



Traumatic Masculinities: The Gendered Geographies of Georgian IDPs from Abkhazia

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OUTLINE

- NSF funded project headed by Dr. Beth Mitchneck (University of Arizona) and Dr. Joanna Regulska (Rutgers University)
- 180 interviews in 2007
 - 118 IDPs; 62 general population
- 37 interviews in 2008
 - Government officials and NGO/INGO workers

Georgian Context

- 2 separatist conflicts (1991-1993) and civil wars
 - Abkhazia and South Ossetia
 - 240,000 IDPs
- 3 waves of displacement
 - 1991-1993
 - 1998
 - 2008















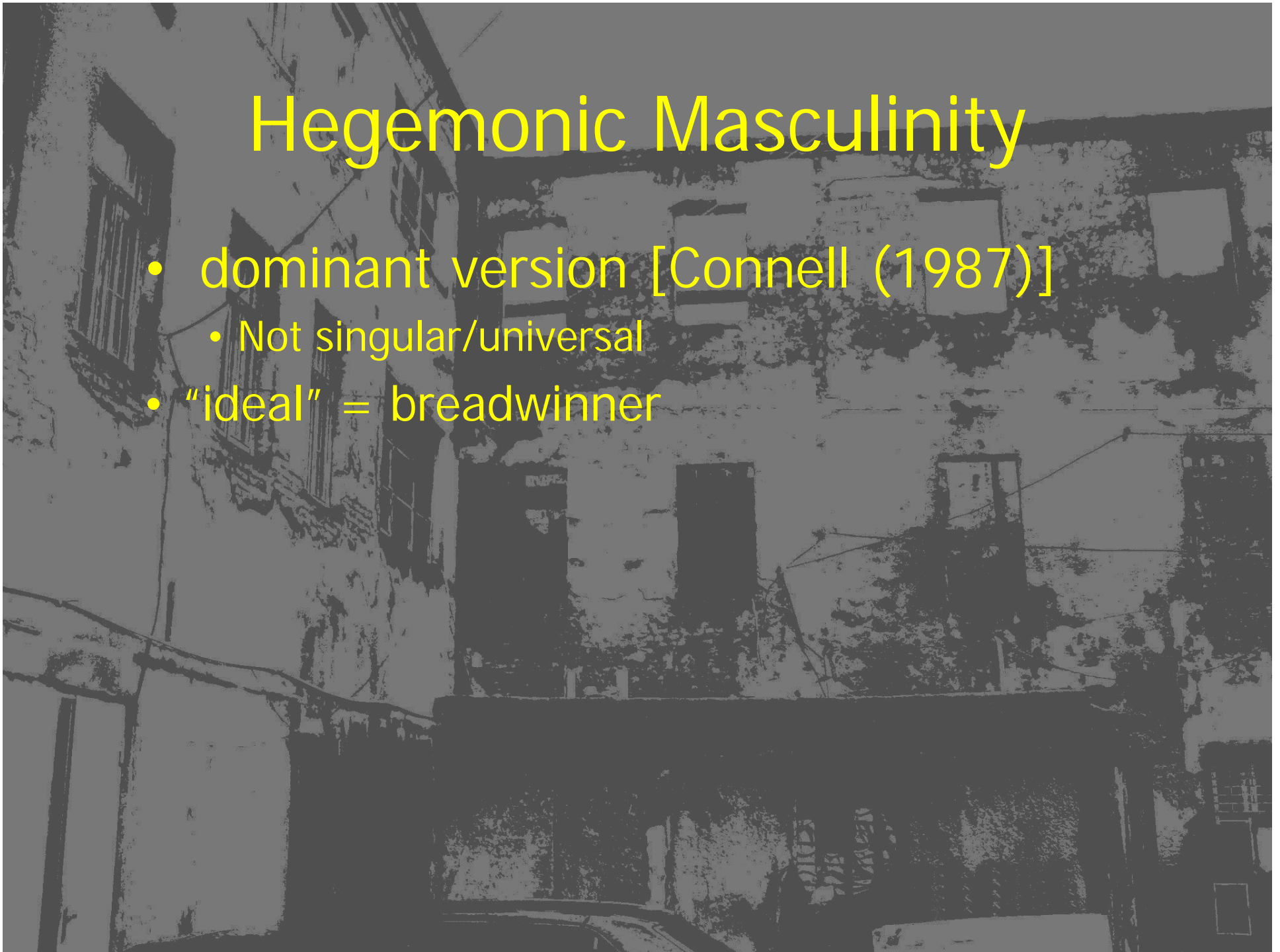


Unpacking Gender

- Gender as women
- Focus on men and the construction of masculinities
- Masculinities: “a cluster of norms, values, and behavioural patterns expressing explicit and implicit expectations of how men should act and represent themselves to others” (Miescher and Lindsay 2003)

Hegemonic Masculinity

- dominant version [Connell (1987)]
 - Not singular/universal
- "ideal" = breadwinner

