of fatigue and physical problems, she talked to herself with these sentences. What she said was not about her real death, but her loss of interest in her children. She acknowledged that she needed to be psychologically healthier to support her children. Later she started to attend psychological counseling sessions and became emotionally available for them. Being a mother and having responsibilities towards the children seemed to be a protective factor for the women; cooking, cleaning, organizing the house chores, and planning their activities seemed to make the participants feel alive and provide a basis for moving on with their lives. Another function of the children was their presence at home; living with them decreased the women's feelings of loneliness and became a source of support. H narrated this as follows;

> H: children... I could not bear it without them, and they are my friends at home. Think about it, if you are alone, you will go crazy
>
> H: çocuklar… Yani onlar olmasa zaten hiç dayanamazdım, bunlar evde bir ses oluyor sana arkadaş oluyor mesela düşün tek başına olduğunu bir ses duymasan insan çıldırır.

As H, many other women mentioned that the children became a source of emotional and social support. They had their children's love and they could talk, engage in festive activities, or play with them, which promoted positive feelings toward living. Considering the pressure of being a widow, enjoying their children was probably the only area that was allowed to have fun. Without them, they would feel alone at home and be without lots of positive feelings, which would increase their suffering. All the women interviewed had at least one child. The experiences of a widow without a child were not covered in the present research, but it was understood that not having a child after spousal loss seemed very terrifying for the interviewed women. A few women had adult children. In these cases, the women could share their feelings more openly with their children and the children became friends who contributed to soothing the women. As G said:

> G: En çok şimdi benim en büyük desteğim bu kız var ya kendi kızım. Bak o ona herkes de dedi o o kadar daha dirayetliymiş ki benden daha sağlammış ki sen saldın kendini gittin diyor ben de öyle olsam bizi kim toparlayacak dedi. Çocuk gibi beni oksuyor ağlama annecim dik dur annecim, aslında benim ona yapmam gerekeni çoğu yerde o bana yaptı.
>
> G: My older daughter became my primary support, my daughter. Everyone says that she was so strong, stronger than me, that she says you let yourself go; what if I did the same thing who could pull us back. She pets me like a child, says pull yourself together, mom. Indeed she treated me in a way I should treat her.

G. was heavily affected by the loss both psychologically and physically. She had hypertension problems and her mood was also depressed during the interview. Her daughter was probably worried about her health-related issues and took an active role in consoling her. Her daughter's support seemed to be very helpful for G., but she was aware that she should support her more as a mother.

3.6.2. Religious coping

Most of the women interviewed were Sunni Muslim and identified themselves as religious. Being religious enhanced their coping in two ways. First, Muslim belief explains death as a destiny. Being grateful to God rather than complaining about what they experienced shaped the participants' mourning process. Many women used similar expressions while talking about their beliefs regarding death and their mourning processes. C and Z both talked about their experience in relationship to their religious beliefs;

> C: Hani rabbim sabrını veriyor hani şukrettikçe isyan değil sabır diledikçe. Mesela tutunacak bir dal verdi evlat verdi diyorum. En büyük şey zaten çok şükür Rabbim hani derdi veren sabrını da veriyor evladım yani.
>
> C: If I am grateful rather than rebellious, God provides patience. For instance, He gave me a child, gave a leg to stand on, He who gives the pain also gives the patience to bear.
>
> Z: Yani sabrettiğinin altında dedim hep şey vardır. Her şeyde bir hayır vardır olanda da olmayanda da. Bu dünya eğer benim şeyimse ben diğer dünyada bunun mükafatını alırım. Her çektiğimde muhakkak bir şey keramet vardır.
>
> Z: I always believed that there is something after patience. Everything happens or does not happen for a reason… I shall receive the reward in the after-world if this world is my thing... There is an oracle in every single suffering of mine…

They mentioned how important it is to be grateful to God and endure losses and difficulties. C emphasized that God provides strength to endure any pain and her child was compensation for what she endured. Z believed that her husband's death was for a reason, because anything happened for a reason, and she would be rewarded in after-life for her suffering in this world. Their perspectives have their roots in trust in God's order, and it provided them with an explanation for their pain.

The second tool of religion that contributed to the women's coping was worship practices. Many interviewees stated that practicing religious acts and worshiping provided them relief and contentment. As L mentioned;

> L: Mesela evde oturduğunuz zaman kitabı (kuran) okuyorsun dua ediyorsun biraz rahatlıyorsun, öyle idare ediyorsun yapacak bir şey yok ki.
>
> L: For instance, when you are home, you read the book (Quran), you pray, you relax a little bit, you manage like that, there is nothing to do…

L found reading the Koran soothing and relieving of her suffering and many other women also said that they read the Koran and surahs to feel better. Performing Namaz was also found to be soothing. Few women were Alevi Muslims. Their explanations about the order of God were similar, but with less emphasis on after-life and being rewarded because of their pain and they did not mention religious practices as a way to relax. These differences probably stem from the differences in religious rituals between Sunni and Alevi Islam.

3.6.3. Social support

Social support is another factor that increases women's coping capacity. Social support is a broad term that includes support from relatives, friends, neighbors, and unfamiliar people. The type of support changed based on the person who is providing it and how the women were affected from it.

Many women stated that their parents and siblings helped them take care of the children. This kind of support was very helpful for women in terms of their everyday lives. But families' most important function was to provide emotional support for the participants. In the psychological consequences section, how the losses influenced the women is explained in detail. While they were suffering, the emotional support they received from their families helped them overcome the problems they faced. Many of them felt lonely and family members also decreased their feelings of loneliness. D narrated;

> D: aslında insan zor gününde kim dostu kim düşmanın daha çok ayrımsıyor, zor gününde kötü gününde, bana en büyük destekçim hep ablam oldu zamanında da ablam oldu ve eşim ablamı çok severdi kız kardeşi olmadığı için ablama çok düşkündü hiçbir şey diyemezdi ablama kızsa da bir şey diyemezdi ablam da onu çok severdi ablam destekçim oldu. Bu günlere gelesiye kadar ablamın çok tesellisi oldu ama hani şu var, belirli bir zaman geçtikten sonra diyorsun ki

> tırnağın varsa başını kaşı, hiç olmayanlar olmadı mı oldu. Akrabalar olsun kardeşler olsun hala teyzeden olsun hiç destek olmadılar mı olmadılar.
>
> D: actually, one can differentiate who is a friend and who is an enemy during difficult days, my biggest support has always been my sister, my husband used to love my sister a lot because he did not have a sister. He was very fond of my sister. He would not say one thing to my sister, even if he was angry with her; my sister used to like him very much, too, she was my support. She consoled me until these days. But after a while, you tell to yourself to become self-sufficient. Some relatives, siblings, aunts, they gave me no support at all, that's what it is.

D explained how her elder sister was so important for providing emotional support. According to D., not all relatives were helpful, but her sister continued to help her. When a family was not supportive, it created additional problems and emotional difficulties as in the case of F;

> F: Benim özgüvenim yoktu önceden, yapamam diyip kestirip atıyordum. Annem hala sen yapamazsın beceremezsin der. Beni hayatım boyunca korumacı davranarak engellediler. Destek değil köstek oldular. Bir süre onlarla konuşmayı kestim sonra biraz değişmeye başladılar
>
> F: I did not have self-confidence before, I would say I cannot do something and that was that. My mother still says you are not competent enough. My parents always behave in this way to protect me, but they prevent me from doing lots of things. I did not communicate with them for a while and they started to change a little bit.

In contrast Z's relationships with her family and her husband's family became better in time.

> Z. Bizde ilişkiler çok kuvvetlendi. Sadece kendi anne babamla değil eşimin anne babasıyla da, iyi davranıyorlar kırmamaya çalışıyorlar. Çocukların işlerinde de destek oluyorlar. Gayet iyi geliyor bana
>
> Z: For us, relationships improved, not only with my mother and father but also with my husband's mother and father. They try to treat me well and avoid hurting me. They also provide support for the children. It feels really good.

Family support was important for the women to cope adaptively. It was effective for both feeling better and getting help when needed. Support from friends was beneficial for some women. As K. said:

> K: En çok psikososyal destek merkezinden destek aldım bir de arkadaşlarımdan. Arkadaşlarım çok destek oldu. Bir şeyi belki saatlerce anlattım ertesi gün geldiklerinde yine anlattım. Onlar demediler ki sen bunu anlatmıştın yine anlatıyorsun demediler
>
> K: I got support from the psycho-social support center most. And also, from my friends. My friends helped me a lot. I told them something a million times maybe, I told them again when they came the next day. They did not mention that I already talked about that stuff before, and I talked about it again.

K said sometimes she told them what she experienced several times, their efforts to understand her helped her relieve her feelings. Friends could show emphatic understanding for some women. Probably being peers provides them the ability to understand each other better. Sharing their emotions with an empathic friend seemed to help the participants relieve their feelings. Some women attended new courses such as driving or handcraft courses, and they met new people there. As H mentioned;

> H: Gittiğim kursta on beş yirmi kişi oluyor biriyle konuşmasan biriyle konuşuyorsun, iki kıştır gidiyorum o bana iyi geliyor.
>
> H: There are 15-20 people in the course I attend. You can talk to one of them or the other, and I have been going there for the last two winters, it makes me feel better.

Talking about daily stuff and being with friends in the class made H feel better. Sometimes friends who are not so close may also be helpful by sharing similar interests.

As mentioned before, many people from different cities and places of Turkey visited families and women just after the disaster. These visits continued for a while and many women said these visits provided them emotional support and increased their faith in humanity. Being remembered and cared for by other people who used to be strangers helped them to bear their sorrow. As a woman said:

> E: Bizim için bakıldığında başkalarının bizi hatırlaması ya da en azından hani söyle düşünüyorsunuz bunun içinde hiçbir art niyet yoksa yanınıza gelip size destek olmaları manevi olarak size dua etmeleri size çok iyi geliyor.
>
> E: For us, other people were remembering us or at least them approaching you for support with no agendas, them praying for you spiritually, these are the things that make us feel better.

According to her, some people had bad intentions or hidden agendas, such as advertising their visits. Those visits were disappointing for them. Those were rare compared to other people who came to show their support. People talking to them, crying with them, providing economic support have created a sense of connection between them and the other people. As a woman said:

> G: İnsana manevi yönden çok büyük bir destek. Kapımı çalıyor biz İstanbul'dan geldik sarılıyor sana seninle bir ağlıyor, baş sağlığı diliyor insanlar maddi olarak da elinden ne geliyorsa onu yapmaya çalıştılar ama yeminle söylüyorum size hiç onları saymıyorum ama tanımadığım bir sürü insanın o kadar güzel bir şey ki.
>
> G: It was great spiritual support. Someone rings the bell, they say they are coming from Istanbul, then they come in, give a hug, cry with you, give their condolences. People also gave economic support, but I do not count it. Lots of people whom I do not know before, it felt very good.

Those visits were frequent for six months after the disaster. Then the number of people visiting them decreased with time. Some women said that they could understand why people could not come anymore, but they also felt disappointed. It felt like they and their husbands' cases were forgotten, and they were alone with their destiny.

Many interviewed women knew each other before, but some of them met after the disaster. Most of them were around the same age and had similar socioeconomic backgrounds, making it easier to form connections. Women shared similar experiences and problems. They were under the same pressure of being widows and they had similar child-rearing difficulties because of being single mothers. Most of them said that talking to each other was helpful because they had the same losses and experiences after the disaster. Other people sometimes could be judgmental, but these women could understand the

difficulties they faced. It could be inferred that being accepted and understood by each other made them feel better.

> B: Onlarla konustukçana iyi oluyon yani ya birbirini daha güzel anlıyon çünkü birbirimizin derdini birbirimiz anlıyoruz görüştüğün eşimiz dostumuz. Mesela benden daha üzgün olanlar var tamam ben de çok üzülüyom da. Yapma diyorum çocuğun var kızın var oğlun var diyorum sen böyle üzülürsen üzülme diyorum.
>
> B: You feel better when you talk to them. We understand each other's suffering better because we are friends. Some women are sadder than me. I am also very sad, but I advise them not to be so sad, saying that you have a daughter or son.

Another significant factor was that these women had similar goals. They were attending the courts or meetings together. So, they had the chance to talk and discuss the juridical process. They could talk to each other about their anger, pain, or happiness after the courts or other communal activities. According to participants' narrations, this created a feeling of solidarity, making them feel better and increasing their coping abilities.

3.6.4. Sufficient financial sources

The money provided by the government led to many controversial changes. Even though it created divisions in the society, it helped women to be more independent. Many women mentioned that having sufficient financial sources contributed to their coping. They could afford food, education for the children, and other needs of their homes. They were previously dependent only on the husbands' limited salaries. Losing the husbands meant losing their primary financial support for the families. The husbands' salary would have been even lower after their losses, which would not be enough to cover all the needs. Regulations of financial help provided lots of potentials for the women and their children. As M said:

> M: o da gerekiyor tabi ki şimdi bir evin olmasa ben çok zor geçinirdim gerçekten, aldığım kiraya şuna bana çocuk var zor geçinirdim. Artık bu saatten sonra insan geçim derdine düşüyor biliyon mu. Mesela onun yanına gittim mi

> öyle diyom ona bak diyom hiç gözün arkada kalmasın ben çocuklara sahip çıkarım elimden geldikçe yaparım onlara. O onlar için öldüyse ben de onun kişisel emanetlere sahip çıkmak istiyorum.
>
> M: Financial sufficiency is needed. If I did not have a home, I could not have afforded our family's needs. I would have given my husband's salary to the rent and the children, and it would not have been enough. When I visit his grave, I say do not worry about the children, I will look after them and do my best. If he died for them, I would embrace his legacy, his children.

What M said was a good demonstration of how most women formed a relationship between financial improvements, their responsibilities toward the dead husbands, and their children. Economic sufficiency became essential not only to afford the needs of the family but also to fulfill their obligations toward their husbands. It seemed to provide a kind of satisfaction and decreased feelings of guilt and sadness. Most of the women did not work before, only two of them were employed before their husbands' death. they were not used to making money for themselves. Therefore, if they had not received financial support, it would have been very difficult for them to fulfill their duty of looking after their family financially after the loss of their husbands.

> Z: İhtiyaç çok pazara markete gitmek gerekiyor, fatura yatıracaksın, evin olmasa kira ödeyeceksin. Çalışmak zorunda kalsam zorlanırdım, şimdi çocuklara rahat vakit ayırabiliyorum. Baban da olsa annen de olsa birilerine muhtaç olmak çok zor. Kendi yağımızda kavruluyoruz, yetiyor bize çok şükür.
>
> Z: You need to go to the market, pay the bills and rent of the house. I would have had more difficulties if I were working. Now I have enough time for children. It is tough to rely on someone, even your father or mother. Thank God, it is enough for us.

Being economically independent and self-sufficient provided them with new ways of coping. Previously, both financial inadequacy and cultural restrictions related to being housewives prevented them from getting new experiences. With new employment opportunities and economic improvements, they learned new skills by attending courses such as using computers, driving, or doing handcrafts. By learning new skills, they became more engaged with their lives, which increased their self-esteem.

3.6.5. Coping by one's own

Knowing one's own ability to cope with adversities was another theme. Similar to being self-confident, knowing their strengths was important in terms of managing on their own. Some women, but not all, mentioned how they found themselves competent toward life. It seemed to increase both self-sufficiency and coping. B was one of them and her positive attitude and self-confidence were so helpful in facing the adversities after the loss. She said:

> B: yaparım her şeyimi ama kendime güvenim var yani seviyom kendimi. Öyle şeyim var yani kendime güvenim var kendime o zaman da mesela seviyom bir şeyi başardım mı mutlu oluyom öyle bir tabiatım var. Mesela kimseye boyun eğmeyi sevmem yani. Bazı insanlar vardır yapsın da arkasında hazır yiyeyim ben öyle hazır yemem sevmem yani ben öyle bir şeyleri yaptıkça mutlu oluyorum baktıkça mutlu oluyorum başardıkçana mutlu oluyorum yani bir şeyler ürettim mi seviniyorum.
>
> B: I can manage lots of things, I trust myself, I love myself. That's to say, I have confidence in myself. When I succeed in something, I become happy. It is my nature. I am not particularly eager to obey someone. Some people like to consume what other people prepare. But I would not say I like it; I am happier when I do something, manage something, succeed in something. I feel joy when I produce.

B had a garden. She said that she felt better when she managed to plant in her garden and be self-sufficient. Mastery feelings may have enabled her to increase trust in her coping abilities. Many women were engaging in handcrafts and found it also relieving. They seemed to produce something new; vegetables or handcrafts, which kept them busy and helped them feel more competent.

3.7. Being a miner family

3.7.1. Poverty

According to women's narrations, nearly all the dead mineworkers and their families were poor. Most of them grew up in villages near Soma. In villages, the primary source of income was generally farming. Tobacco harvesting and

farming of other regional vegetables were frequent. Even though agriculture was still one of the dominant ways of earning lives in the villages, working in the mines became a better option for years, because of its permanent salary and insurance. As H said:

> H: Eskiden biz tarla işi de yaptık hayvanlarımız da vardı domates ektik biber ektik hepsini yaptık biz ama düzenli bir gelirin olmadığı için olmuyordu. Mesela hayvana yedircen hayvan sana bakcak mesela, e tarlaya dökcen sonra topluycan o da olmadı yani en son madene girdi düzenli gelir için
>
> H: We used to be engaged with agriculture and husbandry before with my husband, we farmed tomatoes, pepper, and other kinds of vegetables, but these jobs did not provide permanent income. You had to spend on the farm, feed animals and make money later. We could not afford it, and finally, he started to work in the mine.

H's narration gave a reasonable explanation for background information about why many people stopped working in agriculture. Vegetables were generally seasonal, and one needed to have capital to continue harvesting. Many mineworkers' families were farmers, but moved to the Soma's center when they started mining. With increasing expenses due to living in town, most women said they lived in poverty before their husbands' deaths. As B narrated:

> B: Eşim garibanlığı bilen bir insan olduğu için, kendisi de zengin bir ailenin çocuğu değildi. Gariban bir ailenin çocuğuydu, kendi garibanlığı gördüğü için çocuklara daha çok önem veriyordu hani ben garibanlığı gördüm çocuklarım görmesin, hani onu ben yiyemedim ona ben yedireyim.
>
> B: My husband was born in a village, he knew poverty, his family was poor, he was not a child of a rich family. Because he knew the difficulties of being poor, he cared for his children so much. He used to say, I know poverty, but my children would not.

B. explained how his husbands' previous experiences shaped his attitudes towards his children. He had lots of financial problems and wished to prevent his children from having such problems. The women's families or origin were also from villages or Soma and they made money from agriculture or mining; their socioeconomic status was also low. Most of the women didn't work and the men were the only ones responsible for providing money. Even though mining

was a job that paid regularly, the salary was low and it was hard to live on it, as G. said:

> G: ben dediğim gibi benim hayatım ben eşimle çocuklarımla mutluydum ama bizim sıkıntımız işte ekonomik para yoktu madende çalışıyordu ama para yok, ekmek yeminlen size bir lirayı komsulardan istediğim zaman çok oldu komsularım da biliyor bunu insanlar da biliyor bunu gördü ekonomik yönden dipteydik artık yani evde ekmek olmadı mı mutlaka huzursuzluk da oluyor
>
> G: We were happy as a family with my husband and children, but we had lots of financial problems. He used to work in the mine, you know. We did not have enough money. My neighbors also knew that we were so down, sometimes I even asked them for a lira to buy bread. When you have financial problems, you also have interpersonal problems at home.

G. was one of the oldest participants and lived under difficult financial conditions for years. The need to ask for a lira to buy bread was not an exceptional experience and it summarized mineworker families' economic conditions. K. gave some other examples from their previous daily lives.

> K: Evde vakit geçirirdik genelde bütçemiz kısıtlı olduğundan. Sosyal hayatımız yoktu belki çerez bisküvi televizyonu açıp otururduk. Senede bir kez dikiliye giderdik sabah yedide çıkar öğlen on ikide oraya varırdık. Dört saat için oraya giderdik sonra orada yollarda harcadığımız bizi bir ay sıkıntıya sokardı.
>
> K: We used to spend our time at home because our budget was limited. We were not socially active. We used to watch tv eating nuts and biscuits. We used to go to Dikili in the summer once a year for one day, only spent four hours there, but these expenses generally led to financial difficulties for that month.

K. and her husband needed to restrict their social lives and activities to afford their lives. Many women narrated similar circumstances; they could only afford to go to tea gardens or visit their families and they spent most of their money on the children or household expenses.

3.7.2. Being forced to work in the mine

Some participants said that their husbands previously tried to work in different jobs but could not continue, because those jobs did not pay regularly. D. summarized it as:

> D: Madene girdi istemeyerek girdi istemeyerek çalıştı ama mecburdu. 2012'nin onuncu ayında çocuğum dünyaya geldi, dışarda kaç tane işe girdi, maaşını alamadı sigortası yatmadı, yer altı paklar beni dedi madene girdi.
>
> D: My husband started to work in the mine involuntarily, he had to. My first child was born in October of 2012. Until then, he tried to work in different jobs other than mining, but he could not get his salary or insurance. He thought that going under the ground was the only option and started to work in the mine.

As in the quotation above, D's husband initially did not want to work in the mine and tried different options but could not get his salary. In the other jobs, it was not possible to get permanent health insurance. Before they had children, it was tolerable not to have a permanent position and insurance, but it became more critical with the child's birth, and the husband had to work in the mine. The term "go underground" is generally used to define mining jobs by the participants.

Mineworkers worked eight hours a day in the mine without going out. Indeed, it was not a desirable job, because everyone knew it was not secure enough. All the women also said that they did not want their husbands to work there. Under the conditions in the mine theme, it was explained in detail how problematic it was working there. However, it seemed men had to choose it to support their families. D. continued:

> D: Eşim üniversite terkti muhasebe bölümünden hani yani ne yazık ki okumamışsan Soma'da kömür kentinde olunca nereye girersin yerin altına istemeyerek de olsa girmek zorunda kalırsın.
>
> D: My husband had left the accounting department at the university. Unfortunately in Soma, which is a city of coal, if you don't have a university degree, you have to go underground to do mining.

Soma was a "coal city" where one could not find any other proper job. With the increasing use of mine basins, mining factories very much influenced the socioeconomic conditions in Soma. Thousands of mineworkers could not find better job opportunities. Previously mentioned prejudice towards the widows also had its roots in continuing economic difficulties among Soma residents.

3.7.3. Having a high-risk job

Many participants declared that they were aware of the risks of the mining job. Their awareness was based on their husbands' narrations of the risks related to working in a mining basin. These statements were evident in almost all participants' narrations, and they declared that it was a significant source of stress and anxiety in everyday life.

> B: son bir yani yapılacak iş çaresiz bir işte. Ondan kerecime eşim o zamanlarda da gidiyordu, gidiyordu ama hep aklın onda oluyordu. Acaba bugün de sağ çıkar gelir mi. O kendi de diyordu zaten giderekene hani buradan vedalışıyordu. Orada diyordu yerin altına giriyon diyordu çıkmak hani şeyimize kalmış diyor hani o kendi de diyordu. Bu işin tabi zorlukları vardı zorlukları bile bile gidiyordu yani. Orada arkadaşlarla bile yerin altına gittik mi diyo vedalaşırsın diyor. Çünkü inersin diyor çıkamamazlık da var diyor riksli yani

> B: Last chance, you have to do the work out of desperation. That's why my husband had to work then as well, but he was always on my mind. Would he come back alive today? He said it himself too, and he used to say goodbye when he left home. He said that he was going down underground, but coming back up depended on..., he said it himself. This work has its difficulties; he went there knowing it. He said that they would say goodbye even to his friends there when they went down underground. Because you go down, there is the possibility of not coming back up to the earth. It is risky.

When husbands were working in the mine, many women were anxious because it was considered dangerous. As presented in the quotation above, while men were entering the mine; they thought it was necessary to say goodbye to each other, because they were not sure whether they would get out alive. F also narrated how they were suspicious about her husband's safety.

> F: Eşimiz madende çalıştığı için, zaman madenci eslerinde su var: gitti geri gelebilecek mi acaba? Yedi kat yerin dibine giriyorsun çalışıyorlar, çok ağır koşullarda çalışıyorlar.
>
> F: Because our husbands worked in the mine, we, as mineworkers' wives, worried about whether they could come back from the mine. They were going sevenfold under the ground; they worked in tough conditions.

It was also evident in F's narration that the conditions were burdensome to bear and the emphasis on "going sevenfold under the ground" was a convenient statement that emphasized the dangerousness of the act. Women also heard about injuries or deaths of other workers from their husbands. K said:

> K: Eşim bir gün geldi işten ağlayarak böyle yanında bir arkadaşı ölmüş. Çok ağladı o zaman. Eşim maden çok tehlikeli derdi, bizim girdiğimiz yeri görsen. Bazı yerlerden sürünerek geçiyoruz, bir görsen valla şu parayı koklayıp koklayıp bırakırsın harcayamazsın derdi.
>
> K: Once my husband came home, crying, one of his friends died next to him. He cried a lot then. My husband said that the mining basin was very dangerous. We have to crawl to go through. If you saw the places we have to go into, you would smell the money and could not spend it.

K said that her husband continued to work there even though he lost his friends there and knew the dangers. Difficulties and risks made her husbands' salary very valuable. Many women shared similar ideas about the significance of the money earned by mining. D told another phrase that mineworkers used to signify the health-threatening conditions in the mine. One would say "geçmiş olsun" or “get better soon” when the shift ended as if the person recovered from a sickness.

> D: Biz de şey vardır işçi evine döndüğünde geçmiş olsun derler. Geçmiş olsun kelimesi kime derler hastaya derler ama bizim burada yeraltından çıkan işçiye geçmiş olsun denir.
>
> D: When a mineworker comes back home from work, one says, "get better soon." To whom does one say to get better soon? To a patient. Here we say it to the mineworker.

