AT THE CROSSROADS OF EDUCATION AND POLITICS: KURDISH WOMEN STUDENTS IN ISTANBUL

by
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AT THE CROSSROADS OF EDUCATION AND POLITICS :
KURDISH WOMEN STUDENTS IN ISTANBUL

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ABSTRACT

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Keywords: ethnicity, gender, political subjectivity, education, intersectionality

This thesis explores the ways in which Kurdish women students in İstanbul have constructed their political subjectivities at the crossroads of education and politics. Based on in-depth interviews and participant observation, the study analyzes two crucial dimensions of Kurdish women students' experiences. First is related with the oppressive mechanisms in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia which impede women's access to education. This thesis analyzes the intersecting dynamics of ethnicity, gender and class that limit Kurdish women's educational opportunities in the region, and the distinctive strategies they use to struggle against them. Secondly, as university students, their experiences in the city do not only distinguish them from other Kurdish women in İstanbul, but also shape the ways in which they politicize in the city. Their political subjectivities are shaped at the intersections of ethnicity and gender. Their negative approach to traditional politics and the increasing criminalization of dissident politics in Turkey with respect to Kurdish identity demands lead them to articulate their political concerns and demands in new political forms. I argue that Kurdish women students find themselves in a condition of bargaining between education and political engagement, and instead of choosing one, they integrate them with each other in various forms. Experiences of Kurdish women students open up a space to rethink women's education problem, the politics of ethnicity and gender, as well as the intricate relationship between education and politics in contemporary Turkey, and highlight the need to understand the complex ways in which Kurdish political subjectivities are formed.

ÖZET

EĞİTİM VE SİYASETİN KAVŞAĞINDA:

İSTANBUL'DA OKUYAN KÜRT KADIN ÖĞRENCİLER

Dilşah Pınar Ensari

Kültürel Çalışmalar, MA Tezi, 2012

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Anahtar Sözcükler: etnisite, toplumsal cinsiyet, politik öznellik, eğitim, kesişimsellik

Bu tez İstanbul'daki Kürt kadın üniversite öğrencilerinin eğitim ve siyasetin kavşağında politik öznelliklerini kurma biçimlerini incelemektedir. Derinlemesine mülakatlar ve katılımcı gözlem ışığında şekillenen bu çalışma, Kürt kadın öğrencilerin deneyimlerinin iki önemli çehresini analiz eder. Bu deneyimlerden ilki Doğu ve Güneydoğu Anadolu'da kadınların eğitime erişimini engelleyen baskıcı mekanizmalara ilişkindir. Bu tez, etnisite, toplumsal cinsiyet ve sınıf dinamiklerinin kesişimselliğinin bölgedeki Kürt kadınlarının eğitim olanaklarını nasıl kısıtladığını, onların da bu kısıtlamalar karşısında ne tür stratejiler geliştirdiklerini incelemektedir. . İkinci olarak ise Kürt kadın üniversite öğrencilerinin İstanbul'daki eğitim deneyimlerinin nasıl şekillendiği tartışılmakta, üniversite öğrencileri olarak İstanbul'daki tecrübelerinin onları sadece şehirdeki diğer Kürt kadınlarından ayrıştırmakla kalmayıp, aynı zamanda şehirde politikleşme biçimlerini de belirlediği gösterilmektedir. Bu öğrencilerin politik öznellikleri etnisite ve toplumsal cinsiyet kesişimselliği tarafından şekillenmektedir. Geleneksel siyasete karşı olumsuz yaklaşımları ve Türkiye'de Kürt kimlik taleplerine ilişkin muhalif siyasetin gittikçe daha fazla suç olarak kabul edilmesi onları politik kaygı ve taleplerini yeni ve bireyselleşmiş politika biçimleriyle ifade etmeye yönlendirmektedir. Bu tez, Kürt kadın öğrencilerin kendilerini eğitim ve siyaset arasında bir pazarlık yapma durumunda bulduklarını, ancak bunlardan birini seçmek yerine ikisini birbirine değişik biçimlerde entegre ettiklerini iddia etmektedir. Kürt kadın öğrencilerin tecrübeleri, sadece kadınların eğitimi sorunsalının değil, aynı zamanda etnisite ve toplumsal cinsiyet siyasetinin ve Türkiye'de eğitim ve siyaset arasındaki çetrefil ilişkinin yeniden düşünülmesi için bir alan açmakta, Kürt politik öznelliklerinin kurulma süreçlerinin tüm katmanları ve boyutlarıyla incelenmesinin önemine işaret etmektedir.