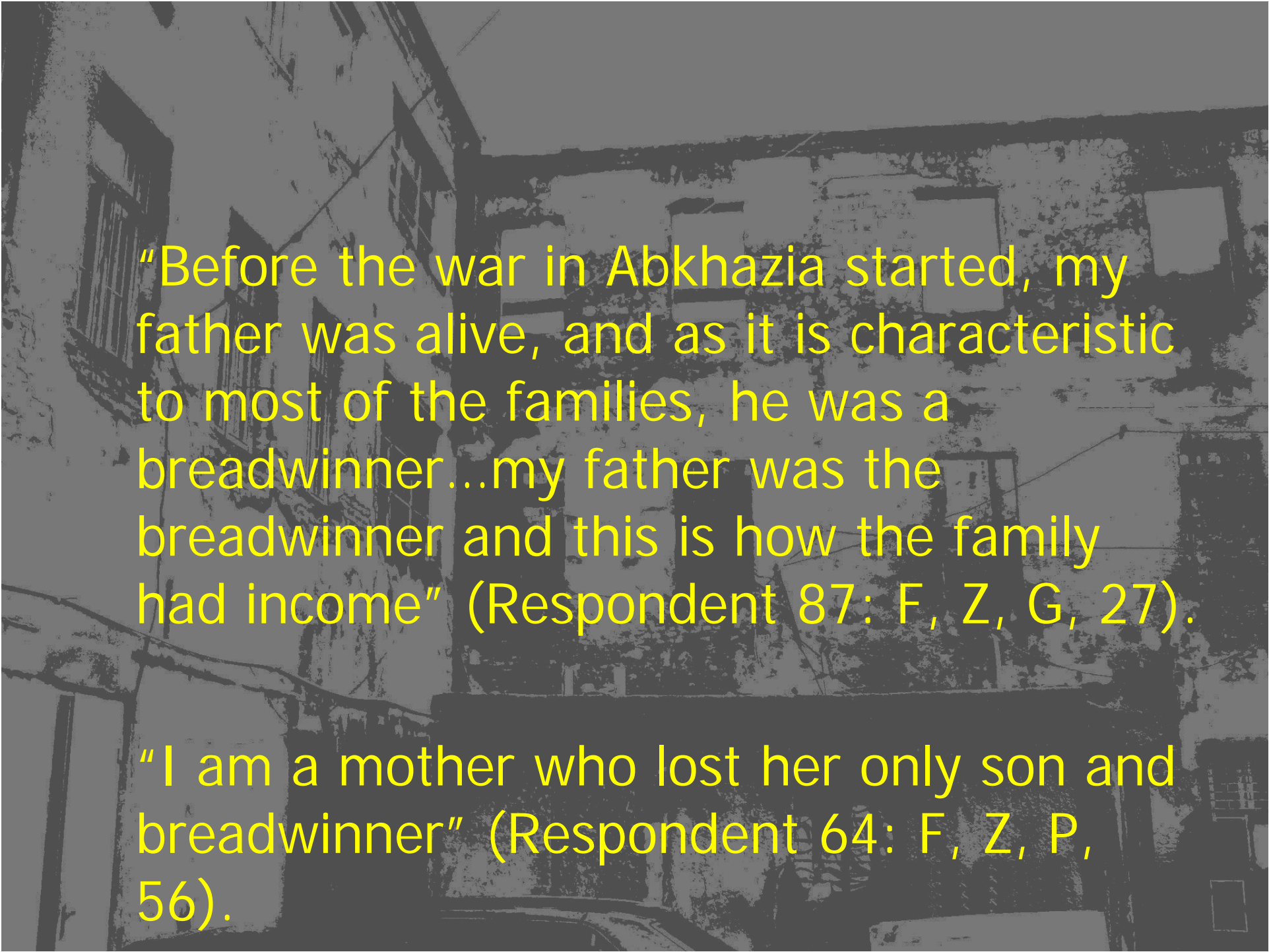




Role of Men

“I consider that women are not obliged to maintain a family [economically]”
(Respondent 6: M, T, P, 26).

“The man has more to do, I mean he has more responsibilities to carry out, well, let's say, in arranging life, in the financial sense, I mean” (Respondent 19: F, T, P, 24).



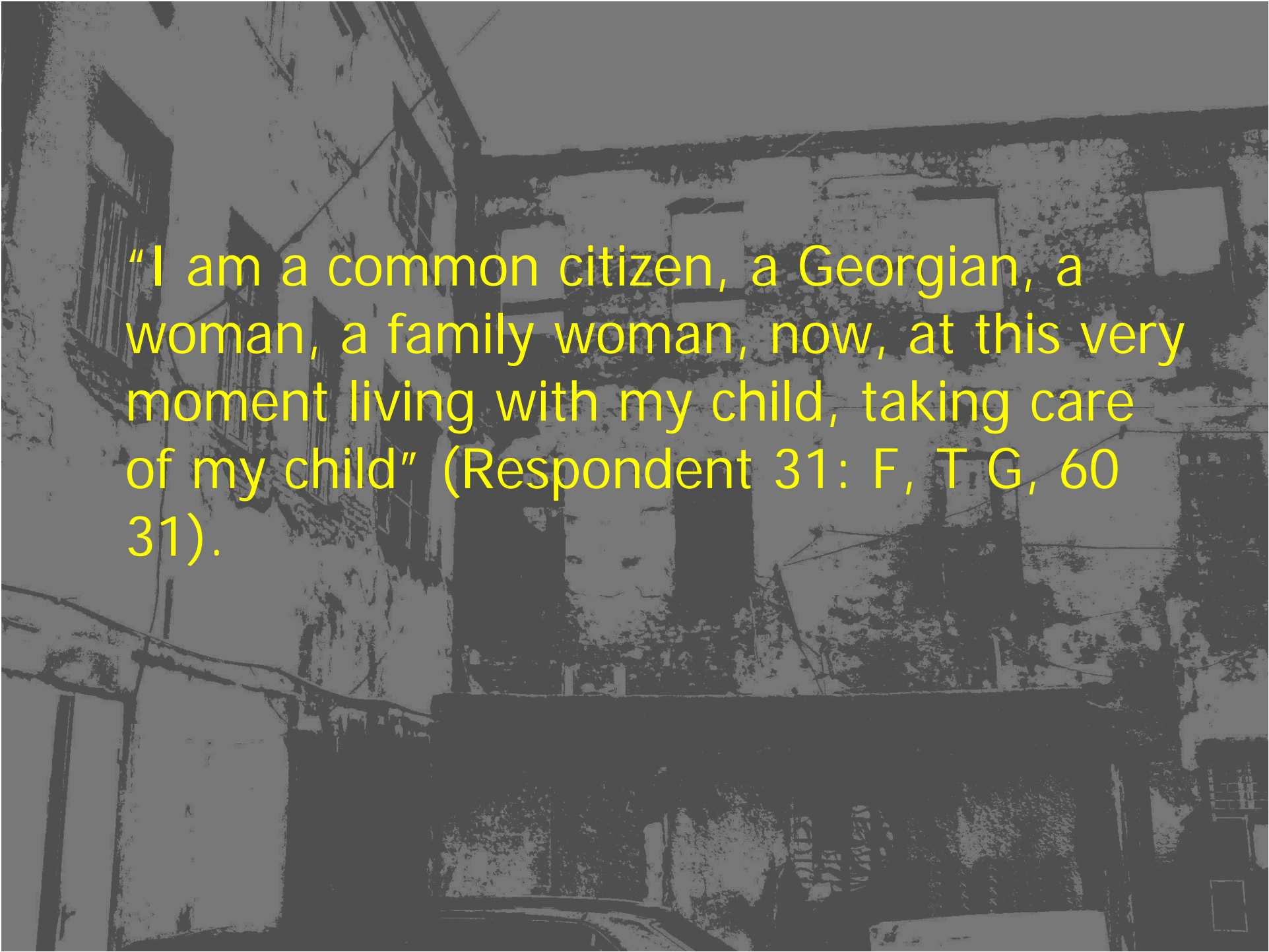
"Before the war in Abkhazia started, my father was alive, and as it is characteristic to most of the families, he was a breadwinner...my father was the breadwinner and this is how the family had income" (Respondent 87: F, Z, G, 27).

