

The effects of social change on relationships between older mothers and daughters in Turkey: a qualitative study

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses several changes in mother-daughter relationships in Turkey and their association with changing social conditions. It is based on in-depth interviews with 30 older mothers and their adult daughters. As a country experiencing rapid urbanisation, westernisation, military coups and economic crises, Turkey provides an increasingly changing setting for the investigation of inter-cohort changes in inter-generational relationships. Most of the mothers in the study were born during the 1930s, soon after the foundation of the Turkish Republic. They grew up during an era of material scarcity, restrictive social norms and few opportunities for advancement, and lived in a relatively homogeneous and stable social context. Most of the daughters were born during the 1950s; they grew up at a time of rapid social change and political turmoil but relative material abundance, and were exposed to consumerism and individualistic values that emphasised personal achievement and independence. The ideals and opportunities of the mothers' youth conflicted with those presented to their children, and the goals of and approaches to parenting became unstable and a source of anxiety. The daughters were caught between their parents' and their children's demands, which produced conflicts between their ideals and reality, and many experienced internal and inter-personal conflicts. Both mothers and daughters attributed differences in their personalities and parenting styles to the changing times.

KEY WORDS – mothers, daughters, old age, lifecourse, social change.

Introduction

This paper examines changes across two generations in the mother-daughter relationship in a sample of urban families in Turkey, and the association of the changes with macro-social transformations. The mother-daughter relationship is arguably the closest and most important parent-child relationship, particularly with reference to inter-generational

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interactions, transmissions and inter-personal support throughout the lifecourse (Baltes 1994). The kin-keeping function of women, the centrality of the maternal role in women's identity, and the shared sense of femininity probably makes the mother-daughter relationship more stable and immune to changing life conditions than most other close relationships (Fingerman 2001; Nydegger 1991; Rossi and Rossi 1990). The paper is based on in-depth interviews with 30 adult-daughter, older-mother pairs that were conducted as part of an extensive qualitative investigation.

Research by Elder and his associates has demonstrated the consequences of historical events such as wars and economic crises for the internal dynamics of families and for the individuals that experience these events at different ages (Elder and Caspi 1988; Elder and Hareven 1993; Elder and Johnson 2002). The effects of industrialisation, urbanisation, consumerism, 'westernisation' and spreading individualistic values on family dynamics have also been discussed (Ambert 1994; Goode 1971). Common themes of these studies have been demonstrations of relationships between macro- and micro-social forms, and of interacting adjustments between intra-familial roles and changing societal norms and requirements (Bronfenbrenner 1988).

In western research on the effects of life course changes on the mother-daughter relationship, the closest precursor to the present study was Fischer's (1991) investigation, during the early 1980s, of 40 adult daughters who were born between 1948 and 1958 and their mothers. It found that most mothers dreamt of pursuing careers but only a few accomplished the goal, and that two-thirds reported unfulfilled career dreams. The mothers who did pursue careers nonetheless still favoured the traditional role of motherhood, a principle that places mothering at the centre of a woman's life. Many of the mothers and daughters noted that their daughters' lives were both economically and personally better than their own. Some mothers described their daughters as having a freer, more independent, and more open relationship with their husbands. Many of the daughters, on the other hand, admitted to conflicts between the two ideals of being a 'traditional mother' and a 'modern woman'.

Other studies of the values and attitudes of older mothers and their adult children have established cohort differences. From a study of older women's accounts of their family problems and conflict in the United States, Fingerman (2001) noted that the cohort grew up in a relatively closed society and learnt to keep their feelings and thoughts to themselves, whereas younger adults grew up during a period of open communication and personal independence. Consequently, the older generation seemed more reluctant to share their family problems with others or to engage in overt conflict to resolve family issues. A cross-cultural study of daughters'

perspectives on mother-adult daughter relationships among European, Mexican-American and (non-American) Indian families in the United States revealed that the Indian mother-daughter relationships had higher levels of connectedness, closeness, dependency and trust in hierarchy than the European relationships (Rastogi and Wampler 1999). These findings were consistent with general differences between individualist and collectivist cultures (Kağıtçıbaşı 1998).¹