3.8. Search for justice

After the mine disaster, a juridical process started to identify and judge the perpetrators. Many families, relatives, and the wives of the deceased participated in the trials, and the court took place in Akhisar, a town close to Soma. The women generally attended the courts with their families or friends. Sosyal Haklar Derneği (Social Rights Association) and Soma 301 Madenciler Sosyal Yardımlaşma Derneği (Soma 301 Miners Social Assistance Association) arranged their transportation by busses. Meanwhile, there were lots of protests in the Soma and in front of the courtroom in Akhisar. Trials generally took place in two or three month-intervals, each of them lasting several days. The women had different attitudes towards and motivations for attending the trials and the protests. All the women were interested in the juridical process, but only a few found the protests meaningful and participated.

3.8.1. Attending the courts

The women mentioned various motivations for attending the courts. Most of them said that they felt the obligation of defending their husbands' rights. It provided a kind of relief to do something for them. As B narreted:

> B: Ben eşimin davasına da gittikçe de vicdanen rahatlıyorum. Gitmedim mi de acaba eşim niye gitmedin benim hakkımı niye aramadı diye sorar bana diye gitmedim mi mutsuz hissediyorum. Mahkemeye gittikçe de mahkemedeki katillere konuştukça da içimdeki sıkıntıyı içimde olan sorunları ben orada söyledikçe de benim içim rahatlıyor. Ben onun için en çok da gidiyom yani içimdeki şeyi boşaltıyorum yani.
>
> B: I feel relieved when I attended the courts and it soothes my conscience. When I do not participate, I feel unhappy, thinking whether my husband would ask me why I did not go and defend his rights. In the courts, I feel relieved when I talk to murderers and express my distress there. I go there mostly for this.

As B said, other women also mentioned the importance of searching for justice for their husbands. B. also narrated that not attending these courts would make her feel guilty. As the researcher, I also had the opportunity to attend the trials

after completing the interviews and I observed that the women were very active and expressed anger during the court sessions. They shouted at the suspects, called them murderers, liars, or accused them of being dishonest. Sometimes the judge threw some women out of the courtroom, but they had no problem with this decision. After a while, they came back to participate in the trials.

Similar to B.'s narration, most women stated that having the chance to express their anger and opinions of the perpetrators was relieving. B. also regularly attended the trials and when she did not participate, she felt unhappy and upset. Attending the court seemed to be a way of sustaining the bond with the dead husbands. Not all the women felt relieved after the courts; some became more angry, sad, and tense after the sessions. As Z. narrated:

> Z: Ben davaya gidip geldiğimde çok etkileniyorum. Onun için bazen gitmemeyi tercih ediyorum. Hep aynı şeyleri söylüyorlar bir de kendilerini savunuyorlar ya o kadar ihmalleri var, kaldıramıyorum.
>
> Z: I am very badly affected when I attend the courts. So sometimes I do not prefer to attend. Suspects say the same things, defend themselves even though they were negligent, I cannot stand it.

Z mentioned that she tried to get over this painful process, but witnessing the suspects' testimonies made it worse for her. M. also said that she felt demoralized when she heard the testimonies.

> M: Ben hiç mahkemelere gitmiyorum birkaç kere gittim çok üzülüyorum moralim daha çok bozuluyor. Bir kere patronun oğlu (yargılananlardan biri) ben mağdurum dedi, sen mağdursan ben ne yapayım. Çok canım sıkıldı
>
> M: I do not attend the court sessions, I went several times, but I got upset, I was demoralized. Once, the boss' son said that he was a victim; what will I do if you are a victim. I was very upset to hear that.

As M said, sometimes suspects defended themselves as victims or blamed dead mineworkers, which made the process unbearable. This caused deep sadness and also anger for the women. Sometimes attending the court led to dangerous consequences for women's health. As in the case of G:

> G: İlk zaman orada da çok kötü oluyordum, adamları gördükçe bırakıversem öldürcem yani kendimi de yanlış buluyorum bırakıversem öldürcem ama ben hepsine yani düşman gibi değil yani başka bir şekilde görüyorum orada da bağırıp çağırıyoz, orada da tansiyonlarım çıktı bir şey söylüyoz sen a diyon onlar başka bir şey diyo hepsi bizim sucumuz yok diyo suçlu kim o zaman ama gitmek de istiyom vazgeçmedim ondan gittim geldim tansiyonum da çıkıyordu
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> G: Early on I would feel horrible there too, as I see those men if I let myself, I will kill them, I know I am wrong, I am ready to kill, I see them differently, not as enemies, we raise our voice there as well, my blood pressure was elevated. We say something, they say another thing, they say we are not guilty, who is the guilty one then, but still I wanted to go, I did not give up, I went, I had hypertension too.

Some women said that what the suspects said implied that the workers were to blame. It increased their anger. G mentioned that she became outraged, she even wanted to kill them when she listed to their false testimonies. Her anger led to an increase in her hypertension. Her relatives were worried about her health and tried to prevent her from attending the courts, but she felt guilty and continued participating in the trials.

3.8.2. Attending the protests

The primary motivation for attending the protests was similar to the motivation behind attending courts; searching for their husbands' rights. The difference was that only a few of the interviewed women attended the protests. Women who participated generally mentioned that it felt good to demonstrate that they did not forget what happened to their husbands and make themselves heard. As B said:

> B: katıldım hepsine katıldım. İyi hissettim kendimi hani neden kötü hissedeyim ki o da benim için benim eşimin hakkı için olan yani bir protesto onun için yapılan bir eylem gibi bir şey iyi hissettim eşimin davasını savunmak onun arkasında durmak.
>
> B: I attended, I attended all. I felt better; why would I feel worse? It is an act of defending my husband's rights, I mean a protest, I felt good to advocate my husband's case, to stand by him.

B. felt that attending the protests was standing by her husband and she thought that the protests were acts performed in his name. Protests also released the

participants' anger towards the perpetrators and raised their voices to show the legitimacy of their cause.

> C: Eşim sağ olsaydı herkesin önünde şu an arkadaşları için o bütün yürüyüşlerin önünde giderdi, haksızlığa gelemezdi şey yapardı işsiz de kalacağını da bilse tutup suç diyip hapse gireceğini bilse o yapardı. Ben de eşim için yapıyorum.
>
> C: If my husband were alive, he would have participated in the demonstrations for his friends. He would not have allowed injustice, and he would have participated even if knew that he would lose his job or were found guilty. I do the same for my husband.

C. said that his husband would have also participated if he were alive and he would have taken any risk to defend the rights of the others. She also wanted to be like him. The other participating women had a similar point of view, that attending the protests was a way of remembering and reminding everyone what happened. On the other hand, women who did not attend generally found the protests useless and meaningless compared to attending the courts. As Z. said:

> Z: Ben hiçbirine gitmedim, neden gitmediğimi sorarsanız hiçbir şey değişmeyecek çünkü sen durma koştur söylen, ben sadece protestoyu yapsam ne için yaparım suçluların dışarı çıkmaması için yaparım. Mesela oymuş şuymuş başka bir amacım yok. Gidip de şu saatten sonra bir protesto yapmanın bir anlamı yok çünkü giden geri gelmeyecek.
>
> Z: I did not attend any of those. If you ask me why, because I believe that nothing will change, even if you raise your voice or you run around. If I protest something, it would be for keeping criminals behind bars. I have no other goals, this or that. At this point protesting has no meaning, because those who are gone will never come back.

She thought that protesting would not change the circumstances, bring back her husband, or ensure justice. She also mentioned that her husband would not like her attending the protests on the streets. Religious women were more conservative about going outside by themselves and demonstrations required them to be together with many men and women on the streets. It seemed that they did not feel comfortable. In addition, some of them found protests political and did not want to be involved in political acts. As E narrated:

> E: Ben çocuklarımı olaylardan uzak tutmaya çalışıyorum. Bir kere protestonun ortasında kaldım, siz neyin peşindesiniz diye bağırmak istedim. Senin burada gelip bağırıp çağırmanın bize faydası yok, dertleri destek olmak olsa bizi tek tek bulurlar evimize gelirler. Dışarıdan da gelenler oluyor protestolara zaten terör olayları çok arttı ben güvenemiyorum.
>
> E: I am trying to protect my children from adverse events. Once, I came across a rally and found myself among the crowd. I wanted to scream and ask them what their intention was. It doesn't help us, and if they intend to support us, they should find and come visit us. There are lots of people coming outside of Soma. Nowadays, terror incidents are frequent and I cannot trust them.

She did not like the idea of outsiders attending protests in Soma, and she did not believe that their intentions were to actually seek justice. E thought that they were demonstrating to support their own political views. In addition, she shared her anxiety about terror attacks directed towards protesters that were frequent in Turkey between 2015 and 2017. Other women also declared that they did not feel secure during a rally in Soma. Safety issue shaped attitudes of women toward attending courts and protests. Attending courts was acknowledged as more of a rights issue, but demonstrations were considered political, which is sometimes considered to be illegal in Turkey. On the other hand, few women stated that even though they did not want to join a rally, people's gatherings made them feel good. As H. said:

> H: Aslında bence pek bir anlamı yok sonuç da vermiyor ama unutulmadığını görmek, insanların protesto etmesi unutulmaması güzel.
>
> H: Honestly, I find no meaning in the protests; it doesn't contribute to any results, but witnessing that people do not forget is good.

H. did not attend them but felt good about the protests, because they meant that not only the family members or relatives of the miners, but also other people remembered and demonstrated their discomfort related to the dead mineworkers. Other women also said that people's involvement in the courts and the protests made them feel valued in society's eyes, positively affecting their belief in justice.

Generally, seeing injustice increased their suffering and led to problems in their mourning process. The courts and the protests became a way of searching for justice and compensated for feelings of injustice. Witnessing the court process and reactions from the society seemed to soften their intense mourning experience.

3.9. Psychosocial support

Ministry of Family and Social Policies opened a social service center in Soma. Volunteers from Turkish Psychological Association, Social worker association, psychiatric association, and Kızılay were working together at the center. A psychologist was permanently employed and others came temporarily and worked generally for one week. Initially psychologists and social workers visited families at home and then they referred people to the center for psychotherapy and psychiatric intervention when needed. Nearly all the women said that they benefited from home visits and receiving services from psychologists at the center.

3.9.1. What worked

Many women said that home visits by psychologists and social workers were helpful. When a psychosocial worker visited them, they could talk about everyday problems and ask questions to improve their conditions. People in remote areas and villages benefited more from those visits, probably because they could not have access to the psychological services center. All the women mentioned the psychological support they got and most of them noted that they benefited from it. As K said:

> K: Anlatmak ya hani orada aslında şey yapıyoruz hanin esneme hareketleri gevşeme hareketleri yapıyoruz ama insan aslında anlattığı zaman rahatlatıyor, o yaptığım hareketler şeyler pek de etkili değil gibi geliyor belki etkisi vardır ama bilmiyorum.

> K: It is talking, you know, we do things, like stretching movements, but one gets relaxed when one talks, I think that those movements are not that effective, but maybe they are, I do not know.

K. attended psychological support sessions with an EMDR therapist and mentioned that not the techniques but sharing was beneficial for her. As a researcher, I also got similar feedback from some participants. After we completed the interview, they said that it was helpful for them to talk about those days, their sorrow, and their current problems.

Women generally did not want to talk about their issues with people from Soma, because they felt that they disregarded their grief. As explained under being a widow theme, prejudice, gossip, and discrimination towards these women were high. So, talking with a stranger, a professional who would not judge them, probably made them feel better. There was a permanently employed psychologist at the center and most of the women said that his contribution was significant. Even though the temporary psychologists were also helpful, lack of stability limited their helpfulness. As G said:

> G: Bir gidiyorsun anlatıyorsun, sonra başka birine anlat. Oradaki kız dedi ki böyle anlata anlata rahatlayacaksın ama tahammül edemiyom orada patlayacaktım az daha. Ondan sonra aynı şeyleri konuşmaktan ağlaya ağlaya ağlaya geldim eve bir baktım benim tansiyonum fırlamış.

> G: You go and tell everything; next time, you tell it to somebody else. The woman at the center said to me that I would feel better by talking about these issues. I was so close to exploding. I came back home crying. My tension went up.

G. narrated that talking about her experiences and talking to different people each time was not easy; it increased her suffering. Because she had hypertension problems, she could not continue attending counseling sessions.

3.9.2. Suggestions for improvement

One of the suggestions was to increase the number of psychosocial workers who visit the families. Some of the participants said that they needed to talk more about their children, but finding a child psychologist or a psychiatrist was challenging. As K. said:

> K: Ev ziyaretleri çok olmalı çocuklara yönelik çocuk psikologları çok olmalı, mesela bizim şeyimizde çocuk psikologları yoktu normal psikologlar bakıyordu çocuğa. O da yine değişiyor, hani pek şeyi olmadı. Onlar çok etkileniyor aile şey yapamıyor

> K: Home visits should be more and there should be more child psychologists. For example, there were no child psychologists; normal (adult) psychologists saw them. The psychologist on duty also changed frequently; it didn't help. The children were influenced so much, but families could not help them.

Even though psychological services were beneficial for people living in Soma, they were not accessible for women and children living far away from the center. A system of transportation was needed in the remote areas and villages. Also, many women suggested that there should be more permanent positions for psychologists at the center. Psychologists generally stayed and worked for one week in the psychosocial center and the psychologists changed every week. According to the participants, meeting with a new psychologist each week made it more difficult for them to feel comfortable to talk about their problems. A Woman complained about this;

> K: Oranın bir kötü yanı çok psikolog değişmesi, yani bu olmamalı böyle bir AFAD bölgesinde hiçbir yerde yani tamam bizimki oldu bitti geçti ama yine bir AFAD olur bir şey olur yine bir psikoloğa gerek olur, sürekli değişmemesi gerekiyor insanların anlattığı şeyi dönüp dönüp tekrar başa anlattığı sürece ben iki ay üç ay dört ay ne ise hep aynı şeyleri anlattım döndüm döndüm aynı şeyleri anlattım, baktım ileri gidemiyorum hep geçmişte yaşıyorum gibi geliyor bana. O beni kötü yaptı, bir de karşındakine iki günde bir kendini tanıtmak zorundasın çünkü sürekli değişiyorlar kalıcı bir şeyler yapılmalı.

> K: One bad thing about that place is that the psychologist changes a lot, I mean, it should not be like that, especially in a disaster region, nowhere, okay ours is over, but if a disaster happens again and a psychologist is needed, it should not change all the time, as long as people tell everything again and again, I told

> same things for two, three, four months, I felt no progress, then I felt like I live in the past. That made me feel horrible and you have to introduce yourself again to the person in front of you because they always change. They should be permanent.

As she said, talking about the same issue repeatedly to a new person negatively influenced her and made her feel worse than before. This could also create problems in trusting mental health professionals and decrease motivation to get appropriate treatment. The participants stated that having a permanent, stable psychologist, psychiatrist, or social worker would be more effective in working with their grief and enhancing their well-being.

Psychological support services were not sufficient for children and adolescents. However, different NGOs organized various sport and hobby courses in Soma, such as football, basketball, swimming, and painting. Most of the women found these courses beneficial. The women living in the villages and distant neighborhoods mentioned they could not reach these services, because transportation was difficult. As H said:

> H: Bu hizmet veriliyorsa mesela bu Somadaki şehit ailelerin çocuklarına hiçbir köy de ayrılmaması gerekir, bence onların çocukları daha iyi bir eğitim alırken bu çocuklar niye almasın, bir servis çıkarın diyin ki sabah şu saatte alcaz aksam su saatte geri bırakcaz öyle bir şey olsa neden göndermeyeyim ki ben köyde durmaktansa.

> H: If you provide a service like that to deceased miners' children you should not exclude those in the villages. If the children at the center are getting better education in those areas why should not the other children get it also. I think they should arrange a shuttle and tell us that we will pick the children up at this time in the morning and we will drop them off at this time in the evening. Why wouldn't I send them and keep them in the village if there were something like that.

In the villages, sources for supporting children's development were also scarce. H suggested that arranging shuttle services would be helpful for them. H. also emphasized the inequality in the organization of those courses. All the women had similar status, but only the women living in Soma could reach all the

services. Arranging transportation to the center seemed essential for reaching women and children in the village who had limited options.

Another problem mentioned was the variety of the organizations. The organizations were significant in being the source of juridical information and distributing different kinds of support such as economic, psychosocial, educational. People generally had a connection with only one organization and if the another organization provided additional information or help, they could not reach it. K mentioned the importance of unity of the services.

> K: Somada şimdi sosyal haklar derneği var birçok kitleye ulaşamıyor veya madenci evi var, hepsi tek bir çatı altında toplansa ya da bilgi alabileceğimiz tek bir yer olsa... o da pek mümkün değil.
>
> K: Now, in Soma, there is a social rights association, it cannot reach many people, or there is mineworkers house. All of them should be together under one roof, or if there were one place from where we can get information, that does not seem possible either.

As K said, better connection and communication were needed between NGOs in the case of an emergency and afterwards.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

4.1. Overview

The present study focused on women's experiences after the traumatic loss of their partners and aimed to contribute to the literature on traumatic loss and grief. The Soma mine disaster was the deadliest industrial accident that resulted in the loss of 301 mine workers (TMMOB, 2014). The common idea was that the pressure of overproduction led to an inevitable accident and violations of workers' safety and health regulations increased the adverse effects of the disaster. After the disaster, the spouses of dead miners were among the most affected groups. This study aimed to focus on their experiences. Research questions were: 1) How did the women who lost their husbands at the Soma disaster experience the disaster and loss of their spouses? 2) What has changed in their lives in regards to both the community members and their significant others? 3) How did they cope with their grief and changes in their lives after the losses?

Seventeen women were interviewed and their responses were analyzed using interpretative phenomenological analysis. Nine superordinate themes emerged: Perception of the Event, Meaning-making of the Event, Psychological Consequences, Changes after loss, Experiences of Spousal Loss as a Woman, Coping with the Loss, Being a Miner Family, Search for Justice, and Psychosocial Support. These superordinate themes were summarized and discussed in light of the existing literature.

4.2. General Discussion of Findings

4.2.1. Perception of the event

The results revealed that the women's perception of this specific event was influential on their grieving processes. Previous research on grief literature pointed out that the mode of death, how the deceased die, is a significant variable for the perception of the bereaved (Parkes & Prigerson, 2010; Stroebe, et al., 2007). Natural deaths are generally described as deaths that are caused by long-term illnesses or due to old age, however traumatic losses are generally described as sudden, unexpected and including violent aspects. When a death included traumatic aspects, the bereaving individuals experienced more suffering, pain, anxiety, and anger compared to bereavement after natural deaths (Stroebe et al., 2007). In a study with individuals who lost their spouses via suicide, homicide, and accidents, Kaltman and Bonanno (2003) found that these traumatic deaths led to more PTSD symptoms and more enduring depression for the bereaved. In the present study, we did not use diagnostic categories to describe symptoms of the women, however women's mourning processes seemed to be very much influenced by the way the deaths happened. They heard about the incident when they were engaging in their usual daily activities, their husbands had gone to work as always and there was no signal for this massive incident beforehand. The incident was very sudden and unexpected, and women were shocked and had difficulty in believing the reality of death for days. An interviewed women narrated that the difference between normal death and traumatic death as; "*when you knew someone was sick, you would prepare yourself to say goodbye, you would guess and expect the death, and would not hurt so much."* For almost all the women, traumatic aspects of their losses increased their anxiety, pain, and depressive feelings in the long run.

Another aspect of traumatic death is the bereaving individuals' exposure to violent details related to death and dying moments which increased the suffering (Rynearson, 2012). In line with this description, the women in the present study

frequently mentioned the violent details related to the incident and the way their husbands died. Hearing about the fire inside the mining basin, how the rescue process was complicated in the narrow tunnels, and other related details resulted in imagining the violent conditions of their husbands' final hours. Boss (2002) says that after traumatic losses the bereaved sometimes imagines the violent details with the information they get from the media and witnesses. The participants' experiences were similar with this suggestion, they heard lots of violent details and used them to imagine their husbands' experiences prior to death.

After traumatic deaths the appearances of the bodies were usually deformed or mutilated. Kristensen and collogues (2010) found that appearances of the dead bodies would also influence grief; deformed bodies would increase the suffering of the bereaving individuals. Parallel to this finding, most women said that the bodies were somehow changed and deformed due to the way their husbands died. Some could not see their husbands' bodies because of their high deformation. Some of them could see the bodies, but they had difficulty recognizing them because of the changes in their bodies' appearances. Later, the women experienced intrusive memories of the time they tried to recognize their husbands' bodies. Women also emphasized where and under which conditions the bodies waited and were prepared for their funerals. The number of dead bodies was so high that many of them could not be put in morgues as expected but rather kept in cold weather storage. Many women complained about the way bodies were kept inappropriately until the funeral.

Norris and collogues (2002) mentioned that traumatic deaths are usually human-made, such as technological accidents, murder, mass violence, homicide, and terror attacks; human factor in deaths led to not only increase in suffering but also led to more rage and anger. Interviewed women heard about the health-threatening conditions in the mine basin and witnessed their husbands' physical problems prior to the incident. Many of them also mentioned the number of mineworkers who died in the disaster, implying that such a vast number of losses

increased the degree of violence and the effect of trauma. It made them realize that the incident could have been prevented and the employers caused the disaster. The large number of deaths were also the proof of employers' responsibilities in the incident. Parallel to Norris et al.'s suggestions, knowing the responsibility of the perpetrator increased the participants' anger and traumatic effects of the incident for the women.

All these aspects related to their husbands' mode of death led them to perceive their losses as traumatic. The women emphasized how their experiences would have been different if their losses were more "normal" rather than traumatic, which is supported by the findings in the literature (Rynearson, 2012; Raphael & Martinek, 2004).

4.2.2. Meaning making of the event

Traumatic losses generally result in difficulties regarding meaning-making processes during the grief process (Neiyemeyer, et al., 2002). In the context of the present study, these processes were very much influenced by political discussions regarding the Soma disaster. After the disaster, there was a discussion about the prime minister's expression: "…death is a natural part of mining job" (Yıldırım & Umman, 2007). Most of the women mentioned that they were opposed to this idea and described the incident as a kind of murder caused by the employer's neglect. They knew the problematic situation in the mine before and mentioned that employers had not ensured workers' safety. So, according to the participants, the employers failed to prevent the incident and acted in an irresponsible manner and caused the incident. Inferences of the participants made the Soma Mine disaster a kind of human-caused disaster that resulted in the death of hundreds of workers, or more specifically a homicide. Considering the event as murder also increased women's suffering. Their anger toward employers and the authorities related to mine basins' regulations was so high that it usually intervened in their pain. This is also in line with Norris and colleagues' (2002) suggestion that human-caused deaths lead to more anger than

natural deaths. The participants' anger sometimes prevented them from grieving their loss, as was also proposed. Interpreting the event as a homicide brought an additional burden of dealing with the idea of their husbands being killed. It seemed to increase their feelings of injustice and insecurity in life.

Another factor that influenced the participants' meaning making process was their religious beliefs. In Islamic understanding, death is the enactment of the God's will and compliance to this understanding is a demonstration of faith (Rubin & Yasien-Esmael, 2004). According to this belief, everyone is born with a pre-written fate, and the timing of their death is pre-determined. The women who did not think the incident as a murder, usually emphasized the God's will in their narrations. It was observed that interpreting the event as a murder was associated with more expression of anger, sadness, and guilt than thinking of the loss as an order of God, which made the loss less traumatic. In Islam there is a specific way of honoring the deceased who die for religious causes, naming them as martyrs (Cook, 2007). Martyrs are thought to be rewarded in the afterlife and they are honorable and valued in the eyes of the society. In a similar vein, calling the dead mineworkers as martyrs made the women think that their husbands became valuable in the eyes of the society and the God. Many women emphasized how their husbands would have a good place in the afterlife, it seemed to soothe their pain and to increase their acceptance of deaths. Değirmencioğlu (2014) pointed how political forces use the term "martyr" for getting consent and acceptance from the society, according to his view it serves to hide the real cause behind the deaths. The intention of the authorities seems parallel with Değirmencioğlu's explanation; however, the women's acceptance of the martyrdom created a paradox in the women's narrations. Even though most of them agreed with the idea of their husbands' being killed because of the employers' ignorance, all of them also believed that they became martyrs. Finding meaning in the husbands' deaths would be better for the women's mental health rather than thinking about the deaths as in vain. Herman (2015) mentioned that survivors of traumatic incidents need their community's acceptance and support to overcome the painful consequences of their

experiences. Parallel to this explanation, martyrs' families and relatives got more public attention and were more valuable for the society. Hence, the women's beliefs on martyrdom would also be influenced by their community's attitudes toward them.

4.2.3. Psychological Consequences

In their study with widows Stroebe & Schut (2008) found that dysphoria, sadness, sorrow, and guilt were the dominant feelings after the loss. The participants were blaming themselves for not behaving differently or wished they had done something to prevent the death. The findings of the present study were similar; the pain and sorrow about their losses were the most expressed emotions, accompanied by feeling guilty about letting their husbands go to work on that day. Additional dominant emotion narrated by the women was anger toward the authorities who were operating the mine. Several women also said they were angry toward their husbands because they had been aware of the risk in the mine basin but had continued to work in there. Sometimes their anger turned to other people around for not helping enough or to their children when they could not manage both their sorrow and their parental responsibilities. According to Stroebe & Schut's (2008) study, widows also experienced irritability, losing interest in daily life activities and decrease in activity level. Similarly, all the women in the study narrated that they experienced fatigue and a total loss of interest in their daily lives for an extended period of time, ranging from several days to several months. Some of them could not get out bed for days, could not engage in any kind of responsibilities related to their children or even stopped participating in any kind of conversation. These emotional outcomes were also mentioned by other researchers (Bonanno and Kelter, 1997; Bonanno et al.,1999).