"I am a mother who lost her only son and breadwinner" (Respondent 64: F, Z, P, 56).

Role of Women

“For mother it is relatively easier, looking after the children, cooking” (Respondent 60: M, T, CC, 81).

“If I were thinking from the standpoint of a woman, I would firstly think of creating a family” (Respondent 34: F, T, G, 30).

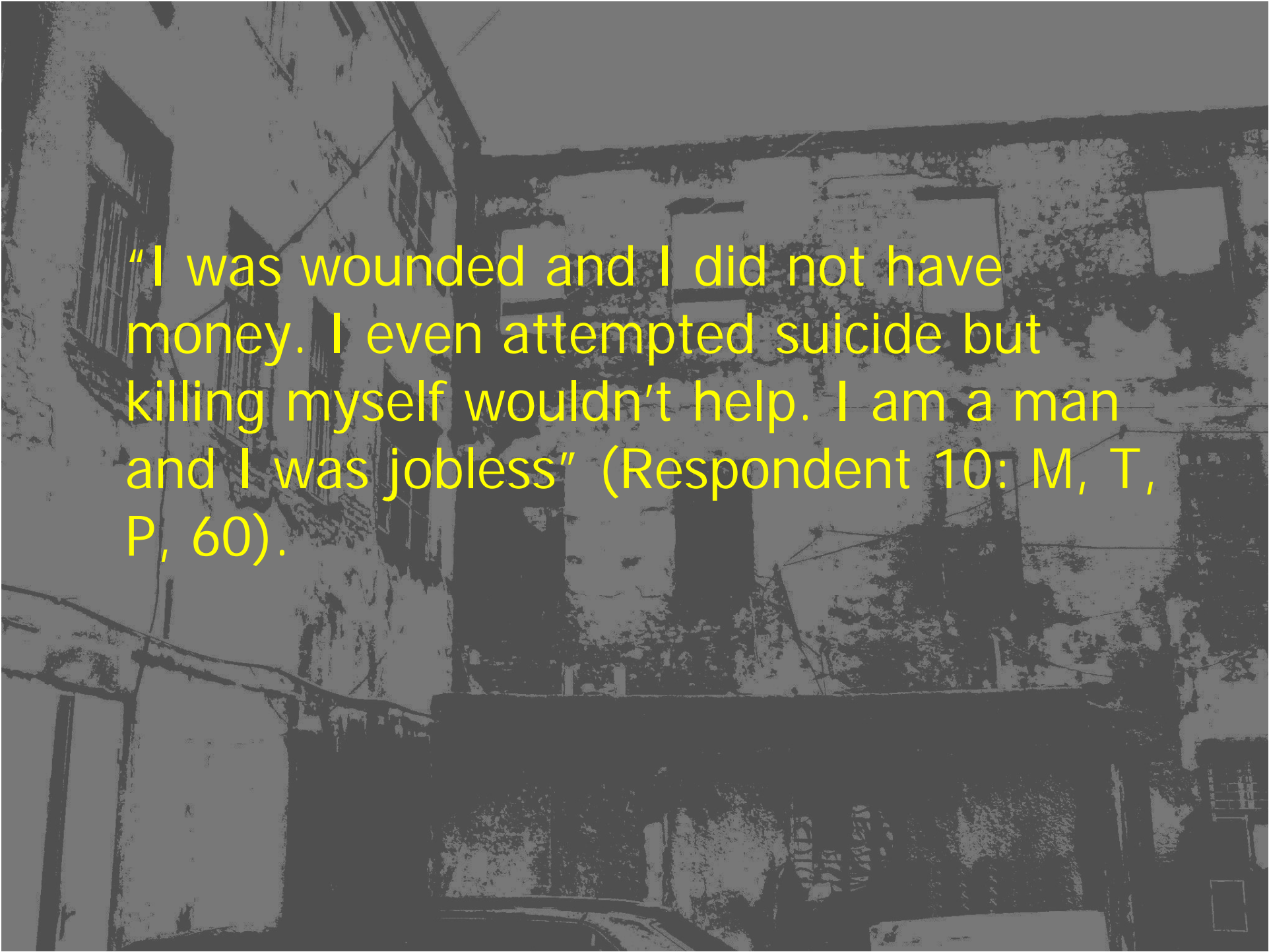


"I am a common citizen, a Georgian, a woman, a family woman, now, at this very moment living with my child, taking care of my child" (Respondent 31: F, T-G, 60 31).

