

ISTANBUL BILGI UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM

DIFFERENTIATION OF SELF, TRIANGULATION,
MULTIGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION PROCESS AND
EXTRADYADIC INVOLVEMENT: AN INTERPRETATIVE
PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

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İSTANBUL

2019

Differentiation of Self, Triangulation, Multigenerational Transmission Process
and Extradynamic Involvement: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Farklılaşma, Üçgenleşme, Kuşaklararası Aktarım Süreci ve İlişki Dışı İlişki:
Yorumlayıcı Fenomenolojik Analiz

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Date of Thesis Approval: 28.05.2019

Total Number of Pages: 98

Keywords (Turkish)

- 1) İlişki Dışı İlişki
- 2) Nesiller Arası Aile Terapisi
- 3) Farklılaşma
- 4) Üçgenleşme
- 5) Kuşaklararası Aktarım

Keywords (English)

- 1) Extradynamic Involvement
- 2) Family Systems Theory
- 3) Differentiation
- 4) Triangulation
- 5) Multigenerational Transmission

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis advisor Dr. Yudum Söylemez who sincerely shared her knowledge with me throughout my master's degree process and answered all my questions enthusiastically. I also want to thank my committee members Dr. Alev Çavdar Sideris, Dr. Gamze Inan Kaya and, my professor Eda Arduman who shared their experiences with me and guided the thesis process at vital points. I am very thankful for all their feedback and contribution from the beginning to the end of my thesis journey.

I offer my deepest gratitude to my dear spouse Koray Erol, who accompanied me on this long journey and encouraged me through tough times. I also would like to thank my family for their patience, support and love.

I want to express my thankfulness to my dear friends Fatma Nur Bayram and Sezin Benli; whose support was invaluable for me.

I would like to thank my colleagues, members of 'BATE Psikoloji' Tuba Akyüz, Özlem Mumcuoğlu, Sezin Öter, Aytül Aslı Serpel, Sena Avaz Avcı, Tolga Erdoğan, Sendi Bağban and Deniz Özsoy for their constant psychological support for me.

Lastly, I would like to thank all women who have participated in this study and sincerely shared their experiences with me.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis consists of two articles. The first article presented is a literature review written to review studies of extradyadic involvement and to identify Family Systems Theory. For this purpose, the article includes (a) extradyadic involvement, (b), frequently researched variables in the extradyadic involvement literature, (c) experiences after extradyadic involvement, (d) theoretical frameworks on extradyadic involvement and, (e) Family Systems Theory. The second article extends the literature conducting a qualitative study aiming to understand the extradyadic involvement phenomenon and how participants' experiences can be related to the fundamental concepts of Bowen's Family Systems Theory. Seven women were interviewed and the data was analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) which revealed four themes: (a) Meaning of the extradyadic involvement, (b) extradyadic relationship changes the primary relationship, (c) difficulty in differentiation and, (d) extradyadic involvement as experienced by a woman in Turkey. Findings are discussed in relation to existing literature and implications for clinicians and prospective researchers.

Keywords: extradyadic involvement, Bowen, family systems theory, differentiation, triangulation, multigenerational transmission

ÖZET

Bu çalışma iki bölümden oluşmaktadır. Birinci bölüm ilişki dışı ilişki fenomeni üzerine yapılan çalışmalar ve literatüre dair bilgi sunmakta, ardından Nesiller Arası Aile Terapisi'ni tanıtmaktadır. Bu amaçla bu bölümde (a) ilişki dışı ilişki, (b) ilişki dışı ilişki çalışmalarında sıklıkla araştırılmış konular, (c) ilişki dışı ilişki sonrası yaşanan deneyimler, (d) ilişki dışı ilişki fenomenine dair teorik açıklamalar ve (e) Nesiller Arası Aile Terapisi incelenmiştir. İkinci bölüm ise, bu literatürden yola çıkarak oluşturulan nitel çalışma ekseninde katılımcıların ilişki dışı ilişki deneyimlerini ve bu deneyimlerin Nesiller Arası Aile Terapisi'nin temel kavramlarıyla ilişkilerini araştırmaktadır. Yedi kadınla yapılan görüşmeler ardından yapılan Yorumlayıcı Fenomenolojik Analiz sonucunda 4 ana tema ortaya çıkmıştır: (a) ilişki dışı ilişki deneyiminin anlamı, (b) ilişki dışı ilişki uzun süreli ilişkiyi değiştiriyor, (c) farklılaşmakta yaşanan zorlanma ve (d) Türkiye'de bir kadın olarak ilişki dışı ilişki yaşamak. Sonuçlar güncel literatür doğrultusunda tartışılmış, klinisyenler ve araştırmacılar için öneride bulunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: ilişki dışı ilişki, Bowen, Nesiller Arası Aile Terapisi, farklılaşma, üçgenleşme, kuşaklararası aktarım

INTRODUCTION

Extradyadic involvement is a phenomenon that has frequently been researched to understand its quite multi-dimensional structure. Extradyadic involvement can be defined as different types of behavior that violate the commitment to the relationship (Blow & Hartnett, 2005a). Being a theme often encountered by therapists in clinical work, extradyadic involvement has several consequences for both partners and the family system (Blow & Hartnett, 2005b; Weiser & Weigel, 2017), and therefore has been the subject of various studies examining its different aspects such as prevalence, contributing factors, consequences and, clinical work.

The current study aims to review the extradyadic involvement literature; understand deeply the experience of women who engaged in an extradyadic relationship and how their experiences can be interrelated to their family of origin experiences, closeness/boundary expectations and differentiation level. In this regard, the first article is a literature review that firstly explores studies focused on definition and prevalence issues, frequently researched variables such as gender, primary relationship satisfaction, adult attachment styles, cultural and socioeconomic factors; experiences of couples after extradyadic involvement- and reviews theoretical frameworks on extradyadic involvement. Then, Bowen's Family Systems Model and three fundamental concepts -differentiation of self, triangulation and multigenerational transmission process- are defined. The article concludes with a discussion of clinical implications of literature.

The second article is the research article aiming to understand deeply the experiences of women who engaged in an extradyadic relationship and to examine the interaction between extradyadic involvement experience and one's family of origin experiences, closeness/boundary expectations and differentiation level. In this respect, the article includes a literature review on studies that focus on extradyadic involvement via Bowen's Family Systems Theory. One-on-one and semi-structured interviews conducted with women in order to answer these research

questions: (a) “What is the experience of women who have been involved in an extradyadic relationship?”, (b) “How are their experiences of extradyadic involvement interrelated with their differentiation, and closeness/boundaries expectations in their romantic and family of origin relationships?”.



Literature Review Article

2.1.Extradyadic Involvement

Extradyadic involvement can be defined as a wide range of emotional, sexual or romantic behaviors which violates the exclusivity norms of a relationship (Glass, 2002). With the exception of some isolated subcultures and some historical periods, extradyadic involvement has frequently been considered as an unacceptable attitude within the relationship (Duncombe, Harrison, Allan & Marsden, 2004).

Extradyadic involvement is not a new problem affecting couples; and is a frequently encountered theme in psychotherapy. According to Blow & Hartnett (2005a), “the topic of infidelity is one that is of great importance to the practice of therapists –and even more important to the couples affected” (p. 183). Blow & Hartnett (2005a) reported that “In the practice of any couple therapist, it is common for a percentage of couples to present with infidelity-related grievances” (p. 183). According to reports of many therapists, there is a high rate of incidence of couples seeking therapy to repair the injury done by acts of infidelity on the part of one or both partners (Fish, Pavkov, Wetchler, & Bercik, 2012).

In this regard, numerous studies concentrate on different dimensions of extradyadic involvement phenomenon such as prevalence (Atkins, Baucom, & Jacobson, 2001; Wiederman, 1997), types of extradyadic involvement (Grass & Wright, 1985), attitudes towards extradyadic involvement (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Treas & Giesen, 2000; Weis & Jurich, 1985), gender differences (Atkins, Baucom, & Jacobson, 2001; Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983), cultural and socioeconomic factors (Solstad & Mucic, 1999), the effect of attachment style on extradyadic involvement (Allen & Baucom, 2004; Bogaert & Sadava, 2002), the aftermath, recovery process from infidelity and clinical practices regarding the issue (Atkins, Yi, Baucom, & Christensen, 2005; Olson, Russell, Higgins-Kessler, & Miller, 2002; Schneider, Corley & Irons, 1998). In Turkey, there have been similar studies examining the relation of infidelity and adult attachment style,

marital adjustment, conflict tendencies, and relationship satisfaction (Kantarci, 2009; Müezzinoğlu, 2014; Polat, 2006).

2.1.1. Definition Issues and Prevalence

Literature has little consensus on what extradyadic involvement means and which behaviors can be considered as infidelity (Blow & Hartnett, 2005a; Thompson, 1984). There are various different definitions describing this phenomenon such as having an affair, infidelity, cybersex, emotional and physical intimacy, pornography, sexual intercourse, kissing, flirting, secrets in the relationship or close friendships (Hertlein, Wetchler & Piercy, 2005; Moller & Vossler, 2015; Thompson, 1983).

According to the literature, the definition of the term extradyadic involvement can be clustered into three main categories; sexual affair, emotional affair and combined-type. In this sense, while sexual affair emphasizes the physical and sexual component of the relationship, emotional affair focuses on the relational bond between involved partner and affair partner (Glass & Wright, 1985; Leone, 2013; Thompson, 1984). In addition, Glass & Wright (1985) underline the fact that these categories are not mutually exclusive; extradyadic relationship often occurs on a continuum between sexual and emotional involvement.

This complicated nature of the subject creates differences in the data provided by prevalence studies. The differences in the characteristics of the sample chosen, as well as the method and design employed lead to varying prevalence of extradyadic involvement (Weeks, Gambescia & Jenkins, 2003). One particular meta-analysis investigating the effect of the definition of infidelity employed by the authors on the outcome of the results states: “The percentage of people engaging in infidelity is estimated anywhere from 15% to 70%” (Hertlein, Wetchler & Piercy, 2005, p. 6). In the study conducted by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies (2011), the reasons of divorce by gender were investigated. The difference in the rates of divorce due to the realization of an extramarital relationship of the partner demonstrates a significant difference in percentage; namely 16,8% for women, and

a 5,7% for men (Ministry of Family and Social Policies, 2011).

This confusion around the definition and prevalence of infidelity is not only a problem for research and theory development, but also for therapeutic practice with couples in distress (Moller & Vossler, 2015). Given the prevalence of infidelity and its potential damage to the relationship, it is not surprising that therapists estimated that 50%-65% of couples in their clinical practices have experienced infidelity in some form and presented infidelity-related issues as the leading problem (Glass & Wright, 1988; Hertlein, Weeks, & Gabescia, 2009). According to Weeks, Gambescia and Jenkins (2003), prevalence of extramarital relationship declined significantly in studies conducted after the year 1990.

Although the topic of extradyadic relationship has generated a significant amount of theoretical and clinical speculation and empirical examination, it can still be considered extremely diverse in focus, having many limitations in the research designs, producing contradictory results, and several factors remaining nebulous (Atkins et al., 2005; Blow & Hartnett, 2005a).

The ambiguity of the aforementioned findings is paralleled in the lack of concurrence on the terminology employed in describing the issue itself. “Extramarital relationship” (Glass & Wright, 1977), “extramarital involvement” (Allen et al., 2005; Glass & Wright, 1985), “cheating” (Emmers,-Sommer, Warber & Halford, 2010; McAnulty & Brineman, 2007), “adultery” (Lawson & Samson, 1988; Winek & Craven, 2003), “infidelity” (Atkins, Baucom & Jacobson, 2001; Hertlein, Wetchler & Piercy, 2005; Johnson, 2005), and “having an affair” are some of the terms encountered in the literature. Each one of these terms, whether chosen intentionally, or purely due to their linguistic pragmatics, poses the danger of an inherent moral judgement, in conflict with the purpose of scientific objectivity. The present study employs the definition of the term “extradyadic involvement”, intending to describe the process, in terms of primary and secondary relationships, not to be prioritized according to value, but rather as in reference to their temporality. The term extradyadic involvement is used to describe both a sexual and an emotional affair; which involves the presence of both sexual intercourse and romantic feelings and/or love evoked by a third party outside the primary dyad.

2.2.Frequently Researched Variables in the Extradyadic Involvement Literature

2.2.1. Gender

Research has typically shown that men engage in more extradyadic relationships than women and their proclivity towards having an affair is greater than that of women (Glass & Wright, 1985). Men have been found more disposed to experience extradyadic relationships than women cross-culturally (Duncombe, Harrison, Allan & Marsden, 2004).

According to Glass and Wright (1985), men tend to be more sexual while women are more emotional during the extradyadic relationship. The authors also emphasize sexual dissatisfaction as a significant contributing factor for this proclivity. According to their findings, men who engaged in an extradyadic relationship were more likely to be sexually dissatisfied in their primary relationship compared to women. In one of the first studies that focused on the viewpoint of women, Atwater (1979) reported that women who experienced an extradyadic relationship were initially involved emotionally. In addition, previous studies have suggested that men report being more upset over sexual infidelity than women; while women report being more upset over emotional infidelity than men (Glass & Wright, 1985; Kato, 2014).

However, the meta-analysis by Oliver and Hyde (1993) has shown that the gap between genders is narrowing. Their comprehensive study of 177 sources examined how gender differences impact 21 different dimensions of sexual behaviors and attitudes including extramarital issues. According to their findings, trends were showing smaller differences between two genders over time. Results also implied differences in attitudes towards premarital and extramarital sex; gender-related differences were narrowing, while males were still hold more permissive position than female. In addition, another study has shown that men who had affairs had a higher rate of alcohol and substance use, while this association is

not valid for women (Atkins et al., 2005).

2.2.2. Primary Relationship Satisfaction

Motives for extradyadic involvement are varied, but they are usually in relation with the concerns or problems regarding the primary relationship (McAnulty & Brineman, 2007). Lower levels of satisfaction in primary relationship have been consistently found to be a significant predictor of engaging in extradyadic behaviors (Jeanfreau, Jurich & Mong, 2014; McAlister, Pachana & Jackson, 2005; Thompson, 1983). In a sample of heterosexual university students who were in dating relationships, low relationship satisfaction accounted for 18.49% of variance in a measure of recent acts of physically intimate behavior involving an extradyadic partner (Drigotas, Safstrom & Gentilia, 1999). Couples who are affected by extradyadic involvement frequently reported less joy in the time they spent together, problems about trust and honesty, and separation-related issues (Atkins et al., 2005). Nonetheless, as a result of the multifaceted structure of the subject, some other studies have failed to find a relation between primary relationship satisfaction and extradyadic involvement. Blumstein and Schwartz (1983) conducted a large sample survey of American couples and they did not find any relation between sexual and marital satisfaction, sexual frequency and infidelity.

Glass and Wright (1985) investigated the relation between marital satisfaction and gender in their study. They found strong and consistent gender differences in the association between marital dissatisfaction and each type of extramarital involvement. Women who were involved in an extradyadic relationship were more dissatisfied than men who were involved an extradyadic relationship. While 56% of the men who experienced extramarital intercourse reported about their happy marriage, this rate was only 34% for women (Glass & Wright, 1985).

2.2.3. Adult Attachment

The relation between adult attachment and patterns of extradyadic involvement comprises a branch of literature that focuses on the effects of early attachment styles on the outcomes of adult relationships. In their study, Bogaert and Sadava (2002) examined the relation between adult attachment processes and sexuality in a community sample of 792 young adults. Findings indicated that people who scored higher on anxious attachment index were more likely to have extradyadic affairs. Allen and Baucom (2004) investigated different dimensions of relation between adult attachment and patterns of extradyadic involvement. Results from two different groups supported their hypothesis that attachment style is related to extradyadic involvement. In the undergraduate sample, dismissive males and preoccupied females had the largest number of partners outside of their relationship. Results also indicated that another dimension, attachment style and motivations for extradyadic involvement can be related; those with fearful and preoccupied styles tend to state more intimacy motivations such as the need for feeling cared for and emotional closeness. Another major point the study showed was the relation between types of infidelity and attachment style. Fearful and preoccupied males in both groups were more likely to report an obsessive and needy extradyadic involvement compared to their counterparts. In addition, the study conducted in Turkey by Kantarcı (2009) states that compared to insecure participants, secure participants' tendency towards extradyadic involvement was statistically lower.