The cultural and historical contexts

Following Hofstede's (1980) dimensions of cultural values, Turkey has been described as a 'vertical-collectivist' culture that has undergone rapid change through massive exposure to western influences since the early 1950s (Hortaçsu, Baştuğ and Muhammedberdiev 2001; Kağıtçıbaşı 1996; Kongar 1998). Although urbanisation and exposure to western influence have led to a rise in individualistic values in Turkey, sex-related honour and family integrity are still predominant values (Delaney 1991; Atalay *et al.* 1992). 'Sex-related honour' is the belief that sexually immodest behaviour or dress by women disgraces the family and requires rectification by punishment (sometimes even death) of the perpetrators. 'Family integrity' is the value that ascribes importance to the unity of the family and adherence to the norms of co-operation and obedience among its members. Consistent with the value of family integrity, the norm of reciprocal filial piety, defined as the maintenance of harmonious relationships with parents and the expression of affection and gratitude, is a widespread norm and reality in Turkey (Yeh and Bedford 2004).

In these social conditions, most individuals value and comply with the wishes and expectations of family members, because such behaviour is consistent with their internalised norms and they do not wish to distance themselves emotionally from their families (Chirkov *et al.* 2003). Although the family's authoritarian control over individuals has declined in Turkey, the nurturing, protective and supportive roles and authority of parents and elders continues to be a strong influence (Fişek 2002). Women in these families occupy a focal role and manage relations between their husbands and their children as well as between their nuclear families and the two families of origin (Hortaçsu 1999). In addition, they guard the family's honour by monitoring their own and their daughter's manner of dress and relationships with the opposite sex.

As in many countries undergoing radical social and economic changes, in Turkey the family continues to fulfil many economic, instrumental and emotional functions. Although the co-residence of married couples with the families of origin is now rare, frequent contacts and inter-generational

support between families of origin and nuclear households are the norm. Such support often involves pooling resources for economic ventures and for home ownership (Kalaycıoğlu and Rittesberger 2000). In addition to the country's exposure to westernisation, several political and social events during the past century have had a profound influence on family structures and personal value systems. A brief review of the historical events and the different cultural milieus of mothers and daughters involved in the present study will be helpful.

The mothers of the present study were mostly born during the 1930s soon after the foundation of the Republic of Turkey. The new republic aimed to industrialise and westernise Turkey and passed many social reforms, several of which aimed for secularisation and the empowerment of women, *e.g.* the education and career orientation of women were encouraged. Nonetheless, women were expected to be good mothers and wives as well as being enabled to follow careers (Durakbaşa 1998). Although encouraged by official republican ideology, working mothers remained rare and housework continued to dominate their lives, partly because of the lack of appliances and ready-made foods (Kongar 1998). Consequently, daughters were expected to undertake household duties.

During the 1930s economic depression and the Second World War, the Turkish economy was relatively closed to western goods and there was a scarcity of basic necessities, so thrift and recycling were necessary and commended. At that time, most families lived in neighbourhoods where most people knew each other and felt responsible for protecting the neighbourhood's honour (meaning the chastity and reputation of women).² During those times, dating between young men and women was non-normative and secret, marriages were mostly arranged, spousal relations were role-based, families were traditional and patriarchal, and mothers were often 'go-betweens' who transmitted communications between strict fathers and their children (Hortaçsu 2000).

Most of the daughters in the present study were born during the 1950s and became teenagers during the 1970s. Population growth was encouraged in the early years of the Republic and reached a peak during the 1950s (Kongar 1998). Migration from rural to urban centres was at very high levels after the 1950s, and many of the poorer migrants lived in shanty towns on the peripheries of the cities. In addition, apartments replaced family houses in the towns and cities. The manufacture in Turkey of cars and rising car ownership promoted suburbanisation, traffic congestion and a high rate of traffic accidents (Bilgin 1998; Sey 1998). Old neighbourhoods were redeveloped and the inhabitants dispersed; consequently there was less social network surveillance over women's honour. Norms concerning premarital romance were somewhat relaxed, and 'dating'

became semi-acceptable, although concern with female chastity remained strong during the daughters' youth.