“Meçhul” öğrencilere…

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In April 2011, Lavin's[1] house, where she lives with her friends was raided by the police at 5 o'clock in the morning. The aim was to take Lavin into custody upon the claim that she is a member of KCK.[2] Lavin was not at home since she was in her hometown with her family for the spring break. Yet the house was messed up by the police in order to find any political document that would prove the already presupposed guilt of Lavin. The story was made public by the housemate of Lavin, who recounted how the police were dressed up "like gladiators going into a serious fight." The target of this police operation, Lavin was an academically successful young woman who had graduated ranking first in her class and had been holding an assistantship position in the university while also being a graduate student in the same department. When a policeman saw her room filled with books, articles and the prize she received during her graduation, he remarked: "She seems to be a very successful girl. She is spoiling her life. One needs to be clever"[3] and continued to express pity for the parents of Lavin, implying that they would possibly have sent their child to university with other expectations in mind,[4] while revealing indeed his own expectations from a university student. Upon the complaint of one of the woman dwellers of the house as to how dirty and messy the house had become after the search, this time, the policeman said: "You

[1] I used pseudonyms throughout the thesis in order to protect my interviewees as well as the people they mentioned.

[2] *Koma Civakên Kurdistan*. The Kurdish acronym for "Union of Communities in Kurdistan"

[3] "Çok da çalışkan kızmış, yazık ediyor kendisine, akıllı olmak lazım."

[4] "Annesine babasına yazık, o kadar göndermişler çocuklarını. Ne olacağı belli değil bu çocukların."

are all ladies. What is your business? You can clean it."[5] After the search of two hours had finished, the identity informations of the dwellers were noted by a policeman. The police officer who took the notes could not hide his surprise when he saw that each woman is coming from a different city, saying that "You are all coming from different cities. How do you live in the same house?"[6] I gave all these dialogues in detail deliberately since the nationalist and gendered state discourse concomitant with the state's imagination of the ideal woman, student and youth lurk in each sentence uttered in these exchanges between the police and three women university students.

According to this discourse, a university student is successful and clever if s/he does not engage herself with anything other than her classes and exams for politics is the business of the elders who know what is best for the youth. If this university student is a woman; then paradoxically, she has a lot of spare time for cleaning since by virtue of her womanhood, cleaning is one of her primary duties. Furthermore, if accidentally this young woman is a university student coming from Southeastern Turkey and a Kurd, she has to be extra careful not to busy herself with anything except cleaning and studying, since she is firstly very "lucky", as opposed to her Kurdish peers, to have come to İstanbul for studying and secondly by virtue of her Kurdishness she is a potential threat as recent KCK operations, which ended up with the detention of nearly two thousand people across Turkey, have indicated[7]. Increasing detention of students in Turkey also revealed the critical position Lavin as a politically active university student holds. As Minister of Interior recently declared, 2824 students are currently detained or convicted across Turkey and 887 of them have been charged with "being a member of an armed terrorist organization".[8]

I had just set out to conduct my fieldwork when I read this news on the internet for the second time under a different light. At the time Lavin was "wanted" by the

[5] "O kadar bayansınız. İşiniz ne? Temizlersiniz!"

[6] "Hepiniz de ayrı ayrı illerden gelmişsiniz, nasıl aynı evde kalıyorsunuz?"