Bonnano and Kaltman (2001), in their review on the course of grief, mentioned four significant disturbances for the grieving individuals: cognitive disorganization, dysphoria, health deficits, and problems in occupational or

social functioning. One of the frequently mentioned cognitive difficulties for the women in the present study was rumination. It took the form of constantly thinking and asking why the event happened, whether there were ways of preventing it, or how their lives would have been if they had not lost their husbands. Kaltman and Bonanno (2003) found that traumatic loss of spouses predicted more PTSD symptoms than natural losses. Experiencing intrusive memories of the event was also frequent and involved different memories for each woman, such as remembering the moment they heard about the incident or when they saw the dead bodies in front of the hospital. Both rumination and experiencing intrusive memories are traumatic loss reactions, but they also resemble post-traumatic stress reactions (Kaltman & Bonanno, 1999; Kaltman & Bonnanno, 2003; Zisook, et al.,1998)

Bonnano and Kaltman (2001) also found that health-related problems and interpersonal problems were frequently mentioned in descriptive studies. These were cardiovascular problems and psychosomatic symptoms that mimicked previous illnesses of the deceased. Because the loss was not related to an illness for the women in the study, mimicking symptoms were not evident but some of the older women experienced cardiovascular problems. Gynecological illness, such as longer menstruation, were also reported by several women after their losses, and a woman gave premature birth to her baby because of the sudden loss of her husband. In addition, the women in the study also experienced lots of difficulties in their social lives. They became more isolated and alone because they lost their trust in the people around them. The isolation increased their feelings of loneliness and decreased their social support.

4.2.4. Changes after the loss

After losing their husbands, widows experienced many changes; their economic conditions, social relationships, and how they viewed themselves changed. According to Elwert and Chirstakis (2006), poverty and insufficient financial resources are important risk factors for widows and women who had been

working before the loss have better adjustment during the grieving process. Some women search for employment options after their losses and younger women have more chances than the older women, hence they can compensate for financial loss that accompanied the loss of their husbands more easily. Prior to Soma mine disaster, most of them women were not employed, and their husband were breadwinners of their families Their income was also restricted as mineworkers. Hence, they had been under risk of the poverty, which presented a great disadvantage parallel to previous findings. However, financial aid that was provided to the women alleviated the possible negative effects of poverty awaiting the women, so financial difficulties due to losing their husbands were relieved. In Turkey, as a general regulation, the widow and her children share the salary and inheritance of the husband. After the Soma Mine Disaster, families of dead mineworkers had the additional money that was donated by people in Turkey and these monetary donations were distributed by AFAD. The families of the dead mine workers were also provided with an opportunity to be a state officer for one family member and were given a new home, via a special regulation. So, the widows' economic conditions had improved considerably after the loss. Hence, additional regulations and donations created more prosperous conditions for the widows in Soma.

The women's social relationship also changed depending upon these financial regulations specific to the Soma disaster became a good source of economic self-sufficiency for women; however, they also led to unexpected adverse effects in the women's lives. Their family in-laws, families of origin, friends, and the Soma community in general were members of low SES and working-class families. The widows became richer than people in their social networks and sometimes experience a kind of social exclusion in these networks. They were criticized for changing their ways of living with better income, forgetting their dead husbands, and not mourning enough after their losses. They lost some relationships because of these kinds of critical attitudes. As a woman summarized, "*you understand who a friend is who is an enemy during difficult times."* Yet, some people became closer supporting the women in various ways.

Some of the participants said that their relationships became more supportive and closer, and others said that their relationships became more distant than before.

One problem with the regulation was that if the dead mineworker was married, all the money was given to the widow and the children. On the other hand, if the man was single, his family of origin got the money, the house, and the chance of being employed. It created tension between the widows and their family in-laws. Some women experienced difficulties because of their husband's families' attempts to get money from them or because their husband's family tried to interfere with the way women spent the money. In Turkey, the women's lives are thought to be under the control of the male members of the family, as an outcome of gender roles. Prior to marriage the natal family is responsible for the women, after marriage the responsibility transfers to the husband and in the case of losing the husband, a woman's life and honor are thought to be the responsibility of husbands' family (Gedik, 2018; Yakut-Çakar & Özar, 2012). The women's relationship with their husband's family showed that the participants internalized these cultural gender roles. The problematic relationship with the family in-laws created additional emotional disturbances for the women during their grieving process. They sometimes felt guilty towards their dead husbands because they thought that they were not acting honorably or being loyal to the husbands' families. But it didn't prevent them to search for their independence.

When the interviewer asked the changes that the women observed in themselves, women also mentioned positive changes in their lives. Even though their natal families and husbands' families still tried to intervene with their lives, the women had some more freedom after the losses. They could make important decisions for themselves for the first time in their lives. Especially economic independence cancelled out the families' pressures. Nearly all the women in the study had attended driving courses, got their driving licenses and cars, despite their families' objections. Having and driving cars became a good demonstration of their independence, they did not have to rely on their families or other people

to travel or ask permission for transportation. It didn't mean they could do whatever they wanted, considering the pressure of being widows, but it expanded their freedom. This was possible with the financial help that they had received. This finding was also in line with the findings on the relationship between economic independence and freedom for widows' lives (Gedik, 2018) . In addition, some women chose to become a state officer, using the opportunity provided by the government aid regulation, so they became employed for the first time in their lives. Working outside the home, driving, being able to cope with adversities of the losses and learning new skills via attending courses, all together seemed to increase their sense of independence and self-confidence.

4.2.5. Experiences of spousal loss as a woman

Widowed women experienced loneliness after spousal losses, which was in line with the literature (Aslan et al., 2020; Parkes & Prigerson, 2010; Stroebe et al., 2001) Most of the women had arranged marriages, but they loved their husbands, had friendship-like relationships with their husbands, and the husbands were depicted as good partners and fathers. The feelings of loneliness included loss of romantic and sexual partners and a significant source of emotional support. Even though they did not talk about their sexual lives openly, they implied the loneliness caused by losing their sexual and romantic partner with such expressions as "*feeling like a plant*". It was hard for them to form new relationships because widows having affairs or extramarital sexual relationships was very much frowned upon by the society.

Harris (2010) suggested that social context and cultural norms regarding bereavement influence how and how long the bereaved should grieve. The bereaved individuals usually try to grieve in line with the societal expectations to be accepted by the people in their social networks. Harries mentioned that in western societies, there is a time limit for grieving and individuals are expected to return to their daily lives and their work as soon as possible after their losses. Many people suppress their emotions, hide their pain, and inhibit adaptive

responses in the long term to behave in line with these societal expectations, and prevent stigmatization. Rosenblatt (2017) mentioned this western perspective on grief dominates not only individuals but also the literature on grief. According to him, what is considered as normal and healthy grieving only represents grief patterns of middle-class European Americans.

Rosenblatt and Wallace (2005) in their study with African American grieving individuals found that they mostly associated death with racism they experienced regardless of the mode of death. The participants of the study mentioned that financial difficulties caused by racism prevented the deceased from reaching appropriate health care services, and that deceased were exposed to racism in various parts of their life or they struggled against it. Those aspects of grieving are specific to African American individuals and significant to understand influences of racism not only in people's lives but also in their grieving patterns. In this study, African Americans also described themselves as more emotional and having stronger grief expressions than the European Americans.

Another striking example from a study with South African Zulu women who lost their husbands demonstrated how culture was influential on widows' lives after losses (Rosenblatt & Nkosi, 2007). The widows experienced significant financial loss with the loss of their husbands, and they could not get any financial or social support from relatives even though they were still considered as married after the death of the husbands. Also, these women had to wear special clothes for a year not to spread death to the others -because they were seen as contaminated with death- and they had to engage in lots of rituals for showing respect to their husbands. They usually remained isolated from the society and left alone for a long time in their grieving processes.

These studies are significant to demonstrate how political and historical background, social context and the current cultural influences shape the individuals' grief experiences. Similarly, the participants in the present study experienced cultural, political, and gender-based pressure on their grieving

patterns in a way specific to Turkey, and the Soma Mine Disaster. They were accused of forgetting their husbands and not grieving enough because of the money they got after their husbands' losses. Many women tried to demonstrate their sorrow and pain to the people around more than usual to avoid being labeled as unfaithful to their husbands. Many of them narrated that they avoided lots of social and enjoyable activities to prevent to be seen as having fun instead of mourning, even though social and fun activities would have been helpful to cope with their grief. Gedik (2018), in her qualitative research with widow and divorced women in Turkey, mentioned that the women were exposed to lots of trials about their properness and gossips related to their living styles. The women usually tried to protect themselves from these trials and gossips by living as if their husbands were still alive. A dominant strategy for them was using auto censoring, which meant behaving and living parallel to what society expected; such as adjusting the way they dress, gestures, and sometimes ways of interacting with people according to the expectations of the society.

Parallel to these findings, almost all the women in the present study mentioned that they realized the negative attitudes of people around them when they went out for a walk or shopping by themselves. According to them these attitudes were evident in people's glances and words toward them. Some women mentioned they started to wear colorful and more conservative clothes not to attract attention and not to be judged. Sometimes they heard that people gossiped about other widows, and they were suspicious that people also gossiped about them. It was not only other people's attitudes, but some women also applied this pressure on themselves parallel to the term auto censoring.

In Gedik's study (2018), avoiding people and some social relationships was also a frequently used strategy for coping with the societal pressure. These strategies seemed to somehow protect the women, but were accompanied with restrictions in their lifestyles, social isolation, and loneliness. According to narrations of the participants, the expected gender roles of the society from the widows were continuous mourning after the loss of the husbands, taking care of their children

as good mothers, and avoiding any kind contact from men who were potential partners. The women usually mentioned that being a widow required proper behaviors such as not going out alone or not talking to strangers, especially to men. The absence of their husbands also influenced social relationships. There was also significant change in the women's identities; being a man's wife was a kind of identity, and their identities changed from being wives to being widows. They did not know how to engage in relationships with their new identities. Most of their friends were still married, and as a widow, they also had to control their relationships with their friends' husbands. They restricted their visits to married friends and refrained from participating in social gatherings involving men. Thus, options for social relationships became more limited for them. Avoiding judgmental people and some social gatherings was one of the strategies that the women sometimes chose to cope with societal pressures, but these coping methods also led to more social isolation and loneliness. So, loneliness was one of the dominant themes in the experiences of the women, parallel to the literature (Aslan et al., 2020; Stroebe et al., 2001).

According to Van den Hoonaard (1997), there is also a significant identity change for the widows as single mothers they become mothers and fathers at the same time. Parallel to this suggestion, the women mentioned that their responsibilities and duties towards their children and the household also changes. Previously, fathers had been the main decision-makers and source of support for their children's schooling related needs. All these responsibilities were transferred to mothers, and they became the main guardians for children for any kind of decisions. Being single mothers added new responsibilities regarding decisions for children's lives and an emotional burden of choosing the right options for the children. In some cases, their natal families and their husbands' families were helpful, but their help could not compensate for the husbands' previous contributions. So, as stated by some of the participants, they *"became both the mother and the father at the same time*.

Kotwal and Prabhakar (2009) grouped problems that single mothers experienced under three categories: financial, emotional, and social problems. Financial problems included inability to afford prior standards of clothing, food, and school expenses of the children because loss of a husband or divorce usually led to a decrease in their income. Emotional problems were very much related to financial problems and the more economical difficulties were usually associated with more hopelessness, helplessness, and loneliness feelings. Worrying about affording the children's needs and their future lives, making right choices, and effectively disciplining and mentoring them when needed were frequently mentioned. Their social lives also changed as single mothers; the increase in responsibilities regarding children limited their time for social activities, and many of them intentionally avoided social gatherings.

In the present study, the women did not experience loss of income; therefore, as single mothers they did not mention financial difficulties for affording their children's needs. Yet, they experienced similar emotional and social problems. Nearly all the women mentioned that their worried about their children's current conditions and their future. For younger children, women worried more about fulfilling the children's physical needs, such as providing good food and nutrition, whereas they were concerned more about disciplining and guiding them for adolescents. Whether they could deal with the children's reactions to fathers' absence or not was a common concern for children from all ages. They sometimes felt helpless about fulfilling all the responsibilities especially when they thought they could not efficiently deal with the children's problems. Women usually isolated themselves because of the pressure of being widows. Additionally, their increasing responsibilities toward children led to decrease in time left for attending social gatherings.

They also experienced a drastic shift in their responsibilities related to home. Previously, husbands had been the ones paying the bills, shopping, and engaging with the other "outside jobs" for the family. As housewives, because of their gender-roles, women had been responsible for "inside jobs" such as cleaning and

cooking. After the loss, women became responsible for all the men's and women's duties. It brought new tasks and sometimes became time-consuming, however, they also benefited from learning new skills, which increased their self-confidence. Many women bought cars and learned to drive, which made them to feel more independent than before. They did not rely on their families or other people in their networks to go their villages, to the schools, and hospitals when needed. Asking for help from their families generally led to their involvement in the women's decisions. Also, many women were judged because of having cars and being independent regarding their decisions to go somewhere. Yet, all of them managed to cope with these judgmental attitudes and had their cars, nonetheless. *Cars* became symbols for the women's empowerment against pressures.

4.2.6. Coping with the loss

The interviewed women narrated various ways of coping when asked how they bear with adversities related to their losses. Coping for the sake of their children was a prominent theme. Most women had lots of emotional difficulties, fatigue, and difficulty in taking care of themselves soon after the losses. It took approximately a year for many of them to return to their usual ways of living. Initially, they felt very powerless and helpless to take care of themselves and their children but being responsible towards their children motivated them to return to their normal lives. Having children and responsibilities as mothers were the things that pushed them to take care of themselves. This finding was like other findings in the literature, showing that having a child or children had a positive influence on grieving widows (Bradley, 2007). The participants restricted their lives due to being widowed, they did not enjoy the life, and there was pressure on them to continue mourning as widows, which discouraged them to participate in enjoyable activities. Children were not only giving them a means for coping, but also, they provided positive feelings. They could enjoy themselves with their children freely whereas it would have been considered inappropriate to attend enjoyable activities with someone else as widows. They

could go outside and play with their children or laugh together. Positive feelings and their love for their children were the biggest tools for coping. Nearly all the women stated that their lives would have been much worse after the losses if they hadn't had children. So, children also became a source of positive feelings and strength, and increased their coping abilities.

Social support was provided by relatives, friends, neighbors, and people from outside of Soma. Breen and O'Connor (2011) conceptualized three types of social support that are essential for the bereaved to minimize negative effects of the bereavement: guidance and advice, financial and service support, and emotional support, including empathy and warmth. Families of the bereaved frequently provide financial support, guidance for the daily life chores and physical help for the bereaved person's responsibilities such as child rearing and house-related activities. Parallel to Breen and O'Connor's conceptualization, in the present study, participants' family members and their husbands' family members (if their relationship was still good) helped them in practical issues such as physical needs of children and their homes. Generally, grandmothers were helpful in childrearing practices. They were like second mothers who were responsible for looking after the children when their mothers were busy. Siblings of the women were also helpful in terms of school-related issues or with chores outside the home.

In addition, Taylor (2007) summarized the differences between support from families and friends. Support from families mainly involve helping the bereaved in daily chores such as child rearing and responsibilities related to home, whereas friends are supportive in terms of providing emotional support and empathy. In line with these suggestions, women in the present study narrated that friends were a significant source of emotional support. Talking to them helped the women feel emphatically listened to and understood. The support from friends was influential on their feelings of loneliness and the risk of being isolated. Friends were also supportive for the women to encourage them to o move on with their lives via including them in some activities. They could attend

some activities together, go outside or to home gatherings together. Culturally, in Turkey widows were generally allowed to be friends only with women. They engaged in activities together when their friends' husbands were working or were outside their homes. The participants felt connected with their female friends, talked with them about their problems, and received emphatic understanding from them, which helped the widows feel accepted and valued.

Widow women also had connections among their group; being in similar ages and having the same experiences; they were the ones who could understand each other's experiences without judgment. Sharing their grief, problems with children, and society's pressure helped them feel understood. They also attended the courts or protests together, went to some hobby courses such as handcraft, computer, or language courses together and increased their closeness. They also met new people in those courses, so attending these kinds of activities increased their social support. After the disaster, many outsiders visited women, which became a unique source of social support. Through the visits of people they did not know before, the women felt valuable and respected.

Parallel to the literature on coping with loss, coping via religious ways was also significant for the women (Fry, 2001; Clarke et al., 2003). Believing in fate and death as an order of God had inferences that no one could prevent what would happen in life and one should accept God's order without a doubt. The women generally used these kinds of explanations when they were talking about their coping with their losses; "*God provides the strength*" was a common saying. Faith in God and the afterlife seemed to give meaning to death, which increased their coping abilities. Pain in this world would be rewarded in the afterlife. Because dead husbands were martyrs, they would be in heaven after death, which soothed the women's pain. Religious ways of coping also included some practices, such as performing Namaz, reading Koran, and praying after the deceased, which are important Sunni practices for the deceased and the bereaved (Kara, 2016; Sayar, 2011). Women frequently used religious practices to soothe themselves. Cemetery visits and meetings for praying after their husbands also

helped them in the grieving process. All the women declared themselves as religious and used religious coping methods. In contrast, only some women interpreted the event as murder, and they were prone to searching for justice. They defined their search for justice as a way of coping. It also affected their meaning-making processes in line with the literature on emphasizing the importance of meaning-making in grieving. They searched for public acknowledgment, and the people's support was helpful.

Having self-confidence also provided women the feeling of self-sufficiency. Even tough women relied on their husband's salaries previously, later had enough money for their children and their own expenses. Generally, loss of a spouse led to financial loss and related difficulties in living (Parkes & Prigerson, 2010). However, after the Soma incident, special regulations provided money for women and families of dead mine workers. So, their financial condition became better than before. This became a coping tool for relying on their own resources and not depending on others. It also meant that they had less familial pressure. Women learned to rely on their own psychological resources in the face of adversities. Being able to cope with their pain gave them strength to bear upcoming psychological difficulties. In addition, they attended to new courses such as handcraft, computer, language, and driving courses, and learned new skills, which increased their mastery feelings. Feeling self-sufficient and competent seemed to be significant in terms of coping with their grief.

According to the dual process model of coping with bereavement, bereaving individuals engage in loss-oriented stressors and restoration-oriented stressors soon after their losses (Stroebe & Shut, 2010). Loss-oriented stressors would be sorrow, pain related to absence of the deceased, or anger toward the deceased for leaving them alone, whereas restoration-oriented stressors are more related to change in the social statues of the bereaved, or responsibilities after the losses. The bereaved oscillate between these two groups of stressors; sometimes crying, talking about the losses or feeling pain, anger or anxiety after the deceased but sometimes engaging in daily responsibilities such as doing homework with

children, trying to adapt to new social roles related to widowhood and so on. A successful coping includes a balance, sometimes avoiding and sometimes confronting these two groups of stressors. This was the case for the women in this study and it was also obvious that managing restoration-oriented stressors increased the capacity for confronting the loss-oriented stressors.

Parallel to the dual process model (Stroebe & Shut, 2010), the women experienced pain, anxiety, loneliness, and health-related problems related to their grief, and tried to adapt to changes in their lives as being widows, single mothers, learning new things at the same time. As proposed by the model, they oscillated between these stressors, using ways of coping by either avoiding or confronting the stressors. A participant's emphasis on importance of avoidance of the pain while engaging in the role of motherhood was a good demonstration of this oscillation. She said: *"I cry a lot at nights but in day-time sometimes I play and laugh with my child, you cannot always cry especially if you have a child, I forget my sorrow when I am playing with her."* Many women narrated periods of grieving, which meant to engage in loss related stressors, and then later avoiding active grieving. When they needed to attend daily life activities such as going to work, playing with children, or learning to drive; they challenged the stressors stemming from the changes in their social status and they avoided grieving. Moreover, many women said that they coped with the adverse emotional consequences of the losses for the sake of their children.

Religious ways of coping, such praying, cemetery visits, or reading Quran, also contributed to confrontation of loss-related stressors. Religion provided an explanation about death and after life, in addition to relief via engaging in religious rituals. Also, group activities, including Mevlut or reading Quran together increased social support and contributed to challenge restoration-oriented stressors. Psychological interventions were helpful for understanding and regulating their emotions as well, which helped them to confront loss-oriented stressors. Learning new skills, such as driving, using computers, or adopting new roles increased their self-esteem via challenging restoration-

oriented stressors. Therefore, increasing self-esteem also became helpful for regulating their grief related emotions, which contributed to loss-oriented stressors at the same time.

The women's coping capacities seemed to increase in time. During the initial days and for some women for several months, loss-oriented stressors were so dominant that the women could not engage in restoration related stressors. A woman narrated that she cried, slept, didn't eat enough and eventually became sick and hospitalized after three months of bereavement. She could not avoid her grief for a long time and was not able to adapt to any kind of change in her life, could not take care of her children or engage with people in her social network. After hospitalization and treatment, she started to engage in restoration-oriented stressors step by step. Not all the women had this kind of long period of loss-oriented stressors, but they mentioned that their capacity for confrontation of change related stressors increased in time. Hence, time after the loss was important for the dual process of coping to start. Future studies could investigate the effect of the time passed after the loss and the relationship between time and different ways of coping with bereavement.

4.2.7. Being a miner family

Questions regarding the participants' conditions prior to the loss were also asked to understand their previous lives. The effects of socioeconomic transformation in the Soma region were evident in their narratives as mentioned by other researchers (Bütün, 2016; Çelik, 2017). Until 2006, tobacco farming was a significant source of income in Soma region but the change in the regulation of purchase of tobacco from the farmers led to a drastic decrease in the farmers' income. Farmers had to turn their attentions towards other sectors. This was also the time for privatization of the operation of mine basins and previous farmers easily turned into mineworkers. Approximately half of the women said that they used to live in villages and engage in farming prior to the change in the regulations. They said that their husband tried to work in other sectors, but

because of the social security option and permanent salary, their husbands felt an obligation to work in the mines even though it was not their first preferences. Despite its advantages, mining salaries were around minimum wage, which was not enough for a family. They used to live in poverty as mine workers' families usually do.

On the other hand, some mining families came from mining backgrounds. According to Topal and colleagues (2018), for some families mineworking is a kind of family business. Mineworkers' fathers or other elder male relatives were also previously mineworkers. These mineworkers already had some knowledge about working in the mine when they started to work, which was protective in terms of knowing the risks and ways of protection. This was also true for some of the participants in the present study. Some of them said that their husbands had already been working for years and were employed with reference of their fathers or uncles. For both types of families, families who had previously done farming versus mining, working in the mine was an obligation for their husbands, because they had not graduated from a university and had limited options for other kinds of permanent employment.

Mineworkers are always aware of the risk of their jobs and there is always pressure for production (Yıldırım & Umman, 2017). Mines are open for 24 hours and workers work in three shifts. Production in the mines rarely stops. This creates solidarity between workers, which is a necessity to survive in the mine. Thus, workers have developed lots of strategies to transfer information to each other for the sake of protecting themselves. After the privatization of the mines, however, the employers prevented miners from accessing adequate information via providing inadequate workers' safety education, in order to increase production and their profits. They collaborated with the labor unions and ensured dysfunctional audits. Therefore, transfer of information and knowledge from the workers to the employers was also limited. Topal and collogues (2018) mentioned that the increase in carbon monoxide levels in the mine was apparent for days, but mineworkers could not use this information to warn the employers

and prevent the disaster. Narratives of the women were also in line with these findings. Women were aware of the risky conditions in the mine. They even used the term " *going sevenfold under the ground*" for the mining job and mentioned that they had never felt secure about husbands' employment. Before the loss they have always been stressful about both the working conditions and the economic difficulties. Yet, Soma was a "coal city" as described by the participants, the husbands had to work, and the women felt most guilty about the risky working conditions that their husbands had to endure.

4.2.8. Search for justice

After the mine disaster, a juridical process started to identify and judge the perpetrators. According to Parkes and Prigerson (2010) these procedures generally make grief processes more complicated. During the juridical processes, individuals usually face the perpetrators, hear their testimonies, and be exposed to lots of details about the death related event. Furthermore, the final decision of the court may not always satisfy or be fair enough to soothe the bereaving individuals' pain. Parallel to this suggestion, some women experienced more emotional and health-related difficulties after participating in the court sessions. Sometimes perpetrators had victim-blaming attitudes and their testimonies increased the women's suffering. Yet, opposite experiences were also evident, where some women narrated that attending court hearings made them feel like they were supporting their husbands' cases. Defending their husbands' rights was important for some of the women, which made them feel like they were fighting for them. Attending the court seemed to be a way of sustaining the bond with the dead husbands. In addition, facing the perpetrators sometimes became a way of relieving their anger. They shouted at the suspects, called them murderers, liars, or accused them of being dishonest, which provided a chance to see and shout at the perpetrators that they would not otherwise have.

Support by other people also became more visible during the juridical process. Some of the women also thought that such support was important for them to

cope with adversities after the losses. Their explanations were also parallel to what Herman (2015) said about acknowledgement and remembrance. Protests also had a similar function for the women. There were perpetrators but there also were trustworthy and supportive people around, which increased their faith in humanity. The courts and the protests became a way of searching for justice and compensated for feelings of injustice. Witnessing the court process and reactions from the society seemed to soften their intense mourning experience. On the other hand, some women found the protests illegal and dangerous and avoided them. Women who interpreted the event as their husbands' fate were more reluctant to be present in the protests compared to the women who explained the event as a murder. Some women also did not want to be outside with strangers in public, so they did not take part in the protests.

