

GENDER AND THE FORMATION OF LATE MODERN NATIONAL  
SUBJECTIVITY IN TURKEY: ISLAMIC AND KURDISH WOMEN IN  
LOCAL POLITICS

A Ph.D Dissertation

by

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İHSAN DOĞRAMACI BİLKENT UNIVERSITY  
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January 2016

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **GENDER AND THE FORMATION OF LATE MODERN NATIONAL SUBJECTIVITY IN TURKEY: ISLAMIC AND KURDISH WOMEN IN LOCAL POLITICS**

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This dissertation looks at the self-narrations of the AKP and the BDP women local representatives and argues that a distinct female national subjectivity is constructed and performed throughout these narrations. Late 1990s is usually referred as a turning point in Turkish politics characterized by the electoral successes of the Islamic and Kurdish movements. The rhetoric of both these movements involves references to their political projects about redefining the bonds of nationhood in Turkey that is conceptualized in various terms such as ‘new Turkey’, ‘peoples of Turkey’ making peace and ‘normalization of Turkish politics’ to name some. The two political parties, namely the AKP and the BDP (now HDP) have introduced different constructions of ‘alternative’ national collectivity in this context.

Patriarchal characteristic of the founding ideology of Turkish modernization is one of the issues that these two parties problematize in their alternative constructions of nationhood. The ‘woman question’ has been

defined as one of the central issues in the party programs of both the AKP and the BDP. They are also the parties where high mobilization of women is observed. The questions that will be discussed throughout this study are: What kind of female subjects are produced throughout the actualization of these programs of two parties, do these subjects subvert, transform or reproduce patriarchal national authority? Focusing on the difference between the two, different notions of patriarchy that plays a constructive role in the formation of national subjects in this context is examined.

**Key words:** gender, late modernity, local governments, female politicians in Turkey, construction of national subject

## ÖZET

### TOPLUMSAL CİNSİYET VE TÜRKİYE'DE GEÇ MODERN MİLLİ ÖZNELLİĞİN OLUŞUMU: YEREL SİYASETTE İSLAMİ VE KÜRT KADINLAR

Yaraş, Sezen

Doktora, Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü

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Bu çalışma AKP ve BDP li kadın yerel temsilcilerin öz anlatılarını incelemekte ve bu anlatılarda özgün bir dişil milli öznelliğinin inşa ve icra edildiğini tartışmaktadır. Geç 90lar dönemi genellikle Türkiye için bir dönüm noktası olarak belirtilmektedir. İslamcı hareketin ve Kürt hareketinin seçim başarıları bu dönemin bir dönüm noktası olarak tarif edilmesinin başlıca sebepleri arasında yer alır. Her iki hareketin de söyleminde ‘yeni Türkiye’, ‘Türkiye halklarının barışı, ve Türkiye siyasetinin ‘normalleştirilmesi’ gibi ifadelerle tanımlanan millet bağlarını yeniden tanımlamaya yönelik siyasi projelere yer verilmektedir. Bu bağlamda iki siyasi parti, AKP ve BDP (şimdi HDP) ‘alternatif’ milli bütünlük inşası içeren farklı siyasi projeler önermişlerdir.

Türk modernleşmesinin kurucu ideolojisinin patriarkal özellikleri, her iki partinin alternatif millet kurgularında sorunsallaştıran unsurlar olmuştur. ‘Kadın sorunu’ hem AKP nin hem de BDP nin parti programlarında yer verdikleri temel meselelerden biri olarak karşımıza çıkar. Bu iki parti aynı

zamanda yüksek kadın katılımı ile dikkat çeken partiler olmuştur. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışmada tartışılmazı hedeflenen sorular şunlardır: Söz konusu iki parti programının uygulama süreçlerinde ne tür dışıl öznellikler oluşmaktadır, bu öznellikler patriarchal milli otoriteyi yerinden eden, dönüştüren ya da yeniden üreten öznellikler midir? İki parti arasındaki farka odaklanılarak, farklı patriarchal kurguların bu dönemde ortaya çıkan milli öznelliklerin inşasında oynadığı rol incelenmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** toplumsal cinsiyet, geç modernite, yerel yönetimler, Türkiye'de kadın siyasetçiler, milli öznellik inşası

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This dissertation looks at the self-narrations of the AKP and BDP women local representatives and argues that a distinct female national subjectivity is constructed and performed throughout these narrations. In late 1990s, many studies about the political developments in Turkey were starting with a diagnosis about her national identity crisis. The references to the increasing alienation from the West oriented secular regime (Ergil, 2000: 43) and the questions about how to refashion national identity after the rise of the Islamist movement and the Kurdish insurgency made up the concerns behind this diagnosis. For example Cizre (1998: 3) indicates that an identity crisis has begun to be addressed in Turkey as “The Kurdish problem and the tide of political Islam have raised fundamental questions about the basic assumptions of the Turkish national state and identity.” While the failure of the previous national narration to contain the religious and ethnic identities as “excluded peripheral identities” who felt alienated from the “imposed monolithic national identity” (Icduygu, Colak and Soyarik, 1999: 203) is stressed, democratic participation, cultural rights and freedoms and political inclusion started to be introduced as the ‘new’ national glue.

In this context, what became an important debate both within and outside these religious and ethnic movements was the formal narration about Turkish women's emancipation by the formation of the Republic. For example Muftuler-Bac, while problematizing Turkey's being represented as "the only modern, democratic, Islamic country ...and the status of Turkish women's visibly marking this difference", argues that this narration of women's emancipation is 'one of the best concealed lies in Turkey' among other lies about its being modern and democratic. When this is exposed as a 'lie', what replaces it is 'women's predicament' in Turkey (1999: 313). As Turkish women's secondary status in social, political and cultural life is stressed to refute this formal narration, the ideal of women's emancipation is maintained. The main identities that became focus of public, academic and policy debate, namely religion and ethnicity, started to represent themselves as the best representatives to serve for this ideal. Thus, while the gendered characteristics of the previous regime were marked as subordinating women through turning them into obedient servants of the Republican ideology (Ecevit 2007: 191), women as historical actors were called for action to be involved in the process of reformulation of national identity for making the state actually representative of their interests.

The period that will be referred here as late modern Turkish context, Islamic and Kurdish groups became the main collective actors that demand to reformulate Turkishness to resolve the so called crisis of national identity. The AKP won the majority of the parliamentary seats in 2002. Kurdish armed

insurgency was replaced by an intention of non-separation from Turkey and the aims about democratic resolution of the Kurdish problem (Yavuz, 2001: 16), followed by gradual increase in the number of representatives of the Kurdish issue oriented political parties in both the parliament and local governments. How to analyze the effects of such simultaneous emergence of the arguments about the crisis of national identity and crisis of its gendered assumptions, also how to discuss the central role gender plays in the construction of these new political actors and their projects of resolving the identity crisis of the nation are the initial research questions behind this study.

National identity constructs itself through providing meaning about daily experiences of sexual identity such as what it means to be a working woman, a good wife, a responsible mother, an assertive Muslim woman that is not trapped in backwards definitions of religion or a progressive Kurdish woman who carries a historical mission to resist against all shapes of patriarchy for leading woman's emancipation in the country. Considering how the categories of womanhood and manhood and their daily performance become this much loaded with meanings about serving for or resisting against the authoritarian forces of the past, national identity becomes constructed and reproduced in every sphere where sexual identity is experienced. Thus, gender itself is constructive of national subjectivity through serving for its bodily embodiment and daily performed in various spheres of social life through locating selfhood within the historicity of the nation.

Although high participation of women in these movements was observed from the very beginning, women's self-identification as Islamic and Kurdish women and attributing themselves distinct historical, social and cultural roles as such within these political parties is a development of late 1990s. Despite the high women presence in the Islamic movement, the definition of the woman question was limited to the rights and freedoms of headscarved women. It was in the AKP period when social and political rights and freedoms of women in general became a central issue both within the party program and within the rhetoric of the AKP women representatives themselves. Also in the Kurdish case, although women's presence in different levels of the Kurdish insulation is not a new phenomenon, the depiction of the movement as a 'feminist' one corresponds to the post 2000s. In the words of Bozarslan (2012: 11) "The Kurdish movement in Turkey, and the pro-PKK parties in Syria and Iran, define themselves today as feminist ones. You could not imagine such a political program in the past."

Both parties that offer political programs to reformulate Turkishness address the so called 'women's predicament' in the historical trajectory of Turkish national identity. Such mainstreaming of the necessity for women to reconsider their sense of self as emancipated by the formation of the Republic affected the historical trajectory of the political projects about building a new national sense of belonging. The translation of the mission of serving for the empowerment or emancipation of women to the political agenda of the AKP and the BDP had important effects in the daily organization of politics, in the forms and styles of

communicating with the constituency and in the ways and methods of remembering the past. The women subjectivities constructed in this context intervened in the processes of building collective ties, producing knowledge about women and organizing the daily conduct of politics. Thus, these women who come to think of themselves as Islamic and Kurdish women are both the effects of this context and they themselves produce the actual shape that politics of inclusion and democratic participation takes in the Turkey. They serve for the stabilizing and reproduction of these identities, they narrate themselves in Turkey's history through claiming common ties with the women from her past, they translate these identities into their various roles as women such as motherhood, sisterhood, wifehood and so on.

Mapping how gender is constructive of the late modern national identity through focusing on the formation of Islamic woman and Kurdish woman subjectivities and how they actively produce the late modern national identity is the aim of this study. Rather than discussing whether they serve for women's emancipation or not, the main question is how the authority of the nation to make interventions in space, time and bodies is reproduced and reorganized through these subjectivities. Scott (1999: 73) defines gender as the subject forming effects of the discursively and historically produced knowledge about sex and sexual difference. National subjectivity is one of the discourses that constructs and is constructed by the production and embodiment of a particular knowledge about masculinity and femininity. Sexual difference in the late modern Turkish context

turned into a useful category for a linear narration of the nation in terms of women's emancipation, spatial reconfiguration of the nation to open up spaces for daily performance, public visibility and reproduction of these 'new' women subjectivities. As it will be discussed in detail in the following chapters, both Islamic and Kurdish women representatives identify themselves as such through narrations about the experiences of Islamic and Kurdish women starting from Turkish modernization, they define their successes in finally having a voice in institutions of representation as the ultimate success of a demand that started to be raised by these ancestors and hence attribute themselves a historical role to mobilize women for their mission. Thus, these categories of womanhood have become sites of making claims about the past and future of the nation, about the essence of religion or ethnicity, its good and bad, real and distorted sides. Hence, they become stabilized through retrospective projections and through intervening in and reordering various practices of daily life. From this perspective, the Islamic and Kurdish women subjectivities and how they are translated and performed within various fields of social life such as religion, culture, economy, ethnicity, morality, and family might have important contributions to discuss how gender operates in the construction, daily practice and normalization of 'new' national identities in Turkey.

These subjectivities are comprehensive in the sense of their being performed not only in mainstream political institutions but at the workplace, friendship meetings and the intimate relations within the family. In her analysis of

the formation of modern nation state in Turkey, Kandiyoti (1998: 281) argues that “What was at stake was not just the remaking of women but the wholesale refashioning of gender and gender relations ...which involved the articulations of new images of masculinity and femininity.” A similar argument can be made about the late modern nation formation process. In the late modern context of rebuilding national ties, these Islamic and Kurdish women subjectivities refashion the gender relations and reorder their daily practice in a way that nation narrates itself through these daily practices of sexual identity. For example, one AKP municipal council member from Ordu, Yaprak, has mentioned that:

During my municipal council membership, as a lawyer, I provided many free legal consultancy services for poor women while my husband, who is a psychologist, provided counselling services for them. There are many educated women who stay away from politics since they prefer spending more time with their children. There are also many educated men within our party who see the main place of a woman as their homes. However, sharing our education and knowledge with the people as a family changed our understanding of the meaning of family. I think my children will benefit from my political experiences more than just my being near them all the time. My husband enjoys this mutual joy of serving the community more than just having a wife who just cooks and cleans. We complete each other as wheels of a gear while serving for the wellbeing of others.

As this quotation exemplifies, the desire for serving for the wellbeing of fellow nationals organizes the daily life of these representatives through attributing a distinct meaning to various practices such as education, family life as mothers and wives or professional activities. These desires serve for her categorizing her life as before and after this experience of joy of serving for the well-being of others. This

joy is translated into her relation with her husband and children, attributing a moral meaning to these relations through which other forms of familial relations are judged as good or bad in terms of their diverging from these idealized images of masculinity and femininity. As Sirman (2005: 167) indicates, “those sections of the population that does not fit this lifestyle”, the educated women who are alienated from the problems of their society and raise selfish children or the AKP men whose images of womanhood is destructive for not only the wellbeing of women but of children and hence the future of the nation in this case, “are excluded as the abject.” As the part of the population that is the most educated or at the most critical positions for providing service to the people, they are seen as a failure not only as good citizens but as good women and men. New national identity is to be constructed through fixing their sexual identities and fitting together these ‘wheels’ to make the gear, that is the nation, to operate properly again. Thus, if we go back to Scott’s definition of gender as the subject forming effects of the discursively and historically produced knowledge about sex and sexual difference, the subject that is formed through such historical and moral discourse of femininity and masculinity is the national subject.

For mapping how the discourse of new national identity both constructs and is constructed by these gendered subjects in the Turkish context, the questions that guided this study are: how are the two parties’ political projects about the resolution of the national identity crisis in this context gendered; how such stress on Turkish women’s predicament is translated into the political programs of these

parties; what are the terms of their articulating Turkish women as a distinct group, which women qualify as the agents of ‘new’ Turkey and which ways of experiencing this category are defined as damaging the cause of emancipation and empowerment; how are the particular experiences of Islamic and Kurdish women constructed in a way that they present themselves as the leading actors for real emancipation of Turkish women; how is the daily conduct of politics organized based on these gendered subject positions? A detailed analysis of these Islamic women and Kurdish women subjectivities might have important contributions for opening into discussion how the ‘new women’ who demand to be the active agents of Turkish future give the actual shape to the discourses of democratizing politics and redefining national ties of belonging in the Turkish context.

The self-narrations of women local representatives from the AKP and the BDP in the post 2009 local elections context make up the empirical material of this study. Local governments’ being the level of analysis is important for two reasons. Firstly, in this context when Turkish experience of modern nation state formation became subject of critical scrutiny, local governments turned into important fields for reclaiming selfhood from the oppressive politics of the past. As the Kemalist ideology of making the individual ‘subservient to the state’ was criticized, empowerment of the local actors was stressed as an important step for making the state responsive to the demands of the people rather than vice versa (Ataman, 2002: 132). The roles and responsibilities of the local governments for democratization and civilianization of politics through empowerment of citizenry

became an issue of debate at this period. As it will be discussed in detail in the following chapters, elected local representatives attribute themselves an important role in the formation of new national identity. Thus, it is considered that focusing on the narrations of local representatives might make important contributions to open into discussion the gendered processes of the formation of ‘new’ national citizenry from ‘bottom to top’. Secondly, not only local governments but also the local organizations of the political parties have an historical importance for the mobilization of women for both of the political parties. As Ayata and Tutuncu (2008: 368) indicate, stimulation of women’s political activism is one of the higher priorities of the AKP “knowing the importance of the local organization and women’s great contribution in local governments.” Also in the BDP case, as stated in the document of election proclamation for 2014 local elections, local governments that promote women’s emancipation are seen as the guarantee of democratic polity. Thus, the AKP and BDP women local representatives’ self-narrations are assumed to provide an invaluable material to discuss the gendered characteristics of the late modern national subjectivity in Turkey.

### **1.1 Reconfiguration of Nationhood, Modernity and Gender in Late Modern Turkey**

Starting with late 1990s, the so called national identity crisis started to be attributed to the failures of the path of modernization taken by the Republican

successors of the Ottoman Empire and its being authoritarian. What this national identity crisis actually means is the loss of desire for imagining oneself as part of a national collectivity and hence the incapability of the nation to serve as the narration to make sense of selfhood by locating oneself within this collective fantasy. Sirman (2005: 161) indicates that this so called ‘crisis’ is something intrinsic to the idea of the nation itself since “the nation is indeed quite a fragile unity, a unity traversed by major fissures.” What is dramatized as *the* national identity crisis at this period in that sense serves to reproduce the idea of a conflict free, non-fragile nation as a collectivity that is experienced equally by everyone as a possibility. Thus, this can be defined as the introduction of distinct narrations and technologies for patching up the cracks and crevices of the nation on a daily basis. This new narration consists of what Keyder (1997: 44) refers as “the transition from a modernizationist state that sees itself as the guardian of social change to a modern state based on political liberalism and citizenship.” Democracy, increased participation of historically excluded groups in decision making processes, the people’s claiming the right to rule from the authoritarian rulers of the past make up the rhetoric that are used to mark this period as a distinct one in the flow of Turkish history.

In this period that she defines as late modernity, Brown (1995: 5) indicates that “freedom persists as the most compelling way of marking differences between lives whose terms are relatively controlled by their inhabitants and those that are less so, between domination by history and participation in history, between space of action and its relative absence.”

Controlling one's fate, participating in the making of history and the freedom for spatial reorganization for daily performance of these freedoms become the main indications of democratic rule. Adoption of a discursive framework that contains various concepts such as individual rights and freedoms, democratic inclusion and political representation in this period is not unique to Turkey. This is a time when a distinct mode of imagining, writing, talking about the 'modern' past emerged in various contexts. Povinelli (1998: 579) refers to this period as a much broader crisis of "modernism, liberalism, humanism and democratic polity" and argues that the lost certainty of moral grounding provided by them wracked national hegemonic projects in various contexts and brought "anxious national debates" about founding a 'new' national collective will in late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The distinction between modern and non-modern or modernizing states was not dissolved but the concepts to define the former were defined as democratic rights and freedoms whereas the latter, as its opposite, is defined as authoritarian and suppressive.

This was not the first time when what modernity is and its outcomes became an issue of debate. As Cinar indicates (2005: 1), "modernity is perhaps one of the most controversial terms in scholarly literature and its ascribed many, sometimes contradictory meanings." However, this is a time when a distinct definition of the modern or 'modernizationist' past started to be used through reference to its divergence from democratic ideals that gave way to what Scott (1991: 774), defines as the emergence of a "future utopian moment." Modern, just like nation, is used to refer to various mechanisms that suppressed, made invisible, unitarized multiplicity through its 'meta-narrative'. Still, in the

definition of these multiple identities, they are marked as alternative moderns that were forbidden to be marked as modern due to their divergences from the formalized definition of modernity. Thus, while a certain definition of modernization which is based on the “premise that tradition and religion disappear with the advent of an evolutionary progression” (Gole 1996: 2) is disclaimed the desire to be the ‘real’ representatives of it persists. Hence, together with the idea of a nation as an equal home for everyone, the possibility of true modernity that is to be built through the democratic participation of everyone becomes the main narrative of political legitimacy in this context.

These characteristics of the late modern context gives way to the reproduction of the ideal of building a ‘new subject population’, again a modern national subject which “in Foucauldian sense refer to technologies of power that mark, stamp, invest, inscribe upon bodies ...not as a simple process of subordination or repression but rather as a process which secures, maintains and puts in place a subject” (Yegenoglu, 2011: 227). These new modern national subjects are distinguished from the old ones in terms of their woundedness and exclusion which is argued to provide them a distinct standpoint to have access to the ‘real’ essence of the past. The presence of these groups in representative institutions in Mackay’s terms (2004: 101), “lends legitimacy to democratic institutions as signifiers of justice, inclusion and recognition.” Also in Brown’s words (1995: 68), such common reference to woundedness in this context “is a triple achievement: it produces an affect (rage, righteousness) that overwhelms the hurt, it produces a culprit responsible for the hurt, and it produces a site of

revenge to displace the hurt.” These subjects write themselves in the history of modern nation states through the memories of those who had been victims of authoritarian modern regimes and claim themselves as the legitimate modern subjects to build the future of the nation. Thus, top to down modern nation formation becomes the culprit responsible for the wounds of those who claim to be suppressed. Replacing the leaders of the past through political representation and recognition becomes their main ‘site of revenge’.

It is the gendered characteristics of such modes of characterizing the ‘newness’ of this period through references to past and present, authoritarian and democratic, ruling elite and wounded masses in the Turkish context that will be the focus of this study. Connolly (1983: 325) argues that the periods that are defined through terms like crisis or deficit can also be read as the introduction of “a broad doctrinal drift toward the problem of managing, regulating, and controlling the behavior of people and institutions.” I will try to introduce a gendered analysis of this period through locating it within the new technologies of constructing and regulating national subjects within this doctrinal drift. At this point, it might be useful to distinguish between gender identity and gender. Masculinity and femininity are not only about men and women but categories that are constructed and constitutive of the dichotomies that are arguably mutually exclusive such as past and present, public and private, state and society, modern and traditional, authoritarian and democratic politics and so on. Gender analysis is to question “the insistence on the fixity of these oppositions” which are

essentialized and normalized on the basis of an essential “truth” of sexual difference” (Scott, 2010: 12). Scott also argues that the category of ‘women’ or ‘feminine’ is being used to mark the difference of any kind, which changes throughout history. In her words “there are appeals to specific interests and experiences that, at a particular moment, get organized under the sign of ‘women’” (2010: 12). What gets organized through that term might be a domain such as domestic or private versus the masculine public, or national territory as a motherland and the state as the masculine authority, or particular type of relationship such as horizontal versus hierarchical or a state of being such as victimhood and agency or presence and absence. As Pateman (2013: 6) indicates “public sphere gains its meaning and significance only in contrast with and in opposition to the private world of particularity, natural subjection, emotion, love, - and woman and femininity.” She also refers to Okin’s stress on how the modern ideal of universal rule of reason and rationality has at its basis the idea of femininity that is intuitive and deficient in rationality. Butler and Weed (2011: 4) argue that “the only way to gauge usefulness of gender is by tracking its organizing effects.” Gender identities that are one’s defining oneself as a woman or man are the effects of all these processes that are very much related with the historical and political context. Thus, such focusing on the normalized and taken for granted categories that make up the basis of political authority in a given time is important to open into discussion its gendered construction as an effect of which a certain forms of femininity and masculinity are formed and regulated. The collective sense of womanhood is not something out there and the

construction of womanhood as a collective identity necessitates certain form of organization, daily performance by certain policy agents as well as other fields of knowledge for their reproduction. A gender analysis is to open into discussion the political and historical processes behind these regulatory practices.

For example, Aynur from Diyarbakir indicates that:

We have a very altruistic style of working within the party. I have participated in women's movement and hence after I got of prison, I was directed by the party to a place where I could work for women's well-being. Mayoralty is just one of them. No one is in politics for career purposes here. I will work wherever they need me. ...This is a place that had experienced all the destructions of 90s. This is a place where there is high sensitivity about Kurdish identity. In that sense women's struggle for freedom is not alien to them. They adopt it as part of their own struggle against oppression and against poverty.

As it will be discussed in detail later, such dichotomies of altruistic and career oriented ways of conducting politics, hierarchical and horizontal relations within the party, politics of oppression and politics of liberation, hence the BDP's marking itself as a difference from the past and from other parties are attributed masculine and feminine characteristics in these narrations. Woman's being the representative of the positive part of the dichotomy or actual women's making these claims does not make these sources of political authority less gendered or less patriarchal.

The studies about the patriarchal characteristics of Turkish modernization had both shaped and been shaped by this context where the discourse of

democracy and its restructuring effects was being experienced. While national patriarchy as a distinct type of patriarchy that is defined as the national authorities' claiming the right to 'name' women and the essence of their identity in line with the interests of the nation is analyzed, it is followed by celebrating the birth of a 'new woman' that has experienced a 'mental transformation' to resist their being prisoned into the normalized representations of them produced by national authorities (Berkay, 1998: 7). For example, Muftuler Bac (1999: 303) introduces the maintaining of male domination despite granting women social, political and legal rights as the paradoxical character of Kemalist reforms. This is argued to be not only a paradox, but as she quotes from Arat, this illusion of emancipation itself served to preempt a women's movement. Thus, while the political nature of the category of Turkish women and how it organizes and disciplines certain woman subjectivities is acknowledged, the possibility of an emancipated, modern and democratic, non-oppressive or non-patriarchal womanhood is simultaneously acknowledged. While the taken for grantedness of the gendered distinctions and the power relations behind them is problematized, women are again called, as women, to be part of building a democratic future. İlyasoglu (1994) indicates that the modernist elite were measuring the admissible dose of modernization in the Turkish society through reference to public presence of women and religion. However, as the demand of the headscarved women to enter high education institutions and working life is used to subvert this idea about the modernization of woman's only being possible through their following secular nationalist ideology, such image is simultaneously marked again as the birth of a

new modern Muslim woman who “claim to know the true Islam and hence differentiate themselves from traditional uneducated women, reject foremost the model provided by their mothers who are perpetuating traditions and traditional religion with their domestic lives” (Gole, 1996: 4-5). In that sense, Turkish woman, together with nation and modernity can be defined as the third ideal that is maintained in late modern Turkey in terms of its being deconstructed but simultaneously attributed a distinct meaning and organizing it as a subject position to claim responsibility for rebuilding the future of modern Turkey.

The category of Turkish women now contains various groups including Islamic women, Kurdish women, feminist women and Kemalist women. A national public discusses its past and future, its authentic and modern characteristics, what can and cannot become issues of democratic debate through these questions of which women are liberated but not emancipated, which women are not even liberated, which women are too much emancipated that had alienated them from their roots and so on. Thus, feminine identity becomes the main field where different projects of building the ‘new’ modern national authority try to subjugate or to constitute themselves as the “political agent capable of producing a public sphere in accordance with its own foundational norms and principles” (Cinar 2014: 902). These questions have been translated into various political, academic, cultural, economic institutions’ realm of interest since 1990s. Gole (1997: 61) identifies a continuity in the “the centrality of the question of gender in shaping political debates, social transformations, and definitions of public and

private spheres.” Thus, Turkish women in this context turns into a useful category for a linear narration of a nation in terms of women’s emancipation, spatial reconfiguration of national space for opening up spaces for them. It is such reorganization of sexual identity as a ‘break’ from the past and how it is constructed by and constructive of the late modern national subjects in the Turkish context that is aimed to be discussed throughout this study.

## **1.2 Contribution to the Literature: Patriarchy and the Formation of ‘New’ National Identity**

This late modern context is the time when the centrality of gender in the construction of national identities started to become an important field of interest and research. The analysis of the gendered characteristics of Turkish modernization started before 1990s. Starting with 1980s, the relationship between the construction of national identity and the construction of women as public citizens, as the marks of transition to a new collective identity started to be problematized. As Cinar (2014: 899) indicates the granting of full suffrage and allowing the presence of women in the parliament were strategic moves on the part of the state to show Europe that Turkey belonged to the world of Western democratic societies. Therefore, how the construction of a national existence as an historical and territorial entity took place through women’s bodies’ serving as the marks of differences from the past and similarities with modern, ‘civilized’ West started to be problematized. In that sense, women’s bodies turning into symbols of

what is Western and authentic, what belongs to past and future of the nation during the modern state formation, hence the attempt to fix the meaning of Turkish women served as a critical perspective to subvert the normalized, ahistorical definitions of national identity.

While discovering the central role gender plays in the ‘imagining’ of the nation as a collectivity, the desire for a gender aware or gender equal political community itself gave way to distinct tools and technologies of producing knowledge of, different spheres of performing, as well as reorganizing the daily life in accordance with this ‘gender aware’ subjectivity. Although emergence of gendered analysis of Turkish modernization precedes the period that is the focus of analysis in this study, it was in this context that gender studies started to be used as the synonym of women’s studies which attempt to ‘discover’ the suppressed identities of women in different spheres of social life. It’s usage as such gained popularity among various political, social, cultural actors. Sancar (2012: 17), for example, argues that the main contribution of the feminist literature to the analysis of Turkish history was replacing the official narration of the Turkish Republic as a ‘woman’s revolution’ with ‘woman’s victimization’. The Turkish women, who had served for the establishment of the Republican regime but who now experience their past as ‘disappointment’ since the emancipation they were promised never took place, became an important focus of research. As Berkay (1998: 6) indicates through her analysis of a famous novel of Adalet Agaoglu introduces the book as “a remarkable reflection of how the first

generation women of the Republic had internalized nationalist ideology but how they were left outside the nation formation process and their disappointment as a result of it.” Thus, nation is imagined as an entity for the building of which women within its territory has participated but then they as agents has been excluded to have a say in its future. So, women’s physical and audial presence in different spheres of life, their finally becoming agents of history is marked as the difference between the modernizationist, authoritarian past and the modern, democratic future.

Moghadam (2007: 2) defines the period that is named as late modernity as that of transition from patriarchy to economic, political and cultural empowerment of women and argues that “for broader societies, women’s empowerment accelerates the transition to modernity, democracy and social justice.” Applying this perspective, international development organizations, governments and non-governmental organizations started to adopt programs entitled gender mainstreaming, women’s empowerment or women’s rights which were not very common before the 1990s (Kardam, 2005). Thus, what is named as women’s empowerment is sought not only as an end in itself but is considered to initiate a systemic change. While patriarchy is defined as ‘lack’ of women in various spheres of social life, their presence in these spheres as ‘actors’ is argued to be both an initiator and a symbol of a cultural shift which will then initiate a transition to democracy. Such cultural difference is also stressed by Donmez and Ozmen (2013: ix) who argue that “a strong patriarchal structure in Turkey

obstructs tolerance in both public and political sphere ...through glorifying nationalism, militarization, violence, intolerance and exclusion of others.” Thus, the new national subjects are to be born through the dissolution of the structures that not only produce but also glorify, support and legitimize the rule of such militant, intolerant and exclusionary actors of the past. Women’s becoming active agents of history is desired not only for democratization of the political regime but also to dissolve the multiple forms of patriarchy in various social relations such as religion, family, ethnicity or culture. While problematization of the construction of a distinct masculinity through a complex interaction between these spheres is made visible, the idea of fixing it, forming a new gender identity reproduces the authority of these institutions to formulate and regulate a certain gender identity.