Restrictions on foreign goods were relaxed after the 1950s, bringing relative abundance. Higher education became more widely available and desirable for most urban women and appeared to be the pathway towards a better life and higher social status. Attitudes towards and expectations of children changed, encouraging their education and reducing their expected contribution to household duties (Kağıtçıbaşı 1998). Families became smaller and somewhat more egalitarian and, helped by the increasing availability of household appliances and their longer schooling, children's contributions to housework reduced. Turkey experienced considerable political and social turmoil after the 1950s. Military coups and edicts took place in 1960, 1972 and 1980, interrupting the democratic process several times. Student uprisings began in 1968, as in many European countries, and resulted in the polarisation of rightist-nationalist, leftist and religious groups. Armed conflict and assassinations followed, and political unrest continued into the 1990s.

The daughters formed their families during the late-1970s and 1980s, by which time the normative marriage was couple-initiated rather than arranged by the family. The children of the daughters grew up in an era of increased western influence and consumerism but also economic instability. Higher education became viewed widely as a necessary if not sufficient condition for a good life, but it continued to be relatively expensive and difficult to obtain. Smaller families, more and more household appliances, and the valuation of children encouraged parental spending on children. On the other hand, the rise of individualism reduced parents' expectations of being supported and cared for in their old age by their children.

In short, the mothers in the present study grew up during an era of scarcity, restrictive norms, external controls, and few opportunities and choices. The norms that regulated their marriages were traditional and role-based, but they lived in a relatively homogeneous social framework with little ambiguity and uncertainty; thus, they lived under internal and external constraints. Social change during their youth meant hope and the acceptance of Republican ideals and was welcomed, but few achieved the republican vision. After growing up in a relatively secure and predictable environment, when their children reached their teens and early twenties, the mothers had to cope with pervasive social change and unrest.

The daughters, on the other hand, grew up during times of rapid change and turmoil but experienced relative abundance. They had less authoritarian parents and more educational opportunities than their mothers had experienced. They were exposed to consumerism and individualistic

values, which emphasised personal achievement, individual goals, and independence from primary groups (Esmer 1999; Kongar 1998). They married and had children during a period of accelerated change and uncertainty. In summary, the mothers' times were characterised by scarcity, restrictions and relative predictability, whereas the daughters' times were marked by relative abundance and freedom, opportunities, risks and uncertainty. The research has attempted to deepen our understanding of the relationships between these changing social conditions during the mothers' and the daughters' formative years and several personal outcomes, including women's self-perceptions and identities, and their approaches to marriage, motherhood and their future lives.

Research design and methods

Sampling criteria and recruitment

The mother-daughter dyads of interest for this study were defined as those in which the adult daughters were middle-aged and either married with children or settled in their career and life plans. Other inclusion or selection criteria were that they lived in close geographical proximity (in the same residential neighbourhood) as their mothers and had frequent contacts (*i.e.* face-to-face contacts on average at least once every two weeks and more frequent telephone contacts). It was believed important to eliminate the influence of geographical proximity on the members' orientations towards their relationship. In order to examine the perceptions of both parties when the mothers were still healthy and active participants in the relationship, only dyads with healthy mothers were selected.

The daughters and mothers were recruited through word-of-mouth and personal contacts. Once one member of the dyad volunteered to participate, they were asked to contact the mother or daughter. Both parties were asked to participate in a study of mother-daughter relationships that focused on changes and continuity over time in their mutual support. All the included daughters were identified by the mother as the child with whom the ageing mother had most contact.

The interviews

The research questions addressed during the interviews were informed by the research literature on relationships between adult children and older parents. The interviews collected basic socio-demographic information; the history of the mother-daughter relationship (changes in the relationship through childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, the daughter's

marriage and parenting, and the mother's widowhood); and self-expressed comparisons of the self and the other party's parenting styles and filial behaviour. The similarities and differences in the personalities of mother-daughter dyads were investigated from both the mothers' and the daughters' perspectives. Probes were used when necessary to clarify or elaborate details, and representative anecdotes were collected. Attempts were made to persuade both the mothers and the daughters to reflect on the reasons for their own and each other's behaviour and on their differences. Possible causes of intra- or inter-personal conflict resulting from changing times were probed. The adult daughters and mothers were asked the same basic questions but they were modified to take each other's perspective into consideration. Separate interviews were conducted with the mothers and daughters, each of which lasted approximately one hour. The interviews were conducted in the subjects' homes or at the daughters' workplaces.³ There was no particular order of the two interviews; the mothers or daughters were interviewed according to their time availability. Participants were encouraged to answer questions as extensively as they could.