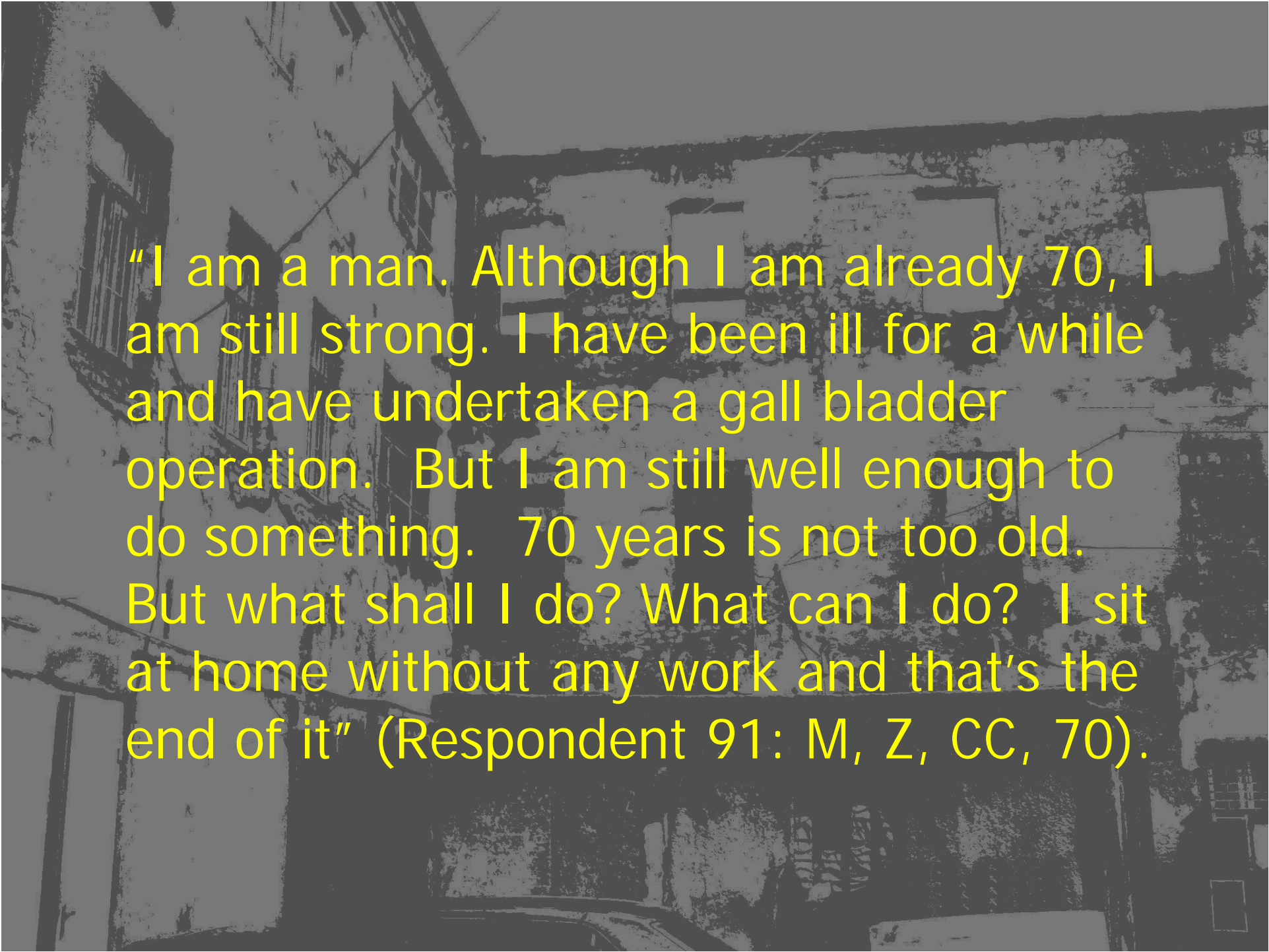
Traumatic Masculinities

- Identities transformed by displacement
 - Displacement affected gender roles
 - Experiencing a loss of status is a continuation of trauma, as well as a reminder of the trauma of displacement