4.2.9. Psychosocial support

Psychosocial support center was established at the center of Soma by Ministry of Family and Social Policies soon after the disaster (Doymaz-Aydın & Yıldırım, 2020). Volunteer psychologists, social workers, and psychiatrists were working at the center. Volunteers from NGOs also contributed to the psychosocial support effort via home visits and group counseling. All the women said that they benefited from psychosocial and counseling support they received. They benefited from home visits by social workers and psychologists the most. The women heard lots of criticism and felt judged by the people in Soma. So, they felt more comfortable talking with outsider professionals because of their nonjudgmental attitudes. Counseling sessions were also helpful for providing an opportunity for sharing their grief experiences, sorrow, and recent problems, not the techniques. After completing the interviews, they also said that it was relieving to talk about their experiences and emotions. Counseling sessions took place at the center and women who lived in the villages and remote areas could not easily reach the center to attend sessions.

One of their suggestions for improving psychosocial services was increasing transfer options for remote areas to the psychological services. Psychologists were coming from other cities, so they worked at the center temporarily. Therefore, the women met with different psychologist during counseling sessions. The worst thing for them was to talk about the same traumatic experiences again and again with different professionals. Professionals who worked at the center permanently were needed to increase the effectiveness of the psychological support. In addition, there were limited psychosocial opportunities for children and adolescents. Children who lost their fathers were also grieving and having lots of difficulties with their changing circumstances. However, the number of child and adolescent professionals were not enough to support their needs. Women witnessed their children's problems and recommended increasing psychosocial opportunities for them. On the other hand, various sport and hobby courses for children were found to be beneficial for the children; the only problem was again transportation difficulties to have access to the courses. Different NGOs were involved in the organization for psychosocial services and different activities for women and children. Disconnectedness between NGOs sometimes led to complications in the organization of the activities; sometimes, similar activities became useless, or activities intersected. Better and sustainable organizations were also recommended.

In summary, all the women narrated that they benefited from psychological and social services at some level. They said, however, that they would benefit from those services more if the psychologists and psycho-social workers were permanently employed at the respective centers. Also, women who resided in remote areas had problems with transportation to the center, and thus, better plans for transportation would encourage more women to attend counseling sessions. The women also mentioned that there was a lack of mental health professionals for children and adolescents, which made them feel desperate while trying to deal with their children's problems. Finally, better coordination of various service providers would enable them to reach correct information and services when needed.

4.3. Psychosocial Service Implications

The findings of the study revealed that the experiences of the women were very much influenced by how they perceived the event, political discussions behind the disaster and juridical processes after the event. There were lots of evidence in the TMMOB's report on how the Soma Mine Disaster was related to the employer's negligence of the workers' health and safety for financial benefits of the company (2014). An overproduction pressure led to previously dangerous areas opening again to gather coal more than legal limits, and it ended with release of dangerous methane gas in the mine basin. Dangerous gas release was evident days before the incident and workers were aware of health threatening conditions in the basin (Topal et. al, 2018). Therefore, the disaster would have been prevented if the employer had taken the required precautions. A juridical process started just after the disaster for judgement of perpetrators. The juridical process lasted approximately seven years and ended on June 2021. More than twenty suspects had been judged but only the director of the mine company was sentenced to ten years in jail, but because he had been in jail for seven years during the juridical process, he had to stay in jail for only two more years.

As the findings implied, most of the participants named the event as murder and massacre, thought the employers and related governmental agencies were responsible. Moreover, the women frequently mentioned the role of governmental institutions in the disaster; and thought they should also been judged, however, no one from related institutions were included in juridical process as suspects. During this research, the juridical process had been going on for almost two years, and the women were worried about the injustice of the courts but still carried a sense of hope for justice. So, they were both fighting for their husbands' rights and suffering from injustice related to the process. Living with the idea of injustice was the most devastating factor that increased suffering in their grieving. Hence, the very first and significant factor for supporting survivors is a just and reliable legal system in which the perpetrators get

appropriate sentences. Grieving process may remain problematic with the feelings of injustice.

In planning and implementation of psychosocial services the event related variables should be considered carefully. After the disaster, lots of psychosocial services were implemented by different NGOs. In time a social service center was established by Ministry of Family and Social Policies which brought lots of NGOs together. The governmental institutions did not accept their responsibilities related to event, they have never been judged, and they even stood against the individuals who were searching for justice. So, it created a paradox for the survivors; some governmental institutions were thought to be responsible for the disaster on the one hand, and on the other hand certain governmental institutions provided psychosocial support for the survivors. Therefore, in the future psychosocial services should be organized by NGOs that can act and organize their services regardless of the governmental attitude and the political oppression. The survivors may also have problems in their relationships with people from governmental organizations, or they may mask their anger and criticisms toward the government. Interviewed women mentioned that they benefited from both independent NGOs' visits and services, and the services provided by the social service center. They attributed the benefits mainly on the relationships with the psychosocial worker, and the workers' nonjudgmental attitudes toward them. Attitudes and competence of the psychosocial workers seemed to counteract the potential negative impact of governmental institutions. So, the acceptance of the experiences of the survivors without any judgement is crucial, in all cases.

Initially there were many visitors, but it decreased in time, and after two years nobody visited them any longer, which created disappointment for the participants. It is probably not easy to organize people's visits after such an incident, but visits may be more helpful if they can be spaced out in time. Organizing long-lasting and planned social activities may create long term connections between the survivors and supporters. Another way to provide social

support may be facilitating commemoration activities with participation of the community. It would include meetings, collective visits to cemeteries, or creating monuments to enhance collective memory related to the specific event. Collaboration of the community with the survivors seems to be essential for building more supportive relationships.

As single mothers, the women were trying to deal with increased responsibilities for providing children's physical and psychological needs. This sometimes limited their time to attend to psychosocial activities. Most of the women mentioned that they had benefited from the home visits most because they could contact lots of different psychosocial workers in different time periods at their homes, lessening the burden of planning their time and organizing childcare in their absence. Therefore, home visits may be more efficient compared to services provided in a specific center. The women also mentioned that they benefited from talking about their problems with other women who had also lost their husbands. Hence, organizing support groups for women as single mothers may enable them to share their problems related to children and their relationships. Seminars for mothers on mother-child communication, ways of supporting children, providing guidance, and setting boundaries to children may also be effective. For all the services organized for single mothers, additional child-care activities should be planned to enable women to participate in the services.

Although children's and adolescents' experiences were not included in detail in this study; the women mentioned lots of concerns about the children's education, future employment, and psychological well-being. Also, the children's school success may have been affected by their fathers' losses. They may have problems in keeping with the schedules or their motivations toward academic success. So, one way to support children and adolescents may be providing more educational opportunities to support their academic development. Additional free courses parallel to their school schedules may help them to increase their academic motivation and success. Also, providing courses on different sports and art activities may increase their coping abilities and may also create new

opportunities to socialize. Children and adolescents psychological support groups organized considering their ages may be helpful to increase their coping abilities.

According to the participants, the money collected country-wide and distributed by AFAD was helpful for them in terms of organizing their lives as women and single mothers, but drawbacks were also evident. The money that was provided divided the Soma community into two. Only women who had children could get it; women without a child had to share the money with their husbands' parents. Mineworkers who were injured and survived the incident did not get any support other than additional two months' salary. Most people living in Soma were mineworkers with low SES, and those who were not mineworkers did not have a higher status either. With the help of the state, wives of dead mineworkers suddenly became richer than the rest of the community and their SES changed. It created a crisis in the Soma community. Mineworkers who lived in poverty and lost their friends in the mine were angry towards the regulation that did not support them economically.

Accordingly, the relationship between the dead mineworker families and surviving mineworkers weakened in time. The surviving mineworkers became angry with dead mineworkers' families and sometimes accused them of not supporting their rights and forgetting what happened. For the families, it also created a crisis between women and their husbands' parents. Some of the mineworkers' parents, who lived in poverty, asked for money from their daughters-in-law; some parents even forced them to give the money. It turned into struggles between them. During the field study, I even heard about court hearings between daughters-in-law and parents. The money they got also created lots of misinformation and prejudice towards the women who lost their husbands. The most common one was their indifferences towards their losses after getting the money and not being sad about their husbands' deaths. So, even though economic support from the state may be necessary to enhance these women living, the distribution of the money seemed to create severe conflicts in

the community, which influenced their mourning in the long run. In the case of such disasters, the general SES level of the community should be considered, and economic support should be distributed fairly across family members.

Moreover, survivors of the incident who might have problems working in a mine again should be supported economically. Psychosocial services should be organized to serve not only the families but also surviving mineworkers who probably had traumatic stress problems. Mineworkers from different mine basins should also get psychosocial support. Even though they did not experience the disaster, they may have difficulties continuing their work. It would also be helpful if regular psychological services were available for search and rescue teams. In addition, secondary traumatic stress should be considered as a severe issue that service providers such as social workers and psychologists tend to experience. Many psychosocial workers were supported by their non-governmental organizations or paid for their expenses themselves. Financial support from the government would be very helpful to provide effective psychosocial support services. As mentioned before, for more inclusive services, community-based support was essential to create unity; open group discussion, seminars, and panels for all the women in the community or mineworkers in general may be influential in bringing them together.

4.4. Clinical Implications

The study revealed various clinical implications for psychosocial interventions for women affected by traumatic loss. In this study, narratives of the women included many details about how the event had happened, which discussions were present in the society, political inferences, and juridical processes. All these details were helpful to understand the experiences of the women better. Before beginning a psychosocial field study, gathering information about the site, the event, and political and juridical discussions are significant. Parallel to this suggestion some socioeconomic and cultural factors and specific suggestions are mentioned in this section.

Soma mine disaster was a highly area-specific event. Soma is full of mining basins and thousands of men work as mineworkers (Bütün, 2015). Mineworkers were the most prominent working-class group in Soma. Being familiar with the group's economic conditions and living standards was essential to developing realistic perspectives toward women. It determined the women's expectations, daily routines, and fears while their husbands were alive. Even though their economic conditions changed after their losses, they continued to define themselves as mineworker families and carried class-related behaviors to an extent. For a psychologist, it was significant to be familiar with the workers' problems, financial issues, and living standards before the disaster, which seemed essential to understand the women's experiences. Traumatic social events may affect people from different social classes with various SES levels. Learning the general conditions and having a class-specific understanding for each event are required. Moreover, having a class-sensitive perspective and being aware of class-related problems would be helpful in the sessions.

Zeybek and colleagues (2022) mentioned the importance of class-related issues in psychotherapy sessions. They outlined several points regarding class-sensitive psychotherapy practices. Accordingly, a psychotherapist should be aware of class-specific conditions in their country, class differences between people, and specifically their own class related backgrounds. Talking about class-related issues in the therapy process may facilitate better understanding of the individuals' specific conditions. Knowing the therapists' own attitudes and emotions toward to the people in different classes would be helpful to reflect on the interaction. Hence, psychologists should also be aware of their privileges and biases based on their social class. This requires psychologists' regular monitoring of their values, beliefs, perspectives, and feelings during and between sessions. In the case of working in rural areas, being aware of differences will help decrease potential gaps in understanding people. For example, avoiding heavy make-up, expensive and formal clothes such as suits may help people feel more comfortable with a mental health worker. A culturally appropriate attire would also be important if a psychologist is a woman. For example, the clients

may consider it inappropriate to wear miniskirts or sleeveless shirts while working in more conservative areas.

Harris (2010) mentioned that during bereavement societal forces influence the way individuals express their feelings or inhibit their adaptive reactions, therefore, a clinician's role included to lessen the suppression on the individual and open ways to free expression of their experiences. The women in the study frequently mentioned their worries about being criticized by the community not to grieve enough or not to be a proper widow. So, women usually tried to be seen mourning rather to behave free. Even though women generally internalized some aspects of the community's ideas for being a widow and tried to act according to them, many women were also aware of gender-based pressure on their shoulders. They had problems with their families when they bought their cars, needed to restrict their relationships with men, tried to control their appearance by avoiding looking attractive and so on. All the women experienced gender-based conflicts in their lives to an extent. While discussing gender-based pressure in the sessions, being in line with the women is important. An appropriate approach may be encouraging them when they are trying to be independent and not confronting their preferences when they want to behave according to the community's expected gender roles. In psychological counseling sessions with women who have problems with people around their gender roles, psychologists should consider that their work is time-limited. They have a minimal role in women's lives. Women continue to live with these people and in those places and forcing them to be more independent would lead to many new psychological problems. Acceptance of their preferences is essential for respecting their experiences and decisions. Because the primary outcome of the pressure on women is generally domination of women and controlling their decisions and choices, avoiding being dominant may be a corrective experience for their other relationships as well.

After traumatic losses, grieving experiences involve high levels of traumatic stress, anxiety, guilt, anger, and sadness (Stroebe et al., 2007). Traumatic stress

and anxiety problems generally include sleep problems, intrusive memories of a traumatic event, fatigue, concentration problems, and fears of losing any other significant ones (Bonanno et al., 1999). In addition, anger can be seen in three different forms: anger toward the dead, self, and people around (Kübler-Ross, 1970). Anger toward the dead may include questioning the way the significant other died, whereas anger towards self may include anger for not protecting the dead one enough. In the case of Turkey's conditions, demonstrations and social gatherings were sometimes banned or viewed as illegal by the political authorities, so anger toward perpetrators cannot be freely expressed in social events. Thus, anger and feelings of injustice may turn towards children and close relatives. Anger towards significant others may lead to problems in relationships, which can increase women's isolation and loneliness. Anger towards children may also lead to long term difficulties in mother-child relationships and negatively affect both sides. Anger toward self-increases guilt, which is another frequently mentioned and devastating feeling after traumatic losses. Sometimes it turns into questioning each moment of relationship with the dead and increasing guilt makes the mourner more depressed. In conclusion, sadness related to losing a loved one may be difficult to cope with and affects many aspects of life. Women may feel alone, worthless, and sometimes unable to bear the pain. Psychologists' collaboration with psychiatrists is significant in referring women when needed. Other medical problems are also frequent. Thus, directly asking whether they have any physical issues such as cardiological diseases or vitamin deficiencies may be valuable to encourage them to check their physical health.

In the sessions, clinicians and counselors may use various techniques depending on their theoretical orientations. The models on explanation of grief process have their own implications on clinical practice. According to the Neiyemeyer (1999), grieving individuals continuously search for new meanings after their losses, and encouraging the individuals to form narratives for reconstructing meaning in their lives should be the backbone of grief therapy. Individuals tell stories about their previous lives, their losses, and experiences after the losses. It enables them

to reflect on and attribute new meanings to their changing lives in time. Similar to this suggestion, women in this study also mentioned that they mostly benefited from talking about their experiences, their sufferings and current problems in their lives. Hence, while working with grieving individuals focusing on their narratives are important, encouraging them to share their stories should be integrated in clinical practice. Another grief model which has implications for intervention is the dual process model. It provides a coherent explanation for two-sided nature of the grief, emphasizing going back and forth between loss-oriented stressors and restoration-oriented stressors (Stroebe & Schut, 2010). According to this model, both grief related emotional reactions and change related problems in the client's lives should be addressed in the sessions depending on the individual's needs. Taking breaks from grieving when necessary is also an adaptive response and should be supported when needed. Working on regulating emotions and increasing one's soothing capacities in the face of high levels of affective experience may be beneficial when working with affective, grief related responses. For restoration-oriented stressors, identifying the current problems and specific coping mechanisms of the individuals to enhance adaptive ones promotes mourning women's well-being.

Martin and Doka (2000) mentioned the importance of individualized adaptive grieving styles in clinical practice. Everyone has their own ways of grieving with adoption of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive techniques after the losses. Considering grieving styles as a continuum, intuitive grieving stands on one end, and instrumental grieving stands on the opposite end. Individuals with intuitive grieving style tend to express their suffering, pain, anxiety, and other emotions related to loss, and they are in need of working through their emotions. On the other hand, individuals with instrumental grieving style are not willing to express their feelings, rather they usually share their thoughts about loss when asked. They are more future oriented, and their expressions are more on concrete problems and possible solutions. However, the most frequent grieving style is blended grieving which is in the middle of the continuum. Blended grievers engage in both emotional and cognitive expressions related to the loss; yet one

expression is usually dominant to other one. It is unique for each individual and reflects personal characteristics, specific experiences, and cultural influences. According to Martin and Doka (2000), all three grieving styles are adaptive and healthy and identifying the grieving style of the individual may help to find appropriate strategies to improve them. For individuals with intuitive styles focusing on expression of the emotions and enhancing their emotion regulation abilities would be helpful, whereas for instrumental grievers working on specific problems and their considerations about future should be the focus.

Culture, tradition, and gender roles sometimes forces individuals to change their grieving style. In these cases, an individual experiences dissonance between their natural and healthy grieving style and the expected style by the society. When the dissonance increases complications in grieving increases. As mentioned previously, all the women in this study, felt the pressure of demonstrating how they continuously mourned to be seen as proper widows in their society. It sometimes led to suppression of their adaptive responses. Based on Martin and Doka's (2000) explanations of grieving styles; identifying grievers' own adaptive grieving style that may be masked by societal pressure is crucial while working with women after traumatic losses. After identification, emotion focused, and problem-solving skills may be integrated in the clinical work depending on the specific grieving style.

Religious beliefs and practices have a special place in grieving processes (Parkes & Prigerson, 2010) There are lots of rituals to be conducted during the funerals and afterwards. Religion has a vital role in women's lives; if they are religious, they tend to adopt religious coping strategies while dealing with their grief (Brown et al, 2008). If a client notes that praying and reading the Quran is relaxing and helps overcoming pain, psychologists may support these practices. Social support from individuals' social networks is important for the bereaved for meaning-making processes and feeling valued and worthy (Neimeyer, 2006; Breen & O'Connor, 2011). Another way may be increasing social connections, sharing experiences with whom they feel comfortable together. They may be

friends, cousins, or sisters, but were generally women in the case of Some widows. Children also play an essential role in women's lives in the mourning process; they can both be a source of support and source of problems (Hooyman & Kramer, 2006). Valuing caregiving practices and supporting the mother-child relationship is important for women's well-being. The women can ask questions about children's psychological issues, so it may be beneficial to know essential tips for supporting mourning children. Furthermore, having a list of a child psychologists and psychiatrists may be helpful to refer their children when it seems necessary.

Talking about clients' experiences in social events that include juridical processes and political acts such as demonstrations is crucial to understand clients' emotions. Some may find being involved in the processes relieving, whereas others may be negatively affected. As explained in detail, there were political discussions among community members related to responsibilities of the employers and the related governmental agencies. Clinicians should be aware of political and ideological problems related to these kinds of incidents. Psychosocial and clinical activities provided by the governmental authorities may impose their points of views to the mental health workers, or even if this is not the case, people using government services may think that the government employed clinicians are taking the side of the government. Even in the face of political pressure on him/herself, a psychologist should not actively defend or participate in the governmental injustice. In the case of apparent atrocities such as the Soma Mine Disaster, a clinician should not hesitate to point out injustice and cruelness related to the event in the sessions. Moreover, clinicians should advocate universal human rights, equality, and justice as part of their mission to empowerment the survivors in the face of human-made disasters and political oppression. Empowering women and other survivors after these kinds of incidences should be a core principle for both psychosocial and clinical service providers, which includes respecting clients' political understanding and helping them reflect on this understanding.

Planning for self-care during and after psychosocial work and clinical sessions with individuals who had traumatic loss experiences are crucial. A professional should be aware of the possibility of secondary traumatic stress and should constantly monitor his/her emotional experiences. Reflecting on one's experiences enables one to use ways of coping when needed. Having social support, engaging in hobbies, using relaxation techniques may also be helpful in this process. In addition, a professional may attend group or individual supervision sessions if possible. For long-term clinical work with individuals who have traumatic loss experiences, a professional should also consider individual psychotherapy to work through their own experiences and feelings.

4.5. Limitations and the strengths of the study

The Soma mine disaster was acknowledged as the deadliest work accident that resulted in the death of 301 mine workers (TMMOB, 2014). This study pointed out the experiences of women who lost their spouses via this kind of traumatic incident. Using IPA for analyzing the narratives of the women increased the transferability of the findings for other women who experienced traumatic spousal losses. According to Smith and colleagues (2009), a significant strength of the IPA's theoretical perspective was transferability of the results to similar contexts. Because the researcher focused on a specific event, the number of participants was limited and the sample was homogeneous, including seventeen women reached via purposive sampling. Compared to other IPA studies, sample size was large, which was a strength of the study.

The current study also made significant contributions to the existing traumatic loss related literature. The current study provided an in-depth understanding of traumatic loss, related psychological processes, and ways of coping among women experiencing spousal loss and provided implication for clinicians. In addition, the Soma mine disaster led to lots of political discussions in the Soma community and in Turkey in general. Juridical processes also got attention from people all over Turkey. The event itself became a tool for political discussions

and proof for the injustice of the legal system in Turkey. The current study also focused on the effects of juridical processes and the protests of the women, which are generally not covered in clinical psychology literature. Importance of justice and the negative effect of injustice during the grieving process were also discussed, which made a significant contribution to the existing clinical psychology literature in Turkey. Another strength of the study was investigating changes in the women's lives, focusing on cultural and gender related factors. Social pressures on women due to being widows and single mothers, and expectations around proper mourning had detrimental effects on both the women's grieving and adaptation processes. These findings contributed to the clinical psychology literature by providing an understanding of the cultural pressures on the women who experience spousal loss in Turkey. The positive effects of the society and cultural ways of mourning were also evident, such as having social support, using religious coping methods, and having solidarity among women. Hence, providing information on the potential of the society for supporting the bereaving women was also a significant outcome of this study.

Despite significant contributions and clinical implications, the study also had shortcomings. It should be noted that cultural differences in different regions of Turkey would lead to differences in women's experiences. There may also be differences based on religious beliefs. Most of the participants in the present study were Sunni Muslims and only a few of them were Alevi Muslims. Differences in religious practices and their effects on grieving should be considered in future studies to better understand experiences of mourning women who have different religious beliefs. Also, the participants were from working class families and women who have higher SES status may experience different outcomes, especially in terms of financial changes after the losses. It is important to note that only women who experienced spousal loss were included in this study. The current study did not include men or LGBTI individuals. Thus, cultural influences after the losses may be different for men and LGBTI individuals. All the narratives were analyzed via the researcher's perspectives and some narrations were chosen to form the themes. Another researcher could

have pointed out different parts of the complete narrations, hence the researcher bias may be considered as a possible limitation of the study.

4.6. Research Implications

The interviews were conducted two years after the losses. Conducting new research after years may reveal different results, because grieving may have different characteristics in different times. The juridical process also ended recently when the present dissertation was being written and this may also lead to different findings in future studies. The present qualitative study aimed to understand women's subjective experiences of psychological distress after the loss, however with a quantitative study, psychological problems may be understood in diagnostic terms. In Soma Mine Disaster 301 death miners lost their lives, and the present research was conducted with only seventeen women. Hence, contacting research with other women who also lost their husbands in this specific event may provide further understanding of the event's psychosocial effects. Because of the large sample, using surveys and other quantitative measures could be effective to reach all the women and understand their grieving experiences. In addition, all the women participated in the present research resided in Soma and its provinces, yet some of the women moved after their losses to other regions of the country and they might have additional changes in their lives, which is also important to understand. Thus, more extensive research with a larger sample could include their experiences as well.

4.7. Conclusion

The results of the present study investigated the grieving processes of bereaved women after spousal losses. Importance of the contextual and cultural factors, both influencing the meaning making processes about the losses and the ways of coping for the women were investigated. Most of the women perceived the losses as traumatic and thought that the disaster could have been prevented if the employers and related authorities had behaved responsibly prior to the event.

After the losses they had to engage in juridical process, which had both positive and negative outcomes for their mourning. Search for justice via demonstrations and attending to courts appeared to be significant for defending the husbands' rights. The women experienced changes in their social status after the losses as being widows and single mothers in the eyes of the society and their families. The bereaved women coped with both loss-related stressors, such as the psychological outcome of the losses, and restoration related stressors, such as changes in their identity. Notably, psychosocial workers and clinicians should consider the contextual and cultural factors that influenced grieving and adaptation processes after the spousal losses for the women.

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APPENDICES

A. INFORMED CONSENT FORM

GÖNÜLLÜ KATILIM BİLGİLENDİRME NOTU

Bu çalışma, Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Klinik Psikoloji doktora öğrencisi İpek Demirok tarafından, *doktora tez çalışması* kapsamında Doç. Dr. Deniz Canel Çınarbaş'ın danışmanlığında yürütülmektedir. Çalışmanın amacı eşini 13 Mayıs 2014 tarihinde Soma maden faciasında kaybetmiş olan kadınların deneyimlerinin incelenmesidir. Araştırmaya katılım tamamen gönüllülük esasına dayanmaktadır.

Araştırmadan elde edilen bilgiler yalnızca bilimsel amaçlarla kullanılacak ve kişisel bilgileriniz gizli tutulacaktır. Araştırma mülakat şeklinde yapılacak olup yaklaşık bir buçuk sürmesi ön görülmektedir. Sorular cevaplanırken ek süreye ihtiyaç duyulduğu takdirde bu süre uzatılabilir. Mülakat esnasında ses kaydı alınacak, bu ses kayıtlarının her biri için numara atandıktan sonra araştırmacının bilgisayarında şifreli bir dosya içinde saklanacaktır.

Çalışmadan elde edilen bulgular bilimsel kongre ve/veya makalelerde kullanılabilecektir. Mülakatta sorulan soruları cevaplarken herhangi bir nedenden ötürü rahatsızlık hissettiğiniz takdirde sonlandırmak istediğinizi belirtebilir ve mülakatı sonlandırabilirsiniz. Çalışma sorularına yanıt verirken duyduğunuz rahatsızlığı anlatmak isterseniz, mülakat sonlandırıldıktan ya da tamamlandıktan sonra araştırmacı sizi dinlemek, yaşadıklarınız hakkında psikolojik bilgilendirme yapmak ve sorularınızı cevaplamak konusunda size yardımcı olacaktır.

