

**PRODUCING GENDER TALK IN RELATION TO CLASS AND ETHNICITY:
CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF GENDER EQUALITY, GENDER ROLES AND
WOMANHOOD BY WHITE COLLAR WOMEN IN ISTANBUL**

by

Anlam Filiz

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Graduate School of Social Sciences and Humanities

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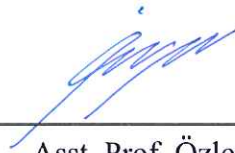
Committee Members:



Asst. Prof. Şenay Özden



Assoc. Prof. Bruce Rankin



Asst. Prof. Özlem Altan Olcay

Date:

21.05.2012

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Anlam Filiz

ABSTRACT

This study explores how gender equality, gender relations and womanhood are conceptualized by white collar women in relation to their middle class belonging and ethnicity. I collected the data for this study through a qualitative fieldwork during which I interviewed 21 white collar women in İstanbul. In particular, this thesis examines how white collar women define middle class identity and how they relate their “gender talk” to it. It also investigates the relationship between these conceptualizations and the gender discourses produced by the early Republican Turkish state. Based on this research, I argue that white collar women differentiate themselves from the lower classes and Kurds through claims for the existence of gender equality among the middle classes. In addition to the studies on how middle class boundaries are built through consumption practices and urban segregation, I argue that gender discourses also contribute to this process of building middle class boundaries. Another finding of this study is that white collar women reproduce the official discourse by analyzing gender inequality through dichotomies of the “East” and the “West”, “tradition” and “modernity”. Moreover, white collar women interpret gender roles, motherhood and womanhood in relation to their habitus. They define the middle class through their incomes, positions in their corporations, consumption practices as well as the education they got and their work. They also present education, work and economic power as what emancipates women from gender inequality. These definitions of gender inequality are fed by the discourse on gender inequality of state feminism which presents education, women’s labor force participation and legal rights as the cure for the submission of women in the Ottoman Period. In this way, this thesis demonstrates the intertwining of class and nationalism in producing gender discourses.

Keywords: Middle class, gender discourses, white collar women, ethnicity, nationalism, formation of class boundaries, Turkey

ÖZET

Bu çalışma toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği, toplumsal cinsiyet ilişkileri ve kadınlığın beyaz yakalı kadınlar tarafından orta sınıf aidiyetleri ve etnik kökenleri ile bağlantılı olarak nasıl kavramsallaştırıldığını araştırıyor. Bu çalışma için gerekli veriyi İstanbul’da 21 beyaz yakalı kadınla yaptığım görüşmeler çerçevesinde yürüttüğüm niteliksel bir saha araştırmasının sonucunda topladım. Bu çalışma özelde beyaz yakalı kadınların orta sınıf kimliğini tanımlayışlarını ve bunu “toplumsal cinsiyet konuşmaları” ile nasıl ilişkilendirdiklerini inceliyor. Bu çalışma aynı zamanda bu kavramsallaştırmalar ve erken Cumhuriyet dönemi Türk devleti tarafından üretilen toplumsal cinsiyet söylemleri arasındaki ilişkiyi araştırıyor. Bu araştırmaya dayanarak beyaz yakalı kadınların orta sınıf dahilinde toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliğinin var olduğunu iddia ederek kendilerini alt sınıflardan ve Kürtlerden farklılaştırdıklarını savunuyorum. Orta sınıf sınırlarının tüketim pratikleri ve kentsel ayrışma aracılığıyla nasıl inşa edildiğini araştıran çalışmalara ek olarak toplumsal cinsiyet söylemlerinin de bu orta sınıf sınırlarının inşası sürecine katkıda bulunduğunu savunuyorum. Bu çalışmanın diğer bir bulgusu beyaz yakalı kadınların toplumsal cinsiyet eşitsizliğini “Doğu” ve “Batı”, “gelenek” ve “modernite” zıtlıkları üzerinden analiz ederek resmi söylemi yeniden ürettikleridir. Ayrıca, beyaz yakalı kadınlar toplumsal cinsiyet rollerini, anneliği ve kadınlığı habitusları ile ilişkili olarak yorumluyorlar. Orta sınıfı; gelirleri, şirketlerindeki pozisyonları ve tüketim pratiklerinin yanı sıra aldıkları eğitim ve yaptıkları iş ile tanımlıyorlar. Bunun yanı sıra eğitim, iş ve ekonomik gücü kadınları toplumsal cinsiyet eşitsizliğinden özgürleştiren öğeler olarak sunuyorlar. Bu toplumsal cinsiyet eşitsizliği tanımları eğitimi, kadınların iş gücüne katılımını ve yasal hakları kadınların Osmanlı Dönemi’nde ezilmesine çare olarak gören devlet feminizminin toplumsal cinsiyet eşitsizliği

söyleminden besleniyor. Bu tez bu şekilde, toplumsal cinsiyet söylemlerinin üretiminde sınıf ve milliyetçiliğin iç içe geçmişliğini gösteriyor.

Anahtar kelimeler: Orta sınıf, toplumsal cinsiyet söylemleri, beyaz yakalı kadınlar, etnisite, milliyetçilik, sınıf sınırlarının oluşumu, Türkiye

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	i
ÖZET.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENT.....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1. Significance of the Study.....	8
2. Organization of the Study.....	9
CHAPTER 1.....	11
METHODOLOGY.....	11
1.1. The Sample.....	11
1.2. Choice of Qualitative Methodology.....	12
1.3. Conducting the Interviews.....	16
CHAPTER 2.....	21
A Theoretical and Historical Inquiry into the Relationship between Middle Class Identity, Nationalism and Gender Discourses.....	21
2.1. Placing White Collars in the Class Structure.....	21
2.2. Formation of the Middle Classes in Turkey.....	28
2.3. Producing Class Boundaries.....	32
2.4. Claims of Cultural Superiority.....	36
2.5. Studies on the Formation of Class Boundaries in Turkey.....	37
2.6. The Relationship between Gender Talk and Class Identities.....	42
2.7. Discourses on Gender in Relation to Nationalism.....	45
2.7.1. State Feminism in Turkey.....	49
2.7.2. Turkish Nationalism, Orientalism, Developmentalism and Gender Discourses.....	53
CHAPTER 3.....	57
White Collar Women’s Gender Talk in Relation to Discourses of Nationalism, Developmentalism, Orientalism and Middle Class Identity.....	57
3.1. Gender and Nationalism Intertwined.....	57
3.1.1. Reproduction of the State Discourses.....	58
3.1.2. Cultural Essentialism and Gender Talk as Ethnicized.....	62
3.2. Middle Class Identity and Gender Talk.....	78
3.2.1. Locating Oneself in the Middle Class.....	80
3.2.2. Gender Talk as a Marker of Class.....	84
3.2.3. Ideal of Heterosexual Family and Motherhood.....	86

3.2.4. Conceptualizations of Gender Equality in Relation to Class.....	97
3.3. Producing the Gender Talk and Middle Class Boundaries in the Turkish Context	104
3.3.1. Middle Class Habitus and Spheres of Differentiation.....	105
3.3.2. Claims of Cultural Superiority.....	109
3.3.3. Middle Class Womanhood and White Collar Workplace.....	111
CONCLUSION.....	121
1. Limits and Delimitations	124
2. Suggestions for Further Studies	125
REFERENCES	128
APPENDIX: LIST OF RESPONDENTS	140

INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines how white collar women's gender talk is constructed in relation to their class identity and how their notions of gender relations, family and gender equality are fed by the early Republican discourses on gender as well as the developmentalist and orientalist outlook of the Turkish state. Accordingly, this thesis aims to demonstrate the intertwining of class and nationalism in producing gender discourses. Moreover, I assert that their conceptualizations of gender, which are generated in the middle class habitus, act as signifiers of middle class identity and construct middle class boundaries.

In order to examine this subject, I carried out a qualitative research where I interviewed 21 white collar women working in the private sector in İstanbul. I regard white collars as members of the middle class, based both on their self-positioning as members of the middle class and also on theories which regard white collars as members of the new middle class. This new class is composed of professionals working in the private sector, who started taking advantage of the restructuring of the neo-liberal economic system (Lange & Meier, 2009; Mills, 1968). An important dimension in analyzing white collars' belonging to the middle class is the decline of state related jobs, farmers and free professionals, and the rise of jobs in private corporations (Mills, 1968, pp. 64-65). In Turkey, white collars started benefiting from the restructuring of the economy following the 1980s. The neoliberal restructuring of the economy reduced the importance of civil servants and independent professionals who constituted the old middle class while urban professionals, who constitute the new middle class, turned their cultural capital into economic capital (Ahiska & Yenal, 2006, pp. 61-62).

With the neo-liberal restructuring of the economy, members of the middle class started restructuring urban spaces by separating themselves from the lower classes and generated

consumption practices in accordance with the new middle-class lifestyles. The lifestyle of the middle classes appears as a ground on which the middle classes differentiate themselves from the lower classes. This lifestyle is produced within what Bourdieu (1977) calls habitus. He defines habitus as: “a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions” (Bourdieu, 1977, pp. 82-83). How the middle classes in general and the white collars in specific as a subset of the middle class generate these lifestyles and differentiate themselves from the lower classes has been studied through analysis of urban segregation (Bartu Candan & Kolluoğlu, 2008; Öncü, 1999) and cultural consumption (Ayata, 2002; Çınar, 2005; Durakbaşa & Cindoğdu, 2002; Özyeğin, 2002; Yashin, 2002). However, how gender talk plays a role in this boundary building has not been studied in the Turkish context. The purpose of this thesis is to contribute to this gap.

As Bourdieu states, gender roles are generated in habitus and they maintain social groups' location in the class structure (Bourdieu, 1990b, as cited in McNay, 1999, pp. 99-101). Accordingly, I argue that the conceptualizations of gender relations, gender equality, womanhood and marriage of white collar women signify their class positions. The notions of marriage and womanhood are also maintained through their relations with their co-workers. White collar workplace acts as a space where they experience gender relations and realize their womanhood. To illustrate, their definitions of womanhood and manhood reproduce the gendered norms of companies situating women as unprofessional, emotional and weak while men are presented as more professional, stronger and thus more suitable for certain jobs. These characteristics of womanhood are associated with their roles as mothers and are reflected as an obstacle towards being successful at white collar work. On the other hand, work is presented as central to being a “modern” woman, which is also claimed to save them from gender inequality.

However, when their domestic roles and their roles at work conflict, they present transferring to a less demanding, therefore a less paid job as the solution. Being a loving, yet working mother is included in their definitions of middle class womanhood as they differentiate themselves from the lower class and Kurdish mothers through their participation in the labor force and the education they got both of which allow them to teach their children the necessities of modernity, i.e. the norms of gender equality.

Education is presented as the major tool to overcome gender inequality as it is reflected as what provides men and women with the necessities of modernity and civilization, which are prerequisites for gender equality. Rutz and Balkan (2010) propose education as what reinforces the position of the middle classes within the stratification system. It provides members of the middle class with the cultural capital, which they can transform into economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Accordingly, white collar women differentiate themselves from other members of the middle class through the gap between their economic capital and cultural capital, which also defines their consumption patterns. When they are discriminated at work, this is attributed to men's being less educated than them or their not internalizing the norms of gender equality.

These conceptualizations of womanhood and manhood and definitions of gender equality through the right to work, to get education and civil rights are in line with the gender discourse of state feminism which refers to “the gender philosophy and policy established by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey” (Kardam, 1994, p. 157). Gender discourses of the early Republican period, which provided women with these rights, also proposed modesty as central to being a proper Republican woman (Z. Arat, 1998; Durakbaşa & İlyasoğlu, 2001; Kandiyoti, 1997). During this early Republican period, women were posited as the signifiers of modernization and development (Ertürk, 2004). Although the scope of women's participation in

the public space was drawn by men, women were granted legal rights such as to work, to get education and equal suffrage (Berktaş, 2003, pp. 106-107). However, Westernization through secularization and modernization of institutions was feared for it was considered to result in the loss of national values if measures were not taken (Ahıska, 2003). In this regard, women were also defined as the bearers and the transmitters of national values to the next generations.

Therefore, women's motherhood was emphasized also as part of a duty to the nation (Z. Arat, 1994, p. 62). Moreover, although they were granted with legal rights to demonstrate the level of modernization of the nation, they were still associated with domesticity, and the extent to which they could share the public space with men was still determined by men (Berktaş, 2003, pp. 106-107, A. Parla, 2001). Therefore, this new Republican woman, who would take part in the struggle for development but also preserve her modesty and national values, had to be 'modern but virtuous' (Durakbaşı & İlyasoğlu, 2001, p. 196).

Nationalism is always gendered (McClintock, 1997), and accordingly women have been subjects of state policies either under nationalism and modernization processes (Besse, 1996; Davis, 1997; Joseph, 2000; Kay, 1997; Paidar, 1996) or socialism as in the case of Soviet Russia (Patino, 2008). Within the process of nation-building, gender discourses and how gender equality would be defined and achieved were enforced by the state also in the post-colonial world (Chatterjee, 1989; Chakrabarty, 1997 & Abu-Lughod, 1990 as cited in Patino, 2008). Likewise, in the Turkish case, reforms to enhance women's status in the society were carried out by the state unlike in the Western world, where women were the major actors striving for reforms (Kandiyoti, 1987, p. 320). This is interpreted by Şirin Tekeli (1981) as a reflection of the desire of the state to differentiate itself from the fascist regimes of Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy (Tekeli, 1981 as cited in Kandiyoti, 1987, p. 321). Moreover, the acts carried out towards

achieving gender equality were based on the definition of gender equality by the Turkish state. This inhibited the emergence of alternative definitions of gender equality in the Turkish context until the 1980s when feminists started questioning state feminism (Kardam, 1994, pp. 156-158). Although state feminism improved the status of women apart from its being generated through a nationalist ideology (Kandiyoti, 1987, p. 335), it was accused of restricting the complete emancipation of women, which would totally liberate them from the chains of patriarchy (White, 2003).

State feminism claims to have achieved gender equality through equal rights granted to men and women regarding work, education, suffrage and civil rights. However, this process of enhancing women's rights, which is defined as 'the replacement of Islamic patriarchy with a secular Western patriarchy' by Zehra F. Arat (1994), did not end up in demolishing patriarchy. This gender discourse emphasized heterosexuality, which would also consider heterosexual families as the basis of the new nation. As Peterson (1999) indicates, state-making processes and nationalism involve heterosexism prescribing heterosexual relationships as the only way of engaging in sexual intercourse and founding families. This also involves the conceptualization of patriarchal family as natural and unquestionable. State places the 'heteropatriarchal family' as the basis of the society while this allows the state to control sexual reproduction also by controlling women's sexualities (Peterson, 1999, pp. 39-40).

I argue that this definition of gender as a strict duality between men and women also makes a selective reading of the problem of gender inequality by reducing patriarchy to the subordination of women. However, a holistic outlook would lead us to an understanding which takes patriarchy as a gender order producing different power relations depending on how one interacts with it. In this sense, I argue that a holistic gender equality definition would include

LGBT as well as men (Connell, 1995; Gilmore, 1990) and women in the analysis of the gender order.

Still, the gender talk of my interviewees replicates the discourse of state feminism, which constructs itself on the duality between men and women, and also which places heterosexuality as the “normal” and natural way of experiencing sexuality and gender relations. This duality is shaped around the idealization of heterosexual marriage. As Mosse (1988) states, heterosexual families and a morality shaping around this ideal forms the basis of the bourgeois society, modernity and the nation-state. Moreover, in the case of white collar women in İstanbul, constituting heterosexual marriages appears as central to womanhood and as a way to perpetuate the middle class lifestyle of working mothers. White collar women also emphasize the importance of modesty and monogamy criticizing promiscuity and ‘excessive homosexuality’.

These notions of gender roles are fed by the discourse of state feminism, which emphasizes women’s modesty and virtuousness (Durakbaşa & İlyasoğlu, 2001, p. 196). Moreover, white collar women in İstanbul denote an embodiment of the reforms of the early Republican period as these women have utilized these reforms through getting the formal education, standing on their own feet with the well-paid jobs they have and maintaining a secular middle class lifestyle. Furthermore, working in white collar jobs defines their relationship with the stratification system as members of the middle class. White collar women I interviewed associate themselves with the middle class through their consumption practices and their positions within the organization where they work.

Moreover, the education they got and their participation in the labor force appear as what differentiate themselves from the lower classes. These characteristics, which signify the middle

class identity, are also presented as cures for gender inequality. Through presenting gender inequality as a problem of being uncivilized and not internalizing the reforms of the early Republican period, they attribute patriarchal gender relations and gender inequality to the lower classes and Kurds. They claim that they, as members of the middle class, possess gender equality as they are free from the reasons for women's suffering from gender inequality, i.e. tradition, ignorance, not participating in the labor force and not knowing their legal rights. These reasons are also stated to be what make lower class and Kurdish mothers unable to educate their children properly and inculcate them the norms of gender equality. Treating men and women equally when their work and education rights are considered and not engaging in violence against women are stated as the norms of gender equality. They present the middle class as possessing these norms through the education they got. However, they present their encounter with the uneducated, i.e. the lower classes and Kurds, as when they are exposed to gender inequality. Upper classes, also reflected as possessing these norms, are presented to be completely free from gender inequality as they have the economic and social means to keep them away from the lower classes and Kurds.

Violence against women is a central theme, which is presented as a manifestation of gender inequality. It is mostly associated with Kurds through honor killings. Kurds are presented as lacking the norms of gender equality as they haven't internalized the acquisitions of the early Republican reforms and are left underdeveloped economically and culturally. The reason for this is explained with a cultural reference, pointing out tradition and ignorance. This dichotomy of the East and the West reproduces the assimilationist and developmentalist outlook of the state (Koğacıoğlu, 2004; Yeğen, 2009). This differentiation with Kurds is also displayed as what

signifies their class belonging since they, as members of the middle class, are not exposed to gender inequality unless they interact with the lower classes.

To conclude, I argue that the gender talk of white collar women portray their class identity through a claim for possessing the norms of gender equality. These norms are stated to be acquired through education, which also gives them the chance to participate in the labor force. Therefore, middle class women's notions of gender relations, gender equality and womanhood should be studied in relation to their class identity (Bacchi, 1988). Moreover, these notions, which label the lower classes and Kurds as uneducated, uncivilized and underdeveloped, are fed by the early Republican gender discourse, Turkish nationalism, developmentalism and orientalism. In this sense, gender talk of white collar women is produced in relation to class and ethnicity.

1. Significance of the Study

This research aims to contribute to studies examining how class, gender and nationalism are intertwined. It also contributes to the literature on the differentiation of the middle classes from the lower classes and how class boundaries are constructed. Although scholars have conducted research, which explore the ways through which the upper classes differentiate themselves from the lower classes (Ayata, 2002; Çınar, 2005; Durakbaşa & Cindoğdu, 2002; Özyeğin, 2002; Yashin, 2002), this research concentrates on how gender discourses play a role in this process. Besides, there is a number of research of urban studies which explore how cities have been designed and redesigned according to the class structure of societies (Bartu Candan & Kolluoğlu, 2008; Öncü, 1999). However, the role of the notions of gender equality, gender relations and womanhood in this process has not been subjects of study. In this sense, this

research extends the existing knowledge about the ways the middle classes differentiate themselves from the lower classes, concentrating on a different aspect of the issue.

Although there is research on how conceptualizations of gender equality, womanhood and sexuality are produced in middle class habitus and how these notions signify class positions (Bacchi, 1988; Rinaldo, 2008), this subject is understudied in the Turkish context. Moreover, the studies on gender discourses in Turkey concentrate on the critique of the early Republican period state feminism (Z. Arat, 1994; Z. Arat, 1998; Berktaş, 2003; Durakbaşı & İlyasoğlu, 2001; Ertürk, 2004; Kandiyoti, 1997; Tekeli, 1981). However, I hereby demonstrate how the reforms of the early Republican period as well as the discourses of nationalism, developmentalism and orientalism appear as central to white collar women's construction of middle class boundaries in contemporary Turkey.

2. Organization of the Study

This thesis is composed of three chapters. In the first chapter, I will elaborate on my methodology. In this chapter, I will discuss my sampling and my choice of qualitative methodology. Moreover, I will provide information about the sample and how I arranged my interviews. I will also present problems I experienced during my fieldwork and elaborate on how I dealt with them.

The second chapter of the thesis is dedicated to providing the theoretical and historical framework of the issues held in this thesis. Firstly, I will discuss how white collars are positioned in the social and economic stratification system. Later, I will concentrate on the historical background of the class structure and the middle classes in Turkey. I will also demonstrate the literature on the formation of class boundaries in Turkey. Later, I will discuss how gender talk is analyzed in relation to class identity. In the last part of the second chapter, I will present the

literature on the relationship between discourses on gender and nationalism, state feminism, developmentalism and orientalism in Turkey.

The third chapter demonstrates the findings of the fieldwork I conducted. In this chapter, I will demonstrate how the gender talk of white collar women associates the lower classes and Kurds with gender inequality and how women utilize this distinction in constructing their class identity. I will present how the gender talk of my interviewees reproduced gender discourses of nationalism and state feminism. I will also demonstrate the ethnicized aspects of their gender talk. Later in this chapter, I will present how white collar women associate themselves with the middle class. The major grounds on which middle class is defined are income, their positions within their companies, consumption patterns and education they got. After displaying their association with the middle class, I will present how their gender talk and conceptualizations of gender equality produce their class identity.

In the third chapter, I will also present how the gap between the economic capital and cultural capital of some members of the middle class is criticized as this gap is displayed as the reason for their discrimination at work by men who cannot internalize the norms of gender equality prevalent among the middle class. Moreover, drawing from the interviews, I will also present the ideal of the middle class woman as a responsible, loving mother who also participates in the workforce. This ideal, which comes into life in heterosexual marriages, overlaps with the ideal woman defined by state feminism. I will also demonstrate that this framing is a way to distinguish themselves from lower class women.

CHAPTER 1

METHODOLOGY

1.1. The Sample

For this study, I have conducted 21 in-depth interviews, each of which lasted around one and a half hours. My interviewees were all university graduate, white-collar women working in the private sector in İstanbul. Throughout the thesis, to respect the privacy of my interviewees, I have used pseudonyms instead of real names. Most of my interviewees, work as specialists in their companies; thus occupying mid-level positions. Although some of their positions' are referred to as "manager," none of them have employees working under their supervision. Other than Defne, who is a marketing manager in the industrial automation sector, they all have supervisors.

I targeted women working as middle-level professionals as my study focuses on middle class women. Their being supervised rather than being supervising managers also points at a tension in their work life as their gender makes them more susceptible to discrimination at their workplaces. Even though they have benefitted from the rights given to them by the reforms of the early Republican period, they haven't totally overcome the glass ceiling that prevents women from climbing up to upper level positions in corporations. In this sense, they encounter with the obstacles that are caused by the patriarchal structure of the corporations more than women working in upper level positions do. This also explains why they are mostly single and in their twenties as they need to work for quite a few years to climb the career ladders.