2.2.4. Cultural and Socioeconomic Factors

As McGoldrick, Preto, Hines & Lee (1991) point out, “cultural norms and values prescribe the rules by which families operate” (p. 546). Nevertheless, the literature on the interaction of extradyadic involvement, culture and socioeconomic factors has limitations on offering consistent and sufficient information. While some studies show no difference between ethnic groups, others indicate that certain ethnic groups have more tendency to have an extradyadic relationship. To

understand the interaction between these variables more international studies are needed (Blow & Hartnett, 2005b; Penn, Hernandez & Bermudez, 1997).

In their study on sexual infidelity among American couples, Treas and Giesen (2000) found that being African-American was positively associated with engaging in extradyadic relationships, even with educational variables controlled. These findings were in line with other researches that report positive association between being African-American and experiencing extradyadic relationships (Amato & Rogers, 1997; Smith 1991). However, as previously stated, although the aforementioned studies suggest higher level of extradyadic involvement rates for African-Americans; other studies indicate that there is no such a difference between ethnic groups (Choi, Catania & Dolcini, 1994).

In his 1973 study, Christensen examined the attitudes of nine different countries towards marital infidelity. According to this early study, each of the cultures' attitudes towards marital infidelity varied prominently: "Permissiveness turned out to be highest in Scandinavia (Denmark and Sweden) with the Southern Negro and Belgium samples following close behind; and norm restrictiveness turned out to be highest in Taiwanese and the religious-oriented American samples (Mennonite, Catholic and Mormon)" (p. 212). Another study conducted by Widmer, Treas and Newcomb (1998) investigating the attitudes towards nonmarital sex in 24 countries concluded that although extramarital sex was strongly unacceptable, some countries appeared to be more tolerant than other such as Russia, Bulgaria, Czech Republic.

Another variable, income and employment status were more recently investigated by Atkins, Baucom and Jacobson (2001). According to the findings, income level and employment status were both significantly related with involvement in extradyadic relationship. In addition, the rate of extradyadic relationship was higher for those who were working and their spouses were not working outside the house.

As underscored by Toplu-Demirtaş and Fincham (2018), existing research has mostly been conducted in Western societies, with Caucasian participants. Turkey's unique complex cultural and socioeconomic dynamics, and idiosyncratic

individualistic and collectivistic structure necessitate the examination of the extradyadic involvement phenomenon in consideration of these variables.

The study of family structures in Turkey, conducted by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies (2011), aimed to understand general characteristics of the family structure and attitudes of family members regarding various topics in the Turkish population in rural and urban areas. According to this study, extramarital relationship is the third common cause for divorce with a rate of 11,7 % and is more common in urban Turkey (12,8%) than the rural (7,5%). When socioeconomic status is taken into consideration with regards to divorce caused by extradyadic involvement, rates demonstrate a presence of 9,4% for low SES, 13,1% for middle class and 12,7% for upper (Ministry of Family and Social Policies, 2011).

2.3.Experiences After Extradyadic Involvement

Extradyadic relationship is a phenomenon that causes quite significant and complex effects on the couple and family system. These effects are valid for both partners (Hertlein, Wetchler & Piercy, 2005). Olson et al. (2002) emphasize the difficulty of the initial phases of the discovery of extradyadic involvement; as an array of challenging emotions and reactions can be experienced concurrently in this process. Blow and Harnett (2005b) describes this multifaceted process as:

“Strong feelings oscillate among anger, ambiguity, self-blame, introspection, awareness, deepen appreciation for spouse and family, desire to work on marital relationship, desire to give up, and even gratefulness that something came about to open their eyes to the trouble in their relationship” (p. 229).

For those whose partners engaged in an extradyadic relationship, sense of betrayal and anger are common. In addition, they may also experience anger towards themselves for not realizing the incident beforehand; as well as shame, and loss of trust, identity, sense of specialness, and a fundamental sense of order and justice in the world (Spring & Spring, 1996; Vaughan 2003). Concerning common experiences of those who engage in an extradyadic relationship, Spring and Spring (1996), also emphasizes relief from having to continue lying, impatience for

rebuilding the primary relationship, absence of guilt due to justifications for extradyadic relationship experience, resentment towards the partner and euphoria about the affair.

Due to the difficulty of this period, couples and individuals can react symptomatically after the discovery or disclosure of an extradyadic involvement. Marital distress, divorce, conflict, loss of trust, damaged self-esteem, posttraumatic symptoms such as disorientation, eating and sleeping problems, agitation, obsessive or intrusive thoughts are common negative consequences (Allen & Atkins, 2005; Gordon, Baucom, Synder, & Dixon, 2008; Leone, 2013).

However, there are also studies that refer to unanticipated positive relationship outcomes such as closer marital relationship, becoming more assertive, better self-care, caring more about the family and an improvement in overall communication (Olson et al., 2002). Through the qualitative and exploratory study Olson et. al. conducted, they used the term “roller coaster” to conceptualize the disclosure process of the extradyadic involvement. They underscored the potential function of the incident as an “eye opener” which can motivate couple to review how their relationship got to that place and how could they move beyond it.

In accordance with the multidimensional nature of the subject, studies emphasize the importance of assessing the relationship as a whole rather than focusing on the affair throughout the therapy work. As Perel (2015) states: “Hurt and betrayal on one side, growth and self-discovery on the other. What it did to you, and what it meant for me ” Despite many intense feelings and difficulties the extradyadic relationship leads to, re-evaluation of the relationship creates a space for both partners to express their relationship needs. Aftermath of extradyadic involvement, which leads to the reconstruction of both the couple relationship and the self of the individual, should therefore be addressed within this compelling complexity.

2.4.Theoretical Frameworks on Extradyadic Involvement

One of the theoretical frameworks used to understand the extradyadic

involvement phenomenon is the Investment Model of Commitment (Rusbult, 1980). According to this perspective, commitment to the relationship depends on primary relationship satisfaction, quality of alternatives and both partners' investment to the primary relationship. Commitment to the relationship -which is a tendency for people to feel psychologically committed and motivated- is highly in relation with the level of dependence (Drigotas, Safstrom & Gentilia, 1999; Jeanfreau, Jurich & Mong, 2014; McAlister, Pachana & Jackson, 2005; McAnulty & Brineman, 2007; Rusbult, Johnson & Morrow, 1986; Segal & Fraley, 2016). The satisfaction of a partner is their assessment on cost and benefit of being in that relationship; and the investment size is the investments such as time, effort, money or sacrifices each partner make in their relationship. Quality of alternatives refers to other alternatives to the current relationship. When the relationship satisfaction diminishes, better alternatives can endanger the commitment to the current relationship (Rusbult, 1980; Segal & Fraley, 2016). That is to say, these three variables define one's own perception about his/her relationship and determine his/her decisions at critical points.

Another framework, namely The Deficit Model, which focuses on deficits in relationships, suggests that partners begin to have extradyadic involvements due to problems and dissatisfactions in their marriages because outside alternatives become more desirable due to dissatisfaction (Thompson, 1983).

Need Fulfillment Model, in parallel with others, suggests that if there is an area that is unable to fulfill a certain need, partners are more likely to try to fulfill their needs outside relationships (Jeanfreau, Jurich & Mong, 2014). The results of the study conducted by Lewandowsky and Ackerman (2006) indicated that "...when a relationship is not able to fulfill or provide ample self-expansion for an individual, his or her susceptibility to infidelity increases" (p. 389). Each partner has five types of mutually complementary needs; intimacy, companionship, security, emotional involvement and sexual involvement. Thus, if one's primary relationship does not fulfill a certain need, he or she is more likely to be motivated to seek fulfillment outside of the relationship (Lewandowsky & Ackerman, 2006).

In addition to these relational perspectives on extradyadic involvement, recent studies try to examine how our genetic and evolutionary processes have an effect on extradyadic involvement. From the evolutionary perspective; men's extradyadic involvement is frequently explained in terms of reproductive benefits of multiple mates. Although for women the mechanism of extradyadic involvement is less understandable from this viewpoint, adaptive explanations emphasize their genetic benefits by mating with a high-quality extrapair partner (Zietsch, Westberg, Santtila & Jern, 2014).

2.5. Bowen's Family Systems Theory

Murray Bowen's Family Systems Theory can be considered as one of the most fundamental theories of family systems functioning. His conceptualization of dynamics of families began to develop during the 1950s, when he joined Lyman Wynne at the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). One particular pilot project at the NIMH involved hospitalizing entire families along with their schizophrenic family members. During this time, Bowen had the opportunity to observe these families' interactional patterns and the determinative effect of anxiety on family dynamics. Later, he continued his studies on developing a therapeutic approach based on Family Systems Theory at Georgetown University until his death (Gladding, 1998; Piercy, Sprenkle & Wetchler, 1996).

The way Murray Bowen and his colleague Michael Kerr handled the family system produced a distinct theory of family therapy (Gladding, 1998). According to Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2008):

“His theoretical contributions, along with their accompanying therapeutic efforts, represent a bridge between psychodynamically oriented approaches that emphasize self-development, intergenerational issues, and the significance of past family relationships, and the systems approaches that restrict their attention to the family unit as it is presently constituted and currently interacting” (p. 175-176).

Bowen conceptualized families as emotional systems. The amount of

anxiety families contain and their perception about threats are determinants of emotionally-driven problematic interaction patterns. The theory focuses on family patterns of both the nuclear family and multigenerational transmission processes that influence the present (Brown, 1999; Carr, 2012; Gatfield, 2017). According to the theory, unless individuals identify and process their transgenerational themes, they are likely to have similar patterns and narratives in their own families (Bowen & Kerr, 1988).

Bowen's Family Systems Theory comprises the primary theoretical framework of the present study, which aims to deeply understand the extradyadic relationship experience and the emergence of this phenomenon in romantic relationships. It is believed that understanding one's differentiation level and how one experiences other concepts such as triangulation and multigenerational transmission processes in the family system can help improve our understanding of extradyadic involvement. Therefore, it is necessary to first define then discuss the interrelation between Bowen's key concepts of differentiation of self, triangulation and multigenerational transmission process.

2.5.1. Differentiation of Self

Differentiation of self is one of the key constructs in Family Systems Theory which defines the capacity of the individual to function autonomously and in a self-directed way, while remaining emotionally connected to the other participants of the system. One's attempts to balance the pulls for autonomy and togetherness during his or her childhood can be seen as the development process of differentiation of self (Brown, 1999; Ross, Hinshaw & Murdock, 2016). As Nichols (2013) states, "the differentiated person is able to balance thinking and feeling: capable of strong emotion and spontaneity but also possessing the self-restraint that comes with the ability to resist the pull of emotionality" (p. 78).

Maintaining the sense of self also has a connection with being differentiated. The more the person is differentiated, the more he or she can enhance the capacity of being an individual while maintaining emotional contact with the group and

family. Higher level of differentiation is in relation with controlling emotional reactions better, having much more flexibility and increased well-balanced decision making in a state of tension (Bowen & Kerr, 1988).

Differentiation is conceptualized as a necessary component for maintaining healthy intimate relationships both within and outside of the family (Piercy, Sprenkle & Wetchler, 1996). An important point that is emphasized by Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2008) is that “The idea here is not to be emotionally detached or fiercely objective or without feelings, but rather to strive for balance, achieving self-definition but not at the expense of losing the capacity for spontaneous emotional expression” (p. 180).

As stated previously, Bowenian therapy aims to help the individual realize their family of origin themes; a critical goal to achieve during this process is differentiating from family’s emotional togetherness (Piercy, Sprenkle & Wetchler, 1996). This enables the individual to feel autonomous while staying connected to his or her family of origin and to not repeat certain interactional patterns inherited from the family.

Differentiation is a way of understanding how one manages his or her anxiety. The reaction one gives at the moment of stress varies according to his or her differentiation level. A family member might behave in an emotionally reactive manner, have a tendency to become more fused or distanced, or can be more vulnerable to triangulate the relationship with an outsider to reduce the anxiety (Hertlein & Skaggs, 2005).

2.5.2. Triangulation

A key step in the development process of systems theory was the exploration of three-person interactions, also known as triangles (Dallos & Draper, 2015). According to Bowen, triangles can be described as the smallest stable relationship unit of a system (Bowen & Kerr, 1988). The driving power of triangles is anxiety (Guerin, Fogarty, Fay & Kautto, 1996). The pull to create a triangulation mostly becomes evident with intense anxiety that arises due to relationship problems and

the need for balancing the forces of togetherness and autonomy.

The third party's involvement can be both for a short period – in this case the triangle doesn't become fixed or problematic- or involvement can continue and triangulation can be a characteristic pattern of the relationship. That characteristic pattern will probably cause a distraction, providing the dyad a means to move away from resolving the problematic themes in their relationship (Brown, 1999).

An example of the triangulation process can be demonstrated via the case of a mother who is mad at her husband and correspondingly increases her closeness with her children. Similarly, a partner who feels overwhelmed by the relationship difficulties may also show a tendency of unintentionally spending more time with technology. Nevertheless, a group of three doesn't necessarily always create a triangle. In a triad, each individual can maintain his or her independence, autonomy and can act in a way that doesn't necessarily force the other two to change (Nichols, 2013). In addition, as Kerr and Bowen (1988) state, a triangle does not always reduce the tension, there is more than one possible outcome of triangulation. The balanced relationship of a dyad can sometimes be unbalanced with the participation of an outsider. Yet it is equally possible for the balanced relation of a dyad to be unbalanced with the removal of the third person. The same situation is valid for the other possibility, an unbalanced relation of a dyad can be balanced with the participation of an outsider, or an unbalanced relation of a dyad can be balanced with the removal of the third person (Bowen & Kerr, 1988).

2.5.3. Multigenerational Transmission Process

Emotional forces operate over years in family's network of relationships. Patterns, themes, roles, beliefs are inherited from generation to generation. The multigenerational transmission process points out the ways in which parents or caregivers project their emotional patterns and differentiation processes inherent from their own childhood onto their children (Kaplan, Arnold, Irby, Boles & Skelton, 2014). In this process, many issues like family belief systems, determined values, certain emotional characteristics are transmitted from one generation to the

next. This process operates through individual's relationship experiences (Bowen & Kerr, 1988). Bowen explains the process of multigenerational transmission with the emphasis of one's differentiation level. According to his perspective, most children continue their lives at about the same levels of differentiation as their parents (Bowen, 1978).

According to Bowen and Kerr (1988), "People who marry one another have the same level of differentiation of self" (p. 225). Through their marriage, the married couple creates an emotional atmosphere into which their offspring is born. This atmosphere determines each child's differentiation level and the way he/she experiences the world; which in turn, results in his tendency to seek a future partner with a similar differentiation level (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2008).

2.6. Conclusion & Summary

Extradyadic involvement is one of the most compelling issues couples can face during different periods of relationships. Therefore, this phenomenon has always been an important concern for the field of couple and family therapy. There are varying definitions of the concept extradyadic relationship. Examples to these definitions include breaking of the contract of sexual exclusivity in the committed relationship, cybersex, viewing pornography, kissing, flirting or emotional intimacy (Hertlein, Wetchler & Piercy, 2005). Depending on how the concept is defined, prevalence rates change significantly. Nonetheless, literature generally defines extradyadic relationship related issues in three main categories; sexual affair, emotional affair and combined-type affair (Glass & Wright, 1985).

Due to the complicated nature of the topic, many different research have been conducted with the intent of exploring different dimensions of the phenomenon. Prevalence, definition, gender related differences, primary relationship dynamics, as well as interaction of race, culture, socioeconomic level, and attachment style with extradyadic relationship, aftermath of extradyadic relationship and clinical practice with couples affected from extradyadic relationship are among the topics studied. These studies provide a wide range of

data on clinical implications for couples and individuals who seek therapy with the presenting issue of extradyadic involvement.