Results and discussion

The characteristics of the mothers and daughters

Thirty mother-daughter pairs resident in two major cities, Ankara and Istanbul, participated in the study. The average age of the mothers was 70.1 years and the average age of the adult daughters was 46.3 years.⁴ The majority (23) of the daughters were married and all but one of these lived with their husband and children; six were single and one was widowed. On average the married women had 1.5 children (standard deviation (s.d.) = 0.5); two had no children, eight had one child and 14 had two children. The majority (18) had university degrees and either worked or were retired, and all but three were in couple-initiated marriages. Turning to their mothers, the majority (18) were widows and on average they had 2.7 children (s.d. = 1.2), including 1.6 (s.d. = 0.9) daughters. The majority (17) of the mothers had completed primary school education and 22 had never worked. Most (22) lived in a different house from the adult daughter who participated in the study. One-half of the mothers had lived in small towns or villages during their childhood and youth, and almost all had had arranged marriages.

Coding categories based on responses to the questions about similarities and differences, conflict issues, and references to social milieu were created consistent with the lifecourse viewpoint. The definitions and contents of the categories were examined by the second author and consensus was

achieved. Common themes appearing under several categories were detected and constituted the framework for organising the results. The common themes were ‘scarcity versus abundance’ and ‘restrictions versus opportunities’.

Scarcity versus extravagance

A pervasive aspect of the environmental restrictions during the mothers’ childhood and young adult years was the economic deprivation following the Second World War. The mothers were thrifty and cautious spenders and had low consumerist aspirations. The social milieu of the mothers supported these norms and neither encouraged nor provided examples of a high standard of living. In short, thriftiness was a virtue and extravagance disapproved; in other words, material restrictions were internalised. The mothers retained their thrifty habits even when what they considered as luxury was no longer considered at all extravagant, and they generally saw consumerism as ‘an obsession’. Their daughters’ grew up in an era of relative economic recovery and consumerism and were more lavish with their money. This difference in spending habits sometimes led to arguments, and both mothers and daughters made comparative and critical references to the others’ spending habits:

Compared to the young generation of today, we were always very careful with our spending. ... We only cared about being dressed tidy and clean. We were not obsessed with brand names like today’s young generation (Married mother 2 (MM2)).

I tell her to take a taxi, but no, she gets on a bus or minibus. In fact, all the people of her age are like that. We are more used to comfort; they are not like that (Married daughter 30 (MD 30)).

Denial of opportunity versus pressure for achievement

The mothers grew up in an era of repressive norms, married early and could not enter higher education. Although they wished to continue their education, the best they could do was to attend colleges that specialised in domestic education, child-care or sewing and embroidery. The mothers reported that, during their childhood and youth, it was not the custom to send daughters to school, and some still resented that fact; they regretted their own ignorance, and felt inadequate and repressed:

In our days, girls didn’t go to school, but now everybody goes to school. We were the unfortunate ones (Widowed mother 19 (WM 19)).

I wanted to go to school so much but our elders didn’t allow us to go to school. Our grandmother ... said, ‘So what? A man cannot feed a woman?’ (MM20)

Some mothers tried to fulfil their thwarted desires through their daughters. They encouraged and some pressured their daughters to get an education and take up a career. In a way they wanted their daughters to be the ideal, emancipated, educated, strong, agentic modern woman idealised by republican ideology as the symbol of modern Turkey but denied to themselves (Durakbaşı 1998). Some pressured too much and later realised that such pressure might have been as oppressive as that they had received. WM13 said, 'I [pressured my daughter] a little to be educated ... that was my ideal ... although she had no ear for music, I tried to get her interested'. MD13 said, 'They [her parents] had an obsession with education'.