White-collar women I interviewed work in different sectors, varying from film production to automotive sectors. They are graduates of various departments such as business

administration, architecture, chemistry and mechanical engineering. Eight of them have Master's degrees and thirteen of them have Bachelor's Degrees from prestigious universities in big cities of Turkey, i.e. İstanbul, Ankara and İzmir, such as Boğaziçi University, Middle East Technical University, Ege University and İstanbul Bilgi University. They come from different cities like İstanbul, İzmir, Eskişehir, Denizli and Balıkesir. Five of them work in multinational companies. Only one of them has employees working under her supervision. Three of them are married, one has children and one of them is divorced. They are mostly in their twenties but their ages range between 22 and 41.

1.2. Choice of Qualitative Methodology

Within the Turkish context, there are previous studies conducted on how middle class boundaries are drawn and on how conceptions of gender inequality are shaped in relation to nationalism and modernization, as well as studies on how class, ethnicity and gender interplay in producing different layers of power relations. However, a study on how women themselves construct their class identity and their womanhood in relation to the lower classes and Kurds has not been conducted. In this sense, this is an exploratory study. Thus, conducting interviews was the best way to grasp what women have to say in the first place. Qualitative research is treated as a way to explore the field, mostly the unknown areas and marginal groups (Stebbins, 2001, p. 54).

Researchers' choice of methods, either qualitative research or quantitative research, depends on their research subject. On the other hand, qualitative and quantitative research has different relations to theory. As suggested by Filstead, qualitative research "... is marked by a concern with the discovery of theory rather than the verification of theory" (Filstead, 1979, p. 38 as cited in Bryman, 1999, p. 39). Furthermore, quantitative research has been criticized by

feminist theory for its search for objectivity, as well as for reflecting a male point of view (Holloway, 1997, p. 69). Nonetheless, others have criticized this outlook for the dichotomy it produces between quantitative and qualitative research, reproducing the idea that quantitative research is more masculine employing 'hard' methods and qualitative research is more feminine employing 'soft' methods (Jarviluoma et al., 2003, pp. 23-24). Furthermore, Oakley states that the languages of both qualitative and quantitative methods are gendered (Oakley, 1981).

Moreover, feminist scholars have debated on the pursuit of objectivity as it is also seen as a reflection of the masculine mind. As Haraway (1988) states, feminists have been trying to either abandon the pursuit of objectivity by labeling science as a rhetorical practice or trying to find a form of objectivity which would be compatible with the feminist theory. For instance, Harding (1995) criticizes the claims for objectivity through neutrality. She presents that neutrality could even be an obstacle towards achieving objectivity, which makes the conventional claims for objectivity "weak objectivity" but rather she offers "strong objectivity" and "standpoint epistemologies" to the solution of how scientists could achieve objectivity (Harding, 1995, p. 334). As Harding states, standpoint theories declare that although what individuals know is not totally determined by what they do, their experiences and social relations draw the boundaries of what they know. That is to say, the everyday lives of women and men give us information about natural and social orders. Therefore, for instance, the power relations within the society can be analyzed through women's lives and thoughts since these are produced within these power relations. In this sense, standpoint theories are aware of the conflict within the society and social inequalities and search for an objectivity about the bigger picture through the analysis of smaller settings (ibid., p. 341).

On the other hand, Haraway (1988) offers “situated knowledges” as “feminist objectivity”. As she declares, the construction of objectivity in the Western world employed the division between mind and body, subject and object. However, feminists shouldn’t try to reach a universal, transcendent reality by positing objectivity as a scientific norm but rather an objective vision can only be reached through analyzing partialities. Therefore, feminists should analyze particular locations and times and therefore situated knowledges (Haraway, 1988, p. 583). Thus, she breaks the duality constructed between relativism and totality and she presents “partial, locatable, critical knowledges” as an alternative to relativism whose alternative does not need to be pursuit of a universal truth (ibid., p. 584).

Moreover, as Stanley and Wise (1993) indicate, feminist scholars have also criticized social sciences for neglecting the presence of women in social world, therefore not prescinding women’s experiences, emotions, perceptions and points of view and for excluding them as researchers. This does not only bespeak that women have been excluded from social sciences but also that works produced under social sciences have been biased and gendered (Stanley & Wise, 1993, pp. 27-31). On the other hand, Stanley and Wise regard these feminist critiques as a narrow attempt to include women in social sciences which neglect the debates in social sciences on concepts like science and objectivity by taking them as given. As they state, none of social science methods are intrinsically sexist. Rather than concentrating on how women should be integrated to social science research, as they state women need to rethink what feminism is and develop a way of “seeing reality differently” (ibid., p. 43).

Social sciences’ pursuit for objectivity regards qualitative methods as being less objective than quantitative methods as they involve the researcher much more in interaction with the field. Accordingly, the conversations between the interviewer and the interviewee as well as

interviewer's own experiences have been regarded as an obstacle against objectivity by this literature. However, feminist literature has regarded this relationship as a way to weaken the hierarchy between the research and the respondent (Bryman, 1999, p. 51). For instance, Oakley (1981) regards proclaiming of personal experiences of women interviewers while interviewing women, rather than creating a bias, as a necessity for the parties to reveal their own experiences and thoughts.

Here I do not claim that I have presented my life story and engaged in a total understanding of what women had to say. However, my being a woman belonging to the same age group as my interviewees has been an advantage in talking about subjects varying from romantic relations, harassment and sexual orientation. My study does not concentrate on the experiences of women and attempt to fill the gaps that are left by conventional works of social science, which are stated to focus on male interests and male experiences. Rather, I intended to get a grasp of how women experience class, how they build class boundaries, how they conceptualize gender equality and relate it to their class belonging and how their discourse is related to the official discourse of the state as well as corporations beyond taking gender as a source of difference in individuals' understanding of the world.

However, I do not intend to make generalizations about the middle class in Turkey as my sample is not representative. Moreover, this research is exploratory regarding its subject. It is not representative both because it was conducted only in İstanbul, and also because I only interviewed women with white-collar jobs. Also, I made a non-probabilistic sample selection from white-collar women working in the private sector in İstanbul. To illustrate, there are not any women from the public sector in my sample although professional women in the public sector like doctors, and lawyers are regarded as members of the middle class.

1.3. Conducting the Interviews

As a graduate of sociology and business administration, I have friends from my undergraduate studies who are currently working in the private sector. My own experience as an intern in the private sector in my undergraduate years as well as the stories I hear from friends in the private sector allowed me to observe and contemplate on how gender norms are constructed in relation to class identity. This has inspired me to study this subject more deeply. My contacts have also helped me reach more white-collar women in the private sector. My friends working in the private sector and friends who have acquaintances working in the private sector have given me the chance to contact their co-workers and acquaintances. Some of my interviewees' being my acquaintances might have led them to construct their discourse in relation to their guesses to how I would answer these questions or what they thought I would expect from them. Arranging interviews through my friends was both an advantage and a disadvantage since interviewees were hesitant about if I was going to share what they had to say with our mutual friends. Moreover, they might have had a prejudice about my thoughts through what they knew about our mutual friends. Although this method of snow-ball sampling has disadvantages, it has also given me the chance to have long talks with these women. They were also willing to help me develop my study and contact their own co-workers.

I developed an interview guide with open-ended questions. I abided to these questions although I asked additional questions and let the interviewee talk as much as she liked to give her the opportunity to present her viewpoint regarding the subject of the research. At the beginning of interviews I told them that we could skip any question if they were not willing to answer. However, none of them wanted to skip any questions, even in subjects like homosexuality or sexual intercourse before marriage, which, in the Turkish context, might make a lot of people feel uncomfortable to talk about. Still, this does not show us that they were totally comfortable

about talking on these subjects or what they said reflected clearly what they thought.

Nonetheless, their hesitations, short answers or words they used were all valuable for me.

At first I was taking notes during the interviews. However, when I realized that they were focusing on and trying to grasp what I was writing, I stopped taking notes. I did not use software to analyze my findings. I transcribed the voice records. I also took notes on the main themes that repeatedly appeared in each interview and I sorted out the main themes. Therefore, I categorized the statements of my interviewees and found out the commonalities and differences between their discourses.

I conducted my interviews in cafes of my interviewees' choice as they mostly wanted to conduct the interviews outside their offices. Aslı, who is a 31 year old human resources specialist working in the banking sector, was an exception. While I was with Aslı in her office where there were other people working in their own separate desks, she lowered her voice especially when she was talking about the characteristics of her workplace. She told me that her current work was less demanding and providing fewer opportunities for employees who wanted to be promoted based on their performances. She argued that this explained why men did not prefer to work in her job. I conducted the other interviews in cafes where the interviewees did not have their co-workers around them who would make them hesitant about what they said. However, since we made the interviews in public spaces where there were other people around who could overhear us, their statements might have been shaped according to the acceptable public discourses. However, this also shows us that they might have tried to conform to what is acceptable to say.

I used a voice recorder in all of my interviews. Although most of my interviewees told me that they were comfortable with it, Hilal a 25-year old architect, put her cigarette box on the

voice recorder. I told her that I could turn it off. Yet, she told me that she was only uncomfortable about seeing it in front of her while she was talking so I put the voice recorder beside my bag on the table. Moreover, they also wanted to make certain that their names would be kept secret and what they said would be kept between us. Although, I told them that I would only use the information they gave for my MA thesis and I would not share it with third parties, İpek, a 26 year old engineer, emphasized that she trusted me that I would not share what she said with our mutual friend working in her company who had arranged this interview. Also while I was telling Elif that what she told me would be kept secret except for some quotations, she felt the need to make a quick statement: “I hope so. Otherwise I will find and smite you.”

Moreover, there were some cases when the respondents did not understand my questions. To illustrate, I had a question concerning what respondents identified themselves with. I asked them how they defined themselves. I received replies such as: “That is a really difficult question.” or “What are my choices?” It was clear that I could not make my point in my question, so I reworded it as: a “People use different references while identifying themselves. This could be one’s nationality, religion, being from a particular city or sexual preferences. How do you define yourselves?”

At the beginning of the interviews, I asked my respondents some demographic questions, concerning their age and marital status. The major topics I covered in the rest of the interviews were how they defined gender equality, which practical issues they think indicate the existence or non-existence of gender inequality in Turkey, to which social class they felt that they belonged to, how they defined this class, what types of gender discrimination they experienced in different areas of social life- at work, home, on the streets, their opinions about honor killings, homosexuality, transsexuality, motherhood and sexuality. Besides, I shall indicate that I have

asked them questions concerning their personal experiences; for instance, their experiences of gender discrimination. I have asked these questions in order to understand how they define gender inequality and discrimination. Moreover, for this thesis, I am not interested in whether, on objective grounds gender equality exists or not in Turkey or among white-collars but rather I am interested in how women associate their perceptions on these matters with their class identity.

As I stated earlier, I interviewed white-collar women whom I contacted through our mutual friends. I was a female graduate student and I probably seemed to belong to the middle class. These affinities turned our interviews into a conversation and relaxed the tension and hierarchy that usually forms between the researcher and the interviewee. The influence of similar past experiences between the researcher and interviewees on the research has been discussed especially by feminists concerning women interviewing women. This similarity produces a convenience that leads to a better understanding between the two parties. On the other hand, the distance between the researcher and the participant concerning ethnicity, class, gender, and age produces a strong hierarchy and weakens the ability of the researcher to understand the participant.

On the other hand, the affinity between the two parties might lead to the researcher filling in the blanks the participant leaves (Lewis, 2003, pp. 65-66). I felt this in my third interview where Defne, a 27-year old marketing manager in the industrial automation sector, was talking about the discrimination women face in Turkey. I made the mistake of saying “I believe that you think we cannot say that there is gender equality in Turkey.” This was actually one of my pre-prepared questions and I happened to answer it for her. This was a directing statement and also a false interpretation of her words. Fortunately, she corrected me and declared that she thought that

there was gender equality in the Western parts of Turkey but she was talking about the East. This experience taught me to clarify any issue in the interview if it was obscure to me.

On the other side, although I, as a woman conducting her thesis on an issue concerning gender and class, might have appeared as a feminist researcher, one of my interviewees declared that she hated feminists. Moreover, many felt free to indicate that they believed that there was gender equality at least among their entourage or in the Western, urban parts of Turkey. One has also declared that she did not follow the feminist work done to achieve gender equality, as she did not believe in that kind of activism. Besides, some of them declared that they did not believe in the equality between men and women, and presented their standpoint as a radical position that does not reel off what every other woman would say.

However, I was with them for the sake of my MA thesis as a researcher and they were well aware of the situation. Some of them underlined that they questioned their position in the capitalist system although this was not directly my subject of study. Most of the time, they perceived our conversations as a chance to present their troubles at work, on the streets and a chance to talk about their dreams about the future. In this sense, I was lucky for overcoming the disadvantages of interviews where interviewees are reluctant to talk about their own experiences, especially on controversial subjects. As I was not trying to comprehend their real experiences but rather to comprehend how they constructed their talk on gender equality, gender relations and womanhood by also analyzing from which discourses their talk was fed, every sentence I heard from them was valuable for me. After discussing the theoretical and historical framework of this thesis in the next chapter, I will be presenting examples from my interviews to demonstrate how white collar women's gender talk is produced in relation to the discourses of nationalism, developmentalism, and orientalism and constructed in close relation with their class identity.

CHAPTER 2

A Theoretical and Historical Inquiry into the Relationship between Middle Class Identity, Nationalism and Gender Discourses

In this chapter, I will present the theoretical framework of the thesis and will display the historical background of the formation of the middle class and of the gender discourses in Turkey. Firstly, I will discuss the conceptualizations of the middle class in the existing literature and how white collars are positioned in the class structure. I will also make a distinction between the old middle classes and the new middle classes and will present theories that consider white collars as members of the new middle class. That identification is central to this thesis as it examines the relationship between gender discourses of white collar women and their middle class identification. Later, I will present the literature on the gender discourses of the early Republican period, the developmentalist and orientalist outlook of the Turkish state as well as the historical background of the Kurdish question. In the following chapter where I present my fieldwork findings, I will discuss how white collar women utilize these already existing discourses for constructing their identities.

2.1. Placing White Collars in the Class Structure

In this part, I will discuss how scholars have analyzed white collars in relation to the class structure. I will start with theories that place white collars in the working class. Then, I will look into the arguments of Marxist scholars who regard the middle class as a temporary phenomenon whose white collar members would either be proletarianized or would join the bourgeoisie. I will continue with scholars who regard white collars as members of a separate class that is mostly named as “the new middle class”. This discussion is crucial as the definition of class influences one’s analysis of the middle class. Moreover, white collars as members of the new middle class are engaged with the capitalist economy differently from the old middle classes. Also, these

theories point out the emergence of white collar jobs, i.e. professionals, and the position of these individuals in the class structure.

Carchedi (1977) perceives white collar professionals to be members of the working class. He states that especially after the Second World War, white collar jobs went through the mechanization and rationalization processes that blue-collar jobs went through earlier. These processes devalued and dequalified their labour. Moreover, he considers the distinction between manual and intellectual labour meaningless, because neither of them owns the means of production and they are both exploited (Carchedi, 1977, pp. 191-192). Carchedi describes the middle class as one that does not own the means of production but supports capital accumulation. However, capital accumulation through technological developments diminishes the size of the middle class by proletarianizing the white-collar professionals (Carchedi, 1975a & 1975b, as cited in Wacquant, 1991, p. 44).

White collar employees have also been analyzed as workers by scholars like Işıklı (2010) and Buğra (2010) in the Turkish context. To illustrate, in her work on office workers, Ebru Işıklı (2010) refers to Smith (1997) who regards white collars as workers since their labour is evaluated in the labour market just like the labour of blue-collars. Although white collars have a different position within the organization of corporations, they are subject to the changes in capitalist relations arising from technological changes affecting the production process (Smith, 1997, as cited in Işıklı, 2010).

Moreover, the neoliberal restructuring and the reorganization of work have also been examined through their reflections on white collars' daily lives. As Sennett (1998) argues, short term contracts, globalization, restructuring of work through flexibility and the need to change positions and jobs at intervals created an insecure and unstable work environment also for white

collars, and reflect on them through eroding their self-confidence and trust. This aspect of neoliberalism emphasizes white collars' being subject to the labor market conditions like blue-collar workers.

Likewise, Ayşe Buğra (2010) analyzes how the transformation in the organization of work towards flexibility under new-capitalism has changed the work relations within different occupations. She asserts that besides factory workers who come to mind when the working class is considered, others who still need to sell their labour outside a factory or a workshop, like seasonal agricultural laborers and office personnel, should also be considered as workers. Although these workers might not regard their experiences as experiences of class, following Bourdieu (1987), Buğra (2010) states that the use of class as a concept in interpreting actors' experiences reveals a political potential since concepts and theories we use have a role in forming the political reality (Bourdieu, 1987, as cited in Buğra, 2010, p. 25).

However, Poulantzas (1975) does not even count the middle class as a category worth studying. Poulantzas regards white collars as akin to the traditional petit bourgeoisie. He regards white collars as promoting competitive individualism and reformism through their ideological standing, just like the traditional petit bourgeoisie, which is composed of small shopkeepers and artisans. Although white collar employees are also wage-earners like blue-collar workers, he perceives them as the new petit bourgeoisie. According to this viewpoint, white collar professionals are not seen as directly productive, but as monopolizing knowledge and supervising the labor process of blue-collar workers. Accordingly, he places white collars out of the relations of exploitation between the working class, which he regards as the only productive labor, and the bourgeoisie (Poulantzas, 1975, as cited in Burris, 1999, pp. 311-312).

Although it is fruitful to introduce a relational analysis of class, Poulantzas' theory of the new petit bourgeoisie neglects the fact that the capital owners also exploit white-collar labour. That is to say, although white-collars hold the monopoly of knowledge and authority over blue-collar workers, they are also exploited, as they do not own the means of production.

Moreover, many other Marxists estimated that the new middle class would be divided into two in the future- part of it proletarianized and the other part moving up to the bourgeoisie. In this sense, the middle class could not be treated as a class based on their position in the property relations. Marxist scholars like Corey (1935) and Klingender (1935), who approach class through ownership of means of production and regard the bourgeoisie and the working class as the major classes, perceive the middle class as a temporary phenomenon that will vanish within the process of proletarianization (Corey, 1935 & Klingender, 1935, as cited in Wacquant, 1991, p. 43).

On the other side, Weber considers the middle class to be a consequence of the bureaucratization of societies and rationalization of capitalist production. Weber and Marx agree that the reason for the growth of the middle class, which includes white-collar workers and managers, is the expansion of production in the capitalist system. However, Weber highlights the separation of management from ownership through bureaucratization. According to Weber, through this separation, the interests of the middle class became distinct both from the working class and the bourgeoisie. Weber perceives the middle class in relation to the bureaucracy rather than the bourgeoisie as Marx does (Howe, 1992, p. 6). On the other hand, Garaudy sees a revolutionary potential in the white collar professionals who possess knowledge which is the basis of production in neo-capitalism. The revolutionary potential could be realized when this segment of the new middle class joins the working class (Giddens, 1974, pp. 192-195).

Furthermore, scholars who regard the white collars as actors to be studied separately view them as a distinct class. White collar employees are included in “new class” by Alvin Gouldner (1979, as cited in Wacquant, 1991, p. 46), in “professional-managerial class” by Ehrenreichs (1977), in the “new middle class” by Lange and Meier (2009) and in the “new middle class” by Mills (1968). Such a conceptualization argues that the middle class did not disappear as Marx and his followers expected, but rather, a new middle class of non-manual, white collar professionals has flourished (Giddens, 1974, p. 177). Accordingly, the distinction between the old middle classes and the new middle classes are central in placing white collars within the class structure. Fernandes, who associates the new middle class of India with the economic liberalization process, also states that the symbolic difference between the old and the new middle classes is that members of the old middle class would work for the state, while the new middle class members target a job at multinational companies (Fernandes, 2000, p. 90).

Likewise, Mills (1968) treats white-collar professionals as members of the new middle class. In his analysis, Mills differentiates the old middle class from the new middle class as he relates the formation of the new middle class to the rise of certain occupations. He includes farmers, businessmen and independent professionals in the old middle class while including managers, salaried professionals, salespeople and office workers in the new middle class, indicating white-collar occupations as constituting over half of the middle class population. He regards white collars as a group in the middle of many axes of stratification- class, skill, function, status and power (Mills, 1968, pp. 64-65).

This conceptualization of white collars as members of a separate class takes the historical background of the formation of white collar positions into account. Moreover, it reflects the transformation of the middle class as well as the different strategies pursued by the white collars

to sustain their positions in the class structure. To illustrate, Barbara Ehrenreich (1990) points out to the period of the emergence of white collar jobs, between 1870 and 1920 when the middle classes were able to take advantage of professionalization. During this period, they reserved certain occupations, like office work, for themselves due to their level of education. That is to say, with the emergence of new white collar jobs, the middle classes could convert their cultural capital into economic capital. In this way, she stresses the importance of professionalization in creating a new form of capital for the sustainability of the middle class; i.e. knowledge and expertise. In this sense, professionalization, i.e. the emergence of new professions, functioned as a way to consolidate the position of middle class members. She regards the middle classes of today as the modern generation of small businessmen, farmers, lawyers and doctors working independently. According to Ehrenreich, professionalization guaranteed the middle class a secure place while they were being squashed between the working and the upper classes (Ehrenreich, 1990, pp. 78-80). The consolidation of the position of salaried professionals through their possession of knowledge, intellectual and cultural capital has been indicated as a way to regain middle class' privileged position.

Moreover, Ehrenreichs (1977) stress how white collars' cultural capital gained through education makes it possible for them to organize and perpetuate themselves as a class. These well-educated workers are defined as the "professional-managerial class (PMC)" by Ehrenreichs, who differentiate them from the traditional petit bourgeoisie as well as from the working class. According to Ehrenreichs, this class of professionals is organized around professional associations. They transmit their ideology, namely "technocratic liberalism", through universities where their own class members are recruited (Ehrenreichs, 1977, as cited in Wacquant, 1991, p.

46). This definition by Ehrenreichs emphasizes the social aspect of class formation besides Marxist analysis of production relations.

For Barbara Ehrenreich (1990), education is crucial in the process of class consolidation as it both functions as a way to learn the know-how for occupations as well as for social closure (Ehrenreich, 1990, p. 80). Education becomes an important mechanism for white collars to differentiate themselves from the lower classes through not letting those who do not have the proper education penetrate through the boundaries of the middle class. In other words, education becomes a central component of class identity for members of the middle class. Education also works as a component of class identity when the gender discourses are considered. In the following chapter, I will present how white collar women indicate education as a tool to establish their superiority over the lower classes, and lack of education as the central reason of the lower classes' suffering from gender inequality. Moreover, I will demonstrate that education is set as a major cure for gender inequality and it is offered as a tool of emancipation both for the lower classes and Kurdish women.

While being aware of the debates regarding the place of white collars in the class structure, I will treat them as members of the new middle class by following theories which take white-collars as the new, important members of the middle class who began to make use of the capitalist system with their well-paid jobs. I will also present the self-association of white collar women I interviewed with the middle class. In the following part, I will focus on the historical background of the formation of the middle classes and the new middle class in Turkey.