The relation between extradyadic involvement and primary relationship has been the main subject of many different studies. Low relationship satisfaction is consistently found to be closely related to extradyadic involvement related behaviors (Atkins et al., 2005; Jeanfreau, Jurich & Mong, 2014; McAlister, Pachana & Jackson, 2005; Thompson, 1983). These findings have influenced theories which attempt to explain extradyadic involvement phenomenon. Theoretical frameworks that try to understand extradyadic involvement concurrently underline the importance of satisfaction level in primary relationship. These findings highlight the importance of adopting a holistic view throughout the therapy work. Despite the heightened emotional reactions of the clients and the necessity for specified therapeutic interventions during the initial phases of therapy, the therapist should be aware of the risk of reducing the process to the single dimension of extradyadic involvement. Extradyadic relationship research suggests the necessity of developing a holistic perspective; taking into consideration the primary relationship dynamics while working with the difficulties experienced by the couple.

Studies that investigate the relation between gender and extradyadic involvement provide important data for widening the clinical understanding of the phenomenon and adopting a sufficient approach in clinical practice. These studies underline the importance of taking into consideration gender related variables such as differing motivations of women and men to engage in an extradyadic relationship in the first place, the kind of relationships they engage in, their attitudes towards the involvement and gender roles; as well as how these variables operate within the distressed couple's and individual's narrative (Atwater, 1979; Glass & Wright, 1985; Kato, 2014; Oliver & Hyde, 1993). Thus, the therapist should try to explore potential gender-specific dynamics in the course of clinical work.

Similarly, some other studies were conducted to understand the interaction between adult attachment styles and extradyadic relationship patterns (Allen & Baucom, 2004; Bogaert & Sadava, 2002; Kantarcı, 2009). These studies emphasize that the motives that lead to engage an extradyadic relationship vary according to

attachment styles. The type of extradyadic relationship also differs due to attachment style. Therefore, therapists should be able to develop specific interventions considering the attachment styles and attachment needs of the couple they work with.

Another point that is important in the case of extradyadic involvement is the necessity of evaluating the cyclical and multidimensional nature of the experience. Research provides important data about the multidimensional and complex structure of the phenomenon. Therapists should avoid the danger of adopting a judicial or accusatory position against any of the partners and create a space for both parties to express their primary feelings and their deep attachment needs. Because of the multidimensional and compelling nature of the topic, the therapist's neutral stance during the process becomes even more important.

Although extensive studies conducted to understand this multidimensional phenomenon address different aspects of extradyadic involvement, some limitations are noticeable. One of these difficulties is contradictory results of different research that examine the same dimension of the topic. This seems to be related to design, definition or sample differences in these studies (Blow & Hartnett, 2005a; Hertlein & Skaggs, 2005). Additionally, the studies conducted with large groups cannot provide in-depth information, while smaller sample studies mainly conducted with heterosexual, middle-to-upper class, married and Caucasian participants lack diversity. Future studies need to explore sexual orientation, culture, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status related variables in a more specified way (Blow & Hartnett, 2005a). Conducting more intercultural studies and involving different samples can help us better understand this quite universal and relationship based phenomenon.

Research Article

Introduction

To have a relationship with someone other than the spouse, as Perel (2017) states “has existed since marriage was invented, and so too the taboo against it. It has been legislated, debated, politicized, and demonized throughout history” (p. 12-13). Although the phenomenon has cultural components, it is a topic with highly universal characteristics due to its relationship-centered nature. Therefore, extradyadic involvement related problems occur with high prevalence among couples in clinical and community settings; cause considerable distress to all the participants, their spouses and family system (Allen et al., 2005).

Many different studies have been conducted in order to understand why humans engage in an extradyadic relationship (Allen et al., 2005; Rusbult, 1980; Thompson, 1983), what exactly “extradyadic relationship” means (Glass & Wright, 1985; Perel, 2017; Thompson, 1984), how this incident effects the relationship and individual (Olson et al., 2002; Spring & Spring 1996) and how an efficient clinical work can be carried out with participants who experience extradyadic relationship related problems (Allen & Atkins, 2005; Gordon, Baucom & Snyder, 2004; Gordon, Baucom, Snyder, & Dixon, 2008). An important part of these studies try to investigate the prevalence of infidelity (Atkins, Baucom & Jacobson, 2001; Laumann, Gagnon, Michael & Michaels, 1994; Wiederman, 1997). Although the data seems to be reliable when research focuses on sexual affair based on data obtained from heterosexual couples and large, representative samples; the results vary significantly when the definition is broader and different populations are included (Blow & Hartnett, 2005b).

In addition to prevalence studies, studies on primary relationship dynamics also provide important information to provide a broader understanding on the matter. Primary relationship satisfaction, primary relationship status, sexual satisfaction, relationship duration, presence and number of children in relationship are among the variables investigated in the studies carried out. In their study, Allen

et al. (2005) underscore some specific risk factors such as “inequity in marriage, highly autonomous marital relationships, personality differences between spouses, cohabitation, marrying at a young age, and being in the early years of marriage” (p. 111).

Among these studies conducted to understand different dimensions of extradyadic relationships, there has been minimal studies concerning Bowen’s prominent Family Systems Theory, and its relationship to extradyadic involvement (Fish et al., 2012). Although studies theoretically linking the basic concepts of Bowenian theory with extradyadic involvement exist, the literature is lacking in researches that comprehensively explore the issue within the framework of the Family Systems Theory. Moultrup (1990) states that differentiation of self constitutes the core of the extradyadic involvement process. According to his perspective, because differentiation is basically one’s ability to balance autonomy and togetherness needs, extradyadic involvement is closely related to this concept. This kind of a triangulation is indeed determined by the couple’s differentiation level, emotional distance and by the overall dynamic balance in the relationship (Moltrup, 1990).

Bowen conceptualizes the family as a unit which operates through interlocking relationships between its members. According to his transgenerational perspective, the family can only be understood in depth with its multigenerational narrative (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2013). Family Systems Theory mainly focuses on patterns that develop in families throughout generations in order to manage their anxiety. As Brown (1999) underlines “If family members do not have the capacity to think through their responses to relationship dilemmas, but rather react anxiously to perceived emotional demands, a state of chronic anxiety or reactivity may be set in place” (p. 95).

Two quite instinctual forces, individuality and togetherness are the fundamental determinants of human relationships. Families as a multigenerational network of relationship, shape the interplay of these two forces’ dance (Nichols, 2013). It is more likely to repeat some specified behaviors for family members if

these two forces –individuality and togetherness- intensify and emerge as emotional overinvolvement (fusion) or emotional cutoff (Gladding, 1998).

Three concepts that play an important role in understanding the difficulties experienced by families and individuals are differentiation of self, triangulation and multigenerational transmission process. According to the Family Systems Theory, individuals are determined by the differentiation level and transgenerational themes of the system they are born into. The way of coping with anxiety, relationship patterns, family belief system, roles and themes pass down from generation to generation (Brown, 1999) .

In contrast to responding automatically to emotional pressures and anxiety, differentiation of self is the capacity to reflect (Bowen & Kerr, 1988). The emotional atmosphere the child is born into determines the differentiation level of the child. The effect depends on the degree of triangling the child experiences with his/her parents (Brown, 1999).

Triangulation, which interacts closely with one’s level of differentiation, “is a common way in which two-person systems under stress attempt to achieve stability (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2013, p. 212)”. When anxiety increases one can need emotional closeness or distance (Nichols, 2013); if the conflict and anxiety in a dyad escalates beyond a critical point, either because of an internal or external condition, by involving a third party –who either takes sides or provides a detour for the high level of anxiety- stability can be rearranged (Brown, 1999; Dallos & Draper, 2015; Ross, Hinshaw, Murdock, 2016). In addition, the tension between the couple can be projected onto the third parties such as children, in-laws, work or alcohol (Gladding, 1998).

The concepts of differentiation of self and triangulation are closely related; as the fusion and emotional reactivity increase, one’s intent to preserve a triangle to maintain the stability is expected to heighten. Moreover, the less-differentiated family member is more prone to get involved in a triangle (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2008).

From a Bowenian perspective, extradyadic involvement itself can be considered as a triangulation process. An extradyadic relationship can help the

couple diminish the anxiety through triangulation at the point of increased relational difficulties. According to Bowen (1978), individuals with lower levels of differentiation tend to overcome their compelling feelings by triangulating with a third person in times of conflict and intense distress within their intimate relationships. The differentiation level of the person and the tendency of triangulation, and the way in which emotional and rational processes are managed in situations where anxiety is at a critical point therefore seems important in understanding extradyadic involvement. The extradyadic relationship itself can be conceptualized as triangulation and is motivated to diminish anxiety (Habbenn, 2000).

Fish et al. (2012) investigated the relation between attachment style, differentiation level and extradyadic involvement. In their study they underscore the likelihood of the emotional reactivity of those who have difficulty in balancing dependence and independence needs in their relationship, and their consequential tendency to achieve stability in the primary relationship through triangulation. Their findings show significant relationship between differentiation and all forms of extradyadic relationships. According to the results of the Differentiation of Self Inventory used in the research, fusion and emotional reactivity subscales are significantly correlated with the tendency to participate in an extradyadic relationship. Based on the strong predictability of the fusion subscale, authors speculate on the pull of seeking outside physical or emotional connection increasing in times of feeling disconnected with the partner. In addition, emotional reactivity is also a strong predictor for extradyadic involvement related behaviors, which supports the theoretical notion of reducing overwhelming feelings by triangling another individual in times of stress and anxiety due to low differentiation. In addition, findings also emphasize increased tendency of extradyadic relationships in people with previous knowledge of a parent's affair (Fish et al., 2012).

Another study investigating the relationship between differentiation and extradyadic involvement, conducted by Hertlein et al. (2003), concludes that when the duration of relationship and age of respondents are controlled, there is a difference in differentiation level between people who engage in an extradyadic

relationship and their counterparts. In addition, people who assess themselves as unfaithful have a significantly lower Total Differentiation of Self Inventory score than who consider themselves to be faithful. However, the difference between two groups is not statistically significant for the relationship between physical affair and differentiation, contrary to the research hypothesis (Hertlein, Ray, Wetchler & Killmer, 2003). Similarly, results of another study conducted to explore the interaction between differentiation and extradyadic involvement is inconclusive, statistically significant relationship are not found between two variables, though the importance of mediating factors is underscored by authors (Hertlein & Skaggs, 2005).

As mentioned above, family belief system, level of differentiation, interaction patterns and attitudes towards relational subjects are inherited from generation to generation. Many researchers investigated the influence of family of origin experiences on one's romantic relationship including relationship satisfaction, divorce, jealousy and marital conflict. The phenomenon of extradyadic involvement can also be understood from the multigenerational transmission process view. In their study on exploring intergenerational patterns of extradyadic involvement, Weiser and Weigel investigated the role of parental infidelity on offsprings' infidelity related behaviors and beliefs (Weiser & Weigel, 2017). They used the social learning theory to understand the intergenerational patterns of the phenomenon and according to their study parental infidelity was positively associated with their children's infidelity-related behaviors and beliefs. The results indicated that children who know their parents' extradyadic involvement experience were more likely to involve an extradyadic relationship. In addition, parental infidelity has an impact upon children's belief system and acceptability of infidelity related behaviors (Weiser & Weigel, 2017). However, researchers also emphasize that these findings cannot imply with certainty that parental infidelity determines offspring infidelity. The authors remind the importance of protective factors such as relationship satisfaction, communication quality. Another study carried out by Weiser et al. (2017) examined how family of origin experiences are associated with the propensity to engage in extradyadic relationship. According to

the findings of 294 participants, parental extradyadic relationship history, lower marital satisfaction and parental conflict were associated with one's own extradyadic relationship behavior. Researchers explain this intergenerational pattern in two ways; direct (parental behavior determines one's own relationship) and indirect (parental marital satisfaction is related to one's own relationship satisfaction which is linked to extradyadic relationship behavior) (Weiser, Weigel, Lalasz & Evans, 2017).

The common point of these studies is the attempt to understand how the differentiation level of the person, transgenerational issues and extradyadic relationship related behaviors are related. Although there are limitations about suggesting consistent and comprehensive data due to limited number of studies, in past two decades the extradyadic relationship literature has been giving much greater attention to the Family Systems Theory.

3.2.Purpose of Study

As stated previously, despite the fact that several studies have examined different dimensions of extradyadic involvement, studies on its relation with differentiation level, triangulation dynamics and multigenerational transmission processes is limited in terms of scope and quantity both internationally and in Turkey. (Fish et al., 2012; Habbenn, 2000).

Although gender differences with regards to attitudes towards and behaviors of extradyadic involvement has been the subject of different studies (Atkins, Baucom & Jacobson, 2001; Greeley, 1994; Lalasz & Weigel, 2011), the literature is lacking in the investigation of particular gender-specific experiences of individuals with such involvements. Previous studies have shown that social attitudes towards extradyadic involvement differ when considering gender (Knodel et al., 1997; Penn, Hernandez & Bermudez, 1997). Additionally, taking into consideration the gender inequality spread across different layers of system in Turkey (Dinç Kahraman, 2010; Özaydınlık, 2014; Kadir Has University, 2019), the present study aimed to understand particularly women's experiences.

In addition to this, the field is in need of more qualitative research on the extradyadic involvement phenomenon. As Blow and Harnett (2005b) state in their comprehensive review on extradyadic involvement related studies: “To understand the process of infidelity, its correlates, and its consequences in greater depth, a dynamic interchange is needed between qualitative and quantitative studies in which in-depth explorations are done in qualitative studies and assertions are falsified in quantitative studies” (p. 230).

Considering the gap in the literature, in this thesis, qualitative research is used to deeply understand the unique experiences of women who have had the experience of extradyadic involvement in their committed relationships. Fundamental concepts of Bowenian Family Systems Theory are used to form interview questions. By doing so, it is aimed to draw attention to and deeply understand the role of differentiation of self, triangulation and multigenerational process. In this regard, two research questions were determined: (a) What is the experience of women who have been involved in extradyadic relationships? and (b) How are their experiences of extradyadic involvement interrelated with their differentiation, closeness/boundaries expectations in their romantic and family of origin relationships? The present study aims to contribute to the extradyadic involvement literature by focusing on the involved women’s experiences in depth through a Bowenian framework.

3.3.The Primary Investigator (PI)

I am a woman who is a student of Istanbul Bilgi University Clinical Psychology graduate program, with a focus on the couple and family therapy track. My interest on Family Systems Theory and couple and family therapy started during my undergraduate studies. I have also completed a five-year training program on couple and family therapy.

My interest in the emergence of extradyadic involvement in a couple relationship is related to the fact that the subject is closely related to our relationship needs. I think very basic existential and relational concepts such as monogamy,

polygamy, loyalty, desire, attachment, closeness and need for security are quite important to us in our better understanding of the extradyadic relationship phenomenon. We can think that the opposite is also true, a wider understanding of extradyadic involvement phenomenon can help us for understanding these concepts.

On the other hand, I believe that every extradyadic involvement experience itself is unique and specific to that relationship. Although there are a wide variety of research on this subject and some general findings are found, research still reveal some controversial and divergent results at certain points. I believe that this complexity is partly related to the fact that the extradyadic involvement experienced by each couple can be understood best with their own narrative. For this reason, I believe it is valuable to conduct a qualitative study to try to understand the participants' experiences from their own reality and narratives perspective.

To me, we do not seem to be able to interpret the dichotomous relation dynamics with dual answers such as good and bad, black and white or victim and aggressor. That is why I believe that as therapists we should be aware of the tendency of triangulation with any partner and repeat the pattern that the couple suffers or being judgmental.

3.4.Method

3.4.1. Participants

Primary criteria for participation in this study were being a heterosexual woman between the ages of 25 and 40, and having been involved in an extradyadic relationship during a committed relationship of at least one year. Another important criterion was having terminated at least one of the two relationships. Seven Turkish women who fit these criteria were recruited for the study. All participants identified as belonging to the middle and upper middle socioeconomic classes, and held minimum an undergraduate program of four years. All were working professionals in their respective branches. Of the six participants, 1 was currently married, 2 were

divorced and 3 had never been married.