It was in this context that any political claim for representation involved references to their serving for women’s empowerment for stressing not only their differences from the actors of the past but also their ideals about the purification of all spheres of social life from the remnants of patriarchal subordination and exclusion. Thus, while patriarchy became a concept that is used to define social, cultural and political relations that had produced the suppressive, exclusionary and intolerant actors of the past, such distinct usage opened up all these spheres as legitimate fields of intervention for the dissolution of all the micro processes that serve for the production of patriarchal agents of the past. The formation of the new national subject started to be formulated as the project of fixation of masculinities and femininities of the citizens. In that sense, all social relations

including family, religion, ethnicity, neighborhood, friendship, political party membership, vocational relations started to be reconsidered in terms of their ‘patriarchal’ characteristics. Thus, all these spheres become linked to the formation of a new national subjectivity through the circulation of the desire for being active agents of a new polity.

Butler (2014: 1-2) indicates that “Although being a certain gender does not imply that one will desire a certain way, there is nevertheless a desire that is constitutive of gender itself and, as a result, no quick or easy way to separate the life of gender from the life of desire ... which does not originate with our individual personhood.” The Islamic and Kurdish woman subjectivities are both the products of this context of desiring recognition and participation in the future of the nation and they themselves give it its actual shape. They desire being recognized, making visible to the national public their forgotten memories, give an end to the silences of the past and become active agents in the making of national history. Circulation of these desires serves as distinct tools of making sense of selfhood, time and existence that are organized for the reproduction of national collectivity. The aim here is to open into discussion such refashioning of gender relations throughout the formation of late modern national subjects in the Turkish context and whether this can be analyzed as transforming, deepening, multiplying or resolving the authority of the national patriarchy. By national patriarchy, I do not mean a single type of male authority that subordinates women’s agency. Rather, national patriarchy here will be used to refer to

normalization of the privilege of the nation state to “mark bodies with gender” (Cinar, 2014: 894) and producing a desire to be marked as such. Thus, if national patriarchy is defined as the legitimate authority of the nation to mark the bodies of the citizens with gender and its legitimate authority to provide services for their fixing and empowering their senses of selfhood as proper women, it is this legitimacy that derives from these desires of actual women and men that should become the focus for analyzing patriarchal authority.

Sirman (2000: 263) argues that while analyzing the Republican period authors such as Kandiyoti and Toprak observed a tendency of women to act both as free and equal agents while at the same time revealing strong compassionate ties with the new national regime. In her words, “It was perhaps this unity of self-assertion and compassion which appeared as a paradox to Turkish academics who attempted to explain women’s position in modern Turkish society through the phrase ‘emancipated but not liberated’.” While today the compassion of these women is problematized as their serving for patriarchy, a new woman agent is called for action to claim a say in the future of the nation. This is a subjectivity that will reorder her sense of self and that will be active in all spheres of life. They still have compassionate attachments with to the new national regime where they seek representation, presence and voice. In that sense, this new national narration continues to order, provide meaning to their desire for agency. Thus, new Turkish woman subjectivity is formed through this narration of rescuing from victimization and experiencing it in the name of the entire woman who had

experienced suppression in the national past. This is a subject position that desires the participation of all Turkish women to this joy and marks those who don't either as continuing victims of patriarchy or worse, active cooperators of patriarchy. Whether women are bargaining with patriarchy or subverting it, how they deal with multiple suppressions in the family, at the workplace, in public sphere continue to be the issues through which Turkishness as a national identity is debated. Thus, a distinct category of Turkish women is being built through developing senses of belonging to the national past and through empathizing with women of that past, through seeking the roots of their woundedness in the experiences of the women from the national past.

Mufti and Shohat (1997: 2) indicate that "gender and sexuality names a site for the enactment of the great drama of origins, loyalty, belonging, betrayal, in short of identity and identification." Butler (2011: 24) stresses the same point when she says "It isn't just that the women find sites from which to speak but that woman, as a category, become established as a site of enunciation." The 'newness' of the Turkish nation and who are to be its real representatives are again being debated through these 'sites' of womanhood, through these debates about who represents the emancipated Turkish women and who cooperates with patriarchy. Scott argues that seeking a non-conflictual sexual identity produces a desire and psychic attachment to collective fantasies which stabilize an otherwise non-transparent, unstable phenomenon of sex. Thus, analysis of national patriarchy from this perspective can be defined as the study of sexualization of

nation as a collective fantasy that produces the desire for a particular form of womanhood or manhood. In that sense, patriarchy is a useful concept of analysis when it serves to identify how normalization of certain sexual identities takes place through marking others as non-modern, authoritarian, unliberated forms. However, patriarchy as a concept loses its critical edge when it no longer destabilizes sexual identity and turns into a part of a discourse which normalizes the idea that a non-conflictual form of an emancipated sexual identity is possible and desirable. The desire to serve for the wellbeing of a community ‘as a woman’, in terms of its subject formation effects, serves to normalize these communal identities through preventing “the recognition of the historical limits of our political imagination” (Brown, 2000: 231).

Opening into discussion the question of how to conceptualize ‘new’ national patriarchy in the late modern context under the light of the findings of the research is the main output that is aimed.

### **1.3 The Research**

The empirical data of this study consists of indebt interviews and focus group interviews conducted with women local representatives between 2009 and 2011 in 21 cities. Data of the research was conducted through a two year project that was coordinated by Prof. Dr. Dilek Cindoglu and funded by TUBITAK. The population of the research consists of elected mayors, provincial council members

or municipal council members, or women nominated for mayoralty in 2009 local elections. We decided to include mayor candidates for two reasons. Firstly, mayoralty is the local representative position where women are represented the least. Hence, the women who succeed in being nominated and their experiences throughout the nomination and election process were considered to be of importance for the purposes of the research. Secondly, the nomination of women mayors from the places where it is certain that they are not going to win is attributed a particular meaning, especially in the case of the BDP. They see this nomination process as the initiation of cooperative work tradition between men and women in local party offices as well as an initiation of communicating with the constituency and explaining themselves to them, giving them information that they cannot gain through mainstream communication channels such as mainstream media.

Once the available data about the nominated and elected women local representatives was collected from the websites of the municipalities and the political parties, through purposeful sampling strategy, a list of interviewees was prepared. 3 cities from each of the 7 geographical regions of Turkey where the highest number of women local representatives had been elected in 2009 elections were listed. If in these regions there were cities where there were women mayor candidates, those cities were also included in the list of cities to be visited. The interviewee list was prepared in a way to include women from different age and

educational backgrounds. Their contact information was reached either from political parties, or the municipalities.

In the Eastern part of Turkey, Eastern Anatolia and South Eastern Anatolia regions, due to security reasons, we organized focus group meetings in two cities, Diyarbakır and Elazığ. In Diyarbakır 2 focus group meeting were organized, one with the representatives from Diyarbakır and the other with the representatives from Mardin. Their participation to these meetings was high so we managed to interview a representative sample from these cities. Since women from representatives from Tunceli cancelled their meeting, we only managed to conduct focus group with women local representatives from Elazığ.

This research consists of meetings with women local representatives from other parties but in this study I only analyzed the data about the AKP and BDP women. The list of interviewees, their age, education and occupation and the can be followed from Table 1 along with their randomly allocated pseudonyms.

In total 2 mayor candidates and 38 elected women local representatives from the AKP, 2 mayors, 8 provincial council members and 28 municipal council members were interviewed from 15 cities. From BDP, 2 mayor candidates, 5 mayors, 4 provincial council members, and 13 municipal council members and in total 24 representatives from 5 cities were interviewed. The interviews were conducted by the project assistants who were women political science PhD candidates at their late 20s. Their being women at the early stages of their career as well as their being students had made important contributions to for putting the

participants at ease and developing relations of trust. Some representatives thought these assistants were young women considering becoming active politicians in the future. This made them very enthusiastic about sharing the possible satisfaction and joy they will gain from this experience as well as detailed warning about the possible problems they will encounter as women and the strategies to deal with them. These women-to-women type of encounters and the interviewees being women PhD students made the interview setting more relaxed to be suitable to yield rich data about the daily experiencing of their representative subjectivity.

The data conducting tool in both in debt interviews and focus group interviews consists of semi structured questions about their demographic information, the motivating factors for them to take active part in local governments, the reasons for their choosing a particular political party, the reactions of family, electorate and the party, their experiences, ideas and feelings about local politics before and after elections and their comments about positive discrimination. The questions are included in Appendix 1.

#### **1.4 Analysis and Methodology**

In this study, I will analyze the self-narrations of women local representatives in terms of tracing the subject forming effects of the late modern discourse of inclusion, recognition and participation as mentioned above. How do actual

women representatives translate these discourses in their definition of selfhood, womanhood and their representative roles? How does this subjectivity affect the daily conduct of politics in this context? What are the differences in the way these discourses operate in the formation of the AKP and the BDP representative subjectivities and how these differences can be theorized in terms of the particular faces that patriarchy takes in the late modern Turkey? As I have mentioned above due to women's being turned into an issue of particular interest through being marked as the source of unbiased knowledge of history, as the main carriers of the authentic, modern, enlightened, eastern or western characteristics of the 'alternative' nationhood definitions of their group, there is good enough reason to argue that the new technologies of national subject formation are gendered. Here, through the self-narrations of women local representatives, I will try to trace how these gendered discourses actually operate. As Sirman (2002) indicates, just focusing on the nationalism projects and their gendered imagining of national community is not enough to understand how actual women negotiate with these imaginings through their distinct ways of defining and experiencing their womanhood. Hence, she argues that women play constructive roles in the actualization of these projects rather than being passively obeying or occupying the roles attributed to them. Thus, focusing on how 'real' women inhabit and perform the positions of women political representative in this context allows discussing the gendered roles within the political parties as a subject of daily contestation and negotiation. According to Foucault (1980: 179) "all the mechanisms and effects of power which don't pass directly via the State

apparatus, often sustain the State more effectively than its own institutions, enlarging and maximizing its effectiveness.” Thus, women politicians’ narrations might also give certain clues about what kinds of gendered imaginings serve to sustain and enlarge the effectiveness of disciplining national subjectivities in this context. As De Lauretis indicates (1987: 9) “the social representation of gender affects its subjective construction and vice versa, the subjective representation of gender, or self -representation affects its social construction.” Therefore, the analysis of how these women imagine their roles in politics and how it plays a constructive, reproductive or subversive role in the way ‘new’ Turkey is imagined by their political party will be attempted to be discussed in this study.

In that sense, the self-narrations of the representatives can be interpreted as an important data to trace what types of historical, national, familial, religious or ethnic discourses are assembled within their narrations in a way to form and regulate a distinct type of sexual identity. These specific characteristics of self-narrations cannot be found in the official narrations and it is actually the translation of these discourses into daily experiences of desire, sense of empowerment, making sense of selfhood that gives these official narrations their actual shape. From this perspective, it is through such narration of selfhood as a transition from victimization to agency, suppression and liberation, finally having access to what they lacked in the past, presence and voice, that nation as a collective entity becomes reorganized. Foucault (1972: 49) defines discourse as the “practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak.” As the main historical and spatial reference in these self-narrations about transition to

new sense of selfhood, nation is constructed through these representative acts of women.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **GENDER AND THE FORMATION OF LATE MODERN NATIONAL SUBJECTIVITY IN TURKEY**

In the scholarly literature, late 1990s is usually referred as a turning point in Turkish politics. The electoral success of the Islamic movement and the armed insurgency of the Kurdish movement's leaving its place to a more representative politics oriented agenda followed by an electoral success in the south eastern Turkey are two of the most important dynamics that characterize this turning point. The rhetoric of both these movements involves references to their political projects about redefining the bonds of nationhood in Turkey that is conceptualized in various terms such as new Turkey, bridging the distance between peoples of Turkey, peoples of Turkey making peace and normalization of Turkish politics to name some. As the previous national establishment and its top to down characteristics are problematized by these groups, those who reclaim the Kemalist national imagination as a still valid and best model for a democratic and progress oriented Turkey got mobilized in CHP that is known as Ataturk's party and is criticized as the party of the status quo by others.

In this context, the project of nation building in the Republican era and its reflections in today's Turkey is an important issue of public debate. This specific way of problematizing the present in relation to the exclusions and subordinations of the processes of national building in the past is not unique to Turkey. Late twentieth century in different contexts is characterized by "renouncing the ideal of a unitary culture and tradition and instead recognizing the value and worth of cultural diversity within, as the basis of a more differentiated mode of national cohesion" (Povinelli, 1998: 581). This is a period that is commonly referred as a distinct time in the flow of history when the modern procedures and concepts employed to comprehend social and political life have to be reconsidered. The previous assumptions about "efficacy of scientific rationality, conception of progress, a vision of emancipation based on the concept of autonomous individual" are argued to be in crisis of representation (Kandiyoti, 2002: 2). This is what Bhaba (1994: 5) refers as an 'interstitial passage' that is opened through the denaturalization and questioning of the so called fixed assumptions of modernity.

This experience of shattering of reality, or its fragmentation, in a way became a common sense category itself which initiates and motivates 'new' approaches to social and political existence that are to be mobilized towards the possibility of reconstructing national ties. It serves as the motivating force for the emergence of new collective narratives that can "make sense, cohere, motivate or hold people together" (Benhabib, 1999: 302). Connolly (2007: 282) defines modernity as "an epoch in which a set of contending understandings of the self,

responsibility, knowledge, rationality, nature, freedom, and legitimacy have established sufficient presence to shuffle other possible perspectives out of active consideration.” Late modernity here will be used to refer to the emergence of another ‘set of contending understanding’, or a political discourse as defined by Scott (2009: 7), about a transition to another epoch in terms of a similar establishment about sense of time and space. In Foucauldian terms (1984: 37), it can be depicted “as an attitude rather than as a period of history …a mode of relating to contemporary reality; in the end, a way of thinking and feeling; a way, too, of acting and behaving that at one and the same time marks a relation of belonging and presents itself as a task.” Nation as a political community and how its previous constructions of historical, spatial and cultural narrations can be reimagined is a central problematic or ‘task’ in this context. Thus, nation continues to be the main temporal and spatial scale where this period of ‘interstitial passage’ is considered, represented and governed. In this context if “the narrative and its embedded myths are to be part of a glue that aim to bind the collective, the protagonist in the story is the nation itself” (Baron, 2005: 2). Thus, it is possible to read this period of re-narration of nation as the introduction of new terms to re-glue the nation as a collectivity to govern this context where the previous ones are ‘shuttering’.

The scholars that discuss the characteristics of what types of subjectivities characterize this period in terms of distinct experiences of the late modern sense of space and time have introduced various conceptualizations such as tolerant subjectivity (Bhabha 1996), wounded subjectivity (Brown 1993),

diversity-phobic subjectivity (Ozyurek 2005) or nostalgic subjectivity (Ozyurek 2006) to name some. Each is used to identify particular types of dealing with this context. Therefore, like the discourse of modernity, late modernity is experienced as an epoch when “people everywhere, at every national and cultural site, rise to meet, negotiate and appropriate it in their own fashion” (Gaonkar, 1999: 17). As the social, political and social life is refashioned for the reordering of time, space, and making sense of selfhood within them, this experience of misplaced and shuttered concreteness “resonates with and is reinforced by everyday experience and becomes commonsensical” (Alonso, 1994: 380). Re-examining nationhood becomes an important field where the past is problematized and people are mobilized for another futuristic project in different contexts, including Turkey.

Gender and the patriarchal characteristics of the founding ideology of Turkish modernization is one of the issues that emerge as a subject through which the founding principles of the nation are debated. The ‘silence’ of women became one of the symbols of the subordinating characteristics of the old regime. A dispersion of the category of ‘Turkish Woman’ was experienced through the problematization of the official narration of her emancipation by the founding fathers of the Republic. Muslim women, Kurdish women and Kemalist women and their distinct ways of experiencing the process of modernization became a subject of interest in various fields of research. Such interest in re-narration of the official history about Turkish women’s emancipation by the Kemalist regime through publicizing and making visible the experiences and voices of the women

themselves took place at different fields including academia, civil society, literature and mass media. It is not only physical presence but as important as that their audial presence as participants, representatives, researchers, activists that is given particular importance. A distinct value is attributed to their voice, talk or speech. Through their voice, they are argued to become agents of history and play active roles in the construction of the future. The stories of women's resistance and the 'voices' of those who had been silenced are collected as evidences of the patriarchal characteristics of the previous political establishment to subvert the Republican claim of Turkish women's emancipation. For example Durakbasa and Ilyasoglu (2001) indicate that "Women's history has been written within an ideological perspective for a long time, telling about the benefits of the state-initiated reforms related to women and the mobilization of women within the nation-building project." The experience of women from different social, religious and ethnic backgrounds and how they have experienced Turkish modernization started to be an issue of interest in not only scholarly productions but in novels, conferences organized by different civil society organizations, local governments, and in public media. Thus, this can be discussed as a period when gender serves as "one of the recurrent references by which political power is conceived, legitimated and criticized" (Scott, 1988: 48-49). Connolly (1983: 325) argues that the periods that are defined through terms like crisis or deficit can also be read as the introduction of "a broad doctrinal drift toward the problem of managing, regulating, and controlling the behavior of people and institutions." Hence, this systematic interest in women's historical, social, cultural and political existence

can be located within this new ‘doctrinal drift’, which necessitates an analytical focus on how gender plays a constructive role in the formation of late modern national subjects.

This study aims to discuss the effects of such gendered subverting of the ‘Republican nostalgia’ (Ozyurek 2007) and how new gendered imaginings are introduced in this context for the re-narration of national community. Butler and Weed (2011:4) argue that “gender is not an isolated factor or element but is itself mobilized in a constitutive and productive relation to other modes of organizing political life.” I will analyze the self-narrations of women local representatives from AKP and BDP in terms of how gendered depicting of their experience as political representatives is constituted by and constitutive of the processes of reorganizing the sense of national time, space and selfhood in the political projects and national imaginations of their political parties. Subversion of a gendered imagining of a political community through denaturalizing its normalized definitions itself is followed by new conceptualizations of nation and state. Hence, these processes can be read as reorganizing the terms of collective sense of belonging. The unsettlement of the idea of women’s emancipation with the Turkish modernization process is followed by the ‘emancipation’ of other collective identities which can be read as a process of re-gendering of national imagination. By ‘re-gendering’ of national imagination, I refer to the distinct characteristics of mobilization and refashioning of the category of ‘women’ in this period. Rather than the dissolution of the gendered hierarchies among women and between men and women, this can be argued as a distinct period of reinvention

and mobilization of the category of ‘women’ for new conceptualizations of nation. Following Scott, if we take gender as a category for historical analysis of subject formation, how can this category serve to analyze and discuss the formation of the late modern national subjectivity in Turkey?

My main focus will be on tracing the gendered codes of collectivity making within two political parties, AKP and BDP. My empirical data consists of indebt interviews conducted with women local representatives between 2009 and 2011 in 21 cities. The two political parties are those where the Islamist and Kurdish movements are organized as the main groups that develop different constructions of ‘alternative’ national collectivity in the late modern Turkish context. Islamists and Kurdish movements became the main reorganizing forces of the political sphere in the Turkish case in their becoming the embodiment of ‘late modern’ sense of exclusion and subordination claimed to be originating from the Republican constructions of national citizenship. This discursive background opened up distinct subject positions mainly for these groups as the agents who will recapture the initiative of reorganizing the social and political life. The Islamist and Kurdish political movements are definitely not the only ones who were challenging the Kemalist project at this period. Nor they are the only groups that are organizing at the axis of religious and ethnicity based criticism of Turkish modernization project. Different Islamic political projects were proliferating at this moment “that range from the traditional Sufi orders ...to religious orders movements of mainly Republican origin and the autonomous radicals splintered

into numerous groups” (Saktanber, 2002: 21). A similar case can also be argued for the Kurdish movement which not only involves different depictions of Kurdishness but itself changed its ideological and organizational structure throughout its political history, especially after 1999 following the arrest of its leader (Casier and Jongerden 2010). However, two main groups that are the AKP version of Islamism and BDP became successful in increasing their public support from the first time that they managed to be elected to the parliament. They are also the parties where high mobilization of women can be observed. How does gender play a role in the ordering of their collective imagining, what type of gendered imaginings are constructive of their ‘alternative’ projects of rebuilding national ties of belonging and how the category of gender plays a disciplinary role in the normalization of these identities will be the main questions for analyzing the re-gendering of national memory making and space making in the context of late modern Turkey.

## **2.1 Re-Narration of National Subjectivity in ‘Late Modern’ Turkey and Its Discursive Context**

Late twentieth century in Turkey is a period when “in the throes of religious struggles and ethnic strife ...the very project of a secular representative democracy is called into question in a way that reconstructs an idea of a nation as a collectivity” (Benhabib, 1999b: 710). The Kemalist Westernization project is problematized in terms of its being “marked by a visible distaste for politics as a

societal activity, and an ambivalent attitude toward the notion of popular legitimacy” (Cizre-Sakallioglu and Cinar, 2003: 310). Its elitism and the continuing unbridged characteristics of the relationship between the rulers and the masses became issues of criticism by various actors. Such discourse of spatial and cultural ‘distance’ became an important point of reference for the expression of dissatisfaction and alienation about the characteristics of the ties of citizenship with the state. The necessity of re-bridging it became an important political rhetoric. In the words of Ozyurek (2006: 6) “Since the 1990s increasing number of Islamists, Kurdish nationalists and liberal intellectuals has argued that the oppressive reforms of the Turkish state are creating a secular public sphere that is not effectively integrated with the intimate zones of domestic life, ethnic identity or religious belief.” Thus, it is possible to talk about a new public debate about renewing of political legitimacy in Turkey that is only possible through refashioning the public sphere in a manner that will be more inclusive and representative of all these zones. It is a period when “many scholars and intellectuals favor and emphasize cultural identity, difference and diversity over homogenization and unity” (Bozdogan and Kasaba, 1997: 5).

These arguments about a distance coexist with other claims about the state’s being too close, too much intervening in the daily social and cultural life of the citizens, dominating the cultural agenda and “insinuated itself into issues far beyond normal politics” (Migdal, 1997: 255) This focus on the necessity of re-bridging the citizens’ relations with the state as well as ‘normalization’ of state-

society relations brought criticism of its founding principles not only by the opposition movements within the country but also by international actors. Representation, popular legitimacy, human rights and freedoms, increased participation and opening up channels for the presence of all segments of the society in the decision making processes became the key concepts for reconsidering the nation as a collectivity and its futuristic ideals.

Late modernity here is used to define the period when the modern's sense of itself and its own achievements is questioned. While through the process that Chakrabarty (2009) names as 'provincializing Europe', an 'anthropological' eye that was used to analyze non-western cultures is turned to Europe itself and its depictions of universality. In Gulalp's words (2001: 442-43), "As the European civilization has been deconstructed as a provincial culture with its own hegemonic project, alternative visions of civilization has gained currency." In non-western contexts such as Turkey, this is experienced as the analysis of the West oriented elite, their projects of modernization and how they had created their provinces within through controlling the religious, ethnic and cultural ties of belonging. Whether they were too Western or not Western enough, how the processes of Westernization brought cultural, ethnic and social hierarchies within the national community, how to deal with them to rebuild the masses' sense of belonging to their nation is the main political problematic in this contexts.

This focus on the authoritarian logic of the previous political regimes and the increasing interest in the 'multiple' ways of making sense of, ordering and

giving meaning to reality can be defined as what Mbembe (2001: 118) defines as the main imaginary of this epoch which “attempts to institutionalize its world of meanings as a ‘socio-historical world’ and to make that world fully real, turning it into a part of people’s common sense.” Cinar (2005: 2) argues that “the pervasive presence of modernity in non-Western contexts is the result of neither servile imitation nor an inorganic imposition from outside or above, but rather the product of creative adaptation.” Thus, if we analyze this ‘late modern’ period as a distinct discourse that is translated into different contexts, it will be possible to open into discussion its ‘creative adaptations’ in the Turkish context. It will also allow introducing analytical tools to discuss how the ‘alternative’ imaginings of nation from different parties co-construct each other in terms of the means and technologies they provide for the articulation of this period as a particular moment in history that calls new national subjectivities for action. These different projects serve to reaffirm this late modern discourse “as a ruling metanarrative of a larger discursive field wherein contending ideologies challenge and seek to overpower each other” (Cinar 2005: 7).

### **2.1.1 From Authoritarian Past to the Democratic Future: The “Double Movement” of Late Modern Memory Making and Futuristic Narration**

As mentioned above, in the Turkish politics scholarly literature, there is a common reference to the late 1990s context as a period of political crisis or ‘hegemony crisis’ in terms of the increasing visibility of different groups who problematize the founding ideology of the Turkish state and its futuristic project.

It corresponds to a time which Cinar (2005: 6) refers as the third shift of the core principles of modernity in Turkey that is characterized by the rising popularity and electoral success of political projects inspired by Isla as well as a popular support for the Kurdish insurgency in the eastern part of Turkey. Thus, two of the most important issues that marked the changing nature of modernity in Turkey took root from the unselement of the secular and ethnicity based tools of nation building. From a period of controlled inclusion of the symbols of Islam and Kurdishness to the public sphere, the most controversial of which had been the headscarf and Kurdish language, demands for de-privatization of them, seeking public presence as well as demanding state acknowledgement and enforcement for public performance of these identities as individual rights took place. It is a time when the meaning of “Turkishness” started being reconstructed, assessed, rejected, embraced, and transformed through criticizing the founding principles of the state and their reflections in the present.

This was experienced as a moment of “double-movement” in the sense that the projects of reconstituting the national political community and redefining state-citizenship relations involved “both a reaction to the past and the hope for the future” (Hall, 1993: 354). Such alternative readings of history as well as different constructions of national identity in Turkey are not unique to this period. Although there is common usage of the term ‘Turkish modernization’ as a synonym of the Kemalist West oriented project, there had been alternative and competing projects of modernity that had different constructions of national community and different ways of imagining the historical, spatial, cultural or

ethnic components of the nation since the early nineteenth century (Cinar, 2005: 5). Some of these projects had later been reread and readopted by certain political actors which itself can be given as the complicated definitions of modern, West and Turkishness throughout this so called project of Turkish modernization rather than a complete hegemony of the Kemalist project. This so called Kemalist model itself had also gone through certain transformations within itself.

What is new today is a distinct sense of the emergence of a time of new possibilities and challenges, a historical moment that opens up a distinct political field for building up new narrations of making sense of selfhood, time and existence. Constant going back and forth to the Kemalist model as the previous central actor of history making in Turkey serves for strengthening the sense of ‘newness’ of present as a historical moment through a linear narration of it. For example, while explaining late 1990s Turkey, Kasaba (1997) indicates that “The Turkish people, few of whom now remembered the early years of the Republic, had grown extremely suspicious of and downright cynical about the latest incarnations of the ‘enlightened and prosperous tomorrows.’” The experience of the present is defined as a national crisis of ‘Turkish people’, the necessity for rebuilding projects for prosperous tomorrows is stressed as the old one can no longer provide it. This is similar to Chakrabarty’s definition (2009: 32) of an emerging practice of reading history “in terms of a lack, an absence, or an incompleteness that translates into ‘inadequacy’...through a homogenizing narrative of transition” from authoritarian rule to democracy. This involves a

distinct form of ordering the complexity of reality by attributing all the agency of history to certain actors which then constructs a new political subjectivity that has survived and ready to transcend the history written by coercive actors in the past, hence the birth of a new national subject.

Such focus on the ordering effect of a distinct historical narration in this period is important in the sense of its serving as the source of locating oneself in the flow of time. It constructs the terms of the relations between different disciplines of knowledge, hence opening up subject positions that will perform their role as historical actors. “Like myths, fantasies claim to provide a representation of and a solution to the major enigmas which confront them. Whatever appears to the subject as something needing an explanation or theory is dramatized as a moment of emergence, the beginning of a history” (Cheng, 1996: 184). Therefore, this experience of present as a new moment of crisis, and in their attempt to make sense of it through the successes and failures of the ‘founding fathers’ projects of the future, they relocate themselves in the national historical and spatial zone. This is the discursive formulation of a political power that legitimizes and establishes its ‘authority to look’ and naturalizes and homogenizes its subjects of interest through marking them as either the origin of or the actors to resolve the problems in the present. It is this look that becomes normalized and naturalized, which is constructive of the late modern national subjectivities.

It is within this seeking of the actors who will resolve this crisis and stabilize national community that a new discursive context for the construction of

political representative subjectivity can be observed. A distinct practice of writing the history of the present which will guide the way for a better future can be observed at this period in various fields of knowledge through constant references to the “crisis of the state-centric modernity” (Keyman and Icduygu, 2003: 219).

As Cinar (2005: 179) stresses,

In both academic and intellectual discourse, what are seen as political, social, and cultural “anomalies,” such as state authoritarianism, the rise of political Islam, separatist Kurdish nationalism ...are predominantly attributed to the failure of the official modernization project due to its imitative nature, imposed as it was as a top-down process by the state.