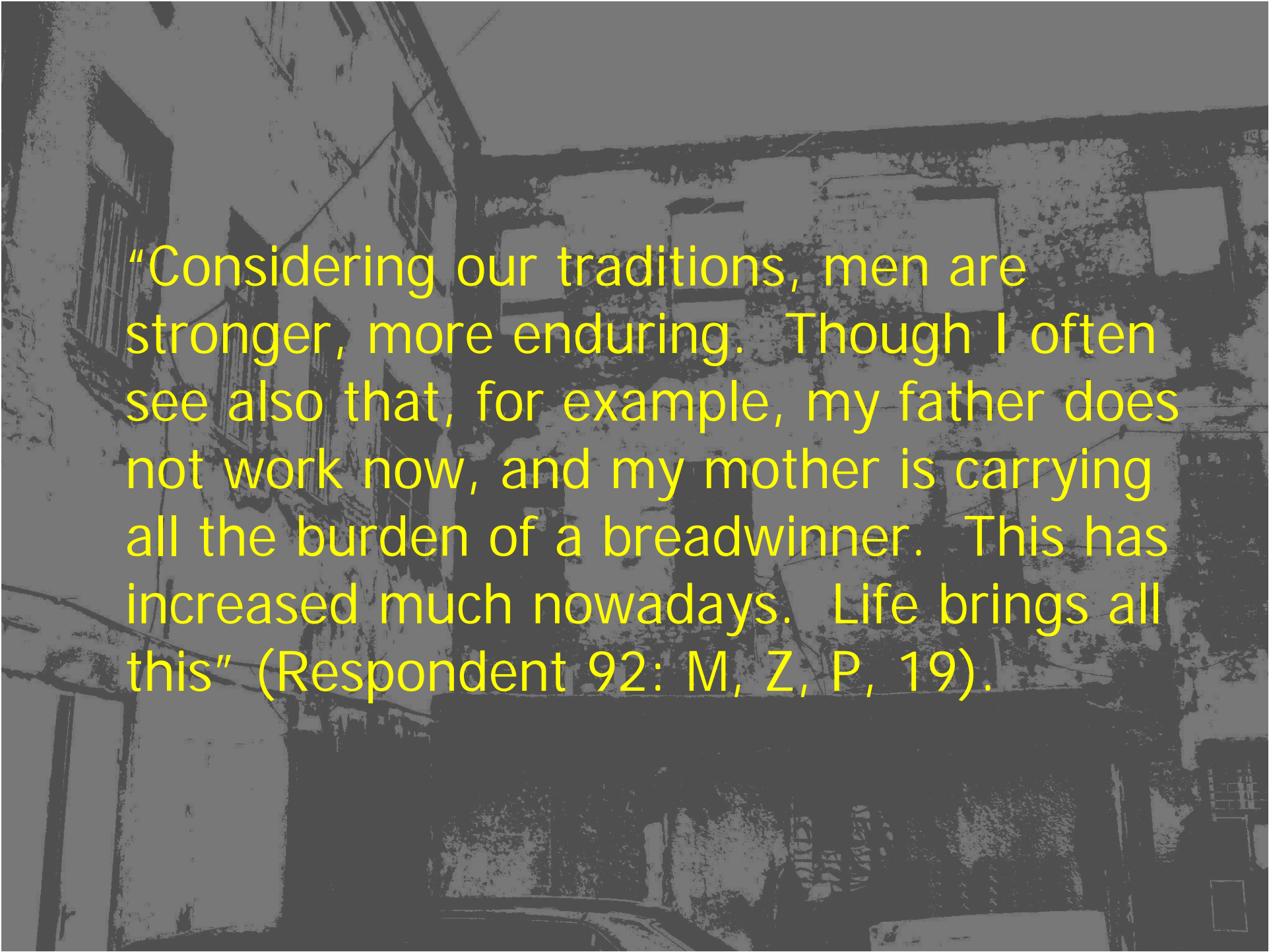




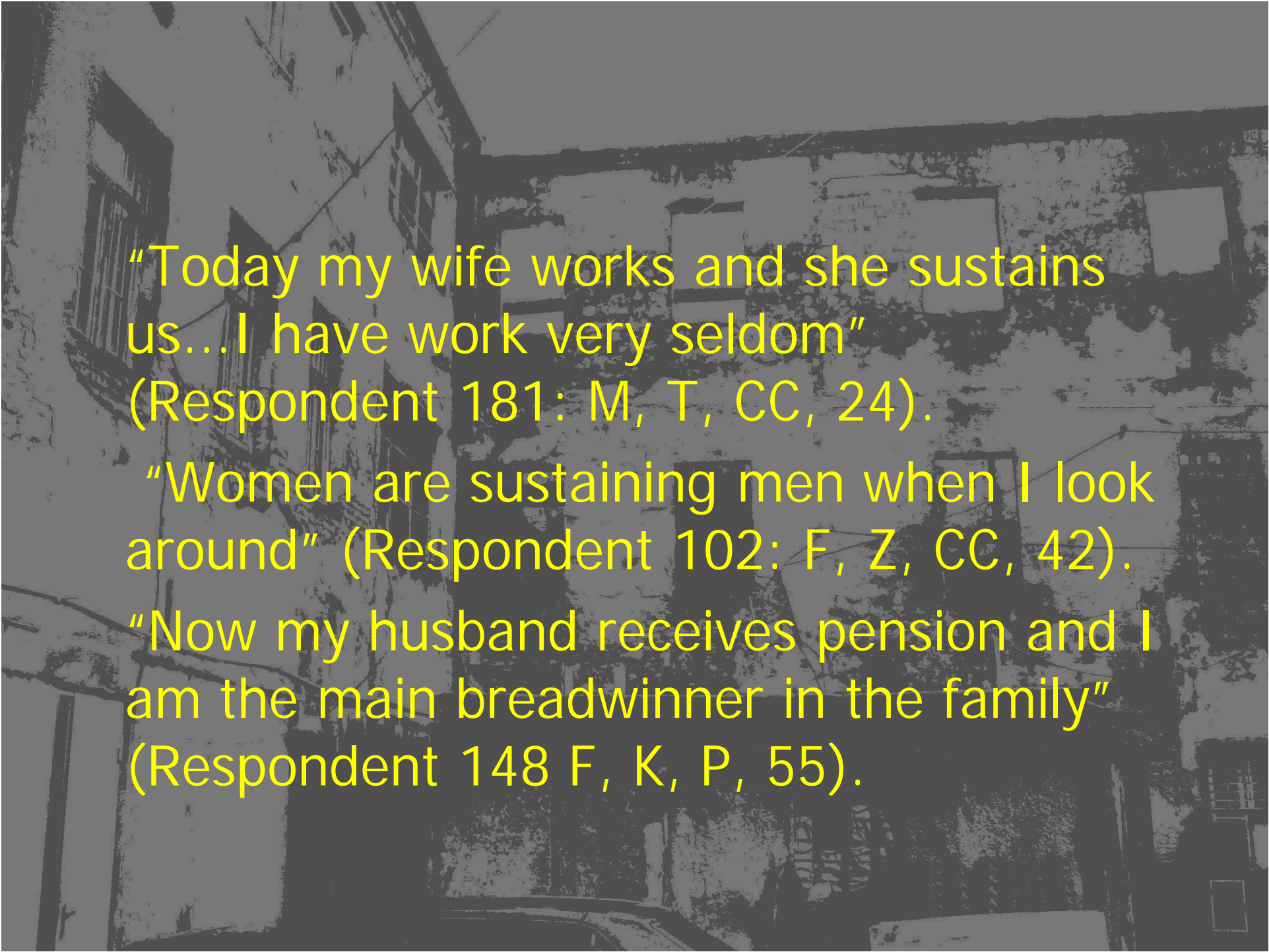
"I was wounded and I did not have money. I even attempted suicide but killing myself wouldn't help. I am a man and I was jobless" (Respondent 10: M, T, P, 60).



"I am a man. Although I am already 70, I am still strong. I have been ill for a while and have undertaken a gall bladder operation. But I am still well enough to do something. 70 years is not too old. But what shall I do? What can I do? I sit at home without any work and that's the end of it" (Respondent 91: M, Z, CC, 70).



"Considering our traditions, men are stronger, more enduring. Though I often see also that, for example, my father does not work now, and my mother is carrying all the burden of a breadwinner. This has increased much nowadays. Life brings all this" (Respondent 92: M, Z, P, 19).



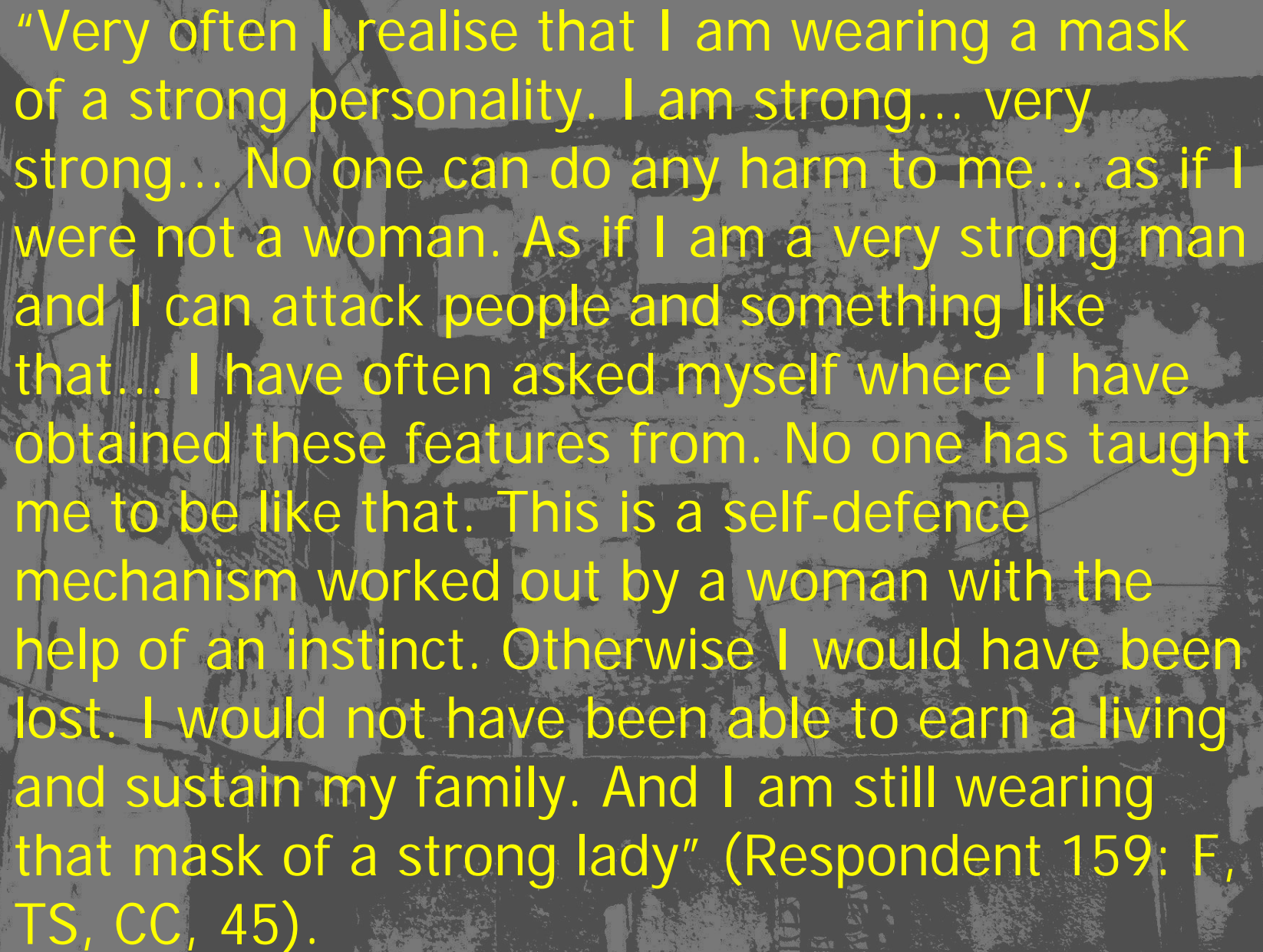
"Today my wife works and she sustains us...I have work very seldom"
(Respondent 181: M, T, CC, 24).