2.2. Formation of the Middle Classes in Turkey

In order to understand the components of middle class identity today, we need to consider the historical context in which middle classes are formed in Turkey. Developing the bureaucratic cadres of the new Republic and positioning them as ideal citizens during the early Republican period and onwards were central to the formation of the middle class in Turkey. Furthermore, formation of the middle classes took place within the modernization process of the Ottoman Empire. Watenpaugh (2006) looks at the struggle for cultural capital which brought about the benefits of holding the monopoly of producing knowledge during the Ottoman Period. Bourdieu (1986) regards cultural capital, which can be turned into economic capital, as capital obtained through education and socialization by investing time and effort (pp. 243-248). As Watenpaugh states, besides their wealth, education levels and positions within institutions, the middle classes' claim for modernity and their practices that were generated in accordance with this claim, are also important signifiers of their class position. He presents a link between modernization and the formation of today's middle classes in the Middle East. As he states, modernity originated the middle class and designated the margins of classes: "... the ideas, institutions, and politics associated with modernity have given rise to a uniquely modern middle class" (Watenpaugh, 2006, p. 8).

Accordingly, in his analysis on the Eastern Mediterranean region, Watenpaugh (2006) asserts that after the 1908 Revolution in the Ottoman Empire, the middle classes emerged in relation to the modernization process. Middle classes transformed their daily lives by integrating specific practices, attitudes, and tastes as well as by employing specific ideological positions regarding rationality, authority, individualism and gender relations, which were considered to belong to the Western middle classes. This was also a claim to take an active role in the production of knowledge and a tool for differentiation against the ruling Sunni Muslim class

(ibid.). The class which was emulated by the emerging middle class in the Eastern Mediterranean was the European bourgeoisie (ibid., p. 22). Possessing the means of getting an education in Europe was an important ladder leading towards the middle class through being employed in jobs in the bureaucracy (ibid., p. 24).

On the other hand, Çağlar Keyder (1987) analyzes Turkish Republican political history as a struggle between the newly formed national bourgeoisie and the bureaucracy. He considers Kemalism as a developmentalist-nationalist ideology and bureaucracy as the leader of the nation-state building and modernization processes. As he declares, the nation-building process of Turkey also involved the restructuring of economic activities. One of the main economic aims of the early Republican cadres was creating a national bourgeoisie. Accordingly, this was a period of Turkification of the bourgeoisie through the non-Muslim bourgeoisie, who were the major owners of capital in the Ottoman Empire, handing capital over to the Turkish Muslim bourgeoisie.

Keyder's analysis is crucial in the sense that it points out the influence of nationalism as well as developmentalism in producing the class structure in Turkey. Moreover, Watenpaugh's analysis displays the importance of cultural capital and Western modernity as an ideal to be reached in the formation of the middle classes in the Ottoman geography. Moreover, this cultural capital integrated with the ideal of modernity is turned into economic capital as well as social status through jobs in the bureaucracy in the Ottoman Empire. This literature sheds light to the formation of middle class identity in Turkey around developmentalist, nationalist and modernist discourses.

Besides the utilization of these discourses by the middle classes in constituting their subjectivities, this modernization and nation-building process also contributed to the formation of classes within the Turkish society. However, this was not a process during which many different social groups were upwardly mobile but rather the cultural and economic capital of upper and middle classes helped them maintain their social positions. To illustrate, the transformations in the state institutions as well as the legal system concerning the gender relations did not benefit each part of the society equally. As Kandiyoti (1987) asserts, those who got the most out of the process of improving women's rights and women's presence in the public space were upper-middle class women. Kandiyoti cites Ayşe Öncü's (1981) study on Turkish women in occupations like medicine, engineering and law, which were traditionally associated with men, as an illustrator of the issue. Öncü (1981) analyzes why there are many women in these occupations that are dominated by men in Western countries. She finds out that the early Republican period was characterized by the increase in the recruitment of specialized employees. However, there were not enough upper-middle class men to fill these cadres. The elite cadres could be filled with men from rural parts of the country or with men from working class families. The other option was to recruit upper-middle class women who got the same education. Other studies also point out to the fact that female university students come from families with better socio-economic status than those of male students (Kandiyoti, 1987, p. 323). In this sense, this process was more like a class consolidation rather than an emancipation, which would cover all women.

Nilüfer Göle (1997) points out to the relation between gendered codes of public appearances presented by the early Republican cadres and modernity that excludes certain aspects of non-secular as well as lower class lifestyles. Middle class lifestyle in Turkey was

especially associated with Western dress codes, Western forms of spare time activities like going to the theatre, men's sharing the public space with women and even having fashionable haircuts. This modern way of life, which was promoted with the state policies in the early Republican period, demanded women's public visibility. Therefore, certain rights had to be given to them (Göle, 1997, p. 191). The secular middle class identity was formed through excluding the Islamist as well as the traditional conceptualizations of gender order. Middle class identity was positioned in a secular, modern ground, which supports gender equality employing a Western outlook. However, after the 1980s, a contrary middle class habitus- Islamic middle class- became visible (Göle, 2008).

The 1980s was a crucial period for the middle classes as it brought about the decline of the old middle class, while, after the 1980s, the new middle classes rose. Following the 1980s, economic policies were liberalized in Turkey. This economic liberalization, which marked the Özal period, was followed by neo-liberal economic reforms since the late 1990s. Although both of these periods aimed at establishing free market capitalism, the second one was more marked with a circulation of global capital and production networks (Cizre & Yeldan, 2005, pp. 338-339). This neoliberal period, in which "a range of policies intended to extend market discipline, competition, and commodification throughout all sectors of society" were noticeable, (Brenner & Theodore, 2002, p. 350 as cited in Bartu Candan & Kolluoğlu, 2008: 9) revealed out the new middle class in Turkey. The new middle class adopted neoliberal values like consumerism, competitiveness, freedom and individualism against the old middle class who were mostly state employees. Neoliberal restructuring resulted in the new middle classes' being on intimate terms more with the capital than with labour (Rutz and Balkan, 2010, p. 24).

Ahiska and Yenal (2006) present the new middle class in Turkey as a privileged group that is composed of engineers, managers, economists, lawyers and salespersons who rose up in the stratification system in Turkey while the traditional middle class, composed of civil servants and the self-employed, were becoming poorer. This group of young urban professionals turned their cultural capital into economic capital and worked for higher wages while the wages of the traditional middle class diminished. These professionals who are sometimes called yuppies as a degrading term (Kozanoğlu, 1993), were the most privileged and valued group in the neoliberal mentality of the economic restructuring in the aftermath of the 1970s' global economic crisis (Ahiska and Yenal, 2006, pp. 61-62). Unlike Garaudy who sees white collar professionals as potential actors of revolution (Giddens, 1974, pp. 195-196), neo-liberal values such as being obsessed with power, success and job promotion are attributed to the so-called yuppies in Turkey (Kozanoğlu, 1993).

2.3. Producing Class Boundaries

Considering the professionalization processes which gave rise to the white collar jobs and the neoliberal restructuring of the economy in Turkey which reduced the benefits of the jobs in the state, I will treat white collars as members of the new middle class. Class is a useful category in analyzing how the experiences, thoughts, norms and values of individuals are shaped. Bourdieu (1977) regards classes as consisting of individuals with similar experiences. That is not to say that every individual in a single class experiences the world in the same way but their chances of facing similar situations and engaging in a similar praxis are greater than with people from other classes. Class positions influence tastes, social practices, ideological positions as well as certain gender discourses. In this thesis, I analyze the relationship between white collar women's class positions and their gender discourses in two ways. Firstly, I analyze the conceptualizations of gender equality as utilized by white collar women to signify their class

positions. Secondly, I analyze their discourses on gender roles and gender relations as produced within white collar women's relations to their co-workers. Moreover, I present these relations as crucial in their identification with the middle class as they claim their belonging to the middle class through consumption patterns and their positions within their companies.

Accordingly, Peter Kaufman (2005) indicates that the social environment of one is extremely important in one's identification with the middle class and in having a particular lifestyle. For middle class men in the USA, this appears as having a college degree, getting a good profession which would make them keep up with their friends and fulfill their friends' expectations about becoming male breadwinners. As Kaufman states, middle class individuals start from childhood to be raised according to the middle class values differentiating them from working class children who do not have the same cultural capital that the middle class children obtain through their interactions with their parents. Through socialization in the middle class habitus, these individuals obtain the elements of a particular lifestyle. They simply eat at particular nice places, go to particular schools and dress according to particular dress codes (p. 18). In this sense, members of the middle class produce their every day practices and consumption patterns in relation to the middle class habitus. They also become attuned to what is expected from them by other members of the middle class.

Moreover, claims for possessing certain norms as well as a predefined moral standing also contribute to the formation of class identities. The struggle for moral excellence is one of the important grounds that mobilize a certain class above others. As Gusfield (1966 & 1981) states, especially the *petit bourgeoisie* uses the claim of moral excellence against other lifestyles, like the conventional lifestyle which promotes compliance, solidarity and harmony, or the neoliberal

lifestyle which promotes a pragmatist morality, and intellectual liberal lifestyle which is built on a morality of common principles (Gusfield, 1966 & 1981, as cited in Eder, 1993, p. 86).

Michele Lamont's (1992) work comparing French and American middle classes is a good illustration of the importance of moral boundaries of class. She asserts that under different circumstances, individuals give worth to different things, value things differently and feel proud and ashamed of different things. Therefore, the middle classes form different habitus, which influence how their members give meaning to what happens around them, what the dominant norms are, how people interact with each other and accordingly how a moral agenda on how they should interact with each other is constructed.

Drawing from Lamont's (1992) study, Sayer (2005) argues that groups differentiate themselves from others through presenting an idea of moral excellence, possessing certain virtues like being honest and hardworking and through claiming moral differences. These are said to be more potent in social groups that are anxious about failing to pursue their status and fall into lower groups. In this sense, besides consumption patterns and spatial segregation, the middle classes utilize claims for moral and cultural superiority in order to differentiate themselves from the lower classes. Therefore, the boundary building processes of the middle classes can be analyzed through a class anxiety, which directs them to differentiate themselves from lower classes through various means.

Claims of cultural superiority through an emphasis on possessing certain gender norms also work as a source of distinction for members of the middle class. In the following chapter, I will be discussing how claims of cultural superiority in terms of more equal gender relations as well as higher tastes and consumption patterns work as a way to differentiate white collar women

from other members of the middle class and from lower classes and Kurds. I will focus on how gender discourses are utilized by white collar women in the process of building middle class boundaries. I will present the link displayed between obtaining a good education and possessing certain norms by white collar women. I argue that education as well as consumption practices act as important tools for differentiating the new middle classes both subjectively and objectively. That is to say, education and consumption both help the new middle classes perpetuate their positions in the class structure and they use the “higher” education they got and their “higher” tastes that shape their consumption practices, as means to differentiate themselves. Through these means, class members form a secure area for themselves by keeping others outside, namely by social closure (Weber, 1978, as cited in Murphy, 1988, p. 8).

Mills (1968) emphasizes the role of education in securing the position of white collars in the society. He states that education replaced the importance of property for the middle classes with the rise of capitalism, technological changes, bureaucracies and wage labor (Mills, 1968, pp. 245-284). Therefore, education is an important guarantor of white collars’ social positions. Moreover, in the Turkish context, the privatization of education as well as the existence of a centralized examination organized by the state to determine who is eligible to get education in prestigious middle schools, which are seen as the ticket to the best universities in Turkey, have resulted in the reproduction of the new middle class and its values (Rutz & Balkan, 2010). However, education does not only provide a tool for upward mobility or sustain middle class boundaries by converting their cultural capital into economic capital. Considering the subjective identification of white collar women with the middle class through an emphasis on education, I display education, which is portrayed as the major way to acquire norms of gender equality, as a means to differentiate white collars from the lower classes and Kurds.

2.4. Claims of Cultural Superiority

Claims for possessing certain norms and a claim for cultural superiority through the education one got and the cultural capital that comes with it are grounds on which class is displayed. Education also provides the middle classes with an opportunity to legitimize and sustain their privileged position compared to the lower classes. As stated by Alvin Gouldner (1979), the power of the middle class comes from the cultural capital it possesses (Gouldner, 1979, as cited in Wacquant, 1991, pp. 46-47). Habitus and cultural capital that is obtained through socialization and education determine the ways class members build class identities. As Bourdieu (1984) exposes, actions, appreciations and tastes shape and are shaped by social structures, especially by class. These are mainly opinions about what is desirable, aesthetic, beautiful, good and moral. Through these aesthetic and moral judgments, who are included into and excluded from the class are determined (Bourdieu, 1984). Gouldner (1979) also emphasizes cultural capital as a source of the sustainability of class positions as well as the consolidation of middle class boundaries (Gouldner, 1979, as cited in Wacquant, 1991, pp. 46-47).

Bourdieu (1986) deals with three states of cultural capital: embodied state, institutionalized state- as academic value which transforms embodied state to the institutionalized state by evaluating and giving one's skills a value- and objectified state- objectified as 'things' like artworks which can be transmitted. As he states, in the embodied state, cultural capital lives with its bearer. This refers to the transformation of economic capital into almost a part of individuals' bodies. The competencies which can be obtained through education or socialization at the expense of time and effort, become part of habitus. The distinctive characteristic of embodied cultural capital is that it is almost seen as the natural characteristic of the individual since the mechanisms for requiring and sustaining it is hard to recognize. Moreover, Bourdieu regards cultural capital as one that generates economic profit to its bearer (Bourdieu, 1986, pp. 243-248).

Furthermore, the different lifestyles, tastes, consumption patterns, judgments and income express the significant properties that make classes distinctive. There are various ways through which classes differentiate themselves from others. Although members of the same economic classes have similar incomes, the consumption areas they spend their wealth on help them distinguish themselves from those who are in a similar horizontal position with them (Gerth & Mills, 1998). Decisions of spending as an element of choice are important sources of distinction. In this thesis, I also portray how consumption patterns, possession of cultural capital obtained through education, and possession of certain norms, and manners become ways to claim cultural superiority by white collar women both over other members of the middle class and over lower classes and Kurds. Therefore, I present these claims used by white collar women as producing their class and ethnic identity.

2.5. Studies on the Formation of Class Boundaries in Turkey

The boundaries between classes became more and more blurry when the societal organization started to transform along with the change in the economic production processes caused by the transition to post-capitalism. This transition led the upper classes to find new ways for differentiating themselves. What is more, under neo-liberalism it is even harder to discern classes since the salaried individuals in the new middle classes have different levels of education and social prestige. In this sense, there is nothing formal and objective that distinguishes the members of the middle classes from other classes. Therefore, the symbolic struggle has become much more important than ever before, and through this symbolic struggle, the social hierarchies are sustained (Sulkunen, 1992, p. 19).

Studies on the formation of class boundaries in Turkey try to grasp how this symbolic struggle for differentiation works. These studies are mostly shaped around the experiences of

upper or middle classes. They concentrate on how consumption and urban segregation play a role in building the class boundaries. Although they oversee the role of the “gender talk”- which I define as discourses on gender, both concerning daily experiences and conceptualizations of gender roles, gender equality and gender relations- in building class boundaries, these studies point out the relationship between how class identities are formed and the historical context in which these identities are constructed.

The ways through which class boundaries are drawn change according to various elements, such as the structuring of the stratification system, economic conditions and the political conjuncture. The changes in these elements also change the means through which classes differentiate themselves from others. For instance, while analyzing the changing cultural and social geography of the upper middle classes of Istanbul, Ayşe Öncü (2005) concludes that in the urban life of Istanbul, the upper and middle classes used to differentiate themselves with their two characteristics; i.e. the education they got and the apartment life they lived. However, with the impact of the transformation of the Turkish society in the 1980s, this situation changed as the upper classes started moving to the suburbs, which emphasizes a spatial differentiation (Öncü, 2005, pp. 102-103).

Gül Özyeğin’s study (2002) in a middle class neighbourhood in Ankara is a good example of the construction of class identities in relation to other classes. Özyeğin (2002) examines the encounters of the upper-middle class tenants with doorkeepers and maids in this work. As she demonstrates, both class and gender identities are produced and reproduced within and through these encounters between the upper-middle class and the lower class. Tenants get rid of certain exploitative aspects of the gendered stratification system like housework, which are traditionally described as the natural job of women, by laying them on the maids. Besides showing tenants’

reproduction of patriarchy through taking men's positions in the gendered stratification, Özyeğin's study is also remarkable in the sense that these encounters take place in middle class neighborhoods, especially in the tenants' houses, but with members of the lower classes who are usually migrants from Anatolia, especially from the northern, eastern and southeastern parts of Turkey.

In this context, these encounters also reflect the tension between tradition and modernity in Turkey. Identities are formed on the tradition-modernity axis when social actors come across individuals belonging to a different class. For instance, lower class women blame their husbands for not letting them participate in the labor force and integrate into the modern city life but for only letting them reproduce their conventional positions as house workers. They associate this situation with their husbands' being unable to internalize modernity and being stuck within their traditional mentality (Özyeğin, 2002, p. 65).

Moreover, as Yashin (2002) asserts, the liberalization and the restructuring of the economy in the 1980s made it possible for the Islamist upper-middle class habitus to flourish. State policies also aimed at directing the economic sources of the market to the Islamist capitalists. This change was also seen as a way to vitalize the market. This made it possible for Islamist individuals to enter the market as capitalists, which gave rise to the emergence of an Islamist capitalist group. Therefore, the period following the 1980s was a period in which the Islamists were upwardly mobile. This was true for the major urban areas as well as for Anatolian cities. The economic policies of the state were also in advantage of the religious businesses in the small cities (Yashin, 2002, p. 224).

While the category of Islamist elites existed before the 1980s, Islamists were visibly upwardly mobile and they were also able to display their own habitus through their consumption practices in the post-1980 period. Although Göle (1997) analyzes this process as a struggle between the secular and Islamist lifestyles and habitus, the process indicates the formation of a new group within the upper middle class. That is to say, these social actors did not only aim at claiming their status by producing their own interpretation of a desired lifestyle but they also differentiated themselves both from the secular middle classes and the Islamist lower classes.

Especially after the 1980s, headscarves, Atatürk badges as well as Turkish flags became cultural commodities and signifiers of different identities. As in this example, different sections of the middle class, i.e. secular and Islamist middle classes reproduce their identities through different means (Yashin, 2002). As in the case of headscarves, bodies are grounds on which identities are inscribed. Headscarves are important indicators of social differentiation as they point out how class identities are constituted against other identities and other middle class positions through women's bodies. Çınar (2005) also regards bodies, places and time as spaces of displaying modernity both for the Islamists and for the Kemalists.

The new lifestyle with Islamic references currently has its own spaces and products, like hospitals, hotels and clothes. The period following the 1980s was a period of production and development of many Islamic institutions and commodities: Islamic radio stations, Islamic TV channels, clothing companies like Tekbir Giyim¹ and Vahdet Kundura², Islamic hospitals where female patients are treated by female doctors and vice versa and Islamic holiday resorts like

¹ Tekbir refers to the act of saying 'Allah is great in everything'.

² Vahdet means uniqueness with a reference to Allah's being unique. It also refers to occupying your heart with Allah in Islamic mysticism (*tasavvuf*).

Caprice Hotel in which there are separate swimming pools and activities for women and men (Bilici, 2000, p. 218). These goods, spaces and consumption practices, which can be seen as hybrid forms bringing modernity and tradition together (Göle, 2008), had a central role in defining individuals' positions within political clashes (Yashin, 2002) and in signifying their class identities.

It is important to note that both in the secular and the Islamist middle classes, men's and women's bodies as well as gender relations are grounds on which class is marked. As Göle (2008) and Yashin (2002) state, bodies and consumption practices are grounds on which one interrelates with modernity and with various political discourses. I argue that they are also grounds on which class is marked as these discourses and one's encounter with modernity are not independent from one's class belonging. In this sense, these studies present the complexities in producing class identities in the Turkish context. Class identities, the particular interest of this thesis, are constructed in relation to the modernization and nation-building processes. Moreover, as I have displayed, the middle classes in Turkey were formed in relation to the changes in the economic structure and the modernization process whose origin goes back to the Ottoman period (Watenpugh, 2006). Therefore, starting with the Ottoman Period, ideals of modernization and Westernization, i.e. certain dress codes, manners, tastes, and norms were stated to be components of the middle class identity (Göle, 1997). Relatedly, in this thesis, I discuss how certain norms attributed to modernity are utilized by white collar women to present a distinction from other classes and other ethnicities. I analyze the gender talk of white collar women regarding their gender roles, gender relations, womanhood and gender equality in relation to the modernist ideological background which constitutes the back bone of middle class identity.

2.6. The Relationship between Gender Talk and Class Identities

Gender is a crucial axis through which class differences are emphasized. Both how individuals experience gender in their daily lives and through their ideological positions concerning gender relations are produced in accordance with their class belonging. This process works in both ways as they experience gender relations through their interactions within their workplaces-which constitutes an important part of their class identity- and also their notions of gender relations signify their class positions. That is to say, they use specific claims about gender relations in order to construct their class identity. I present this dual relationship between gender and class throughout this thesis by demonstrating how white collar women produce their gender talk in relation to their middle class belonging.

The relationship between women's class belonging and their discourses on gender has been analyzed in the Indonesian, British and American contexts. To illustrate, Rachel Rinaldo (2008) examines clothing patterns and ideological positions on marriages of Indonesian women activists of the Prosperous Justice Party, as part of the Islamic habitus. This habitus is one of many among the middle classes which are differentiated from each other in certain forms of woman-man relationships, i.e. veiling, availability of women's careers, marriage and motherhood. These women's ways of interpretation of Islam on gender roles is a way to define their class positions. Their interpretation is both contrary to traditional gender roles which restrict women's presence in public space as well as more egalitarian ideological positions which aim at equating men and women in public space as well as in private space. They emphasize morality both as a component of their nationality and of religion. They perceive men and women as complementary rather than equal. Women are stated as the major bearers of children while families are regarded as crucial units of the nation. These notions also differentiate these women from the lower classes who are not seen as devoted to their children as they are and from the upper classes who

are perceived as reckless about sexuality and marriage. In this sense, gender has a crucial role in the creation of a certain middle class identity among these Indonesian women.

These socially produced notions, ways of acting, tastes and dispositions work together, change and are changed by the social world. The bodily actions and dispositions, through which gender is defined, redefined and performed, are generated within habitus. The complementary roles defined by women in Prosperous Justice Party are generated from interpretations of Islamic sources. These women do not regard men and women equal. Men and women are stated to have different roles in life although they are judged equally by Allah (Rinaldo, 2008, p. 32). As in this example of the relationship between ideas on gender equality and class belonging, class is embodied in everyday actions, ideologies and beliefs of individuals. Class penetrates everyday life even if the individual does not necessarily think about it. It shapes one's struggle for identity and recognition. Therefore, class is embedded in one's psyche as well as in one's practices (Reay, 2005).

Likewise, Carol Bacchi (1988) argues that women's ideological positions should also be studied in relation to their class belonging. She analyzes the role of class positions as well as the intellectual and political climate on discourses on female sexuality through a reading of two early twentieth century feminists, Margaret Sanger, an American feminist activist, and Marie Stopes, the leader of the British birth control movement, who were members of the middle class themselves. As indicated by Bacchi (1988), these feminist women echoed anti-feminists since they were restricted by their middle class political agenda. Bacchi (1988) also states that discourses on female sexuality have changed over time. In the nineteenth century, female sexuality was strictly restricted for the sake of maintaining the class-specific status quo; whereas, in the twentieth century, these feminist women demanded passion for women as well as the use

of contraception methods. However, for them, these demands would be presented within the eulogized heterosexual marriage. According to Bacchi, these discourses changed in relation to the transformation of the relations between and within social groups. To illustrate, the nineteenth century ideal for women to be asexual was a way to differentiate the middle classes from the lower classes who were seen as animalistic. Also the image of the asexual ideal functioned for women as a way to prevent themselves from getting stuck in unwanted motherhoods, in a time when there weren't any contraception methods other than simply not having sex (Bacchi, 1988, pp. 43-44).