Rather than discussing the validity of these arguments, what I argue is the effects of this emergent field of interest in the top-to-down, authoritarian, exclusionary characteristics of the Turkish experience of modernity, either at the scholar or at the political level. In the Turkish context, this practice of going back to the founding principles of modernity and analyzing its effects in social, cultural, political and economic life can be observed in different research fields especially in late 1990s and early 2000. For example, for the case of urban studies and city planning, in his article where he analyzed several books on the field published at this period, Icduygu (2004: 941-2) observes a trend of “going back to the early Republican period and concentrating on digging up the roots and background of urbanism and modern architecture in modern Turkey.” He argues this as a paradigm shift when he compares it with the predominance of the issues of interest in the field as being “urban squatters, degraded environment, inadequate infrastructural services, informal economy and poverty.” As the ‘gaze’ over the

“‘provincial other’s’ as the aliens infesting the city” started to be problematized through seeking the origins of such homogenizing look, they continued to be the issues of interest through new concepts such as ‘public culture’, fragments of culture, plural rather than unitary realities. Democratizing the gaze of the state through making the voice of those who had been defined as pre-modern others audible and heard ended up with a variety of research about them.

There are various forms of experiencing this way of going back and forth to the Republican past. ‘Nostalgia for the modern’ coexists with the sense of loss of those who had been victims of the homogenizing processes of the state as well as the celebration of the emerging multiplicity rather than unity in the public sphere. All these ways of experiencing the present and their being translated into ‘alternative’ projects co-construct each other in the sense of their taking the Turkish nation as their historical and spatial starting point. Such focus on the Kemalist modernization as the founding ideology of the Turkish nation serves to “temporarily arrest the flow of differences to construct privileged sites which partially fix meaning” (Pringle and Watson, 1998: 216). In other words, it serves as the point that makes reconstructing the nation possible again at a time when the core elements of national imagination had been deconstructed, unsettled and denaturalized. Connolly (1995:2) argues that “fundamental presumptions fix possibilities, distribute explanatory elements, generate parameters within which an ethic is elaborated, and center (or decenter) assessments of identity, legitimacy, and responsibility.” The ‘ghost’ of the founding fathers serves to “embody

abstract conceptions which are not immediately present to experience, such as history, nation, society and people, and become emblematic of the nation speaking with the voice of history” (Anagnost, 1997: 4). Thus, their hegemony, sovereignty in giving shape to the society, despite being negated, serves to make the past, present and future of the nation as imaginable and representable, constituting itself as the positive reality through the performances of late-modern Turkish subjectivities. The necessity to build new collective ties, making the injuries brought by the sovereign visible in daily performance of politics can be read as ‘carrying the ashes of the sovereign around’ (Pringle and Watson, 1998: 203) rather than passing it. In their seeking a political community that will erase the wounds of the sovereign state, they make this idea of sovereignty a constructive force in their sense making of time and space and self-imagination. This distinct narration of history constructs a subject position for new political representatives who were otherized by an imagined to be once full sovereign authority and who will reclaim their presence in politics, academia, civil society and media.

## **2.2 Gendered Narrations of Carving out an Historical Existence from the Hegemonic Republican Turkish State**

Such way of experiencing present in relation to the exclusions and subordinations of the past is not unique to Turkey. As Connolly (1995) indicates, it is possible to observe a resurgent interest and tendency to define the particular experiences of

late twentieth century as “the eruption of new claims to positive identity among constituencies whose previous identifications along lines of race, gender, sexuality, nationality, class, religion, or irreligion were experienced as injurious or degrading.” Especially important for the focus of this study is that this is a period where the “woman question” emerges as a field of research in Turkey. Kandiyoti (1991: 4) locates such emergence of ‘woman question’ as a field of interest within the ongoing search for national identity in the non-Western world. She argues that its terms are forged in the processes of searching for “different conceptions of time and space as well as the mobilization of images and symbols to ‘think’ the nation.” The gendered characteristics of the previous modes of national imagination and the hierarchies of powers it serves to construct in the post-colonial as well as other non-Western contexts played an important role in destabilizing what Kandiyoti refers as the previous ‘gender ideologies’. In her words (2005: 137) “Gender ideologies are not merely cultural beliefs and attitudes which are somehow attached to economic and political processes but are actually constitutive of them.”

As the totalizing and homogenizing characteristics of the category of woman defined in terms of their national belonging such as Turkish woman, Egyptian woman, Mexican woman is criticized in this period, it gave way to new categorizations. Women in a given national context become a focus of interest in terms of their different experiences of nation building process not only from men but also among themselves in terms of their religious, ethnic, racial or class

backgrounds. In other words, rather than destabilizing of the category of woman itself, this period can be read in terms of how it operates to construct, locate, identify, produce and circulate the knowledge of, homogenize and discipline certain social, cultural and economic ‘fragments’ of national context. The category of Women did not only become redefined as the repository of the knowledge of their unassimilated, authentic cultures. Also, the rhetoric of resistance to the previous assimilatory regime is full of gendered references such as modern Republican women’s distancing themselves from the authenticity of their culture, their being assimilated in the ‘masculine’ characteristics of politics or the state’s criminalization of certain customs and traditions through framing them as degrading especially for women. As it will be discussed in detail later, the new women of Turkey are defined as those who can both maintain these cultural values and still be modern, assertive actors to play important roles in ‘new’ Turkey. The gendered marks are not all the time coherent. Contradictory and multiple depictions of these women coexist. They are both defined as victims and heroines, as modern and traditional, representatives of the authenticity as well as the true enlightened face of the alternative project they are part of. Their being particular victims of assimilation, humiliation and exclusion by the previous regime are also followed by their being the courageous, self-confident survivors of these processes of assimilation. Thus, bodies of women are marked in various ways by different parties as representing the embodiment of the new national subject.

Women's political representation emerged as a particular research field in this context. It is not only women entering the political field but also the turn of the political, scholar, mass media interest in womanhood as a category of research that took place. They become subject of analysis at the scholar, governmental and civil societal levels as the disadvantaged part of the population, as the providers of unpaid labour within the family, as the paths to collect the silent, hidden parts of history and so on. Different institutions for the representation of women started to emerge. Starting with 1990s, there has been a proliferation of institutions that take various issues about women as their realm of interest. In 1990, the Directorate of Women's Status and Problems was established and nationwide data collection process was initiated about the social and economic status of women. In addition to the establishment of this state institution that aims to develop policies particularly for women, various women civil society organizations started to be established. "Women's organizations, which had been about 10 in number between 1973 and 1982 and 64 between 1983 and 1992, multiplied, reaching more than 350 by 2004" (Arat, 2008). Women's Studies centers were opened within universities. After Turkey became a candidate country for membership to the EU in 1999, the Turkish state committed itself to improve women's status in the National Plan (Kardam, 2005). The women branches of political parties started to be actively involved in the daily practice of representative politics through the rhetoric of the necessity to communicate with women on a daily basis and make their voices heard in the decision making processes as well as providing them an environment of socializing and having access to the legal, educational,

vocational services. Thus, the category of “Women Question” in this period includes various fields of interest that target women’s empowerment, such as family, work place, cultural codes, use of city space as well as re-readings of history for making visible the non-official ‘heroines’ of the past and revealing the pains, silences and dark sides of the official ones. The will to know about women, their experiences, ideas, memories emerges as the “Women Question” becomes an issue of interest to uncover, make visible, politicize and undo gendered hierarchies in social, cultural and political life.

A dispersion of the category of ‘Turkish Woman’ was experienced through the problematization of the official narration about her being emancipated by the founding fathers of the Republic. Religious women, Kurdish women and their distinct ways of experiencing the process of modernization and nation building became an issue of interest. Although both in the AKP and BDP case, the Kemalist regime is defined similar to a ‘colonizer’ who intervened in all the spheres of daily life for constructing a homogenous population, in the former case, it is imagined as similar to Western colonizing tradition whereas in the latter case, this is defined as representing a Middle Eastern authoritarian approach. For example, one of the important women figures of Muslim women’s mobilization within the Islamic movement, Sibel Erarslan defines it as similar to English colonial governorship whereas one of my interviewees from BDP has depicted it as a representative of the ‘dark swamp of the Middle East’. Thus, east and west, modern and traditional continue to be central categories in the narrations of the past and present. Women as a distinct repository of the knowledge of the past and

collecting and ordering of their ‘real’ experiences became an important technology to challenge the validity of the hierarchical power relations embedded in the official history and to destabilize its normalizing effects.

### **2.2.1 Who Speaks for the Turkish Past and Future? : ‘Herstories’, Authenticity, Assertiveness and the Subjectivity of the ‘New’ Woman Representative**

Connolly (1995: 6) observes a resurgent interest and tendency to define the particular experiences of late twentieth century as “the eruption of new claims to positive identity among constituencies whose previous identifications along lines of race, gender, sexuality, nationality, class, and religion were experienced as injurious or degrading.” Especially important for the focus of this study is that this is a period where increasing interest about “herstories” of distinct experiences of modernization as opposed to ‘his’story especially in non-Western contexts. Breaking the silence of ‘real’ women and making their experiences of this “emancipation” heard became an important political, scholarly and civil societal interest at this period for introducing critical perspectives about the Republican heritage and “Turkish national self-understanding” (Altinay, 2014: 1). Disturbing the silences of the nationalist imagination through the standpoint of women from various social, ethnic and religious backgrounds emerged as an important technique to open up spaces of renegotiating national imagination. Not only the voices of women but also family archives and photographs of various groups that

claim to be excluded and silenced, such as the Armenian women as discussed by Altinay (2014), can be given as examples of the process of opening up public spaces of renegotiation of national memory through the previously unheard and unseen experiences of women. Women's presence in the political field is to represent the new national subjectivity that is to be inclusive of those excluded and subordinated, whose history has been erased and destroyed by the official historical narrations. This new subjectivity is to be reborn through the voice of women who had carried these memories to the present thanks to their being defined as either the least or the most assimilated parts of the population. Thus, the private sphere of women as the least effected by the hegemonic public sphere and hence the furthest away from the gaze of the founding 'fathers' is invented as the carrier of the authentic core of these cultural identities. This is in sharp contrast to the simultaneous representation of the Kemalist women as over-westernized, over-assimilated, over-masculinized women who have distanced themselves from their culture and their 'sisters'.

Self-assertive women who are both modern and the carriers of the authentic good within that tradition itself are among the many gendered images of the oppositional projects. In the case of AKP, veiled women "portray an authentic identity" that is far removed from the western-secularist imposition of identity" who, at the same time have managed to become "active and self-asserting women who have proactive stance in life" (Ciddi, 2009: 106). A similar case can be observed in the representations of Kurdish women where women's

empowerment and having equal and independent standing with men in various levels of resistance is given particular importance within the depiction of not only the insurgency itself but also in the Kurdish past. How Kurdish women had been critical actors whose names had been erased from the official history writing provides both a sense of pride and agony. Thus, the category of women is at the center of the debates about the past and future of the country as well as the debates about the historicity of these movements themselves and their futuristic projects about the ‘new’ face of the nation.

### **2.3 Reconfiguring Spatial Practices of Nationhood and Gender**

One of the significant issues of concern emerging within the late modern feeling of the ‘shuttering’ or fragmenting of the reality in both scholarly and policy oriented research at this period is the reconsideration of the imagining of national territory as a homogenous space. This is followed by reimagining of it as consisting of different spatial scales such as local, regional or cities with distinctive features of their own. As unequal and uneven experience of modernization among different regions, cities or even different neighborhoods started to be problematized, the imagination of a nation as a community living in a homogenous territory started to get into a ‘crisis of representation’. For example, as Kandiyoti (2002: 13) exemplifies from the Turkish case, different cities started to symbolize different versions of dealing with these late modern challenges, such as Istanbul’s being a “multi-ethnic entity centered cosmopolitan city” whereas

Ankara is referred as a “more uniformly Turkish-Muslim polity.” Holston and Appadurai (1996: 188) locate this interest in the local or regional scales of national territory within the emerging focus in the ordering of “emergent social morphologies that are radically unfamiliar and force a reconsideration of the basic principles of citizenship and membership in national community.” They argue that as social and economic inequalities and hierarchies become more and more visible among the residents of close neighborhoods, especially after big waves of migration to the cities, sustaining the ideal of the unitary social imaginary of the nation as consisting of people sharing a common good and common future started to seem implausible.

According to this perception about the new late modern ‘reality’, as the encounters between the members of the nation started to intensify perception of difference and inequality rather than commonality and equal membership, the nation as a scale of containing various dimensions of other communal ties such as religion or ethnicity started to get into crisis. The sense of the necessity of reorganizing the spatial experience of the nation as a territorial unity is co-constructed with the emergent interest in the local, cultural or ethnic forms of collectivity making. Migdal’s article (1997: 253) can be given as an example of this emergent interest in the spatial dynamics of late modern Turkey. He says that “while the forces of modernity have been powerful agents of change, they themselves have not been impervious to obstructions and reconstructions on the part of those touched, but not necessarily absorbed, by the project.” He argues that it was inevitable for those who ‘are touched’ by modernity to resist against

the cultural tyranny of the previous regime and hence in this late modern context, it is now necessary to build new spaces of social and cultural encounter of these newly modernized national citizens in order to ‘absorb’ them in a new national imagination. Public sphere as the new ‘meeting ground’ (Migdal, 1997) or as the ‘third space’ (Nalbantoglu, 1997) between those who privilege homogenizing vision of Kemalist modernization and those who essentialize religious, ethnic and cultural identities emerged as a common rhetoric for reordering spatial encounters of the national citizens for reproducing their sense of belonging to a common territory.

Politics of recognition, empowerment, participation, inclusion can be read in terms of an attempt to re-stabilize and reconstruct territorial imagination of the nation in this context. Just like reorganization of time in a way to rebuild the sense of sharing a common future with a national community, another issue that become issue of policy interest is how to rebuild the sense of sharing a common national territory as an equal ‘home’ for all the inhabitants. New narration of the nation that acknowledges these different fragments and supports their writing their own future together and their sense of joy and inclusion in the national community are constructed as the new national ‘glue’. Cinar (2005: 9) defines modernity as “self-constitutive project of nation state” that operates through “an intervention related to bodies, space and time that constructs their present as corrupt in order to induce a need for transformation toward a better future.” This late modern period can be read as introducing distinct discursive technologies for reproducing the authority for making such interventions as an effect of which new

national subjects will be formed. Together with the crisis of the national subjects' seeing their common fate with a national community with whom prosperous futures are to be build, this new narration of inclusion, presence, visibility reconstructs a political gaze that can effectively intervene in various spheres of existence for the formation of the late modern national subject. Thus, late modern national subjects are constructed through a 'new' call for a change in their sense of selfhood, how they organize their lifetime as well as how they translate these senses of bodily and timely existence to their relationship with their immediate space.

The 'alternative' projects that criticize official narration of the nation, the AKP and BDP versions in my case, developed new 'lieux de memoire' for encoding the inclusion and visibility of themselves as 'new' political actors. Thus, their capacity to reclaim the right to intervene in the national public space that used to be in the monopoly of the previous national elite becomes an important symbol of their being actors rather than objects of the nation building projects. The political representatives of these groups in this period have the right not only for intervening in the public space for making these identities visible but also particular access to the private sphere of their community members to collect memories, stories both related with their painful past and related with their authentic culture. Hence, this claim for being visible in the public sphere can be read as an important technology for introducing policies to perform, ritualize, organize, discipline and normalize these new collective senses of belonging.

Povinelli (2002: 39) argues that “recognition is at once a formal acknowledgement of a group’s being and of its being worthy of national recognition and at the same time a formal moment of being inspected examined and investigated.” Thus, this context of increased participation, visibility, free expression and exercising cultural and religious rights can also be discussed as introducing complex techniques of surveillance, disciplining and control.

In the Turkish context, the criticisms of the republican top to down policies for organizing the national space again serves as the central problematic to discuss how to reorder the national space for equal presence and developing equal sense of belonging among the various ‘fragments’. The emergent alternative projects about rebuilding national collectivities not only claim cultural assimilation but also spatial assimilation of their ‘authenticated’ identities by the unitarizing logic of the modern nation states. One of the issues that the top to down characteristics of the Kemalist project of nationalism became criticized in the scholarly literature is the plans and projects about “a homogeneous and ubiquitous representation throughout the national territory as everywhere the same, from west to east and north to south” (Watts, 2009). Thus, the territorial imagination of a nation that is equally inhabited by all the citizens is destabilized through the claims about its not being equally inhabited as a home in all parts of the country. The previous national establishment’s unitarizing interventions in the space started to be problematized not only in terms of turning various public spaces to the authoritarian ritualization of the unitary nation such as museums, parks or squares but also interventions in the old ones, such as changing the

names of the streets as a strategy for “the infusion of an idea of Turkishness into public space” (Jongerden, 2009).

In this context, as the transition from the authoritarian rule of the founding fathers to the pluralist, rights and freedoms oriented and participatory democracy became the new historical narration of the nation, public sphere as the location of visual and audial encounter between the different groups that make up the national collectivity became the main zone of the ‘sociospatial’ experience of late modern national subjectivity. By sociospatial experience, I mean a spatial configuration for the ritualization of nationhood for the national subjects both to experience and reconstruct the legitimacy of the national ‘interventions’ to their senses of selfhood. The quotation Kandiyoti makes from Berman at the very beginning of the book *Fragments of Culture* (2002: 1) can be read as summarizing the main concern of the late modern ‘epoch’. Berman says “as the modern public shatters into fragments speaking incommensurable private languages, the idea of modernity ...loses its capacity to organize and give meaning to people’s lives.” Above, I have tried to discuss how all these fragments that are otherwise “incommensurable private languages” are brought together as a narrative in the Turkish case in a way that can now be read as a linear history of a nation. The spatial reflections of this new narration of the nation are important to discuss how these new late modern national subjectivities become reconstructed and disciplined on a daily basis. In order for making all the ‘fragments’ familiar and representable, the public sphere played an important role in this period.

### **2.3.1 Shifting Spatial Practices of Nationhood and Technologies of Familiarizing National Community**

While discussing the formation of the Ethnography Museum in Ankara during the early Republican period, Kezer (2000) refers to the introduction of new zones of ‘sociospatial experience’ of the Turkish nation for the negotiation of the boundaries of the past and present. The Museum consisted collections of “familiar things still part of everyday use, which were labeled as historical and placed on display for the viewing of the locals …presenting them as props of a pre-modern way of life that had already been left behind in the nation's quest for modern.” This focus on the sociospatial experience is important in the sense of how an imagination of a nation as the new community is constructed as the opposite of other senses of belonging in the private sphere. Nation constitutes itself through intervening in or “subordinating and coordinating all other identities –religion, estate, family, ethnicity, region and the like” (Holston and Appadurai, 1999). Thus, in order for opening up the possibilities for imagining oneself as part of a nation, a distinct spatiotemporal narration was introduced. This narration both negated the previous modes of collectivities as belonging to the past and turned them into constructive ‘others’. The national citizen will be born as his perception and normalization of his immediate environment changes. The museum experience that Kezer mentions is critical in terms of symbolizing this transformation. It exemplifies the merging of the temporal and spatial characteristics of national imagining as the birth of the national citizens is

depicted in their leaving the familiarity of the ‘womb’ of the private to become responsible adults and take the responsibility of their new family, that is the nation. Thus, rather than the erasure of the previous ties, they are constructive of the national imagination itself as its both temporal and spatial ‘other’.

Ozyurek identifies a kind of reversal of such museumification of the daily life through putting “familiar things in strange places” while mentioning her astonishment about seeing the images of Ataturk in “strange, new places, previously unusual contexts” (2006: 94) such as restaurants, bars, coffee shops, or on daily items such as t-shirts or mugs in late 1990s. This process of shifting of the places of the familiar objects in late modern Turkey is experienced in a double manner. While the national symbols were entering the intimate, private or ‘banal’ zones, the images and symbols whose proper place were previously defined as the private, intimate sphere or as belonging to the past are increasingly becoming issues that are brought to the attention of the ‘Turkish’ public and becomes part of daily talk in media, parliament, exhibitions, conferences. Cinar (2005: 41) argues that in this context “The type of neighborhood where one lives, the means of transportation one uses, the school one went to, the part of the country one is from, the places where one shops, eats or gets a haircut, what one eats and the type of music one listens to all serve a purpose beyond their immediate apparent functions.” This is what Warner (2002: 57) defines as “reshaping the most intimate dimensions of subjectivity around co-membership with indefinite persons.” These all turn into technologies of marking, disciplining and

normalizing the existence of identities as real and homogeneous groups and turn the imagined borders between these identities to spatialized and materialized ones.

This can be read as what Mbembe (1992) defines as the subjections becoming more intense in this context as the marked identities are “internalized to the point where they are reproduced in all the minor circumstances of daily life such as social networks, culinary practices, leisure activities, modes of consumption, dress styles” and so on. The public sphere in the late modern context serves as the place where people are to perform their distinct selfhood through communicating it visually by carrying the marks of these identities. In Cinar’s words (2014: 895), “the public sphere of the late twentieth century is better understood as a field of appearances, performances, images, and displays.” Hence, rather than the place where they communicate with others, it becomes the place where they perform their differences in the presence of the others, inhabit them and reproduce them. Therefore, these joys of inclusion, enjoying and feeling safe within these included identities and their historical and spatial reflections in this context can be analyzed in terms of how serve to naturalize, depolitize and normalize these identity marks.

What Brown (1993) defines as ‘wounded attachments’, which is used to define groups that demand recognition of their subordination and want to be included, is based on a paradox in the sense that the political field that they seek equal presence turns into a place where their bodies becomes the constant reminders and carriers of the pains of the past that they were seeking relief through their political presence. This politics of inclusion that is based on

traumatizing, exclusionary and subordinating characteristics of the past experiences, gave way to a distinct practice of politics. It is the memory of those who had been lost, whose voice had been silenced and whose presence has been denied that these identities find themselves a ‘home’ today. The sense of agony, woundedness provides a distinct narration of history in a way that seeks the origins of these pains as well seeking clues of previous resistance to it. “Nostalgia is a longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed. Nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one’s own fantasy” (Boym, 2001: xiii). Thus, nostalgia, melancholy, woundedness, suppression and exclusion are discussed as the emotional settings in this context and it is through the circulation of these emotions, their marking various daily items, spaces, bodies with meanings of group membership that characterizes not only the public sphere but also the style of ‘alternative’ political projects.

Focusing on such emotional baggage of this period is important to introduce a critical approach to those who analyze these new demands of political participation and representation from within the paradigm of democratic inclusion and pluralism. What is suggested instead is analyzing the emergent discursive context through the effects of the circulation of these emotions as distinct tools of making sense of selfhood, time and existence. While discussing politics of multiculturalism in Australia, Povinelli (2002: 633) argues that “colonial domination worked by inspiring in colonized subjects a desire to identify with the colonizers” whereas multicultural discourse “in contrast works by inspiring

subaltern and minority subjects to identify with the impossible object of authentic self-identity, a domesticated non-conflictual form of subjectivity.” In other words, rather than the preexisting identities that mobilize to make the state more inclusive, egalitarian and plural, the question is the effects of these discourses in the formation and disciplining of national subjects within these authentic identities. Hence, despite their “denaturalizing the categories upon which contemporary structures of power rested and destabilizing those structures of power” (Scott, 2001: 285), attributing particular mission to the new political subjectivity who will demand visibility and active roles in the political field through reference to such historical mission, they introduce their own technologies of stabilizing and naturalizing these identities.

The narration of being included, becoming visible, seen and recognized by the state, rather than subverting the technologies through which national authority operates, is a re-ordering of these technologies for making national imagination possible again. Thus, the intervention in space, time and bodies is re-stabilized through this shift in defining what belongs to the past and future, which performances become national and which others are contained as archaic, authoritarian and damaging to the future of the nation. Gole (2002: 175) indicates that “The articulations and tensions between two different cultural codes, modern and indigenous, intervene in distinguishing and defining public and private spheres, interior and exterior spaces, licit and illicit practices.” These categories, rather than being fixed in terms of what they mark as modern or indigenous, public or private, are always fluid and changing. Thus, the construction of

national selfhood can be followed through the organization of these binary oppositions in a constructive manner. Rather than their constant exclusion of certain groups, power operates through redefining these borders of difference, what is to be included and excluded, what is the proper space of ‘familiar’ objects. Hence, the inclusion or ‘familiarization’ of divergent practices within the public gaze, marking them as distinct identities or cultures can be discussed as a technology of reconstructing the power of national authority to intervene in bodies, spaces and time. Resorting to the past and reinventing it in a way that will renew the public sphere as the location where past traumas can be shared and rehabilitated for building a new sense of belonging brought reframing of the political meaning of presence in the public sphere. Bozdogan and Kasaba (1997: 2) argue that “Now people publicly debate and criticize the Kemalist doctrine as patriarchal and anti-democratic impositions from above that has negated the historical and cultural experience of the people in Turkey.” What if we consider the effects of subject formation through such mobilization of the sense of exclusion? If politics of inclusion and presence is discussed as the late modern narration that reproduces the legitimacy of the national authority to intervene in ‘bodies, time and space’, how does it operate in the Turkish context?

Through re-disciplining the codes of the national public sphere, the national subject’s sense of feeling at home amongst an otherwise unknown, alien people, making them re-imagine themselves as part of a national community can be sustained. These all turn into technologies of marking, disciplining and

normalizing the existence of identities as real and homogeneous groups and turn the imagined borders between these identities to spatialized and materialized ones. The public sphere in the late modern context serves as the place where people are to perform their distinct selfhood through communicating it visually by carrying the marks of these identities. Therefore, these joys of inclusion, enjoying and feeling safe within these included identities and their historical and spatial reflections in this context can be analyzed in terms of how they serve to naturalize, depoliticize and normalize these identities.

As discussed above, in this context religion and ethnicity are among the two main categories that claim to be excluded and subordinated throughout the process of Turkish modernization. This corresponds to the ‘second phase’ of Islamic and Kurdish movement when the former lead to an “exit from religious revolution” (Gole, 2002, 174) whereas the latter stopped its armed struggle and adopted political measures for demanding cultural rights of the Kurdish population. Rather than forming an Islamic state or demanding a separate Kurdish state through territorial partition from the state, this period is defined as their cultural turn in the sense of their demanding acknowledgement and inclusion of religious and ethnic identity in the public sphere. However, what religion or ethnicity means do not have a universal definition “not only because their constituent elements and relationships are historically specific, but because that definition is itself the historical product of discursive processes” (2009: 29). Therefore, rather than democratization of the public through the presence of these groups as they are, this period can be analyzed in terms of the continuities in these

categories' serving as technologies of making sense of time and space and ordering of national life. Their exclusion only makes sense if the history is narrated in a linear manner in terms of their exclusion. Their presence in the public sphere is celebrated daily only when their previous exclusion is encoded in the visible signs. For example, in her analysis of the subjective experiences of Muslim women Saktanber (2002: 28) indicates that "a sense of injury, arising from having been constantly accused of being obscurantists who prevent society from its onwards march to progress" goes hand in hand with "a certain pride as non-secularized Muslims, born out of a sense of being close to the essential, a sense of being on the true path." How the spatial experience of the nation is reconfigured to contain such coexistence of the feelings of injury and pride, exclusion and inclusion, loss and survival is an important question to discuss the spatial dynamics of this period.

## **2.4 Politics of Presence, Gender and the Women Political Representatives**

Above, I have briefly introduced how survival narratives and the collection of authentic voices of groups mobilized through ethnic and religious references serve as the technologies of their narrating themselves within the future of the nation as active participants. How they intervene in the city space for daily ritualization of these identities, for mobilizing different groups, how the political parties as well as municipalities are spatially organized as daily places of socialization, education, solidarity and cooperation, how these close relations brings in an

imagination of these public spaces as extensions of home and the effects of these in terms of the formation of late modern national subjectivity is aimed to be discussed in this study. Foucault argues that “Discourses are much more than ways of constituting knowledge. They include the social practices, the forms of subjectivity and power relations that inhere in such knowledges” (Pringle and Watson, 1998: 215). As public debate through the inclusion and participation of people from various cultural backgrounds becomes the main organizing and legitimizing narration of political practice, who speaks for which ‘fragments’ of culture, which experiences can ‘pass’ as an issue of public debate and which cannot, hence the exclusions, silences and hierarchies embedded within the actual practices of this public debate complicates the analysis of late modern national imagination. Gender as a category of analysis can only make sense if it is located within these regimes, norms and principles of history making and space making.

Thus, if this period is to be analyzed in terms of its specific technologies of national subject formation, how the Turkish people or people of Turkey locate their senses of selfhood within the spatiotemporal zone of a national public, how these senses are translated into and performed within their social practices is an important question. If the late modern national subject formation is to be analyzed from this analytical perspective “one must examine the orderings of the world it produces; the types of institutions, knowledges, norms, and practices that issue from it; the manner in which these institutions, knowledges, norms, and practices structure the *quotidian*” (Mbembe: 1992).

Brown (1992: 9) argues that although "the increasing organization of everything is the central issue of our time", limiting the focus of gendered analysis to the issues of women's absence, subordination, exclusion will not allow to discuss how this discourse of women's subordination legitimizes the policies that "invite extensive state surveillance of women's and men's daily lives, work activities, sexual and parental practices, as well as rationalization of their relationships and expectations." Thus, the analysis of the construction of the subjectivity of women political representative in the Turkish context might have important contributions to discuss such co-construction of increased surveillance and women's senses of pride and joy of empowerment. In that sense, the moments where they express their joy and pride as historical actors can be analyzed as their fantasies of relay from weakness to strength. What are the spaces that these subjectivities are reproduced, what items, practices, historical moments do they mark through which their collective entities are constructed, what are their temporal and spatial others are important questions to discuss the formation of women representative subjectivities in late modern Turkey.