[7] For more information about the KCK case, see: http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalDetayV3&ArticleID=1092791&CategoryID=77

[8] For more information about the minister's statement, see: http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalDetayV3&ArticleID=1096449&CategoryID=77

police, detentions of students[9] had not grown into a mass phenomenon yet, at least in terms of visibility. In a few months, the detention of students became more widespread, more visible in the political agenda and a more common subject in the newspapers.[10] Lavin was the first person whom I got in touch with in order to make an interview. Yet, I had been so overwhelmed by the intensity of the detentions, I was not ready to translate my confusions into sound research questions. So, initially I wanted to have a chat with her as two women students and to learn what happened afterwards in her life. Above all, I was wondering how she, as a politically active Kurdish woman student, coming from Adıyaman to attend university in İstanbul, perceived this whole process of increasing students arrests. It was more of a personal need to understand what we as university students had been going through than a "professional" academic inquiry. Actually my intellectual puzzle, to put it in ethnographic terms, came up only after we had poured out our hearts to each other. Lavin's story is exemplary in terms of revealing the oppressive mechanisms at the intersections of ethnicity, gender and class, which have marked Lavin's life particularly in the course of her education in Istanbul. Moreover, the interplay of those mechanisms has been influential in shaping her political subjectivity as a student. Lavin's narrative drew my attention to the intersecting roles education and politics have been playing in shaping the lives and subjectivities of Kurdish women students in İstanbul, which I decided to further explore.

1.1. Purpose of the Study

Lavin has grown up in a Kurdish working class family. Since her childhood, her parents have deliberately spoken in Turkish with her so that she could become more

[9] The Initiative for Solidarity with Students in Prison (TÖDİ- Tutuklu Öğrencilerle Dayanışma İnisiyatifi) prepared a report, entitled "Report on Arrested Students", which includes the overview of trial cases as part of which students have been arrested and detained. To visit TÖDİ's website see: https://mechulogrenci.crowdmap.com/

[10] For some of those news items, see: http://bianet.org/bianet/siyaset/138885-hukumet-tutuklu-universiteli-sayisini-bilmiyor-mu and http://www.evrensel.net/news.php?id=34474 and http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalDetayV3&ArticleID=1092555&CategoryID=77 and http://bianet.org/bianet/insan-haklari/138681-ogrencileri-neden-tutuklarlar

successful at school and receive a better education through which she could achieve a higher socio-economic condition in the society as a Kurdish woman. Lavin's narrative led me to question the absence of educated Kurdish women students or professionals within the set of predominant images of "the Kurdish woman" that circulate in Turkish public discourse, i.e. uneducated poor mother who does not speak Turkish, the "Eastern woman" oppressed in the hands of the "Eastern (Kurdish) man," "terrorist," or ("separatist") politician. Women in Eastern and Southeastern Turkey have been mostly considered as miserable ignorant people under the subordination of patriarchal control, unable to receive education unless benevolent hands come to their "rescue", "educate" and "civilize" them. The low rate of education on the part of female children in that region is a fact revealed in all education statistics, but the complexity of the political, socio-economic and cultural structure lying underneath girls' education problem is hardly explored or problematized beyond public campaigns to "save" these uneducated, oppressed girls. Moreover, I was wondering how politics has been imagined and constructed by Kurdish women students. I wanted to learn about their concrete political experiences and the ways in which they construct their political subjectivities which could not be heard under the noise of the public discourses that often criminalize and marginalize the Kurdish struggle for rights in general, and the Kurdish political parties in particular. Moreover, so far the politics of Kurdish women have been mainly considered within the context of the Kurdish movement. I wanted to inquire into their ways of voicing political concerns and demands beyond the confines of the Kurdish movement and the possible dynamics shaping their politics.

With these questions in mind, I set out to explore the interplay of ethnicity, gender and class which have been influential in Kurdish women's access to education. I sought to understand not only the political, socio-economic and cultural framework (in terms of education) where they were situated and subordinated as Kurdish female children, but also their forms of agency in overcoming the oppressive mechanisms in front of educational access, embedded in this framework. Secondly, I wanted to explore how, as women university students coming from Eastern and Southeastern Turkey, they experienced the urban space of İstanbul and the ways in which their experiences resemble or differentiate from those of other Kurdish women in the city. Thirdly, I was wondering how their experiences, especially at school, until the university as well as in the city and on campus as Kurdish women students shape the way they frame their politics. Interrogation of the interplay of ethnic and gender-based subordination Kurdish

women students have experienced at the crossroads of education and politics has become the central element in this thesis. I believe this intersectional approach is able to shed more light on the various forms of oppression and political agency Kurdish women students have experienced and manifested at the crossroads of education and politics. Their experiences and the way they put them into words seem to open up a space to rethink women's education problem, the politics of ethnicity and gender, as well as the intricate relationship between education and politics in contemporary Turkey, and highlight the need to understand the complex ways in which Kurdish political subjectivities are formed and performed.