Çalışma hakkında daha fazla bilgi almak isterseniz, mülakattan hemen sonra İpek Demirok'a sorunuzu iletebilirsiniz. Daha sonra sormak istediğiniz sorular için kendisiyle telefon yoluyla iletişime geçebilirsiniz (Tel:05052937843).

Bu çalışma hakkında bilgilendirildiğinizi ve çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katıldığınızı, herhangi bir rahatsızlık duyduğunuzda çalışmayı bırakabileceğinizi ve verdiğiniz bilgilerin bilimsel amaçlı yayınlarda kullanılmasını kabul ediyorsanız, ses kayıt cihazını açtıktan sonra onaylıyorum demeniz yeterlidir.

B. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Kişisel Bilgiler

- Kaç yaşındasınız?
- Eğitim durumunuz nedir?
- Çocuğunuz var mı? (Varsa ____)
    - Yaşları
    - Okula devam edip etmedikleri
- Şu anda kiminle yaşıyorsunuz?
    - Bir başkasıyla yaşıyorsa, daha önce onlarla mı yaşıyordunuz?
- Bulunduğunuz ilçe ya da köye (Soma'ya ya da Kınık'a vb.) gelme nedeniniz neydi?
    - Ne zaman geldi, daha önce neredeydi?
    - Kalma nedeniniz nedir?

Evlilik

Maden faciasının sizin hayatınızdaki yerini anlamak ve sizi tanımak için çeşitli sorular soracağım, evliliğinizle ilgili konuşmaya başlayacak olursak..

- Eşinizle nasıl tanışmıştınız?
    - Evlenme kararını nasıl aldınız?
    - Ne kadar evli kaldınız?
- Eşiniz nasıl biriydi?
- Evliliğiniz boyunca ilişkiniz nasıldı?
- Eşinizin çocuklarıyla ilişkileri nasıldı?
    - Tartışma/kavga yaşar mıydınız?
    - Hangi konularda yaşardınız?

- Eşiniz madende çalışmaya ne zaman başlamıştı?
    - Daha önce çalıştığı işler var mıydı? Madende çalışmaya nasıl karar verdi?
    - Ailenizde, yakın akrabalarınız arasında madende çalışanlar var mıydı?
- Eşinizin mesleğiyle ilgili ne düşünürdünüz?

Maden Faciası Öncesi/Sonrası Yaşam ve İlişkiler

- Maden faciasından önce hayatınız nasıldı?
    - Maden faciasından önce kendinizi nasıl tanımlardınız? Kişisel özelliklerinizden bahsetseniz neler söylerdiniz?
    - İlişkileriniz nasıldı (Çocuklarla ilişkileri, Aile, akrabalar, eşin ailesi, arkadaşlar, komşularla ilişkileri)
    - Ekonomik durumunuz nasıldı? (çalışıyor muydunuz, ne zamandan beri çalıştı, ne kadar süre çalıştı?"
- İnsanlar bu olayı farklı şekillerde isimlendirdiler, açıkladılar, siz nasıl açıklıyorsunuz?
- Maden faciası hayatınızı nasıl etkiledi?
    - Bugünden dönüp baktığınızda facia anına ve sonraki günlere dair aklınıza neler geliyor?
    - Sizi en çok üzen şeyler nelerdi?
    - Maden faciasından sonra hayatınızda neler değişti? "Nasıl değişiklikler oldu?"
    - İlişkilerinizde nasıl değişiklikler oldu (Çocuklarla ilişkileri, Aile, akrabalar, eşin ailesi, arkadaşlar, komşularla ilişkileri) – Bu değişikliklerle ilgili nasıl hissediyorsunuz?
    - Siz nasıl değiştiniz?
    - İnançlarınızda bir değişiklik oldu mu? – *Dini inanç ayrıca sorulacak*

- Ekonomik durumunuzda neler değişti? (nasıl geçiniyor, eşinden kalan maaş, devletten gelen yardım vb.) - Bu değişikliklerle ilgili nasıl hissediyorsunuz?

- Dul kalmak sizi nasıl etkiledi?
  - Değişiklikler olduysa neler değişti?
  - Bu değişikliklerle ilgili nasıl hissediyorsunuz?
- Bu anlattıklarınızın içinde sizi en çok ne zorladı?
- Anlıyorum ki eşinizin kaybıyla hayatınızda birçok şey değişti, bu değişimin sizin için nasıl bir anlamı var?
  - Takip etmiyorsa etmeme sebepleriniz nelerdir?
  - Mahkeme sürecinde desteğiniz oldu mu? Neler, kimler gibi.
  - Mahkeme süreçlerinin sizin için nasıl bir anlamı var?

Başa Çıkma Yolları/Sosyal Destek

- *Oldukça zor zamanlar geçirmişsiniz*, bu sürece dayanmanızı sağlayan *(kolaylaştıran)* şeyler nelerdi? (Ne/neler sizi ayakta tuttu?)
  - Bugünden baktığınızda; dayanmanızı sağlayan en önemli şey neydi?
- Takip ettiğim kadarıyla facianın hemen ardından Türkiyenin birçok yerinden insan gönüllü olarak taziye ve destek için bulunduğunuz yere (Soma, Kınık veya Köy) gelmişti. Bu durum size nasıl hissettirmişti?
- Şu an devam eden benzeri gönüllü desteği var mı?
  - Varsa bu destekler neler?
  - Bu desteklerle ilgili ne hissediyorsunuz?
- Maden faciasında eşini kaybeden aile dışından tanıdıklarınız var mı?
  - Varsa, ilişkileriniz nasıl?
  - Onlardan destek alıyor musunuz?
- En çok kimlerden destek aldınız?
- Siz faciadan etkilenenlere destek veriyor musunuz?

Kurum Dahilinde Destek/ Adalet Arayışı

- Takip ettiğim kadarıyla Soma'da facianın hemen ardında birçok eylemler, protestolar yaşandı; bugüne kadar devam edenler de oldu. Sizin katıldıklarınız oldu mu?
    - Evet ise; katılmak size nasıl geldi?
    - Katılmama sebepleriniz nelerdi?
- Hala mahkemeler devam ediyor, siz takip ediyor musunuz?
    - Mahkeme süreçleriyle ilgili nasıl hissediyorsunuz?
- Bildiğim kadarıyla Soma civarında çalışmalar yürüten kurumlar (dernekler, merkezler vb.) var. Onlarla hiç bağlantınız oldu mu?
    - Olduysa, hangi konuda ne tür destek aldınız?
    - Aldığınız destek sizin ihtiyacınızı karşıladı mı?
    - Karşılamadıysa, ne olsa daha iyi olurdu sizin için?
- Bildiğim kadarıyla psikolojik destek sunan merkezler ve dernekler de var? (psikiyatr, psikolog görüşmeleri). Hiç onlardan destek aldınız mı?
    - Ne için aldınız?
    - Size nasıl bir etkisi oldu? /yardımcı oldu mu?
    - Olmadıysa, Ne olsa daha çok yardımcı olurdu?
    - Olduysa, iyi gelen yönleri neydi?
- Bu gibi zor zamanlardan sonra yaşananların insanlara öğrettiği yeni şeyler de olabiliyor, eşinizin kaybı ve sonrasında yaşadığınız bu değişiklikler size neler öğretti?

C. SELF HELP GUIDE FOR THE WOMEN

KAYIP VE YAS SÜRECİ

- Eşinizi kaybetmiş olmak, hayatınızda birçok role sahip olan birini kaybetmek anlamına gelebilir. Kaybettiğiniz kişi arkadaşınız, çocuklarınızı yetiştirirken desteğiniz, ekonomik destekçiniz, en güvendiğiniz insan olabilir.

- Bu kayıpların farkında olmanız hayatınıza yaptığı etkiyi anlamak, baş etmek adına önemlidir. Eşiniz kaybından dolayı kendinizi yalnız ve desteksiz hissedebilirsiniz, içinize kapanmak ve diğer insanlarla ve çiftlerle görüşmek vakit geçirmek istemeyebilirsiniz.
- Yaşadığınız kayıptan ve yas sürecinden kaynaklı duygusal olarak çökkün, hissiz, üzüntülü, huzursuz ve çaresizlik içinde hissedebilirsiniz. Bu duyguları suçluluk, pişmanlık ve kızgınlık gibi duygular takip edebilir, çoğu zaman kaybettiğiniz kişiye hasret duyuyor olabilirsiniz.

- Düşüncelerinizde dağınıklık, kafa karışıklığı, dikkati toplamakta zorlanma, odaklanamama, unutkanlık gibi sıkıntılar yaşayabilir, bununla birlikte fiziksel olarak güçsüz hissedebilir, çeşitli uyku problemleri yaşıyor olabilirsiniz.

- Yukarıda yazanlara ek olarak çeşitli duygusal, düşünsel ve fiziksel güçlükler yaşıyor olabilirsiniz. Bazen yaşadıklarınızı tanımlayamıyor ancak bir şeylerin yanlış olduğunu düşünüyor olabilirsiniz.

- **Unutmayın ki** yası yaşamanın birçok farklı yolu vardır ve bu yaşantılar kişiden kişiye değişiklik gösterebilir.
  Örneğin, eşini kaybetmiş bir arkadaşınız uykuya dalma sorunları yaşarken sizin uykularınızda bir değişiklik olmamış olabilir, bunun yanında bahsi geçen sıkıntıları yaşamıyor ancak zaman zaman kendinizi yalnız hissediyor olabilirsiniz.

- Yas, sevilen kişinin kaybına karşılık verilen doğal bir yanıttır. Bu süreçte kaybedilen kişiyle ile ilişkide olumlu duyguların yanı sıra öfke, nefret gibi olumsuz duygular da yaşanabilir.
  Örneğin zaman zaman sizi yalnız bıraktığı için eşinize karşı öfkeli hissediyor olabilirsiniz.

- Tüm bu duygular ve yaşantılar kaybınıza yönelik verdiğiniz doğal tepkilerdir ve yas yaşantınız size özgüdür, kendi yaşantılarınızı başkalarıyla kıyaslamamak kendi duygularınızı ve yaşadıklarınızı anlamak için önemlidir.

- Yasın ne kadar süreceği, ne zaman tamamlanacağı yine sizin yaşantılarınıza göre şekillenecektir. Duygularınızın yoğunluğunda zamanla azalma olması beklenir ancak hayatınız boyunca önemli günlerde ve hayatınızda olan yeni gelişmelerde kaybınıza dair yoğun duygular hissetmeye devam edebilirsiniz.

- Kaybettiği kişiyi unutmaktan korkuyor olmak yası yaşayan birçok kişinin sorduğu bir sorudur. Eşinizle ilişkiniz değişmiş olsa da bundan sonra da büyümeye ve var olmaya içsel olarak devam edecektir.

- Yaşadığınız kaybı anlamlandırmak, kaybınızdan sonra şekillenecektir. Kendinizi ve hayatınızı yeniden tanımak ve anlamlandırmak hayat boyu sürecektir.

KENDİME NASIL YARDIM EDEBİLİRİM?

- Zorluklarla başa çıkmak, toparlanmak için kendinize zaman tanıyın. Yasın uzun bir süreç olabileceğini kabul edin, yaşadığınız acıyı ve duygularınızı yok saymaya çalışmayın. Kendinize duygularınızı yaşamak için izin verin. Hiç bitmeyeceğini düşünmeyin.

- Eşinize dair gerçekleşmemiş hayalleriniz, beklentileriniz ve çözülmemiş çatışmalarınız olması çok doğaldır. Bunları fark etmeye, anlamaya çalışın. Eşinizle ilişkinizde yaptığınız ya da yapamadığınızı düşündüğünüz şeyler için kendinizi anlamaya çalışın. Kendinizi bağışlayın.

- Zaman zaman, baş etmekte başkalarına kıyasla daha çok zorlandığınızı düşünebilir ve kötü hissedebilirsiniz. İnsanların farklı tepkiler gösterebileceklerini ve tepki vermenin tek bir doğru yolu olmadığını kendinize hatırlatın.

- Düzenli yemek yiyin, uyku düzeninizi ve belirli bir fiziksel aktivite düzeyini korumaya çalışın. Bunları yapmak zaman zaman içinizden gelmese de yaşadığınız durumla baş etmenin ilk basamaklarının kendinize bakmaktan geçtiğini unutmayın.

- Zaman zaman kendinizle başbaşa kalabileceğiniz, sessizce oturup, kısa süreli de olsa rahatlamaya çalıştığınız durumlar yaratın. Rahatlamak için alkol kullanmayın ve doktorun bilgisi dışında ilaç kullanmaktan uzak durun**.**

- Arkadaşlarınız, komşularınız ve akrabalarınızla vakit geçirin. Diğer insanlarla birlikte olmanın verdiği güven, kabul ve sevginin en büyük destekçiniz olacaktır. Onlara neler olduğunu, neye ihtiyaç duyduğunuzu, neye ihtiyacınızın olmadığını anlatın.

- Kendinize yastan dolayı yaşadığınız acı ve üzüntüye mola verme fırsatı tanıyın. Bunu sakin tek başınıza iyi hissettirecek bir ortam bularak yapabilir ya da kısa da olsa eğlenebileceğiniz ortamlar yaratabilirsiniz, bu tür molalar vermek sizi uzun vadede daha sıkıntılı hissettiğiniz durumlara hazırlık sağlayacaktır.

- Ölüm yıldönümlerine, mahkemelere ve özel günlere yoğun duyguların eşlik edebileceğini unutmayın. Bu günlerde destek aldığınız kişilerle bir arada olmaya, onlarla duygularınızı paylaşmaya özen gösterin

- İhtiyaç duyduğunuzda uzmanlardan yardım almaktan çekinmeyin.

Profesyonel Destek Almak İçin Aşağıdaki Hastane ve Merkezlere Başvurabilirsiniz

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- Soma Devlet Hastanesi Psikiyatri Polikliniği HürriyetMah, Derviş Sok. Beşyol, Soma/Manisa Tel: 0 236 -6131973-74-75 - 444 20 45
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Kaynaklar

Mothers against Drunk Driving (2010) *Trauma, Loss and Bereavement,* MADD: Ontario

Maraş, A. *Kayıp ve yas: Sevilen kişinin ardından yas tutmak***.** Ayna Klinik Psikoloji Ünitesi: Ankara

Hazırlayan: Uzm. Psk. İpek Demirok

D. GUIDE FOR SUPPORTING CHILDREN

KAYIP VE YAS YAŞAYAN ÇOCUĞUNUZA NASIL YARDIMCI OLABİLİRSİNİZ?

- Çocuğunuza net ve doğru bilgiler verin. *Bu bilgileri verirken çocuğunuz özellikle de 7 yaşından küçükse, kısa ve öz konuşmaya dikkat edin.*

- *Mümkün* olduğunca kafa karıştırıcı detayları bir kenara bırakarak, babasının öldüğünü direkt ve net bir şekilde söyleyin, artık geri gelmeyeceği konusunda dürüst olun.

- Çocuğunuzun sorularına mümkün olduğunca yanıt vermeye çalışın, *özellikle de çocuğunuz 7 yaşından büyükse konuyu kapatmayın, o istediğince onunla konuşun.*

- Çocuğunuz bu konuyu konuşmaktan kaçınmadığınızı hissetmesini sağlayın; sizin dayanıklı olduğunuzu görmek ona güven verecek ve bu konularda kendini açmasını ve duygularını içine atmamasını kolaylaştıracaktır.

- Çocuğunuza onun ihtiyacı olduğu zamanlarda yanında olduğunuzun ve olacağınızın güvencesini verin.

- Sizin de üzgün olduğunuzu, ancak o konuşmak, ağlamak veya sarılmak isterse onun yanında olduğunuzu bilmesini sağlayın:

  "Ben de çok üzgünüm, o geri gelmeyeceği için çok üzülüyorum. Senin de böyle hissetmen çok doğal. İnsanlar çok sevdikleri biri dönmeyeceğinde çok üzülürler. Ağlayabilirsin, çok kötü hissedebilirsin, ama istediğin zaman benimle bunları konuşabilirsin. O gitmiş olabilir, ama ben hep yanında olacağım, merak etme" gibi cümleler kurabilirsiniz.

- Çocuğunuz sizin de öleceğinizden korkuyor olabilir. Böyleyse, ona insanların genelde uzun yaşadıklarını ve onunla birlikte daha uzun süre kalmayı planladığınızı söyleyin.

- Çocuğunuzun söylediklerine ve duygularına karşılık gelecek, bunları yansıtacak cevaplar verin: Örneğin çocuğunuz *"uyuyamadığım için yatmak istemiyorum"* derse, *"uyuduğunda bir şey mi olacağından çekiniyorsun?"* diye sorabilirsiniz.

- Çocuğunuzun fiziksel temas ihtiyaçlarını gözlemleyin, ihtiyacı olduğunda sarılmak, kucaklaşmak, elini tutmak iyi gelecektir.

- *"Bilmiyorum"* demek konusunda çekimser olmayın. Çocuğunuza destek olmak için tek bir doğru yol yoktur. Çocuğunuzun bazı sorularına siz de ne cevap vereceğinizi bilmiyor olabilirsiniz. Bilmiyor olmaktan çekinmeyin. Önemli olan onu dinlemeniz ve çocuğunuzun bu yolu birlikte öğreneceğinizi bilmesini sağlayın:.

  "Bunun cevabını ben de bilmiyorum. Bazen insanlar her şeyi bilemez, bu doğaldır. Ama merak etme, bir gün öğrenirsem, mutlaka seninle paylaşacağım, o zaman ikimiz de biliyor olacağız" diyebilirsiniz.

- Çocuğunuza babasından kalan eşyalar konusunda ne yapılacağına dair söz hakkı tanıyın. Babasından kalan bir eşyayı saklamak ya da kullanmak isterse buna izin verin. Herhangi bir eşyayı görmek ve kullanmak istemezse bunun için ısrarcı olmayın.

- *Çocuğunuz 0-3 yaştan büyükse,* babasının ardından düzenlenen tören, dua, mevlit gibi ritüellere katılması için cesaretlendirin.

- Çocukların cenaze törenlerine ve sonrasında yapılan mezarlık ziyaretlerine, dua-mevlit gibi organizasyonlara katılmasının zararlı olabileceği yaygın bir kanıdır. Çocuğunuzla bu durumu konuşarak onun tercihini öğrenmeniz faydalı olacaktır. Katılmak isterse, katılması durumu anlaması ve aklında birleştirmesi, böylece bir son/veda yaşaması adına faydalı olacaktır.

- Çocuğunuzun okulunda öğretmeniyle ve rehberlik servisiyle iletişim kurun. Okuldaki öğretmenlerin ve arkadaşlarının destekleyici olmasını isteyin.

- Eğer mümkünse çocuğunuzun zorluk yaşadığı dönemlerde ödev-sınav tarihlerinin ertelenmesini isteyin.

- Çocuğunuzu okulda yaşadığı zorlukları sizinle paylaşması için cesaretlendirin. Okulda kaybından dolayı zorluk yaşıyorsa bu durumu rehberlik servisiyle ya da sınıf öğretmeniyle görüşün.

- Mahkeme süreçlerine katılıyorsanız, bu konuda çocuğunuzu bilgilendirin. Çocuğunuza başka insanlar da zarar görmesin diye mahkemeye katılacağınızı söyleyebilirsiniz. Mahkemeler uzun sürecek olursa, çoğu kez takip etmek için gidip geleceğinizi söyleyin.

- **Çocuğunuza destek olurken**, kendi acı ve üzüntünüzü paylaşmak konusunda "acaba onu çok üzüyor muyum, onunla paylaşmasam daha mı iyi olur?" diye düşünebilirsiniz. Önemli olan paylaşımlarda bulunurken, onun duygularını ve tepkilerini takip etmektir.

- **Unutmayın ki** çocuğunuz için yapabileceğiniz en iyi şey onunla yas tutmaya, konuşmaya, ağlamaya, gülmeye ve oyun oynamaya devam etmek, ona eşlik etmeyi sürdürmektir.

Ergenlik Çağındaki Çocuğunuza Nasıl Yardımcı Olabilirsiniz?

- Yası yaşamak her yaşta zordur ancak ergenlik çağında olan gençler, gelişimsel bir dizi evre geçirdikleri ve bir değişim içinde oldukları için yaşadıkları yas hayatlarının her alanını etkileyebilir.

- Ergenlik çağında olan gençleri hızla yoğun duygular arasında geçiş yaşayabilirler. Örneğin, *çocuğunuz size destek olmak isteyip fazlaca sorumluluk olmak isterken, sizinle ufak bir tartışmasında çok fazla öfke gösterebilirler.*

- Ergenlik çağında olan gençler, aile ilişkilerinden uzaklaşıp kendi yaşıtlarıyla ilişki kurma eğilime gösterebilirler. Bu onlara kendilerini bir çocuk/ergen gibi değil, ayrı bir birey, neredeyse bir yetişkinmiş gibi hissettirir. Örneğin, çocuğunuz yaşadığı üzüntüyü sizinle paylaşmak yerine yakın arkadaşlarıyla konuşmayı tercih edebilir.

- Ergenlik çağında olan gençler, destekleyici ilişkilere sahip değillerse üzüntülerini azaltmak için faydalı olmayan yollara başvurabilirler ya da kendilerini ilişkilerden izole edebilirler. Örneğin, üzüntülerini paylaşacak güvenli ilişki bulamayan gençler alkol-madde kötüye kullanımı, okulda kavga etmek, hızlı araba kullanma gibi risk davranışları gösterebilirler.

- Yukarıdaki maddelere ek olarak ergenlik dönemindeki çocuğunuz;

- Acı ve üzüntüsünü sizinle paylaşmak yerine arkadaşlarıyla konuşmak isteyebilir, bu durumda onlarla konuşmak ve paylaşımda bulunmak için hazır olduğunuzu ama başkalarıyla paylaşmak isterse buna üzülmeyeceğinizi bilmesini sağlayın.

- Onu güvenli ilişki kurabileceği bir abi/abla, arkadaş grubu ya da arkadaşlar bulması konusunda cesaretlendirin.

- Acı ve üzüntüsünü müzik, şiir, kitaplar veya bilgisayar kullanarak yaşamak isteyebilir. Onu kendi güvenli yolunu bulması konusunda cesaretlendirin.

- Onun nasıl olduğuyla ilgilendiğinizi gösteren, ancak bunu onun üzerine fazla düşmeden bir şekilde davranmaya çalışın.

- Ara ara ona nasıl olduğunu, nelerle meşgul olduğunu, nasıl hissettiğini, aklında nelerin olduğunu sorun. Cevap vermiyor veya bu sorularınızı geçiştiriyorsa çok üstelemeyin; sormanız, ilgilendiğinizi göstermeniz yeterlidir, o hazır olduğunda sizinle bunları paylaşabilir.

Çocuğunuz için Profesyonel Destek Almak İsterseniz Aşağıdaki Merkez ve Hastanelere Başvurabilirsiniz

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Kaynaklar

Mothers against Drunk Driving (2010) *Trauma, Loss and Bereavement,* MADD: Ontario

Uzm. Psk. Ayten Deniz Tepeli'nin katkılarıyla

Hazırlayan: Uzm. Psk. İpek Demirok

E. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTE

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER

ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
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Gönderilen: Doç.Dr. Deniz CANEL ÇINARBAŞ
Psikoloji Bölümü

Gönderen: Prof. Dr. Canan SÜMER
İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başkanı

İlgi: Etik Onayı

Sayın Doç. Dr. Deniz CANEL ÇINARBAŞ' ın danışmanlığını yaptığı doktora öğrencisi İpek DEMİROK'un "Soma'nın Kadınları: Soma Maden Faciasında Eşini Kaybeden Kadınların Kayıp Sonrası Deneyimleri" başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülerek gerekli onay **2016-SOS-050** protokol numarası ile **01.04.2016-30.10.2016** tarihleri arasında geçerli olmak üzere verilmiştir.

Bilgilerinize saygılarımla sunarım.