Butler and Weed (2011: 4) argue that "to ask about gender and its uses means accepting a point of departure a historically dynamic and complex field of analysis." The historical narration of religion and ethnicity based resistance to the authoritarian 'gaze' of the Turkish state and the demand for cultural rights as the rhetoric for mobilizing cultural and religious groups had been briefly mentioned above. Empowering women and the particular importance given to their physical

and audial presence as an important gender ideology of all these groups had been discussed. I have also mentioned the increasing interest in including women as both subjects and objects of research in various fields. This emergent interest in the category of women had expanded women's access to the political, social and cultural means. Brown (1992: 11) asks "Do these expanding relationships produce only 'active political subjects,' or do they also produce regulated, subordinated, and disciplined subjects?" The spatial organization of the political parties as well as the public space make the intimate contact with the group members on a daily basis an important technology of disciplining collective membership and controlling the critical voices. The collective sense of Muslim womanhood or Kurdish womanhood is not something out there and the construction of womanhood as a collective identity necessitates certain form of organization, daily performance as well as references to other fields of knowledge for their reproduction.

Thus, is it possible to discuss how this assertive and demanding rather than passive and silent women figure is an effect of gendered reformulation of national history that narrates the past through reference to the image of an omnipotent, authoritarian father? "Fixed oppositions conceal the extent to which things presented as oppositional are, in fact, interdependent—that is, they derive their meaning from a particularly established contrast rather than from some inherent or pure antithesis" (Scott, 1994: 286). The co-construction of authoritarian past and democratic future as well as spatial assimilation and reclaiming presence can be read as the reformulation of the national authority to

intervene in bodies, time and space. Thus, how can these processes be read in terms of the gendered characteristics of late modern national subject formation in Turkey?

## **CHAPTER III**

### **JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT PARTY AND THE FORMATION OF PIOUS (MUTEDEYYIN)<sup>i</sup> WOMAN SUBJECTIVITY**

The increasing public visibility as well as electoral support of the Islamist movement in Turkey has brought a political, scholarly and public discussion about what this means in terms of the founding principles of the Republic, which are about ‘West’ oriented modernization, secularism and democratic regime. The political program of Justice and Development Party (AKP), which was founded by the ‘reformists’ of Refah Party, was based on suggesting a reinterpretation of these principles under the title of ‘conservative democracy’. In Cizre’s words (2008: i), “The AKP’s adoption of a conservative-democrat identity has rested on a new understanding of Westernization, secularism and democracy.” The

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<sup>i</sup> There are many terms that the interviewees chose to identify themselves such as conservative, pious or ‘mutedeyyin’. I chose using the term mutedeyyin instead of others to define the distinct subjectivity that is constructed throughout the daily performance of their political representative roles. The main reason behind this preference is that both religiosity and conservativeness are politically loaded terms commonly used in the rhetoric used in mainstream institutions of politics as well as within the political programs of different political parties in Turkey. I use ‘mutedeyyin’, which literally means personal belief in a certain religion, to define daily practices of these women’s political representative subjectivity and their distinct forms of reproducing it in various spheres of their life.

formation of the AKP by those who claim to be distancing themselves from the Islamist orientation of Refah Party to a rather ‘conservative democracy’ oriented agenda that will introduce a re-interpretation of these founding principles was followed by its gaining majority of the seats in the parliament in 2002. The definition of ‘conservative democracy’ was based on a synthesis or ‘functional mixture’ (Muftuler-Bac and Keyman, 2012: 91) of the concepts that are argued to be defined as mutually exclusive throughout the Turkish modernization process. It includes references both to the Ottoman ancestors and the West, Islam and modernity, a political agenda that is future oriented but reformist rather than ‘revolutionist’ as the Republican founders (International Symposium on Conservatism and Democracy, 2004).

As Turkish national identity is debated through these axes of its Western and Eastern, modern and traditional characteristics as well as religious and secular norms and values of the society, women and their public visibility became an issue of daily talk in government, media, civil society as well as scholarly literature. The emergent interest in the visibility of Islamic symbols as well as the electoral success of the political party that represents the Islamist movement, first Refah Party than the AKP, brought a criticism about the possible reactionary implications this would mean in terms of their targeting the Republican reforms about women. While Islam and the inequalities it poses for women became an issue of debate, there were others that problematize the gendered inequalities embedded in the nation state formation processes. Contrary to those who argue

that Islam poses a threat about curtailing gender equalities brought by the Republican regime, the emancipation or equality that is argued to be recognized by the founding fathers of the Republic started to be questioned (Muftuler-Bac, 1999; Kadioglu, 1994; Sancar, 2004). Thus, within this context where the main dynamics of the nation state formation process were opened into discussion, there emerged a critical pole of debate about gender relations. The woman question served as the main issue through which the conservative democracy program was debated both within and outside the AKP. In the words of Çitak and Tür (2008: 455-56), “while the claims of change and tradition were the two essential themes of the ideological discourse of conservative democracy, the women question stands as a key parameter in understanding the AKP’s attempt at balancing these two parameters.”

The conservative democracy program of the AKP has a particular construction of the category of womanhood. As Yegenoglu and Cosar (2012: 184) indicates, “The AKP’s approach to the women differs from the Milli Görüş movement especially in terms of the party’s enthusiasm for women’s public visibility. ...In the case of AKP the women found the grounds for more visibility in regular and parliamentary politics.” The category of assertive conservative woman is constructed so as to symbolize the difference from both the secular elite and Refah Party version of Islamism; hence the AKP’s program as a synthesis. However, in order to analyze how this category is actualized, it is how women themselves take up, interrogate, reproduce and subvert the limits of this category

that becomes the level of analysis. Butler (1997: 383) indicates that “there is no subject prior to its construction and neither is the subject determined by these constructions; ...it is the demand to re-signify or repeat the very terms that constitute ‘we’ that opens up the possibility of a reworking of the very terms by which subjectivation proceed and fails to proceed.” Hence, in order to discuss the ‘demand’ that makes the proceeding of the pious women subjectivity possible, how actual women locate themselves into the cultural, historical and national narrations of this conservative democracy project through adopting, negotiating or rejecting its construction of womanhood becomes an important question. The analysis of such demand or desire for such subjectivity makes it necessary to look at the practice of such a gendered identity both at the level of the everyday and the technologies that sustain this subjectivity.

Active women participation within the Islamic movement was an important phenomenon in this context that has both shaped and has been shaped by the particular trajectory of political Islam in the Turkish context. Hence, the project of ‘conservative democracy’ was not a univocal challenge to the overall gender ideology of Turkish modernization. Which Muslim women subjectivities are excluded or silenced as an effect of the conservative democracy program of AKP is outside the limits of this study. But it is important to note that my focus on the pious women subjectivity within AKP is not based on the assumption that this is the only Muslim women subjectivity that can be observed within the late modern Turkish context. Nor it is assumed that this subjectivity is not challenged,

discussed and negotiated among the women AKP representatives themselves. However, it is important to note that the experiences and definitions of their roles as women political representatives that they shared with us as researchers reflects a little if not none of these debates and renegotiations within the party. Özyürek, in her analysis of her interviews with the women who had served as teachers in the Republican period indicates that her focus on their ‘nostalgia’ about their past does not mean that this is the whole story and they have not mentioned any disappointments or criticism about that period. However, although she observed that they mentioned few sentences about such criticisms throughout the interview, she chose to focus on the way they frame their self-narrations that they obviously want to share in public. Other forms of framing, she argues, they share “when they meet their family, neighbors, and friends in the private section of their apartments, in casual clothes and slippers, without makeup or hairdos” (2006: 63). My focus on the moments when they perform this subjectivity that I named as pious woman subjectivity is based on similar concerns. There were moments when they wanted us to turn off the tape recorders to share something ‘privately’, and also moments that they told all their criticisms since they want others to know them. However, these were exceptions and mostly criticisms of AKP were not mentioned. My focus on their publicly shared self-narrations is not based on the assumption that these criticisms do not exist. Hence, through their public self-representations of their role as AKP women representatives, what I would like to discuss is the processes through which desire for public performance of this subjectivity is reproduced.

As the heroines of their self-narrations, they enter into negotiations with history, society and culture. Thus, rather than discussing these self-narratives as the traces to the backstage of politics, I will use them as a chance to analyze the AKP women subjectivity in action, thus, as moments where they utter this subjectivity into existence. I will try to discuss how this so called conservative democracy program enters, provides meaning, shapes and becomes self-constitutive through intervening in these performances. This is similar to what Özyürek (2006) defines as considering life history narratives “not for their referential value but as speech acts ...that do things rather than say things.” As Sirman (2000: 251) indicates “Constructing the self becomes a process through which other collectivities such as family, ethnicity and nation are also constructed in relation to one another”. How such collective imaginings shape and are shaped by their political party identity cannot be answered through the analysis at the level of ideologies or political party programs. It is the processes through which the actual women representatives’ values are redefined, negotiated and grounded within their daily practices in a way that provides new meanings for their social, familial, and vocational interactions that I will try to trace from their self-narrations.

I will use the term pious women subjectivity in terms of Mahmood’s definition of piety in her analysis of the active women subjectivity in dawa movement in Egypt (2011: 51). She defines piety as “a logic that inheres not in the intentionality of the actors, but in the relationships that are articulated between

words, concepts, and practices that constitute a particular discursive tradition.” As will be discussed later, in the narrations AKP women, a distinct version of piety plays such an organizing role among various fields of knowledge and practice. They define themselves as playing a historical role as modern Turkish Muslim women, which is about not only mobilizing for getting rid of the suppressive secular authority on Muslim women but, as important as that, spreading the real knowledge about Islam to the Muslim women who mistaken archaic authority with real Islamic perception about womanhood. The quotation below from one of our interviewees exemplifies women’s concern about the necessity to reach Muslim women for them to get rid of their misinformation about Islam:

In Islam women are not allowed to be governors or heads of state. It is because they will have to go to the mountains if necessary on horses, which is especially tough for women. It was the conditions that limited women rather than Islam. Now things have changed. Transportation on the horses is no more. Thus, this rule became null and void. Thus, Muslim women have to know that they can become a minister, prime minister or governor. (Ankara)

As mentioned before, conservative democracy project has a distinct perception about women’s role within the project that is differentiated from not only the women of secular elite but also from other Islamic movements. “The AKP Party Program has a separate heading, ‘Women’, devoted to explaining AKP’s perception of the women question and their problems” that strongly encourages women’s participation in politics and public life (Citak and Tur, 2008: 456). The actual content of this Program and its details about women is outside of the limits of this study. It is the AKP women representative’s way of actualizing this role

through translating it into ways of remembering their past, their imaginings of the future, re-meaning of their daily activities as well as the municipal activities accordingly that I will try to discuss in detail in this chapter. It is the co-construction of their selfhood as pious AKP woman and the actual shape that conservative democracy project of the party takes that I will try to discuss. In other words, the gendered characteristics of the conservative democracy project of AKP are not embedded within the party program itself. Rather, how actual women translate various spheres of their life into markers of their emotive affiliation to their party is what gives the political party program its actual shape. In her analysis of the mosque movement in Egypt, Mahmood (2011: 36) indicates that a large women mobilization in Egypt within the mosques “altered the historically male centered character of mosques as well as Islamic pedagogy.” She also discusses the role of women’s high mobilization in terms of reordering of different institutions of learning and social welfare into locations of “displays of religious sociability” (2011: 37). Therefore, women’s mobilization might play a role that far exceeds, transforms or strengthens the effectiveness of different political projects in different contexts as well as playing transformative roles in their own senses of selfhood. It is this active women subjectivity in the case of AKP, its historical narration and spatial organization which are performed in their self-narrations as speech acts that I will try to discuss.

It is true that women had turned into important markers of the political project of AKP to distance itself not only from the secular establishment but also

from other Islamic mobilizations. However, discussing how actual women animate its project rather than their passively obeying it necessitates a thick analysis of how this historical role intervenes in their various daily actions that vary from management of household to the spatial organization of their workplace and the meaning they attribute to charity activities. Their narrating themselves as the heroines, who have to play an active role in the late modern Turkish context, where a new type of national bonding has emerged as a possibility, strengthens their sense of duty as acting not only out of moral responsibility but out of a political responsibility. A lot of our interviewees have expressed that their main motivation for being nominees is their feeling that they are living in times when it is necessary for them to stick their necks out. For example Helin mentions that:

It was my belief that it was time for women not just put wood in the stove but put their hands in it that made me decide to follow the Academy of Politics in the AKP. I wanted to play active roles in the party in those critical times when Turkey had suffered a lot from the coalition governments. Those education programs provided important tools to deal with men who wanted to treat us women as their servants. My success in the program and my professional background were the reasons that I was invited to be a candidate.

She depicts Turkey as a ‘suffering’ body and it is this sorrow that calls her for a particular type of action. Just voting for AKP is not enough to heal the suffering nation. She decides to make use of her knowledge and skills and developing new ones through education programs to serve her best for this task as an active agent. It is the power relations that construct such a desire to ‘burn their hands’ and that are activated in this pious women subjectivity that I will try to discuss here.

### **3.1 Morality and Moral Purification Discourse: Memory Making and Space Making in the Formation of Pious Woman Subjectivity**

Brown indicates that morality is one of the political signifiers which emerged in late modern context not only to criticize the constitutive premises of modernity but also to serve as the basis of new collective narratives and political formations. She argues that in this context “Whole political formations have taken their bearings from their moral opposition to a historically specific ‘immoral’ regime” (2001: 25). Verdery also argues that reference to the necessity of moral purification is a common element in narrations about rebuilding or reawakening of a political community. Such purification refers to a construction of a new national collectivity through stressing how “the guilty are no longer shielded, the victims can tell of their suffering, and the punishment purifies a public space that the guilty had made impure” (2013: 38). As the moral groundings of the modern regimes are disrupted, this brings in not only a celebration for new possibilities but also an anxiety, insecurity and panic about the future. It is in that context that melancholy, nostalgia about a romanticized past and the search for other forms of moral binding emerges. In the words of Brown, “righteous moralism is an acute symptom of the contemporary political discourse, which I render as a symptom of the political disorientation and political impotence resulting from the troubled narratives of modernity” (2001: 15). In this context, political criticism of the previous definition of normal citizen coexists with melancholia about the past, the desire for a romanticized conflict free political order and the comfort of normalcy.

Colebrook (1998), through adopting Foucault's conception of positive ethics, defines morality in terms of their productive effects "that extends its domain beyond notion of norms, justification, legitimation and meaning to include the consideration of practices, selves, bodies and desires that determine and are codetermined by morality." From that perspective, the AKP version of moral purification can only be analyzed in terms of not what it says but what it does "pertaining to a specific set of procedures, techniques and discourses through which highly specific ethical-moral subjects come to be formed" (Mahmood, 2011: 62). It is such specificities of pious women subjectivity that I aim to map.

Late modernity in Turkey is a context where different narratives of purification which consists of various ways of defining the malice of the past that brought the decay of the present and the desire to construct a new future for the country can be observed. The demand for recognition of the injustices of the past has distinct ways of making the world intelligible as well as an intimate and emotional ways of communicating with the constituency. In the AKP version of purification, the political rhetoric of 'normalization' of politics is commonly used. The intimate contact with the people and caring for their daily needs is identified as a moral compensation for their exclusion and subordination in the past. This can be observed in the women's stress on 'politics of service' as the main shift that AKP has introduced to the culture of politics in Turkey. It is argued to be characterizing the 'civilian' characteristics of new politics as opposed to top to down, militarist or elitist forms of politics in the past. The following quotation exemplifies this point:

I saw that those who come from a traditional Turkish political culture have no place in this party. There is no place for selfish and corrupt people. Providing service to the people and hearing a “God bless you” is what motivates all the daily practices here. When I was persuaded about this, I thought I have to be part of this movement. No one is here for a personal wellbeing. Being the servants of society is what distinguishes us from the way politics was conducted in the past (Kerime).

Politics of service is used as the opposite of the established mode of conducting politics that is referred as characterized by corruption, rent seeking and intensification of social hierarchies. What is introduced instead is the construction of an ideal, conflict free community where everyone cares for each other where the highest reward that is sought for any service is benediction (*hayir duasi*). For building that community in the future, the remnants of the immoral practice of politics in the present are to be cleaned. Women representatives desire being active agents in this process to conduct the ‘cleaning’, purification of politics from the remnants of such practice of politics.

Our prime minister tries hard to make women play active roles in politics because he tries to clean up politics. Women bring cleanliness to everywhere they enter. If women are the ones who clean the houses, they will be the ones who will clean politics. Our style is very different; we are incapable of making intrigues thanks to our nature. We are the ones who will purify this filthy, immoral style of conducting politics. (Aylin)

Thus, although it is the prime minister that is depicted as the main agent that desires purification of politics, he is in need of natural purifiers, which are women, to succeed in doing it. Therefore, her wanting to sanitize politics is defined not only as a natural derive thanks to her being a woman but also as a

responsibility for contributing to the mission of Erdogan, which he cannot succeed without women. As the ideal politician thanks to her incorruptible nature, she takes part in representative politics. This nature makes women natural cleaners of all the places they enter. This is similar to what Sirman names as ‘abject’, which is a way of marking anything that does not fit in the narration of such an ideal community as belonging to the past and that is not only to be cleaned but this cleaning process is to be remembered collectively as its constructive other (2005: 147). In accordance with this narration, as these ‘abject’s are cleaned and gotten rid of, the state will finally conduct its main mission, which is serving to the people rather than accepting service from them. This politics of service is also defined as ‘normalization’ of politics while the past is remembered as abnormal, authoritarian, immoral interventions in the lives of people. Thus, the past as the repository of memories related with active antagonism, a field of threat, chaos, or traumatization is constantly remembered to make “fantasies of relay from weakness to strength, abandonment to recognition possible.

Being the ‘servants’ of the people is the main rhetoric that is used to legitimize and naturalize their political intervention in various spheres of social life. Throughout the analysis of our interviews with the AKP women representatives, I observed that various daily spaces are re-marked and re-ordered in order to serve for the ‘new Turkey’ project of AKP that constitutes of various moral renewal references. A lot of issues ranging from how to raise a child to how to conduct business or how to deal disputes within the family become issues to be

dealt with collectively in order to serve for such a moral renewal. Their contact with the constituency is not depicted as just citizens connecting with their representatives to share their ideas and demands. Rather, these interactions are narrated as their reawakening the ties of neighborhood and solidarity that are defined as values that have been forgotten for so long. Women's having easy access to various services provided by the municipality such as health, social security or employment is attributed a distinct meaning in the Turkish political history. This is narrated as citizen's no longer being seen as servants to the state but the state becomes a servant for them in all their practices. The municipality and the buildings of the political party are defined as places of socialization for women. Almost all of these representatives stress their role in representative politics as including as many women as possible from their constituency within these interactions.

What convinced me to say yes to the party members who asked me to become a candidate was my seeing that politics is no more a clash of interest among the parties. I was convinced by the AKP's policies that what they understand from politics is serving people, for humanity rather than seeking self-benefit. I was elected and I became the mayor. It was as if women were waiting for a woman mayor for years. At least three or four women a day come and visit me. They consult me about their health, about their children, about everything they need. They even call me at 3 o'clock in the morning in cases of health emergency. I also collaborate with the NGOS's that I am affiliated with to help them. I am a pharmacist; serving for the comfort of the people is my purpose in life. Now I can serve much more people, which make me very glad.

This representative, Isil defines her role as providing service to the people about 'everything they need' and she feels happy about being accessible by people 24

hours a day. This dissolving of all the distance between the representatives and the constituency is depicted as the replacement of the politics of fear and subordinating authority with solidarity, intimacy and a motherly form of caring. This is how either their or the women branches' interacting with the constituency on a daily basis is legitimized. Some of the AKP women representatives, such as Umran, stress their pride in the increased access of the low educated women to these representative institutions since they had been looked down as 'uneducated' housewives.

We tried to have access to women who might not be very well educated but who are well known within their neighbors as helpful, problem solving, compassionate women and who have the qualities of beings sisters (*abla*) of everyone. What is known as the AKP's success about having access to women is about its being very capable of making these women realize the natural good within them rather than imposing what is good and bad by intervening in their sense of value.

Thus, the 'new' morality is not something that is alien to these women that will be imposed on them. Rather it is embedded in the good characteristics they have, which is not related with education. The role of the woman representative is to have access to these 'natural goods' within these women and serve for their wellbeing.

Their entering representative politics is mentioned as their gaining a distinct perspective about the meaning of their daily practices. The experience as political representatives is highlighted as a moment in their life when they reassessed their sense of selfhood, their identities as mothers and professionals,

the meanings of their social, professional and familial roles. Thus, the subjectivity of women political representative is experienced in all their spheres of life and orders them in a meaningful way. Ceylan has indicated this point when she defined her experience in politics as something that provides an ‘inner discipline’.

Politics really disciplines you. You learn how to treat various people around you. For example I used to have an angry temper. I learned not to be angry, to be patient and to listen more and speak less. I learned not to be selfish and always act collaboratively. This is an invaluable experience that provides an inner peace and affects all your life, even your relations within the family. It was painful at the beginning, to see myself changing. Now in every moment of my life I feel thankful to those who have invited me to the party.

Thus, this experience as representatives is defined as serving to purify their own life through their gaining an inner peace. She defines that this peace was acquired at the price of a painful process of changing. This is how enduring pain is defined as a virtuous act and how the pre-AKP period is bodily registered as that of bad temper, impatience and uneasiness. This self-narration constructs a political gaze that intervenes in distinct everyday practices and orders them in a meaningful way which daily reproduces the desire to perform the pious woman subjectivity. Thus, they not only make women constituency realize their own value. They themselves go through an inner transformation and purification to reach the natural goodness there as an effect of which desire for playing active role in the historical mission of the party is produced.

In the following paragraphs, I will try to introduce how the conservative democracy projection of nationhood constitutes and is constituted by women

representatives' relations with their constituency, their senses of selfhood, and how they locate their role within the historical narration of Turkishness.

### **3.1.1 Pious Womanhood Located in an Historical Trajectory: Narrations of Transition from Victimhood to the Carriers of a Holy Mission**

As I have mentioned earlier, almost all of the AKP women representatives have stressed their historical responsibility and their depictions of the present as the time when it is time to stick their necks out. One of the issues that these representatives stressed as their historical mission is the subversion of the official ideology about women's emancipation by the Republican regime. Kandiyoti (2003: 262) indicates that "It is commonly conceded that among Muslim nations, Turkey distinguishes herself by comprehensive and as yet unparalleled reforms with respect to the emancipation of women ...as part of a spate of legislation which amounted to a radical break with Ottoman Islam and institutions." This official narration of emancipation of the women by the formation of the Republic is one of the issues the coherence of which some interviewees questioned. This can be defined as what Layoun (1999: 93) defines as a moment of renegotiating the dominant national narration and challenging its narrative perspective. Some of the interviewees, through stressing the increase in the number of women representative throughout the AKP government have argued that only with the AKP regime these reforms that remained on paper for most of the women of Turkey have reached the masses.

In 1934 women gained their right to elect and being elected. It was the first time that women were given the rights of universal suffrage. Following that, women were given many other rights. However, these did not make significant differences in the lives of most of the Turkish women. Only at the AKP period women were valued that much throughout the Turkish history. Only at this period their presence at representative institutions was supported not on paper but through various policies and education programs. (Fidan)

While emancipation of women as a historical mission is acknowledged, the previous regime is criticized in terms of its impotence in actualizing it. The narration of emancipation is reordered in a way that the previous regime is marked as impotent and the AKP is marked as the actor that accomplished it. Hence, the pre AKP period is remembered as a period of victimhood in the sense that the experience of few women from the secular elite dominated the official history whereas the formation of new nationhood is bodily registered as the time of joy and pride about finally being recognized as agents of history. Hence, political authority narrated again as an emancipator to whom they are to reveal their loyalty in various daily activities.

Belma stressed the same point:

Although we have expressed proudly that we have given women their economic and social rights years before many Western countries did, it is very recently that women are finally demanding to use these rights actively. Starting from the foundation of the Republic, the presence of women in the parliament was very limited. The real shift in terms of women's representation came with the AKP.

How the Republican reforms about women's public presence affected the lives of a limited number of women from the secular elite is stressed to subvert the official narration, which is followed by defining the AKP period as a unique historical

shift, which is again marked by the emancipation of women. The pre-AKP period, on the other hand, which is narrated as the hegemonic domination of the secular elite, is remembered through reference to various affective narrations. Ozyurek (2006: 57), through her analysis of the self-narrations of the elderly Republican women, argues that “through connecting many events that took place in their childhood to the milestones of political history …they connect their own lives to bigger historical events.” While the same Republican period pervades the life narrations of the AKP woman representatives as the historical event that they connect their lives, the affective references they use for connecting with that period is quite the opposite. Throughout my analysis of the interviews, I have observed that emotional marks such as pain, suffering and sorrow serve as important mechanisms of remembering the past. Thus, emotions play important roles in terms of their daily remembering, performing, normalizing this particular historical narration as well as disciplining themselves through these emotions’ becoming constant reminders of their responsibilities. An important aspect of such usage of pain as the link between the past and the present is that it marks the ‘others’ as social elites who have not experienced pain and hence putting a moral distance between them and themselves which constructs their subjectivity as virtues historical actors.

### **3.1.2 Narrating Selfhood within the Past and Future of the Nation through Emancipation Fantasies**

Povinelli (2006: 3) argues that “discourses of individual freedom and social constraint” which she names as ‘autological imaginaries’ “animate and enflesh love, sociality and bodies, they operate as strategic maneuvers whose result is to distribute life and values.” In the self-narrations of various interviewees, senses of pain and victimhood which are then resolved by their being emancipated from a previous suppressive authority, which is sometimes depicted as the state, sometimes as a father or husband, and sometimes social inequalities, serve as an important mechanism through which they ‘connect their own lives with bigger historical events’.

I believe that what motivated me for politics subconsciously is my coming from a very poor background and being able to become a lawyer by tearing all the difficulties apart. This made me have a soul of a warrior. As a woman who had passed all these difficulties successfully, I have a lot to share with other women coming from similar circumstances. Then of course you want to change these circumstances, have a voice in all the issues concerning the future of the people like me. Having these thoughts in mind, I knocked the door of the AKP.

This interviewee, Bade, wants to play active role in the AKP’s politics of service, this time not for making the ‘disadvantaged’ women realize the natural good within them but to develop their ‘souls’ as ‘warrior’s until the time when the conditions that they have to fight against will disappear in the future. She identifies with the poor people as ‘people like me’, her daily encounters with them

serves as reminders of the difficulties she had suffered in the past and as her wanting to become a representative to ‘fight’ the last war until building the future where it won’t be necessary, which she will build together with people like her.

Especially women whose family members personally know the political party founders stress politics as a debt of loyalty since they owe their education and their finding a job to these connections. Aylin has mentioned that

My father did not want me to continue my education after high school and wanted me to marry. Abdullah Gul knows my childhood. I remember his caressing my hair when I was a child. He convinced my father to let me continue my education and he found me a job in a real estate agency to finance my own expenses. I am trying to pay my debt of loyalty now as much as I can through serving for young people like me.

This interviewee also connects with ‘young people like her’ in terms their suffering from an authoritarian father who limits their public presence. The AKP government is remembered as the non-authoritarian fatherly figure who made it possible for her to be educated. Similar to the previous interviewee, she defines politics as the platform to reach people like her, which constantly remind the painful past and the sense of debt to AKP.

Betul who had mentioned that she had completed her university studies abroad due to the headscarf ban told that

I had no intentions to turn back to Turkey; all the problems I had experienced made me feel offended towards my country. I was considering making use of the migration law and becoming a German citizen. During all these years, I visited Turkey once. During that visit, everything seemed so ugly, the roads, even the traffic lambs. I felt like I had come to a village even in the capital of Turkey. Then I followed how radically things were changing from the TV in

Germany. I was still not sure whether to turn back or not when I took my graduation diploma at 9am. It was all of a sudden that I decided to come back and bought a ticket for the 12 o'clock flight. I personally observed the extent of the change, the infrastructure of the city, the life standards of the people, the extent of the change from 2004 till today is amazing. I am very glad that I have turned back and became part of this historical shift in Turkish history.

Betul also mentions her experiences in Europe to stress how the secular Westernization project in Turkey was not Western at all. She stresses how as a Muslim woman she felt more at home in a foreign country than her own country although the secular regime claimed to be taking Europe as the model for modernization. In her words:

It was a Christian priest who was teaching the class ‘Muslims in Europe’. I was shocked when he reminded us about the birthday of Hz. Ayşe. Even I as a devoted Muslim did not know that. When we asked for a place to perform our namaz, he himself talked to the rector and arranged a separate room for us in the place where Christian students were practicing their religion. These Christians were much front apart about the issues of religious freedoms than our own country.

Cinar (2005: 73-74) indicates that “the confrontation between Islamist and secularist national projects has taken place on the ground of the female body, upon which both parties have attempted to instill different discursive contours.” Being pro-West and anti-West has been among the most prominent issues of debate between these parties. In the narration of this interviewee, this distinction dissolves through reference to the knowledge about and respect for Muslim women in a European country. This is in sharp contrast with the Milli Görüş Islamism that the founding members of the AKP originate from and that “opposes

the West and the Westernization process” (Yildiz, 2008: 45). It is also important to note that headscarf issue had not been mentioned as among the priorities within the agenda of women representatives among whom only a few of them were wearing headscarves. Citak and Tur indicate that (2008: 458) “The number of veiled women increases as one goes down the levels of the party administration as well as the Women’s Branches” and that at these lower ranches there is a disagreement about the necessity for stressing and out speaking the headscarf issue. Since my research interest is limited with the representative women, such disagreement within the party is outside the limits of this study. However, at times when the issue was mentioned by the interviewees, such as the one mentioned above, it is framed in a way that not only problematizes the secular elite’s perception about headscarf but also the perception of the West by other Islamists. Another representative historically locates the political program of the AKP within the contemporary interest in the West about converging technological development and respect for cultural and religious values.