"Women are sustaining men when I look around" (Respondent 102: F, Z, CC, 42).

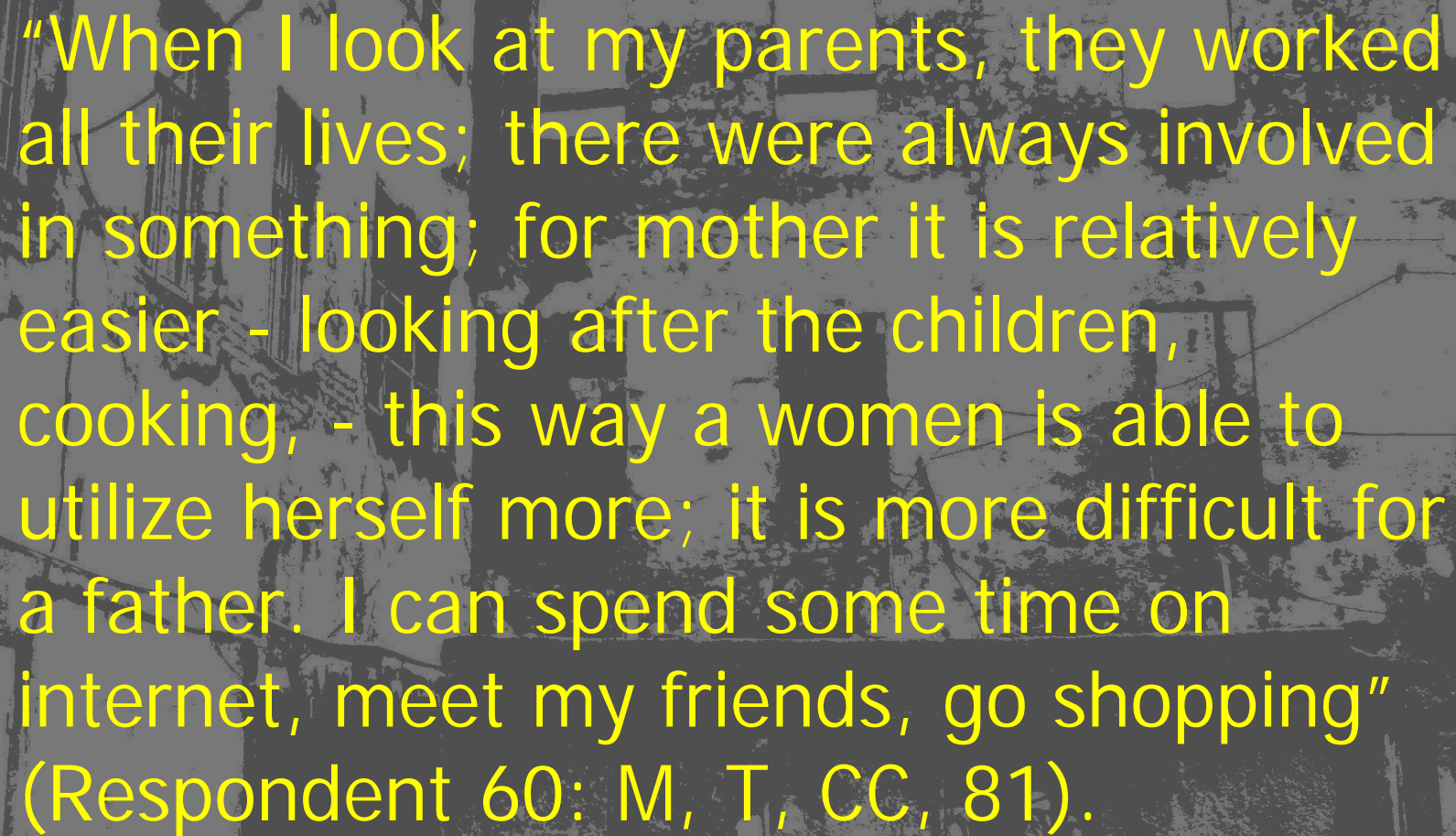
"Now my husband receives pension and I am the main breadwinner in the family"
(Respondent 148 F, K, P, 55).