Their political agendas as well as their class belonging restricted the writings of these feminists. As Bacchi suggests, their point of view towards sexuality was shaped through the belief system of the middle class to which they belonged, the present knowledge on contraception and the present scientific knowledge. They supported contraception methods and tried to change the idea of sex serving only the pleasure of men. However, their works developed in relation to their conservative agenda. Their primary objective was to constitute a marriage life that would also take women's demands into consideration. In this sense, their works aimed at making middle class men more sensitive towards their women. They did so by differentiating the lower classes' sexuality from the middle classes' sexuality. Lower classes were stated as wild, driven by their pure instincts. Through this differentiation, class positions were consolidated (ibid., pp. 42-46).

Bacchi (1988) provides us with an important insight. Notions about sexuality, gender relations and marriage are developed in relation to one's class belonging. Moreover, these notions are used to differentiate the members of the middle class from other classes. I will also follow this idea of a connection between the discourses on gender and class belongings. I will

make a similar analysis on the conceptualizations of gender equality, what is included in it, how women define womanhood and gender roles. To be precise, I will analyze these notions in relation to white collar women's middle class belonging. Moreover, I will discuss this relationship between middle class identity and gender talk by touching upon the connection between the nationalist discourses in Turkey- which employs a developmentalist and Orientalist outlook- and white collar women's conceptions on gender relations.

2.7. Discourses on Gender in Relation to Nationalism

In this part, I will present the historical background of the formation of gender discourses in Turkey. This historical background displays how the daily lives and social relations of women and men were reshaped by the reforms of the early Republican period. This process also constituted the backbone for various gender discourses in Turkey. These gender discourses are either fed by the state discourse or they challenge them.

The Turkish state claims itself to be the only responsible actor for determining gender norms, gender roles and how gender equality could be achieved. The nation-building process in Turkey is central to these claims as the state claimed itself to be the major actor to organize the daily lives and social relations of individuals as part of the modernization project. Actually in many cases, gender has worked as a constitutive element during the nation-state building and national modernization processes. Gender roles- both for men and women- have been portrayed to be central to producing and ensuring the continuity of the nation (Davis, 1997). Modernization process of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic was no exception.

As Berktaý (2003) states, both feminism and "anti-feminism" in the Turkish Republic were inherited from the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, as in other societies where the formation of nation-states eventuated late, women's movements emerged under the influence of nationalism in Turkey. This influence of nationalism is not only unique to the Republican period but also

relevant for the Ottoman Empire period. In this sense, the woman question has continually been a part of the nationalist project (Berktaş, 2003, pp. 97-105). That is why an analysis regarding gender relations and gender equality in Turkey should take into consideration the historical background, which shaped gender discourses in Turkey.

Gender discourses in the Ottoman Empire and in the early Republican Turkey were shaped as part of the modernization process. During these periods, both the scope and dimensions of women's participation in public space changed. These changes in women's roles in public life and in the formation and continuity of the nation-state have been markers of the identity of the new nation. Moreover, improving women's status was stated as a way to differentiate the new Republic from the Empire, which was characterized as a political system where women were oppressed. However, this official discourse ignores the attempts for modernization and improving women's social status during the Ottoman Period. Women's status has been debated since the proclamation of Tanzimat in 1839. Women's organizations, which supported women's education, labor force participation and improvement of women's rights, were founded following the Tanzimat Period (Çakır, 1996). However these organizations were limited to urban upper classes (Z. Arat, 1998, pp. 7-8), and their analysis of patriarchy as well as their suggestions for improving women's status reflected at best the everyday problems of middle class Ottoman women (Tekeli, 1993, p. 30).

Although the feminist movement in the Ottoman period was led by upper middle class women (Z. Arat, 1998, pp. 7-8), reforms of the early Republican period were led by the state (Tekeli, 1981). Gender policies were actually central to the Turkish state's desire to prove the Western and modern image of the new Republic which was emerging as a capitalist nation-state. Therefore, these reforms did not emancipate women from the chains of patriarchy as women

were still associated with domestic roles (Tekeli, 1981). As Yakin Ertürk (2004) displays, the reforms towards improving women's conditions were limited and they aimed at exhibiting how far the Republic had gone towards becoming a modern nation-state.

As Zehra F. Arat (1998) asserts, the image of the ideal Turkish woman was constructed in conjunction with the encouragement of women to participate in public life while being restricted morally (Z. Arat, 1998, p. 7). Although women were encouraged to dress, behave, and be educated like the Westerner women, this also had some limits. As Arat (1994) states by referring to Atatürk's *Speeches*, women were obliged to preserve their virtuousness by avoiding promiscuity and dressing provocatively (Z. Arat, 1994, p. 62).

Women's bodies and sexual activities were regulated in relation to their association with domesticity in other cases as well, such as Brazil (Besse, 1996), Iran (Paidar, 1996), Soviet Russia (Patino, 2008) and the post-Soviet Russia (Kay, 1997). Susan K. Besse (1996) names the similar process in Brazil in which women's legal status was improved but they were not emancipated from social control and patriarchal gender roles, as 'modernization of gender inequality'. In Brazil, women were given certain rights but they were expected not to exercise these rights in cases when these rights contradicted with women's so-called natural and fundamental family roles (Besse, 1996, p. 10). Moreover, Besse (1996) states that the encouragement of female education and labor force participation in Brazil did not aim at the "emancipation" of women just like in the case of Turkey (Z. Arat, 1994, p. 61). Even in schools, which provided women with the necessary training for their integration into the capitalist market, women were also taught to internalize their traditional, domestic roles as natural (Besse, 1996, p. 111).

Likewise, Jennifer Patino (2008) states that in Soviet Russia women's labor force participation and emancipating women from the pressures of bourgeois men were ways to overcome the drawbacks of the capitalist legacy and as the only way to constitute a healthy socialist country. Housewives were still responsible for helping their husbands serve the community and for increasing their husbands' productivity. Moreover, motherhood was still defined as the core, natural role of women even though the state was responsible for supporting them with childcare services (Patino, 2008, pp. 144-145). Also, in the 1990s, the Russian state claimed that they returned women's prior domestic roles and femininity to them. However this call by Gorbachev was not new since Stalin had abolished abortion rights to prevent the decline in population despite women's opposition to rearing big families (Kay, 1997, pp. 88-90).

These examples of emphasis on women's roles in the development and nation-building processes of countries reflect the perception of the status of women as an indicator of the success of nation-state regimes. As Besse (1996) illustrates, these policies were also ways to perpetuate patriarchy. The gender system in Brazil was modernized in the twentieth century through legal reforms and integration of women from different classes into the education system and into the market. However, jobs, which were seen as appropriate for women, were extensions of their domestic roles and the gendered division of labor. Through centralized education, they were also trained to become proper women to perform domestic activities at home. As Besse (1996) states, this gender order was internalized by both men and women. The new roles of women were rationalized through presenting them as compatible with the nature of femininity. Therefore, these new roles did not emancipate women but created an illusion of emancipation, which made it even easier for patriarchy to survive (Besse, 1996, p. 201).

These examples are similar in the sense that they all claim an emancipation of women, yet they end up in perpetuating the existing gender roles. Moreover, through these policies women's as well as men's bodies, sexualities and daily lives are regulated by the state. In addition to affecting individuals' daily lives, these policies as well as the gender discourse of the early Republican period have set the historical context for the creation of different discourses on gender equality in Turkey. Moreover, the claim of the early Republican state to overcome gender equality, made other appearances of patriarchy, such as women's association with domestic roles, invisible.

2.7.1. State Feminism in Turkey

Here, I will demonstrate how state feminism in Turkey constituted the notions of gender roles. In the next chapter, I will discuss the relationship between white collar women's "gender talk" and the discourse of state feminism which employs a developmentalist outlook. Consequences of state feminism and early Republican reforms on women's legal rights and social roles have been long debated in Turkey. For instance, Yeşim Arat (1996) characterizes state feminism in Turkey as providing women with some freedom but also preventing their complete emancipation. This situation makes many other aspects of gender inequalities like their domestic and public roles, a double burden, invisible as the institutions of the republic, like the military and the legal system were contributing to the persistence of the gender order. Moreover, even if the laws are in favor of women's emancipation, they are not practiced due to the pre-defined gender roles (Y. Arat, 1996, p. 28). Koğacıoğlu (2004) also declares that the discourses of institutions like law, political parties well as the European Union, which associate honor killings with tradition, also perpetuate honor killings. Perceiving honor killings as an outcome of timeless and unchanging traditions, and constructing a dichotomy between tradition and modernity renders the patriarchal aspect of the modern institutions such as the law invisible. As

Koğacıoğlu illustrates, both the ideology and the practices of law in Republican Turkey neglect women's rights.

Even though the Turkish Republic presented itself as overcoming tradition and providing women with gender equality, Zehra Arat (1994) describes the impact of Kemalist reforms as “the replacement of the Islamic patriarchy with that of a secular Western one” (Z. Arat, 1994, p. 58). She states that these reforms were not carried out for the sake of women's liberation but so that women would be able to serve the nation better by learning how to be better wives and mothers. Also, the inclusion of women in public space was only possible through the modification of women's appearance towards a more asexual and masculine one with the purpose of preserving their modesty. This asexual ideal was constructed so that the Republican woman would participate in public life with men but unlike the image of the Western women, they would stay virtuous. Therefore, state feminism constituted the new Republican woman as “modern but virtuous” (Durakbaşa & İlyasoğlu, 2001, p. 196).

However, it is important to note that Zehra Arat (1994) finds the term ‘state feminism’ which is used frequently by scholars like Deniz Kandiyoti (1987) problematic. As she asserts, in order to call these reforms state-led feminism, the state should acknowledge the existence of gender inequality. Nonetheless in the Turkish case, the state ignores the conflicts within the society, regarding class as well as gender (Kandiyoti, 1987, 317-338 as cited in Z. Arat, 1994, p. 58). This is due to the corporatist ideology employed by the early Republican Turkish state which rejects the political significance of individuals and classes and builds its ideology mainly on “occupational groups” and corporations (T. Parla, 2004, p. 12).

Although the Turkish state ignored the inequalities in the Turkish society, early Republican reforms aimed at overcoming the gender inequality, which was prevalent in the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, the early Republican state acknowledged that there was gender inequality in the Ottoman society, although not in the Turkish society. In this sense, the term “state feminism” is still valid in the analysis of Republican reforms, which claim to emancipate women from the submission of women in the Ottoman society.

State feminism was witnessed in other modernizing societies too. For instance, the state of Iran founded an association that controlled the activities aiming for women’s emancipation. In this way, the state terminated women’s independent organizations. This obstructed the development of a feminist movement that would arise from the individual experiences and preferences of women themselves. In this sense, although state feminism in Iran improved the status of women, it kept any possibility of emergence of women’s independent organizations under control (Paidar, 1996, pp. 52-54). Early Republican Turkey has also gone through a similar process whereby women’s organizations were shut down due to the claim that women’s emancipation was completed with the early Republican reforms.

Until the 1980s, the common perspective in Turkey was that Kemalist reforms freed women (Y. Arat, 1997, p. 103). As Tekeli (1990) states, the conceptualization of gender equality by state feminism was internalized by Kemalist women (p. 31). Emancipation from the traditional absolute authority during the early Republican period was accomplished through an alliance between men and women both of who benefitted from the abolition of the sultanate. Even though how women would take part in the newly founded republic was still determined by men (Berktaş, 2003, pp. 106-107), this process opened a field where a struggle for complete emancipation could take place (ibid. p. 155).

Especially following the 1980 military coup, the gender discourse of the Turkish state was not the only existing gender discourse. Feminist movements are regarded as the major political movements to emerge after the 1980 coup. This is due to the apolitical atmosphere created by the coup that shut down political parties and imprisoned many political activists in Turkey. As asserted by Kardam, this political atmosphere directed women to issues which were not examined before. Moreover some scholars relate this to the persuasion of Marxist women about the inability of a potential revolution to overcome patriarchy but only socialist feminism could do so (Kardam, 1994, p. 158).

As Kardam (1994) states, following the 1980s, rather than “male bureaucrats”, women started to talk about gender equality through their own experiences and world views. Socialist feminists claimed that gender equality was only possible through the formation of a socialist order which would also remove patriarchal relations of power (Kardam, 1994, p. 158). In the 1990s, the feminist discourses became more diversified with the rise of the Kurdish feminist movement as well as the Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgender (LGBT) movement. Kurdish feminism both challenged the Turkish state by demanding their ethnic rights, like the right to be educated in their mother tongue as well as questioning the patriarchal tribal regime (Diner & Toktaş, 2011, p. 42). This was also the period when radical feminists questioned how bodies of women were regulated, for instance through virginity controls (ibid. p. 41). While Kemalist feminism defended secularism and the rights given by Atatürk to Turkish women against the influence of religion, Islamist feminists argued that women were under a double burden with both wage work and housework and that they were actually equal with men under Islam (Kardam, 1994, pp. 156-158). These different feminist movements as well as discourses on

gender equality, emerged on a political and ideological ground which were either fed by the discourse of state feminism or which dealt with its handicaps.

2.7.2. Turkish Nationalism, Orientalism, Developmentalism and Gender Discourses

The gender discourses of the early Republican period and the political actions taken in accordance with them have influenced the gender discourses as well as the feminist movements, which emerged in Turkey. However, it is important to note that the gender discourses of the state are a part of various overlapping discourses. The state claims to educate the masses about how men and women should interact with each other as well as how manners of men and women should be shaped. In this thesis, I will analyze the gender discourses of white collar women in relation to the discourses of the state, nationalism, developmentalism and orientalism. An orientalist outlook is also employed by many social actors, the media, NGOs, the Turkish state and even by feminists while producing their gender discourses in relation to development, modernization and Westernization. This outlook is produced in relation to the attitude of the Turkish state towards the public as the state posits itself as the savior of the public as a mass in need of transformation, education. Accordingly, especially the Eastern parts of Turkey and relatedly the Kurdish community have been pictured as trapped in tradition, backwardness and ignorance (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2008).

As Mesut Yeğen (1999) states, the Turkish state has always treated the Kurdish question as a problem of “political reaction, tribal resistance or regional backwardness, but never as an ethno-political question” (p. 555). However, starting with the nation-building process of the Turkish Republic, the Turkish state systematically ignored the existence of the Kurdish community and tried to assimilate them by forbidding the use of the Kurdish language as well as other elements of the Kurdish culture such as the Kurdish music and Kurdish folklore

(Zeydanlıoğlu, 2008, p.7). Kurdish population was also displaced and relocated in different parts of Turkey both in the first 10 years of the Republic and in the 1990s. Kurdish nationalism was fed by these assimilationist policies of the Turkish state which intensified with the 1980 coup (ibid., p.11). The Kurdish ethnicity was politicized with the radical social movements and rapid urbanization following the 1960s and the 1970s. This resulted in the war between the Turkish army and PKK (*Partiya Karkêren Kurdistan*) (ibid., p. 12).

This historical background influenced the discourses prevalent in the Turkish community. Besides, the discourse on the Kurdish Question, which concentrated on ignoring the Kurdish ethnicity, changed with the transformation of the urban space in the 1980s and the rapid migration of Kurds to the Western cities of Turkey in favor of an “exclusive recognition” in the everyday lives of the middle class (Saraçoğlu, 2009). Middle class residents of İzmir in Saraçoğlu’s study emphasize the “backwardness” of the Kurdish culture through labeling them as “ignorant”.

This points out the production of an Orient in the Turkish territory by the Turkish nationalist discourse. Zeydanlıoğlu presents the discourse on the Kurdish community by the Turkish state as an Orientalist one. As he states, the Turkish community was not exposed to Western colonialism but rather Kemalism employed the Orientalist narrative. By negating the Ottoman Empire through representing them as a “backward” and “Islamic” past, Kemalism created a “Turkish Orientalism” specific to Turkey. By presenting the traditional Anatolian society as underdeveloped because of Islam, they employed the modernization mission. The Kemalist discourse praised the ideal of the Turkish nation while the society inherited from the Ottoman Empire was labeled as “different”, “incomplete” and “in need of transformation” (Soğuk, 1993, p. 374, as cited in Zeydanlıoğlu, 2008, p.5). In accordance with this

developmentalist outlook, the Kurdish community was stated to be in need to be civilized by being assimilated and Turkified (ibid., p. 10).

The Turkish state associated the East with “custom”, “fundamentalism” and “separatist terror”- which were associated with barbarism- in order to gain legitimacy. These characteristics attributed to the East were contrasted with the Kemalist elites who were portrayed as enlightened and civilized (ibid., p. 14). As Koğacioğlu states, this essentialism let the other parts of the country be imagined as free from problems (2004, p. 130, as cited in ibid.). Louisa Schein explains the process of the production of an internal Orient in order to constitute one’s identity as such:

As Edward Said (1978) pointed out, orientalism is productive, and what is produced are ideas and statements that constitute a hegemonic description of the object. Those represented are rendered mute while the culture of the producers of such ideas "gains in strength and identity" by contrasting with the Other as a "sort of surrogate and underground self" (1997, p.72).

As stated by Lila Abu Lughod (2001), Orientalism does not only produce stereotypes but these stereotypes legitimize the power relations between the producer of these stereotypes and those represented in them. Moreover, the difference between the East and the West is not only a geographical difference. This difference is historical and political (Abu Lughod, 2001, p.106). I will also suggest in the following chapter that the discourses produced by white collar women about the “masses” and the Kurdish population in Turkey shape around an Orientalist outlook which goes hand in hand with a developmentalist ideal which forms the backbone of Turkish nationalism. The developmentalist and assimilationist policies of the Turkish state associate the

Kurdish population with patriarchy and gender inequality while Westernization through participating in the modernization project of the Turkish state is stated as the major way to escape from women's oppression. Although the modern institutions of the state, such as the law and the economy reproduce patriarchal relations, this association of the Other with patriarchy lets manifestations of patriarchy and gender inequality among the Turkish population stay invisible (Koğacıoğlu, 2004 & 2011).

To sum up, the Turkish state has associated women's oppression under the Ottoman rule with Islam and claimed to overcome it by educating the public the norms about gender roles and how women and men should share the public space. This developmentalist attitude regards the public as ignorant and as trapped in tradition. In the Turkish context, this outlook creates an Orient in itself, i.e. Kurds and constitutes the Turkish identity through contrasting itself with the Kurdish population. In the next chapter where I present the findings of my fieldwork, I will analyze the gender discourses of white-collar women I interviewed in line with these overlapping discourses of nationalism, Orientalism and developmentalism. The historical background of the formation of gender discourses in Turkey will guide my discussion on the relationship between the constitutions of middle class identities by white collar women and their gender discourses. In this sense, I will present a picture within the new middle class where the discourses on gender are produced at the intersection of class and nationalism, which is fed by Orientalism and developmentalism.

CHAPTER 3

White Collar Women's Gender Talk in Relation to Discourses of Nationalism, Developmentalism, Orientalism and Middle Class Identity

In this chapter, I will present the findings of the fieldwork conducted for this thesis. Firstly, I will discuss how gender discourses are intertwined with nationalism. I will show how the gender talk of my interviewees reproduced the state discourses on gender. Later, I will present the ways through which they located themselves in the middle class and how gender talk acted as a component of their identification with the middle class as well as Turkish ethnicity. As I will demonstrate in this chapter, white collar women associate gender equality with the upper classes while they attribute gender inequality to lower classes and Kurds. My interviewees also differentiated themselves from other members of the middle class through claiming a cultural superiority. Also, I will present how the ideal of a heterosexual family and motherhood was constructed in relation to a claim for moral superiority. Lastly, I will show the construction of womanhood in relation to the white collar workplace.

3.1. Gender and Nationalism Intertwined

Aspects of social inequality, i.e. gender, class, ethnicity and race do not always work on their own but rather the implications of them are intertwined. As Joseph (2000) states, women's experiences of citizenship should be studied considering their gender, class, ethnicity and race altogether. In this part, I will argue that gender inequality is conceptualized by white collar women in Istanbul in relation to the official gender discourses as put forward by the modernization project in republican Turkey and the developmentalist and orientalist outlook of the state. Moreover, ethnically Turkish white collar women differentiate themselves from Kurds through their conceptualizations of gender inequality. That is to say, they argue that they

differentiate themselves from Kurds on the basis that Turkish white collar women have actualized their rights to get education, work and they practice their legal and civil rights due to their middle class belonging. Such conceptualizations place the state as the main actor which is responsible for overcoming gender inequality in accordance with state feminism's definition of gender equality. White collar women define gender roles of men and women as complementary. They assert that these gender roles are natural reflections of biological differences of men and women. These definitions are also in line with the official nationalist discourses, which legitimize women's affiliation with domesticity.

In this part, I will argue that gender roles of middle class white collar women are shaped in relation to nationalism and state feminism which to a great degree determined the context in which multiple gender discourses in Turkey are produced- whether in support of or in opposition to the official discourse of gender equality. Accordingly, I will discuss the conceptualizations of gender inequality and conceptualizations of proper gender relations among my interviewees in relation to their ethnic identity. As I will display, they emphasize their differentiation from Kurds through not being exposed to gender inequality due to their belonging to the Turkish middle class. Later, I will indicate how violence against women and honor killings, which are associated with Kurds, are presented as major manifestations of gender inequality which could be overcome through education, economic development of the Eastern parts of Turkey, and women's participation in the labour force.

3.1.1. Reproduction of the State Discourses

Even though state feminism was not the only gender discourse prevalent in the post-1980 Turkey, I argue that white collar women who politically lean towards a Turkish nationalist perspective, consider the Turkish state to be the main actor which will emancipate women and

achieve gender equality. According to my interviewees, in order to achieve gender equality, the state needs to promote economic development and ensure women's participation in the labor force as well as provide equal opportunities for girls to get education. Accordingly, my interviewees state the economic and cultural backwardness of the "East" as an important reason for the existence of gender inequality. As Ceren, a 26 year old medical project specialist in a pharmaceutical company, stated:

If you take your eyes off our entourage and look at the East, you'll see that they don't school their girls. They can't even attend primary school. Women are oppressed in Turkey. The way to change this is to improve women's level of education. The state must protect women by compensating the part which men exploit.

Through this reproduction of the developmentalist outlook of the state (Koğacıoğlu, 2004), white collar women attribute gender inequality to Kurds and build their middle class Turkish identity by differentiating themselves from Kurds as they utilized the rights to get education and work.

Funda, a 27 year old production assistant in a film production company, also emphasized the role of education in the emancipation of women but she doesn't find the current education system sufficient as it is under the influence of religion. She stated:

When the education and income levels fall, women experience womanhood in more sorrowful ways. There are women who even cannot cast their own vote. ... I believe that there is a consent given (*alan memnun, satan memnun*) in the case of violence against women. This is directly related to education. They are raised like that. 'My husband shall both beat and love me' (*Kocamdır, döver de sever de*) they say. She should understand that

she mustn't get beaten. The education system should teach you to question. We should question tradition.

Funda's words reproduce the tradition/modernity dichotomy the Turkish nationalist discourse is based on. Relating violence against women with tradition and ignorance, she also puts education as the cure for gender inequality as state feminism does.