Even in the most developed countries like United States, we see that people have started to search for non-material, moral values. I see that science and rationality are no longer enough to make the people happy. In their daily life, people increasingly base their human relations on beliefs. However, people in Turkey had been blamed as reactionaries just because they wanted to maintain these beliefs and values in Turkey. In that sense, the AKP is the main party that captured the spirit of the time. Of course we support following and using the latest scientific development, but through maintaining our cultural values.

This representative, Sevim also stresses the importance of Turkish cultural and religious values in the eyes of the Westerners.

People from Denmark, Belgium, Germany and US follow the rising star of Turkey as a location of distinct cultural and religious values and the deep meanings hidden within them. A chair was founded in China in the name of Mevlana, where mostly Americans teach Turkish Sufism. When we paid a visit there once, there was a woman Turkish professor with us who speaks very well English and who also knows Koran very well. A Christian woman asked her why Islam is known as the last religion but not Christianity. Her answer was ‘It is because it is the only religion whose believers give their children names of holy figures from other religious such as Isa, Musa, Meryem. If there were Christians who named their children Muhammed, it would be known as the last religion. I saw how that woman was impressed by the answer from her face.

Thus, she feels thankful to the AKP for making it possible to share all these religious and cultural accumulation of Turkey in various platforms. She argues that Turkey as ‘a rising star’ has a lot to contribute to the increasing demand for meeting with the spiritual values in the West which had been realized and actualized in the AKP period. It is the educated AKP women who represent such perspective of the AKP which not only serves to make visible the ‘deep meaning’ hidden within various cultures in Turkey but also to change the practices that had led to their being perceived as patriarchal and subordinating for women in the West.

There are still some men in the party who are used to women who come when they call them and go when they are told to. It is due to the parenting practicing prevalent in every parts of Turkey. Women usually raise their sons as if they are kings. They ask their daughters to bring water to them, to iron their trousers. ‘Son, your sister is busy now; go get your own water’. Do they say that? No. It is the mothers who maintain these practices. However, mothers are the queens of their houses here, if they want to change things, their husbands will walk that road with them shoulder to shoulder. It is women who do the actual work, it is them who have the last word but still it is them who are argued to have a subordinate position in the Turkish culture. It is necessary to travel from village to village, from mountain to mountain to change these practices. (Belma)

Thus, the main motivation for traveling from villages to mountains is the desire for the birth of the ‘new’ citizen whose mothers are to be educated by these woman representatives of the AKP. In the new family this new citizen will be born, he will follow their wives, shoulder to shoulder which will disallow misinterpretations about their authentic Turkish culture’s being patriarchal and subordinating women. ‘New Turkey’ that is to impress the West in terms of its scientific knowledge and cultural accumulation is imagined to be born within these families.

### **3.1.3 Gendering the AKP’s Discourse of Social Inclusion and Empowerment**

Democratic legitimacy and popular support is one of the main pillars of the conservative democracy program of the AKP that had been highlighted in the literature as an important issue in terms of its being a “clear sign that democratic government is perfectly possible in a Muslim society even when the ruling party has faith based roots” (Hale and Ozbudun, 2009: xi). While the term development in its name, Justice and Development Party refers to economic development, justice refers to an even distribution of the wealth accumulated in a way that the poorest part of the population having their share from it. In an interview in 2003, one of the founding figures of the party, Eyup Fatsa (Cakir, 2003) had mentioned that dealing with poverty was the issue that the party was giving the highest priority, much more than the headscarf issue. Dealing with 3 Y’s, corruption

(*yolsuzluk*), prohibitions (*yasaklar*) and poverty (*yoksulluk*) was the slogan of the initial party program of the AKP.

Women poverty, as the most disadvantaged part of the population, became a particular policy concern throughout the AKP governments since 2002. Local governments were given particular responsibilities within that frame. As part of dealing with the poverty program, metropolitan municipalities were given the responsibility of opening centers to serve the social and cultural needs of children and the youth within the poor neighborhoods as well as dealing with their health, education and social needs. The municipalities were responsible for creating Counseling Boards to develop policies on empowering children and women (Sengul, 2003). Local governments were held responsible for creating social service facilities as well as opening vocational schools for developing professional skills of women and increasing their employment. Municipalities were held responsible for opening centers that women could consult in order to solve their problems. For the provision of these services as well as detailed mapping of poor women's needs and checking the successes and failures of these policies, women's participation in decision-making bodies became an important agenda. The party arranged education programs to increase female political literacy as well as developing leadership skills. With very few exceptions, the AKP women local representatives we interviewed are the women who have participated to these education programs. Rather than tracing what they do for their women constituency or discussing these effects of these policies on empowering of women, my aim here is locating the pious women subjectivity

within this context of the complex interworking of various discourses such as democracy, poverty, development and health.

Within the self-narrations of women representatives, poverty in general, and the body of poor women who had also suffered the pain of social isolation and subordination by their husbands and fathers in particular is marked as the main symbol of the AKP's moral historical trajectory. They are depicted as those who have endured the pain caused by the elites through their virtuous patience and who are to be the main carriers of the futuristic mission of the party. While their disempowerment in the past is to be defined as the effects of the elitist and authoritarian characteristics of the old regime, they are to be the main builders of new Turkey as good mothers and wives.

We broke the extreme expectations from the women such as education, high professional profile in order for them to be emancipated good citizens. This made politics accessible to limited number of women from the elitist groups. We tried to have access to women who might not be very well educated but who are well known within their neighbors as helpful, problem solving, compassionate, women who have the qualities of beings sisters of everyone. What is known as AKP's success about having access to women is about its being very capable of showing women the values of women they have within naturally rather than imposing on them what is good and bad by intervening in their sense of value. (Sadiye).

Sadiye also stressed their pride in the increased capabilities of the women constituency who had been looked down as 'uneducated' housewives but who can now take part in political debate and make 'sophisticated' contributions to the issues about almost all the issues related with the political agenda of the country.

The educations provided for the poor uneducated women are depicted as serving for their gaining respect of their husbands, which is an important step for strengthening the companionate characteristics within a marriage. Some stories our interviewees have told as their unforgettable memories that is defined as ‘stuck in their mind’ or they ‘still get gooseflesh’ when they remember, memories that ‘bring tears to their eyes’ can exemplify this point.

The speech of one of our attendants to the literacy courses of the municipality made of all of cry. She said ‘when I was a child, they said ‘you are a little girl, shut up’. When I grew up and got married they said ‘you are a bride, shut up. Then I had children, they said ‘mother, you are ignorant, shut up’. Now I can finally talk.’ Everyone applauded her afoot’. Look, I still get gooseflesh when I remember it (Aylin).

One of the paradoxes of such definition of poor women’s being put as the main carriers of the future is that it is the educated women who are to be the carriers of their voice in representative institutions. In the conservative democracy project, they represent the synthesis between the West and the East, those who have been educated in the institutions established by the secular elite or in the West but still not having been assimilated in their culture. They are to play subversive roles in terms of the secular perception of Muslim women that depicts those women who publicly rather than privately express and perform their religious identity as archaic, non-educated pawns. They as educated Muslim women will serve as role models of assertive conservative women for the poor women themselves. The category of motherhood as the commonly nature among these women plays a very important role to contain that paradox. As mothers, they are defined as being able

to feel their pain as if it is their own, worrying about the future of their children by not distinguishing them from their own child. For example, Defne has mentioned that

Such explosion of women's reclaiming their city has never existed in the past. Politics is communication, communicating with these people whose existence is forgotten, communicating with the public. In the past, politicians were distant from these people; they had no affection for them, even those who were the most educated people of the country. But only through communication and affection you can make the people feel connected. Their accession to the institutions that used to look down on them is our success. We have to be everywhere, in every corner which is something that only women politicians like us can do since we have this capability of making empathy in our motherly nature.

This is how she translates the political project of AKP to her definition of selfhood, through narrating herself as the embodiment of the unique 'synthesis' that is introduced in this project. Such assertive agency also turns into the marker of their not being the symbolic pawns of the party or those who are victims of religious patriarchal power. Sebnem has depicted herself as a distinct synthesis that embodies all the good qualities attributed to women in different political discourses:

I am not the cleverest woman here, nor am I the woman who wears the best outfits. But I have a little from all these qualities. I am not coming from a poor neighborhood nor have I been beaten or subordinated in my family. But I know how it might feel not being able to put proper food on the table at night and how tough men can get against women. Thus, what brought me here is my ability to mix all these qualities and experiences within a dough.

Sebnem refers to motherhood as the category where various hierarchies that are marked on women's bodies such as clothes, education or experience are resolved.

The motherly nature is used to subvert and replace not only the significance of the marks outside the body but also other social and cultural distances among the women from different backgrounds. Thus, these women perceive their womanly genesis as the natural catalyzer of the competing understandings of womanhood. Stress on the genesis (*fıtrat*) of women as the bodily carriers of the real message of the party and transmitters of it to their children makes the bodies of women an important target for the purification of the society. They argue that the previous regime's stress on the equality of women not only failed to empower all the women equally but also masculinized, defected and alienated the 'enlightened' women from their genesis.

At one side, there are highly educated women who are successful in their professional life but do not care about social or political issues. At the other side there are poor, uneducated women who are very interested in taking part in active politics but only for selfish reasons, to find jobs for their family members, to know influential figures to make their work easily done in different institutions. Both groups, despite being from such different backgrounds, have something in common which is being selfish. Our difference as the AKP women is being both educated and using it for the betterment of all. This is something that all women have in their nature as mothers and our coming together with all kinds of women is important to make them realize that.

Thus, motherhood is used not only to inscribe the dissolution of the hierarchical differences among women but also as the point of resistance to the 'elitist' interventions in the name of emancipation and equality. They commonly make references to their being criticized by the secular elite as the 'showcase' (*vitrin*) women who perform no agency in the decision making process but just passive 'pawn' of their party who only do the low profile work. As a response to

that, most of the AKP women representatives stress their pride in the increased capabilities of the women constituency who had been looked down as ‘uneducated’ housewives but who can now take part in political debate and make ‘sophisticated’ contributions to the issues about almost all the issues related with the political agenda of the country.

### **3.2 “Erdoğan made me see more happy days than my husband did”: The AKP Reorganizing the Muslim Family**

Actively participating in the moral mission of the political party as women, defined as a category that is different than men in their genesis is stressed in most of the self-narrations of AKP women representatives we interviewed. The biological differences between men and women are stressed not as conflicting but as complementary. Although their coming together to form the family is defined mostly in terms of respect for each other, having complementary responsibilities for raising the children the only figure that had been mentioned as the object of love has been Erdoğan. He is imagined as the embodiment of the moral mission of the party that is expressed by references to his physical and personal characteristics. Thus, their depictions of him can be defined as a different level of intimacy than any other man-woman relationship within a family. The moments of encountering with him is mostly expressed as a distinct ‘intimate event’ as defined by Povinelli. In her words (2006: 177), an intimate event “is not merely a

substantive good in and off itself; it opposes all other modes of organizing intimacy.” It is through such bodily encoding of the political authority that is differentiated from any other affective relations that the national discourse operates through producing gendered citizens. Sirman (2005: 149) indicates that “the invention of new forms of intimate relationships …produces a new regulation of desire, constituting sovereignty, national community and the new national individual all at once.” Thus, Erdoğan’s being mentioned as the figure of love by all the interviewees can be read as his serving as the embodiment of the historical moment that is imagined to be the birth of this new pious woman subjectivity.

He is the figure of love and adoration for women. I have heard stories about women who fight with their husband in front of the voting box saying to their husbands that ‘he made me see more happy days than you did, I am going to vote for him’. The political party provides various benefits particularly for women. If women who are primary school graduates need money for their children, they don’t ask it from their husbands; they withdraw money from the bank accounts opened for them. They first met with ATMs in the AKP period. They didn’t ever have any bags or wallets because they didn’t have any belongings of themselves. (Bade).

Thus, Erdoğan is imagined to be serving as the family leader which is a role that is failed by the husband. He is a figure that is defined as transforming their intimate relations, encouraging them to resists against the men who are closest to them as active agents, his image in a way serves as the reflection where such a radical inner transformation is projected. The strength of this new tie with the new authority is depicted in the following quotation:

Go to any home here. If a woman tells you that she is going to vote for Erdoğan, you can be sure that she will. That woman will not decide not to

vote for him even if her husband beats her, swears at her, and beats the living daylights out of her. Such determinacy to resist the husband began with Erdoğan. Not with the AKP but Erdoğan. It is his charisma that makes all these women so determined to serve for the mission of the party disregarding its possible consequences. (Ece)

Most of the interviewees had mentioned that if Erdogan did not insist on the presence of women in the nominee lists, it would not be possible for them to play such active roles in politics. Erdogan's image as a political leader is also imagined to transform the Muslim manhood.

There are still a lot of men within the party who could not get use to the idea of women's being politicians. Before Erdogan's insistence on nominating women, we had to act like men, find strong uncles or relatives who would support us against the self-benefit seeking sassy men. They were the dominant figures even in the AKP. They would get you off the nominee list without letting anyone know. These dirty politics was conducted at midnight. Thank God Erdogan broke their dominance (Leyla).

We had to face very disrespectful comments when we wanted to be candidates. There were certain men in the party that said 'you want rights but it is us men who carries even your coffins. He meant that women who lack even the power to carry the coffins of women are incapable of doing politics. Thanks to our prime minister, these rude comments cannot be made that easily now. The party headquarters do not leave us alone. We are educated there about how to deal with these disrespectful men who do harm to the mission of the party. Now I can be more men (*herif*) than them when it is necessary. I can show these rude guys what it means to be a real man. (Sebnem).

The men from my party in the municipal assembly made me suffer a lot. They really make me want to leave the party. One of them one day stood up and shouted that he would take me under his foot. To protest him, I no longer attend the party group meetings in the municipality. If I let the prime minister know about all these, I am sure that he would get mad at him. It is because he knows that men are still not used to seeing women in important places, he, as a leader, has to back up women. I really love him, he is such a great leader. (Olcay).

Thus, Erdogan is a highly respected figure as starting the moral change from the party and attributing women an important role as carrying these norms to the future generation of politicians. Mayors are also figures of respect as representing this change in the style of doing politics. This style is narrated as not only their relations within political institutions but in all their social and private life.

Everyone wanted to live in luxuries spaces, when Altindag was a poor neighborhood. Even those who worked here, I mean those who earn their bread here didn't live here. The first thing that our mayor did when he became a candidate for mayorship was moving here. At that time there were no roads, no cars here. You had to wear boots all the time to walk through all the mud in the streets. He was taking his boots off when he arrived the municipality building and then wearing his shoes. He moved his home here and changed everything here through showing a care that one only shows for his home. (Serpil)

The mayor is depicted as the figure that transforms the way of relating with the city space as a 'home'. One is claimed to have responsibilities for the place where he earns his bread, which is another form of depicting the past as immoral. Thus, the mayor is the representative of the moral mission of the AKP at the local level. Thus, transformation, renewal, upgrading of the city space as the extension of their home is to reflect this moral transformation as well as how women define their roles in this process.

Our mayor gives particular importance to women representatives being from this neighborhood. Women who know their neighborhood rather than total strangers are given priority. Thus, he wants to meet the women who are already in good relations with the people here and motivates them to take active part in politics. My being a tradeswoman here and my being known through my charity activities as well took his attention and he told me that it

was time for me to serve for the mission of the AKP. It was an honor for me. This is how I became a candidate. (Aylin)

Thus, while the city is depicted as the home of the residents and various neighborhoods as the family of all its members, women representatives define their roles as distribution of wealth among the ‘children’ citizens while the mayor is the fatherly figure that constructs this ‘home’ and organizes these processes.

### **3.2.1 Bridges of Love, Houses of Hope: Neighborhood as the New Family and AKP Women as Their Mothers**

As mentioned above, starting with the initial years of the AKP government, the municipalities are held responsible for opening centers that women could consult with in order to solve their problems. These centers are mostly named as women and family centers, centers for women’s and children’s health, and centers for the education of women and family. Women’s health centers are mostly referred to as centers of women and family, and the seminars and education programs consisted of topics on mother–child and husband–wife relations. At these centers, the projects of which are usually named as Bridges of Love or Houses of Hope, women are given education programs before and after marriage about how to accomplish communication among family members, how to manage arguments within the household and how to raise good children. The interviewees have stressed that through daily communication with these women, who come to these centers, they gain new mothers, sisters and daughters that they share a common faith with.

I don't consider daily relating with the problems of the people as an extra work load in addition to my housework and business. I consider it as dealing with the problems of the family members. I feel myself empowered as they feel empowered. I don't consider my happiness separately from theirs. Women are like that in every responsibility they take. They don't mind about overtime working and don't leave their workplace without finishing their responsibility. It is same here, whatever we do is based on voluntariness and what we expect in return is the inner peace when we can direct the resources to the people in need. (Umran).

Also, as these women are present in all the intimate spheres of their constituency, in child birth ceremonies, funerals, before and after important exams of the children, in their finding a job, in times of sickness or weddings, all these activities become the places where the successes of the political party in making these visible and heard are remembered through prayers of gratitude. This is what they define themselves as changing the 'culture' of politics.

Various education programs are provided to women for free in these houses of love. They get psychological consultancy about communication techniques within the family. They learned that what they did to their child was bad from an expert point of view. These are all the things introduced by the new municipality perception of the AKP. (Bade)

The political party and the institutions of representation that their members are present are imagined as the extension of the intimate spheres of the people.

You can never know what happens within a person's privacy if they never come and tell it themselves. They have to feel such closure to their representatives for us to be able to touch their lives. Those women who have problems with their husbands, mother or daughter in law, with their children, or who have financial or health problems feel free to come and talk to us whenever they want to. They see us as a family member, which makes it possible for us to learn and provide the needs of the people. (Isil)

Women who are invited to be nominees for the elections from the AKP by the political party members mention that these members have told them to consider this invitation as a reward for their service to the society as good mothers and providers of social service. Apart from some exceptions, these women have stressed their active involvement in the charity organizations in their neighborhood. They define themselves as the ‘nerve cells’ of the neighborhood in the sense that through their daily interaction with the people, they record their needs, let the mayor know about these needs and then provide these services.

No one here in my constituency feels alone or hopeless. For all their needs and demands, including the most intimate ones such as consultancy about husband wife relations, or about their health, they know that we are here. We become the children of the childless families and visit them in religious holidays; we arrange country tours for those who have never gone out of their close environment. (Basak).

Hence, not only they signify the places of their interaction with the political party members and the constituency with personal meanings through marking them as the places of their ‘rite of passage’ but also they reorganize these spaces for various women to have similar experiences through the feeling of their empowerment on a daily basis. They promote activities for them to reorganize their spatial relationship both with the city and at home.

Once we succeed in connecting with all these disadvantaged mothers in the centers we build particularly for women, distribute the resources to their real owners, the children will be healthier, the youth will be more effective and will not deviate from the path of good, the harmony between the young and the old will be established. We will rock the world as a cradle together with

these women ...not through damaging the family but by strengthening it. (Neslihan)

Women of the neighborhood who hear about our activities want to join us, not for self-benefit but for the experiencing the sense of doing well to others. We lead them to the Social Services institution and their organizations such as voluntary motherhood or voluntary caretaking for the elderly. Their desire about working for someone in need, their caring for their neighborhood made me so happy and hopeful about the future. (Isil)

Women representatives collaborating with the woman branches of the party for such organization of social redistribution is framed as the reawakening of the neighborhood relations that are argued to be an important part of Turkish culture. These centers for women also serve for the professional women, such as pharmacists, doctors, lawyers, teachers to converge their professional identity with their woman representative identity. For example Isil mentions that:

This is a place that takes a lot of migration from the East. I think they feel relaxed when they come here. We were talking with the pharmacists. They told me that they reviewed the prescriptions of these migrants and they observed that there is an increase in the number of Eastern women using antidepressants. They could not tell that they had a headache; they get anxious about their life. Now, we provide services particularly for them in cooperation with the family doctors. They feel much more comfortable with the women representatives and their doctors. They can share their psychological and physical pains much more easily than before. Their world view has expanded which makes me feel that I am doing the right thing.

She uses both her professional expertise and representative role to legitimate her intervention into the bodies of migrant women as depressed, anxious women who are in need of particular treatment. The connections being taken in a woman-to

woman conversation is argued to break down the top to down, authoritarian characteristics of medical discourse.

Family and health consultancy takes place in a woman to woman sharing problems format. It doesn't stop in the office of the experts. We invite women who consult us to our gatherings. The feeling of becoming a single fist with us is an important part of the therapy. Their empowerment passes to us. When we as the different links come together, we form a chain of women whose conscience is fulfilled. (Isil)

Thus, family consultancy is framed not just as a scientific expertise but as an activity that serves for fulfilling their conscience as good mothers and serving for the wellbeing of a bigger community. It is also mentioned to stress the importance of the vocational courses that are given in these centers. They are defined as the places where they realize their real capacities which they will use for not only financial contribution to their family but also for gaining their self-confidence and become conscious mothers.

All the disadvantaged women who participate in our education programs are actually very clever and talented. They never forget what you teach them. It is enough for them to see a sample of needlework once for them to replicate it. You cannot believe their manual skills and intelligence and what they can succeed in when you give them an opportunity to show their capacities. (Serpil).

This is defined as returning to 'normal' history of the nation while their personal histories that is to be remembered as times of pain, loneliness and exclusion and their experience of overcoming them becomes the signifiers of this transition.

### **3.3 Reordering of Personal Time and Space: Pious Woman Subjectivity Performed in Familial and Vocational Practices**

How women representative subjectivity is constitutive of their intimate relations provides important material to trace the ways through which the conservative democracy project intervenes, marks and orders the daily life of these women. The women representatives have stressed that their being members of the political party not only changed the way they organize their daily activities but also the meanings they attribute to them. Thus, they reorder their worlds which, according to Verdery, mean “giving new values to space and time” (2013: 38). While their motherly roles at home and their professional life is stressed as contributing to their being good politicians, their entering representative politics is mentioned as their gaining a distinct perspective about the meaning of these roles. The experience as political representatives is highlighted as a moment in their life when they reassessed their sense of selfhood, their identities as mothers and professionals, the meanings of their social, economic and familial actions. Thus, the subjectivity of women political representative is experienced in all their spheres of life and orders them in a meaningful way.

#### **3.3.1 Motherly Love, Wifely Respect: Purification of the Family**

There is common stress on the possible threat of dissolving the family as women feel empowered. Women’s presence as representing the dissolution of the previous limits on their self-actualization by curtailing their rights and freedoms

of education and belief in the name of secularism is commonly stressed. However, they also highlight that these new rights and freedoms bring new moral responsibilities for the actualization of the cause of their political party. The image of ended marriages and the pain this might cause for the children and the future of the society as a whole are widely stressed. The rights they gain are not to serve for their own wellbeing but for their gaining back their rights to contribute to the wellbeing of the society. Both at the times when they are not educated and just abide by the domestic roles attributed to them and at the times that they are educated and reject all domestic roles, they turn into soulless bodies with no higher, communal aims in this life. Rather, education should not be for personal development but rather for moral development, both for men and women. They should not claim any superiority or independence which will culminate in their losing a sense of meaning of life. Therefore, their past is to be remembered as the repository of their memories about exclusion, having no rights for education and remaining limited to the domestic sphere with no possibilities allowed for self-realization. Now, as the new women of Turkey, they are to reflect this transition first to their family and to their community. They should neither be guided by their bodily emotions nor by their secular education but by their synthesis, the former they find in their motherly nature which is to be elaborated but not rejected by the latter.

### **3.3.2 Moralizing Professional Life: Reconfiguring the Meaning of Work after Party Membership**

The distinct meaning attributed to economic activity in the political program of the AKP had been discussed from various perspectives in the scholarly literature. As Sen stresses, in the AKP's political party program, economic activity is given particular importance in terms of its not "only being oriented to wealth and economic success but also to the betterment of the community in order to earn God's merit" (Sen, 2010: 74). The statist policies of the past are read as serving for the benefit of limited elite and in that sense economic entrepreneurship is attributed a political meaning in terms of giving an end to the monopoly of this elite and their elitist look to the culture of the Turkish people. Through its economic program, the AKP also distinguishes itself from other Islamists movements. One of the founders of the party, Abdullah Gul had mentioned that "We are the WASP of Turkey" (Adas, 2006: 115) in the sense that they represent the part of Turkey that is both modern, which is defined in terms of economic and technological development, and religious, which is defined in terms of their stress on the moral and religious values of the Turkish people.

The details of the AKP's economic program and its moral framing are outside the limits of this study. What is important for the purposes of my analysis is how women define their contribution to the party as their being the main embodiment of the synthesis of professional education and high morality. How

the AKP particularly supports professional women's playing active roles within the party is a very common issue that had been stressed by the interviewees.

If you are an educated, professional woman, it is very easy for you to find a place in the party. I didn't think it would be that easy for me to be accepted to the party. You don't need a reference from a high profile person. It took me just a short time to become vice provincial chairman after being a member to the party. Such welcoming and supporting of professional women for playing active roles really impressed me. (Ipek)

Helin also defines that it is mostly men who enter institutional politics for professional politics whereas women's main purpose is to participate in the moral mission of the party which exceeds material interests.

While professional men usually use politics as a means for networking, for meeting people that will serve for their business, it is the opposite for women. Professional women participate in politics to make their professional knowledge accessible for other women. Politics is a kind of investment for men whereas for women it is a platform for sharing knowledge. They also tell what they learn in education programs to their neighbors, to their friends in their 'gün'. They redistribute knowledge and skills rather than seeking material income.

Thus, in this case, national authority is reproduced through intervening in the meaning she attributes to her professional practices. It is redefined in a way that new social interactions can be formed which exceeds the main motivation of a profession, which is earning money. The following quotation also stresses that even the most basic economic transaction can be redefined in a way that the new nation can be commemorated.

On the American dollar, it is written In God We Trust. If we take a decision in the parliament to write such a thing on our money, we will be blamed as

followers of sharia. However, people are emphasizing their belief in all of their commercial transactions in their daily life, how nice. We have not reached that point in this country. When we want to claim our religious values, when we want to protect our morale, we are blamed as reactionaries here. (Sevim).

### **3.4 Concluding Remarks: Pious Women Subjectivity and the Re-establishment of the Paternal National Patriarchy**

The late modern discourse is characterized by criticisms of the top to down characteristics of the modern nation state formation processes, which are aimed to be replaced by the inclusion of the groups that have previously been excluded in the decision making processes. The late modern discourse about inclusion, democracy and empowerment of the citizenry, operates through continuous remembering of the past as authoritarian and exclusionary. Thus, the feelings of joy, love for the new authority coexists with constant remembering of the past through narrations of victimization. Sirman, (2005: 161) argues that “The old order had first to be dismembered and forgotten and then re-membered only under defined disciplines, theories and discourses.” While the dichotomies such as authoritarian versus democratic authority, top to down versus representative, politics of domination versus politics of service discipline the forms of remembering the past, love serves as the key term that produces the way of relating with the new authority. The AKP women use the term love for Erdoğan. Paying regular visits to the party headquarters and hearing the support of the

leader for their active presence in representative institutions had been commonly mentioned by the interviewees. Erdoğan was the witness of some of them at their marriage. Thus, their ways of imagining their bond with the new national authority is like a father daughter relationship, which is imagined to be no longer an authoritarian father but one that supports them and backs them up in their familial, professional, and political relations.

The AKP women representatives we have interviewed refer to a distinct type of pain, which is a motherly pain that derives from identifying with the sufferer as the main deriving force for their taking active part in institutional politics. Asad argues that “In the register of the imaginary, the pain of the other not only asks for a home in language but also seeks a home in the body” (2003: 82). Their making use of the category of motherhood to register the pains of those who are defined as disempowered, subordinated, excluded by the secular elite within their own bodies activates certain forms of subjectivity. Such stress on bodily encoding is important in terms of its reordering different daily practices including their professional and familial life and hence the intervening of this national imagination in their ways of organizing their time and space. This also opens up a distinct gendered public space which ‘empowers’ the women constituency through stressing their motherhood as the main carrier of the moral mission of the AKP. This space is to be protected not only from the secular elite but also from certain men within the party who only seek self –benefit, and hence threaten this moral mission. Women professional mothers, in terms of their usage

of their professional skills and business connections for the well-being and empowerment of others, become the main organizers of these spaces. These spaces consist of the new centers opened up for women by municipalities, women's NGO's that either do charity work or develop EU funded projects for women, women branches of the party, or the saloons of their homes. Rather than the empowerment of the women constituency, these spaces can be discussed as the locations where this pious women subjectivity is performed and constructed through these performances.

In addition to pain, another form of bodily activation of this pious subjectivity through reproducing the desire for is love. The authority of the state is imagined as the new father image that supports these mothers on the road of such moral purification. He is imagined as the figure that is potent enough to deal with the 'immoral' men that will use their institutional, financial, cultural or physical advantages to distract or discourage them. Thus, while the previous authority is defined as the illegitimate masculine authority that is resisted through bodily rejecting of it as an 'abject', public expression of love for the leader and the desire for his construction of new national morality to intervene in the way they mark and order their time, space and bodies can be observed. Çınar argues that "Through a series of regulated interventions that orchestrated women's visibility in the public sphere, the secular state constructed itself as the political agent that unveiled the female body, dressing it in accordance with secular ideals and principles so as to display Turkey's new national identity for a Western global

gaze” (2014: 902). In the case of the AKP, the Republican sovereignty is imagined as having ‘unveiled’ women but not having captured their inner love.