Spaces of Masculinity

- IDP men hanging out with other IDP men
 - Outside of collective centers
- Male IDPs spend more time in outdoor spaces than female IDPs (38.6% vs. 9.8%)
- Female IDPs spend more time at home than male IDPs (18.9 hours vs. 16.1 hours)



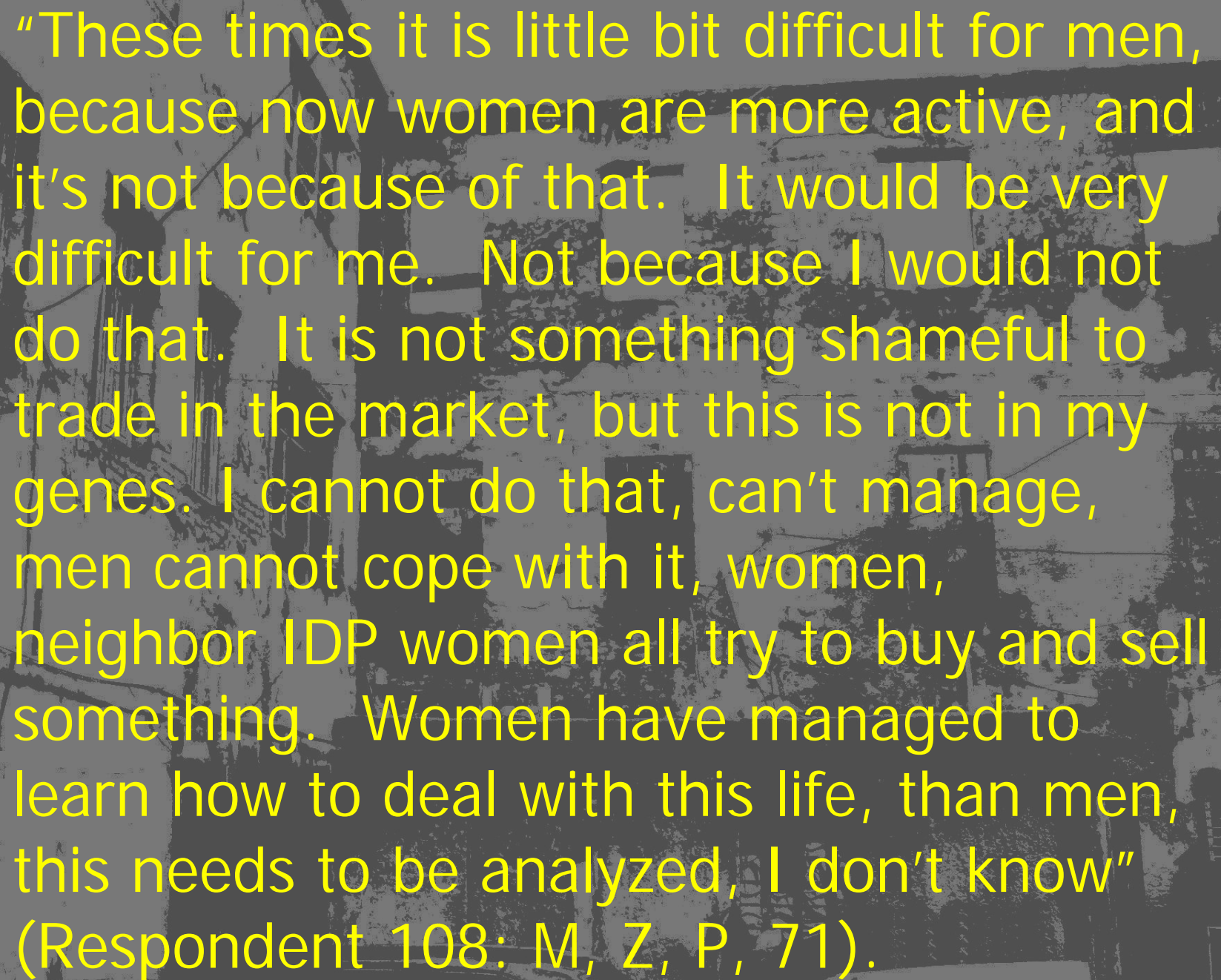
“Very often I realise that I am wearing a mask of a strong personality. I am strong... very strong... No one can do any harm to me... as if I were not a woman. As if I am a very strong man and I can attack people and something like that... I have often asked myself where I have obtained these features from. No one has taught me to be like that. This is a self-defence mechanism worked out by a woman with the help of an instinct. Otherwise I would have been lost. I would not have been able to earn a living and sustain my family. And I am still wearing that mask of a strong lady” (Respondent 159: F, TS, CC, 45).



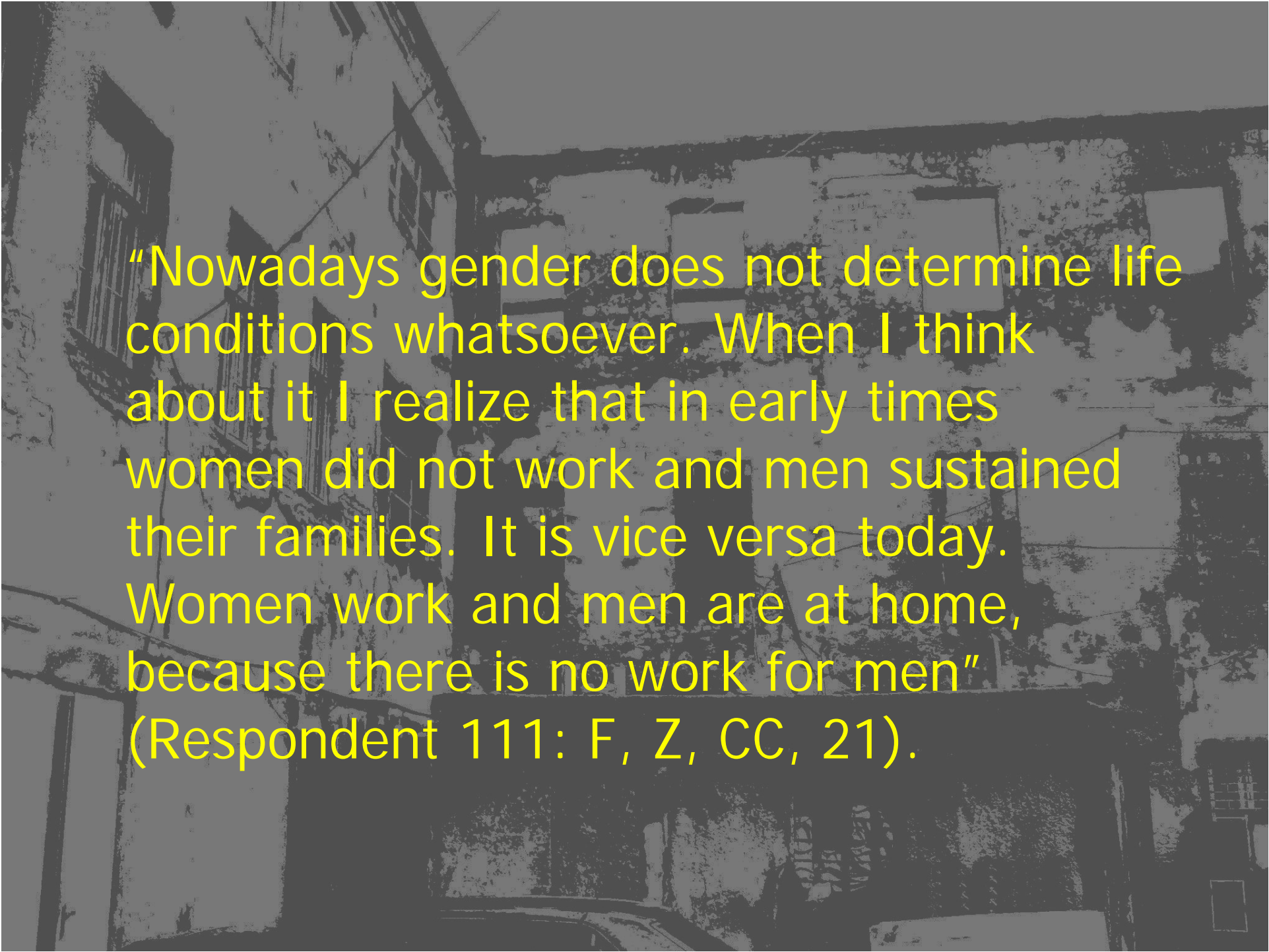
"When I look at my parents, they worked all their lives; there were always involved in something; for mother it is relatively easier - looking after the children, cooking, - this way a women is able to utilize herself more; it is more difficult for a father. I can spend some time on internet, meet my friends, go shopping" (Respondent 60: M, T, CC, 81).