3.4.2. Settings and Procedure

The Primary Investigator (PI) used the snowball method to reach participants. Following the Istanbul Bilgi University Ethics Committee's approval, the PI informed her colleagues by sending emails and text messages about the study and participation criteria. PI's friends, clients and all other acquaintances were excluded. Participation in the study was based on volunteering. PI conducted pre-interview calls with all prospective participants to give information about the study, confirm the participation criteria and arrange the appointments. Participants who fulfilled the inclusion criteria were interviewed by the PI in either her or participants' workplace.

One participant was interviewed as a pilot study before the other six interviews. No revision needed after the pilot study. Interviews were conducted in a semi structured and face-to-face way. At the beginning of the interview, PI informed participants about the aim of the study once again and participants read and filled the informed consent forms (see Appendix A). The Turkish title of the study was simplified in order to make it more understandable for the participants. Demographic information gathered via verbal questions. Open ended questions were preferred to deeply understand the experiences of the participants'. Different probing questions were asked to explore details of their romantic relationships, extradyadic involvement experiences, family relationships and their perspectives on culture. Questions clarified with sub-questions if needed (see Appendix B). Interviews lasted between 1 and 1.5 hours and conducted in Turkish.

3.4.3. Data Analysis

Since one of the primary aim of the study is to understand the extradyadic involvement experience, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA: Smith & Osborn, 2003) is preferred. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed by

the PI herself. Transcription process was continued during the data collection process. Transcripts were edited to ensure privacy. During the transcription process PI examined process-related components of expression such as improper affect, silence moments, laughs and tone of voice. Transcripts uploaded to MaxQda software program and the PI coded each interviews. Some sentences have been coded more than once if needed. Then, themes and subthemes were identified.

3.4.5. Trustworthiness

In order to strengthen the trustworthiness, multiple methods were applied. The first of these methods was, the data was collected in two different ways; audiotapes and the field notes. During the interviews and coding process the PI continued to reflect her own perspective and reflections. The whole process was followed by the thesis advisor. Additionally, a peer debriefer also coded one of the interviews and consistency of codes has been checked by comparing the results. After completion of the analysis phase, final themes were emailed to the participants for member checking. None of the participants replied back to the email.

3.5. Results

Four themes emerged from the analysis of the interviews: Meaning of the extradyadic involvement, extradyadic involvement chances the primary relationship, difficulty in differentiation and extradyadic involvement as experienced by a woman in Turkey (Table 1). The quotes are labeled P1, P2 etc.; the letter identified Participant and the number identified the interview order (e.g., the participant who was interviewed third is P3). In addition, in this section, the term 'EDI' is used as the abbreviation of the term extradyadic involvement.

Table 1- Summary of Themes

Themes	Subthemes	Illustrative example
Meaning of the extradyadic involvement	Not the presence of extradyadic involvement, but the absence in the primary relationship	<i>“We were more like two housemates, two adults sharing a house logistically, not spouses.” (P4)</i>
	Need for feeling good	<i>“Yes, I lived through a very very happy and beautiful thing.” (P1)</i>
	It is not only about sex	<i>“Sharing, talking and then flirting with an adult who is my friend... Me liking his interest in me.” (P4)</i>
Extradyadic involvement changes the primary relationship		<i>“Negative. It affected my primary relationship very adversely. I lost my affection to my partner.” (P3)</i>
Difficulty in differentiation	Lack of boundaries	<i>“There are no rules, a high level of spontaneity (in the family) ... Hence, adrenalin is very high.” (P5)</i>
	Significance of the mother	<i>“She is extremely important for me. Because up until that time, my greatest support was my mother. I have always felt that way.” (P2)</i>

	Ambivalence towards independence needs	<i>“Yes, their attitudes are intrusive for me, but when I imagine to tell them about this without breaking their hearts, there is no way.” (P6)</i>
Extradyadic involvement as experienced by a woman in Turkey	Extradyadic involvement is more difficult for women	<i>“A man did it, bravo; a woman did it, shame on her.” (P3)</i>
	Challenging the homeostasis	<i>“I want to feel good and happy. That’s why I don’t care about societal schemas or anything.” (P2)</i>

Having information about the basics of the narratives of the participants can help us evaluate the results in a more holistic way. For this reason, each participant’s experiences as to family of origin and intimate relationships are summarized below.

Participant 1:

P1 was a 40 years old woman who engaged in several extradyadic involvement experiences in her marriage as well as the romantic relationships before her marriage. She stated that she first got divorced, and then after a while ended her relationship with her extradyadic involvement partner. At the time of the interview, she was engaged in another relationship and was free from an extradyadic relationship.

P1 stated that she did not get any therapeutic support about this issue, and was not in therapy at the time of the interview. P1 defined her motivation to engage in an extradyadic relationship in terms of several factors. One is that she did not

have a satisfactory relationship with her primary partner. She stated that she panics during the times when she feel insecure in her primary relationship and at such times wants to have someone new in her life. She added that she also had a motivation to punish her primary partner during that episodes. Her tendency to engage in an extradyadic relationship manifested itself more especially when she felt insure and angry in her primary relationship.

P1 stated that she had a very close relationship with her mother, adding that they had a lot in common. Her words about her parents portrayed a strong, way too dominant and controlling mother and an emotional, naive and even-tempered father. She told that she was always supportive of her mother about the dynamics in the relationship between her parents, which provides us with an important information as to the triangulation process in the family.

In P1's family of origin, parental figures had not engaged in an extradyadic relationship. Yet she told that her uncle had such an experience. She stated that he was very special for her and that he had lived with them for a while. Even though P1's parents strictly opposed such a relationship, P1 took it normally, both for her uncle and herself. She said that she did not judge her uncle. Her attitude was the same towards herself.

Participant 2:

P2 was a 30 years old woman who got involved in several extradyadic relationship during her marriage. After divorce, she had a romantic relationship in which she again engaged in an extradyadic relationship. She told that she first got divorced, and then after a while ended her relationship with her extradyadic involvement partner. At the time of the interview, she was engaged in yet another relationship and was free from an extradyadic relationship.

P2 stated that she did not get any therapeutic support about this issue, and was not in therapy at the time of the interview. P2 said that her motivation to engage in an extradyadic relationship was fueled by the fact that the emotional bond in her primary relationship was no longer present. At that point, she gravitated towards

another man to meet her need to be happy. She added that her extradyadic involvement experience provided her with space in which she could run off from her marriage that was going bad and harming to her.

P2 stated that she had a very close relationship with her mother, adding that her personality was similar to that of her mother's in various ways. They both lived life at a fast pace, transited from one emotion to another quite easily and experienced emotions intensely. She asserted that her mother's stance as a strong woman and her dominant character inspired her in her romantic relationships as well as in social life. P2's description of her parents portrayed a dominant and controlling mother who had difficulty in affect regulation. Her father seems to be an introverted person who was distant to other members of the familial system. The familial atmosphere was described to be chaotic by P2 who seems to have assumed the role of parentified child in the familial system.

In P2's family of origin, parental figures did engage in extradyadic relationships. Yet the couple had avoided talking about these experiences. P2 described her family's attitude towards extradyadic involvement as accepting and understanding. Her words as to the need and right to be happy resemble her mother's discourse about to the topic.

Participant 3:

P3 was a 29 years old woman who got involved in two extradyadic involvement experiences during her romantic relationship. She told that she first broke up with her extradyadic involvement partner, and then after a while ended her primary relationship. At the time of the interview, she was engaged in another relationship and was free from an extradyadic relationship.

P3 was not in therapy at the time of the interview. Yet she stated that she went to therapy before to resolve a difficulty she felt in her life in the previous years. When asked about her motivation to engage in an extradyadic relationship, she said that something was missing in her primary relationship and that she was

not satisfied in her sex life, stressing that she wanted to fill the deficiency with another person.

P3 described her familial relationships as “very close”. She said that all family members cared about one another to a great extent. Even though she was not eager to gain her independence, she engaged in various efforts to take a distance from her family because she foresaw that this much of closeness would be problematic for her emotionally in the future.

In P3’s family of origin, parental figures had not engaged in an extradyadic relationship. She described her family’s possible reactions to an extradyadic involvement experience as: “They would not take it kindly; but rather than getting angry or judgmental they would feel badly about it.”

Participant 4:

P4 was a 38 years old woman who got involved in extradyadic relationship during her marriage. At the time of the interview she was out of her marriage and was still in a relationship with her extradyadic involvement partner. She said that she sought therapeutic support within this period and was still in therapy.

P4 stressed the difficulties in her primary relationship when asked about her motivation to engage in an extradyadic relationship. She talked about her felt loneliness, drifting apart from her partner and diminishing of sharing between her and her partner as years passed. She underlined her need to “demand love”. It seems that it is important for her to fill the void she felt and share the life with another person.

P4 described her familial atmosphere as generally hectic, which was characterized by talking about problems most of the time. According to her, relationships between family members were “very close in general, without boundaries”. She stated that the difficulty as to boundary issues was more apparent in her relationship with her mother, adding that she felt uncomfortable about it. In P4’s narrative we see the perfect child-partner role and its corrosive effects. She said that she assumed way too much responsibility in her romantic relationships for

years because of this role she learned in the family, adding that she failed to approach problems in her relationships in a transparent and realistic manner and as a result got very exhausted in the end.

As distinct from other participants, P4's extradyadic relationship was known by both her primary partner and her family. In her family of origin, no such thing was experienced before. She said that her father reacted to her as "I wish you had come to us and share the difficulties you experienced". Her father was saddened because of the topic at hand while her mother was more concerned with what other people would think and say about the situation.

Participant 5:

P5 was a 37 years old woman. She had engaged in several extradyadic relationships both in her marriage and the romantic relationships before marriage. She was still in a relationship with her husband and the marriage was free from an extradyadic relationship at the time of the interview. P5 said that she sought therapeutic support at different times in her life and worked on her romantic relationships in those therapeutic processes. At the time of the interview she was not in therapy.

When talking about her motivation to engage in an extradyadic relationship, P5 stressed that it could not be associated with a single emotion. She said that her extradyadic involvement experiences showed up especially when her relationship with her primary partner was weak and they drifted apart. She underscored several factors; need to be appreciated and fancied, being more creative in life and punishing the partner during difficult times.

P5 stated that she grew up in a family in which tension and conflict was intense. Her relationship with her father was distant. As to her mother, her words did not portray a close relationship either. Yet she said that her character was a mix of her parents. She believed that her being emotional and depressive was similar to her mother, and that her being angry and harsh resembled her father. She stated that it was hard for her to carry contrary characteristics of her parents.

P5 asserted that no one had engaged in an extradyadic relationship in her family. She believed that her family could approach such experiences in an understanding manner and added that her family can find it normal to flirt with another person while being in a relationship.

Participant 6:

P6 was a 28 years old woman who got involved in an extradyadic during her romantic relationship. At the time of the interview, she was not engaged in any romantic relationship. She told that she first broke up with her extradyadic involvement partner, and then after a while ended her primary relationship. P6 stated that she did not get any therapeutic support about this issue, and was not in therapy at the time of the interview.

P6 stressed the importance of feeling loved when talking about her motivation to engage in an extradyadic relationship. She defined extradyadic involvement as meeting the need to be loved when she could not get love in where she was. Yet she also referred to her experiences in her family of origin, suggesting that her being a parentified child could have made it hard for her to make room for her own needs and that this could be one other factor for her involvement in another relationship. She added that her negative experiences as to trust issues in her previous relationships could be influential as well. She said that the idea that “she should betray his trust before he does that to her” could be a motivating factor for her.

As to the relationship between P6 and her mother, we see the anxious and intrusive character of her mother. P6 described the relationship between her parents and her as too close, adding that despite her discomfort about this situation she failed to find a way out. She asserted that she wanted to have a healthier relationship with her parents in which boundaries were clear and she was emotionally independent.

P6 stated that no one had engaged in an extradyadic relationship in her family. Her family’s attitude towards this topic is rigid and harsh. She predicted

that they would never be accepting and understanding in case they learned about such an experience.

3.5.1. Meaning of the Extradynamic Involvement

This main theme showed up in the participants' narratives around the relational difficulties and deficiencies in their primary relationships. In all participants' narratives, it was very clear that the primary relationship was characterized by strains that augmented in time and hence failed to fulfill the needs of the partners in different dimensions.

For some of the participants, the problem was beyond unfulfilled needs. They were confronted with a toxic relationship in which they were being emotionally harmed. To be able to understand this theme more comprehensively, three subthemes, namely "Not the presence of EDI, but the absence in the PR", "Need for feeling good" and "It is not only about sex" will be explored.

3.5.1.1. "Not the Presence of Extradynamic Involvement, But the Absence in the Primary Relationship"

In an effort to grasp the EDI experience in depth, participants were asked to define how they themselves made sense of their EDI experience. In all of the answers, the underlying factor was the difficulties and emotional and sexual deficiencies evident in the primary relationship. Despite the fact that participants provided multidimensional answers as opposed to the meaning of EDI, their answers all started with mentioning the difficulties and problems they experienced in their primary relationships. Participants stressed that the dynamics evident in the relationship with the primary partner were at work when their EDI experience took hold.

When asked to elaborate on her EDI experience and its meaning in her life, Participant#1 (P1) stated that her EDI experience was, for the most part, related to

her feeling (or not feeling) safe and secure –as well as valued – in her primary relationship. She portrayed her situation via the following words:

“Here is the thing. I thought I was not emotionally satisfied in my marriage, I suppose. Whenever I feel insecure or become unsure of my partner’s feelings or feel anger inside, I gravitate towards this direction. I think this has to do with my need to protect myself in times when I think he is not that much involved with me.” (P1)

Here we see that the participant leaned towards EDI as a result of her unfulfilled needs as to relational satisfaction and emotional security in that relationship. This seems to be her way of protecting herself.

EDI experience started with apparently similar reasons for P2. Her primary relationship changed with time and she started experience challenges, while her partner’s drinking habit became problematic day by day and he started to inflict violence on her. In her own words their marriage turned into a very problematic one in a couple of years.

“It was like a door to escape for me... I was on the way to grow up, had entered the business life and came across a different world. In the meantime, my partner had problems with alcohol consumption and started to inflict violence on me. It was an escape from the pressures of that marriage, an escape from such a bad psychology.” (P2)

In these statements, P2 portrays her EDI experience as a means she used in order to get away from the difficulties she encountered in her marriage. She puts her relationship with her spouse and the problems they experienced in that relationship at the center when making sense of her EDI experience.

Another participant of the study, P3, described how her primary relationship set down the stage for her EDI experience via two different relational means:

“I can say that our sexual life was not satisfactory for me, it was not enough. We did not have sexual compatibility. I realized that long afterwards. We were together for four years. Then we broke up, and then we united again. I realized it just now. Sexuality was really not enough. In my current relationship, we are together for six months. I feel absolutely no need to look

around for other men. I am totally closed to alternatives. Hey, we are talking about a very flirty person like me, someone who loves flirting, someone who wants to attract attention. I love getting attention. But I think it depends on the person. It seems that the person with whom I had a long relationship, a three-year long period, did not really satisfy me. In my current relationship, I do not experience similar stuff. None of it.” (P3)

Like all the other participants, she stresses the determinative role of the primary relationship and unsatisfied needs in the formation of her EDI experience.

The ample impact of the deficiencies in the primary relationship on the formation of an EDI experience is evident in P4’s narrative, as well:

“In the last five years of my marriage my partner and I came to become disconnected. We were more like two housemates, two adults sharing a house logistically, not spouses. You expect to see love and respect and many other things from your partner, but none of these existed. I entered a period in which I toughened like a wall. I felt empty inside; the issue was not the presence of someone else perhaps, it was the absence of my partner in the picture.” (P4)

P4 emphasizes the disconnection in her relationship that manifested itself for a long time along with lack of satisfaction and emotional nourishment. She asserts that her romantic involvement with another man and the joy she started to feel in that relationship made her understand how hungry she has become in her primary relationship. These are the words she uttered:

“It may or may not work with the person I really want to be with (partner in the EDI experience). But I know I have many things to share with a man, with a person. And there are many things that cheer me up in a relationship. It seems I went way too hungry in my relationship. Thinking these, I came to grasp what was happening.” (P4)

P6 interprets her EDI experience in terms of the lack of love in her primary relationship: *“I was not feeling loved and when some other person showed interest in me I thought I could get nourished with that love and then try to continue to love my (primary) partner. That’s what I chose.”*

P5 thinks that her EDI experience was a function of the interaction between her primary relationship and EDI:

“It happens at a time when your relationship is at its most fragile, shaky phase. When my (primary) relationship is sturdy, when we are close, when our communication is intense, warm and sincere I become distant to the other person. (When asked about what fragile and shaky means in this context) It was... when I take my current relationship as a reference... it was distance, being distant, yes we can call it distance.”