The imaginings of ‘new’ national authority and the new citizen in the self-narrations of women reveal important similarities with the formation of the national authority they claim to dissolve. In the Republican period “The Ottoman father figure was depicted by reformers and novelists alike as a remote, authoritarian, and foreboding figure who displayed little overt emotional closeness to his spouse and children and expected total respect and obedience” (Kandiyoti, 1998: 281). The new father would be an ‘engaged father’ and ‘emotionally close’ and hence an object of admiration and love for the spouse rather than fear. The household was defined as the main realm where sanitization of the disruptions of the national essence would take place. While discussing the discourses and practices under which the Turkish nation state was produced, Sirman argues that “the main preoccupation was the creation of a proper national subject ...the invention of new forms of intimate relationships, that is the patriarchal nuclear family, produced a new regulation of desire, constituting sovereignty, national community and the modern individual all at once” (2005: 149). The self-narrations of the AKP women above can be read in terms of how the depictions of the pre-AKP period as the rule of a limited secular elite over the masses, constructs a distinct form of desire that is productive of patriarchy. In the words of Sirman (2005: 152), “the new woman and the new family are not simply categories produced by the state; they are themselves productive of new

configurations of power and desire.” Therefore, patriarchy and male dominance as paradigms to discuss the gendered inequalities are not sufficient to discuss how women play active and constructive roles for the actual performance of patriarchy rather than visa versa. Through the analysis of the increasing presence of women in representative institutions in the case of AKP, it is possible to argue that this increased presence produces a distinct form of national patriarchy. Another party where there is high participation of women is the BDP, which will be the focus of analysis in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **PEACE AND DEMOCRACY PARTY AND THE FORMATION OF ‘PROGRESSIVE’<sup>ii</sup> KURDISH WOMAN SUBJECTIVITY**

As the Islamic movement and the electoral success of the Islamism oriented political parties was being debated in terms of the future of the Turkish national identity and its secular characteristics, another issue of concern about maintaining this identity was the Kurdish movement. As Sakallioglu indicated in late 1990s (1998b: 73), “The Kurdish issue has become a central component of the process of redefining Turkish identity”. Its resolution was being stressed as not just the concern of the Kurdish people but of all citizens of Turkey since it would have an impact on “the future shape and substance of the Turkish state and society in their entirety” (Sakallioglu, 1996: 1). This movement was consistent of various actors including but not limited to the armed insurgency of PKK. However, this armed insurgency became the main focus of attention by the state in 1990s which led to

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<sup>ii</sup> Here I will use the term ‘progressive’ to refer to Kurdish women representatives’ stressing the uniqueness of their experience due to Kurds being an ethnic group without a state of their own. They define themselves as possible leaders for dissolving the conservative rule in not only Turkey but the whole Middle East where the formation of the state is argued to be the origin of patriarchy. In that sense, they publicly represent their representative roles as pioneers of a progress from patriarchal to gender equal society in the region.

the securitization of the issue culminating in the death of thousands, unresolved murders of the state and forced migrations. The destruction and tragedies caused by the armed conflict intensified due to militarist measures of the state.

The historical trajectory of the Kurdish movement is usually analyzed by dividing it into two periods that is being defined as exceptionality and post-exceptionality (Watts, 2009), denial and post denial (Yegen, 2011) or pre and post liberalization (2010) of Turkish state perception and policy towards the Kurds. The exceptionality or denial period refers to the non-recognition of Kurdishness as a distinct ethnic identity within the modernization approach of the Republican state. As Gambetti and Jongerden indicates (2015: 1) within the “modernist state discourses” the eastern region of Turkey had been marked “in terms of backwardness or lack” in order to introduce policy intervention in the name of ‘development’ of the region. Kurdishness, rather than referring to an ethnic population, is mostly used to refer to a region and the social, historical and cultural characteristics of it that become marked as the causes of such backwardness. In different periods of this denial, the depictions of its non-modern’ characteristics have shifted from “‘the location of actual armed resistance, a region intrinsically conservative and counter-revolutionary” which had been used to legitimize formal depictions of the region as the “space of exception” (Watts, 2009) for legitimizing policy or militarist measures to resolve their ‘exceptional’ problems. The imagining of the Kurdish region as the other of modern Turks and how such categorization of the region sometimes as feudal,

sometimes as the place of nomadic, non-modern ‘others’ of the Turkish modern culture by the state became subject of critical scrutiny with the ‘post-exceptionality’ paradigm. “Post-exceptionality” as defined by Watts is characterized by problematization and denaturalization of such modernist depictions of the region and discussing how to rebuild a national identity that acknowledges, includes and guarantees rights and freedoms for the practice of Kurdish identity. Starting with 1990s, recognition of Kurdish identity started to be publicly spoken by the elected representatives. After 1999, following the capture of Abdullah Ocalan and his introducing the project of radical democracy, this period of denial was followed by increasing institutionalization of Kurdishness as a distinct ethnic identity at the political, legal and sociocultural level. It started being translated to the symbolic and informational communication in daily life as well as “struggles to create new spaces ... and new efforts at the production and control of knowledge” (Watts, 2009). As Satana indicates (2012: 170), “the AKP government has gradually changed the state discourse since 2002 ...and declared that the terrorism problem of Turkey can be resolved through a democratic opening and a pluralist perspective to mitigate the grievances of all ethnic and religious minority groups, including Kurds.” Together with this recognition of Kurdishness as an ethnic identity, and the Kurdish issue oriented political party’s declaring its intention to conduct political activity within Turkey rather than seeking independent Kurdish state, how ‘new’ nation as a common identity of Turkish and Kurdish peoples is to be imagined emerged and continues to be an issue of discussion. It is important to note that such recognition was not

acknowledged by all the political actors in the country and the denial approach coexists with that of recognition. As Bahceli and Noel indicates (2011), a particular appeal to the Kurdish voters was and still is weak or non-existent in the rhetoric of the political parties apart from the AKP and the Kurdish issue based political parties.<sup>iii</sup>

The details about the history of Kurdish issue are outside the limits of this study. The aim here is to discuss the radical democracy project of the BDP and the gendered characteristics of the way national ties and sense of belonging are constructed within this project. Still, in order to do that, it is important to note that this project's stress on reordering of Turkish politics rather than putting the emphasis only on the Kurdish people corresponds to a distinct mode of conducting politics within the historical trajectory of the Kurdish movement itself. This radical democracy project made the party one of the important actors that proposes a resolution to the 'identity crisis' of the Turkish nation rather than establishing an independent Kurdish state. Although women's presence in different levels of the Kurdish insurgency is not a new phenomenon, the depiction of the movement as a 'feminist' one corresponds to this particular period in its history. In the words of Bozarslan (2012) "The Kurdish movement in Turkey, and the pro-PKK parties in Syria and Iran, define themselves today as feminist ones. You could not imagine such a political program in the past." Women's having participated in the armed insurgency, their high ratios of presence in both civil

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<sup>iii</sup> By using plural form 'parties', I refer to the renaming of the party after being subject to banning from conducting political activity several times by reference to their 'terrorist activities'. These parties are HEP, DEP, HADEP, DEHAP, DTP and BDP.

societal activities and elected representative levels started to be attributed a distinct meaning as a model for building gender equal Turkish society. Thus, the Kurdish womanhood itself became a site of making claims about the past and future of the Turkish nation rather than being limited to Kurdish ethnic identity. It also became a site to make a call to all the women of the nation to participate in and being active agents of demanding and building peace in the country as well as to mobilize for collective problematization of the patriarchal benefits that both Turkish and Kurdish men enjoy. For building a sustainable peace, they are called to reconfigure the gendered relations in all fields of social life where the previous patriarchal nationhood had intervened to enslave them and turn them into obedient servants of the subordinate, oppressive patriarch. They are called to change not only the Turkish men but also the Kurdish men in order to make this peace sustainable through what Ocalan names as ‘killing the men’ inside the militant, exclusionary, suppressive agents of history. Thus, the radical democracy project of the BDP introduces distinct constructions of womanhood and manhood, produces knowledge about their history and hence introduces a distinct invitation for experiencing sexual identity in a way to locate oneself in the past, present and future of the Turkish nation.

It was in this context that the high presence of Kurdish women in critical positions both among the guerillas and within the political party and the BDP’s project of changing the social, economic and legal status of not only Kurdish women but all the women in Turkey started to be stressed as a distinguishing

characteristic of the BDP's political project. Caglayan indicates that (2007: 129) 'woman question' had not been part of the agenda of the political parties that had been formed by the Kurdish movement until 2000s. It is how such interest in gender identity is constitutive of and constituted by the overall construction of Kurdish identity in the BDP that is aimed to be discussed in this chapter. The category of 'Kurdish women' plays a central role in the BDP's distinct construction of Kurdish identity in many ways. The BDP women representatives claim their resistance against the distinct type of patriarchy in the region, the high women mobilization and their independent organization within the party, as well as coming from a non-state tradition where Kurdish women had been important actors provides an important model for women's emancipation in Turkey. They are critical about the Kurdish women's being depicted as the victims of the authoritarian and patriarchal traditions in the region which legitimates top to down interventions of the state not only in the eyes of men but also women from the Western parts of Turkey. How Kurdish women had been in critical positions and were active agents of social and political life before the formation of the nation state is commonly mentioned. It is used as an evidence to prove that what is known as the conservative characteristics of the region, namely dominance of customs and traditions that limits and puts strict controls on women's public presence are actually the results of the political measures taken by the central state rather than being something intrinsic to Kurdish culture itself. Focusing on the construction of what I will refer as "progressive Kurdish woman subjectivity" and how it operates for re-narration of national history, reorganization of public space

and the daily life of these representatives might provide important analytical tools to discuss the distinct mechanisms through which this identity is embodied, reproduced and disciplined. “Discipline supposes a continuous registration: annotations of the individual, relation of events, disciplinary elements, and communication of the information.” (Foucault, 2007: 147). Thus, it is these disciplining processes that are aimed to be subject of detailed analysis in this chapter through the self-narrations of BDP’s women local representatives.

During the fieldwork of this study, which ended in 2011, People’s Democratic Party (HDP) had not been founded. Thus, the particular focus of this study to the BDP period does not consist of any claims of continuity between these two parties in terms of the gendered characteristics of their political program as well as the formation of women subjectivities. The continuities and changes, parallels and divergences between the two is an important research question the analysis of which necessitates conducting another data. At this stage, it is important to note that the HDP case is outside of the limits of this study.

#### **4.1 Narrating Kurdish Women within the Past, Present and Future of the Nation: Kurdish Women as the Victims, Survivors and New Modernizers of Turkey and the Middle East**

The late 1990s corresponds to a period when the liberation of not only Kurdish women but also all women in Turkey became a central topic of interest in the

political agenda of the Kurdish movement. As Caglayan (2012) follows from Ocalan's texts from late 1990s onwards, the mission of women's liberation is attributed a founding role in the Kurdish movement's project of building a 'new society', which can only be formed through women's love for 'victory'. Victory is used to define the birth of a new culture, a new humanity that will be formed after demolishing the established senses of manhood and womanhood. These sexual identities are blamed for serving to maintain the current system of inequalities and domination through turning men and women into 'castrated' servants of the system that seek love in man-woman relations, sexuality or family rather than the formation of a gender equal society. Democracy is the system where love is re-organized as the desire to be freed from these senses. Only then they will discover their inner freedom and reach an inner victory which will bring the death of the 'colonizer's' domination, namely the militarist elite aiming to assimilate and Turkify their sense of self. This is an inner freedom that will be collectivized in a radical democratic regime where everyone's will to freedom will be voiced and actively performed.

As Heckmann and Gelder (2000) indicates, this also corresponds to a time when the image of the Kurdish woman who will lead the Kurdish struggle for recognition shifted from the Kurdish women in the cities to the women in the rural areas through their being imagined as the women who had both been victimized and untouched by the Turkish modernization process. Yuksel (2006) also stresses the same point when he indicates that starting with this period, the

urbanized Kurdish women who had been influenced by the feminist movement started to problematize the ethnic blindness of feminism in Turkey and how Kurdish women and their different experiences are invisible” within the feminist literature itself. Kurdish women representatives, through what I will discuss in this chapter as ‘progressive woman subjectivity’, construct themselves as the model for developing a gender equality agenda which will transform not only the Kurdish women’s but also Turkish feminists’ sense of selfhood and their gender equality agenda and practice. Thus, the reformulation of the political project of Kurdish movement and the emerging interest among the Kurdish women themselves about the language, culture and history of Kurdish women and their emerging concern about writing the history of Turkish modernization from their standpoint co-constructed each other. As the political project of claiming self-determination rights of the Kurdish people was shifting to seeking decentralization, local autonomy and democratization within Turkey, the definitions of modern and traditional, East and West and the bodily, historical and spatial representations of these dichotomies were themselves changing. The details of the radical democracy, new society and new humanity projects are outside the limits of this study. Rather, the aim in the following paragraphs is to discuss the subject forming effects of the discourse about sexual identity within this project. This will be conducted through a detailed analysis of how women local representatives themselves translate this project into the processes of their daily production of subjectivities as the BDP women representatives. Thus, their self-narrations will be analyzed in terms of how they differentiate between

modern and patriarchal womanhood, between spaces of domination and ‘new’ locations of performing free will as well as how they rewrite national history in a way that the Kurdish region, again as a space of ‘exception’ shifts from being a patriarchal zone of Turkey to a role model for liberation of the women in the all parts of the country.

#### **4.1.1 Constructing the Legacy of Strong Kurdish Women in the Pre-Modern Era as a Guide for Building a New Modern Nation**

In the history narrations of the BDP’s women local representatives, the common starting point is the gender equal Kurdish society before the formation of the nation state in the Middle East. The representatives we have interviewed have indicated the pre-Ottoman period as that of prevalence of gender equal Kurdish society which continued during the Ottoman period when the Kurdish population was experiencing certain autonomy from the central authority. Kurdish women are depicted as having been strong figures in pre-nation state period, who used to play active roles in different spheres of social life. As Derya indicates;

Once, the mayor of Midyat was a woman. Look, the disparity between man and woman had not yet emerged. At that year, a woman in Hakkari spoke 4 languages. It was these women who were conducting international communication. If we go back 80 years in history, during the Ottoman period, the community leader in Dersim was Hatip Hanım. Thus, if you make a historical comparison, you can observe that this disparity between Kurdish men and women emerged at a distinct time. Kurdish women used to have the mission of leading the society before.

Caglayan (2012) indicates that starting with late 1990s, the founding myths of Kurdishness started to shift from the narrations where male actors were dominant to those where women are depicted as active leaders. The images of goddess from ancient Mesopotamia are constructed as those they claim to be descendants of. Smets and Akkaya (2015: 11) stress the same point when they say “the role of goddesses and heroines is evoked in order to emphasize the important place of women in the Kurdish national movement.” Pelin has stressed how ‘catching the essence, the soul of the goddesses’ and applying it to the resistance against patriarchy in the present is the main aim of their movement.

Our motto is that society cannot be liberated without women’s liberation. When we analyze women’s history, the core of their problems originates from the depictions of history by dividing it into B.C and D.C (millattan önce-millattan sonra). In this depiction, the natural society, the primitive communal society is told as belonging to a dark age. It was the period when women used to be active. It is the period of the goddesses. When you make these analyses, you can have better access to the roots of women’s subordination. We work to catch that essence of these times, to catch the soul of these women.

The formation of nation state in the Middle East is marked as the historical moment when the memory of these women has been erased. As the biggest minority group in Turkey, in order to keep Kurds under control for them not to demand the right for self-determination and autonomy, the unitary nation state imposed Turkish language and culture over the Kurdish population. According to this narration, one important strategy of the central authority to suppress possible resistance to this Turkification project was to bargain with the feudal landlords for them to make the population abide by the reforms of the state in exchange for the

state's strengthening their powerful position in the region. Through these measures, eventually, the social and cultural characteristics of the region had shifted from prevalence of gender equality to male oppression.

Kurdish women are depicted as the most victimized part of the population after these developments in the sense that they could not have access to educational, social and cultural rights that the women in the other parts of the country enjoyed. Such curtailing of their access to these resources turned the Kurdish women who used to be active agents of social life into suppressed, uneducated and uninformed housewives due to the patriarchal contract of the central state in the region. Despite all these disadvantages, as a result of these developments, Kurdish women who had not been assimilated by the Turkification project of the central state have become the main carriers of the authentic Kurdish language and cultural practices. These women are represented as what Caglayan (2007: 87) defines as the “enslaved, devalued, diminished” Kurdish women who are argued to be the main actors to liberate the Kurdish identity together with their own emancipation, and mobilize all the women of the country in this mission. It is through opening up spaces for them to distance themselves from their enslaving practices at home, communicating with other women to raise such consciousness about their history that their emancipation can be accomplished. As Dilan indicates, such desire for emancipation is referred as the source of Kurdish women’s having created a ‘miracle’ in the region.

When you touch a Kurdish woman’s life here, you can see that they create miracles many times in a day. It is through their own miracles that they gain

presence in society, in politics. Nothing has been granted to them. Rather, they want to clean this mentality about politics where someone grants something and the other becomes servants of the grantor. These women want to be active in politics and in social life to bring a moral and conscientious change to this prevalent dirtiness. They don't have the governmental official mentality. Democratization is in the hands of these women who are the only ones to change this politics of lies and untruths.

Thus, women's emancipation is considered to be a moral and conscientious one which is defined as the political project of democratization. Democracy is framed as the opposite of dominance of central state which is a morally corrupt system in the sense that it turns the citizens into servants by rewarding those who abide by its authority. Democracy is depicted as the best system that suits the 'essence' of the time of free and gender equal communal life in ancient times. It is through the miracles that are being created by women who can no longer bare this 'dirtiness' which was established by the unitary nation state that a new, clean society can be constructed. The purification of the region from the effects of the patriarchal contract between the central state and the feudal landlords can only be established by these women who refuse to become officials of this immoral rule. Such emancipation initiated by the Kurdish women will guide all the women of Turkey who suffer from a similar patriarchal contract between the state and the husbands and fathers. Thus, while they disclaim the depictions of the region as that of exception due to dominance of conservative, patriarchal traditions inherent to Kurdish culture, they problematize the image of the Western parts of Turkey as the location where women are emancipated and are active figures in all spheres of life. Kurdish women claim themselves as having the potential to transform

patriarchy in other parts of the country and their being important political as well as cultural role models for women of Turkey. They develop ties of continuity with the Kurdish women in the past who managed to play similar roles as active politicians which is again stressed to subvert the image of ‘conservative region’.

Derya indicates that:

If you follow how life has changed here for women after Kurdish women’s movement, you can see how we have a lively social life in Kurdish society that is mainly demanded and organized by women. You cannot elect one woman mukhtar now, however even before women’s movement here, 50 years before, the Kurdish society has elected 3 women mukhtars by themselves.<sup>iv</sup>

Thus, not only the presence of the Kurdish women in active politics today, but also the heritage of the Kurdish women in the past, making them more visible to encourage and empower the Kurdish women plays a central role in the self-definitions of Kurdish women politicians about their role as active politicians. Boym (2001: xvii) defines this condition of going back and forth between the nostalgic fantasies of a pre-modern past and using them both as a model and for awakening the sense of responsibility for their heritage to mobilize people for a progressive ideal through the concept of ‘off-modern’. In her words, “Off-modernism offers a critique of both the modern fascination with newness and no less modern reinvention of tradition. In the off-modern tradition, reflection and longing, estrangement and affection go together.” As it can be exemplified by the

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<sup>iv</sup> By ‘you’, what this interviewee means is the non-Kurdish women who come from the western parts of Turkey. Throughout the interviews with women politicians from the BDP, the project coordinator and the research assistants had been addressed as such occasionally.

quotation below, the loss of the memories of the strong women from the past is stressed as a source of disappointment and anger about the Republican project of building a ‘new’ society. The memories from the pre-republican period are reinvented in an affectionate manner for rebuilding a lively social life for women. This heritage of openness to gender equality which was gradually forgotten due to the Turkish state’s strategies of governing the region through assimilation is to be reawakened again as the real characteristics of the Kurdish culture. This is attributed an importance not only for the wellbeing of Turkey itself but also for all the Middle Eastern countries that had adopted similar patriarchal measures during their experiences with the unitary nation state formation.

#### **4.1.2 Turkey as a Conservative Middle Eastern Country and the Kurdish Women’s Movement as Its Enlightened Face**

While the formation of independent Kurdish state is replaced with the agenda of radical democracy in the political project of the Kurdish movement, being an ethnic community without a history of a state of its own is stressed as a distinct experience that will contribute to the formation of a democratic society in Turkey. This is an issue that had been commonly stressed by our interviewees. While the state’s authority is depicted as that of an authoritarian father the history of which is written through warfare and heroic glories over the enemies, being a non-state community that has survived for centuries is argued to be based on other kinds of collective ties that never allowed the emergence of such an authoritarian father cult. What is referred as the conservative, patriarchal characteristics of the region,

which is usually represented through the cases of honor crimes, early age marriages and low education level of women in the region, they argue, is the result of the political measures taken by the Turkish nation state to keep the Kurdish community under its control. They argue that the state itself established patriarchy in the Eastern part of Turkey through cooperating with tribal chiefs and aghas. They served as the allies of the Turkish central state in its ‘colonial’ mission of Turkification. These processes strengthened and deepened the patriarchal relations of power in the region through subordinating women who had been the authentic collectivity builders and the carriers of the Kurdish culture. All these political processes are argued to be at the basis of the prejudices about the region as suppressive over women. As Dilan indicates,

This region is known as very conservative in the Western parts of Turkey, which is actually a prejudice with no grounds. This perception has to change. This is not a conservative place. This is actually a place where social life is very lively both for men and women in terms of its history, culture and economic life. The Kurdistan society in terms its way of life is very open.

It is possible to read this quotation together with the one above where Kurdish women’s creating miracles many times in a day has been stressed. While the perception of the region as a conservative place is rejected in terms of its making the main agent that imposes conservatizing policies, the central state, invisible, it also disregards the changes introduced to social, cultural and political life by Kurdish woman subjectivities. While the usage of ‘conservative’ as a mark to define the region as the location of distinct patriarchal norms and culture is rejected, it is readopted to introduce a moral criticism to the suppressive authority

of the state and its historical trajectory. The openness of social life both for men and women is referred as the evidence of conservatism's being something introduced by the central state itself rather than being the historical reality of the region itself. When state is marked as the conservative agent, a tie of belonging to national citizens is constructed as common victims of its conservative rule. This also constructs their progressive subjectivity in terms of carrying the mission of saving all the women of the country from this conservative authority. As Tulay indicates:

If today gender equality in state institutions is being talked about, it is thanks to our struggle for gender equality and our organized power as women in the party. In that sense, we are a model for Turkey, for the Middle East and for the whole world.

Sibel also stresses the same point when she says:

Kurdish women's liberation will be a building stone for the liberation of not only themselves but also the whole Kurdish people, then the whole country and the whole Middle East. Today Kurdish women can go wherever she wants; she can enter all the spheres she desires. This was made possible after our struggle, it wasn't that easy but we are not complaining, our gains are worthy of the struggle. We want all the women to be this much tenacious about their rights and freedoms, we want them to claim and protect both their rights and the rights of other women.

Women's political activism becomes an important political tool for constructing a sense of honor in the overall political activism in the region. Such alliance with the active women's movement is crucial for representing the 'enlightened' Kurdishness as opposed to the patriarchal one that the national state had allied

with. In terms of Kurdish women's not having internalized the patriarchal authority as it is in the Western parts of Turkey, they see themselves as in an advantaged position to be the leader of women's liberation movement nationwide.

It is not only Turkey and its particular patriarchal state tradition that the women local representatives from the BDP construct as the field of threat. Within their own futuristic projects, Middle East and Mesopotamia as geographical entities are commonly stressed as the locations of a futuristic intervention. They argue that this is part of the history of state formation in the Middle East which colonized and suppressed the voice of different peoples through dominating women. Certain conferences are organized at the local governmental level for maintaining solidarity among the women from different Middle Eastern countries and the BDP women define themselves as the main actor and initiator of women's resistance among them.

As Eastern Turkey becomes depicted as the birth of resistance against patriarchy, it becomes a center of attraction for Kurdish women who had to migrate from there to the cities in the West. For example, Eda indicates how she wants to be part of the joy of women's emancipation in the East:

I live here in Izmir since my childhood. But now I would prefer leaving all the luxury of this place behind me and live in any rural parts of the East. Somehow my origins there attract me. But it's not only about that. Women there live a much freer life than Izmir. If my kids' school was not here, I would definitely move there.

Thus, the locations where the women in Turkey are imagined to experience emancipation and subordination shifts place in their narration. Rather than dissolution of the terms they use to differentiate themselves from others, such as modern and backwards, progressive and conservative, West and East, they are readopted and reloaded again with particular meanings. Turkish central state is marked as the conservative, non-modern and Eastern authority and Kurdish women's playing leading roles in society turns out to be the main symbol of the progressive and modern carrier of the mission of rebuilding a democratic national identity.

#### **4.1.3 The Experience of Armed Conflict: Divided by Blood, United in Tears**

While the experience of patriarchal control of the unitary nation state over the Kurdish people has been stressed, another experience that has been a common referent in the self-narrations of Kurdish women representatives is the armed conflict, or the unnamed war, as one of them has depicted, and the destructions it caused. In addition to death of "more than 45000 people including soldiers, guerillas and civilians ...between 3 to 4 million people have been internally displaced" (Gunes and Zeydanlioglu, 2013: 1), "thousands of Kurds have left the country ...and the sources of livelihood, stockbreeding and agriculture, were destroyed" (Yavuz, 2001: 14). As Acik (2013: 115) indicates, at the times when the effects of the conflict were at its peak, Kurdish women "were the only sector of the society who was able to be active during the military occupation, when, for example, many women courageously demanded to be informed about the

whereabouts of their male relatives.” This was followed by their increased political activism, taking active part in the uprisings and establishing women’s branches within the Kurdish organizations.

While the fieldwork of this study was being conducted, certain police operations were taking place, a number of Kurdish politicians, including mayors, were being arrested on the grounds of supposed relationship with the Union of Communities in Kurdistan (KCK), “an organization that allegedly functions as the urban branch of the PKK” (Cicek, 2011: 16). Some of our planned meetings with the local politicians were canceled due to these operations. Thus, it might be important to note that the recognition of Kurdish ethnic identity and the ruling party, the AKP’s supporting the context of Kurdish issue in this so called post denial period, did not mean that the BDP’s legitimacy as a political party was no longer challenged by the state and the barriers, bans and pressures about their political activities were dissolved. Thus, the period when this data was conducted was a time when the hopes of peaceful resolution of the issue coexisted with continuing legal and political pressure on the BDP.

A distinct mode of femininity is constructed in the self-narrations of the BDP’s women local representatives for building new bonds of brotherhood and sisterhood between Kurdish and Turkish people that will no more allow shedding the bloods of their brothers and sisters. Within these narrations, ‘mothers’ pain’ is attributed a distinct value in the sense that when the history of wars and state making are seen from their worldview, what had formally been depicted as glories

and victory becomes degrading, immoral and corrupt. This is similar to what Berlant (2008: 4) defines as “an affective capacity that brackets many kinds of structural and historical antagonism on behalf of finding a way to connect with the feeling of belonging to a larger world.” This larger world, in this case is the collective nation of all the peoples of the country. Mothers are imagined to bring together the siblings who had seen each other as enemies for years which had been worsened by the father’s, which is the Turkish central state, taking a side for one brother’s killing another. Mothers are the ones who take the side of life of both Turks and Kurds who are valued equally. Saturday mothers, in terms of their ways of expressing of ‘motherly pain’ which does not seek blood for blood but desires to stop the bloodsheds is given particular importance as a distinct affective account of the history of conflict.

The Saturday Mothers stage a sit in protest every week, making their motherly pain public. It is not something that a father would do; only a mother can heal her pain by sharing her pain with the pains of others. It is a motherly type of communicating with others. Mothers didn’t get involved in the dirty power games and know that a continuing war will mean more pains of mothers. This is pure pain. Saturday Mothers try to heal it by demanding the deaths of children of other mothers to end.

As Dicle indicates, once the conflict ends, the new bonds of national belonging will be built on the basis of sharing a common pain of the past when sons, daughters, sons, brothers, sisters had been killed by their own state. Pure bodily pain which is the common ground for communication can rebuild the sense of sharing a common history and a common future. Belief in the transforming effect of the visibility of not only mothers’ pain but also the pain of those who had been

victims of the use of violence by the state institutions within the national public, which cannot be heard in any public media, leads to women representative's defining their roles as making these pains heard and seen without being silenced. Once this 'real' side of the conflict can become more and more visible, rather than a zero sum game between winners and losers, this conflict is assumed to be perceived as victimizing everyone in the country who, as human beings, are able to identify with 'pure' bodily pain. This pain is thought to activate a call for their resolution and a desire to disclaim the authority of the central state who had conducted such unlawful acts, not being parts of authoritarian 'father's' dirty war and being united for collective healing of the effects of injustices he had conducted.

For example, Dicle argues that as this antagonism between the Turkish state and the Kurdish insurgency is replaced by the sense of brotherhood sharing a similar fate as peoples of Turkey, the wealth that they build together can finally be spent for the wellbeing of all.

It is necessary to give this shedding of blood to an end. This blood is shed for no reason; this is an issue that can be resolved. What is demanded is not a big deal. Kurds want to live equally, like it is written in the constitution, by speaking their own language. This costs so many lives and so much wealth. It affects the economy of the country. Our common budget is used to shed the blood of siblings. There are many poor, hungry, unemployed people in the country. It is our common present and future that is sacrificed for a problem that is not that difficult to resolve.