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Prof. Dr. Ayhan Gürbüz DEMİR
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Yrd .Doç .Dr. Pınar KAYGAN
İAEK Üyesi

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Yrd. Doç. Dr. Emre SELÇUK
İAEK Üyesi

F. CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Demirok, İpek

[redacted]

EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
Ph.D.	METU, Clinical Psychology	2022
MA	Doğuş University, Clinical Psychology	2012
BA	Boğaziçi University, Psychology	2009

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2018 - Present	Aşiyan Counseling Center	Clinical Psychologist/Psychotherapist
2018 – Present	Women's Solidarity Foundation	Clinical Psychologist/Psychotherapist
2021 - 2022	TOBB University	Part-time Instructor
2019 - 2020	Save the Children	Project Researcher
2018 - 2019	Concern Worldwide Turkey	Staff Well-being Consultant
2018 - 2019	Bilkent University	Part-time Instructor
2018 - 2018	International Medical Corps	Staff Well-being Consultant
2017 - 2018	METU Northern Cyprus	Part-time Instructor
2015 - 2016	Human Rights Foundation	Clinical Psychologist/Psychotherapist
2012 - 2016	METU Disability Support Office	Specialist
2013 - 2016	METU AYNA Clinical Psychology Unit	Clinical Psychologist, Intern Supervisor
2011 - 2012	Kıyı Counseling Center	Clinical Psychologist/Psychotherapist
2010 - 2012	Maltepe University	Research Assistant
2010 - 2011	Doğuş University Clinical Psychology Unit	Intern Clinical Psychologist
2009 - 2009	Tarlabaşı Community Center	Project Assistant
2008 - 2009	Yeniden Health and Education	Project Assistant
2007 - 2008	Boğaziçi University Library	Student Assistant

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English, Pre-intermediate German

PUBLICATIONS

1.Demirok, İ. (2020). Afet alanlarında çalışana destek. In Albayrak, H. Kolbüken-Çavdar, Y., Toksöz, M. F. & Ünal, H. (Eds), *Afetlerde ve insan eliyle yaratılan travmalarda psiko-sosyal destek çalışmaları* (pp. 69 -75). Sosyal Hizmet Uzmanları Derneği Ankara Şubesi

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G. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

GİRİŞ

13 Mayıs 2014'te gerçekleşen Soma Maden Faciası 301 maden işçisinin ölümüyle Türkiye tarihindeki en çok işçi kaybının gerçekleştiği maden faciasıdır. (TMMOB, 2014). TMMOB'un facia sonrası araştırmalarına dayanarak hazırladığı rapora göre madendeki üretim baskısı, maden ocağında daha önce çalışılmış ve kapatılmış alanların tekrar açılmasına neden olmuş ve açılması tehlikeli olan bu alanlarda metan gazı salınımı faciadan günler önce salınmaya başlamıştır. İş sağlığı ve güvenliğinin dikkate alınmaması ve maden ocağının bu koşullar altında çalışmaya devam etmesi sonucunda 13 Mayıs günü büyük bir yangına dönüşmüştür. Maden ocağında yaşam odalarının bulunmaması ve oksijen maskelerinin yeterli koruyuculukta olmaması nedeniyle de facianın etkileri büyümüş ve 301 maden işçisinin ölümüyle sonuçlanmıştır. Arama kurtarma çalışmaları yaklaşık dört gün boyunca devam etmiş ve bu süre zarfında işçilerinin aileleri maden ocağı çevresinde ve hastanelerde işçilerden haber almayı beklemişlerdir.

Facia sonrasında Türkiye'nin farklı bölgelerinden aileleri ziyarete, baş sağlığı dilemeye ve desteklemeye pek çok ziyaretçi gelmiş; aynı zamanda Soma'da ve Türkiye'nin pekçok farklı bölgesinde protestolar düzenlenmiştir (Yıldırım & Umman, 2017). Dönemin baş bakanı maden faciası sonrasında olayı *"bu işin fıtratında var"* diyerek açıklamış ve bu açıklama sonrası protestolarda *"kaza değil cinayet, kader değil katliam"* sloganı kullanılır olmuştur. Maden işçilerinin aileleri ve ülke çapında pek çok insan olayın işverenin para kazanma hırsı uğruna madendeki sorunları görmezden geldiğini ve önlenebilir bir faciayı işçilerin ölümünü göze alarak önlemediklerini düşünmektedir.

Facianın hemen sonrasında sivil toplum örgütleri de hem psikososyal destek vermek hem de hukuki olarak ailelerin yanında olmak adına bir araya gelerek ev

ziyaretlerinde bulunmuşlardır. Sonrasında psikososyal destek çalışmaları AFAD'ın koordinatörlüğünde Soma merkezde kurulan sosyal hizmet merkezine taşınmış ve faciadan birkaç ay sonra yaklaşık yedi yıl sürecek olan mahkeme süreçleri başlamıştır (Doymaz-Aydın & Yıldırım, 2020). Aynı zamanda Türkiye çapında organize edilen bir kampanya sonrasında toplanan maddi destekler, AFAD tarafından maden işçilerinin ailelerine paylaştırılmıştır. Eğer ölen maden işçisi evli ise maddi destek (yaklaşık 156 bin lira) işçinin eşine verilmiş, eğer bekar ise anne babasına aktarılmıştır. Faciada ölen maden işçilerine özel bir kararla ölen madenciler "şehit" ilan edilmiş ve yakınları şehit yakını olarak devletin sağladığı imkanlardan yararlanabilir duruma gelmişlerdir. Madenci eşlerine ve ailelerine sağlanan bu imkanlar, Soma'da yaşayanlar, hayatta kalan maden işçileri, ölen işçilerin anne-babaları ve eşleri arasında çeşitli gerilimlere de neden olmuştur. Bu çalışma, madende hayatını kaybeden işçilerin eşlerinin yaşadıkları kayıplar sonrasındaki yas süreçleri, sağlanan maddi ve psikososyal desteklerin hayatlarını nasıl etkilediği ve dul kadınlar olarak kayıplarıyla ve hayatlarındaki değişimlerle nasıl baş ettiklerini araştırmayı hedeflemiştir.

Sevilen kişinin kaybı hemen her zaman kayıp yaşayan kişiler için acı, üzüntü, kaygı, öfke ve suçluluk gibi yoğun duygular uyandıran bir durumdur (Stroebe & Schut, 2008). Bu yoğun duygulara ek olarak kayıp yaşayan kişiler uyku sorunları, günlük hayatı idame etmede zorluk, ilişiklerde bozulma ve iletişim sorunlarıyla birlikte dikkat dağınıklığı ve çalışmaya devam etmekte güçlük yaşayabilmektedir (Bonanno and Kelter, 1997; Bonanno et al.,1999; Bonanno & Kaltman, 2001). Yas deneyimleri kaybı yaşayan kişilerin özellikleri ve ölümün oluş şekline göre değişiklik göstermektedir (Parkes & Prigerson, 2010). Ani, beklenmedik olan ve kaza, cinayet intihar gibi insan eliyle gerçekleşen olaylar sonrasında yaşanan ölümler, yaş itibariyle veya kronik hastalıklar dolaysıyla yaşanan olaylar nedeniyle gerçekleşen ölümlerden daha yoğun yas tepkilerine neden olmaktadır (Raphael et al.,2004; Rynearson, 2012) Aynı zamanda ani ve travmatik içerikli kayıplar sonrasında ölümün acı verici detayları olabilmekte, ölü bedenler deformasyon nedeniyle kişilere gösterilmemekte hatta bazı durumlarda cenazeler yapılamamaktadır (Boss, 2002; Kristensen et al., 2010).

Tüm bu değişkenler yas sürecini sekteye uğratan ve kayıp yaşayan kişilerde daha çok acı, üzüntü, kaygı ve öfke uyandıran durumlardır.

Her kültürün tarihsel olarak getirdiği ve dini inançlarıyla şekillenen yas tutma pratikleri vardır (Martin & Doka, 2000). Yas deneyimi kişinin içinde bulunduğu kültürün, inanç sisteminin, politik arka planın ve toplumsal cinsiyet rollerinin izini taşımaktadır. Yas tutan kişiler için cenazeden önce ölen kişiyi görebilmek, cenaze merasiminin yapılması ve cenazeye katılabilmek, sonrasında yapılan dini ritüellere katılım göstermek yas süreci içinde destekleyici olmaktadır (Parkes & Prigerson, 2010). Dini inanç sistemi ölüm ve sonrasıyla ilgili bir açıklama sunması bakımdan kişinin ölümü anlamladırmasını kolaylaştırmakta aynı zamanda Kuran okumak, namaz kılmak gibi dini ritüeller yoğun duygularla baş etmeyi kolaylaştırmaktadır (Sayar, 2011). Yas tutan kişilerin ailelerinden ve sosyal çevrelerinden aldıkları destek önemlidir (Breen & O'Connor, 2011; Neimeyer, 2006). Destekleyici olmayan ailelerle yaşamanın ve sosyal çevreden uzaklaşmanın yas deneyimi üzerinde olumsuz etkileri olduğu bulunmuştur. Aileler yas tutan kişilerin hem deneyimlerini konuşmak hem de çocuk bakımı ve ev işlerinde pratik destek sunmak adına önemli bir destek kaynağı olmaktadır. Eşini kaybeden kadınlar eşle birlikte maddi kayıplar da yaşamaktadırlar. Özellikle ev hanımı olan ve daha önce çalışmamış kadınlar eşlerinin maaşlarının bir kısmını alıyor olsalar bile yaşamlarının devamı ve çocukların ihtiyaçlarını sağlamak adına ailelerinden maddi destek de almak durumunda kalabilmektedir (Elwert, & Christakis, 2006). Sosyal destek olarak arkadaşlar kadınların duygularını rahatlıkla paylaşabildikleri ve sosyal aktivitelere birlikte katılabilmeleri adına önemli destekler sunmaktadır. Eş kaybı ile finansal kayıp yaşayan kadınların yas süreçlerinin daha karmaşık hale geldiği görülmektedir. Eşini kaybeden dul kadınların pek çok kültürde ve Türkiye'de daha önce yaşamadıkları türden bir sosyal baskı yaşadıkları ve hayatlarını bu baskılar altında devam ettirdikleri görülmüştür. Dul kadınların eşleri ve ailelerinin onuru korumak adına özellikle cinsellikleri ve yaşam tarzlarının kontrol altında tutulması gerektiği düşünülmektedir. Kadınlar ne kadar makbul ve uygun kadınlar olduklarına dair birçok teste tabi tutulmaktadır (Gedik, 2018). Bu testler

karşısında çeşitli baş etme yöntemleri geliştiren kadınların en çok uyguladıkları yöntemin eşleri hala hayattaymış gibi yaşamaya devam etmeleridir. Bir başka yöntem ise kendi davranışlarını eleştiri almayacak şekilde kontrol ettikleri, kıyafetlerini, davranışlarını ve hatta konuşmalarını toplumun beklentilerine göre kısıtladıkları oto sansür yöntemidir. Bazı kadınlar ise eleştiri ve testlerden uzak kalmak için kendilerini bazı insanlardan uzaklaştırmakta ve zaman zaman yalnızlaşmaktadırlar. Bu yöntemler kendilerini korumak adına başarılı olsa da sonuç olarak bazı adaptif davranışların kısıtlanmasına, kendi hayatlarını istedikleri gibi yaşayamamaya ve yalnızlaşmaya neden olmaktadır. Dul kadınların üzerindeki sosyal baskı yas deneyimlerini zorlaştıran ve baş etmeyi güçleştiren en önemli etmenlerden biridir.

Çalışmanın Amaçları

Mülakat soruları hazırlanırken kadınların yas deneyimine etki eden sosyal, kültürel, dini inanca dayalı değişkenler de göz önüne alınmıştır. Bu çalışmada Soma maden faciasında hayatını kaybeden madencilerin eşlerinin öznel deneyimlerinin araştırılması amaçlanmıştır. Araştırma soruları şöyledir:

- Soma maden faciasında eşini kaybeden kadınlar faciayı ve eşlerinin kaybını nasıl deneyimlediler?
- Faciada eşini kaybeden kadınların hayatları, hayatlarındaki önemli kişiler ve Somadaki diğer insanlarla ilişkileri bakımından nasıl değişti?
- Yas sürecinde yaşadıkları ve hayatlarındaki diğer değişimlerle nasıl baş ettiler?

YÖNTEM

Yorumlayıcı Fenomenolojik Analiz

Yorumlayıcı Fenomenolojik Analizin en önemli özelliklerinden biri kişilerin kendi deneyimlerini nasıl anlamlandırdıklarının araştırılmasıdır (Smith et. al., 2009). Kişilerin anlam dünyası ise içinde bulundukları bağlamın özelliklerini taşımakla birlikte süreğen ve düzenli bir şekilde deneyim üzerinde düşünmeyi gerektirir. Araştırmacının amacı katılımcıların kendi deneyimlerinden çıkarmaya çalıştıkları anlamı anlamlandırmaya ve yorumlamaya çalışmaktır (Larkin & Thomson, 2011). Araştırmacının odağı her zaman için katılımcıların deneyimleri üzerindedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı kadınların kendi ifadeleri üzerinden eş kaybı deneyimlerini anlamlandırmak olduğu için yorumlayıcı fenomenolojik analizin en uygun yöntem olduğu düşünülmüştür.

Katılımcılar

Bu çalışmada amaçlı örnekleme yöntemi kullanılarak Soma maden faciasında eşini kaybeden, Soma ve çevresinde yaşayan kadınlara ulaşılmıştır. Çalışmaya 21 ve 42 yaşları arasında on yedi kadın katılmıştır. Kadınların on beşi Soma içinde, iki tanesi ise Soma'nın köylerinde yaşamaktadır. Evlilik süreleri 8 aydan 25 yıla kadar değişkenlik göstermektedir. Kadınların on üçü evlilik öncesi de Soma'da ikamet etmektedir, dördü ise evlilik yoluyla Soma'ya göç etmiştir. Katılımcıların beşi lise mezunu olmakla birlikte bir tanesi ise üniversite eğitimine devam etmektedir. Beşi ilkokul mezunudur ve ikisi ortaokul eğitimine devam etmektedir. Dört kadın ise ortaokul mezunudur ve birisi açık lisede okumaya devam etmektedir. Bir kadın okula gitmemiştir ancak açık ilkokula kayıtlı olarak okumaktadır. Katılımcılardan iki tanesi eşlerinin ölümünden önce çalışmaktadır, iki kadın ise eşlerinin kaybından sonra yapılan bir düzenlemeyle devlet memuru olarak işe başlamıştır. Bir kadın günlük yevmiye usulü işlerde çalışmaktadır ve diğer kadınlar ise ev hanımıdır.

Materyal

Araştırmacı çalışmanın amaçlarına uygun olacak şekilde yarı-yapılandırılmış mülakat yöntemi kullanmıştır (EK A). Yarı yapılandırılmış mülakat soruları kadınların kayıp öncesi ve sonrası deneyimlerine dair sorular içermektedir. Soru formunun ilk kısmı demografik sorulardan, kadınların evlilik hayatından ve eş kaybından önce eşle ilişkilere dair sorulardan oluşmaktadır. Sonrasında facianın oluş şekline, olayı nasıl anlamlandırdıklarına, yaşadıkları psikolojik sorunlara, baş etme yöntemlerine, aileleri ve çevrelerindeki insanlarla olan ilişkilerine dair sorular gelmektedir. Son olarak da adalet arayışlarına ve aldıkları psikososyal destekleri nasıl bulduklarına dair sorular eklenmiştir. Bu mülakat sorular tez izleme komitesi tarafından değerlendirildikten sonra üç kadınla pilot bir çalışma yapılmış daha sonra ufak düzenlemeler yapıldıktan sonra tüm kadınlarla olan görüşmelerde kullanılmıştır.

Etik konular

Araştırmaya başlamadan önce Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Etik Kurulu tarafından etik onay alınmıştır. Araştırmacı mülakata başlamadan önce katılımcılara verdiği ve okuduğu bir bilgilendirilmiş onam formu hazırlamıştır. Kadınlardan imza yerine sözel bir şekilde onam alınmıştır; facia ile ilgili pek çok dava sürdüğü için herhangi bir şekilde imza atmanın yaratacağı etki düşünülerek sözlü onay alınmasına karar verilmiştir. Sözlü onay ve mülakat sorularına verilen cevaplar ses kayıt cihazı ile kaydedilmiş, ses kayıtları araştırmacının bilgisayarında şifreli bir dosya içinde, kadınların isimlerini gizleyecek şekilde saklanmıştır. Bilgilendirilmiş onamın bir parçası olarak, mülakat sırasında herhangi biri geldiğinde gizliliği korumak adına ses kaydının durdurulacağı söylenmiştir. Araştırmacı mülakat sonrasında katılımcılara verilmek üzere iki broşür hazırlamıştır ve her mülakat sonrasında bu iki broşürün üzerinden katılımcıyla birlikte geçilmiştir. Broşürlerin biri kadınların kendileri için yas süreciyle baş etme yollarının neler olabileceğini içerirken bir diğeri ise çocuklarını nasıl destekleyebileceklerine dair bilgiler içermektedir (EK B).

Broşürler aynı zamanda kadınlar ve çocuklar için Soma ve Manisa'da psikolojik destek alabilecekleri merkez ve hastane bilgilerini de içermektedir.

Prosedür

Katılımcılarla yapılan mülakatlar Mayıs 2015 ve Temmuz 2016 tarihleri arasında araştırmacının Soma'ya ziyaretleriyle tamamlanmıştır. Mülakatlar genellikle bir buçuk iki saat arası sürmüştür. Katılımcılara genellikle birbirlerinin yönlendirmeleriyle ulaşılmıştır. Görüşmeler katılımcıların isteği üzerine kendi evlerinde yapılmıştır. Görüşmeler sırasında kesintileri ve çocukların mülakatları duymasını engellemek amacıyla kadınların müsait olduğu zamanlar gözetilerek yapılmıştır. Görüşmeler sonunda broşürler üzerinden yapılan psikoeğitimden katılımcıların faydalandığı görülmüştür, çocuklarıyla ve onlarla ilişkilerine dair sorular soran kadınlar olmuştur, araştırmacı mülakat sonrasında bu soruları yanıtlamıştır.

Veri Analizi

Veri analizi için öncelikle ses kaydı alınan mülakatlar tüm detayları kapsayacak şekilde yazıya dökülmüştür. Daha sonra her bir mülakat satır satır okunarak ortaya çıkan kodlar, araştırmacının düşündükleri ve olası gruplamalar not alınmıştır. Mülakatlar ve bu kodlamalar birkaç kere okunduktan sonra öncelikli olarak alt temalar oluşturulmaya başlanmıştır. Alt temaların oluşmasından sonra bulgular tekrar değerlendirilerek gruplandırılmış ve üst temalar altında isimlendirilmiştir. Araştırmacı alt ve üst temaları oluşturduktan sonra yorumlayıcı fenomenolojik analize hakim diğer bir doktor adayı olan Deniz Yılmaz Zambak'a göndermiş ve onun geribildirimleriyle birlikte tema ve üst temaların isimlendirmelerini tamamlamıştır. Aynı zamanda tez izleme komitesinin geribildirimlerini alarak her bir temayı kadınların anlatılarını ve psikoloji literatür bilgisini birleştirerek yorumlamıştır.

Çalışmanın Güvenirliliği

Çalışmanın güvenirliliği Sousa'nın (2014) vurguladığı stratejiler göz önünde bulundurularak düşünülmüştür. Yorumlama sürecinde analize hakim başka bir araştırmacıyla kodlanan materyalin üzerinden geçilmesi ve geribildirim alınması güvenirliliği sağlayan değişkenlerden biri olarak görülebilir. Aynı zamanda tez danışmanı ve tez izleme komitesi pek çok aşamada geribildirim vererek araştırmacının kendi yorumları üzerine düşünmesini sağlamışlardır. Araştırmacı, araştırma boyunca kendi duygu ve düşüncelerini not ettiği bir günlük kullanmış ve bunu analiz esnasında kendi yorumlarının yanlılığını ayrıştırmak amacıyla kullanmıştır. Araştırmacı aynı zamanda kendi sınıfsal konumu, inanç sistemi ve kayıp deneyimleri üzerine tekrar tekrar düşünerek analiz ve yorumlarını gözden geçirmiştir.

BULGULAR

Katılımcılarla yapılan mülakatların yorumlayıcı fenomenolojik analizi sonucunda dokuz üst tema belirlenmiştir. Bu üst temalar, "olayın algılanışı", "olayı anlamlandırma", "psikolojik sonuçlar", "kayıptan sonra değişimler", "eş kaybı yaşayan bir kadın olma deneyimi", "kayıpla baş etme", "madenci ailesi olma", "adalet arayışı", "psikolojik destek" olarak isimlendirilmiştir.

Olayın Algılanışı

Bu ilk üst temada kadınların eşlerini kaybetmelerine neden olan 13 Mayıs Soma Maden Faciasını nasıl algıladıklarından oluşmaktadır. Bu üst tema dört alt temayı içermektedir. Olayın beklenmedik ve ani bir şekilde gelişmiş olması birçok kadın tarafından vurgulanmıştır. O gün, bütün kadınlar için sabah eşlerine iş hazırlığı yaptıkları ve akşama görüşmek üzere ayrıldıkları bir gündü. Olay anında kadınlar ev işleriyle uğraşmakta yakınlarıyla vakit geçirmektedirler. Haberi bazıları Komşularından bazıları ise arkadaşlarından almışlardır. Duyduklarına göre eşlerinin bulunduğu madende büyük bir yangın çıkmış ve

madenciler madende kapalı kalmışlardır. O haberi aniden duyduklarında birçoğu şok olma hissi yaşamamış belirli bir süre gerçekliğine inanamamıştır. Arama kurtarma çalışmaları birkaç gün sürmüş ve bu süre zarfında eşlerinin durumunu bilmeden beklemişlerdir. Kadınların çoğu eşlerinin ölümünü anlatırken kayıplarının ne kadar ani ve beklenmedik olduğunu, duruma adeta hazırlıksız yakalandıklarını sıklıkla vurgulamışlardır. Eşlerinin akşam her zamanki gibi eve dönmelerini beklerken bu olayla birlikte sarsılmış ve günlerce olayın gerçekliğini kavramakta zorlanmışlardır. Sıradan bir gün olduğu için vedalaşamamış olmak birçoğunun vurguladığı gibi kayba dair yası ve acıyı daha zorlayıcı bir hale getirmiştir. Kadınların pek çoğu madendeki tehlikeli ve zorlu çalışma koşullarından haberdardılar. Eşleri ölmeden önceki dönemde son zamanlarda madende sıcaklığın fazlaca arttığından ve bu durumun çalışmayı güçleştirdiğinden bahsetmişlerdir. Aynı zamanda pek çok eş iş dönüşünde baş ağrısı, yoğun halsizlik ve uyuşukluk durumu yaşadığı için, bu durumun madende bir süre önce başlayan ve yetkililer tarafından görmezden gelen tehlikeli bir duruma işaret ettiğine dair çıkarımlar yapmaktadırlar. Kadınların bazıları iş sağlığı ve güvenliği önlemlerinin alınmadığını eşlerinin sıklıkla vurguladığını dile getirmişlerdir. Olaydan önceki maden içindeki bu durumların, işverenin ve ilgili kurumların sorunları görmezden gelerek bu sonuçtan sorumluluklarına dair çıkarımlar yapılmaktadır. Bu maden faciasında 301 maden işçisi hayatını kaybetmiştir. Madenci eşleri genellikle madende gerçekleşen yaralanmayla ya da tek bir işçinin kaybıyla sonuçlanan maden kazalarına aşinadırlar. Madende çalışmanın zaten tehlikeli bir iş olduğu genel bir kabuldür. Ancak madende çalışma koşullarının maden işletmesinin devletten özel sektöre devredilmesiyle kötüleştiğini ve bu kadar ölümle sonuçlanan bir kazanın ancak cinayet olabileceğini vurgulayan kadınlar çoğunluktadır. Madendeki gaz sızıntısından ve yangınla başlayan olayın korkutucu ve şiddet dolu ayrıntıları kadınların zihninde önemli bir yer kaplamaktadır. Madende yangın çıkınca dar tünellerde çalışan yüzlerce işçinin nasıl çıkacağı, çıkış yolu olup olmadığı, içeride yanarak mı yoksa dumandan boğularak mı öldüklerine dair detaylar özellikle haber almayı bekledikleri dönemde zihinlerinde dönen sorular olmuştur. Eşleri ölmeden önce yaşamış olacakları dehşet verici detayları ve

eşlerinin çaresizliğini düşünmek pek çok kadın için örseleyici olmuştur. Olayın dehşet uyandıran detayları ölü bedenlerinin görünüşünü de etkilemiştir. Bazı kadınlar eşlerini gömülmeden önce bedenlerinin fazlaca deforme olmasından dolayı görmemelerinin daha iyi olacağı söylendiği için görememiştir. Eşlerinin cesedini gören kadınların neredeyse hepsi yangının ve gazın etkisiyle bedenlerinin etkilendiğini söylemiştir. Türkiye'de cenazeden önce ölü bedenler genellikle morglarda ya da uygun koşullar olduğunda gömülünceye kadar kendi evinde bekletilir, usullere uygun olarak yıkanır hazırlanır ve gömülür. Bu olaydan sonra kayıp sayısı çok fazla olduğu için var olan morglara sığmamış, kavun ve soğuk hava depolarında biriktirilmiştir. Birçok kadın eşini teşhis etmek üzere oralara gitmiştir. Bu durumun ölüye saygısızlık olduğunu belirtenler olmuştur.