Divergent gendered explanations for IDP circumstances





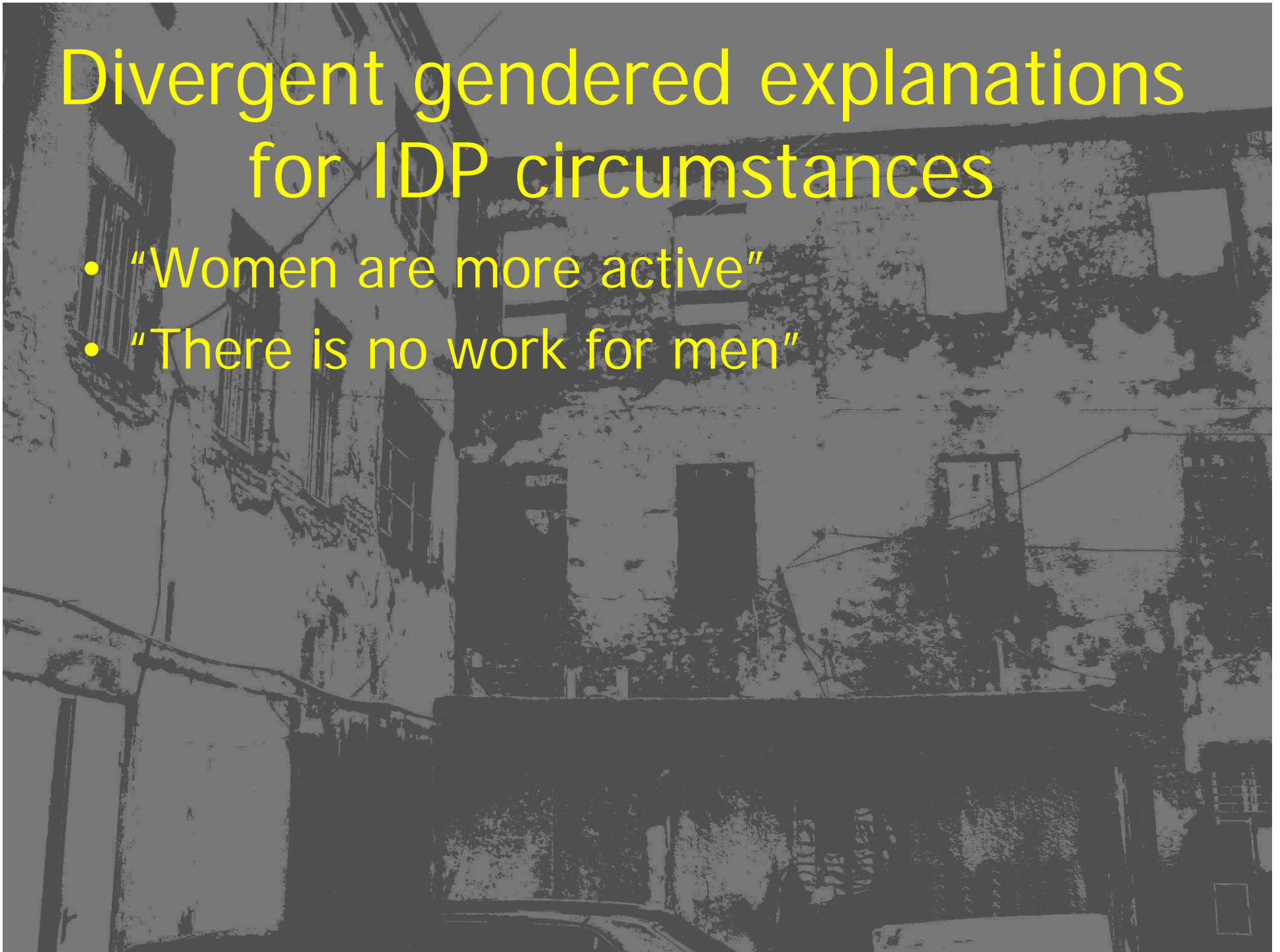
"These times it is little bit difficult for men, because now women are more active, and it's not because of that. It would be very difficult for me. Not because I would not do that. It is not something shameful to trade in the market, but this is not in my genes. I cannot do that, can't manage, men cannot cope with it, women, neighbor IDP women all try to buy and sell something. Women have managed to learn how to deal with this life, than men, this needs to be analyzed, I don't know" (Respondent 108: M, Z, P, 71).



"Nowadays gender does not determine life conditions whatsoever. When I think about it I realize that in early times women did not work and men sustained their families. It is vice versa today. Women work and men are at home, because there is no work for men" (Respondent 111: F, Z, CC, 21).

Divergent gendered explanations for IDP circumstances

- "Women are more active"
- "There is no work for men"



Future Implications