Therefore a distinction is made between motherly desire and fatherly desire about the future of the nation. While motherly desire is depicted as building ties of

solidarity among the citizens for collective healing of the pains, fatherly desire is depicted as making everyone obedient to his authority which leads to using dirty, unjust measures when he sees necessary. This is also represented as an irresponsible father who not only causes the death of the ‘siblings’ but also misuses the common budget and sacrifices the problems of the citizens to his expensive desires for power and oppression. Eda stresses the same point when she says:

The sense of motherhood makes women demand a new life. They are much more sensitive, that’s for sure. Mothers have big hearts thanks to their compassion. The death of both soldiers and guerillas gives me the same pain. That’s because I know the meaning of having a child. However, the voters only care for their own children; they vote for those who will give jobs to them or who will do something for their benefit. No one cares about the tears of the mothers. It is a world of those who care for self-benefit. No one should sell their honor, their personality for a job, if they have a heart.

The desire for building peace through motherly care for all the victims of conflict constructs another scene of anxiety about ‘bad’ mothers and their damaging the future of everyone through their seeing the world as consistent of the benefit of their children only. These self-benefit seeking women in the narrations of women local representatives are commonly referred either as subjects of anger due to their serving for this immoral system or pity due their not using the full capacities or their ‘heart’ which is capable of seeing every member of the society as their children. Pelin stresses her belief in these women who still don’t have gender consciousness and have such ‘fatherly’ desires which actually in the end serves for their own subordination.

Since all the women regardless of their religious, economic status, color are in a disadvantaged position, their tears are common. Women are always subject to the pains of the dominant patriarchal system. Since it is men who are dominant, they are selfish about not losing their advantaged position and authority. This doesn't have to be conscious. Even those who claim themselves as the most democrat man, they have internalized this perception. Thus, women are definitely different in terms of their levels of internalizing the dominant structure. The experience of suppression and pain puts a distance between them and the male dominant system.

Just as motherly pain reconnects Turkish and Kurdish mothers, sisterly pain connects all the women of Turkey since all of them are subjects of a similar violence of the central father and his male allies in every sphere of life. They imagine that women in every part of Turkey live in a state of emergency. Thus, while men, either consciously or unconsciously, desire maintaining their dominant position, only women who are victims rather than beneficiaries of this system are capable of desiring and building a democratic future. The mothers who don't share the pains of these injustices and keep their children unaware of them are blamed as choosing to live a meaningless life within which not only themselves but also the future of all the children of the country are trapped.

I definitely want my child to get involved in politics. In Turkey the youth is raised so unaware of the realities of their country. If I have a kid, I want him/her to put his/her foot on the ground. You see the realities of life. I am 36 years old but sometimes I feel myself as 90 years old. Politics is not just politics; it is a way of giving meaning to life. If the youth does not have such sensitivity for the reality of their country, they will continue this meaningless life no matter how hard we try for peace. (Merve)

While some mothers whose 'feet are on the ground' are idealized as those who take this responsibility of building a peaceful future for the children of the nation

as a whole, despite all the traumatizing and aging effect of sharing the heaviness of the pains, other mothers are blamed as insensitive citizens that trap the country in a meaningless war.

The existing system has definitely affected women. They have lost their natural state but honesty and nurturing is in their essence. Once this essence in them is exposed, I believe that salvation will be brought by women. (Sibel)

This motherhood they idealize and desire as the agent who will introduce salvation from all the injustices and inequalities of the present is depicted in sharp contrast with the Kurdish mothers who had allied with the Kemalist ideology and alienated their children from their cultural roots in the name of national unity. In some cases, the representatives such as Eda blame their own mothers.

My mother wholeheartedly supports CHP. It has been only few years since I have totally recovered from her pressure. She distanced me from my culture. In eastern cultures respect for mothers and fathers is the norm. Once a mother says ‘my milk is not halal for you’, everything ends. Now I can say ‘so what’. According to her, women sit at their homes and look after children. My sisters in law are also like that. My BDP membership was a shock for all of them. I did what a person who has awareness should do. The mentality that sees women as possessions is also prevalent here in Izmir. Once I was courageous enough to face the common fate of women in Diyarbakir and in Izmir, I could no more turn a blind eye to this like I used to.

The transformation of familial relations is attributed an important value by reference to their being remnants of the patriarchal interventions of the Turkish authoritarian state in their sense of selfhood. Identifying with the pain of others as if it is your own pain is depicted as making a transformative role in the life of these women’s representatives. As this mayor candidate from Izmir stresses, it

was through the effects of these pains that she gained her courage to resist against the pressure within the family. The continuing pain of ‘sisters’ from the past and in the present and the desire for serving for their salvation is bigger than the fear of losing ‘mother’s milk’ which serves for maintaining the prevalent norms that enslave them within their homes.

The metaphoric linkages made between the sheer violence of the central state in the Kurdish region and the dominance of patriarchal norms that suppress women serves for their forming affectionate ties with the women from all over Turkey. As Rezzan indicates:

“What men are doing to the Kurdish women is similar to what the Turkish military was doing to the Kurdish people. They see us as invaluable as an identity, as a body over which they have natural right to oppress.”

While the Kurdish people are seeking recognition of not only their ethnic identity but also the immoral, illegal and unjust face of the state that they had suffered from, women are also called for seeking such recognition of their suppression by patriarchy. Povinelli (1998: 582) defines this imaginary as the fantasy of emergence of a new nation which “comes out from under the pall of its failed history” and only through facing its shameful deeds and refusing to be its allies, “the citizens would be freed from guilty glances over their shoulders into history.” Berlant (2000: 41) also stresses the same point when she says “The centrality of pain and suffering ...endorses a construction of a true subject as a feeling subject

whose suffering disables a person's ability to live at his/her true capacities and thus requires reparations from the agents who wielded the force.”

The women who started to shed tears even before the conflict are called to be the main builders of a truly democratic system by ‘stabbing patriarchy at its birthplace’ through first realizing then making public its suppressive and traumatic characteristics. The new consciousness and courage for this is to be gained through public sharing of their pains with their sisters. Through these sisterly communities, they will be freed from the ‘secrets’ that they kept to themselves either due to fatherly fear or motherly threat of ‘cutting her milk’ from them. It is these ‘new’ women who will introduce new humanity, ‘victory’ or salvation. From their tears, a new nation is claimed to be born.

#### **4.2 From Mountains to Local Governments: Claiming Spaces of Their Own Outside the Access of the Central Father**

From the ways the central nation state marked the public spaces either with the flag or by Turkification of their names after the foundation of the Republic, to the application of resettlement and forced migration policies for the dispersal of the Kurdish population in different places of the country in 1990s, various spatial measures had been taken by the state in the so called pre-recognition period. Gambetti and Jongerden, as well as Zeydanlioglu (2008: 161) refers to distinct construction of the national map in a way that the usage of the term Kurdistan,

“which had been widely acknowledged during the Ottoman era” was no longer used after 1920s. In the words of Gambetti and Jongerden (2011: 376) “During the 1920s and 1930s, the newly established state of Turkey practiced a de facto politics of colonization vis-à-vis the territory that had become ‘southeast’ on its map, of what is also known as the northern parts of the Kurdistan region.” Cleaning up the city space from the marks of the colonial interventions of the central state through its Turkification policies since the foundation of the nation state, as well as opening up new places and marking the old ones as the locations of remembering the historical trajectory of the Kurdish movement, the pains of the violence and joys of resistance and recognition are the issues that had been underlined within the self-narrations of the BDP’s women local representatives. Reclaiming the ‘original’ Kurdish names of the places that had been Turkified during the nation formation processes as well as their demand to use Kurdish as the name of other newly build places and institutions are the main tools for spatial encoding of Kurdish identity.

What is particular importance for the purposes of this study is how these spatial configurations are ordered in way that another liberation movement within the Kurdish movement itself, namely Kurdish women’s liberation, becomes publicly represented, remembered and performed. As “women have been identified as a key social and political group that will lead the democratic development and renewal in the region and the democratization of the society ...steps have been taken to establish the women’s movement as an autonomous

organization within the national movement" (Gunes, 2013: 143). Independent women organization within the political party, civil society as well as the PKK have reconfigured various public and private spaces as the places of learning and teaching the history of Kurdish women's liberation as well as performing their liberated identities and mobilizing other women for this mission. It is the gendered and gendering characteristics of such a construction of independent locations outside of the colony-like effects of patriarchy that is aimed to be discussed in the following paragraphs.

This is of particular importance in the sense that as it had been mentioned above, rather than the liberation of an ethnic identity, an inner liberation from the selfish, power seeking, militarist characteristics of a culture that had been imposed by the central state that is being sought. An internal resistance against these emotions in order for the introduction of a new humanity becomes the political agenda. The Kurdish women's bodies as the main victims, the suffering bodies of mothers as well as the bodies and consciousness of all women whose voice and free will have been taken away becomes the main 'fields' of resistance. Various sites are organized for awakening the desires for such liberation and performing this liberated identity. Chatterjee (1993) discusses how women's presence became the main field of contesting with the colonial power about the limits of its rights to intervene and what to keep as the national tradition that is essentially different from the Western colonizer. In this case, the re-naming of the institutions and public spaces with the language of the mother is used as a strategy to stress the

excessive authority used by the central state. Also the increased presence of the Kurdish women in the public sphere becomes the daily symbolizer of the end of the time of the ‘colon’ thanks to their gaining back their freedoms that they had lost due to assimilatory politics of the central state in the past. As the public presence of Kurdish women itself becomes loaded with meanings of emancipation, in all the moments of their going out of their houses, they remember the pains and joys, sorrows and enthusiasm of this struggle against the colonizer. Cinar (2014) argues that through orchestrating women’s agency in the public sphere and the authority to mark their bodies with particular symbols, the state constructs itself as the political agent. In the following paragraphs, I will try to discuss how the desire to disclaim such authority of the ‘colonizer’ Turkish central state constructs a distinct authority that organizes the public sphere for the performance of ‘progressive Kurdish women subjectivity’ who carries both the marks of the Kurdish movement in her speaking the ‘mother’ rather than the ‘father’ tongue and serves as a role model for the women of the colonizer. While this authority uses the image of the liberated Kurdish woman to subvert and disclaim the marks of the central state about the region as the conservative, traditional, pre-modern or undeveloped others, it demands to be the main ‘orchestrator’ of the national public by marking the central state itself as the colonizing, suppressive, patriarchal and conservative Middle Eastern authority.

#### **4.2.1 Depictions of Women Guerillas: Independent Armed Organization of Women as a Guarantee for Maintaining Gender Equality**

Since early 1990s, a high number of women have participated in the armed forces of the Kurdish movement. As Caglayan (2012) indicates, “In the beginning of 1990s, many women from the villages and from among the university students in big cities went up to the mountains to become ‘fighters,’ to join the armed forces of the movement.” This eventually led to women armification within the PKK as an autonomous organization through references to women’s rights of self-determination. Caglayan indicates how an important value is attached to Kurdish women’s joining armed forces by quoting from Ocalan’s texts, “If, somewhere, there are only men’s armies, this means that the reality of oppressed women is in question. ...As such we should see and know that women army-fication expresses a fundamental value for equality.”

The Kurdish women’s fighting against the state violence together with men has been argued by the local representatives we have interviewed to be giving them an upper hand in organizing an independent women’s branch within the party that actually have a say compared to the women branches of the political parties in the West. Such participation in ‘hard’ politics is discussed as providing them the chances to be seen as political ‘actors’ when it comes to the peace building process. This fact, they argue, makes their empowerment an irreversible

process, and makes it impossible for the men to send them back to ‘homes’ after the achievement of liberation. As Zehra indicates:

If women are free in the political party, it is thanks to PAJK’s being there within the PKK. It is thanks to women there that we can do politics here freely. It is thanks to the respect for their honorable struggle there. I have never been to school. I took a primary school degree by external education program, since I was not allowed to be in mixed classes. But now I can stay outside till midnight as a sole woman among six men. These are the revolutions we have introduced together with the honorable struggle of women at mountains.

Thus, their free presence in the public together with men becomes possible due to this presence’s being marked as the gain of the honorable struggle of the guerillas.

If such co-presence of men and women was not being experienced in the mountains, the patriarchal pressures about women’s participation in public life as equal and free members of the society would not have been dissolved. Aysegul stresses the same point when she says:

Within the PKK, there is also a women’s movement. It is thanks to them that a lot of women can come and knock our doors without our having to do anything.

Thus, this experience of having joined the armed forces together with men is valued in terms of its being perceived as both serving for providing women the chances to break with the patriarchal limits on their public presence and serving as a guarantee that they will continue to struggle for women’s liberation once the armed conflict ends. The independent women’s organization will resolve the patriarchal structures of politics where women need the approval and support of

men to become strong figures, which leads to their having to make sacrifices of their struggle for women's liberation, like they have to do in the Western parts of Turkey. As Sena indicates:

Women have to do things like lobbying or working behind the scenes with men in Turkey. Women in our region don't need to do these in politics thanks to our independent organization of women. This was possible thanks to our struggle, thanks to the struggle of the women at the mountains and all the Kurdish women who took part in the Kurdish movement from the past to the present. When I look back, I can say that we have accomplished a lot.

Kurdish women's presence in the public sphere together with men, as this quotation exemplifies, becomes the visual representation of both the painful past and the gender equal characteristics of the BDP's project of building a gender equal 'new' nation. Their independent organization in the armed forces and in the political party is marked as a difference from both the Republican nation formation process in the past and the ways of conducting politics in other political parties in the present 'Western' Turkey. The image of gender equality in the mountains is fantasized as the opposite of the top-to-down, authoritarian and suppressive 'center' that tries to erase their history and the legacy of all these accomplishment of Kurdish women, like it had done before. Zeydanlioglu indicates that in the decades following the creation of the Republic, when Kurdishness as a separate ethnic identity was denied, Kurds were called 'Mountain Turks' in denial of their Turkishness. He also indicates that the mountains had been inscribed with "the symbols of the Turkish flag, the crescent and the star" (2008: 162). While the inscription of the flag of the unitary state to

the mountains is denied, the image of the mountains is replaced with the image of gender equal resistance with strong and independent Kurdish women, just like it used to be in the pre-nation state period. Thus, the joy of purifying the mountains from the colonial interventions of the central state and (re)establishing it with symbols and performances from the pre-colonial period, which is argued to have direct impact in the daily life of women in the cities, makes up an important affective component of the self-narrations of the BDP's women local representatives.

#### **4.2.2 Sanitizing the City from the ‘Colonial Gaze’ of the Turkish State and the Progressive Kurdish Women as the Builders of Democracy**

The anger for central authority and the joy of having survived from the suppression and authority of both the central nation state and its male collaborators in various spheres of life are the emotions that dominate the Kurdish women representatives' narrations of Kurdish movement in general and feminist movement of Kurdish women in particular. The BDP municipalities are attributed particular importance to represent the will of the Kurdish people as opposed the Governor's House that represents the central authority from which emancipation is sought. Meryem indicates that the state appoints its own governors to blockade the 'will' of the people which is to be represented by the elected representatives.

The prime minister had declared that there is already autonomy in the region, everyone is living their autonomy, he said. He should come and visit the cities both in the East and the West and should see himself how much autonomy there is. It is true that the public performs its will in the local

elections but when it comes to making decisions, a public official that you have appointed blockades the actualization of public's will.

Thus, local governments and the central state are defined as the two institutions that contest for having the legitimate authority to represent the actual will of the public setting the limits of their autonomy. While the central authority depicts itself as the will of everyone within the borders of the state, which is bigger than the will of the people within different cities, as this representative exemplifies, the BDP women see such perception as extension of limits of authority in the sense that the prime minister is spatially distant and unaware of the reality of these localities. Rather than being a hierarchical relation between upper authority and higher authority, the relationship between local governments and the central state is demanded to be perceived as a relations among equals as they both represent public will. Otherwise, this will lead to an immoral power game where the central state suppresses any local demands for making independent decisions as illegitimate. This is depicted as similar to suppressive control of men over women's rights and freedoms as independent individuals through institutionalized and centralized codes of religious or cultural morality.

In 1992, the central state made it obligatory for women to bring a document that proves father's consent while she was applying for a job. This is an unjust, unconscionable agreement between the state and men. The state empowers and protects the men so much so that all the control of women over their lives is taken away. It says women are chastity of men and cannot work without his permission. It applies the same strategy to disempower local governments. Normally villages or, neighborhoods or districts have a style of administration of their own, based on demands and needs of their own people. I mean there is a local style of administration based on moral values and conscience of their own. When central state intervenes, the group that

allies with it gains a disproportionate, unjust and unprincipled power. Thus, central state is actually an unlawful intervention on the real actualization of people's will.

In this example from Devrim's narration, the Kurdish region is imagined as a woman whose will to make free decisions has been taken away by the central state whose authority had intervened in every spheres of life, including homes, through making fathers and husbands normalizing this suppression as their natural right as men. To subvert this process, another moral entity, that is the 'will' of the locality is invented that consists of conscience of the dwellers of the locality. 'Local governments' in that sense are marked as the spatial zone where the people claim and establish kind of a 'private' zone outside the control of the centralized nation state. It is this conscience that is to be rebuilt again which can only be possible through the participation of women since all the men have the codes of the authority of the central state embedded in their years long performed and internalized masculinity. Thus, women are to be the leaders of the mission of rebuilding the local will as both the subjects who had been suppressed and unassimilated to the culture of the 'colonizer' central authority. Thus, this local will can only be awakened in a society where women's free presence in all the spheres of social life is accomplished. In that sense, the bodies of the woman in the street, in local governmental buildings, in the social gatherings organized by the party become the markers of this resistance against the unjust and immoral intervention of the central state. Various locations for women's collective

gathering and empowerment have been built for them to form, perform and remember the historical importance of their voice and presence as woman.

We think that when women find their identity, they will then gain their representation in all spheres. We said more women, more democracy. We believed in the necessity for women to create spaces of their own. We have built spaces where they can express themselves such as parks or sports centers. For example we opened a consultation center for women. Our psychologist, sociologist and lawyer are there. They prepare projects based on women's needs starting from the ones that have priority.

Sibel stresses that democratic rule can only be established when women gain their self-consciousness as a historical victim of national patriarchy. This women representative defines her role as opening up spaces for them to gain and perform such consciousness, leading the way for developing projects to empower them on the process of their gaining their gender identity. As they gain this identity in new places where they are not only mentally but bodily and legally supported, they will democratize all spheres of life which used to be under the hegemony of patriarchy. Women representatives who already have gender consciousness are the ones who have the authority to set the priorities and strategies to reorganize the city for replacing the dominance of the central 'colonizer' with the will of the people. In that sense, various locations within the city space such as parks of market place and daily activities such as sports, shopping or family relations become loaded with meanings of empowerment on the way of resisting against patriarchal dominance and hence moments of remembering the past and locating oneself within a distinct national history.

For example, in Lice women cannot easily go outside of their homes for shopping. They almost never go outside of their houses. When we became representatives, the women who could not even pass near the municipality building now come inside and make individual demands. They can easily express the problems they experience within their families and demand consultancy. We have a women's center that provides psychological consultancy and we direct them there to get professional help. During our election campaign, there was no local bazaar in Lice and women could not go far to do shopping. A local bazaar close to their home was their biggest demand and we built that.

Through these narrations of empowerment, Ayten defines her role to strengthen women on the way of building a just, democratic future which necessitates a transformation in their daily routines of problem solving. Instead of asking their husbands to go for shopping, they will go to the municipality to ask for a bazaar nearby. When they have problems within the family, the new women's centers become the main providers of knowledge and guidance. While home is no longer the sole realm of their life, the experience outside home in the city space is to transform and reorganize the home itself through redefining gender relations.

This sense of having such a big responsibility also affects the women representatives in terms of their organizing and disciplining the daily practice of politics itself. For example, Rezzan defines the BDP women as the leading figures in the transformation of the unjust, corrupt and loose style of conducting politics.

Unlike others, we give high importance to punctuality. We are very careful to be here at 12 o'clock if the council meeting is at 12 o'clock. Last year one of us was in the auditing commission and she was the one who did the most research. We already gain the highest amount of votes and our hardworking is a result of our sense of responsibility rather than desire for more votes. I mean we have changed the style of conducting politics. We work not to waste

money, to be just in all the decisions, not letting the money of the people to go to a few people and to be transparent about the expenses.

#### **4.3 Their Reordering of Inner Self and Intimate Relations as BDP Women Representatives**

In the post 2000 period of the movement, academies for women were established as part of the project of developing a scientific knowledge independently from the ones established by the state and serves for its maintenance. In the political program of establishing feminist and ecological democracy, how the social sciences reproduces patriarchy and the natural sciences have served for the devastation of the nature is stressed. In these academies, an alternative scientific knowledge that makes the sexist and colonialist ideology in the established form of sciences is argued to be developed. The root of such usage of knowledge to legitimize power and authority is traced to the ‘oldest’ colonial regime, that is the established by men over the bodies of women. Thus, the true scientific knowledge is argued to be possible only by women’s having access to the true knowledge of their bodies by dissolving the ones that had been imposed on them by thousands of years old patriarchal authority. While the intimate relations and feelings are defined as the ideological interventions of patriarchy on the bodies of women to maintain its authority, desire for democracy becomes depicted as providing an inner transformation that dissolves the affective power of the previous intimate relations. While the groups who do not have a state tradition of their own and

hence “who are not the carriers of power or heirs to the state”, in order not to be assimilated by them and develop self defense mechanisms against the attempts of the colonizers to establish their system of thought in their minds and bodies, they need an inner purification from the effects of these thoughts. Women from these non-state groups are depicted as in a most advantaged position to initiate such a transformation. This is what Ocalan names as Sociology of Freedom (Kaya, 2015).

Such attribution of a scientific value to the Kurdish women’s movement has a critical role in both their reconsidering their affective bonds in male-female relations and their depicting themselves as playing a vanguard role in liberation of women in all parts of Turkey. As Sibel indicates:

First it is necessary for women to change themselves in a scientific way. It is necessary to look at women’s history in an objective manner. Their experiences in society have to be studied objectively. Why men see themselves this much strong, shapes the whole life in accordance with their wants? It is necessary to make scientific research about all these. They think we have the state, we have the power, we are the MPs we are the businessmen for 5000 years. They have naturalized their authority. Women need to do develop themselves scientifically to learn and resist against this system that had devalued them, that had turned them into men’s servants.

All daily relations between men and women become subject of such a scientific curiosity and reconsideration in terms of not letting their thoughts and emotions being ‘colonized’ by men. While they liberate themselves from the established norms and values about male-female relationship, they will also transform and liberate the man from the patriarchal manliness inside them as the carriers and performers of scientific truth of life that has been emancipated from the effects of

patriarchal ideology. The Kurdish men themselves become liberated from the suppressive, selfish, greedy manliness of the ‘center’ by these women. The center ceases to become the location where the scientific, modern knowledge is to be spread to whole parts of the country, especially the East as the most backwards and uneducated region. Thus, the ‘off-modern’ condition that is to be established is going to be different from the modernity perception of the center that brings environmental damage; that colonizes the fantasies of the citizens with desires for wealth and development. Thus, all those who are depicted as the victims of this system, workers, peasants, minorities, together with the liberation of women and their killing patriarchy, will introduce a scientific as well as moral and ethical blow to the manhood of the center. Through the new communal relations they construct at the local level where new humanity is performed by men and women equally, the relation between the center and the local will no longer be a hierarchical one but one among equals. Neither the center, nor the family becomes the subject of love but it is the new community life that is going to be built together which will dissolve and transform both.

#### **4.3.1 Sanitizing Inner Self as Progressive Kurdish Women: New Consciousness, Courage and Responsibility as the Bonds of the New ‘Familial’ Public**

In the self-narrations of women Kurdish women representatives, resistance against the patriarchal norms and pressures of their own family is a very common issue of

reference. It was not only the political party but also their lives and families that they transform through their gender consciousness. Introducing a transformation within their roles within the family and the perception of their family about them is depicted as an important turning point in their life. As family is imagined as the micro version of the authority structure in Turkey, men as the central state who colonizes the bodies of the women and women who have never became family heads but who have been assimilated to raise children obedient to the ‘central’ father, the transformations introduced within the family is of particular importance. While it becomes a source of courage and self-confidence, it also equips them with a distinct experience that they feel they are obliged to share with all the women to raise their consciousness, to encourage them and to build a new society together with them. As all the material wealth is shared among men and as they have been distanced from the legacy of strong women from thousands of years ago, women need the support of a new ‘family’ that will encourage them and empower them as the liberators of the whole nation. The BDP women representatives distinguish themselves from the women representatives from other political parties in Turkey in terms of their being the only women who problematizes this male dominance and patriarchy. The quota system within the party is named as gender quota rather than woman quota since the women who don’t have gender consciousness are not allowed by the women’s council within the party to become a representative. Sibel defines the benefits of this as such:

A housewife might be much more capable of conducting politics than an experienced male politician thanks to her gender consciousness and her sense

of responsibility for empowering other women. What I mean is never a woman like Tansu Ciller. What I mean is a woman who can consider her public as her family. I don't mean she has to be emotional. However, her gender consciousness will make her treat social problems in a more justice seeking rather than benefit seeking manner.

While gender consciousness is attributed a scientific as opposed to emotional value, it becomes the basis of forming a new political community as a 'new' family. It is not a nuclear family that only seeks the benefits of its members. Rather, it is a family within which all members are valued equally and maintaining justice is a concern for everyone. It is in this new public where women will be encouraged to liberate themselves who will, through their liberation, bring the salvation of the whole society from the unjust, immoral authority of the 'central' father. This will only be maintained by cleaning themselves up from the effects of 'mothers' who had internalized the rule of the father and raised them to abide by his rule. This consciousness is stressed to be more valuable than knowledge and skills attained through the national education system. The new national public is going to be built by these gender conscious women who will have the responsibility to treat every member of the 'family' in a just way rather than using their knowledge and education as means to suppress, exclude or devalue those who disobey the father, just as Tansu Ciller had done to the Kurdish people.

This gender consciousness comes up with a feeling of responsibility to make a change in all the women's life as the carriers of the scientific knowledge of the historical roots of their suppression. Thus, as this consciousness is gained, it

is no more possible for a woman to remain silent which lets them feel courageous that is depicted as an inner transformation where all the fears of the past are erased. Eda has mentioned that she had experienced an inner transformation after membership to the party. She refers to the difficulties of this transformation as a woman who had been raised by a mother who had ‘assimilated’ her to the patriarchal authority. She attributes a moral meaning to sharing this experience with other women.

I go near women and talk to them. They express their problems with their husband but then as they fear that their husbands will hear what they say, they take a step backwards and refuse to get any help. I tell them my own experience as an example. Look, I say, I don’t feel fear no more and I made my husband accept my demands. This is worth the try I say and you can never know without trying. They still don’t have the courage but they will one day. The Kurdish women in the East are much more courageous than the Kurdish women here. They are always on the foreground. Women there lose their children, they are under bombs. I hope women here will gain courage before experiencing these.

This consciousness that makes it unbearable for a woman to live in accordance with the rules and demands of a husband or father also transforms the inner self by replacing fear with courage. Through developing ties of sisterhood with women who still live within the affectionate state that enslaves them, a desire for sharing, making public her fears, pains and her will not to be limited by these emotions suppresses her fears. Through making her life story public by narrating it as before and after party membership, all the narration of the political party about the history of women from ancient times till present is translated to the way she makes sense of her selfhood. Feeling empowered by the sense of having

access to the reality of history, she encourages others not to keep these pains secret any more, to seek help for them and take their place ‘on the foreground’ of this resistance. It is thanks to the Kurdish women who took the lead, paid the highest price and ready to support them in this mission, they no longer need to fear anything. Resistance against their families and introducing a change in their senses of manhood and womanhood is dramatized as the initial step for introducing such a change in the whole society by disclaiming the authority of the ‘colonizer’. Rezzan stresses a similar courage that she had gained after the political party membership:

I have one foot at the party, one foot at home and family and another foot at the streets. I see myself as very powerful, I think I can resolve all the problems; I can handle anything and everything. I gained that much self-confidence that gives me the energy to deal with all.

This new subjectivity makes the inequalities of the present so unbearable that this interviewee wants to be everywhere at the same time to resolve them. As a self-confident agent of history who is equipped with the knowledge, desire and courage to build a ‘new’ life, she never gets tired and always feels herself energetic enough to serve for the mission. Neither bodily nor social limits stops or discourages these women from performing this subjectivity. They see themselves as the carriers of all the pains and wishes of the women, which they adopt as their own, which gives ‘psychological pain’ if they feel themselves outside this mission. As Cemile indicates:

If I wasn't there in the municipality, this many women would not come there. If I wasn't there, women who had been abused, raped, beaten wouldn't come there and express themselves. We have woman institutions where we lead them depending on their problems. We lead women who suffer from male violence to Epi-Dem<sup>v</sup> for psychological counselling and other women to other women centers depending on their need. If it wasn't for us, these women could not have been reached. Even the idea of it hurts me psychologically.

Even the idea of the suffering women's seeking help by surpassing all their fears, and her not being there for them is unbearable. Even when her personal pain is no longer present, it is the pain of other women that reproduces her desire to perform this subjectivity. Scott (1991: 779) argues that "It is not individuals who have experience but subjects who are constituted through experience. Experience in this definition becomes not the origin of our explanation ...but rather that which we seek to explain, that about which knowledge is produced." While the knowledge about women's pain is produced through locating its origins in an historical trajectory, rather than the experience of pain itself, it is locating oneself in time and space, developing sense of belonging with women from past and present and their imagining pain as a common experience for all that constitutes the progressive Kurdish women subjectivity. Thus, experience of pain as providing a distinct access to the reality of Turkish nation is not the origin of this subjectivity. It is not pain that leads to seeking the origins of this experience in the formation of the nation and also it is not pain that makes women go to municipalities to seek help. As the interviewees have themselves mentioned, these pains are still not made public by many women. Thus, pain itself does not

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<sup>v</sup> Education and Psychological Consultancy Center for Women

necessarily constitute a subject. It only produces subjects when it is located within a historical, moral, scientific discourse. In this case, it is formative of the subjectivity of progressive Kurdish woman when it is adopted as a way of having knowledge about the Kurdish women in history that had been erased by the Turkish central authority, as a way of developing a national sisterhood, or as a way of scientific and moral purification of politics from the effects of the authoritarian father. Thus, the subject that is constituted through this repetitive experience of pain that produces a desire for ‘killing’ the central father for building a democratic future is the national subject.