The majority of the mothers thought that their daughters were smarter, more knowledgeable and more enlightened than themselves. They accepted the superiority of their daughters and felt incompetent to give advice to their daughters. As MM2 said, 'I finished the institute, but my daughter finished university. Probably she thinks better than I do. ... How can I give her advice? She knows everything better than me'.

The risks of education in an era of political turmoil

Although the daughters were strongly encouraged to be educated, the majority grew up in the era of severe political conflicts and anarchy of the 1960s and 1970s. Most of these daughters were then students and the universities were the focal points of the anarchist activity. Some were involved. The mothers' desired and valued the education their children received but they were very apprehensive that they would be injured or harmed. Education had been denied to the mothers by their families, but then the political conditions made it dangerous for their daughters. The mothers wanted their daughters to be educated but also wanted them to be safe, and for some the two goals were incompatible, which led to anxiety:

She was a university student. ... Those were the years of intense anarchy. I was worried about her as a mother. Frankly, I was very upset (WM22).

Her time was the time of terror. ... She would ... participate in those leftist activities (MM25).

The attraction of companionate marriage and the concern with social reputation

In spite of their educational opportunities, the second generation of women had a highly restricted social life, partly because of the conservative society, and partly because of the continued social concern about 'their reputation'. Although the mothers were aware that the times had changed and that family-arranged marriages were no longer viable, they controlled their daughters' social life because they cared about what the neighbours

would think and say about their children's behaviour and reputation. They wanted to protect the reputation of their daughters as well as letting them enjoy their opportunities:

In the old days, parents would find a potential spouse and tell the child that he or she should marry him or her; and the child would say 'yes'. But it is not like that anymore (MM12).

I wanted my children to be at home on time, I didn't want them to be late. They were not like the young people of today (MM2).

The importance of marriage and children

Notwithstanding the evidence that the mothers and daughters differed in their approach to parenting, it was the most important role in the lives of both generations. Explicit comparisons were made, as by WM11, 'Her children come first. ... For me too, the children', and by MD17, 'I think we are both self-sacrificing mothers'. The consensus on the importance of parenthood presented difficulties for the daughters who remained unmarried. The mothers had difficulty in accepting adult unmarried daughters: their conception was they had not completed a 'necessary step' in life. For mothers, marriage was natural and being unmarried was not:

This is my mother's perspective: she is educated, finished her university, she is good looking so it is time to get married. ... My mother can't think like 'my daughter doesn't have to marry, she should live her own life freely' (SD14).

Increases in parent-child intimacy and lenience

The mothers reported being more understanding than their own mothers; the daughters, however, claimed that their parents were stricter with them than they were with their own daughters. The mothers were trying to adopt a model of motherhood different from that of their own mothers, but they had no personal experience of the new model that they could emulate. The mothers were not used to sharing intimacy and listening to their daughters because they were taught not to speak about topics that their daughters raised. As WM1 said, 'I say that they grew up in heaven. I did not restrain my children because I was very restricted'. By contrast, the second generation (the daughters) reported more open and intimate communication with their children than with their mothers:

For example, when I had my first period, my mother never said anything to me about menstruation. Maybe in those days, mothers and daughters did not talk about these sorts of things (SD23).

Everything was hidden and secret ... that was the way it is in those days ... we never shared the same thing with my mother because my mother is more authoritarian (MD₂).

The second-generation women tried to be more friendly and understanding with their children than their mothers had been with them. They reported that they were more relaxed with their own children, both because the country was safer now and because they had suffered strict restrictions. They all emphasised being 'like friends' with their own children; sharing experiences that they never dreamt of telling their own parents. They were also cognisant of their children's sensitivity to parental interference, as remarked by MD₁₃, 'We were like mother-daughter with my mother; with my daughter we are like friends', and by MD₂, 'There is nothing my daughter hides from me'.