Women I interviewed commonly state Islam as a reason for the existence of gender inequality. For instance, Çiğdem, a 32 year old budget planning specialist in the construction sector, stated Islam, traditions, customs and ignorance as the reasons for the existence of gender inequality and honor killings in particular and she asserted that education was the biggest problem of Turkey. Through the exhibition of gender inequality rising from ignorance and Kurdish women's lack of information about their legal rights, white collar women differentiate themselves from Kurds. They do so by presenting themselves as free from the reasons for gender inequality, i.e. Islam, traditions, customs and ignorance. Reyhan, a 24 year old architect, emphasized the role of legal enforcement as well as education in ending honor killings. She said:

Punishments for honor killings should be fiercer. This is all about education. Although people say that honor killings are exploited, it should be emphasized that honor killings are not normal. Gender equality can be accomplished if women can go to school, work and have self-confidence by means of these.

Here, Reyhan reduces the problem of honor killings to ignorance and finds the solution in education. This discourse is parallel to the official discourse which associates honor killings with the Kurdish culture and tradition and neglects the patriarchal structure of modern institutions, like the legal system.

As in the case of honor killings, there is a clear distinction drawn by white collar women between East/ tradition, which comprises ignorance, false beliefs, backwardness, accordingly gender inequality, and West/ the modern, which is associated with progress, enlightenment coming with education and gender equality. This outlook is parallel to the approach of the early Republican Turkish state which puts tradition and modernity as a dichotomy and presents Westernization as the cure for tradition (Koğacıoğlu, 2004). Moreover, the statements of my interviewees reproduce this dichotomy, through labeling the Kurdish population as ignorant and under the influence of tradition. This outlook, which is also implied in the gender policies of state feminism, portrays the new Republican woman as freed from the handicaps of tradition and ignorance.

In accordance with this dichotomy of the West and the East, Defne indicated that there is actually gender equality in Western, urban Turkey. As she stated:

I will say that there is gender equality in Turkey. I am looking from İstanbul. There is not a developed economy or equality in the East but there is gender equality in cities like Bursa, Ankara, İzmir and Antalya. The state should enhance the industry in the East. Women should be educated. A female sales person came to the company from Diyarbakır. She was totally different from what I expected. She knew foreign languages. She dressed up nicely. It is a developing economy. Women should be educated and take part in it.

As indicated by Defne, gender inequality is regarded as resulting from the economic underdevelopment of the East, lack of education as well as lack of women's labor force participation. Therefore, she stated that the problem stems from the inadequacy of the East to integrate in the modernization process of the Turkish Republic. Moreover, this inadequacy is

attributed to a Kurdish cultural essence, tradition and the child rearing styles of Kurdish mothers. Through their belonging to the Turkish ethnic community and the middle class which allowed them to exploit the opportunities offered by the early Republican reforms, they presented themselves as free from these manifestations of gender inequality.

3.1.2. Cultural Essentialism and Gender Talk as Ethnicized

White collar women build their middle class Turkish identity through a claim for gender equality. They do so by associating the Kurdish ethnicity- neglecting the diversities in the Kurdish population in terms of class and social status- with gender inequality. White collar women also present themselves as different from Kurdish women through the education they obtained, their jobs as well as their class which is asserted to be free from symptoms of gender inequality, such as violence against women. This difference is illustrated especially through presenting honor killings as a phenomenon inherent in Kurdish culture. In this way, the conceptions of gender equality are ethnicized. Moreover, they reproduce the Turkish nationalist conceptualizations of the East and the West and construct their own identities in relation to their position in this dichotomy.

Honor killings is one of the grounds on which national identities are formed. Gender equality is also claimed as part of national identities in European countries, like Sweden and Belgium which bears a resemblance with the case my interviewees presented. To illustrate, Reimers (2007) discusses the representation of the murder of a Kurdish woman who migrated to Sweden at the age of 7, Fadime Şahindal, by her father in Swedish media. She was a major case of debate in the Swedish media which was either represented as an honor killing stemming from cultural specificities or as an appearance of patriarchy which was stated to be prevalent universally (Reimers, 2007; Kurkiala, 2003). Through her case, Eva Reimers (2007) points out

the intersection of class, ethnicity and gender in categorizations of social groups (Skeggs, 1997 & 2004; De Los Reyes, 2002, as cited in Reimers, 2007, p. 251).

While demonstrating the utilization of gender relations and claims for gender equality as components of drawing ethnic, national and class boundaries, Reimers (2007) refers to an article written in a Swedish newspaper by Kurdo Baksi. Baksi is a Kurdish columnist, who stated that honor killings were actually not prevalent among all Kurds. He asserted that almost all of the incidents of honor killings occur among uneducated Kurds, who live in the rural areas and belong to the lower classes. Besides the Swedish media which presents Kurdishness as opposed to the Swedish identity, Kurdo Baksi also marginalizes the case of Fadime Şahindal as a case unique to lower class Kurds. Reimers also gives the example of Belgian media analyzed by Blommaert and Verschueren (1998, as cited in Reimers, 2007, p. 245) where ethnicity of immigrants was stated as a cause of concern only when the subjects belonged to lower socio-economic classes (ibid., p. 245).

Eva Reimers (2007) regards media's role in reflecting the case as "constitutive rather than representative of common notions" (Reimers, 2007, p. 240). She states that the media treated Fadime's murder through a discourse that denoted the Swedish culture as possessing gender equality and the immigrant community as built on patriarchy. In this way, the problem was represented as a matter of integration. This discourse also referred to violence against women in immigrant communities as resulting from the possession of a backward culture whereas violence against women exercised by Western men was reflected as a matter of psychological and social problem which stemmed from the individual (ibid., pp. 240-241).

Through the case of Fadime Şahindal, Swedish media presented immigrant men who were not able to integrate into the Swedish culture as a threat to women as well as to the Swedish culture and society (ibid., p. 247). This perspective is also prevalent among middle class women I interviewed who present lower class men as a threat of violence towards them; thus as a threat of violence to their middle-class lives based on gender equality. Moreover, the example of Fadime, where she and the media present her way as the Swedish way and her father's as the Kurdish way, is used as evidence of Swedish women being much less subject to gender inequality than Kurdish women (ibid, p. 246). Furthermore, as Reimers (2007) states, the discourse on honor killings stresses the question of how a parent can kill his children. Reimers (2007) analyzes this as a reflection of the norm of the heterosexual nuclear family. In the case of honor killings this is shaped around the contempt of an ethnicity whereas in another case in which a mother was accused of killing her son, this was portrayed as her lacking the necessities of femininity and being a bad mother. These accusations were made through her belonging to the lower class, stressing her licentiousness, her unskilled working class job and being divorced (Dobash, Dobash & Noaks, 1995, p. 6 as cited in ibid., pp. 251-252).

Likewise, my interviewees state honor killings as resulting from child rearing styles of Kurdish mothers, their ignorance and lack of participation in the labor force. They essentialize the Kurdish culture and argue that it is responsible for Kurds' inability to integrate into the modern Turkish society. Therefore, both their ethnicity and lower class belonging are blamed for not possessing norms of gender equality. In this sense, there is a cultural essentialist outlook in the statements of my respondents regarding their view on the reasons for the persistence of gender inequality. East-West distinction and urban-rural duality constitute the basic dimensions

for analyzing gender inequality for most of my interviewees. To illustrate, Gülin, a 25 year old chemist in a laboratory of a private company, stated her view on honor killings as:

Honor killings?! Why are you killing the woman after raping her? You should be killing the man if you will kill someone. Your psychology might also change at a moment and you can do the same thing to a lady and this lady's family will kill her. What if this is done to your mother, daughter or sister? This usually happens in the East. Their thoughts and child rearing styles are different. Even if you educate them, there are people who don't want to change. Huge work should be done to enlighten them.

Here, Gülin differentiates the East from the West through associating honor killings with the East. Moreover, she posits education as the major way to overcome the deficiencies of "their thoughts and child rearing styles" as she calls them. In line with the Turkish nationalist discourse which places tradition and modernity as a dichotomy and presents education as the major way to overcome tradition and achieve modernization, Gülin presents the Kurdish population as a mass to be enlightened, to be modernized.

Likewise, Elif, a 26 year old marketing specialist in the communication sector, presented honor killings as a matter of how children are raised in the East:

I don't think that anything can be done against honor killings. These people don't question what they have in mind. He (*a man who kills her daughter or sister*) is not like a man. Even animals can learn but definitely he couldn't. We live as if these don't happen but they do and it's disgusting. It's not only men but women also do this. Mothers in the East raise their sons by flattering them: 'You are my hero, you are my pasha'. Then we, women, become the ones who cannot speak about equality. We cut our own throats. She raises the

child like that since that is what she learned from her mother. In order to go beyond this, many many years should pass.

Here, Elif portrays Kurdish people as unable to question tradition. She attributes the reason for honor killings to the culture of Kurdish people, which she describes almost as static and unchangeable. As Koğacıoğlu (2004) asserts, this association of honor killings with tradition, which is defined as timeless and static, ignores the patriarchal relations prevalent in different aspects of social life.

Reimers (2007) demonstrates a similar case in the representation of Fadime's murder in Swedish media. Gender relations and gender equality are presented as signifiers of the 'us' and 'other' distinction. Gender equality is posited as central to being Swedish. In this sense, possessing the norms of gender equality, which is defined as equality between men and women, is presented almost as a national characteristic (ibid., pp. 250-251). As argued by Leyla Pervizat (2004), honor killings are perceived as a phenomenon existing among Kurds, therefore among the 'other people' in Turkey. In this sense, association of honor killings with Kurds is a step of the otherization of the ethnic community although honor is a prevalent concept also in the Western part of Turkey. Yet, the murder of women in the "West" is associated with an instantaneous instinct of passion. Pervizat (2004) compares the legitimization of murdering women in Western Turkey with the passion killings in South America. As she states, murdering of women in the "West" is stated to be in common with the so-called passion killings but not with honor killings. However, as she asserts passion killings and honor killings stem from and are fed by similar gendered stigmatizations (Pervizat, 2004, pp. 303-304).

White collar women hold the Kurdish ethnicity responsible for preserving patriarchal norms unlike the Turkish ethnicity does. Lack of labor force participation and women's ignorance as well as honor killings and violence against women are stated as the major grounds where gender inequality presents itself in Turkey. These grounds on which gender inequality presents itself are also exposed as the major problems to be overcome by state feminism. As in Ceren's words, a 26 year old medical project specialist in a pharmaceutical company:

If we go beyond our circles and consider the East, families don't let their girls go to school. The way to overcome gender inequality is educating women. Sexual abuse is also worse in the East. The reasons for gender inequality are Islam and the economic situation. Families invest more in boys as they think that girls could extricate themselves through marriage. Education is the key. They should be educated even before they go to university. Northern countries have accomplished gender equality as they have a good education system and value humans and human rights.

Here, Ceren praises the Northern countries as she portrays them as free from gender inequality. Her words are consistent with the Turkish nationalist discourse which places educating the nation as a major duty towards accomplishing modernization. Moreover, this is presented as the major way to emancipate women. This outlook which praises the Western world and considers Turks as approaching the Western world is actually a characteristic of the Turkish modernization process. As Meltem Ahiska (2003) points out, Turkish modernization has been marked with a distinction between the West and the East which mark progress and backwardness (Ahiska, 2003, p. 366). The conceptualizations of gender inequality by white collar women are fed by the Turkish nationalist discourse of the early Republican period. The nationalist discourse

presents fulfilling the creeds of state feminism as the only way to struggle against gender inequality and to approach the Western world.

Başak, a 26 year old architect in a hierarchical architecture office, argues that less patriarchal gender relations and gender equality exist among the Turkish middle class:

I'm not exposed to gender inequality myself. There are women around me who leave their husbands when they are exposed to even very little violence. People around me don't raise girls and boys differently. They are even happier when it's a girl. However, in general women are associated with indoors and when they get out, this is called dishonor (*namussuzluk*). Maybe, they can't resist this because they can't stand on their own feet. There should be a movement to change everything, not only men-women inequality. Education comes first and we know how it is where there are honor killings.

As Başak stated, the solution is seen in labor force participation of women and in education. Likewise, many of my interviewees presented ignorance and lack of education for both women and men as reasons for gender inequality. As state feminism presents the right to work as a major ground where women would be emancipated, work has a central place in the solutions offered for women who suffer from gender inequality especially when they need to escape from their husbands or fathers. White collar women who present Kurdish women as not participating in the labor force and uneducated associate this situation with the economic and cultural backwardness of the region.

As Mesut Yeğen (2009) indicates, the state discourse has also presented the Kurdish question as a matter of regional backwardness or as the result of the attempts of foreign countries provoking the political characteristic of the Kurdish movement (Yeğen, 2009, p.599). Defining

gender inequality as a problem existing among Kurds goes hand in hand with this state discourse on the Kurdish question as well as state feminism. In line with the discourse of state feminism and the state discourse on the Kurdish movement, my interviewees regarded gender inequality as a problem of backwardness, being uncivilized, uneducated and not participating in the labor force. When I ask them who suffers from gender inequality, besides the lower classes and women who are out of the labor force, they point at the East, i.e. Kurds.

Associating gender inequality with the whole Turkish nation is seen as injustice by white collar women I interviewed, as gender inequality is presented as a phenomenon existing among Kurds as well as the lower classes. Therefore, this can't be generalized to the Turkish society. Nazan, a 28 year old product manager in a pharmaceutical company, presented a case where Turkey is misrepresented with honor killings and the nation's image is hurt:

Before, families wanted their sons to get education but now they also want their daughters to go to universities as it is impossible to bring home the bacon with one salary. Yet, this isn't the same in Diyarbakır or Ağrı. It is another country there. Women are either at home or on the field. They rarely think that their daughters should go to school. Look at what young people here do while girls are killed although they are innocent. These are all holding us back. I have read that Elif Şafak wrote an article on honor killings in Times. I was upset because she wrote an article like that. This damages Turkey's image abroad. Ignorance and bigotry are the worst illnesses and they don't have a cure with a medicine. Education can be a solution, when civilization goes there.

As stated, the cure for the illness of gender inequality and violence against women, in particular, is stated to be adopting the Turkish way of modernity, by learning the norms of

gender equality through education. Likewise, integration is stated as the immediate way to settle the issue of honor killings in Europe, particularly in Sweden. As Reimers (2007) indicates, the Swedish case also presents social mobility as a cure which can be achieved through integration. That is to say, if immigrants learn how to speak proper Swedish, participate in the labor force, get the proper education and therefore learn that gender equality is a common value of being a part of the Swedish society, they would be able to move up to a higher class (Reimers, 2007, p. 249). White collar women I interviewed also present education, work and gender relations as what differentiates themselves from Kurds.

My respondents' gender talk is shaped around nationalist assumptions associating gender inequality with Kurds. As in Nur's words, a 41 year old divorced metallurgical engineer, overcoming gender inequality is presented as a component of the secular, national progress which was started with the reforms of Atatürk:

Gender inequality is in the history of this society. It even penetrated into the genetic codes of the society. In this way, it continues to live. I don't mean to say that it can't change. It definitely can change. However, this is not something that could change from one generation to another easily. We gained our rights with the laws of the Atatürk Period. Of course there was a progress till today. However, there have been recessions too. I feel it a lot nowadays. There might be an increase in the number of women in good positions in the private sector but in general, there is a regression. We would not see women in burqas but now we see a lot of them. In order to progress, we should work altogether. The politicians, the laws... Also the education level of every individual should increase. Media should also change the way it projects violence against women. The way murders are represented in news... They make murdering women seem normal.

As Nur stated, gender inequality is reflected as a problem of cultural deficiencies and being unable to overcome tradition. My interviewees differentiate themselves and men of their circles from the lower classes and Kurds who can't catch up with this national progress. Ideal women are stated to be able to stand on their own feet and ideal men are constructed as urban, unlike the Anatolian men. Anatolian men are displayed as macho and disrespectful towards women. My interviewees, who constantly work with Kurdish men and women from the lower classes because of the nature of their jobs especially, referred to men in Anatolia while describing the characteristics of a disrespectful, uneducated man. White collar women, who work as a bridge between the management in İstanbul and dealers in other cities, refer to the disrespectful attitudes of uneducated men in Anatolia while they discuss how they experience disadvantages of being a woman at work. The disapproved attitude of these men is stated to be stemming from how they are treated in their families, especially by their mothers.

Likewise, Elif offered the child rearing styles of mothers as responsible for honor killings:

Those who engage in honor killings are no longer humans but animals. In the East, mothers raise their boys as pashas. This is about parenting.

This is also reflected by Banu, a 26 year old project director in a market research company, who doesn't have much hope for overcoming gender inequality:

I am not interested in the actions taken for gender equality. I think things are getting worse. Women's shelters do not work either. We should support education from the beginning of childhood. Honor killings start from things that we do not consider important, like traditions, the desire to belong to a nation or a family. 'Our family is like that', 'Our girls

are like that' they say. It is due to lack of education. These reasons seem very meaningful for them because they were brought up so.

As these statements of my interviewees portray, parenting and child raising styles are stated to be generating gender inequality. Moreover, this emphasis implies that they do not possess the norms of gender equality since their parents-especially mothers- did not teach them these norms when they were children. At this point, the formal education is offered as a way to interfere this transfer of the norms of gender inequality to next generations. Likewise, Funda saw the problem in tradition and the solution in an education system which would make individuals question it:

The reason for gender inequality is not questioning traditions. We don't do anything we do now only with our instincts but we learn things. We are exposed to things. Women do not value their own selves. Even having periods is seen as a dirty thing in smaller places. There should also be huge punishments for honor killings as all aspects of it are sick.

As in these statements of my interviewees, there is a developmentalist outlook which points to cultural and economic backwardness of the East as the major cause of honor killings. This outlook is in accordance with the state discourse which reflects tradition and being unable to integrate into the modern world as the major reasons for suffering from gender inequality. As Koğacioğlu (2004) points out, NGOs, media and the Turkish state have framed honor killings as a matter of tradition. Tradition, which is predefined as timeless and static, is posited as contrary to modern institutions. However, this understanding of gender inequality and honor killings in particular covers the fact that institutions also have a role in sustaining patriarchy and honor killings. This 'tradition effect' as Koğacioğlu (2004) calls it, appears in the institutional practices

of the political and juridical authorities. This practice is in line with the statist and nationalist discourse of the Turkish Republic which posits modernity contrary to tradition which would fade away with the establishment of modernity. This understanding reproduces the dichotomy of East and West (Koğacıoğlu, 2004, pp. 121-122).

Attribution of honor killings to tradition is a selective process, in which the ways institutions maintain honor killings is neglected, which makes essentialist assumptions by associating gender inequality with being Kurdish. Gender inequality is reflected as a problem of lack of education which transforms people and the society from a traditionalist ground to a modernist and progressive one. The assimilationist and developmentalist policies are also reproduced through laws, economy and the daily interactions within state institutions. As tradition, which is associated with the culture of the East i.e. Kurds, is seen as the basis of the matter, the solution is put forth as getting the proper education offered by the Turkish state. However, the complicity of patriarchy, capitalism and the state in sustaining the murder of women is ignored (Koğacıoğlu, 2011, p. 213).

This developmentalist and assimilationist understanding is parallel to European countries' offering of integration as the solution to overcome the symptoms of gender inequality, which are stated to stem from the cultural deficiencies of migrants. Korteweg and Yurdakul (2010) indicate that state, media and NGOs in European countries where Muslim immigrant communities are formed, culturally stigmatize the whole Muslim community through their analysis of honor killings. These stigmatizations associate Islam and the civilizational deficiency with the existence of honor killings among these groups. However, the authors assert that this understanding of honor killings relate honor killings to domestic violence neglecting the social

relations and the political context in which the experiences of the immigrant community develop (Korteweg & Yurdakul, 2010, p. 1).

Likewise, in the Turkish case, honor killings are presented as the reflection of the patriarchal dominance over women in the Eastern and Southeastern parts of Turkey, where the majority of the Kurdish population live. These stigmatizations employ cultural essentialism and label an ethnic identity as inherently possessing norms which subordinate women. To illustrate, Hilal, a 25 year old architect in a small architecture office, offered culture as a determinant of the relationship between Kurdish ethnicity and patriarchy:

Although ironically I have an Italian lover, I see myself as an extreme nationalist. I don't hate Kurds but I hate the extremists. I do have prejudices. It will be ethnic discrimination to say so but honor killings are more common among Kurds. They don't value their women. They eat in different tables. I had a Kurdish boyfriend and he would tell me that I wouldn't be able to eat with his father. But when it comes to honor, women become important. I think this is hypocrisy.

Hilal's association of patriarchy with the whole Kurdish population reproduces the dichotomy between Kurds and Turks as possessing different cultural traits. This point of view regards the Kurdish community as degrading women in contrast to the Turkish community. Here, I do not argue that the Kurdish society is not patriarchal, but rather I argue that through attributing gender inequality to Kurds and the lower classes, white collar women define their own identities. This differentiation is made through pointing out to their work, income and education levels which as they argue save them from gender inequality.

Koğacıoğlu (2011) emphasizes the separation of the private and the public spheres which consigns cultural differences to the private sphere by the assimilationist and developmentalist outlook of the Turkish nation-state. The public sphere is closed to claims other than the Turkish identity. That is to say, while the Turkish nation-state tried to form a united, classless society under the Turkish nationality, the public visibility of ethnic differences of individuals was restrained. This was in line with the assimilationist policies of the Turkish nation-state which neglected the ethnic identity of Kurds. These assimilationist and developmentalist policies also regard honor killings as a problem of insufficient development which could be overcome with Westernization. The problems occurring today are perceived as disappearing with advancements towards modernity. However, as Koğacıoğlu (2011) points out, this understanding also takes the nation as “the basic bearer of the will to act in history” (Koğacıoğlu, 2011, p. 187). This is also why knowledge production orbits around an analysis of the extent to which nations are developed. Those who are left outside the national identity stay in “the waiting room of history” as described by Chakrabarty (Chakrabarty, 2000, as cited in *ibid.*, p. 188). The ones left out of history are labeled as ignorant and traditional, through their being out of the reach of modernity, development, education and civilization (*ibid.*).

Koğacıoğlu (2011) states that the legal professionals claim a difference between them and the urban poor through the education they received and therefore, their civilized position which also defends the state. The discourse produced by legal professionals reinforces the dichotomy between tradition and modernity through labeling the urban poor as ignorant and knowing nothing about and even neglecting the way juridical processes work. These legal professionals come to the big cities of Turkey to get the formal education the state offers. Socializing through this education and penetrating in this network become the basis of their fidelity to and

dependence on the state. Education is set as the primary way to overcome ignorance and tradition by these legal professionals. They perceive formal education both as a modernizer and also as a way to change the direction of the perils the state could face (ibid., p. 208).

Education is therefore presented as a tamer for most of the problems of a community on the road to modernity. The major actor offered to procure a proper education is the state. In this way, civilization could be brought to the un-enlightened areas of Turkey. For instance, Özlem, a 22 year old auditor in the outsourcing department of an auditing company, finds the solution for honor killings in awareness-raising campaigns which could be held in the East and in rural places. On the other hand, Defne was reluctant to state that honor killings only happen in the East as many Kurds live in the Western parts of Turkey:

I would say that the East suffers much from gender inequality but I can't as there is a lot of migration to here. We see their family structures. Girls are repressed. The reason for honor killings is the lack of education, ignorance and religion. Although we are all Muslims, I don't think that they have read Quran.