In the self-narrations of the BDP’s women local representatives, pain becomes constructive of their subjectivity through disciplining the ways they remember and narrate their personal history. Pain becomes constantly remembered and readopted as the main referent to depict the moment of their inner transformation when a ‘new’ sense of selfhood was born who can no longer live within the norms and limits of her family, thus who can no longer be her ‘old’ self. This transformation is a powerful one that dissolves all the borders between public and private, family and society, home and political party or their house and their neighbor’s house. As Dilan indicates:

At home we display the outlook of our political party from the way we host our guests to the way we serve food. We all know what kind of responsibilities we have to take at home. If my neighbors are quarreling, I try to intervene based on that outlook. Thus there no such thing as leaving my political party identity at the party building and I become a housewife at home. BDP identity intervenes in all my relations.

Not only physical borders but also bodily distance between women dissolves. As Meral indicates:

You become the symbol of women's struggle in the eyes of all the women, both in Kurdistan and Turkey. They see you as their own voice. They try to see their problems being expressed by you. Thus, when you are successful, this encourages them as if it is their own success. This makes them more responsive and encourages them to work for other women. They start to do various work without needing our guidance after a while. Women representatives brought more active women in social life in that sense.

These sisterly bonds and their having encouraging and empowering effects for experiencing a 'new' sense of selfhood through an inner transformation by resisting against the authority of the father are strong enough to surpass ethnic sense of belonging. As Pelin indicates:

My husband is Turkish. Within my own family, there is only me who has joined the struggle. But everyone in my husband's family recognizes and joins this struggle. It was a very different thing for me; this had influenced me a lot. They try to depict this as a struggle between Turks and Kurds which is not true. We never wanted to live that separation. This entire struggle was to be able to live together. It still is today. While my own family was suspicious of my BDP membership due to my being a woman, my husband's family was supportive all the time.

Thus, building a community with those who value the birth of a new womanhood and manhood for building a new society together is depicted as the new national 'family' where all the communities are valued equally without the authoritarian power games of the central father. What they call as the project of women's emancipation is not to serve just for the well-being of women but also for men to get rid of the historical roots of patriarchy coded in their masculinity. 'Killing the

Man' (Erkegi Öldürmek) is the title of Ocalan's book that is cited in the literature as one of the main documents that had effected the gendered characteristics of the political rhetoric of the Kurdish parties in the post 1990s context. Kurdish women define their role in politics for making such killing of the fatherly authority inside men for the birth of new men together with whom they are to build a new society.

#### **4.4 Concluding Remarks: Progressive Women Subjectivity and the Sororal Social Contract**

The new generation will remember the past not as the victory of the Kurds but as the shameful effects of the father's excess usage of authority. This will be a narration of the past from the standpoint of the women in the sense that from their point of view, the pains and losses means a failure for everyone. Thus, it will be killing of not only the central father for ending up his authority of intervening in all spheres within the nation, but killing of 'manhood' of the past. For completing this aim, not only patricide but also matricide is necessary since it is the mothers' collaboration with the rule of the father that makes the patriarchal system continue. Thus, to be able to perform their real agency, women need an inner transformation to get rid of the roles of femininity that had been thought them by their mothers.

The memory of the goddesses is reawakened to empower them in this mission. As the carriers of the legacies of the heroines of pre-history they see

themselves as strong enough to build a new society, the building of which will be the real victory. This is why they claim that “society cannot be liberated without women’s liberation”. This can only be accomplished by fixing the centuries long ‘castration’ of women’s agency through making them servants of their family and husbands. The legacy of the strong Kurdish women will serve for the reawakening of their desire to serve for the wellbeing of their community rather than seeking the benefit of their individual families at the expense of their losing their freedom and essence. This can be conceptualized as the replacement of ‘fraternal sorority’ that is depicted as the kinship relations based on blood to another form of sisterhood relations based on tears and pain. It is through these tears of the women from the past and present of the nation that a new sisterhood is to be constructed. The central father, as the cause of these tears, is denied the authority to structure and dominate local governments in accordance with his will as the head of the national family. The Turkish history is re-written not from the perspective of whose blood is shed but whose tears are shed and new nation that is named as new society is to be built as a distinct kinship of tears. Also, Kurdish women’s being in the mountains is not depicted as not fighting a common war but as protecting women’s liberation from the effects of the ‘unkilled’ men.

The new national public is where the pains and wounds of the national past are revealed and the new subjectivity that is born through the inner purification of revealing the truth of history is performed. As the women liberate themselves from the remnants of the colonizer ‘center’, they will serve for the

formation of the new Turkish society. The men, instead of being the allies of a suppressive authority will then be awarded with a new reality, a new beauty and a new sense of selfhood. His masculine identity is to be fixed through a new kind of man-woman relationship. The paternal central father and the mothers and wives who still continue to live in this enslaved morality can no longer attract and satisfy his new manliness. Nuclear family becomes no longer the place where they seek such satisfaction. Instead they imagine a new political community where these new depictions of manhood and womanhood will be performed. The local governments are depicted as the zones of performing their free will independently from the central authority and its patriarchal reflection within the household.

The interviewees have sometimes depicted the early aging effects of this agency and how this struggle for peace has captured all their sense of selfhood and they cannot have individual dreams about their lives. However, these feelings of tiredness are not strong enough to curtail or subvert their desires to perform their progressive woman subjectivity. In the self-narrations of the BDP representatives, the desire to purify the nation from the effects of the colonial ‘center’ and to shame him by publicly declaring him as undesirable both as a father and as a husband are the prevailing emotions that produces the desire for them to appropriate the woman subjectivity in the radical democracy project. The woman who consciously desire the ‘central’ father and his micro reflections at home as husbands, excluding those who continue to abide by their rule due to fear or their lack of courage, become subjects of shame as well. The image of the

enslaved and diminished womanhood shifts from the mark of the East to the West in terms of their being the women who have internalized the patriarchal ideology the most. Tansu Ciller becomes the main symbol of this enslaved woman who had totally lost her gender consciousness and her roots with the goddesses. The Kurdish women representatives imagine their bodies and emotions as the main fields of resisting against becoming wives and daughters of the ‘colonizers’ by their own will. Those who do so, who is depicted as their own mothers from time to time, are represented as self-benefit seeking, immoral women who actually does damage to the wellbeing of those whose interest she tries to serve for. The women who are caught in the middle, who no longer desire to continue with the rule of the father but who fear losing her social and material wellbeing are actually capable of transforming to a distinct femininity when they are educated with the knowledge of history and practice of their gender consciousness. It is through their being part of this project of building a sororal identity that a new nation can be built. This project consists of rebuilding a new sense of womanhood and manhood that will serve for the dissolution of patriarchal dominance in the Middle East in general and in Turkey in particular. The progressive in their progressive woman subjectivity refers to this project of progressing towards a new, non-patriarchal society that will be built based on women’s experiences of the past as suppressive, degrading and shameful.

They argue that when family becomes the main realm of love, it is enslaving both men and women. The locality is invented as the new place where

real love can be actualized by their reordering their sense of selfhood. It is the place where they can finally have access to what have been taken away from them, their feminine agency. This is how their progressive woman subjectivity, the locality as the new moral entity where relations of love are to be regulated and the nation as the unity of different localities constructed by their sisters is constructed at the same time. Similar to the AKP case, this love is not passionate love between men and women. In the AKP case, it was the love for the father who was empowering them on the way of their reordering their sense of self to serve for the nation. In the BDP case, it is the love for free will and agency and a victory not only against the central father but against themselves in order not to be distracted by any other desire. Love and attachment of any kind to men as husbands or fathers and even to the brothers, due to its not being a relation among equals, is depicted as destructive for the cause of women's liberation.

The history is narrated in such a way that both the women of the Middle East who are victimized by patriarchy and those women who collaborate with patriarchy in this process are depicted as women without any agency. Kurdish women as women of a collectivity without a state of their own and hence without a father cult are those who have most suffered from state authority and also the most alienated from it. They neither fear it nor desire to have a share from its authority. Thus, they become the inevitable agents of democratizing the region in the late modern context. This is how they masculinize the past and feminize the democratic future which can be established through the recovery of feminine

strength in the sisters of the nation. The only condition for being part of this sisterhood is to share the pains and tears of all the women who had been subordinated by patriarchy, named as having feminist consciousness.

The category of sisterhood is important in the sense that they can identify with the mother's pain based on their common feminine identity. Thus, it is not a daughterly consoling of the mothers but organizing their pain for a political purpose. Secondly, mothers and daughters' uniting on the ground of femininity is also important as a challenge to the male authority within the family, resolving the gendered hierarchies and turning it into a more democratic union. Thus, sisterhood as a category represents both the dissolution of the authority of the central father and his male allies, husbands. Sisterly ties with women are attributed much more importance than their relations with their own brothers. They have stressed their not being supported by their mothers, fathers and brothers on various occasions. It was the sisters' independent organization within the political party who were the only ones that provided them support throughout their political activities. That organization also encouraged them not to remain silent about their oppression within their families and empowered them through various education programs. The sovereignty of the colonizing father is to be replaced by the sovereign subjectivity of women and the new democratic nation is argued to be built by the 'sisters' of the nation.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION**

This study was an attempt to introduce a systematic analysis of the self-narrations of women local politicians from two political parties, the AKP and the BDP. These are the parties that had introduced alternative projects of national imagination which, since late 1990s, have been and still are the main topic of debate in representative institutions and public media. To locate this period in a wider setting, since the stress in this context on the ‘national identity crisis’ is not unique to Turkey, I made use of the term, late modernity. A sense of shuttering of reality, as the previous forms of locating oneself in time and space became subject of criticism and alienation, is the main characteristic of this period. Nation continues to be the main temporal and spatial scale where this period is considered, represented and governed. It was the reflections of this period in the Turkish context in general, and how patriarchy as a productive power played a constructive, disciplining and governing role in the formation of national subjects in particular which became the issue of discussion and analysis in this study.

The emergence of ‘woman question’ at this period served for the processes of construction, reproduction, subversion or transformation in the actualization of these projects. Starting with late 1990s in Turkey, there emerged something like a national consensus about different groups of women’s being

suppressed, subordinated, excluded, and disempowered. This was translated into various political, academic, cultural, economic institutions' realm of action both at the local and international level, for the resolution of these gendered inequalities not only to make women active agents of history but also to make a 'new' history through their agency. Thus, gender in this context is useful for a linear narration of a nation in terms of women's emancipation, spatial reconfiguration of national space for opening up spaces for them as well as redefining the authority of the state to make legitimate interventions in the personal spheres of the citizens.

I have read the Turkish counterpart of this experience that is usually referred to as 'national identity crises' due to the dissolution of the official national ideology. The late modernity in Turkey is characterized by narrations about resaving the national collectivity from the authoritarian, top to down markings of the Republican fathers. The main markers that were problematized by the political parties that were the focus of this study, the AKP and the BDP, were Turkey's being a nation distinguished from the empire it replaced in terms of its being secular and distinguished from other contemporary nations in terms of its Turkishness. Their narrations about transition to a new phase of national identity were based on reintroducing the marks that the Republican fathers excluded from the national public sphere for building new ties of national building, namely Islam and Kurdishness.

The critical scrutiny about the historical trajectory of modern nation state formation, which I have tried to discuss as the late modern discursive context,

gave way to the formation of new national subjects who reorder their sense of self. As the self-narrations of the women local representatives suggest, gendered categories play important roles in this reordering process and the process of the formation of late modern national subjectivities. Narrations of reconsidering their intimate relations as women as well as the meaning they attribute to their everyday practices play a central role in these women's public representations of themselves. Sirman (2005: 151) indicates that "gender identity has to do with subjectivity ...and one has to look for the conditions in which subjects desire to appropriate this identity." As the analysis of the cases of AKP and BDP suggests, being active agents of the task of building a new nation for the prosperous future through healing the wounds that had been opened by the experience of modern state formation in Turkey makes up a strong desire for the women representatives to sustain and perform a distinct type of femininity. As long as national discourse is translated within their desire for agency, it can continue to contain, govern and discipline the late modern sense of shuttering of reality. Nation operates through being translated into this desire for agency that differentiates between past and present, agency and non-agency, authoritarian and democratic. All these dichotomies are gendered in the sense that the problems with the past are related to problems of masculinity and femininity.

In the literature that discusses the patriarchal basis of national imagination, mostly the focus is on how masculine desire is formative of this imagination which excludes, subordinates women, rendering them invisible or reducing them to symbolic, silent representations of their bodies. The most critical

output of this study can be highlighted as its opening to discussion how female desire itself is constitutive of this imagination in such a way that women strongly attach their senses of womanhood to iconic images of femininity as transformers of Turkish society.

Thus, these two narrations together make up the discursive field that constructs and reproduces nation rather than being opposing political projects. In that sense, their political projects can be read in terms of their fashions of re-narrating a ‘new’ nation into existence and how the bonding ties between citizens of Turkey are attempted to be reconstructed. Kandiyoti (1991: 4) locates such emergence of ‘woman question’ as a field of interest within the ongoing search for national identity in the non-Western world. Women continue to be the representative of these differences from the past through dichotomies of silence-voice, agency-victimhood, presence and absence. She argues that its terms are forged in the processes of searching for “different conceptions of time and space as well as the mobilization of images and symbols to ‘think’ the nation.” Nation continues to be the main subject of what Berlant (2008) names as “unfinished business of sentimentality” in the sense that it organizes the fantasies about the ‘good life’ that can be built and lives in the future. In this study, focusing on the two cases of the AKP and the BDP had made it possible to identify the gendered codes of such sentimental formation of late modern national subjects in Turkey.

### **5.1 Codes of Feminine Desire in Women Representatives Narrations: ‘Fixation’ of Femininities, Purification of Politics from Excess Masculinity and Finding the True Love**

The sentimental framework in both the cases of the AKP and the BDP, as followed from the narrations of women local representatives from both political parties, is similar. In the self-narrations of various participants, senses of pain and victimhood which are then resolved by their being emancipated from a previous suppressive authority, which is sometimes depicted as the state, sometimes as a father or husband, and sometimes social inequalities, serve as an important mechanism through which they connect their own lives with bigger historical events. Then, they gain the quality of ‘assertiveness’ and become agents of history as empowered women. This assertiveness is depicted as an inner transformation, a discovery of new femininity inside and this desire for having access to the ‘new’ woman inside them provides an important motivation for women to adopt the gendered roles within the political party programs. Narratives from both parties includes references to women who are assertive agents despite not having the qualities that the previous system saw as prerequisites for women to be modern agents of Turkey. Not having high education but serving for the wellbeing of their neighbourhood or having a distinct experience of Turkish political history that differs from those in any other parts of the country is a common reference.

Butler (1997: 383) indicates that “there is no subject prior to its construction and neither is the subject determined by these constructions; ...it is

the demand to re-signify or repeat the very terms that constitute ‘we’ that opens up the possibility of a reworking of the very terms by which subjectivation proceed and fails to proceed.” It is a very powerful desire that is to be performed in every spheres of life and hence turns all these spheres as legitimize spheres of intervention. They mark themselves as the symbol of the ‘true’ representative of Islam or gender consciousness, which depicts these femininities as a historical or apolitical. This mission of purification ends up with a distinct, intimate contact with women constituency. This process of self-purification is depicted as *nefis terbiyesi* in the AKP case and self-disciplining in the BDP case.

Municipalities are held responsible for opening centers that women could consult in order to ‘fix’ these femininities. For the provision of these services as well as detailed mapping of poor women’s needs and checking the successes and failures of these policies, women’s participation in decision-making bodies became an important agenda. Both parties arranged education programs to increase female political literacy. Women are to have access to this ‘true’ femininity who will then fix the authoritarian, wrong, distorted manliness. Together they make up the modern, democratic men and women of Turkey. The presence of these ‘new’ women symbolizes the birth of this new manliness.

In both narrations, women are rewarded with true love that is higher than the one between man and woman or husband and wife at the end of the story. Thus, an important part of this desire originates from the motivation of fixing the masculinity of men, the excess masculinity of the father, husband or brother and

being able to raise good sons. Such familial categories plays an important role in terms of marking different forms of social relations in daily life and identifying different forms of femininities that are to be practiced at each of them. The past is narrated as events taking place between an excess authority of the father and those who are non-agents or victims. Among these victims, a new man is born through the fixation of the femininities.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A- Open Ended Interview Questions

Merhaba,

Bu araştırma TUBITAK tarafından desteklenmekte, Bilkent Üniversitesi Siyaset Bilimi Öğretim Üyesi Doç Dr Dilek Cindoglu tarafından yürütülmektedir.

Bizimle konuşmayı kabul ettiğiniz için teşekkür ederiz. İzninizle bu konuşmayı sonradan daha sağlıklı inceleyebilmek için kaydetmek istiyoruz.

Biz bu çalışmanın başından sonuna kadar çalışan araştırma görevlisi ve proje asistanlarıyız.

Türkiye de bildiğiniz gibi yerel siyasette kadınların katılımı son derece düşük düzeyde. Sizin başarılı siyaset öykünüzden yola çıkarak, yerelde kadınların siyasete katılımını belirleyen, destekleyen, engelleyen faktörleri anlamaya çalışacağız.

Önce sizin hayat hikayenizle başlamak istiyoruz;

- Ad Soyad
- Yaşınız?
- Eğitiminiz (hangi okulları bitirdiniz, ailenizle aynı şehirde mi okudunuz)
- Çalışma hayatı (hiç ücretli bir işte çalıştinız mı... nerede, nasıl bir iş...)
- Hiç evlendiniz mi, çocuğuınız var mı, kaç yaşında-lar? Eşinizin eğitimi, mesleği, siyasetle ilişkisi nedir?

#### Siyasete Katılma Hikayesi

1. Siyasete katılma **hikayenizi** öğrenebilir miyiz? Siyasete atılmaya nasıl karar verdiniz?

Hep BU partide mi çalıştinız?

• Eşiniz/ aileniz siyasete katılma fikrinizi nasıl karşıladı? Neler yaşadınız? Aile çevrenizden kimler destek oldu?

- Parti dışında sivil toplum kuruluşları için çalışmalarınız oldu mu?
- Partiye nasıl katıldınız? Hangi birimlerinde çalıştinız, neler yaptınız? Ve neden bu partiyi tercih ettiniz?
- En başından beri kaç seçime katıldınız, farklılıklar var mıydı?

## **Seçmenlerin Tutumu**

2. Yörenizde seçmenlerin kadın siyasetçiye bakışları nasıl?

## **Partilerinin Tutumu**

3. Aday olarak belirlenme sürecini de merak ediyoruz. O dönemde neler yaşandı?  
Sizin

bölgennizde adaylar nasıl belirlendiler. Kadın adayların şansları konusunda ne düşünüyorsunuz?

4. Siyasette yer alan erkeklerin kadın secilmislere bakış acısı nasıldı?

5. Siz herhangi bir siyasi ortamda (belediye meclisi toplantısı gibi) sırıf kadın oldugunuz

icin goruslerinizin degerlendirilmedigini, fikrinizin karar verme surecinde etkili olmadigini ya da herhangi bir bicimde ayrimciliga ugradiginizi hissettiniz mi ya da bu

cercevede bir olaya sahit oldunuz mu?

## **Kadın Siyasetçilere Bakış**

6. Başörtülü kadınların siyaset yapmaları konusunda ne düşünüyorsunuz?

7. Yerel siyasette, kadın siyasetçilerin siyaset yapma tarzları, erkeklerden hangi açılardan, nasıl farklı?

8. Sizce kadınlar farklı bir siyaset yapıyor mu? Savundukları görüşler, politikalar, oncelikleri, ajandaları erkek politikacılardan ne anlamda farklıyor? Kadınlar siyaset arenasında kadın kimlikleriyle ya da kadın perspektifleriyle mevcut hegemonic düzene karşı mı çıkıyorlar yoksa onu yeniden mi üretiyor?

9. Farklı düzeydeki secilmis kadınlar(yerel ve genel düzeyde) birbirleriyle nasıl bir

ilişki, iletisim icerisindeler? Kadınlara ilişkin politikalar üzerinde ortak bir hareket söz konusu mu?

## **Kotaya Bakış**

10. Daha fazla kadının siyasete katılabilmesi için

a. POZİTİF AYIRIMCILIK yapılması konusunda ne düşünüyorsunuz?

i. Kota konusundaki görüşleriniz nelerdir? Sizce daha fazla kadının siyasete katılımı için gerekli mi? Kotaya alternatif gordugunuz

yöntemler var mı, varsa nelerdir?

ii. Başka önlemler düşünüyormusunuz? (kreş gibi, toplantı saatlerinin düzenlenmesi gibi)

### **Siyasetten Beklentiler**

11. Bugün dönüp tüm o adaylık ve siyasete katılım sürecine baktığınızda siyasetten beklentilerinizin karşılandığını düşünüyor musunuz?  
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12. Bir kadın olarak ev kadını ve anne rollerinizle ve varsa evdeki diğer sorumluluklarınızla isteki sorumluluklarınız arasındaki dengeyi kurabiliyor musunuz?
13. Eğer siz belediye başkanı olabilseydiniz, gerçekleştirmek istediğiniz en önemli projeniz ne olurdu?
14. 10 sene sonra kendinizi (siyasette) nerede görüyorsunuz? (Genel seçimlere katılmayı düşünüyor musunuz?)
15. Kızınızın ileride sizin gibi, siyasete katılmamasını ister misiniz?
16. Bizim sormak istediklerimiz bunlar, sizin eklemek istediğiniz şeyler var mı?

**Tablo 1: List of Interviewees and Pseudonyms**

Pseudonym	İl/Görev	Parti	Medeni Hal	Çocuk	Yaş	Eğitim	Meslek
Ayşe	Adana İl Genel Meclisi Üyesi	AKP	Evli	2	38	Üniversite	Dernek Başkanı
Aliye	Ankara İl Genel Meclis Üyesi	AKP	Bekar		29	Üniversite	Muhabir
Aylin	Ankara Belediye Meclis Üyesi	AKP	Evli	1	50	Lise	Esnaf
Serpil	Ankara Belediye Meclis Üyesi	AKP	Evli	1	38	Üniversite	Ev Hanımı
Esra	Ankara Belediye Meclis Üyesi	AKP	Evli	2	44	Lise	Polis Memuresi
Betül	Ankara Belediye Meclis Üyesi	AKP	Evli	1	33	Üniversite	Gıda Mühendisi
Leyla	Aydın Belediye Meclis Üyesi	AKP	Evli	1	34	Üniversite	İnşaat teknikeri
Sevim	Bursa Belediye Başkan Adayı	AKP	Evli	1	41	Yüksek Lisans	Yüksek mimar
Hande	Bursa İl Genel Meclis Üyesi	AKP	Evli	2	36	Lise	Aile şirketi- yönetici
Nilgün	Bursa Belediye Meclis Üyesi	AKP	Bekar		37	Üniversite	Harita mühendisi
Ceylan	Bursa Belediye Meclis Üyesi	AKP	Evli	2	32	Üniversite	Aile şirketi- yönetici
Emine	Bursa Belediye Meclis Üyesi	AKP	Evli	2	40	Üniversite	Mimar

Meral	Diyarbakır Belediye Başkanı	BDP	Evli	2	45	Lise	Serbest Meslek
Ayten	Diyarbakır Belediye Başkanı	BDP	Evli	1	38	Lise	Serbest Meslek
Aynur	Diyarbakır Belediye Başkanı	BDP	Bekar		41	Üniversite	Sivil Toplum
Dilan	Diyarbakır İl Genel Meclis Üyesi	BDP	Evli	2	55	Yüksek okul	Öğretmen-Emekli
Meryem	Diyarbakır İl Genel Meclis Üyesi	BDP	Bekar		38	İlkokul	Ev Hanımı
Aysegül	Diyarbakır İl Genel Meclis Üyesi	BDP	Bekar			Lise	Serbest Meslek
Zehra	Diyarbakır İl Genel Meclis Üyesi	BDP	Evli	2	46	Lise	Serbest Meslek
Tülay	Diyarbakır Belediye Meclis Üyesi	BDP	Bekar		33	Üniversite	Mali Müşavir
Merve	Diyarbakır Belediye Meclis Üyesi	BDP	Evli	6	48	Orta okul	Ev Hanımı
Canan	Diyarbakır Belediye Meclis Üyesi	BDP	Bekar		27	Üniversite öğrencisi	Öğrenci
Cemile	Diyarbakır Belediye Meclis Üyesi	BDP	Bekar		33	Üniversite	Sosyolog
Deniz	Diyarbakır Belediye Meclis Üyesi	BDP	Bekar		32	Yüksek okul	Hazır giyim teknikeri
Ece	Elazığ Belediye Meclis Üyesi	AKP	Evli	2	55	Üniversite	Öğretmen-Emekli
Fidan	Elazığ Belediye Meclis Üyesi	AKP	Evli	2	32	Üniversite	Serbest Meslek

Gülay	Elazığ Belediye Meclis Üyesi	AKP	Evli	3	50	Lise	Emekli Memur
İşil	Eskişehir Belediye Başkanı	AKP	Bekar		50	Üniversite	Eczacı
İpek	Eskişehir Belediye Meclisi Üyesi	AKP	Bekar		29	Yüksek Lisans	Avukat
Kerime	Eskişehir Belediye Meclisi Üyesi	AKP	Evli	2	44	Lise	Aile şirketi- yönetici
Leman	Hatay Belediye Başkanı	AKP	Evli		39	Üniversite	Harita mühendisi
Mine	Hatay İl Genel Meclis Üyesi	AKP	Evli			Üniversite	Esnaf
Neslihan	Hatay Belediye Meclis Üyesi	AKP	Evli		58	Üniversite	Avukat
Olcay	İçel Belediye Meclis Üyesi	AKP	Bekar		48	Üniversite	Sivil Toplum
Pelin	İçel Belediye Meclis Üyesi	BDP	Evli	2	33	Lise	
Rezzan	İçel Belediye Meclis Üyesi	BDP	Evli	2	43	Lise	
Sibel	İçel Belediye Meclis Üyesi	BDP	Evli	2	35	İlkokul	
Şadiye	İstanbul İl Genel Meclis Üyesi	AKP	Boşanmış		50	Üniversite	Mali Müşavir
Ümran	İstanbul Belediye Meclis Üyesi	AKP	Boşanmış		53	Lise	Sivil Toplum
Bade	İstanbul Belediye Meclis Üyesi	AKP	Bekar		29	Üniversite	Avukat

Şule	İzmir İl Genel Meclis Üyesi	AKP	Evli	3	55	Lise	Esnaf
Saniye	İzmir İl Genel Meclis Üyesi	AKP	Evli	3	61	Üniversite	Öğretmen- Emekli
Fatma	İzmir Belediye Meclis Üyesi	AKP	Bekar		35	Üniversite	Mali Müşavir
Gülsevi	İzmir Belediye Meclis Üyesi	AKP	Evli	2	55	Üniversite	Yönetici-Aile şirketi
Eda	İzmir Belediye Başkan Adayı	BDP	Evli	2	37	İlkokul	Serbest Meslek
Başak	Kayseri Belediye Meclis Üyesi	AKP	Evli	2	34	Üniversite	Avukat
Defne	Kayseri Belediye Meclis Üyesi	AKP	Evli	2	36	Üniversite	Jeoloji Mühendisi
Hatice	Kayseri Belediye Meclis Üyesi	AKP	Evli	3	45	Lise	Ev Hanımı
Nihal	Kocaeli Belediye Meclis Üyesi	AKP	Evli	2	55	Üniversite	Öğretmen- Emekli
Bihter	Kocaeli Belediye Meclis Üyesi	AKP	Bekar		41	Üniversite	Mali Müşavir
Dilan	Mardin Belediye Başkanı	BDP	Evli	3	48	Lise	
Derya	Mardin Belediye Başkanı	BDP	Bekar		42	Üniversite	Hemşire
Gülbahar	Mardin Belediye Meclis Üyesi	BDP	Bekar		27	Lise	
Evrim	Mardin Belediye Meclis Üyesi	BDP	Bekar		35	Lise	

Eylül	Mardin Belediye Meclis Üyesi	BDP	Bekar		33	Lise	
Devrim	Mardin Belediye Meclis Üyesi	BDP	Bekar		46	Üniversite	Belgesel Sinemacı
Sena	Mardin Belediye Meclis Üyesi	BDP	Bekar		33	Üniversite	Öğretmen
Dicle	Muğla Belediye Başkan Adayı	BDP	Evli	2	42	Lise	Belediye Çalışanı
Tuğçe	Ordu Belediye Başkan Adayı	AKP	Evli	2	47	Üniversite	Yönetici-Aile şirketi
Pınar	Ordu Belediye Meclis Üyesi	AKP	Bekar		30	Üniversite	Avukat
Yaprak	Ordu Belediye Meclis Üyesi	AKP	Evli	1	29	Üniversite	Avukat
Helin	Samsun Belediye Meclis Üyesi	AKP	Evli	2	38	Üniversite	Peyzaj Mimarı
Belma	Trabzon İl Genel Meclis Üyesi	AKP	Evli	3	54	Üniversite	Öğretmen- Emekli
Şebnem	Trabzon Belediye Meclis Üyesi	AKP	Evli	1	31	Üniversite	Avukat