The lack of restraint and taboos in contemporary conversation shocked some of the grandmothers. As MD₁₁ said, 'They ... can talk about the most intimate topics with their mothers. Sometimes I blush (with shame) but try not to let on'. The mothers sometimes attempted to interfere with their daughters' parenting, either blaming them for neglecting their children or for being too self-sacrificing. MD₁₉'s mother was concerned to protect her daughter ('She complains that I am too self-sacrificing'), and MD₂₅'s mother to protect the granddaughters ('She says I am spoiling my children'). Others were concerned about their daughters being both mothers and in work. As MM₁₀ said, '[My granddaughter] spends the weekend alone at home. ... They leave her but go to her for the weekend. ... I would have stayed with my child. ... I get worried, I tell her so'.

The changes in parent-child relations reported by mothers and daughters are consistent with Fişek's (2002) views about recent changes in Turkish urban families. She argued that the rigidity of family hierarchies has been reduced, but that intimacy has remained high and communication has increased. She argued that the manner of parental control has changed, with authoritarian practices having been replaced by control based on caring. This change in parent-child relations is conducive to the nurture of more autonomous individuals, as described by Kağıtçıbaşı (1996).

The rising norm of individualism and declining norm of filial piety

Increased individualism was reflected in the greater assertiveness of each successive generation. Both the first and the second generations of women stated that their children were more outspoken and assertive than they had been. Some mothers noted that their daughters were more outspoken, more assertive, and less obedient and submissive than their mothers, and

they attributed the change to differences in their upbringing. Mothers often viewed these characteristics in a positive light and seemed to envy their daughters' assertiveness and autonomy. As MM12 said, 'My daughter didn't grow up being stressed ... they are more outspoken. We, on the other hand, think more before we speak'.

Both mothers and daughters agreed that the third generation (*i.e.* the daughters' children) had more personal freedom, more outside social activities and were even more outspoken. MD25 said that 'they [my children] are freer than us; I had no freedom to go out at night when I was their age', and MD11 observed that, 'You cannot say anything to today's children, when you say anything you get ten answers in return. ... We did not answer back'. The daughters explained that their mothers had higher expectations of them than the expectations they had for their own children in the future. The second-generation women said that they had felt obliged to put up with their mothers' capricious expectations and behaviour but that their children would not have the same problem: they saw themselves as the 'sandwich' generation.

We put up with a lot of whims ... this will be all over with our generation. If I ring my daughters and tell them that I am bored, I think they will say 'none of my business' and hang up (WD8).

We are stuck in between. ... Our mothers as well as our children have a lot of expectations of us (MD19).

Conclusions

The interviews with the mothers and daughters revealed the effects of the different social milieus in which they were raised. Both generations experienced restrictions and social change but of different kinds: the differences led to different views of life and different personal and inter-personal concerns. The mothers had to deal with external constraints, not least those associated with economic scarcity and few opportunities. They were presented with a vision of an ideal emancipated woman that most could not reach. The ideal was itself a source of contradiction and conflict, in its simultaneous emphasis upon the individualistic values of self-sufficiency, independence and personal achievement, and conformity to family and network control over familial roles and sexual honour. The mothers believed in the ideal, and projected it upon their daughters without realising its inherent conflicts. They did however experience internal conflict while encouraging their daughters to pursue the new ideal, because they were afraid for their personal safety and loss of respectability. They resorted to restriction, the only means of protection with which they were

familiar. Thus, the mothers in their youth experienced conflict between ideals and opportunities, and, as mothers, experienced anxieties about the most appropriate parenting goals.

The daughters had more opportunities to realise the republican ideal and most of them achieved a near approximation of its model of the emancipated, educated, strong, agentic modern woman (Durakbaşa 1998). They lived in times of accelerated change and political turmoil, experienced the conflicts intrinsic to the ideal, and were caught between the demands of their parents and their children. Thus, they experienced both internal and inter-personal conflicts. They had been faced with unpredictability during their youth and empathised with their children's predicament. Their experience of unpredictability and their internal conflict may explain their frequent use of unrestricted communication with their children as a conflict-resolution technique. They wanted to understand their children and to maintain close emotional contact, possibly because they accepted that restriction was not a viable (or desirable) strategy. The absence of political turmoil and reduced family network and neighbourhood surveillance gave them fewer reasons for being restrictive.