In this sense, Defne presented ignorance, which could be cured with education, as the source of the problem of gender inequality. Moreover, her association of Kurds with an incorrect interpretation of Islam and ignorance reflects the state discourse because these are stated as the reasons of gender inequality as the Turkish state claims to save Turkish women from the influence of Islam.

On the other hand, Seçil, a 25 year old brand manager in an advertising company presented honor killings with the metaphor of habit:

Boys are still favored in families, even in modern ones. Also, girls are not free in small places. Still, there should be a difference as the chemistry of boys and girls are different. The reason for honor killings is what is taught to them. It is like a habit which people can't stop.

This metaphor which resembles honor killings with a habit is significant as it refers to a situated way of doing and being which one cannot abandon. As Seçil associates this with what Kurds learned from their families, it refers to a settled set of cultural norms.

To sum up, gender inequality is stated as a prevalent phenomenon among Kurds. This prevalence is stated to stem from their being unable to internalize the reforms of the early Republican period. Likewise, the gender discourse of state feminism presents gender inequality as a problem of being unable to join the modernization process led by the Republican cadres and of sticking to tradition, religion, therefore staying underdeveloped. State feminism offers women's participation in the public space with men, their labour force participation and civil rights as the answer to the question of gender inequality.

In line with state feminism, my interviewees presented getting an education, participating in the labor force, developing the East economically and helping women realize their legal rights as ways to overcome gender inequality. White collar women, who were able to make use of these rights, present themselves as possessing gender equality. In this sense, these women who identify themselves with the middle class through their current well-paid jobs differentiate themselves from those who have not been able to actualize the norms of the early Republican period through their possession of norms of gender equality.

To conclude, the conceptualizations of gender inequality and the ways to overcome it defined by white collar women are fed by the nationalist gender discourse. Accordingly, they associate Kurds with economic and cultural underdevelopment and state these as reasons for gender inequality. They regard education and work as the major ways to emancipate women from gender inequality and honor killings. White collar women differentiate themselves from Kurds as they possess these qualifications since they are educated and they participate in the labor force. Therefore, white collar women's conceptualizations of gender inequality portray the Kurdish ethnicity as possessing gender inequality while they, as members of the Turkish middle class, regard themselves as free from it.

3.2. Middle Class Identity and Gender Talk

In this part, I will present the role of "gender talk" in marking the class identity of white collar women in Istanbul. I will employ the concept of "gender talk", which is defined as "the discourse on gender" (Omotola, 2007, p. 33), to refer to women's construction of their statements on gender relations, gender (in) equality, gendered discrimination, womanhood, manhood and sexual orientation. While discussing how discursive methods can be used in feminist research, Speer (2005) offers an analysis of individuals' talks on topics like gender and sexuality as being produced differently in different contexts in relation to the social structures. By using "gender talk" as an analytical tool, I will demonstrate how women present their interpretations of different meanings of gender relations based on their class positions and the historical background in which gender norms and conceptualizations of gender equality are produced in Turkey.

In the previous part, I discussed how white collar women's conceptualizations of gender inequality are produced in relation to the nationalist discourse in Turkey by analyzing the ways

through which they associate gender inequality with ethnic identity. In this part, besides ethnicity, I will present how class positions play a similar role in white collar women's claim for gender equality. Through an analysis of the self-identification of my interviewees with the middle class based on their consumption practices, and lifestyles which are generated in middle class habitus (Bourdieu, 1984) besides their job positions, I will display the various ways the middle class is positioned within the class structure as a category of analysis. I will demonstrate white collar women's construction of middle class boundaries based on a claim of possessing gender equality. I will argue that gender inequality is attributed to lower classes that lack the middle class education which is considered to transform individuals by providing them with the consciousness of gender equality. In other words, possessing the norms of republican modernity and civilization procure the proper gender relations which differentiate the middle classes from lower classes in Turkey in the same manner Turks differentiate themselves from Kurds as I discussed in the previous part.

In this part, I will also argue that their representation of an ideal heterosexual marriage and its notion of gender relations are also in relation to the discourses of the Turkish nation-state. The gendered division of labor and women's abandoning of their careers and moving to less paid and less demanding jobs is stated as a necessity for maintaining their middle class lifestyle while starting a family. This is also consistent with the discourse of state feminism which prescribes women to share the public space with men by working while at the same time fulfilling their domestic roles, especially motherhood.

I approach women's gender talk on issues like gender relations, gender equality and womanhood as being established in relation to habitus which is defined as "a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a

matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions” by Bourdieu (1977, pp. 82-83). How tastes, lifestyles, and political positions on what counts as moral signify class positions have been of scholarly interest in Turkey. However, how the middle classes signify their class membership through gender talk remains understudied. In this sense, white collar women’s gender talk is produced at the intersection of the influences of the nationalist discourse, their class belonging and their interactions with their white collar co-workers. Moreover, the gender relations in the workplace are parallel to the official discourse as both of them place motherhood as the primary role of women, associate women with certain jobs while also encouraging heterosexual marriages.

3.2.1. Locating Oneself in the Middle Class

I will treat white collars as members of the middle class both by following Mills (1968) and by recognizing my interviewees’ subjective definitions of class identification. Although the middle class is a heterogeneous group (Lange & Meier, 2009, p. 6), which includes white collar employees-professionals, bureaucrats and civil servants, I will analyze my findings for this specific subset of the middle class.

My interviewees mostly defined themselves as members of the middle class while two architects among them, defined themselves as workers, but not members of the working class. These architects, who defined themselves as workers, indicated the long working hours, low wages and being unable to contribute anything creative to the production process as reasons for their identification as workers. Selin, a 24 year old architect, stated:

I see myself as a worker. I resist it but they try to exploit me. I try not to work on Saturdays or after I come home from work. Yet, I am not different from a worker in a textile workshop. I also use a machine –a computer- like a textile worker does and I work

on autopilot. I don't add anything intellectual. I produce but someone else does the intellectual production. I do the forced labor. I can rarely express my opinion. Although this will change when the trust for me increases, I work like a technician now.

However, these white collar women's self-definitions of being workers do not lead them to identify themselves with the working class. That is to say, they do not build their class identity based on an understanding of class structure as being historically formed through class conflict between the working class and the bourgeoisie. Rather, they perceive classes as "sites of differences" (Skeggs, 1997b, as cited in Bottero, 2004, p. 992). Walkowitz (1999) describes the class identity of social workers in the United States in 1930s as "working class" on the job and "middle class" at home (p. 113). Likewise, Robert Zussman's research on engineers in America indicates that his respondents constructed their identity through defining themselves as "working middle class" (Walkowitz, 1999, p. xv).

In a similar vein, Hilal, a 25 year old architect working in a small architecture office, who perceived herself as a worker, explained:

Ok, I said I am a worker but still I am satisfied with my job although I also need to work on Saturdays half-day. It is just that I am not well-paid and my friends who graduated from architecture in the same year with me earn much more than I do.

As Selin's and Hilal's definitions show us, it would be fruitful to analyze class identities both in relation to their jobs and their consumption patterns. As Bourdieu (1984) states, consumption patterns do not result from individual preferences but rather they are generated within class. He regards these consumption patterns not only as learned through socialization within class but also as a ground on which power relations reveal themselves. That is to say,

class members utilize these consumption patterns in order to indicate their “higher” cultural tastes and education, which in return engender their cultural capital.

My interviewees defined middle class through their incomes, lifestyles, consumption patterns as well as their positions within the companies they work for. Ceren, a 26 year old medical project specialist in a pharmaceutical company, stated:

I have had a good education. I earn more than many people but I consider myself a part of the public. I still need to plan my budget. I see myself probably in the middle class. I don't have an ambition to earn more. I am happy with my class.

Ceren's statement points at her identification with the middle class through the “high quality” education she got and her level of income. Therefore, she defines her cultural capital, which she turned into economic capital, as a marker of her class identity. I shall also state that the cultural and economic capital Ceren points out as linking her to the middle class, is also what insulates members of middle class from manifestations of gender inequality. Besides this classification through income and education, my interviewees also situated themselves as middle class members through having “better” cultural tastes and hobbies. Gülin, a 25 year old chemist working in a laboratory of a private company, argues her class belonging was based on cultural consumption:

I am a member of the middle class. I engage in social activities. I read books, go to the theatre, to movies. Although I don't have time to engage in organizations' events, I spare some time for these.

These cultural tastes and hobbies Gülin spoke about signify her class belonging. Other interviewees who consider themselves as members of the middle class also define class through

income and lifestyle. They emphasize their intellectual and cultural capital through activities like reading books, going to the movies and to the theatre. However, there was the exceptional case of Hülya, a 22 year old auditor working in the outsourcing department of an auditing company, who considers her workload as an obstacle to her intellectual progress although others perceive the monetary benefits of their white-collar jobs as leading to high-quality cultural consumption. Hülya complains about her lack of time to even read newspapers while she was really into reading before she started working for this auditing company. My interviewees also emphasize a mismatch between their income levels and their social class as İpek, a 26 year old industrial engineer working in the construction sector, calls it. İpek stated:

I am a member of the middle class. I can go abroad for holidays. I ski. I take dance and language lessons. Although economically I am in the middle, socially I'm in an upper position compared to other people in my department. Actually, that is because some of them try to support their families with their salaries.

Also, Sevgi, a 26 year old project director in a marketing research company pointed out: "When I consider my position and my salary, I am a member of the middle class but I have luxuries for which my salary is not always enough." As clear in Sevgi's words, the middle class identity is defined along lines of a higher life standard. However, economically, they still need to plan their budget, as they do not have the monetary means to satisfy them in every respect. This is also relevant in their analysis of gender equality. Economic and cultural capital is presented as being directly related to how one experiences gender inequality and gender relations. Upper classes are considered to be exempt from gender inequality since they have the means to isolate themselves from lower classes among whom gender inequality is a prevalent phenomenon. However, as middle class members, they need to interact with the lower classes on a regular

basis in their everyday lives. They state that they interact with them at work or on the way home home at night. These moments appear as such when they are exposed to the manifestations of gender inequality, such as molestation and violence against women.

3.2.2. Gender Talk as a Marker of Class

Representation of the lifestyle of lower classes as inherently containing aspects of gender inequality, like violence against women and women's lack of participation in the labor force, has appeared as a central theme in my interviews. Certain ways of experiencing gender relations and gender equality and inequality emerge as markers of class boundaries. These conceptualizations separate the middle class both from the lower classes and from the upper classes. Briefly stated, white collar women present gender inequality and patriarchal gender relations as inherent to the lower classes and Kurds. They state that gender equality exists among the middle class; however, their limited economic capital does not allow them to escape from encountering the social groups, which possess norms that subordinate women. These encounters with the lower classes are presented as instances of being exposed to discrimination and are given as examples of gender inequality. In a similar vein, Bacchi (1988) states that middle class women's ideas on gender equality and their womanhood are closely related to their class identity (Bacchi, 1988). Women's perception of gender equality as a norm reflects their conception of their own class identity as well as how they view and give meaning to other class positions. Likewise, my interviewees' conceptualizations of gender equality and womanhood are engendered in relation to the conditions of white collar work, their class belonging which is defined in relation to their work and the benefits of their work as well as the historicity of the gender discourse of Turkish nationalism. In other words, their discourses on gender are generated within a complex structure of social hierarchies that are formed through a play of different basis of stratification like class and ethnicity.

Besides the intertwining of class belonging and interpretations of gender equality, Bourdieu (1990) displays how class belongings and gendered stratification work together to perpetuate social groups' position in the society. He indicates that gender roles function as reproducers of class positions. He regards gender inequality as a display of symbolic domination. He concluded his research on masculinity among Kabyle, a North African ethnic community, by stating that masculine domination and feminine-masculine opposition had been naturalized through everyday life practices and organization of social space. It had even settled in the bodies of men and women. Men and women are socialized in a way that women are associated with the domestic and pastoral space while men are associated with the public space. The masculine and feminine duality is written on the social world, which is in turn embodied and reproduced in habitus. Here, Bourdieu's definition of habitus is generative but not determinative. It employs an active and creative relationship between the subject and the world. It is not simply a collection of norms, which are absorbed from outside but rather lived, performed and penetrating into bodies of individuals (Bourdieu, 1990b, as cited in McNay, 1999, p. 99-101).

Puri (1999) also displays how Indian middle class women's self-definitions emerge in relation to their class belonging, which is also related to nationalism. Marriage and motherhood are the major components of what is seen as the expected path that a woman belonging to the middle to upper class goes through. She points out that womanhood and heterosexuality are the major means of social control. Puri (1999) considers these narratives that she heard from the women she interviewed as reflections of the post-colonial nation-state and nationalism, which shape the Indian national identity, the transnational cultural codes as well as the benefits of their class position. She also extends her study to a larger group, including LGBT people where she analyzes how LGBT people interact with these hegemonic discourses both in the national and

transnational contexts which impose certain desirable schemes of gender relations (Puri, 1999, pp. 17-19). In this sense, the daily lives of women as well as LGBT people are shaped in relation to discourses prescribing heterosexist and sexist norms as their experiences are both shaped under the influence of these discourses which they also challenge.

As Bourdieu (1990b, as cited in McNay, 1999, pp. 99-101) and Puri (1999) state, notions about womanhood, gender relations as well as gender equality originate in habitus. The norms and notions of women on gender relations; proper womanhood and the meaning of gender equality also originate in class but at the same time being fed by the nationalist conceptualizations of gender roles. The gender talk of white collar women I interviewed is also in line with how state feminism defined gender roles and ways to overcome gender inequality. Moreover, in accordance with the construction of the national identity in the Republican period, white collar women stigmatize homosexuality and perceive it as a threat to the social order. Their definitions of womanhood are also shaped around monogamy, morality, a heterosexual family and motherhood. White collar work is also stated to be central to their identity which shouldn't be negotiated. These reflect the proper definitions of manhood and womanhood as established by state feminism.

3.2.3. Ideal of Heterosexual Family and Motherhood

Conceptualizations of gender relations by my respondents as well as their descriptions of womanhood are shaped around the ideal of a heterosexual nuclear family where they posit themselves as good, emotional mothers. These conceptualizations are in line with the nationalist discourses, which build on heterosexual families as the basic unit of the nation and which assign women the duty of being virtuous mothers who would transmit the national values to next generations. White collar women also differentiate themselves from mothers from the lower

classes accusing them of being less educated and being unable to raise children properly. As I discussed in the previous parts, Kurdish mothers are also presented as unable to transmit the civilized gender norms to their children. An important reason for the existence of gender inequality among these groups, i.e. the lower classes and Kurds is stated to be the raising styles of mothers, which are fed by tradition rather than by modern education and reason.

Moreover, motherhood and marriage are asserted to be the already drawn pathways for them. As they indicate, although companies do not want them to get married and have children since these are considered to hinder high performance, they feel pressure from their families as well as their white-collar circles to get married. Merve, a 26 year old specialist in the construction sector, stated that an aggressive woman at work is usually labeled as one left on the shelf (*evde kalmış*) and is made fun of. Therefore, the pressure to get married is always felt in the white collar entourage. Furthermore, heterosexual marriage in the white collar entourage is reflected as a way to sustain the middle class lifestyle while remaining faithful to what is gained through the reforms of the early Republican period by staying in the workforce. Therefore, they indicate that they feel a pressure from their co-workers to get married while also placing marriage as central to womanhood. Even though marriage and motherhood are not presented as obstacles to working in general, they necessitate working at a job proper for wives and mothers. Therefore, they transfer to less-paid jobs while their husbands work in more career-oriented jobs. From a functionalist perspective, they present this as an essential division of labour and a means to sustain their middle class lifestyle while also complying with the demands of their circles as wives and mothers.

Gül, a 31 year old mother who works in the human resources department of a bank, indicated that she and her husband need to earn a good amount of money to live in İstanbul,

where they can send their son to good schools. However, she also stated that because of both her husband and herself working in demanding white-collar jobs, they would not be able to spare time for their child. She presents her choice of working in a less paid job as congruent with the division of labour necessary to sustain the family and the middle class lifestyle which require both a high level of consumption and good parenting:

In this company, mostly women work. Men's career objective is to rise up in the organization. Here, it is pre-defined when you will be promoted so you are not rewarded with your performance. Therefore, your performance is not really important but rather friendships and social relations are the important thing. I used to work in a better paid job but I would leave the workplace at 9 or 10 pm. I could continue working there but then I wouldn't be able to spare any time for my child. I didn't work for 2 years when we had the baby. I transferred to this job afterwards. My husband works in a more demanding and well-paid job. We shared our roles in the marriage. We became like a company ourselves.

As in Gül's words, sticking to gender roles and the gendered division of labor appear as central to the perpetuation of middle class family lifestyles. Even Seçil, a 25 year old brand manager in an advertising company, who criticized women's urge to get married, describes womanhood through motherhood. Likewise, Elif, a married marketing specialist at the age of 26, defined her ideal woman as a good mother standing on her own feet preferably running her own business. She states this definition of an ideal woman as:

I believe that a woman should own her own business, if possible. It could even be managing a boutique. She could even sell wool. Yet, she should spare enough time to

show the loving kindness of motherhood to her children. Although she lives in a metropolis, she should reserve feminine naivety and intelligent emotions, which are also sought by men in women. Otherwise, everybody resembles each other. She should also preserve her unique physical beauty.

These notions of manhood and womanhood which are reproduced in the white collar workplace are not dissimilar to the notions implied by the Turkish nationalist discourse since it also portrays women as being emancipated through the early Republican reforms, but also accomplishing their duties to the nation as virtuous mothers. Moreover, the official discourse presents men as strong, masculine and civilized heterosexuals. My interviewees' statements about men being more professional and women more emotional since their prior role is motherhood reflect these notions being produced in the workplace. As Oya, a 29 year old banker, stated:

It is easier to work with men. Men are more professional. They don't reflect their emotions to work. Women reflect their mood to work but men can control their emotions. As women care more about their children, their husbands can concentrate on work better. Men don't want their wives to be bankers but teachers so that she would be able to look after the child properly. This is about social roles and maybe this is the correct way of doing it.

This emphasis on motherhood as a central aspect of being a woman reflects the accepted gender roles. These accepted gender roles are only possible within an established heterosexual family. Fulfilling these gender roles are ways to perpetuate the middle class lifestyle and to conform to what is expected from them by their families, other white collars as well as the

nation. This is not unique to the Turkish case. Likewise, different ideologies like nationalism (Davis, 1997) and socialism in the case of Soviet Russia (Kay, 1997) have defined proper women and men through determining the proper- heterosexist- ways of leading their sexual, marital and daily lives.

Proper gender roles defined by the nationalist gender discourse in Turkey involve heteronormativity, which is compatible with the norms possessed by middle class women I interviewed. During the early Republican period, proper ways of being female and male citizens were defined. These definitions of femininity and masculinity were constructed under a strict gender binary and heteronormativity. Republican reforms defined the ideal Republican woman as one who would participate in public life but she would also be the transmitter of the national values to the next generations (White, 2003). She would be visible in the public space but she had to be modest, obedient and conscientious at home. This new Republican woman is presented as a woman who is purged from gender inequality, as she possesses equal suffrage rights, the right to work, to get education, and is freed from the veil. The ideal of a working, university graduate woman who would get married and raise good generations is embodied in the white-collar women I interviewed. These women are well aware of their concord with the ideals defined by the society.

The attempts of the state for improving the status of women are criticized for their functionalist approach in literature. As Yakın Ertürk (2004) successfully points out, women were granted privileges since they were given the role of symbolizing the modernity of the country. However, the boundaries of the public space women are included in are still defined by the state. Therefore, she reads this process as exchanging private patriarchy with public patriarchy. The

framework of the new woman of the Republic was drawn by the state in relation to the construction of the identity of the Turkish man (Kandiyoti, 1997).

Besides the Republican discourses, which are heteronormative, reports of organizations like UNICEF, United Nations and World Economic Forum neglect the fact that LGBT people are also suffering from the existing gender order.³ However, masculinity studies have acquainted us with the knowledge that patriarchal gender regimes actually suppress both men and women with their enforcements for becoming proper women and men (Connell, 1995; Gilmore, 1990). Therefore, in order to comprehend gendered inequalities, scholars should go beyond a dual understanding of gender and analyze how different groups and individuals encounter with patriarchal norms. Joane Nagel (2004) approaches the issue by declaring that the criticisms against research on nationalism and state about not including gender as a category of analysis also were based only on an analysis of women. However, nation-states are masculine institutions, and reducing gender to women results in neglecting how masculinity is constructed within the process of nation-building (Nagel, 2004, pp. 68-70).

Likewise, for instance, the Turkish nation-state has constructed its national identity with an emphasis on masculinity through labeling the Turkish nation as a military-nation and making the military service, which is obligatory only for men, a base of citizenship (Altınay, 2004). Turkish national identity is also shaped through defining ideal men and women as heterosexual, moral individuals who possess the qualities of Turkishness, as Kandiyoti (1997) presents:

³ As examples, Gender Gap Report 2010 of World Economic Forum, UNICEF Gender Policy 2010 Report 'Working for an Equal Future: UNICEF Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Girls and Women' could be examined. For instance, in UNESCO's Gender Equality and Equity Report of 2000, even though the fact that women can have different 'sexual preferences' is recognized, this is presented as only a marker of their heterogeneity.

The nationalistic moralism of the early modernizers could condemn both the license and freedom associated with the West and what they interpreted as elements of degeneracy in the patriarchy of local tradition. Defining responsible social adulthood in terms of monogamous heterosexuality was not only a matter of proscribing co-wives, concubines, and child brides but also of taming other, unruly forms of male sexuality. The world in which the former palace boy could become a respected patriarch and in which sexualities and life cycles could merge and mingle in fluid ways had passed. A rising nationalist elite was giving voice to and shaping a new normative order. Although a history of Ottoman sexualities remains to be written, we must acknowledge that the emergence of contemporary gender identities cannot be fully grasped without being informed by this history.

In this way, nationalism constructs a gender binary through positioning men and women into strictly drawn grounds. Masculinity and femininity are stated as contradictory categories. These strict categories do not let any transitions by defining homosexuals as crossing these lines, making them either feminine men or masculine women, that is to say labeling them as abnormalities. This heteronormative discourse is prevalent among white collar women I interviewed, as it appears in Elif's, a 26 year old marketing specialist working in the communication sector, words:

Personally I don't like homosexuals, not because of their sexual preferences. I respect them but they especially have only female friends and they take women's bad sides, like gossip and jealousy. Maybe, that's their way of finding a place in the society.

Elif's words demonstrate both women's identification with negative attributes of jealousy and gossip and also homosexuals' association with a position that wanders between men and women, which are assumed to be stable gender positions.

Similarly, the ideal man framed by my respondents is respectful towards women, but is still stated to be stronger than them. In this sense, men are defined within their relationship to women. This idea of men as being polite, respectful but naturally stronger than women and better suited for certain jobs, presents a normative masculinity which is considered to be the civilized way of being a man. This image of civilized men is also put against lower class manhood who are accused of being uncivilized, uneducated, therefore not having internalized the proper gender roles. Lower class men are presented as lacking respect towards women through their exercise of violence against their wives, not helping women in housework, not letting their daughters go to school and not knowing how to treat women properly.