EDI experience seems to be put aside when the primary relationship appears to be sound and vivid. It is revived when distance shows up in the primary relationship which fuels the feeling of lack of intimacy and closeness. In line with all the other participants' experiences, the basic determinant of engagement in an EDI experience appears to be one's perception and satisfaction as to the primary relationship.

3.5.1.2. “Need for Feeling Good”

In this sub-theme which is very much related to the previous one, we can track the participants' discourses as to their need to feel good and happy, which they associated with the EDI experience. Unhappiness, lack of emotional fulfillment and the arduous psychology embedded in the primary relationship seem to be compared and contrasted with the parameters in the EDI experience which is characterized by feelings of joy and happiness, sense of being completed with the presence of another person and activation of creative sources.

When asked why she got into an EDI experience, P1 said “*when I feel unhappy, someone else's interest in me, his being concerned about me or maybe a new vessel of excitement give me gratification, I suppose*”. She added that she embraced her EDI experience because it helped her feel happy. She seems to position what she lived through as a critic and enriching experience.

“I really needed this kind of a thing at that time and it was such a beautiful relationship... I have a perspective that if I am happy in the moment I live

through I really see it as a gain. This was true for me at all times. Yes, I lived through a very very happy and beautiful thing. Yes, there were some negative consequences and yes, I managed to bear the brunt. I mean, there was nothing else to do. Would I do it again, now? Yes, I would.” (P1)

For P2, just like P1, EDI experience meant to be happy and live her life. She uttered the following:

“When I reached that stage, I felt that something was over. To live my life meant to do the thing I wanted to do. The only thing is that there is an oath, a word of commitment. And yet, to me, commitment is no longer at the table. I just don’t want to hold myself back in guise of that at such a point. I want to do whatever I want to do because I want to be happy.” (P2)

In these words, we see not only an emphasis on the exhaustion of the sources that nourish the primary relationship and the ceasing of the commitment between the parties, EDI experience meant to enjoy life for this woman. P2 stressed the “need to feel good”:

“So it became something that you see the end of. As such, when I saw that I could have feelings towards another man, I remembered the times when I held myself back and thought that there was no need for that. I felt happy. As long as these relationships make me experience all these, without any hesitation I will continue to chase happiness, to fulfill my need to feel good. I can engage in an EDI experience again.” (P2)

P6 expressed her need to feel good through the following words: “*Well then, why did I not feel guilty after doing this, after this happened? Because it made me feel good. I don’t know whether this is somewhat selfishness or not. I suppose it is for me.*” Importantly, she stated that the two relationships met different needs for her.

“I used to live my self-enclosed part with him and lived my social part with the other man. My social life was with him, but chatting at home, talking about deep issues were with the other man. That is to say, if this side was gray, that side was green. And I thought the green went together with the gray beautifully.” (P6)

The previous sub-theme underlined the deficiencies and difficulties evident in the primary relationship as well as how they paved the way for an EDI experience. Here, on top of those, we see that the EDI experience has another function. The two relationships serve different needs for the person involved. Moreover, they seem to complement one another in a sense. I believe this is an important point to grasp as it prevents us to make the mistake to conceptualize EDI experience as only a consequence of the difficulties evident in the primary relationship.

P5 gave us another perspective when she expressed the intense excitement she engaged in the EDI experience. She asserted that what she lived through was a means for her to renew and recreate herself. When asked what was the motive behind her starting such a relationship she said:

“To be liked, to attract interest is excitement, I think. It is excitement for me. It is a new, brand-new thing. Anything new gives the person the opportunity to rebuild him/herself – be it in the field of work, friendship or any other thing. You can be a new person, you can build a new self with a new person. For one thing, you can learn new stuff. I think encountering something new is an extremely enriching, teaching experience for the person. You can do things you did not do before. You can test your limits. Flirting is the most effective means for me to demolish and then rebuild myself in a relationship. Flirting is living a relationship.” (P5)

What she said resembles what all the other participants stated as to the need to feel good and to chase happiness. Yet P5 designates an important point as to the place and function of her EDI experience in her life. She said:

“To me, infidelity lays down a fertile ground. I write poems, I write stories. My hair gets longer, I get more beautiful. It makes me hold on to life to a greater extent. Yet it also makes me feel guilty towards the man at home. Then I become more sensitive, more fragile.” (P5)

As it seems, EDI experience serves to function as a means to experience what is vital for her and to make her live her emotions at a deeper level. But as we can track from what she said, the excitement and the creative sources activated do

not come all by themselves; feelings of intense guilt and vulnerability accompany the positive effects as well.

P4 talked about the long lasting distant relationship in her marriage and her disappointment in not having her romantic needs met in this relationship. She positions her EDI experience within this context and on the opposite side of what she lives through with her primary partner. She described her sense of being completed in her EDI experience and the intense gratification as well as feelings of guilt she experienced via these statements:

“Longing for love. Lack of feeling loved. Emptiness. The joy in filling the void inside you with a person like you, a person who thinks like you. I felt more... whenever I was with him I felt unbelievable pleasure and joy and yet when I got back home I started to whip myself harshly. As it were, I came to feel very guilty because of the pleasure and joy I felt.” (P4)

Here we see the position of vital emotions in the participant’s EDI experience even though they are nested with feelings of intense guilt.

Putting together all the narratives of the participants as to their EDI experience, we see that it happens not only because of the deficiencies or unhappiness evident in the primary relationship. EDI experience seems to make those who engage in in feel better, be more productive in life, become happier and feel completed by another person.

3.5.1.3.It Is Not Only About Sex

This theme emerged from the narratives of four of the participants. It explores how EDI experience is not only about sex. Participants stressed that what they experienced was not a short-dated relationship based on sexuality. They asserted that the people who entered their lives came to fulfill emotional needs in the first place. As they said; they first built an emotional bond, shared their sorrows and resentments and experienced joyful moments with the new person. Their relationship evolved over time as to include sexuality as well as all the other components aforementioned.

P4 describes this dimension of the issue through the following statements:

“Sharing, talking and then flirting with an adult who is my friend... Me liking his interest in me... Initially the thing was to share the void, the feeling of emptiness in my life with a person (it could have been a woman as well) who has a similar need, a similar reality. This sharing gave me enormous gratification. And then it went beyond that. As it were, we came to share our daily life and talk about our problems. We came to tell each other how beautiful we saw the other. It was such a flirting period. I started to love him emotionally as well. That was more important for me.” (P4)

She gives priority to the gratification of sharing her life with another person and stresses that the emotional dimension of this relationship is more important to her than the sexual dimension.

P5 has a similar story. She said:

“Yes, it may be perceived as orienting towards someone for sex, but it was not even close to that. It was always emotional first. The story is always the same. In every case, someone approaches me emotionally at a time when I am very vulnerable. That person is always someone who I should not get close to. He tells me something either very funny or emotional. I mean, I never get attracted to a man’s physical appearance or presence. For instance, it all started at an emotional level, and having sex came only after we passed through the emotional stage and developed an intimate bond. Then sex became a binder.” (P5)

Like P4, she asserts that all her EDI experiences started with emotional closeness and evolved to include a sexual component after bonding took place in the relationship.

P1 states that she indeed needs to have an emotional bond with her partner in all her relationships and that she cannot rely on only sex in any relationship. She said:

“These are not short-dated relationships. Then I realize I am in love, and I continue with that. I really do feel something. I mean, I really need to like the person. I really should be attracted to him. There needs to be an

emotional bond in between. I do not like it if this is not at the table. It is about disliking only sex based relationship.” (P1)

P6 reports that she meets her social needs with her EDI partner whereas her spiritual and more self-enclosed side is activated when she is with her primary partner. Here, albeit through an indirect saying, we see that EDI experience is not about only sex for P6, too. She seems to be engaged in a relationship that includes emotional bonding and makes her feel good in a myriad of ways. These are the words she uttered: *“There is a need for something, a need to love. And then someone comes before you... and I like to love him.”* These statements enable us to clearly see the importance P6 attributes to the emotional bonding in her EDI experience.

3.5.2. Extradyadic Involvement Changes the Primary Relationship

In the narratives of all the participants we see quite varying effects of EDI experience both on themselves and their primary relationships. The differences between participants’ experiences as to the impact of EDI on themselves and their relationships clue us as to the complex and multi-factorial nature of the EDI experience. One participant indicated that this experience was like therapy for herself and her spouse while another said that it made her feel strange from her primary partner and resulted in her feeling the need to distance herself from the primary relationship. Yet another participant stated that her EDI experience was the reason why her primary relationship ended.

P5 said that the impact of each one of her EDI experiences was different for every relationship, which supports the assertion that EDI has a complex nature with different consequences. She said, *“In my first marriage I did not feel love. Because I already was way too far from feeling that my partner was someone with whom I got along with, I could not bear the exhaustion, I broke up with him.”* These sentences put forth the determinative role of EDI’s impact on the primary relationship. P5 said that in her second marriage she was in love with her partner and felt an emotional engagement, and that even though she once again engaged in an EDI experience she continued the primary relationship. Since she was not in love

with her ex-spouse, she could no longer carry the intense affects and the devastating effects of the EDI experience, which lead her to terminate the marriage. Another important point is that P5's EDI experience in her second marriage played a remedial role for both herself and her husband. She expressed this via resembling her EDI partner to a therapist:

“He was in our life, in the life of my husband and I. I mean, we had a relationship which my husband had no clue about, and yet this relationship did good for both me and my husband. He is sitting with us, just like a therapist.” (P5)

P1 explained how her EDI experience affected herself and her primary relationship via the following words:

“In fact, I think it does not have that much of an effect. I can ignore. Because I cannot stand feeling bad. I know that I will feel bad if I elaborate on the topic and hence I ignore there in some way. What can I do? It happened once and I got very angry. I was very angry at him. He is my ex-lover, you know it is not a new thing. I have lived it with the same person repeatedly. I say to myself, one night we went out and had a great time, and then I erase the thing from my mind. I do not allow it to affect the relationship.” (P1)

Here we see that she portrays her EDI experience as something which makes her feel bad, and yet at the same time she says that it does not have a negative impact on her. It seems she uses rationalization and minimization of the effects in her mind in an effort to preclude the possible impact of the EDI experience on her. She added that her EDI experience acted as a signal for her to see that her primary relationship had come to an end. She uttered the following:

“The dynamics of each one of them was different, but I lived two long-term affairs when I was with my husband. In both of them I made myself believe that my marriage was already over. I had feelings towards someone else... If I had feelings towards someone else, then it means I was done with the relationship with my husband.” (P1)

When asked about how she made sense of her EDI experience P2 said the following: *“It meant that my relationship was to end. It was a relationship which I*

saw the end of anyway. Hence, having feelings towards another man and making sex with him made me say to myself “yeah, this is really over.” As it were the case with P1, here we see the impact of EDI on the termination of the primary relationship. For P2, her liking someone else and having sex with that person implied to her that the bond in her primary relationship was ruptured. She drew attention to an important point as to the doom of her primary relationship, saying that EDI was not the only factor determining whether to continue with the relationship or not. She asserted her belief that if she were satisfied and happy in her relationship, she could continue with her partner even if she engaged in an EDI experience.

For P3, EDI, all by itself, happened to be an experience that affected her primary relationship adversely and made her drift apart from her primary partner.

“Negative. It affected my primary relationship very adversely. I lost my affection to my partner. I lost my affection to him completely. For instance, the words he uttered started to irritate me. I started to react to him in a negative way even when he said something completely normal. When he approached to hold my hand, I tried to avoid it. Yet at the same time I put effort not to make him realize how I was feeling. It was like me trying to expel him from my world.” (P3)

Her EDI experience resulted in P3’s drifting away from her primary partner, feeling irritated by his words and actions, and losing her affection to him even if it could not compromise the only reason to end the primary relationship.

In P6’s story, EDI experience served to increase her tolerance in general, resulting in her being more peaceful and tolerant in her primary relationship. She said the following:

“The thing is... before my involvement in that other relationship, I used to feel I was not loved in my primary relationship and thought that we had small in common. I became more jealous, more domineering as I got more intolerant as a result of these. I used to press him in various means; ‘Why don’t we go there? Why don’t we do this?’. After the other relationship took

hold, I was more peaceful in my primary relationship as I nourished that part of me in the other relationship.” (P6)

3.5.3. Difficulty in Differentiation

Family members’ ability to meet their own needs as to independence while feeling emotionally attached to one another in the family system, their ability to build a sense of self and to maintain it in both familial and other relationships appear to be closely linked to the concept of “differentiation of self”. One of the common themes that became apparent in participants’ relationships in their family of origin was the difficulty family members experienced in balancing the need for autonomy and the need for togetherness. This difficulty manifested itself in romantic relationships, as well. This main theme is divided into three sub-themes and each will be explored now. The sub-themes are “Lack of boundaries”, “Significance of the mother” and “Ambivalence towards independence needs”.

3.5.3.1.Lack of Boundaries

When asked about familial relationships and boundaries, all participants conceived in a very lucid manner that the concept of boundary was not evident in their family of origin and this pattern was important in what they expect or retain from in their intimate relationships. Even though lack of boundaries in the family was directly expressed by each participant, their feelings, thoughts and attitudes towards this dynamic appeared to be different.

For example, P5 expressed boundary problems and intense affectivity both in her family of origin and, her intimate relationship:

“There are no rules, a high level of spontaneity (in the family) ... Hence, adrenalin is very high. In the family system I designed, adrenalin and spontaneity are high. Yet being together... I mean, we are together, whatever happens. Yes, in my relationship with my partner things were like this (*she nestles her hands*).” (P5)

Here she expresses the fact that her family of origin was characterized by boundary problems and intense affectivity, and that the same picture was true for her own intimate relationship.

For P2 who described the setting within her family as continuously chaotic, boundaries were to be crossed by her mother unless you protected them. She uttered:

“If you do not stand firm before her, she walks over you. But when you make her feel your line, when you make her feel the message ‘hey look, you will be hard to put to do that, so don’t cross the line’ she moves backwards.”

(P2)

In P2’s story, we see the absence of a father figure and the mother’s being dominant and intrusive. P2 argued frequently with her mother when she was in her adolescence in an effort to prevent boundary violations that was coming from her. She continued to put effort to maintain her boundaries. The same pattern seems to be evident in her romantic relationships, as well. Yet P2 says that when her partner respect boundaries she can act in a more flexible manner. But when she senses an intention on the side of her partner to control her, she starts to put up a wall around herself. She described her view on boundary issues in romantic relationships as follows:

“It is a strain for me. I mean, I usually cannot see the respect and freedom I want from the person before me. You know, there is a saying... do not treat people the way you do not want to be treated. Even if I get curious of something, I prefer not to ask.” (P2)

P2 stated that she did not express her feelings as well as curiosity in an effort to make the other person respect her boundaries.

In what she uttered during the interview, P4 directly stated that there were no boundaries in her family of origin and that this constituted a problem:

“As a family, we are very close- me, my mother, my father and my siblings. I can say that everyone knows everything about everyone else. Everyone is very close to everyone else. To me, we are way too close. I have no boundaries with my family. I think it is a problem.” (P4)

When it comes to romantic relationships she said “*I am not sure whether one can be independent in a relationship*”. She stated that boundary issues were totally different in her two relationships. She explained the difference via these sentences:

“I was in a relationship in which my partner was not demanding at all. I used to take trips and he did not know when I would be back. Then I got into another relationship in which I was with a man who called me ten times a day; I loved a man who was very demanding.” (P4)

Lack of boundaries in the family of origin was evident in P3’s story, as well.