Olayı Anlamlandırma

Bu üst temada kayba neden olan olayın ve kaybın kadınlar tarafından nasıl anlamlandırıldığı anlatılmıştır. Olayın anlamlandırılma süresince o günün politik atmosferinde var olan tartışmalar etkili olmuştur. Dönemin başbakanının maden faciasından sonra yaptığı "*Ölüm madenciliğin fitratında var"* açıklaması ciddi tepkilere neden olmuştur. Madenciliğin her ne kadar tehlikeli bir iş olduğu bilinse de madenciler için uygun çalışma koşulları hazırlamayan maddende yaşanan sorunlara rağmen gerekli tedbirler alınmadan çalışmaya devam etmesi önlenebilecek bir durumun nasıl bir felakete dönüştüğünü gösterir niteliktedir. Bir önceki temada anlatıldığı gibi kadınlar madendeki problemli durumları ve zorlukları çok öncesinden biliyor ve zaman zaman eşleri ile bunları paylaşıyordu. Bu koşullara ek olarak denetimlerin göstermelik yapıldığını, madenlerde gerekli olan acil durumlar için hayat kurtaracak yaşam odalarının olmadığını ve zehirli gaz yayılması durumunda kullanılacak oksijen maskelerinin ise gerçekte çalışmadığını anlatmıştır. Bütün bunlar olayın bir kazadan ibaret olmadığını, işverenin madenin çalışmasını durdurmamak ve daha çok para kazanmak adına sorunları ihmal ederek göz göre göre madencileri ölüme gönderdiği fikrini pekiştirmektedir. Eşlerinin ölümünü cinayet olarak yorumlayan kadınlar

çoğunluktadır. İşverene ve sorumlu gördükleri diğer kurumlara oldukça öfkeli olmakla birlikte adaletsizlik ve çaresizlik hislerini daha yoğun bir şekilde yaşamaktadırlar. Bu kadınların hemen hepsi kendilerini dindar olarak tanımlamaktadır ancak ölümün sadece Allah'tan geldiği fikrine karşı inancın sadece bunu vurgulamadığı, takdirin her zaman Allah'a ait olduğu ancak önlem alınmamasının bu ölümlere neden olduğunu vurgulamaktadırlar. Birkaç kadın ise inanca dair bu açıklamayı kabul etmiş gibi görünmekle ve eşlerinin ölümünün tamamen Allah'ın takdiri olduğunu ve bu durumun bir kaza olduğunu vurgulamaktadır. Bu durumda isyan etmek ya da başkalarına kızgın olmak gereksizdir, ölümü kabullenmek ve isyan etmeden yas tutmanın gerektiğini düşünmektedirler. Bu açıklama kadınların acılarını sakinleştirmekte etkili olduğunu göstermiştir. Bir başka ve bu farklı açıklamaları yapan kadınların hepsinin kabulü ise eşlerinin şehit olarak adlandırılmasıdır. Kadınlar eşlerinin şehit olduğunu iki şekilde açıklamışlardır; eşleri çocukları ve aileleri için para kazanmaya çalışırken ölmüşlerdir ve bu kutsal bir durumdur. Bir diğeri ise eşlerinin çıkardığı kömürün pek çok insanın ısınması ve hayatlarını geçirmesini kolaylaştırdığı için önemli olduğu ve yine bu işi yaparken ölmüş olanın şehit adını almasının gerekli olduğunu düşünmüşlerdir. Pek çok kadın eşlerinin şehit olmasının, gurur duyulacak bir durum olduğunu söylemiştir, şehit eşi ve yakınları olarak kendilerinin de değerli hissettiklerini vurgulamışlardır.

Psikolojik Sonuçlar

Bu üst temada kadınların yaşadığı çeşitli psikolojik zorluklar gruplanmıştır. Bu zorluklar ruminasyon, girici travmatik anılar, halsizlik, gerginlik, öfke, üzüntü, yalnızlık ve sağlık temelli sorunlar olarak görülmüştür. Hemen hemen her kadın günlerce bu olayın neden olduğunu ve bu kaybın neden kendi başlarına geldiğini sorgulamıştır. Ruminasyon olarak tanımlanan bu süreç, anlam bulmaya çalışmak ancak bir anlam vererek canlarını acıtan önemli bir durumdur. Bazen de olayları açıklamaya çalışırken farklı bağlantılar kurmaktadırlar, örneğin kayıp sonrasında çocuklar bazı iyi okullara gönderilmiştir. Çocuğunun okuması konusunda çok hassas olan bir babanın öldükten sonra çocuğunun böyle bir imkana sahip olması

ölümü tanımlamaya çalışmanın bir ifadesi gibidir. Maden faciası sonrasında kadınlar hastanelerde madenlerin önünde saatlerce ve bazıları günlerce beklemiş eşlerinden haber almaya çalışmışlardır. Bu süreçte ambulans sesleri, kalabalık, yaralı çıkarılan madencilerin ve bekleyen diğer yakınların durumuna yakından tanık olmuşlardır. O günlere ait anılar flaşbek olarak zaman zaman zihinlerinde canlanmaktadır. Özellikle ambulans sesi o günleri doğrudan hatırlatan bir uyarıcıdır. Kalabalık bir insan grubunu görmek ya da bağırma feryat gibi durumları işitmek kaygı uyandıran tetikleyiciler olabilmektedir. Bu seslerle veya görüntülerle tetiklenen kaygı kadınların sıklıkla bahsettikleri ve baş edemedikleri duygulardan biridir. Bununla birlikte en yoğun tanımlanan duygu acı ve üzüntüdür. Kayıp sonrası yaşadıkları üzüntü çok derin ve zaman zaman sakinleşmesi zor bir hal almıştır. Yaşadıkları acıyı kadınların hemen hepsi daha önce yaşamadıkları çok yoğun bir duygu olarak tanımlamışdır. Birçok kadın üzüntülerinin zaman içinde azaldığını ancak hala çok canlı olduğunu ifade etmişlerdir. Üzüntüye eşlik eden hayattan ve herhangi bir durumdan keyif alamama hali yine pek çok kadın tarafından vurgulanmıştır. Çaresizlik ve geleceğe dair umutsuzluk dile getirilen diğer duygular arasındadır. Öfke, kadınların anlatılarında bazen çocuklarına, bazen çevrelerindeki insanlara, bazen kendilerine hatta kimi durumda ölen eşlerine yönelen bir duygu olarak kendini göstermektedir. Bazı kadınlar, eşlerine madendeki durumu bilmesine rağmen çalışmaya devam etmesine kızgındır bazıları ise kendilerine bu duruma engel olamadıkları için kızmaktadır. Çocuklarla baş etmek yalnız bir ebeveyn olarak zorluk yaratmakta ve o sorunlarla baş edememek de zaman zaman çocuklara karşı öfke patlamalarına neden olmaktadır. Kayıp sonrasında birçok ailede ilişkilerde değişiklik olmuş, bazı kadınlar eşlerinin aileleri tarafından dışlanmış ya da eziyet görmüştür. Bazıları ise yakın çevrelerinden yeterli destek alamamıştır. Tüm bunlar öfkelerinin başka bir kaynağını oluşturmaktadır. Bazı kadınlar özellikle kaybın hemen ardından birkaç aya kadar tükenmişlik ve yorgunluk durumu tanımlamışlardır. Bu durum kendini yemeden içmeden kesilme, yataktan çıkamama ve herhangi başka bir gündemle ilgilenememe olarak kendini göstermektedir. Tükenmişlik yaşayan kadınların bazıları sağlık sorunları da yaşamıştır, vitamin eksikliği süreğen menstrüasyon durumu

bunlardan bazılarıdır. Yaşı görece ileri olan birkaç kadın hiper tansiyon problemleri yaşamaya başlamış ve kardiyovasküler hastalık tedavisi almaya başlamıştır. Hamile olan bir kadın eşinin ölüm haberini aldıktan sonra erken doğum yapmış ve bebek bir süre risk altında küvözde kalmıştır. Tüm bunlara ek olarak, hemen her kadın sosyal olarak eskiye göre daha izole olduğunu belirtmiştir. Bunun en önemli nedenlerinden biri yaşadıkları yoğun duygular ve çökkünlük haliyle insanlarla görüşmek istememeleridir. İlk başta yaşanan şok durumu ile birlikte pek çok kadın günlerle kimseyle konuşmamıştır. Sonrasında ise yaşadıklarını herkesle paylaşmak zor gelmeye başlamıştır, daha önce kadınların sosyal çevresinde olan bazı insanlar bu süreçte sergiledikleri yargılayıcı tutumlar nedeniyle uzaklaşmışlardır. Kadınlara ve evli olmayan maden işçilerinin ailelerine toplanan bir miktar para, ev ve iş hakkı verilmiştir. Bu durum kadınların çevrelerinden parayı alıp kaybı unutmak gibi yorumlar duymalarına neden olmuştur. Yine pek çok kadın eskiden yakın oldukları ve sosyal ilişkileri olan insanlardan benzeri yorumlar ve ima duydukları için uzaklaşmışlardır. Bu durum kadınların yeni ilişkiler kurmasının da zaman zaman engel oluşturmaktadır.

Kayıptan Sonra Değişimler

Kayıp sonrası yapılan devlet destekli maddi destek, Türkiye çapında toplanmış yardım paralarının dağıtılması, her aileden bir kişiye iş hakkı ve ev verilmesi gibi durumlar, kadınların hayatında ciddi ekonomik değişimlere neden olmuştur. Daha öncesinde işçi sınıfı ailelere mensup bireyler olarak bu ekonomik desteklerle kadınlar ekonomik açıdan önceye göre daha avantajlı hale gelmişlerdir. Böylece maddi olarak kendileri ve çocuklarını kendi ailelerinden ve eşin ailesinden uzaklaştırmışlardır. Pek çoğuna göre maddi olarak başkalarına ihtiyaç duyuyor olmak zaten dul bir kadın olan kadınların biraz daha baskılanması anlamına gelebilirdi. Hayat giderlerini kendilerinin karşılayabilmesi hem başkalarının etkisini üzerlerinde azaltmış hem de kendi kendine yeter olmak zorluklar karsısında daha güçlü hissettirmiştir. Çocukların geleceklerine dair endişeyi azaltmış ve daha önce hiç çalışmamış kadınları da

çalışma zorunluluğundan kurtarmıştır. Hemen hemen her kadın yaşadıkları bu değişimin kendileri için destekleyici olduğunu paylamıştır. Bunun en büyük olumsuz çıktısı ise sosyal çevreleriyle iletişimin bozulmasıdır. Kadınlar, daha önce arkadaş veya tanıdık olan bazı insanlardan eleştirileri ve yargılayıcı tutumları yüzünden uzaklaşmıştır. Yeni insanlara ise temkinli yaklaşmaktadırlar. Sağlanan maddi imkanların eş yoksa ölen madencinin ailesine verilmesi durumu ise kadınlar ve eşlerin aileleri arasında sorunlar yaşanmasına neden olmuştur. Çoğunlukla eşlerin ailesi ve kadınların ilişkileri bu maddi durumlar yüzünden yıpranmıştır. Birkaç kadın ise ilişkilerinin eskisinden de daha iyi olduğunu söylemiş ve bu durumun hem kendileri hem de çocukları için önemli bir destek mekanizması yarattığını söylemişlerdir. Benzer şekilde ilişkilerin bozulmuş olması ise kadınları psikolojik açından daha çok zorlamaktadır. Bazı kadınlar bu ilişkideki zorluklar yüzünden eşlerine karşı mahcup ve suçlu hissettiklerini söylemişlerdir; ancak yaşanan çatışmalar karşısında iletişimi kesmek dışında başka bir yol bulamamışladır. Birkaç kadın eşlerinin aileleri tarafından ev işlerinde çalıştırıldığını ve düzenlemeler tarafından kendisine verilmesi gereken paranın eşinin ailesi tarafından alınmaya çalışıldığını da söylemiştir. Bu durum kadınların yas sürecini daha sancılı bir şekilde geçirmesine neden olmaktadır. Bir istisnai durum dışında, kadınların hepsi kendi ailelerinin desteğini bir şekilde hissettiklerini ve bu desteğin hem günlük hayatı idame ettirmekte hem de daha iyi hissetmekte önemli olduğunu söylemişlerdir. Arkadaşlarla ilişkiler olumlu yönde değiştiyse bu genel olarak kadınların kendilerini anlaşılmış ve empatik bir şekilde dinlenilmek anlamına gelmektedir. Genellikle eşi olmayan ya da yalnız kadınlarla daha yakınlaştıklarını ve onların desteğinin önemli olduğunu söylemişlerdir.

Görüşmeler esnasında kendilerindeki değişiklikler sorulduğunda hemen hemen her kadın değişmediğini vurgulamıştır. Eşlerinin ölümlerinden sonra hayatlarını değiştirdikleri ve uygun şekilde yas tutmadıkları için eleştirilen kadınların değişmediklerini söylemeleri anlaşılırdır. Daha detaylı olarak kendilerine dönük farklılıklar sorulduğunda ise eşlerinin varlığı zamanına kıyasla daha bağımsız hissettiklerini söyleyenler olmuştur. Sağlanana ekonomik destekle birlikte kendi

hayatlarına ve çocuklarına dair kararları tek başlarına daha rahat bir şekilde almaya, maddi olarak kimseye karşı sorumlu hissetmemeye başlamışlardır. Bazı kadınlar eşlerinin ölümünden sonra ilk defa çalışmaya başlamışlar bunun da kendilerini güçlü hissettirdiğini vurgulamışlardır. Birçok kadın araba sürmeyi öğrenmiş ve eskiye kıyasla maddi olarak daha rahat oldukları için araba alabilmiştir. Dul kadın olmaktan kaynaklı pek çok baskıyı deneyimlemeye devam etseler de araba kullanmak kadınları bir nebze daha bağımsız hissettiren bir sembol olmuş, istedikleri yere istedikleri şekilde gidebilmelerini sağlamıştır. Maddi ve fiziksel olarak kimseye muhtaç olmamak kadınların en çok önem verdikleri şeydir, muhtaç olmamak özgüvenlerini ve kendi yeterliliklerine dair inançlarını arttırmıştır.

3.5. Eş kaybı yaşayan bir kadın olma deneyimi

Kadınlar eşlerinin kaybından sonra yakın bir sosyal desteklerini, romantik ve cinsel partnerlerini kaybetmişlerdir. Hemen hemen her kadın eşlerinin kaybından sonra hayatlarında ne kadar yalnız hissettiklerini vurgulamışlardır. Pek çoğu görücü usulü olarak evlenmiş olsalar da evlendikten sonra ilişkilerinin iyi olduğunu birlikte zaman geçirmekten keyif aldıklarını, hayatın zorluklarına karşı birlikte durduklarını, sevdiklerini ve sevilmiş hissettiklerini vurgulamışlardır. Evlilik dışı cinsel ilişki uygun görülmediği için yine pekçok kadın için cinsel partnerden de mahrum kalmak anlamına gelmektedir. Bu yalnızlık duygularını anlatılarında çeşitli şekillerde vurgulamışlardır.

Eş kaybından sonra yaşanan önemli değişimlerden biri çocuklar için tek ebeveyn olarak sorumluluklarla baş etmektir. Kadınlar ailelerinden ve yakın akrabalarından çocuklarla ilgili destek alsalar da bu eşlerinin desteğinin tam olarak yerini tutmamaktadır. Çocukların eğitimleri, günlük hayatları ve geleceklerine dair karar yetkisi ve sorumluluğu olan yalnız anneler olmanın ciddi bir sorumluluk olduğunu ve zaman zaman yanlış kararlar vermekten korktuklarını vurgulamışlardır. Özellikle eğitimleriyle ilgili daha önce genellikle babalarının sorumluluk aldığını, okula, toplantılara onların katıldığını ve

ödevlerinde daha çok babalarının yardımcı olduğunu söylemişler bunlarla tek başına ilgilenmenin yeni öğrendikleri bir durum olduğunu ifade etmişlerdir. Aynı zamanda babasız büyüyen çocuklarının baba sevgisinin mahrumiyetinden kaynaklı zorluk yaşamalarının önüne geçemeyeceklerine dair endişeleri vardır. *"Hem anne hem baba olmak zorundalığı"* kadınlarının çoğunun anlatılarında vurguladığı endişe verici bir durumdur. Kadınların, küçük çocuklar için endişeleri daha çok yeterli sevgi ve fiziksel ihtiyaçlarını karşılamak yönündeyken, ergenlik yaşlarındaki çocukları için yeterli disiplini sağlamak ve gelecekleri için doğru kararları vermek temel endişe nedenleridir. Çocuklara karşı sorumluluklar ve yapılacaklar çoğu zaman endişe kaynağı olmakla birlikte, kendi hayatlarına dair meşguliyetler zaman zaman suçlu hissettirmektedir. Yalnız anne olmanın en büyük baskılarından birinin odaklarının her zaman için çocuklarında olması gerektiğini düşünmeleri olduğunu ifade etmişlerdir. Çocuklarla ilgili sorunlar ise zaman zaman yetersiz hissetmelerine neden olmakta aynı zamanda sorunlarına dair çözüm bulabildikleri, onlarla yeterince ilgilendiklerini düşündükleri zaman kendilerine dair inanç ve güvenleri de artmaktadır.

Eş kaybının neden olduğu önemli değişimlerden biri toplumsal cinsiyet rollerinde olan değişimdir. Kadınlar, eşleri hayattayken market pazar alışverişleri, evle ilgili ödemelerin yapılması ve benzeri ev dışı işleri çoğunlukla eşlerinin yaptığını ancak kayıplarından sonra tüm bu işlerin de kendilerine kaldığını vurgulamışlardır. Evdeki değişim, tamir ve tadilat işlerinin de yine erkeklerin sorumluluğu olduğunu söyleyen kadınlar, bunları da öğrenmek ve ellerinden geldiğince uygulamak için çabaladıklarını söylemişlerdir. Eskisine kıyasla çok daha fazla iş yüklerinin olduğunu söyleyen kadınlar bu yeni öğrenmek durumunda oldukları "*erkek işlerinin"* yorucu olmakla birlikte kendilerini daha yeterli ve güçlü hissetmelerini de sağladığını vurgulamışlardır.

Kültürel olarak *"dul kadın"* olmanın yarattığı baskıyı hem toplumsal olarak hem de kendi içlerinde yaşadıklarını vurgulayan kadınlar, belki de baş etmesi en zor değişimin bu olduğunu söylemişlerdir. Çevrelerindeki pek çok insanın kendileri

hakkında dedikodu yaptığını ve konuştuğunu bildiklerini, bire bir duymasalar bile başka kadınlar hakkında söylenenlerden yola çıkarak kendi davranışlarının da eleştirildiğini düşünmektedirler. Eleştiriler genellikle uygun dul kadınlar olmadıkları, aldıkları maddi destekle eşlerinin yasını unuttukları, çoğunlukla kendi hayatlarıyla meşgul oldukları yönündedir. Bunları duyan kadınlar bazen kendilerini dış çevreden soyutlamaya çalışarak, bazen tıpkı eşleri hayattaymış gibi davranarak, bazense kıyafetlerine, davranışlarına ve konuşmalarını kısıtlayarak çalışmaktadırlar. Her ne kadar baş etmeye çalışsalar da bu durumun kendilerini çok üzdüğünü ve ciddi bir stres kaynağı olduğunu söylemişlerdir. Tüm bu eleştirilerin temel olarak kendi onurları ve dolayısıyla da eşlerinin hatıralarını zedelediğini söyleyen bazı kadınlar, eşleri adına da üzüldüklerini ve zaman zaman onlara karşı suçlu hissettiklerini vurgulamışlardır. Eşlerinin ardından yas tutan kadınlar için dul kadın olmak ve sürekli baskı altında hissetmek her durumda yıpratıcı olmaktadır.

3.6. Yasla baş etme

Çalışmaya katılan bütün kadınlar öncelikli olarak çocukları için yaşadıkları zorluklarla baş etmeye çalıştıklarını söylemişlerdir. Özellikle kayıp sonrasında yaşadıkları yoğun duygular sırasında kendilerini hayatta tutan en önemli şey çocuklarının varlığıdır. Çocuklara karşı bakım sorumlulukları ve onlara karşı hissettikleri hayatlarını hem daha anlamlı kılmakta hem de somut amaçlar sağlamaktadır. Çocuklar için yemek yapmak, temizlikle ilgilenmek, okul işleriyle uğraşmak günlük hayatı idame ettirmek konusunda onları güçlendirmektedir. Dul kadın olarak dışarıda başkalarıyla vakit geçirmek ve eğlenmek hoş görülmediği için, çocukları aynı zamanda keyifli vakit geçirebilecekleri ve eğlenebilecekleri, bunun da yadırganmayacağı kişiler için aynı zamanda birçok iyi hissin kaynağı olmaktadırlar.

Kadınların çoğu Sünni Müslümandır ve kendilerini dindar olarak tanımlamışladır. Dini inançlarına göre yaşam ve ölümün kişinin kaderi olduğu ve Allah'ın yazdığı kader karşısında kabullenici olmak gerekliliği fikri pek çoğu

için zorluklara dayanma gücü vermektedir. Kader inancına göre olanların Allah'ın hükmettiği bir nedeni vardır ve bu dünyada acı çekmenin diğer dünyada ödüllendirileceği inancı sakinleştirici olmaktadır. Dini inancın bir başka önemli etkisi de dua etmenin, namaz kılmanın ve toplu şekilde yapılan Kuran okuma, Mevlüt gibi pratiklerin kadınların üzüntü ve acılarının azalması için somut araçlar sağlamasıdır. Hemen hemen her kadın, zorlandıkları zaman dini ritüelleri yerine getirmenin destekleyici olduğunu ve kendilerine rahatlama sağladığını vurgulamışlardır.

Kadınlar için en önemli baş etme yöntemlerinden biri aldıkları sosyal destek olmuştur. Sosyal desteğin şekli ve nasıl olduğu desteği veren kişiye göre değişmektedir. Kadınların çoğu ailelerinden ve özellikle kardeşlerinden günlük hayatlarıyla ve çocuklarıyla ilgili somut işlerde destek aldıklarını söylemişlerdir. Aile desteğinin kadınlar için ne kadar önemli olduğu anlatılarından anlaşılmaktadır, ailelerin özellikle duygusal desteğinin yeterli olmadığı zamanlarda ise baş etme zorluklarının arttığı görülmektedir. Kadınlar özellikle kadın arkadaşlarından aldıkları duygusal desteğin de zorluklarla baş etmek konusunda önemli olduğunu vurgulamışlardır. Birlikte yaptıkları sohbetler anlaşılmış hissettirmekte ve kadınlarla yapılan aktiviteler ise hem keyif alabilecekleri hem de yeni şeyler öğrenecekleri alanlar açmaktadır. Soma Maden Faciası dolayısıyla eşini kaybeden kadınlarla kurdukları iletişim, aynı duygusal zorlukları, baskıyı ve çocuklarına karşı benzer endişeleri taşıdıkları için birbirlerini daha iyi anladıklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Mahkemelere çoğu zaman birlikte katılmışlar ve süreci birlikte takip etmişlerdir. Aynı zamanda pek çok kadın facia sonrasında şehir dışından gelip kendilerini ziyaret eden daha önceden tanımadıkları insanların desteğinin önemi aşikardır. Hemen hemen bütün kadınlar bu desteğin kendilerine ve eşlerine saygı gösterildiği ve değer verildiği şeklinde yorumlamış, bu durumun kendilerini iyi hissettirdiğini söylemişlerdir.

Bir başka baş etme mekanizması da sağlanan ekonomik destek olmuştur. Daha öncesinde maddi olarak eşlerine bağlı olan kadınlar, sonrasında bu destek dolayısıyla kendilerine ve çocuklarına yeter hale gelmişlerdir. Böylece evlerinin

ihtiyaçlarını, çocukların eğitim masraflarını ve kendi giderlerini kimseye muhtaç olmadan sağlayabilmektedirler. Pek çok kadın eğer bu ekonomik destek olmasaydı ne kadar zorlanacaklarını, belki çalışmak zorunda kalıp çocuklarıyla yeterince ilgilenemeyeceklerini, ailelerine ya da eşlerinin ailelerine ekonomik olarak bağlı kalmak zorunda olacaklarını belirtmişlerdir.

Acılarıyla baş edebilmek, yaşadıklarına rağmen ayakta kalabilmek hemen hemen her kadının kendine olan güvenini artmıştır. Aynı zamanda araba kullanmak, bilgisayar kullanmayı öğrenmek, bazı kadınlar için çalışmaya başlamak kendilerini daha güçlü hissetmelerine neden olmuştur. Bazı kadınlar, kendilerine dair artan güven ve yeterlilik hissinin baş etmelerini kolaylaştıran önemli bir etken olduğunu vurgulamışlardır.

3.7. Madenci ailesi olmak

Kadınlar, kendi ailelerinin ve eşlerinin ailelerinin yoksul olduğunu ve çoğunlukla Soma yakınında köylerde yaşadıklarını söylemişlerdir. Köylerde genellikle tarım, hayvancılık ve tütüncülük ile uğraşan aileler, yıllar içinde bunlardan yeterince kazanç sağlayamadıkları için Soma merkeze doğru göç etmişlerdir. Birçok kadın eşlerinin madene girmeden önce başka işlerde çalışmayı denediğini ancak bu işlerin çoğunlukla düzenli maaş sağlamadığını ve sigortasız olduğunu vurgulamışlardır. Özellikle çocukları olduktan sonra sağlık sigortası daha önemli hale geldiği için, madende çalışmak adeta zorunluluk haline gelmiştir. Kadınlar, madende çalışmayı ne eşlerinin ne de kendilerinin istediğini hatta bunun tüm maden işçileri için geçerli olduğunu söylemişlerdir. Madende üç vardiya şeklinde sekizer saat çalışılmakta, maden işçileri bu sekiz saat boyunca madenden çıkmadan çalışılmaktadır, "*yerin yedi kat altına girmek"* kadınların sıkça kullandığı tabirlerden biridir. Kadınlar, madenlerdeki çalışma koşullarının ağırlığı, güvenlik önlemlerinin yetersizliği ve kötü koşullar dolayısıyla çalışma hayatları boyunca eşlerinin sağlığından hep endişe duyduklarını ve eşleri için üzüldüklerini belirtmişlerdir.

3.8. Adalet arayışı

Soma Maden Faciasından sonra sorumluların tespiti ve cezalandırılmaları için bir yargılama süreci başladı. Çalışmaya katılan kadınların çoğu mahkemeleri yakından takip ettiklerini belirtmişlerdir. Kadınlar temel motivasyonlarının eşlerinin hakkını savunmak olduğunu ve mahkemelere katılmanın bu yüzden onlara iyi geldiğini hatta katılamadıkları zaman suçlu hissettiklerini söylemişlerdir. Mahkemeler, bir şekilde eşleriyle bağ kurmanın yolu olarak görülmekle birlikte; sorumlu buldukları kişileri gördükleri, onlarla karşılaştıkları ve ifadelerini dinledikleri yerdir ve zaman zaman onlara karşı öfkelerini ifade etme fırsatı bulmaktadırlar. Bazı kadınlar öfkelerini orada söyleyebilmenin ve gösterebilmenin kendileri için önemli olduğunu belirtmiştir. Bazı kadınlar ise mahkeme oturumlarından sonra daha gergin ve öfkeli olduklarını, kendilerine gelmenin günler alabildiğini ifade ederek zaman zaman katılmayı tercih etmediklerini söylemişlerdir. Sanıkların özellikle maden işçilerine yönelik haksız ve kötü söylemlerinin kendilerini çok rahatsız ettiğini, onların yalanları karşısında çileden çıktığını söyleyen kadınlar da vardır. Sağlık sorunları yaşayan kadınlardan bazıları ise bu durumun sağlıklarını da olumsuz yönde etkilediğini vurgulamıştır.