Mosse (1988) associates the ideal of heterosexual, moral masculinity with the emergence of bourgeois society as it provided the essential gender roles for the organization of capitalism, modernity as well as nationalism. That is to say, through displaying a normative masculinity, the nation and the capital were provided with strong, respectful men who could join the work force and provide new citizens to the nation. Mosse presents the link between middle class identity and a proper heterosexual family. Masculinity, a proper family life and respectability were stated as the essential norms promoting the clear lines between what is normal and abnormal. Accordingly, middle class lifestyle was shaped around the norm of respectability. This lifestyle excluded homosexuality as it was regarded as a loss of the order of sexes and an animalistic expression of sexual instincts (Mosse, 1988, pp. 24-25).

Moreover, nationalism attacked homosexuality as well as masturbation as they disserved the growth of nations instead of manly sexual reproduction, which would promote the health of the nation as well as the state. Besides the construction of masculinity promoting national growth, the idealization of a modest woman is also in accordance with the demands of the nationhood and the state. Mosse (1988) emphasizes the role of respectability as a dominant norm in establishing the order of the bourgeois society as well as the national order (ibid., p. 34). In this process of nation-building, nationalism also generates the idea of an innocent and self-effacing woman in order to prove its honorableness (ibid., p. 90).

The statements of my respondents are fed by a similar discourse of nationalism. Nationalism and state policies have influenced the formation of gender discourses in Turkey, like in other parts of the world as presented in the post-colonial literature (Chatterjee, 1989; Chakrabarty, 1997 & Abu-Lughod, 1990, as cited in Patico, 2008). My interviewees' statements reflect conceptions of the nationalist discourse, which define gender equality through the equality of men and women before laws and emphasize the morality sustained through controlling individuals' sexualities.

Mostly, respondents' assertions on homosexuality correspond with these accepted gender roles established by state feminism, which propose norms of womanhood and manhood. These norms define heterosexuality as the one and only normal relationship form. Heterosexuality and heterosexual marriage are stated to be what is expected from them to fit with their white collar co-workers. On the other hand, my interviewees had a tendency to state that they are tolerant towards homosexuality, by indicating that they recognize the fact that it was a consequence of the play of hormones. Still, most of my interviewees are positive towards sex change operations and some see sex change more acceptable than homosexuality. This can also be interpreted as a

reflection of the dominant gender discourses, which require the establishment of clear boundaries of womanhood and manhood. As this perception states you might not have been born into the right ground but as long as you want to be inside one of these and do not swing in between, you are acceptable.

Heterosexuality is a crucial component of morality approved by white collar women, which is also connected to their ideal of heterosexual families. This ideal reflects the discourses of nationalism on acceptable sexuality and the pressures of their entourage to make heterosexual marriages, as Seçil, a 25 year old brand manager working in the advertising sector proposes:

I am a homophobic. Gay marriages are not necessary. There would not be any healthy generations with homosexual parents. However, it is not nice for them to live out of the society repressed, either. Transsexuality disturbs one much less. It is about one's creation and hormones. The state should even help them have operations. This is something more understandable than homosexuality. They should not be walking around like freaks (*ucube*)⁴. Male sex organ with female body, this is against nature!

Seçil's proposition of transsexuality as a more acceptable way of being reflects her embracement of clear lines between men and women as she embraces the idea that one's physical appearance should correspond to one's sexual orientation even though this physical appearance is the result of a physical modification. Therefore, for her, transsexuals fall in one side of the line, which differentiates men and women whereas transvestites and homosexuals wander in the grey lines, which violate proper gender roles. Pinar Selek (2007) demonstrates the connection between these conceptions and the ideal of heterosexual families:

⁴ She refers to transvestites with the word 'ucube'.

Heterosexual relationship is the basic element of family, which undertakes the power relations between sexes. Homosexuality does not reproduce the power relations between men and women. Therefore, patriarchy has always excluded and stigmatized homosexuality (p. 50).

Reflections on sexuality and sexual freedom are major components of the gender talk of women I interviewed. These reflections defend the ideal of monogamous heterosexual relations, which replicate their notions of heterosexual marriages. Relatedly, my interviewees claim a moral superiority through their morally justified sexual practices. They actually have a positive attitude towards sexual intercourse before marriage. However, they are mostly concerned about the moral corruption that would come with promiscuity. Moreover, the purpose of defending sex before marriage does not stem from an idea of sexual freedom, a claim for removing patriarchal domination over men's and women's bodies through the control of sexuality, or the idea that women should also have sex for pleasure; but rather, it is defended for the sake of the permanency of marriages.

As I stated before, they posit marriage and motherhood as central to being a woman. However, they also complain about the pressure on them to get married right after graduating from university. Yet, this pressure is also internalized as they also set marriage as a step to actualize their womanhood. When it comes to sexual intercourse before marriage; besides Gülin, a 25 year old chemist in a laboratory of a private company, who also thinks that girls should be raised differently by protecting them, sex before marriage is approved. To illustrate, Funda, a 27 year old production assistant in a film production company, criticized the pressure on women's sexuality which is shaped around norms about virginity:

I can understand why monogamy appeared in the first place but I don't understand being a virgin before making such a huge decision- getting married. Women are not seen as individuals who shall have pleasure from sexual intercourse.

However, other interviewees defended sexual intercourse before marriage mostly because one should get to know his/her life-long partner, or other problems might appear afterwards. Therefore, this freedom is stated as important for the sake of the perpetuation of marriages although sexuality is presented as a ground on which morality is defined.

3.2.4. Conceptualizations of Gender Equality in Relation to Class

The ways in which women I interviewed defined gender equality are compatible with the discourse of state feminism as they highlight the importance of education and labor force participation as cures for gender inequality, which they associate with Kurds and the lower classes. These gender equality definitions are LGBT blind, considering men and women as dualities. Furthermore, gender (in) equality is defined in relation to middle class identity. White collar women regard the middle class as free from the reasons giving rise to gender inequality, like women's lack of labor force participation or their right to get education. However, they state that middle class women do not have the means to protect them from the symptoms of gender inequality, which is also stated as the mind-set of the lower classes. Merve, a 26 year old specialist working in the construction sector, stated:

Wealthy people, those without prejudices and those that are in an environment with open-minded people, easy-going people might not be exposed to gender inequality. Maybe the A class but not people around us.

Moreover, as in Seçil's, a 25 year old brand manager working in the advertising sector, words, upward mobility is seen as a way to escape from gender inequality:

There is an insincere moral understanding in Turkey, like where I grew up, Rize. This should be overcome. I haven't felt gender inequality myself. It is something I observe. I would feel so if I was still in Rize, if I hadn't come here for university education and if I got married. I have friends who got married and had children. They are subject to everything their mothers-in-law say. I could have been like that, too.

Selin, a 24 year old architect, who is against positioning the state as the major actor towards achieving gender equality unlike most of the other interviewees, refers to class as the source of gender equality. She states gender inequality as a deficiency, which can be overcome when moved to the upper classes:

We (men and women) are not equal. We think differently when we see the same picture but there should be gender equality in the sense that women should be able to walk freely in streets at night or they shouldn't ask you if you plan to have a baby in job interviews. We're not equal but a balance could be achieved.⁵ However, these rights should be given to people by the people, not by the state. These rights might exist in a limited group; I mean socially and culturally higher groups. They live so, since they interact only to each other but they would face gender inequality if they moved to lower grounds.

Unlike Selin, most of my interviewees indicate that there is inequality between women and men by nature, but it is the duty of the state to protect women as they are weaker than men. This idea

⁵ "Eşit değiliz ama bir denklik sağlanabilir."

of the natural inequality appears in Çiğdem's words, a 32 year old budget planning specialist working in the construction sector:

Gender equality should be accomplished at work but we are not equal naturally. Women are more fragile and men are rowdy, by their fabric.

This physical difference between men and women, which is stated as the major source of gender inequality, is displayed as the source of violence and as an obstacle towards women's being socially equal with men. This natural difference is stated as one that has to be brought under control, especially by education and state control. Accordingly, violence against women, which is stated to arise from lack of education, is presented as the major symptom of gender inequality.

White collar women speak about threats like molestation and rape as the major reflections of gender inequality in their lives. However, these threats are displayed as coming from other social groups among whom gender inequality exists. Most of them assert that it is almost impossible for them to walk on streets at night freely. Besides the fact that there are a lot of events of rape and harassment, what is interesting is that these men on streets are presented as naturally wild and uncivilized. Sevgi's, a 26 year old project director working in the market research company, assertion describes her encounter with gender inequality materialized in violence:

Even educated women are exposed to violence. We live with fears of harassment. I can't wear what I want to. I can only live in Beyoğlu, Cihangir or Nişantaşı⁶.

⁶ These neighborhoods are known for their upper class residents.

İpek's, a 26 year old industrial engineer working in the construction sector, statement about her uneasiness about walking home at night is a good illustration of the issue, as she puts it: "I can't walk freely at night since there is a chance that a man will jump on me but I won't jump on him as I don't have that instinct." As in İpek's words, lower class men on the streets are presented as violent and ready to attack. This image of men as always ready to have sex and even to attack and rape women is a reflection of the discourse, which restricts women's sexuality. As İpek puts it, men are perceived as wild creatures who demand sex from women, and women's sexuality should be circumscribed as men would "use" them. Likewise Çiğdem asserted:

Although we can speak about sexuality in daily language, Turkish men are always hungry for this. There is sexual hunger in Turkey, which results in harassments. Not my men who work in my company, those who go to Asmalımescit⁷ or those living in Kanyon⁸ or Ataköy⁹, would do so. Yet, when you're in Gaziosmanpaşa¹⁰, at places on the other side of Taksim¹¹, they eat you with their eyes. Like in Merter¹², there are a lot of bad lots.

As in Çiğdem's words, predisposition to sexual violence is stated as a natural male characteristic; however, with education, men could be civilized by learning how to control their instincts. In this regard, lack of education both of women and men is posited as the major reason of gender inequality and proper education is posited as the solution to it. Merve's, a 26 year old

⁷ Asmalımescit is known for its bars and pubs mostly preferred by students and white collars.

⁸ Kanyon is a plaza in İstanbul, which is both a shopping center, a residence accompanied with offices.

⁹ Ataköy is a neighborhood in İstanbul with one of the first satellite towns in Turkey.

¹⁰ Gaziosmanpaşa is a neighborhood in İstanbul where mostly migrants live.

¹¹ Here she refers to Tarlabası where mostly migrants, Kurds and gypsies live.

¹² Merter is where she used to work. It is a neighborhood with a lot of textile workshops.

specialist working in the construction sector, words which display her experience of gender discrimination at work also illustrates this emphasis on education as a solution to pull men from their ignorance about how to behave women:

Salespeople in the company are all men, either primary school or high school graduates, they are *kiro*¹³ and macho. It is impossible to communicate with them. They do not respect you since you are a woman.

Education is emphasized as the major cure for gender inequality since the main reason for the existence of gender inequality is stated as being uncivilized and lacking education. Possessing the qualifications coming with education is presented as the way to overcome gender inequality. They differentiate themselves from the lower classes through the education they got and therefore possessing norms of gender equality. Accordingly, the way to overcome gender inequality is presented as educating the whole ignorant community as Merve stated:

I don't know what could be done to overcome gender inequality. Different things should be tried. Men should be educated. Education is a pre-condition. They were brought up like this. They are flattered when they are circumcised. They live their first sexual experience in brothels. This is even flattering. If a woman does this?! She can't even do it. Everyone has physical needs. Men can do that but not women. It is really difficult to equate these people. The state should take action. For this, we shouldn't have a government with an Islamic outlook.

¹³ Kiro is a distorted version of the word kuro, which means boy in Kurdish. However, embedded in daily language, it refers to a lowbrow, hick person, as a racist connotation.

Education is both a means to reproduce class (Rutz and Balkan, 2010) and a means to claim cultural superiority and accordingly a claim for the existence of gender equality. The idea of civilizing ignorant masses is prevalent among interviewees. The state is presented as the major actor, which would transform individuals through education. Moreover, the rearing styles and education exercised by families are stated as the predecessors of the mind-set that gives rise to gender inequality. Family as the initial institution of education is stated as one to be shaped by the state. As in İpek's words concerning how gender inequality and honor killings could be overcome:

Education is the solution but primarily family education. University education is also important, as it is the best environment for boys and girls to be friends. The state can found institutions where children would get education about sexuality and human rights. Otherwise, families would transfer their own ideas to the children.

The theme of educating the masses appears in different schemes. To illustrate, morning shows whose target audience is women are criticized frequently. These programs are perceived as ways to make women "even more ignorant". For instance, Seval, a 27 year old marketing manager working in the industrial automation sector, asserts that women should be working, not watching marriage programs. Media is put forward as a means to be used to educate people, not to deceive them. Besides media, the use of public space as a ground to orient individuals' behaviors towards a civilized ground is emphasized by Başak, a 26 year old architect working in a hierarchical architecture office:

As we all know, during the early Republican period, there were attempts to organize women-men relationships, to teach them how to behave towards each other. Parks like

Ankara Youth Park enabled the visibility of women and men in the public space, which enhances social education. We can see in Atatürk's pictures how he values dancing, or the culture of drinking alcohol together. There were ads of women and men drinking beer together when a park in Taksim was first opened in 30s. Men and women do not know how to interact with each other. The first thing to do should be social education to change these daily relations, but it is really hard with a state whose minister responsible of family, Aliye Kavaf, says "Homosexuality is a disease."

As in Başak's words, the public appears as a group shorn of the civilized norms of gender equality. Early Republican state's attempts to civilize individuals through the use of public space are presented as an unfinished project towards achieving gender equality. Moreover, once again, education as a modern institution is reflected as a healer of this deficiency. They also present their difference from the "ignorant public" through the formal education they got and see these norms of gender equality as widespread within their own class. In this sense, their conceptualizations of gender equality and a claim for possessing gender equality construct their class boundaries. Therefore, these reflections on gender equality cannot be analyzed without taking their position within the class structure into account.

As illustrated, women structure their class identity through these definitions, differentiating themselves from the lower classes. Gender inequality is seen as a phenomenon existing among the less educated i.e. the lower classes and Kurds. Moreover, they perceive the upper classes as relieved from gender inequality since they do not face the threats that middle class women face. That is to say, they define their experiences of gender inequality through their encounter with the lower classes on the street and at work. Upper classes are stated as not being

exposed to these as they have the means, both economic and social, to live in an isolated environment free from gender inequality.

In this part, I have demonstrated how class and nationalism are intertwined in white collar women's gender talk. Besides the association of gender inequality with the lower classes according to the definitions of gender equality by state feminism, an ideal of heterosexual family and heteronormativity also appear as central to their definitions of manhood and womanhood. They define womanhood through marriage and motherhood while preserving their privileges as middle class women such as working. Moreover, they also differentiate themselves from lower class women through their participation in the labor force and education levels, which is also seen as a way of overcoming gender inequality. Lower class men are also presented as uncivilized and uneducated who haven't internalized the norms of modernity and gender equality. As illustrated, gender talk of white collar women appears as a way to draw their class boundaries.

3.3. Producing the Gender Talk and Middle Class Boundaries in the Turkish Context

The literature on how class boundaries are formed in Turkey demonstrates that through consumption and urban segregation, the middle classes differentiate themselves from the lower classes. I want to add another dimension to the formation of class boundaries and argue that claims for the possession of gender equality are also tools to differentiate the middle classes from the lower classes. Moreover, through an emphasis on participation in the labor force, an ideal middle class woman is defined as a working and well-educated woman, therefore not being exposed to gender inequality. As I have discussed in previous parts, these characteristics differentiate middle class womanhood from lower class and Kurdish womanhood.

Furthermore, white collar workplace appears as a space where white collar women experience their womanhood. White collar work is central to their constitution of middle class boundaries as they declare that their income and positions in their workplaces are what place them in the middle class, in addition to their consumption patterns. Moreover, white collar workplace appears as a space where they experience and reproduce the middle class praxis. This is where white collar women socialize with other members of the middle class and engage in the consumption practices. The characteristics attributed to women and men at white collar work are also reflected on women's definitions of womanhood and manhood. They describe womanhood by including motherhood as well as what they define as gender equality, i.e. a good quality education and work.

Moreover, by declaring that they were discriminated at work because of their gender, white collar women distinguish themselves from those whom they were discriminated by, through a claim of cultural superiority. That is to say, the reasons for the discrimination they face are linked to individuals' inability to internalize modernity or their lacking a good education. In these ways, they construct an ideal middle class womanhood. Also, being a responsible mother is stated as central to being a woman even though it contradicts with the demands of white collar work. Furthermore, these definitions of middle class womanhood and manhood go hand in hand with the definitions of gender roles as stated by the official discourse.

3.3.1. Middle Class Habitus and Spheres of Differentiation

The diverse mechanisms used by the middle classes in the symbolic struggle for social closure, for distinguishing themselves and for exclusion through construction of class boundaries should be emphasized (Sulkunen, 1992). Studies on the formation of class boundaries in Turkey concentrate on how the middle classes differentiate themselves through consumption and spatial

segregation (Ayata, 2002; Bartu Candan & Kolluođlu, 2008; ınar, 2005; Durakbařa & Cindođdu, 2002; ncü, 1999; Yashin, 2002). To illustrate, Durakbařa and Cindođdu (2002) state that urban shopping experiences of individuals from different social classes differ as the urban middle classes prefer shopping malls in the center of the city although they live in suburban areas; whereas, the lower classes prefer corner shops, groceries and butchers which are located in their own neighbourhood. On the other hand, Bartu Candan and Kolluođlu (2008) indicate that upper-middle class inhabitants of Gktürk¹⁴ try to spend their time as much as possible in their own neighborhood or in Etiler and Niřantařı¹⁵. They feel disturbed and even terrified when they are in neighborhoods they are not familiar with, like Dolapdere¹⁶.

Avoidance from the lower classes is also prevalent in my interviewees' responses. Defne gave an account, which is an illustration of her disturbance by being exposed to the lower class praxis:

I belong to the upper class if I don't consider my family. I can eat where I like to eat. I feel that I don't enjoy doing things in a lower way¹⁷. I used to go on the VIP floor when I used the car ferry to Bursa although I am used to sitting downstairs now. The noise, people talking loudly, eating sunflower seeds... It wasn't like that in the US. I changed three trains to go to work in the States. People either read a book, worked on their computers or drank beer. Nobody interrupted others.

¹⁴ Gktürk is a gated community where upper-middle classes reside in İstanbul.

¹⁵ These are neighborhoods in the city center of İstanbul but they are known for their upper class inhabitants and visitors.

¹⁶ Dolapdere is a neighborhood in İstanbul where mostly immigrants, Romans, Kurds and Africans live.

¹⁷ "Bazı Őeyleri biraz ařađıda yaptığımda zevk almadığımy hissediyorum."

Besides the lower classes, she also differentiated herself from others who lack the acceptable manners although with similar income:

Let me give you an example from love affairs. I used to date a guy. He was very rich. His parents owned a business but we were very different. He was raising his voice while we ate outside. I'm a calm person. I don't like such infamously. This is about how one was raised. He was from Kırklareli¹⁸. You are similar but also you are not. I had another friend that I met in the US. His family was not as rich but they were originally from İstanbul. He was educated for sure. He was from Saint Michel¹⁹. He had educated himself with the people he hung out with and with where he went. He doesn't do anything without enjoying it. That gives you pleasure too.

Defne's words demonstrate being educated and possessing certain cultural norms and manners as central to her identity. In this way, she criticizes the gap she observes between the economic and cultural capital of other members of the middle class. Her reference to the distinction between İstanbul and Kırklareli also presents her differentiation of big cities like İstanbul and Bursa²⁰ where she is from, from the less cosmopolitan cities of Anatolia.

Education appears as an important mechanism to acquire these modern norms, which include norms of gender equality. As Çiğdem stated:

There is not gender equality in Turkey as in villages, girls are not sent to schools. The media also stupefies women. My lifestyle is different from other women not because of my

¹⁸ Kırklareli is a small city in the northwest of Turkey.

¹⁹ Saint Michel is a private high school in İstanbul, which gives education in French.

²⁰ Bursa is the 4th biggest city in Turkey.

income but because of culture and education. All in all, I am a university graduate. I have an MA degree. I work in an institutionalized company but I don't belong to the upper class either. I belong to the middle class. Still, I am different from a housewife. Housewives have a limited point of view. Even if you are smart, you dry up. I like working and being a career woman. Uneducated women and Islamic groups experience gender inequality more. Lack of education is the curse of this country. They don't even understand Islam.

Here, Çiğdem differentiates herself from uneducated women through her work and the education she got. Education and work signify white collar women's position in the stratification system as they identify the middle class on these terms and as the education they got provided them with the cultural capital to work in their current jobs which designate their incomes. Pelin, a 27 year-old aerospace engineer working in the aeronautics sector, also proposed a clear difference between educated and uneducated women about their being subjected to gender inequality. Accordingly, she ascribed gender equality to modernized, urban and educated groups. She stated:

Education plays an important role. Uneducated women living in rural areas suffer more from gender inequality but there are also people protecting their girls there so it changes. Still what a girl and a boy means differ in traditional, less modernized families from it is in modern, urban, highly educated families.

As in Pelin's words, education is also presented as a way to recover from tradition and acquire the norms of modernity. Education and labour force participation are stated as what relieves them from gender inequality. This account reveals the relationship between their middle class identity and the claims of the Turkish national discourse for emancipating women by

modernizing them through education and providing a space in the public space for women. Therefore, having internalized the modernizing and Westernizing reforms of the early Republican period appear as what differentiates white collar women from women living in rural areas, uneducated women and women who could not utilize the benefits of the modernization process in Turkey.

3.3.2. Claims of Cultural Superiority

Upper-middle classes constitute a cultural ground, which differentiates them from the lower classes in Turkey (Ayata, 2002; Öncü, 2005). Claims of cultural superiority are also prevalent among my interviewees. They refer to their “higher” culture when they distinguish themselves from others with similar economic capital. To illustrate, Pelin differentiated herself from her co-workers through her lifestyle and claimed a cultural superiority:

In foreign countries, people in technological sectors like ours have different hobbies, different interests. People in my work have dreams of buying a car, sending their children to school X. I’m not like them. I’m interested in philosophy and I question.

In this sense, although their consumption practices are formed within their relations with their co-workers, white collar women also claim superiority over those who do not share the same practices even if they also belong to the middle class. Moreover, they refer to the intellectual inferiority of their co-workers from whom they differentiate themselves through their cultural capital. Seçil drew a line between her and the people in her office:

I don’t usually hang out with the designers in my office. They are mostly men. When I do, I get bored. This is not because they are men. Maybe, because I see them as inferior to me, I mean socially. We are not into same things. We don’t think in the same way, either. This

is why I see them as inferior to me. Men in my company might live in Avcılar with their families but I don't give up on living in Bomonti for money. They are less educated. They look modern but inside, they are not. This is their mind set.

As this account illustrates, Seçil perceives herself superior to the people in her workplace through the "higher" education she obtained, as well as by claiming that her co-workers are not modern. Moreover, she presented a gap between her cultural preferences and her economic capital. To illustrate, Seçil defined her class as socially B but economically B-C in marketing terms. In this way, she displayed a gap between her income and her lifestyle:

I have some luxuries, where I eat, what I eat and drink. I like to hang out in nice places although this exceeds my budget.