She said:

“Let me state it in this way. In my family, there is no such thing as rules or boundaries. I mean, they really do not exist. It is because, as I said, we are like this (*she nestles her hands*). I mean, we have a private life of course, but I slant towards sharing everything. It is the same for my family. I mean, we really have no boundaries, no boundaries at all.” (P3)

As can be inferred from both what she said and her body language, P3 seems to be raised in family characterized by an interwoven web of relationships. Her thoughts on lack of boundaries in her family have changed during the interview, just like her thoughts on the need to be independent. On the one hand, she described, both verbally and bodily, her familial relationships as “too close” while on the other hand she added that this was not a problem for her. As to the boundaries in her romantic relationships, her reply was based on two different relationships. In her EDI experience, she was somewhat disengaged. As she put it, “*We had absolutely no boundaries in my primary relationship. Rules, nothing. I did not want any of that.*” Her current relationship is with a man with whom she fell in love. In this relationship, her jealousy is at the fore and her passion increases day by day, both of which augments her intimacy needs. Yet despite this, she added that her new partner and her were respectful to one another’s boundaries. Even though she said that lack of boundaries in her family of origin was not a problem for her, P3 appears to have tried various ways to take a healthy distance from her family and to build her boundaries. She mentioned to have thought of moving another city and sharing

less about her life with other family members. We observe that she places emphasis on maintaining the boundaries in her intimate relationships. Even though she declares not to get irritated by the lack of boundaries in her family of origin, it seems that she has a part inside that tries to change this and that part seems to be working hard to build healthy boundaries in her romantic relationship.

P6 described her mother's fixation on her via these statements: "*If we do not speak twenty times a day my poor mother seems to get an awful fright. We are trying to solve this for years. I hope it will be solved one day.*" As it is apparent, her parent's attitude toward her hindered P6's building her own boundaries. Her diaries were read, whatever she did was need to be known, her choice of occupation was manipulated. P6 clearly saw this lack of boundaries in her family of origin as a problem and she wanted it to be resolved. In line with this, her attitude and expectation as to boundary issues in her romantic relationships was the maintenance of individuality and boundaries. She asserted that she put emphasis on respecting the boundaries one has.

In P1's story the same picture could be seen; family of origin had very loose boundaries. In her words; "*We don't have much of that. We don't have tight boundaries. Everyone wants to know everything about one another. Or they may want to come whenever they wish to do.*" She described her mother as a "very very dominant person". She said, "*she is still like that. I mean, she loves to interfere. She pushes the limits.*" The counterpart of this pattern in romantic relationships can be tracked via the following statements P1 uttered:

"You know, that kind of relationship is not something suitable for me. Yes, we all have our own boundaries. We have two different lives. Yet we also have a shared life. There is no such thing. If you are in a relationship you need to live everything together. He needs to not do anything without informing me. I need to know what he does at every single moment." (P1)

3.5.2.2. Significance of the Mother

Another sub-theme apparent in the narratives of the participants was the significance of the mother in participants' lives. This theme is closely associated with boundaries and independence needs. We see that participants put their mothers in a different place as opposed to other people in their lives when they described how boundaries were set in their relationships as well as how they made sense of the EDI experience. Most participants seem to be encouraged by the significant presence of their mothers in their lives. Some model their mothers' courage and emotional expressions and do not want to live a life that they are not fully satisfied with; some depend on the support that they would get from their mothers whatever they decide to do in life.

P1 explained how important her mother was for her after she mentioned her oppressive and intrusive character. She said, *"My mother was a harsh person, but we had a very strong bond in between. She actually knew everything about me. She was a mother with whom I could share anything easily since adolescence."* P1's mother stands at a critical point in the formation of her identity. She described how her mother influenced her via the following statements:

"I believe my relationship with my mother and her stance at home affected my life and relationships to a great extent. I don't know whether I would be different if my mother were to be a less dominant woman, maybe a bit submissive one or one who is okay with being of secondary importance at home and work. I don't know if I would go after my ambitions or desires this much if that were the case. Did I inherit my courage from her? You know, there are people who believe in male domination and are scared to free themselves from it one way or another. This was not the case for us. When my parents fight over something my mother can tell my father 'take it or leave it'. She can give my father the boot even though she does not have economic freedom. That's why she might have been influential in my going after my ambitions and desires." (P1)

In these lines, P1 stresses her mother's being a role model for her, and underscores her mother's influence on her transcending gender norms via how she positioned herself at home.

P2 uttered the following when she was explaining how important her mother was in her life: "*She is extremely important for me. Because up until that time, my greatest support was my mother. I have always felt that way.*" We see that she resembles her personality and that of her mother:

"Perhaps I feel that my nature is very close to my mother in that sense. Just like me she lives life at the fast lane, all her emotions are at the extreme; her anger, happiness, love or hatred are all very intense. And now when she looks at me she sees someone who resembles her." (P2)

Her mother's being a woman who revolts against gender norms and her seeing EDI experience as going after happiness are important factors that shape P2's perspectives as to relationships and life in general.

After saying that there were loose boundaries in her family of origin, P4 explained her difficulty in making the decision to divorce from a very toxic and unhappy marriage in terms of the strong parental image she had in mind. She stated that she needed her parents to tell her to divorce. She was in need of approval about her decision to break up. She said, "*I divorced my husband. And I need to find a way to divorce my mother*". This statement clearly reveals how important her mother was in her life. She associated her hesitation to divorce with her need to be seen and mirrored by her parents, especially her mother. As she said, her hesitation was not because of her husband.

As to her relationship with her mother, P3 said that they argued a lot in her adolescence and then became best friends thereafter:

"My adolescence was very stormy. I mean, it was really out of order. I was very impulsive, very hot-tempered. Anyway... I was avoiding my family in my adolescence. But I think this is the case for every child. And then my mother became my best friend. I share my everything with her. My everything. I still do." (P3)

The relationship that swings back and forth at two extremes informs us as to the boundary issues in the relationship with the mother and the confusion and difficulty when differentiation rang the bell.

3.5.3.3. Ambivalence Towards Independence Needs

Difficulty in securing independence and the complex emotions that the need for independence creates in the one's psychic world show up themselves first in the relationship web within one's family of origin. The same pattern may be generated in romantic relationships, be it directly or indirectly. In this study, we observe this difficulty and need in all participants' narratives.

Upon stating that there were no boundaries in her familial life, P1 went on to describe her thoughts on independence as follows:

“My family's emotional bonding is too much; it is close to dependence actually. It is irritating in a way, yet it also makes you feel safe and secure. I mean, I don't know which one to choose. There are times when I feel overwhelmed. I mean, why do I need to spend my holidays with them? There are times when I do not want to do that. But then I say to myself that they are good and they feel happy when I am with them. In such times, I come to think that I do need to spend the holiday with them. If that were not the case, if they did not care about me or bundle me up this much I could have felt lonely and insecure, I suppose.” (P1)

Here we see that P1 uses the word “dependency” when defining the relationship in her family of origin, stressing both the overwhelming nature of this as well as the feelings of safety and security it provides. P1 appears to view any relationship that is free from dependency as not providing enough care, and define alternative relationship models characterized by independency as paving the way for loneliness and feelings of insecurity.

P3 defined the relationships in her family of origin as characterized by lack of independence, as well. Her dilemma was obvious in her choice of words in explaining her independence/dependence needs: “*I cannot be independent from my*

family. I don't want to be independent. I mean, I want to include them in everything. For me, the concept of family is extremely important. I can sacrifice a lot for my family." She stated that there were no boundaries in her familial relations and that this was not a problem for her. Yet she also stressed that the closeness in the family was "way too much". She started to live in another city in an effort to take a distance and prepare herself to a probable death of a family member which would devastate her. And there are the fierce fights she got into with her family when she was in adolescence. All these imply that she had a need to be independent that operated at the background, leaving her with confusion and complex emotions.

When it comes to P6, we see that she had hard times as to encountering her need to be independent from her family and this need made her feel guilty at times:

"For a long time I wanted them to leave me in peace, leave me alone. I wanted them not to be this much anxious about me. I wanted to have more freedom. Yet it is difficult to cope with these, too. You know, it's them who raised me up, who were confronted with all the problems that stem from me. I had a conflict inside. Was I unfair to them when I thought of all these? It is a fierce fight inside. That's why I reacted negatively to my mother for years. I am twenty-three years old, yet when my mother says something completely normal I get angry easily and react back, just like an adolescent. Now I understand them, but there is nothing to do. That's the way they are. They care too much, they are way too curious, they interfere a lot. Yes, their attitudes are intrusive for me, but when I imagine to tell them about this without breaking their hearts, there is no way. I mean, I don't think they can understand it." (P6)

Here we see that P6 feels the need to set her boundaries and secure her autonomy. At the same time; she feels not understood by her family, views her need to be independent as treating them unfairly and feels hopeless as to the fulfillment of her need for autonomy.

For P4, it appears that need for independence became apparent in her adolescence. She said, "*All our fights were about me wanting more freedom and trying to extend my space. And they were opposing these. All our fights revolved*

around this issue.” She asserted that her parent established their relationship largely on interfering in when she was faced with a problem. Even though she was well aware of her need to be independent, she had difficulty in how to accomplish that.

3.5.4. Extradyadic Involvement as Experienced by A Woman in Turkey

One of the crucial points in this study was the impact of EDI experience on women. This theme has two sub-themes, namely ‘EDI is more difficult for women’ and ‘Challenging the homeostasis’. These sub-themes explore the relationship between EDI and gender norms/roles via the experiences of the participants.

3.5.4.1. Extradyadic Involvement is More Difficult for Women

When exploring how participants experienced EDI as a woman, most of them remarked that this kind of a relationship was viewed to be much more inadmissible for women as opposed to men. They asserted that they feared to be judged by others to a greater extent because they were women.

P2 said the following as to the intersection of EDI and being a woman:

“This kind of stigmatization is in our DNAs in Turkey. The arguments go as ‘This is wrong, we are a society based on the holiness of the family’. That’s why being a woman in Turkey is very hard. When I look at other countries I see that there is infidelity there, too. Whether you are a Turk, a European, a Christian, a Muslim... Many people do cheat their partners. Our society is much too oppressive. I think this is very wrong.” (P2)

Here we see how hard it is to be woman in Turkey as well as the oppression and stigmatization evident in Turkey as opposed to the Western world.

P3 described her EDI experience as a woman in Turkey as “*Very bad. Very very bad. Really.*” She asserted that she could not tell even her best friends about it. She pointed out to the unacceptable nature of EDI for the Turkish community with these statements: “*It is something that cannot be accepted, especially in our society.*

Never.” She added that men and women were confronted with different attitudes when it comes to EDI, just like other participants:

“When a man engages in this they say ‘it’s the dirt in a man’s hand’ in Turkey. When a man does it there is no problem, but when a woman does it she directly becomes a jezebel. Stigmatization kicks in immediately. When you do it abroad, it is to be accepted somehow. You know, it is to be accepted be it a woman or a man. They do not say, ‘A man did it, bravo; a woman did it, shame on her. Shame on the person they say, without considering the gender. But in the Turkish society is in this way... it’s as if they will stone me to death. That’s why I did not want to share it with anybody.” (P3)

According to P3, reactions towards such an experience is different depending on gender, and the society underestimates the EDI experience for men whereas it does the opposite for women, having very strong reactions towards women involved in such an experience. Just like P2, P3 makes comparison with other countries as well, stating that there is no difference in perception of EDI based on gender in other cultures and that such an experience is not admissible for both of the genders there.

P4 underlined her being married and having a child in the difficult position she was exposed to. In her words; “*You are a woman and a woman with children. Even if I had no children... I think they judge you much more when you cheat your husband if you are a woman with children.*” She added that her friends could not grasp the whole picture in face of her EDI experience, that they failed to understand the long-lasting problems in her relationship and the strain she was going through and that they accused her without seeking the answer to the question why all that happened in the first place.

Fear of judgment showed up in P6’s narrative, as well. She said:

“Even when I told it to my close friend, telling about each and every incident happened... Can you believe it, I could share it with only my gay and lesbian friends. And with my friend who had a similar experience before. I could ask them how they felt in that situation. I preferred not to tell it to someone

who had a normal, long-lasting relationship or someone who was single.”
(P6)

Engagement in an EDI experience in Turkey was similar for P6, too: Being confronted with attitudes based on gender, judgmental approach and oppression. She uttered the following as to this point:

“Yes, there is pressure here, but people may find it odd in other countries, as well. They find it odd, but they do not judge. Here judgment and oppression kick in. I believe it’s something to do with being a Muslim community. Because even a woman’s being together with a man is unacceptable here. The idea of getting laid with a man is even more absurd in this context. Hence, engaging in another relationship when you are already in one cannot be grasped by some people living in Turkey who have steady thoughts on the topic.” (P6)

3.5.4.2. Challenging the Homeostasis

One other point notable for most of the participants was that they challenged the norms inflicted either by the society or the system in which they were raised up. In addition to the challenges and judgmental attitudes based on gender, which are felt in many areas in life and also come to the fore when it comes to EDI, we see that some participants prefer to go against these norms. This attitude of going against the norms is evident in the narratives told, as a dimension of the EDI experience. Participants talked about chasing after their own good and happiness via putting aside societal expectations. They voiced their protest in their attitudes of not giving importance to societal norms or even opposing those norms. We see that each one of the participants challenges the homeostasis in the different layers of the system via their EDI experience, all of them having a variety of emotions and perceptions while doing so.

In P1 and P2’s narratives, we see clearly how one does not fit the societal expectations of being a woman. For P1, this challenge was enjoyable from time to time. As she said:

“I mean I do not care about those norms that much I suppose. They are not that important for me. I even find it entertaining sometimes. I don’t care about what others think that much. It’s me in question, me and my feeling good and happy. Apart from that, if someone sees us or if it becomes a topic in the work place I say to myself that’s their problem, and I go on.” (P1)

P2 said the following as to the topic in question:

“As a Turkish woman I really doubt if I can find a Turkish man suitable for me. And as long as this kind of relationships makes me feel these I will chase after my happiness without hesitation. I may again get involved with another man when I am already in a relationship. If I want to be happy, my relationship needs to fulfill my needs. This is not only about sexuality. When some things come to an end in my mind I lose the sexual compatibility as well. Hence, why should I think that sexuality is the man’s need only? No, it is not. I want to be satisfied in that field as well. I want to experience it at this age, I want to feel good and happy. That’s why I don’t care about societal schemas or anything... I will continue with it... despite living in Turkey. I will be happy.” (P6)

P5 reported that *de facto* societal rules meant nothing for her. She said, “*I don’t want to be with someone who wants to own me like a property*”, rejecting the societal norm of exclusion in romantic relationships. She stated that she wanted to get free from feelings of ownership in relationships.

P4 expressed that she accused herself more than anyone else because of her involvement in an extramarital relationship. From what she said, it was apparent that she went against the norms of the system –to a great extent– in which she was brought up. She uttered the following:

“It is very clear. I believe it is very clear (that my family does not approve my EDI). You know, no one has such a relationship. I was always a good student, a good child, actually a student who is more than good, a very successful business woman etc. They have no problem with me. On the opposite, you know, my track record is so perfect that when you ask them if

something went wrong I am the one whom they will point out the last as the problem.” (P4)

Here we see that P4’s EDI experience challenges both her role as the perfect child and her family’s clear and unaccepting attitude towards EDI.

Similar to P4, P3 stated that she saw herself as a very contradistinctive character as compared to her family and the society because she engaged in an EDI experience. Her words were; *“You know, I want to associate my attitude and my family’s reaction. I am a very contradistinctive character, when compared to my family actually. In fact, the same holds true when we talk about the society, as well.”*

3.6. Discussion

The first major theme that emerged in light of the responses given by participants to the questions asked was “Meaning of the extradyadic involvement”. It is believed that this theme harbors the answer to one of the main questions of the study: “What is the experience of women who have been involved in an extradyadic relationship?” In the first sub-theme under this theme, namely “Not the presence of extradyadic involvement, but the absence in primary relationship”, when participants were describing how they made sense of their extradyadic involvement experience, all of them referred to the hardships they experienced and the needs that went unmet in their primary relationships. In their answers that generated the second sub-theme, “Need for feeling good”, participants stressed how they felt completed and happy in their extradyadic involvement experiences. Their descriptions of what they lived through started with the problems in the primary relationship; stressing the dissatisfaction felt, fights had, the lack of interest and attention experienced, and the difficulties evident in sexual life. Their narratives then went on to include the happiness and satisfaction they experienced with their extradyadic involvement partners.