Facianın hemen ertesinde ve takip eden süreçte birçok protesto da gerçekleşmiş, kadınların bir kısmı bu protestolara katılmışlardır. Benzer şekilde protestoların da eşlerinin hakkını aramak anlamına geldiğini düşünenler olmakla birlikte unutulmaması adına protestoların yapılmasını olumlu bulan ancak katılmayan kadınlar da vardır. Katılan kadınlar protestoların özellikle kendilerine eşleri için bir şeyler yapmış olmanın getirdiği iyilik hissiyle birlikte öfkelerini yansıttıklarını söylemişlerdir. Bununla birlikte protestoları işlevsiz ve koşulları değiştiremeyeceği için de anlamsız bulanlar da vardır. Daha dindar olan kadınların, sokakta erkeklerle birlikte protestoya katılmayı istemedikleri fark edilmiş, aynı zamanda fazlaca politik buldukları bu eylemlerin de anlamsız olduğunu söyleyenler olmuştur.

3.9. Psikososyal destek

Facianın hemen ardından Soma merkezde kurulan psikososyal destek merkezine birçok ruh sağlığı çalışanı derneklerinden gönüllüler katılmış ve psikososyal destek hizmetleri sunmuşlardır. Ev ziyaretleri, bireysel danışmanlık ve psikiyatri desteği sunan bu merkezden pek çok kadın yararlandığını ifade etmiştir. Özellikle ruh sağlığı çalışanlarının evlerine yaptıkları ziyaretlerden dolayı mutlu olduklarını ve kendilerini yargılamadan dinleyen bu çalışanlarla iletişim kurmanın önemli bir destek olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Özellikle merkeze biraz uzakta ikamet eden kadınlar, merkeze gelip gitmekte sorun yaşadıkları için en çok ev ziyaretlerinden yararlandıklarını söylemişlerdir. Bireysel görüşmelerde ise özellikle duygularını, yaşadıklarını anlatabilmenin; dinlenilmiş ve acılarının paylaşılmış olmasının kendilerine en iyi gelen şey olduğunu ifade etmişlerdir. Bazı psikologların daha fazla Teknik kullandığını ancak tekniğin değil konuşabilmenin kendilerine iyi geldiğini söyleyen kadınlar olmuştur.

Merkezde çalışan ruh sağlığı çalışanları başka bölgelerden gelmekte ve genelde bir hafta süreyle çalışmalarını tamamlayıp dönmektedirler. Bazı kadınlar, haftalık gittikleri görüşmelerde çalışanların değişmesi dolayısıyla aynı şeyleri tekrar anlatmak zorunda kaldıkları için iyi hissetmediklerini, bu değişimlerin paylaşım süreçlerini sekteye uğrattığını ifade etmişlerdir. Uzakta yaşayan kadınlar merkeze ulaşmakta zorlandıkları için, bu çalışmalar dahilinde transfer hizmetlerinin de sağlanmasının önemli olduğunu söylemiştir. Çocuklar için düzenlenen etkinliklerin de merkezde kaldığı ve onlar için de daha çok seçenek ve transfer imkanı sağlanmasının önemli olduğunu vurgulamışlardır. Çocukların iyilik hali kadınları etkileyen önemli bir faktör olduğu için çocuklarla çalışacak ruh sağlığı çalışanlarının da daha fazla dahil edileceği bir system kurulması önemli görülmektedir.

TARTIŞMA

Olayı nasıl aldıkları yorumlandığında kadınların çoğunlukla eşlerinin kaybının ani ve beklenmedik olduğunu vurguladıkları görülmüştür. Facia günü her günkü gibi eşlerini işe gönderdikten sonra gündelik işlerini yaparken olay haberini almış ve birçoğu eşlerinin ölümünü öğreninceye kadar birkaç gün hastane önünde haber almayı beklemiştir. Kadınlar eşlerinin ölümden önce madendeki kötü koşulları bildikleri için olayın engellenmediğini ve göz göre göre ölüme gittikleri kanısındadır. Madendeki koşulları biliyor olmak eşlerinin nasıl öldüklerine dair vahşi ve cani detayları gözlerinde canlandırmalarına da neden olmuştur. Bazıları eşlerinin ölü bedenlerinin morglarda değil de kavunların tutulduğu soğuk hava depolarında tutulmasını saygısızlık olarak algılamış, bazıları ise eşlerinin ölüm şeklinden dolayı bedenlerindeki yara ve karbon izlerini görerek daha çok acı çekmiştir. Bazı kadınlar ise bedenlerindeki bozulmalar dolayısıyla eşlerinin bedenlerini hiç görememiştir. Tüm bunlar literatürde vurgulanan ölüm şeklinin yas süreçlerini nasıl etkilediğine dair çalışmalara paralel sonuçlar doğurmuştur. Travmatik ve insan eliyle gerçekleşen ölümler daha çok acı ve öfkeye neden olduğu bilinmektedir (Rynearson, 2012; Raphael & Martinek, 2004). Kadınların hemen hepsi bu detaylardan dolayı daha çok acı çektiklerini ve eşlerinin ölüm şeklinden dolayı çok öfkeli olduklarını söylemişlerdir.

Travmatik kayıplardan sonra anlamlandırma süreçleri de etkilenmektedir (Neiyemeyer, et al., 2002). Bu çalışma kapsamında kadınların en çok etkilendikleri değişken olayın arkasından başlayan politik tartışmalardır. Dönemin başbakanın "bu kazalar işin fıtratında var" söylemi üzerine başlayan, facianın kader mi yoksa cinayet mi olduğu tartışması kadınların söylemlerinde de yer almaktadır. Kadınların çoğunluğu faciayı ve eşlerinin ölümünün asla kaderle açıklanamayacağı ve cinayet olduğunu vurgulamıştır. Olaya dair algılarında bahsi geçen tüm değişkenler eşlerinin önlenebilecek olan ancak işverenin umursamazlığı ve para kazanma hırsı yüzünden engellemediği fikri, eşlerinin ölümlerinin cinayet olduğu fikrini pekiştirmiştir. Birkaç kadın ise

ölümü ancak Allah'ın takdiri olarak yorumlayabileceklerini ve eşlerinin kaderinde bu şekilde ölmek olduğunu söylemiştir. Anlamlandırmadaki bu farklar kadınların adalet arayışlarını mahkemelere protestolara katılımlarını da etkilediği gözlemlenmiştir. Aynı zamanda olayı cinayet olarak yorumlamak kadınların daha çok acı çekmesine ve sorumlulara karşı daha çok öfke ifade etmelerine neden olmaktadır. Bu da insan eliyle yaratılan ölümlerden sonra yaşanan duygudurum farklılıklarına önemli bir örnek olarak düşünülebilir (Norris et. al., 2002). Bütün kadınların ortaklaştığı bir nokta eşlerinin şehit olarak görülmesine katılmalarıdır. İslam inancına göre şehitlik ölen kişinin cennete gideceği ve yakınlarının da önemli insanlar olduğuna dair önemli çıkarımlar taşımaktadır (Cook, 2007). Aynı zamanda şehitlik tanımı devlet tarafımdan verilmekte ve şehit yakınlarına belirli ekonomik avantajları da beraberinde getirmektedir. Eşlerinin öldürüldüğünü düşünen kadınların da şehitlik mertebesini kabul etmesinde hem şehit yakını olarak daha değerli görülmelerinin hem de maddi avantajlarının olması olduğu düşünülmektedir. Değirmencioğlu'na (2014) göre şehitlik kavramı devletin politik olarak ölümleri aklamak ve ölümü yakınlarına kabul ettirmek adına kullandığı bir kavramdır. Soma maden işçilerine bu tanımlamanın yapılması bu önermeyi doğrular niteliktedir ancak kadınların bu tanımı kabul etmelerine rağmen adalet arayışından vazgeçmemeleri ise bu önermeye tezatlık içermektedir.

Katılımcıların yaşadıkları yas deneyimlerinin literatürde kayıp yaşayanların duygusal, fiziksel ve bilişsel sonuçları itibariyle benzerlik taşıdığı görülmektedir (Bonanno and Kelter, 1997; Bonanno et al.,1999; Kaltman & Bonanno, 2003). Kadınların yoğunluklu olarak acı, üzüntü, mutsuzluk ve öfke duygularından bahsettikleri ve bu duygulara genellikle tükenmişlik ve yalnızlık hislerinin eşlik ettiği görülmüştür. Yoğun tükenmişlik ve yorgunluk yaşayan birkaç katılımcıda ciddi vitamin eksiklikleri görülmüştür. Aynı zamanda özellikle yaşı biraz daha büyük olan kadınlarda kardiyovasküler ve tansiyon sorunları görülmekle birlikte birçok kadın jinekolojik problemler de yaşadığından bahsetmiştir. Bu sağlık sorunları kayıp yaşayan insanların deneyimlerine benzerlik göstermektedir (Bonnano & Kaltman, 2001).

Eş kaybı dul kalan kadınlar için genellikle ekonomik kayıplarla sonuçlanan bir durumdur (Elwert & Chirstakis, 2006; Gedik, 2018). Soma maden faciası sonrasında ise tam tersi bir durum gelişmiştir. Facia sonrasında Türkiye çapında yürütülen bir kampanyayla ciddi miktarda bir para toplanmış ve bu para ölen madencilerin evli ise eşlerine bekar ise anne-babalarına verilmiştir. Öncesinde maden işçisi ailesi olarak sadece madenden gelen maaşla geçinen dar gelirli işçi sınıfına mensup kadınlar olarak yaşamlarını sürdürürken verilen bu parayla (yaklaşık 156 bin lira) kadınların yaşan koşullarında iyileşmeler olmuştur. Aynı zamanda her bir aileye birer ev yapılmış, her aileden de bir kişiye devlet memuru olarak çalışma hakkı verilmiştir. Ekonomik olarak dezavantajlı olmaktan kurtulan kadınlar, başka birçok zorlukla karşı karşıya da kalmışlardır. Bunların başında eşlerinin aileleriyle olan gerginlikler gelmiştir. Eşlerini kaybeden kadınların ekonomik durumu iyileşirken bir madenci kenti olan Soma'da eski arkadaşları, çevreleri, diğer maden işçisi aileleri ve eşlerinin aileleri düşük gelirli olarak yaşamaya devam etmiştir. Bazı kadınlar eşlerinin ailelerinin paraları kendilerine almaya çalıştıklarından, kendilerini eşlerinin arkasından üzülmediklerine dair suçladıklarında bahsetmiştir. Kadınların bir kısmının eşlerinin aileleriyle ilişkisi bu nedenle kopmuş ya da kopma noktasına gelmiştir. Aynı şey bazı eski arkadaş çevreleri için de geçerlidir; maddi durumlarının iyileşmesi çevreleri tarafından çok fazla eleştiri almalarına neden olmuştur. Kadınların bazıları bu yüzden arkadaşlarından uzaklaştıklarını ve yalnızlaştıklarını söylemiştir. Daha az sayıda da olsa eşlerinin aileleriyle ve çevrelerindeki ilişkilerin daha iyiye gittiğini söyleyen kadınlar da olmuştur. Özellikle eşin ailesiyle ilişkilerin güçlenmesi ve iyiye gitmesi kadınların yas sürecini daha iyi geçirmelerini sağlamaktadır. Bozulan ilişkiler ise kendilerini daha stresli, öfkeli ve zaman zaman suçlu hissetmelerine neden olmaktadır. Eşlerinin kaybından sonra acıya katlanabilmek, zorlukların üstesinden gelmek ve daha önce yapmadıkları pek çok şeyi öğrenmek ve yapabilmek -araba ve bilgisayar kullanmak gibi- kadınların kendilerine olan güvenini arttırmış bu da değişen hayat koşullarıyla baş etme konusunda daha yeterli hissetmelerine neden olmuştur.

Eşini kaybeden bir kadın olmak evde ve hayatta kendilerini daha yalnız hissetmelerine, hayatlarına romantik ve cinsel partnerin de yokluğunda devam etmelerine neden olmuştur. Sıklıkla vurguladıkları bu yalnızlık hissi literatüre benzerlik göstermektedir (Aslan et al., 2020; Parkes & Prigerson, 2010). Kadınların yas deneyimini belirleyen en önemli etkenler bulundukları toplumda kendilerine atfedilen toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri ve kültürel normlardır (Harris, 2010; Rosenblatt & Nykosi, 2007). Benzer şekilde çalışmaya katılan kadınlar Türkiye'ye ve maden faciasına özgü değişkenler dolayısıyla çeşitli baskılara maruz kalmış ve yas deneyimlerinde bu baskının etkisini yoğunluklu olarak yaşamışlardır. Kadınların en çok duydukları şey eşlerinin kaybından sonra parayı alınca yas tutmayı bıraktıkları ve eşlerini unuttuklarıdır. Bu yüzden çalışmadaki hemen her kadın ne kadar üzüldükleri ve acı çektiklerini göstermek zorunda hissettiğini söylemiştir. Aynı zamanda kendilerini daha iyi hissedebilecekleri pek çok aktiviteye katılmaktan ve insanlarla eğlenebilecekleri ortamlara girmekten imtina etmektedirler. Gedik (2018) eşini kaybetmiş veya boşanmış kadınlarla yaptığı bir çalışmada, Türkiye'de dul kadınların maruz kaldıkları baskıdan ve kadınların bu baskıyla nasıl baş ettiğinden bahsetmiştir. Bu çalışmanın sonuçlarıyla tamamen benzerlik göstermektedir; kadınlar eşleri hayattaymış gibi yaşamaya çalışmakta, kendi davranışlarını kısıtlayarak oto sansür yöntemini uygulamakta ve kendini yargılayabilecek insanlardan tamamen uzak durmaya çalışmaktadırlar. Tüm bunlar yas sürecinde kendilerine iyi gelebilecek durumlardan zaman zaman uzak kalmalarına ve kendilerini izole etmelerine neden olarak yas süreçlerini olumsuz etkilemekledir. Bir başka önemli değişimse kadınların kendi kimliklerine dair yaşadıkları değişimdir; bazen kendilerini eskisi gibi hissetmediklerini kendilerini dul kadın olarak daha ciddi anlamda muhafaza etmeleri gerektiğini düşünmektedirler. Kimlik algısındaki bu değişim Van den Hoonaard'ın (1997) bahsettiği kimlik algısındaki değişimlere paralellik göstermektedir. Bir diğer değişimse yalnız anneler olarak eskiden eşleriyle paylaştıkları sorumlulukları artık tamamen kendileri yüklenmek zorunda olduğu için çocuklara karşı hem anne hem baba olma zorunluluğudur. Hemen hemen bütün kadınlar çocukların özellikle eğitimleriyle ilgili kararları ve desteği temel olarak eşlerinin verdiğini söylemiştir. Ancak artık tüm bu sorumluluk her ne

kadar zaman zaman ailelerinden destek alıyor da olsalar tamamen kendilerine aittir. Çocuklara yeterli gelip gelmeyeceklerini sürekli sorgulayan kadınlar en çok gelecekte onların ihtiyaçlarını karşılayamayabileceklerine dair endişe duymaktadırlar. Babanın yokluğunda uygun iş veya eş konusunda yönlendirici olmak ve gerektiğinde çocukları disipline etmek konusunda yeterliliklerini sürekli sorgulamaktadırlar. Sadece çocuklarla ilgili değil evle ilgili tüm iş ve sorumlulukların da kendilerine kaldığını vurgulayan kadınlar eskiden "erkek işi" olarak gördükleri tamir, pazar alışverişi, fatura ödeme gibi işleri de artık kendileri yapmaktadırlar. Her ne kadar artan sorumluluklar zaman zaman kendilerini zorlasa da yeni öğrendikleri bazı işleri yapabilmenin de iyi hissettirdiğini söyleyen kadınlar olmuştur.

Kadınların zorluklarla nasıl baş ettikleri sorulduğunda genellikle öncelikli verdikleri cevap çocukları için baş ettikleri olmuştur. Çocukların bakımı ile ilgilenmek hem bir hayat amacı sağlamakta hem de somut işlerle ilgilenmek zihinlerini başka işlerle meşgul etmek bakımından faydalı olmaktadır. Her ne kadar çocukların sorumlulukları ve onlara dair duydukları endişeler zaman zaman yıpratıcı olsa da onlara duydukları sevgi hayata devam etmek konusunda umut verici olmaktadır (Bradley, 2007). Çocukları aynı zamanda rahatça vakit geçirmek ve eğlenmek konusunda kısıt hissetmedikleri insanlar oldukları için de birlikte olumlu deneyimler yaşamaktadırlar. Bir diğer destek ise sosyal ilişkilerden gelmektedir (Breen & O'Connor, 2011). Aileleri genellikle çocuk bakımı ve evle ilgili sorumluluklarla ilgili destek sağlamaktadır, kadın arkadaşlar ise çoğunlukla kendilerini anlaşılmış hissettikleri, benzer deneyimler yaşadıkları için rahat bir şekilde paylaşımda bulunabildikleri ve birlikte çeşitli aktivitelere katılarak kendilerini geliştirmelerini sağlayan ilişkiler sağlamaktadır. Dini baş etme yöntemleri ise literatüre paralel şekilde yoğunluklu olarak görülmektedir (Fry, 2001; Clarke et al., 2003). Kadınların hemen hepsi zor zamanlarında Kuran okuduklarını, dua ettiklerini söylemişlerdir. *"Allah dayanma gücü veriyor"* kadınların sıklıkla kullandıkları cümlelerden biridir. Olayın cinayet olduğunu düşünen ve vurgulayan kadınların bir kısmı ise protestolara katılmanın, mahkemede adalet aramanın da bir baş etme yöntemi olduğunu söylemişlerdir.

Kadınların bir kısmı ise en çok kendilerine güvendiklerini ve kendilerine güvenmenin önemli bir baş etme mekanizması olduğunu söylemiştir. Her durumda kadınların baş etme kapasitelerinin zaman içinde arttığını söylemek mümkündür.

Kayıptan önceki yaşamları sorulduğunda kadınların çoğu Soma bölgesinde yaşanan sosyo-ekonomik değişimden bahsetmiştir. Daha önce tarım özellikle tütün işiyle ve hayvancılıkla uğraşılan bölgede madenlerin özelleşmesine paralel olarak artan maden işçisi istihdamının tütüne kota koyulması ve oradan gelen gelirin düşmesi sonucunda köylülerin maden işçilerine dönüşmesiyle sağlandığı düşünülmektedir (Bütün, 2016; Çelik, 2017). Çalışmaya katılan kadınların yarısı da benzer şekilde daha önce köyde yaşadıkları ancak söz konusu değişimden sonra köyde gelirlerinin yeterli gelmemesi sonucunda Soma merkeze taşınmak durumunda kaldıklarını belirtmiştir. Eşlerinin madene girmekte istekli olmadığını kendilerinin de madendeki olumsuz koşulları bildikleri için öncelikle buna taraftar olmadıklarını vurgulayan kadınlar Soma merkezde düzenli aylık gelir alabilecekleri ve sağlık sigortasının da karşılandığı başka bir iş bulamadıkları için eşlerinin maden işçisi olarak çalışmak zorunda kaldığını belirtmişlerdir.

Soma maden faciasından hemen sonra sorumluların yargılandığı mahkeme süreci başlamıştır. Genellikle insan eliyle gerçekleştirilen ölümlerden sonra görülen bu süreçte Parkes ve Prigerson (2010), kayıp yaşayan kişilerin suçlularla karşı karşıya kalmaları dolayısıyla ve olası adaletsiz sonuçların yaratacağı olumsuz duygulanımdan bahsetmişlerdir. Benzer şekilde mahkemelere katılmanın ek olarak duygusal bir yük getirdiğini söyleyen kadınlar da vardır. Orada suçluları görmek ve onların doğru olmayan ifadelerini duymanın kendilerini daha çok öfkelendirdiğini ve mahkeme sonrasında acılarının tazelendiğini ifade edenler olmuştur. Bazı kadınlar ise orada bulunmanın eşlerinin davalarına sahip çıkmak anlamına geldiğini ve suçluları görmenin onlara mahkeme salonundan atılmak pahasına yalancı ve katil olduklarını haykırmanın öfkelerini dindirmek açısından iyi geldiğini söylemiştir. Mahkemelere Soma dışından katılan insanları görmenin

ve desteklendiklerini bilmenin de kendilerine iyi geldiğini vurgulayanlar olmuştur. Benzer bir durum facia sonrasında belirli aralıklarla devam eden protestolar için de geçerlidir. Bazı kadınlar, protestoların eşlerinin hakkını aramak ve unutulmadıklarını görmek adına kendilerine iyi geldiğini söylerken bazıları ise anlamlı bulmadıklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Mahkemeler yasal görüldüğü için hemen her kadın az ya da çok katılım göstermektedir ancak bazı kadınlar protestoların yasal olmadığını düşünmekte ve yapılmasına olumlu bakmamaktadır. Özellikle daha muhafazakar kadınlar sokakta başka insanlarla birlikte olmak istemedikleri için de protestolara katılmak istemediklerini söylemişlerdir.

Facia sonrasında kurulan sosyal hizmet merkezinde dönüşümlü olarak çalışan sosyal hizmet uzmanları, psikologlar ve psikiyatristler bulunmuştur (Doymaz-Aydın & Yıldırım, 2020). İlk olarak ev ziyaretleriyle başlayan psikososyal destek hizmetleri daha sonra merkezde bireysel görüşmeler şeklinde devam etmiştir. Kadınların hemen hemen hepsi kendilerine en faydalı gelen hizmetin sosyal çalışmacı ve psikologlar tarafından yapılan ev ziyaretleri olduğunu vurgulamışlardır. Soma'daki insanlar tarafından çokça eleştirildikleri için evlerine gelen bu kişilerin yargısızca kendilerini dinlemelerinin iyi geldiğini söylemişlerdir. Bir yandan ev ziyaretleri kadınlarına artan iş yükü ve ulaşım sorunları düşünüldüğünde merkezde verilen hizmetlerin yanında ulaşımı daha zahmetsiz olan bir yöntem olarak görülmüştür. Zaten merkeze uzak ya da köylerde yaşayan kadınlar isteseler de merkezdeki bireysel görüşmelere gitmekte zaman zaman zorlandıklarını vurgulamışladır. En önemli önerileri ise böyle merkezlere ulaşım için servis düzenlemelerinin yapılmasıdır. Merkezde gönüllük esasına dayalı çalışıldığı için ruh sağlığı çalışanları çoğunlukla birer haftalık aralıklarla çalışabilmişlerdir, bu durumun kendilerini zorladığını belirten kadınlar olmuştur. Çalışılan kişinin değişmesi bazen olayı ve yaşadıklarını tekrar anlatmayı gerektirmekte bu da duygusal olarak zorlayıcı olabilmektedir. Kadınların psikososyal servislerin geliştirilmesine yönelik en önemli önerilerinden biri çocuk ve ergenlere verilen ruh sağlığı desteğinin arttırılması olmuştur.

Çalışmanın Sınırlılıkları ve Güçlü Yanları

Bu çalışmanın güçlü yanlarından biri yorumlayıcı fenomenolojik analiz dolayısıyla Türkiye'nin en çok ölümle sonuçlanan maden faciasından etkilenen kadınların öznel deneyimlerinin çalışılmasıdır. Bu analiz çerçevesinde kadınların yas deneyimlerine odaklanılmış olmasına ek olarak, Türkiye'ye ve bölgeye özgü kültürel, sınıfsal ve politik ortam göz önüne alarak deneyimlerin yorumlanmasıdır. Çalışmada adaletsizlik hissinin deneyimler üzerine etkisi ve psikososyal çalışmaların etkisi de göz önünde bulundurulmuş, psikososyal ve klinik çalışmalara yönelik önemli çıkarımlar yapılmıştır. Başka bir güçlü yön ise yorumlayıcı fenomenolojik analiz için pek çok çalışmaya göre geniş ve homojen bir örneklem kullanılmasıdır. Bu çalışmanın spesifik bir facia çerçevesinde yürütülmüş olması hem güçlü hem de çalışmanın sonuçları itibariyle kısıtlılıklar yaratan bir tarafındır. Türkiye'nin başka bir bölgesinde yapılacak çalışmalarda kültürel ve dini öğeler değişebileceği için farklı sonuçlara da ulaşılabilir. Genel olarak nitel çalışmaların kısıtlılığı olan genellenebilirlik güçlüğünü bu çalışma da taşımaktadır.

Gelecek Çalışmalar

Bu çalışma Soma maden faciasının üzerinden yaklaşık bir yıl geçtikten sonra başlamış ve bir yıl içinde tamamlanmıştır. Kaybın farklı zamanlarında farklı deneyimler ön plana çıkabileceğinden aynı bölgede benzer bir çalışma yapılması farklı deneyimleri gün ışığına çıkarabilir. Bir yas araştırması olarak düşünüldüğünde farklı kültür ve sosyoekonomik düzeyden insanlarla benzer çalışmalar yapılabilir. Bu çalışmada tanısal özellikler üzerinde durulmamıştır, yas deneyimini diğer psikolojik güçlüklerden ayıracak tanısal çalışmaların yapılması literatürü zenginleşmesinde katkıda bulunacaktır. Son olarak bu çalışmada kayıp sonrasında farklı yerlere taşınan kadınların deneyimlerine yer verilememiştir, yer değişikliği yaşayan kadınların hayatlarındaki değişimler ve yas süreçlerine etkisi de başka çalışmaların konusu olabilir.

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