Both mothers and daughters attributed the differences in their personalities and parenting styles to the changing times. They frequently referred to the influence of external conditions and exemplified Carr's (2004) report that mothers cite social norms to explain their roles as home-makers. Carr interpreted this explanation as a tactic for positive self-evaluation. There is, however, an alternative explanation in the Turkish context, for changing norms are a salient and desired aspect of social discourse. In other words, the republican ideology that lauds change in the areas of education, women's rights, democratic families and prosperity, is widely approved. Furthermore, many important events have occurred in the recent past, and many in the population seek to actuate social change rather than merely adjust to external changes in the social context.

It may be, as Choi *et al.* (2003) have suggested, that easterners are readier than westerners to interpret their changing personal circumstances with reference to external causes. Although differences with respect to the sources and use of external information have been demonstrated between Americans, Koreans and Chinese samples, these information processing differences are consistent with reports of the lower incidence of fundamental attribution error (*i.e.* attribution to the person of external factors) in individualist than in collectivist countries (Kağıtçıbaşı 1998). Seeing change as a consequence of 'the times' provides a comprehensive explanation and is similar to viewing reality as a process of constant flux. Such an approach to the explanation of inter-personal difference does not generate blame and is associated with compromise seeking (Peng and

Nisbett 1999). It should also be noted that a high prevalence of references to 'the changing times' may be characteristic of retrospective accounts (McFarland and Ross 1987; Miller and Porter 1980). We have also suggested that the past may be represented negatively to establish improvement over time in a personal history (Hortaçsu and Gençöz 1993).

Some of the changes between the two generations of women, such as the increased opportunities for the second generation, and mothers' acceptance of their daughters' 'superiority', are similar to those reported by western research (Carr 2004; Fischer 1991; Fingerman 2001). Unlike the second-generation women in Fischer's (1991) research, the Turkish daughters did not report conflicts between their mothering and career roles. The absence of such conflict may be explained by the high value placed on the family in collectivist Turkish culture (Atalay *et al.* 1992). At times, however, they did report conflict between the demands of the nuclear family and their parenting duties and, on the other side, their mothers' demands and their own needs.

Despite the similarities with western findings, the Turkish case is unique in that the ideal of the emancipated woman has been promoted as the state ideology. The change in ideology was rather sudden and advocated in a top-down fashion without concern for its inherent incompatibilities. Failure to achieve the ideal was attributed to (outdated) familial restrictions, even though the rationale for these restrictions, such as the primacy of motherhood and the importance of sexual modesty, were retained in the republican ideal. Every country's culture is distinctive and adopts modernisation in unique ways: the exceptional feature in Turkey is the high value currently placed, sometimes incompatibly, on personal autonomy and family and social network ties (Kağıtçıbaşı 1996).

In conclusion, the present study has investigated mother-daughter relationships in the context of the rapidly changing political and socio-economic conditions in Turkey. Adair and Kağıtçıbaşı (1995) argued that, as a result of their high rate of social change and cultural instability, developing countries constitute fascinating laboratories for social research. Turkey exemplifies the notion, because it has been the scene for radical social, economic and ideological changes during the past century. Its culture has changed from 'traditional' to 'modern' forms and provides a unique case study of the processes of adjustment to the influences of westernisation and urbanisation.

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NOTES

- 1 Kağıtçıbaşı's review article is based on many ethnographic accounts inspired by Hoefstede's (1980) work on Chinese values.
- 2 No systematic evidence of the sanctions exerted by non-kin, e.g. unrelated neighbours, is known, but there is much anecdotal evidence and the practices are represented in novels and old movies.
- 3 At the time of the interviews, the interviewer (the first author) was a married woman aged 28 years. She had had long and close relationships with her two grandmothers, and is highly skilled in establishing rapport as evinced by the length and details of the interviewees' responses. It was explained to the participants that they could refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the interview at any time. They were aware that the interviews were recorded and were assured about the confidentiality of their answers. All interviews were taped and transcribed verbatim by the first author and professional transcribers.
- 4 The daughters ranged in age from 35 to 55 years (s.d. = 5.3), and the mothers from 59 to 83 years (s.d. = 6.0).

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