These findings are consistent with the discourse of deficiency, that is widely addressed in theoretical explanations as to why one engages in an extradyadic involvement experience. The common ground stressed by many theoretical

frameworks that explore the reason behind extradyadic involvement is the deficiencies and dissatisfaction that surface in a variety of ways in primary relationships (Atkins, Baucom & Jacobson, 2001; Atkins, Yi, Baucom & Christensen, 2005; Drigotas et al., 1999). On the other hand, Rusbult's (1980) "Investment Model of Commitment" addresses commitment issues in romantic relationships in three dimensions. Firstly, partners' commitment to the relationship is positively correlated with the satisfaction they draw from the relationship. Secondly, the quality of the alternatives outside is important. Investment to the relationship and commitment increase when alternatives are not favorable. Lastly, commitment will change as a function of the partners' intrinsic and extrinsic investment to the relationship [i.e. time spent together, moments shared, common friends, financial resources etc.] (Rusbult, 1980; Rusbult, Johnson & Morrow, 1983; Brooks, Ogolsky & Monk, 2018). In line with the dimensions proposed by the Investment Model of Commitment, participants answered the question why they engaged in an extradyadic relationship via stressing the dissatisfaction they felt in their primary relationships as well as how they came to share less and less in time. For most of the participants, their primary relationship, which failed to provide them with satisfaction, was already giving signals that the end was to come about. They referred to the affective gains the extradyadic relationship provided them with. In cases where participants' investment in their primary relationship was high (i.e. when primary partner was still loved or the couple had a lot to share), continuation of the primary relationship despite extradyadic relationship was still in line with what is proposed by the Investment Model of Commitment. Even if the commitment in the primary relationship was injured because of extradyadic involvement, the relationship was not terminated in the process.

Research shows that women attach much more importance to the emotional bonding in extradyadic involvement experiences in comparison to men. They appear to start such an involvement primarily because of emotional needs, and their level of emotional bonding is shown to be much higher when compared to men (Glass & Wrigh, 1985; Atwater, 1979; Spainer & Margolis, 1983). The limited number of participants interviewed for this study seem to concur with these

findings. In the answers that made up the third sub-theme of the theme “Meaning of extradyadic involvement”, namely “It is not only about sex”, we see that for most of the participants who engaged in combined-type extradyadic involvement, the extradyadic relationship started with emotional satisfaction and sharing; and was beyond sexual encounters.

The theme “Extradyadic involvement changes the primary relationship”, presents us with valuable information as to the complex and multidimensional nature of the extradyadic involvement experience. Even though we come across common and generalizable conclusions on extradyadic involvement phenomenon, each participant is affected differently by this experience depending on her own context and conditions. Even different extradyadic involvement experiences of the same participant appear to differ in nature. Research shows that extradyadic involvement is frequently lined to marital stress, conflict and separation (Amato & Rogers, 1997; Olson, Russell, Higgins-Kessler & Miller, 2002; Polat, 2006). In addition, many studies reveal that those who engage in extradyadic relationship, go on to experience symptoms such as depression, anxiety, shame and feelings of guilt (Gordon, Baucom & Snyder, 2004; Glass & Wright, 1997; Spring, 1996). In the present study, these symptoms were observed in some of the participants, but not all. It can be said that the level of satisfaction in the primary relationship was predictive of the relationship’s fate; whether it would continue or end. Concurrently, the person’s attitudes towards the extradyadic involvement phenomenon appear to impact how she is affected by this experience. Results put forth the importance of considering those components unique to the person in question while trying to understand how extradyadic involvement is experienced by those involved.

Another question explored in the present study was “How are their experiences of extradyadic involvement interrelated with their differentiation, and closeness/boundaries expectations in their romantic and family of origin relationships?” In light of the information participants gave about their experiences in their family of origin as well as romantic relationships, it is seen that there were problems in the areas of differentiation and boundaries. The first thing that draws

attention in this track is boundary issues in the family of origin. Participants clearly portrayed lack of boundaries in their relationships with their parents. It appears that how they view this picture have impacted how boundaries were formed in their romantic relationships. In all the participants' narratives, there appear to be "no" boundaries in the relationship web of the family of origin; yet how they perceive and respond to this situation is different. For instance, P1 found it perfectly normal not have boundaries in her family of origin and argued that it should be the same in romantic relationships, stating her desire to know everything about her partner. On the other hand, P6 talked about her discomfort in being raised in such a context and her efforts to change the picture. She added that it was important for her to respect boundaries and reserve her individuality in romantic relationships. Boundaries compromise an important factor in the designation of one's level of differentiation. A fused relationship in the familial system which is characterized by lack of boundaries prevents the person to establish a healthy balance between the forces of autonomy and togetherness. This in turn leads to either emotional overinvolvement or emotional cut-off in the system (Nichols, 2013). Results of the present study clearly reveal that boundary issues have led to emotional overinvolvement in the participants' family systems.

Results of the present study reveal that participants tended to engage in an extradyadic relationship when their primary relationship was characterized by intense distress. Examples of distress they experienced are; feeling insecure in the relationship, being unable to get the attention needed from the partner in times of unfortunate life events, alcohol-related problems, domestic violence, emotional detachment and feelings of long-lasting loneliness. Murray Bowen's Family Systems Theory addresses in great detail how the person manages anxiety (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2013). From this perspective, in times of distress, those with low levels of differentiation display more emotionally reactive behaviors, have a tendency to form either a fused or a distanced relationship with their partner and/or get into triangulation with a third party in an effort to stabilize their anxiety (Fish, Pavkov, Wetchler & Bercik, 2012). Interpreting the results of the present study within this context, it can be speculated that extradyadic involvement

emanates as a result of triangulation with a third party to reduce the tension in the primary relationship. In addition, some participants declared their intention to punish their primary partner and this intention was a motivator to engage in extradyadic relationship all by itself. This too seems to be related to not being able to reflect on the situation in a calm manner and instead to react emotionally under distress.

Ambivalence towards independence needs that appear in participants' narratives seems to be related to the need for establishment of a balance between autonomy and togetherness as stressed by the concept of differentiation. Kagitcibasi (2005) conceptualizes these two forces as determinative components of the self-construction processes, self-other relations and social behaviors. Importantly, participants talked about the unpleasant attitudes towards autonomy in the family of origin, prevention of the attempts to gain independence via fights and intrusive approaches displayed by the intensely anxious parent(s) and assumption of the parentified child role in the family. It can be speculated that the participants with overinvolved family of origin experiences have difficulty in taking a distance in their romantic relationships, to separate from their partners and to understand their own needs. Followingly, they attempt to resolve the hardships they experience in their romantic relationships via triangulation. According to Kagitcibasi, with emphasis on cultural background which determine one's experiences and perception significantly, selves and families can be classified to four groups; autonomous-separate self, autonomous-related self, heteronomous-separate self and, heteronomous-related self. In this regard, considering participants' family of origin experiences, can be conceptualized as heteronomous-related self; which implies being high in relatedness, but low in autonomy (Kagitcibasi, 2005). For instance, P4 stated that she was not happy in her primary relationship, yet waited for her family's approval before separating from her partner; continuing her unhappy marriage until then. In the end, she came to realize how "hungry" she had been in her primary relationship when she got engaged in an extradyadic relationship. Only then could she take the step to break up with her primary partner. Similarly, P2 was able to get out of her toxic relationship characterized by intense

fighters upon starting her extradyadic relationship. In these examples, we see the function of extradyadic involvement in making the person realize her own needs, taking a distance from her relationship and finally ending the relationship. Though, this could also imply not having a chance of learning conflict resolution strategies, asking for one's needs, verbalizing negative emotions but instead practicing behaviors of punishing and cutting-off.

Another sub-theme of the study, significance of the mother, presents us with valuable information for future research. Dynamics of differentiation, a prominent theme in the participants' discourses, is further emphasized during discussions of maternal relationships. Most participants described their relationships with their mothers as a special one. Some saw this as a problem, while others stated that this closeness in the mother-daughter relationship was inspiring for them and that they felt supported by it. In any case, it seems that this significant relational pattern has a negative impact on participants' maintenance of their sense of self and their realizing and meeting of their own needs. As the person increases his/her capacity to live his/her individuality, he/she has better chances of building relationships free from fusion and emotional cut-off. It is expected that the increase in this capacity results in a decrease in emotional reactivity and an increase in reflection on thoughts in a calm manner in the face of anxiety provoking situations (Bowen & Kerr, 1988). It can be said that this type of relating to another person, which has its roots in childhood experiences with the caregiver, shows up in different areas in life, romantic relationships being one such area.

Additionally, assessing this particular mother-child relationship from a culture-based perspective, results can also be evaluated with regards to traditional motherhood expectations; which demand women in Turkey to accept the roles of mother and housewife as primary social roles (Komut, 2011; Sever, 2015). It can be argued that constructing the self in accordance with these social expectations can cause one to overemphasize the role of motherhood and potentially jeopardize the differentiation process for both the mother and the child.

Even though intergenerational transmission of extradyadic involvement did not show up as a particular theme in the present study, attitudes towards EDI held

by the members of participants' families of origin did effect their experiences. Attitudes were different with respect to extradyadic involvement; while some families were more accepting, others were strongly opposed the very thought of it. Family Systems Theory talks about the intergenerational transmission of patterns, roles, beliefs and levels of differentiation through the concept of "multigenerational transmission process" (Bowen, 1978). It is observed that those participants coming from families with an incident of extradyadic relationship or with a more accepting attitude towards the issue, were more likely to define their experience as seeking happiness and to have lower degrees of guilt and regret. On the other hand, participants raised in families where extradyadic involvement was harshly criticized underlined the intense feelings of guilt they felt and stated that they saw engagement in extradyadic relationship as an adversity.

Intergenerational transmission of the level of differentiation and tendency for triangulation in the family of origin is yet another area of importance in the narratives of the participants. Gerson et al. (1993) conceptualize "the family of origin frames" to understand the interaction patterns of couples. This framework underscores how earlier experiences are carried in future relationships through learned coping mechanisms, acquired roles and reversed patterns (Gerson, Hoffman, Sauls & Ulrici, 1993). Specific themes such as dilemmas around closeness and distance, dependence and independence, self-fulfillment and commitment tend to repeat when an issue is not resolved in the family of origin. Seen from this perspective, study participants who talked about the overinvolvement and triangulation patterns in their family systems also had difficulty in their own romantic relationships. It can be argued that problems in their primary relationships triggered a need to triangulate by engaging in extradyadic relationships.

In their study Knodel et al. (1997) found that extradyadic involvement was "far more morally wrong for women to engage extradyadic relationship". Penn, Hernandez & Bermudez also investigated the way extradyadic involvement viewed by three ethnic minorities; African Americans, Hispanic Americans and Asian Americans. They compiled beliefs about infidelity and emphasized that infidelity

was more acceptable for males for all three of ethnic minorities (Penn, Hernandez & Bermudez, 1997). These findings are in line with the results of the current study. Studies on gender roles and experiences of being a woman in the Turkish society reveal the difficulty in coping with the challenges presented in various aspects of life due to gender inequality (Dinç Kahraman, 2010; Özeydinlik, 2014; Kadir Has University, 2019). Participants' experience of engaging in an extradyadic relationship in the Turkish society has been summarized under the theme "Experiencing extradyadic involvement as a woman in Turkey". Characteristics of participants' ethnic and professional backgrounds were similar. It can be said that, this similarity leads to the emergence of shared experiences. Most of the participants asserted that Turkish society's attitudes towards extradyadic involvement changed a lot depending on the gender of the person, and that it was much more admissible when males were in question. They added that pressure and judgmental approaches were way too apparent for women as compared to men. These findings reveal that gender inequality is overtly present when it comes to the perception of extradyadic involvement.

On the other hand, the sub-theme "Challenging the homeostasis" portrays an important difference in attitude in reaction to gender inequality. Even though all participants stated that the society's attitude towards men and women is different (i.e. unfair) with respect to this topic, some of them stressed that they challenged familial and societal norms via their extradyadic involvement experience. This challenge as arisen by the extradyadic involvement experience can be viewed to serve a function; it may be a means to create change in both participants' own lives and in different layers of the system in general. This reveals that, need for differentiation is not valid for only family of origin. We also need to differentiate from the social norms and gender stereotypes. In addition, considering the inequality women face and the difficulty of the subject, participation to the study itself can be assessed as an attempt of challenging the homeostasis.

When we consider all themes together, systemic perspective can help us realize the interaction between different layers of the system in the emergence of the extradyadic involvement phenomenon. Considering the findings of the current

study from a holistic perspective, we can clearly notice the interaction between different subsystems in each participants' extradyadic involvement narratives. Difficulties and dissatisfaction in the primary relationship provide the basis for extradyadic involvement; sharing joy and happiness with a third person, as well as one's vulnerability accelerates the process of extradyadic involvement. These findings are in line with the extradyadic involvement literature.

Findings also show that one's family of origin experiences and multigenerational transmission processes determine his/her differentiation level and relational patterns. The way a person experiences a primary relationship, how he/she deals with the stress at the times of intense anxiety, or meets his/her needs (e.g. implicitly or explicitly, verbalizing or triangulating/cut-off) are determined by these processes. At this point, the current study used Bowen's basic concepts to understand the experience of extradyadic involvement in depth and with a systemic framework, and findings showed that participants' experiences were in line with the assumptions of the study.

Another layer of the system, culture and social norms, revealed itself in the discourse of the participants, particularly through gender stereotypes. Similar to the previous studies on culture and women, findings of the current study also show that extradyadic involvement is a more difficult experience for women in Turkey. However, the discourse of 'challenging the homeostasis' via extradyadic involvement, which emerged at some of participants' answers, provides an important and distinctive data to investigate via further research.

All in all, it is believed that, findings of the current study contributes to the literature with underscoring the importance of conceptualizing the extradyadic involvement experience through Family Systems Theory, and developing a systemic point of view for this complex and multi-faceted phenomenon.

3.7. Clinical Implications

Findings of the current study reveal the importance of understanding the complexity and depth of the extradyadic relationship experience. Therefore,

therapists should try to understand the idiosyncratic narrative of each relationship. Most therapeutic models designed to work with this topic address meaning making of extradyadic relationship incident together within the context of the particular relationship.

In their study Gordon, Baucom and Snyder (2004) conducted a study with six couples who suffered from extramarital relationship and used a replicated case study design to examine the efficiency of their integrative forgiveness-oriented approach. Researchers used insight oriented and cognitive behavioral strategies together in their work with couples. They conceptualized the aftermath of extradyadic involvement as an interpersonal trauma and emphasized the importance of ‘violated assumptions’ concept. Their first stage of treatment includes investigation of the impact of the affair on the couple’s relationship, assessment of individual resources and vulnerabilities, outside factors and the outside-affair relationship. Both partners’ physical self-care, stabilization and affective containment were found to be supportive significant components of this stage. In addition, according to the model, healing of the trauma can be begun with an acknowledgement of the fact that the offending spouse violated the relationship agreement by engaging in an extradyadic relationship and then take some specific responsibilities during the healing process. During the second stage, the therapist and the couple try to understand the factors that contributed to the extradyadic involvement, and the couple can begin address the central question “Why did this happen?” The third stage helps the couple to evaluate the process of moving on by reconsidering previous sessions and understanding their belief systems and attributes towards forgiveness (Gordon, Baucom & Snyder, 2004; Gordon, Baucom, Snyder & Dixon, 2008).

Another study by Allen and Atkins that presented a framework for the treatment of extradyadic involvement underlines the importance of helping both of the partners to gain an understanding of why the incident occurred, and then building a shared narrative. They emphasize the importance of attending to multiple influences for identifying risk factors and areas requiring change, developing a

realistic and balanced narrative for the event, and making informed decisions about how to move on (Allen & Atkins, 2005).