This perceived difference is also observable in Başak's words:

In the architecture sector, people earn low compared to what they do. Our social, cultural and intellectual possessions are greater than our monetary possessions. The job is labour-intensive with long working hours... When I think about with which group of people I have much in common, I feel close to architects and the academics, especially intellectually.

Through displaying the gap between architects' economic and cultural capital, Başak also presents their difference from other members of the middle class. She presents architects' intellectual capital as a component of her identity. This cultural capital is obtained with socialization within the workplace as well as with the education they got. In addition to this claim of cultural superiority over other members of the middle class, they also use similar claims while differentiating themselves from the lower classes. Particularly, possessing norms of gender

equality are situated as differentiating them from the lower classes. Lower classes are indicated to be socialized in an environment that holds patriarchal norms as engraved to their daily lives.

3.3.3. Middle Class Womanhood and White Collar Workplace

The way women formalize their bodies, the ways they define their womanhood as well as their conceptualizations of gender roles and gender (in) equality are ways through which class differences are emphasized. These definitions are closely related to societal, religious and national definitions of proper femininity and masculinity. They also act as signifiers of class and compose class identity. Accordingly, in this part, I will present how white collar women portray an ideal middle class womanhood. I will also impart the relationship between the ideal woman defined by white collar women and national definitions of womanhood as well as the notions of womanhood and manhood produced in the white collar circles.

White collar women attribute certain roles to middle class womanhood and criticize those who do not fit these roles. To illustrate, morality is used as a central concept for presenting middle class womanhood. For instance, Elif used a claim for moral excellence to situate herself in a different position from white collar women who do not possess the norms of her modest lifestyle or her way of living her marriage. She criticized women's submission both to their husbands and mothers-in-law. She presented trying to find a rich husband and exiting the labor force as manifestations of immorality. Therefore, she offered work and standing on one's own feet as central to being a proper woman:

Our mothers defended women's economic freedom but our generation only wants to find a rich husband and stop working, especially the plaza women of İstanbul (*İstanbul'un plaza kadınları*). Even some plaza women kiss their mother-in-law's hands once a week. I don't experience these.

When I asked her to delineate Plaza women, she explained:

Plaza women are married, overage versions of office girls. Typical! This is now the new trend. They find themselves in spiritual consumption, like pilates and yoga. They find themselves in breathing exercises in pilates. Funny! I don't consider myself like these women. Nobody wants to work until they retire. This is due to hard working conditions and overtimes but I question all these. Other women are like office girls. I belong to a part of the middle class, which consists of white collars earning a bit more than other middle class people. However, my life is really simple, without expensive luxuries. I live in Etiler but it is only due to necessities. There is also a high stratum, more distinct in İstanbul. They are really high society.²¹ They are high society because of their families so it's not only money. You won't be one of them how much ever you earn. Those who go to auctions.²²

As in Elif's example, this differentiation through morality, which is defined over gender roles, can also be made to differentiate oneself from other members of the middle class. She criticizes women leaving the labor force when they get married. Therefore, work is stated as a must in women's lives. She interprets this behaviour as submission to traditional gender roles as she presents these white collar women as obeying their husbands and mother-in-laws. Furthermore, for her, a certain definition of wifhood and relatedly womanhood define the proper womanhood. This proper womanhood points out a married but independent woman.

Moreover, she also differentiates herself from other white collars through her consumption patterns as well as their ways of experiencing marriage. She also expostulates the lifestyle of the

²¹ "Onlar çok çok sosyete."

²² "Müzayede gezen tipler."

upper classes by calling them “high society”, also notifying that she can never be one of them while she also differentiates herself from the lower classes through her income and work. In this sense, claims for morality defined through gender relations, possessing a higher level of cultural knowledge, consumption as well as urban segregation play a role in the distinction both within the middle class and between classes. Conceptions on proper gender relations, women’s positions within families as well as the community and gender equality also work as grounds on which middle class identity is formed.

Here, I will point out the importance of white collar work in white collar women’s practices and notions of womanhood. Work composes a significant part of white collar women’s everyday lives. White collar women present work as a central component of womanhood. That is to say, they both define the middle class through their positions in their workplace and they also declare that an ideal woman should get education and should actualize what she learned in her work. Workplace is also a place where class and gender are experienced. Accordingly, the gender talk of white collar women is related to their relations at work which they define as one of the major determinants of their class positions.

As they state, they spend most of their time with their co-workers. By socializing with other members of the middle class, they experience, produce and reproduce the middle class praxis through consumption as well as through fulfilling their gender roles. Their work life shapes their consumption patterns, which they relate to their class belonging as in Merve’s example where she talked about her previous workplace, Kanyon - a luxurious plaza- where she both worked and socialized. Moreover, my interviewees stated that they organize their lives in relation to their work. That is to say, they choose the places where they socialize, what they eat,

drink and hobbies they adopt in relation to their co-workers. Their lifestyles generate within these relations. Therefore, they experience class through their socialization at work.

Furthermore, they consider work as necessary for the emancipation of women. Therefore, work differentiates them from lower class women whom they associate with domesticity. They present themselves as emancipated since they participate in the labor force. White collar women I interviewed had a tendency to regard women's right to work as a major component of gender equality. Therefore, it is a major area where they experience and define their class and womanhood. Their socialization in the workplace also influences their notions of gender roles. These gender roles inculcate them to work. However, they also prescribe them to carry the responsibilities associated with domesticity. These patriarchal gender roles are encouraged by the nationalist discourse as well as by the white collar circles. As they do not regard domestic work as a ground where gender inequality presents itself, they do not present their domestic responsibilities as contradictory to their claims for the existence of gender equality among the middle classes. Accordingly, they propose motherhood as preferential to work.

White collar women find the solution to manage work and motherhood together in transferring to a less paid and less demanding job. As stated by Özlem:

If I get married, I should change my job. I can't cope with working like that while at the same time doing the housework. However, I would not quit working if I get married. I did not go to school to be a housewife.

However, this is displayed as only possible under the condition where their husbands are working in a well-paid job. Therefore, a gendered division of labour, which would sustain the middle class family, is stipulated. As their jobs provide them with the benefits to maintain a

middle class lifestyle, their abandoning of their current jobs is only possible when this lifestyle is still supported. This lifestyle is what differentiates them from the lower classes and which maintains their hopes for upward mobility.

There are miscellaneous grounds on which the patriarchal definitions of gender roles are reproduced at white collar workplace. These patriarchal definitions are also in line with the definitions of womanhood and manhood by the early Republican state. To illustrate, white collar women present women as regardful and attentive in the workplace while also declaring that women should not be disregardful of their children because of their work. Moreover, they present these notions as what is expected from them by their white-collar circles. Therefore, the reproduction of gender roles at the white collar workplace goes hand in hand with the gender discourse of state feminism. Women's participation in the labor force is seen as a must but certain jobs are associated with them. White collar women state that women are more suitable for office work rather than areas more suitable for men, for instance construction sites. They also introduce women's presence in the office as enhancing the workplace with femininity. A woman's touch (*kadın eli*) is praised for bringing kindness to the workplace. For instance, İpek, while complaining about her male supervisor, propounded:

My supervisor is a very difficult person. He doesn't care if you are a woman or not, he just curses. He shouldn't be doing that when I am around. People should be kinder with women. Women change the work environment. When they enter a room, men become kinder. We have a new female sales manager and everyone says that with her the department has changed.

Cursing is a topic, which came out during the interviews frequently, which women associate with manhood. The removal of this rudeness with a woman's touch is portrayed as the transformation of workplace into a better place. However, as İpek presented, this change is still presented with the attribution of certain traits to women, such as being kind and attentive. Reyhan also proposed:

Being a young woman is hard in the construction site. The construction foremen do not listen to you. Women are preferred as office architects. There is no such attitude towards you in the office but they want you to dress up classy as the job is also an aesthetic one and you are presented to customers in meetings.

As Reyhan states these traits are attributed to women by their co-workers and managers but as in the case of İpek where she praises the woman's touch, they also constitute womanhood through these traits. In line with corporations' definitions of jobs suitable for men and women, white collar women present men and women as possessing different traits. Besides being attentive, women are also portrayed as weaker, more emotional and unprofessional whereas men are stated to be stronger, more professional and easy going by white collar women. This dichotomy of weakness of women and strength of men is set up in a romantic manner while they portray men and women as complementary, who will balance each other's deficiencies. Seçil's statement about the woman she wants to become and her ideal man illustrated so:

The aim of my life is to become the woman I have in mind, being like Bennu Gerede²³. She is really cool. She is the mother of four boys. Being the mother of male children (*oğlan annesi olmak*) is a thing I dream a lot about. Being cool and strong. Actually a bit weak,

²³ Bennu Gerede is a photographer from a well-known Turkish family who had her education in Paris. She is well known for her global tastes and lifestyle but her distorted accent of Turkish is mostly criticized.

too. I want to have weak sides, like a childish woman (*çocuk kadın gibi*). Good at her job, free, stylish, beautiful with intellectual capacity, able to speak well and have an expertise in something.

While she described the ideal man in her mind, she framed him as modern, benevolent and mature:

He shouldn't be childish but mature. He shouldn't be lazy but snappy. He should know how to listen and how to talk. He should also have humane sides of compassion enabling him to show his emotions.

As in Seçil's account, motherhood is set as a central element of womanhood. Women are mostly seen as default future mothers in a heterosexual marriage, which as they state also leads to a practical drawback at white collar work which demands concentration and adaptability to long working hours. They criticized women working too much for not caring for their children. Therefore, when motherhood and work roles conflict, motherhood is presented as their primary role to be fulfilled. However, even white collar women who criticize overworking wives and mothers, stated that work is a central part of their lives which they would not abandon even if they had children, as work is propounded as a major emancipator for women.

Workplace is pivotal in the lives of white collar women as it is the place where they actualize themselves. Further to that, it is where most of their days are spent. On the other side, work is uttered to free women from their husbands and families. In this regard, work is also stated as the major solution to women's subordination. Although my interviewees stated that women should –while reserving their compassion- work, they also indicated that some male white collar employees disapprove or at least become uncomfortable with women's presence in

the work place. However, people who discriminate them were stated as less educated and not modern enough. As Seçil stated:

People in the company are less educated. Their states of mind... They are used to such a male-dominated environment. They are not used to a woman in the forefront. Sometimes, they just can't put up with it. I felt this deeply in a meeting. We were in a meeting with our client. I was with my art director. After the breakfast, we started talking about daily matters. It came to political matters eventually. A high titled client asked me a question about a past political event. He asked me what I thought about it. When I started telling him my thoughts, I said 'I was at the university back then.' My art director imitated me: 'I wasn't able to understand.' (*aklum ermedi*) and he laughed. This demoralized me. I was uncomfortable with his inappropriate joke. I even could not sleep at night. I thought about how I would knock the hell out of him the other day. Yet, I didn't feel the need to encounter him the other day. I realized they could not stand a woman speak up. Everybody else could speak but a woman could not.

Here, Seçil speaks about a discrimination she faced just because she is a woman. However, she does not consider this as a consequence of the gendered nature of the workplace or the gender norms prevalent in the society. She indicated that people who discriminate her are either less educated or unable to internalize the norms of modernity. On the other hand, Çiğdem, a 32 year old budget planning specialist in the construction sector, presented gender inequality and gendered discrimination as phenomenon one can stay away from with upward mobility or by preferring certain places which are free from gendered discrimination as the middle classes socialize or work in these places. Therefore, gender inequality appears as a problem when encountered with the lower classes. As Çiğdem stated:

I don't feel discriminated now but in my ex-job in Merter²⁴, my work was double-checked just because I was a woman. I could not even go out to the bank as men around there were molesting me. If I had to, I preferred to go out during prayer times when men were in mosques. My current organization respects women. Yet, I feel afraid when I go outside. I only go to Asmalıescit. I live in Ataköy and I work at Kanyon, all sterilized places.

These spaces where Çiğdem works and prefers to socialize are places where she experiences the middle class praxis. She claims that this middle class praxis is out of the realm of gender inequality, as she does not need to encounter with the lower classes as she did in her previous job in Merter.

As in Çiğdem's example, white collar women present middle class as free from gender inequality. When they encounter discrimination in the white collar workplace, they relate this to their co-workers' inability to internalize what they present as middle class values like possessing the norms of gender equality. People who discriminate them both at the workplace and outside are presented as uneducated and not having internalized modernity which they also perceive as a reason for gender inequality. This is in line with the state discourse contrasting modernity with tradition and ignorance, which are associated with gender inequality.

Moreover, white collar women's notions of middle class womanhood embody the norms presented as related to modernity, i.e. being well-educated and working. However, being a responsible mother is also presented as central to womanhood. This definition is in line with the definition of an ideal woman by state feminism, which emphasizes the appearance of women in public space but also accentuates their domestic roles. Moreover, these gender roles are also

²⁴ a neighbourhood in Istanbul which is known for its inexpensiveness, with a lot of textile workshops.

expected from them within the white collar circles. The portrayal of manhood and womanhood at the workplace is also in line with these definitions, which associate women with domestic roles and related traits, such as being emotional and attentive while men are associated with being strong and professional. These definitions are central to their delineation of how a woman and a man should be. To conclude, these ways through which white collar women build their class boundaries and display an ideal womanhood are illustrations of how gender roles and notions of gender equality are produced along the interplay between class, gender and nationalism.

CONCLUSION

This thesis was intended as a contribution to examining how class and nationalism are involved in producing gender discourses. More specifically, it looked at how the gender talk of white collar women in İstanbul is constructed in relation to their class identity and to Turkish nationalism. In order to interpret the relationship between my interviewees' "gender talk" and state feminism, I analyzed how they conceptualize gender (in) equality, how they define their womanhood and gender relations. Through such an analysis, I tried to demonstrate the relationship between the gender talk of white collar women and their middle-class identity and Turkish ethnicity.

The research on how middle class boundaries are formed in Turkey concentrate on consumption practices, tastes and urban segregation and they overlook the role of "gender talk" in this process. Sencer Ayata (2002) finds the association of women with domestic life among the middle class dwellers of suburban neighborhoods in Ankara contrary to their claims for equality between sexes (Ayata, 2002, p. 33). This observation which he presents in his work on how the middle classes engage in urban segregation in order to escape from "social heterogeneity" and to preserve their family life, provides us with an important hint about how gender equality can play an important role in the process of building class boundaries. However, he does not explore what equality between sexes means for the middle classes and how these definitions play a part in this process of building class boundaries. In order to address this gap, in this study, I aimed at demonstrating the relation between the conceptualizations of gender equality and the nationalist discourse by also presenting these conceptualizations' roles in building class boundaries.

My interviewees defined gender equality in parallel to the discourse of state feminism, which encourages women's presence in the public space but stays silent regarding discrimination they face in the private space. White collar women argued for equal opportunities for women to get education and to work, for equal rights for women and men before the law and economic development as necessary tools to accomplish gender equality. These actions towards achieving gender equality are stated as the responsibility of the state. Moreover, they presented violence against women among lower classes and honor killings among the Kurdish population as a major manifestation of gender inequality. Although scholars have examined how gender discourses in Turkey are produced by the state, they haven't looked at how these are utilized by women in contemporary Turkey.

In order to provide a background for this study, in Chapter 2, I presented the theoretical and historical background of the formation of middle classes, nationalism, developmentalism and orientalism in Turkey. I also presented the literature debating the inclusion of white collars in the middle class. Later, in Chapter 3, in order to demonstrate the relationship between class, nationalism and the "gender talk" of interviewees, I elaborated on how nationalism and state feminism in Turkey shaped the gender discourses of interviewees. Moreover, I presented how my data supports my assertion that the "gender talk" of white collar women is in relation to the nationalist discourses. Furthermore, I displayed how my interviewees defined the middle class and how "gender talk" became a marker of the middle class. I also propounded that their idealizations of heterosexual middle class families and their definitions of an ideal working, middle class mother are in relation to the discourse of the state which posits heterosexual families as the smallest and healthiest unit of the nation. Relatedly, I asserted that the concept of gender equality as defined by the official discourse is problematic as it excludes LGBT

individuals. Furthermore, I argued that these conceptualizations are produced within the middle class habitus. Finally, I offered white collar workplace, which they use as a basis of their identification with the middle class, as a major space where my interviewees experience the middle class praxis and gender roles.

My interviewees tended to associate gender inequality with the lower classes and Kurds while they displayed the upper classes as completely free from gender inequality. On the other hand, they portrayed the middle classes as possessing norms of gender equality. However, they presented their interactions with the lower classes as an encounter with gender inequality, as exemplified by the disrespect of lower class men towards women and threats of being exposed to violence. White collar middle class women portrayed upper class women as capable of escaping from these threats as they have the economic means to do so. Moreover, they defined ideal womanhood through an emphasis on heterosexual marriage and motherhood. The heterosexual marriage, which they idealize, and their roles as mothers perpetuate the gendered division of labor proposed by the gender discourses of the early Republican state as well as their corporations.

My interviewees further included work in their definition of middle class womanhood since work is stated to be one of the major tools necessary to emancipate women. This emphasis on work goes hand in hand with an emphasis on education, which is frequently offered as a cure for gender inequality. As they have utilized the early Republican reforms, which provided women with the rights to work and get education, they presented themselves as free from gender inequality. Being free from gender inequality is portrayed as differentiating middle class womanhood from lower class womanhood. In this sense, they did not regard their domestic roles as contrary to their middle class belonging. Therefore, the gendered division of labor between

wives and husbands is not seen as a ground where they experience gender inequality but rather this is stated as being essential due to their motherhood roles.

1. Limits and Delimitations

With the data collected through qualitative research, this study aimed to demonstrate how the “gender talk” of white collar women in İstanbul is fed by the discourse of state feminism, nationalism, developmentalism and orientalism and how this gender talk interrelates with their middle class identity. However, as I used snowball sampling, this is not a representative research. In this sense, I do not intend to generalize my findings to all white collar women in İstanbul. Moreover, this study cannot be generalized to a larger setting. Due to the fact that this was an exploratory research and due to time and budget limitations, this study was conducted with qualitative methods. Still, a research conducted through probabilistic sampling, which includes white collar women from different parts of Turkey, could be generalized to white collar women in Turkey. This might be the purpose of further studies.

My research is also limited in the sense that I conducted my interviews only in İstanbul. Conducting my research in İstanbul was my best choice due to time and budget limits. Moreover, İstanbul still provides a variety among white collar women as many of the private companies are located in İstanbul. Besides, there is also a variety in sectors as the main firms of sectors such as advertising and film production are established in İstanbul.

Another limitation of my research is my interviewees’ ethnic identities and their occupational groups since I have only interviewed white collar women from Turkish origin. Therefore, this study does not present findings that could be generalized to the middle class or to all white collar women in Turkey. However, this limitation could also open up an area where quantitative and qualitative research could be conducted to analyze how different segments of

the middle class in Turkey interact with state feminism and how they relate their gender talk to their class identity. Drawing from these limitations, I will make suggestions for further research.

2. Suggestions for Further Studies

This study is a modest attempt to display the relationship between the gender discourses of the Turkish state and white collar women's conceptualizations of gender equality as well as their definitions of womanhood and gender roles. The ideal images for men and women constituted by the Turkish state were integrated into lives and bodies of individuals in different ways. These different ways are generated in relation to how one interacts with the state, their ideological positions, their ethnicity, gender, class and social status. As Kandiyoti (1998) states:

Refashioning gender also implies the creation of new images of masculinity and femininity that involve the repudiation of the old as well as the espousal of the new. These images and styles are selectively appropriated by different sections of society, making gender a contested and polyvalent marker of class, social extraction, and cultural preference (Kandiyoti, 1998, p. 284).

Therefore, women and men from different classes and from different ethnic backgrounds might interact with the discourse of the Turkish state in diverse ways. Accordingly, the results of such a study conducted in different settings may produce different results. For this study, I concentrated on white collar women in İstanbul. However, white collar women in other parts of Turkey may produce different discourses as İstanbul is a city engaged with the global world much more than any other part of Turkey. However, women's conceptualizations of gender equality, their womanhood and gender roles might involve other interpretations of the state discourse, Islam as well as class identities in different parts of Turkey. Moreover, upper-middle classes utilized the early Republican reforms much more than any other class in Turkey

(Kandiyoti, 1987). Therefore, women who could not utilize the early Republican reforms, such as women who did not get official education and who do not participate in the labor force might interpret these reforms differently. Still, their statements could also reproduce the state discourse portraying their being uneducated and their lack of participation in the work force as a cultural deficiency or as related to their families' inability to internalize the reforms made by the state.

Moreover, white collars are a segment of the middle class although the members of other occupational groups such as civil servants and independent professionals are also regarded as members of the middle class. Although I focused on how gender discourses of white collar women are produced, whether women from other segments of the middle class also produce their gender discourses in similar ways should also be studied. Especially how women working in jobs offered by the state, interpret the state discourse might differ from white collar women.

Furthermore, I only interviewed women from Turkish ethnicity. However, women and men from ethnic and religious minorities might interact differently with the Turkish nationalist discourse, which is formed around an assimilationist and developmentalist outlook. To illustrate, Kurdish women might perceive the Turkish nationalist discourse, which associates the "East" with backwardness and gender inequality as oppressive. Moreover, they might talk about gender inequality in relation to their daily life experiences.

In addition to that, gender discourses of the Turkish state produce ideals of manhood besides womanhood. Therefore, a study on how men conceptualize gender equality would point out a different engagement of class and nationalism with gender. Moreover, as men are regarded as the winning side of the patriarchal gender order, an analysis on how they interact with the state discourses might produce useful results to contribute to masculinity studies, which is a

relatively new area of research in Turkey. Besides, LGBT individuals' relation to the state discourses as well as their self-definition through class could be another area of research. Although discrimination against LGBT individuals is a subject that attracts more attention than before, studying their engagement with the heteronormative discourse of the state and how they challenge it would open up a new ground of discussion.

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APPENDIX: LIST OF RESPONDENTS

ID	Age	Marital Status	Children	Education Level	Sector	Position
Merve	26	Single	N	BA	Construction	Category Specialist
Seçil	25	Single	N	BA	Advertising	Brand Manager
Seval	27	Single	N	MA	Industrial Automation	Marketing Manager
Ceren	26	Engaged	N	BA	Pharmaceutical	Medical Project Specialist
Elif	26	Married	N	BA	Communication	Marketing Specialist
Sevgi	26	Single	N	BA	Market Research	Project Director
Pelin	27	Single	N	BA	Aeronautics	Aerospace Engineer
Başak	26	Single	N	MA	Architecture	Architect
İdil	24	Single	N	BA	Automotive	Mechanical Engineer
Selin	24	Single	N	BA	Architecture	Architect
Çiğdem	32	Single	N	MA	Construction	Budget Planning Specialist
Funda	27	Single	N	MA	Film Production	Production Assistant
Hülya	22	Single	N	BA	Auditing	Auditor
İpek	26	Single	N	MA	Construction	Industrial Engineer
Hilal	25	Single	N	BA	Architecture	Architect
Gülin	25	Single	N	MA	Quality Control	Chemist
Nazan	28	Married	N	BA	Pharmaceutical	Product Manager
Oya	29	Single	N	BA	Banking	Credit Monitoring Specialist
Tuğçe	29	Single	N	BA	Banking	Assistant Manager
Nur	41	Divorced	N	MA	Production	Metallurgical Engineering
Gül	31	Married	Y	MA	Banking	Human Resources Specialist