As these two study underscore, it is important to be aware of the risk of reducing the distress couples experience only to extradyadic involvement, and instead, to try to explore the primary relationship with a holistic view. In line with many other studies conducted to explore the phenomenon (Allen, 2001; Glass & Wright, 1985; Spanier & Margolis, 1983), findings of the current study reveal the importance of understanding the primary relationship dynamics. As the Investment Model of Commitment proposes (Rusbult, 1980), therapists need to develop an integrative formulation which include the examination of primary relationship satisfaction level and the problematic areas the relationship has, how the outside alternatives effect individuals and primary relationship.

This study suggests that an individual's differentiation level and family of origin experiences effect how one deals with primary relationship difficulties. Within this scope, extradyadic relationship is associated with difficulty in differentiation and tendency to triangulate with an outsider in the face of relational distress. Therefore, it is important for therapists to understand how one's family of origin experiences pass down through generations and operate in one's current relationship. Whether working with a couple, or working with an individual during the aftermath of an extradyadic involvement, exploring multigenerational transmission of emotional processes, roles and dysfunctional coping mechanisms and intervening on these recurring patterns is crucial for the change and healing process. Additionally, the themes of differentiation dynamics, boundaries both with the families of origin and also within the relationship must be addressed in the course of psychotherapy even before extradyadic involvement occurs.

Therapists have an essential role in assisting the intense emotions and conflicts couples or individuals experience. Extradyadic involvement leads to many strong and ambivalent feelings such as ambiguity, anger, shame, loss of trust, and self-blame. These feelings can be valid for both partners in various forms (Hertlein, Wetchler & Piercy, 2005). As the findings of the current study show, extradyadic relationship has quite diverse consequences due to the characteristics of the

involved partner, structure of the relationship and attitudes towards extradyadic involvement. Therefore, therapists should be attentive to the complex effects of the extradyadic involvement incidence; listening closely and responding empathetically to each partner's experiences and adopt a more directive manner to contain and calm intense distress (Leone, 2013). Emotion Focused Therapy considers extradyadic involvement as an attachment injury; a traumatic experience that causes considerable distress for both partners, violates the trust and brings into question the basic assumptions that the couple has (Johnson, Makinen & Millikin, 2001). According to EFT, therapists should conceptualize effects of the extradyadic involvement in terms of attachment theory. Therefore, therapists should listen to the experiences of each partner with this framework and make possible for both partners to hear the impact of the incident in terms of broken attachment bonds (Johnson, 2005). In addition, considering the complex and compelling nature of the subject, a really neutral stance is needed in terms of the therapist's own attitudes towards the extradyadic relationship phenomenon. Special caution towards the unintentional tendency of triangulation with one of the partners which would mean a repetition of the pattern the couple suffers from should be taken.

Considering the participants' experiences, another point that should be taken into account is that partners and individuals can decide to continue or to terminate their relationship. Healing from an extradyadic involvement can be seen as a process of turning a crisis into an opportunity. Perel (2015) underscores the generative potential of this experience. The opportunity to have deep conversations with honesty and openness that were most likely overdue can initiate this transforming process. Terminating the relationship, on the other hand, should help the couple create an emotional coherence and shared narrative. By doing so, both partners can shift from anger, resentment or other hurtful emotions to a more integrative position (Perel, 2017). In either case, gaining a perspective for the incident and understanding how one experiences high anxiety and deals with it should be an important part of the therapy process.

Findings also showed the importance of considering gender-specific factors. Therapists need to be aware of gender role stereotypes and cultural factors effecting

the individuals and couples they work with. Therapists should evaluate possible culture-based stress factors such as self-blame, shame, fear, humiliation or anger following extradyadic involvement for both genders. Therapists working in Turkey particularly need to keep in mind the commonly-held gender role expectations pertaining to women, that place them in a vulnerable position prone to societal shaming and isolation.

Given the complexity of the phenomenon and its potentially paradigm shifting consequences for individuals and couples, adopting a systemic perspective both in formulation and intervention can provide the therapists with the tools offered by the in-depth insights of circular causality and avoid arriving at misguided linear conclusions. The systemic perspective can furthermore help therapists trace how the interaction process between different layers of the system -such as individual, couple, family of origin and culture- manifest themselves throughout the therapeutic process regarding extradyadic involvement.

3.8. Limitations and Further Research

This qualitative study was conducted to understand experiences of women deeply and how their experiences interact with concepts of Bowen's Family Systems Theory. Although participants' experiences investigated through semi-structured interviews and the size and homogeneity of the sample are designed in line with the requisites of IPA, it is important to note that findings of the study are not generalizable. Participants represent a quite homogenous group that is comprised of upper-middle class, heterosexual Turkish women. While this study is an important attempt to understand deeply the experiences of women engaged in extradyadic relationships, further research can contribute to our understanding by studying different populations such as different sexual orientations, socioeconomic status, race, and ethnicity.

Conducting longitudinal studies that follow how participants' experiences change overtime may contribute to our understanding of the phenomenon. In this regard, following up with these participants and examining how their experience

take shape in time can enable us explore the phenomenon more comprehensively. In addition, conducting quantitative research and giving participants the Differentiation of Self Scale can help us understand the association between the extradyadic involvement experience and the systemic framework more accurately.

Within the scope of the current study, only women were interviewed. Even though this particular choice was necessitated by the purpose of the study, further research targeting both parties of the primary dyad could contribute to understanding the couple-relationship related factors in the face of extradyadic relationship. Research regarding the experiences of the extradyadic involvement partner could further broaden the understanding of the phenomenon by shifting the research interest to an understudied area that could provide complementary data for a holistic analysis.

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DISCUSSION

Extradyadic involvement is a commonly encountered phenomenon in romantic relationships that causes considerable distress for both partners and the family system.

This study aimed to understand the extradyadic involvement phenomenon by focusing on women's experiences through three concepts of Bowen's Family Systems Theory -differentiation of self, triangulation and multigenerational transmission process-. In this respect, participants' experiences of extradyadic involvement are examined; the interaction between these experiences and participants' family of origin experiences, closeness/boundary expectations and, differentiation level is discussed. The sample of the study included women in particular, with the intention of understanding women's experiences in depth.

The first article in this study reviewed the literature on extradyadic involvement phenomenon; considering its definition, prevalence and frequently researched variables on the subject such as gender, primary relationship, adult attachment dynamics, and cultural and socioeconomic factors. The review showed that the subject has quite different dimensions within itself; in this regard, the importance of considering the diverse structure of the phenomenon emphasized. Bowen's Family Systems Theory was introduced and the relation between extradyadic involvement and differentiation of self, triangulation and multigenerational transmission process was discussed. The review underscored the need for better understanding of this phenomenon through systemic perspective.

The second article focused on describing the experiences of women who engaged an extradyadic relationship during their committed relationship and understanding how these experiences were related with their family of origin experiences, closeness/boundary expectations in relationships and differentiation level. The results provided important data showing participants' experiences prior to engaging an extradyadic relationship had significant similarities; their primary relationships were characterized by difficulties and failed to fulfill the basic needs of both partners. In addition, engaging an extradyadic relationship implied diverse

effects for both partners and relationship such as feelings of happiness, sense of being completed with the extradyadic involvement partner or ending the relationship with the primary partner. Participants' experiences on the difficulty in differentiation were elaborated. Both their family of origin experiences and romantic relationship patterns indicated difficulty about maintaining a more differentiated state and enhancing healthy boundaries in a relationship with others. Participants' discourses on experiencing an extradyadic relationship as a woman in Turkey was elaborated. This article concluded with a discussion of clinical implications for clinical practice.

Beyond the discussion, further research on evaluating the extradyadic involvement phenomenon through systemic perspective is needed. Also, further qualitative studies can help clinicians to understand the subject more comprehensive. This study aimed to fill this gap; examine extradyadic involvement experience in depth through a Bowenian framework.

Appendix A: Informed Consent

BİLGİLENDİRİLMİŞ ONAM FORMU

CALIŞMANIN ADI:

İlişki, İlişki Dışı İlişki ve Köken Aile: Fenomenolojik Bir Çalışma

CALIŞMANIN KONUSU VE AMACI:

Bu çalışma ilişki dışı ilişki deneyimini köken aile yaşantısını da göz önünde bulundurarak derinlemesine anlamayı amaçlamaktadır.

CALIŞMA İŞLEMLERİ:

Bu çalışmaya gönüllü olarak katılmanız halinde sizinle yaklaşık bir buçuk saat sürecek bir görüşme yapılacaktır. Görüşmede ilişki dışı ilişki deneyiminiz ve kök ailenize dair sorular olacaktır. Görüşme süresince ses kaydı alınacaktır. Çalışma verilerinin değerlendirilmesinin ardından çalışma sonuçlarına dair bilgilendirme yapılacaktır. Katılımınız psikoterapi süreçlerini anlamak ve iyileştirmek adına önemli veriler sağlayacağından çok değerlidir.

CALIŞMAYA KATILMAMIN OLASI YARARLARI NELERDİR?

Bu çalışmaya katılımınız ile, ilişki dışı ilişki deneyiminin farklı boyutlarıyla daha iyi anlaşılmasına katkı sağlamış olacaksınız. Araştırma sonuçlarının psikoterapi ve çift terapisi alanında hem teorik hem de pratik bilgilerimize büyük bir katkı sağlamasını umuyoruz.

CALIŞMAYA KATILMAMIN OLASI RİSKLERİ NELERDİR?

Çalışmada herhangi bir olumsuz risk bulunmamakla beraber dilediğiniz zaman çalışmaya ara vermeyi talep edebilirsiniz. Çalışmanın herhangi bir aşamasında herhangi bir neden göstermeden vazgeçebilirsiniz. Bu durumda verileriniz çalışma kapsamı dışında bırakılacak ve imha edilecektir.

KİŞİSEL BİLGİLERİM NASIL KULLANILACAK?

Bu formu imzalayarak çalışmaya katılım için onay vermiş olacaksınız. Bununla birlikte kimlik bilgileriniz çalışmanın herhangi bir aşamasında açıkça kullanılmayacaktır. Görüşmede verdiğiniz cevaplar ve araştırma süresince işitsel cihaz kullanılarak edinilen bilgiler yalnızca araştırma ve bilimsel yayın amacıyla kullanılacaklardır. Çalışma sonunda tüm kayıtlar silinecektir.

SORU VE PROBLEMLER İÇİN BAŞVURULACAK KİŞİLER:

Bu araştırma ile ilgili herhangi bir sorunuz veya endişeniz varsa, aşağıda iletişim bilgileri verilmiş araştırmacılar ile lütfen iletişime geçiniz:

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Çalışmaya Katılma Onayı

Bu bilgilendirilmiş onam belgesini okudum ve anladım. İstediğim zaman bu araştırmadan çekilebileceğimi biliyorum. Bu araştırmaya katılmayı kabul ediyorum ve bu onay belgesini kendi hür irademle imzalıyorum.

<i>Katılımcı Adı Soyadı:</i>		<i>Tarih ve İmza:</i>
<i>Adres ve Telefon:</i>		

<i>Araştırmacı Adı Soyadı:</i>		<i>Tarih ve İmza:</i>
<i>Adres ve Telefon:</i>		

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Demografik Bilgiler:

1. Kaç yaşındasınız?
2. Eğitim durumunuz nedir?
3. Şu anda çalışıyor musunuz? (Eğer çalışıyorsa) Mesleğiniz nedir?
4. Etnik kökeninizi nasıl tanımlarsınız?
5. Sosyoekonomik düzeyinizi nasıl tanımlarsınız?
6. Şu anki ilişki durumunuzu nasıl tanımlarsınız?

Görüşme Soruları:

1. Uzun süredir devam eden, ilişkiniz sırasında başka biriyle ilişkiniz olduğundan bahsetmişsiniz. Bu deneyiminize ne isim verirsiniz? Bu ilişkiyi yaşamış olmak size ne ifade ediyor?
2. İlişki dışı bir ilişkiye başlamanın birçok farklı anlamı ve sebebi olabilir, sizin için anlamı neydi? Sizce ne gibi sebepler sizin bu ilişkiye başlamanızda etkili oldu?
3. Bu ilişkiye başlamadan önce uzun süreli ilişkiniz nasıldı?
4. İlişki dışı ilişki deneyiminiz uzun süreli ilişkinizi nasıl etkiledi?
Ayrıntılandırmak için: Bu etkilerle baş etmek için neler yaptınız?/Bu durum karşısında nasıl davranmayı seçtiniz?
5. Diğer ilişkiyi yaşamadan önce uzun süreli ilişkinizde yaşadığınız, uzun süren bir çatışmayı anlatır mısınız?
Ayrıntılandırmak için:
 - Çatışma sırasında neler hissettiniz? Neler düşündünüz? Birbirinize ne şekilde davrandınız?
 - Kendinizi nasıl ifade ettiniz?

- Ne gibi çözüm yöntemleri kullandınız? Birbirinize daha yakın olma/uzaklaşma ihtiyacı duyduunuz mu?
 - İş hayatıyla, arkadaşlarla vb. başka şeylerle daha çok ilgilenme ihtiyacı duyduunuz mu? (Aile dışından 3. bir kişinin ilişkiye dahil olması gibi)
 - Bu çatışma nasıl sonlandı?
6. Partnerinizle yakın olmak sizin için önemli midir? Bunu ona nasıl ifade edersiniz?
7. Partnerinizle olan ilişkinizde bağımsız olmak sizin için önemli midir? Bunu ona nasıl ifade edersiniz?
8. Partnerinizle aranızdaki sınırlar sizin için önemli midir? Bu sınırları nasıl belirlersiniz?
9. Kök ailenizde üyelerin birbirleriyle olan ilişkisi hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz? Aile üyeleri arasında kimler birbirine daha yakındır? Kimler birbirine daha uzak görünmektedir? Hiç görüşmemektedir?
10. Sizin anne-babanızla olan ilişkinizden bahseder misiniz?
Ayrıntılandırmak için:
- İlişkinizde birbirinizle olan yakınlığı nasıl tarif edersiniz?
 - İlişkinizde sınırlarla ilgili ne söyleyebilirsiniz?
11. Anne ya da babanızla yaşadığınız, sizin için önemli olan bir çatışmayı anlatabilir misiniz?
Ayrıntılandırmak için:
- Çatışma sırasında neler hissettiniz? Neler düşündünüz? Birbirinize ne şekilde davrandınız?
 - Kendinizi nasıl ifade ettiniz?
 - Ne gibi çözüm yöntemleri kullandınız? Birbirinize daha yakın olma/uzaklaşma ihtiyacı duyduunuz mu?
 - İş hayatıyla, arkadaşlarla vb. Başka şeylerle daha çok ilgilenme? Aile dışından 3. bir kişinin ilişkiye dahil olması
 - Bu çatışma nasıl sonlandı?
 - Sonrasında kendinizi bu çatışmayla ilgili nasıl hissettiniz?

12. Anne babanızla olan ilişkinizde yakın olmak sizin için önemli miydi? Bunu onlara nasıl ifade ederdiniz?
13. Anne babanızla olan ilişkinizde bağımsız olmak sizin için önemli miydi?
Ayrıntılandırmak için: Evden ilk ayrıldığınızda anne ve babanızla ilişkileriniz bundan nasıl etkilendi?
14. Anne ve babanızla sınırlarınızı nasıl belirlersiniz?
Ayrıntılandırmak için: Karar verme süreçleri hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz?
15. Ailenizde bildiğiniz kadarıyla hiç ilişki dışı ilişki yaşandı mı? Bu konuya nasıl bakılır? Annenizin/babanızın nasıl bir tutumları vardır?
16. Şu ana kadar konuştuğumuz konuları düşündüğünüzde ilişki dışı ilişki deneyiminiz ve içinde yaşadığınız kültür arasında nasıl bir ilişki olduğunu düşünüyorsunuz? Kadın olmak ve ilişki dışı ilişki deneyim hakkındaki değerlendirmeleriniz neler?
17. Görüşmemizin başında ilişki dışı ilişki deneyiminiz hakkında konuştuk. Daha sonra partneriniz ve ailenizle olan ilişkilerinizden bahsettik. Sizce tüm bunlar birbiriyle nasıl bağlantılı olabilir?