1.2. Theoretical Overview

1.2.1. Locating Intersectionality

The term "intersectionality" was introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) to articulate the various ways in which race and gender work together to shape the multiple dimensions of Black women's experience in the US. Emphasizing how diverse structures intereact, Crenshaw argues that race and gender is not independent from the class dimension (1991:3). Moreover, while the interplay between race and gender mechanisms is effective in producing observable class differences, "once in a lower economic class, race and gender structures continue to shape the particular ways that women of color experience poverty, relative to other groups". (Crenshaw, 1991:3) Therefore, multiple forms of oppression women of color experience are shaped by the intersecting dynamics of gender, race and class. Theory of intersectionality analyzes diverse and marginalized positions not only deriving from those three dimensions but also other intertwining social and cultural divisions such as ethnicity, disability, nationality and sexuality, age, immigration status and geography (Knudsen, 2006:61; Yuval-Davis, 2006:195). Yuval-Davis emphasizes that each social division has a different ontological basis which is irreducible to other categories, while "in concrete experiences of oppression, being oppressed, for example, as 'a Black person' is always constructed intermeshed in other social divisions" such as gender, social class, disability

status or nationality (Yuval-Davis, 2006: 195). Crenshaw defines intersectionality as follows:

> Intersectionality is what occurs when a woman from a minority group . . . tries to navigate the main crossing in the city. . . . The main highway is 'racism road'. One cross street can be Colonialism, then Patriarchy Street. . . She has to deal not only with one form of oppression but with all forms, those named as road signs, which link together to make a double, a triple, multiple, a many layered blanket of oppression." (Crenshaw, quoted in Yuval-Davis, 2006:196)

In a similar vein, Patricia Hill Collins, who also makes an intersectional analysis of the conditions of Black women in the USA, argues that multiple forms of oppression work together in producing different injustices. Moreover, her examination of intersectionality suggests that gender, sexuality, class, nation and race can not be analyzed as separate systems of oppression, but as systems mutually constructing each other (Collins, 2000a:47). Collins clarifies that although dealing with multiple oppressions at the same time, Black women do not experience them in the same degree. As the form of oppression changes depending on certain contexts and encounters, different faces of subordination become salient in their experiences:

> Her gender may be more prominent when she becomes a mother, her race when she searches for housing, her social class when she applies for credit, her sexual orientation when she is walking with her lover, and her citizenship status when she applies for a job. In all of these contexts, her position in relation to and within intersecting oppressions shifts. (Collins, 2000b: 274-275)

In examining the ways in which oppression affects Black women, Collins also makes use of another theoretical framework, "matrix of domination" which is different yet related to intersectionality. Collins considers domination as "encompassing intersecting oppressions of race, class, gender, ethnicity, and nation" which organize an overall particular matrix of domination (2000b:275). So according to Collins, while intersectionality stands for particular forms of intersecting oppressions, the matrix of domination refers to the way these intersecting dynamics of oppression are indeed organized (2000b:18). In Collin's analysis, a particular matrix of domination is organized by four interrelated systems of power which are structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal domains. "The structural domain organizes oppression, whereas the disciplinary domain manages it. The hegemonic domain justifies oppression, and the interpersonal domain influences everyday lived experience and the

individual consciousness that ensues" (Collins, 2000b: 276). With an intersectional analysis of the individuals' everyday experiences of subordination in diverse ways, Collins also manages to capture the unique and shifting self-definitions and personal identities of Black women who operate within relations of domination and power on a daily basis.

Following from the current literature on intersectionality, this thesis is based on an analysis of the multiple forms of oppression Kurdish women students experience with respect to education and political engagements in different spatial contexts. Firstly, I aim to show that dynamics of ethnicity, gender and class intersect in various forms with shifting boundaries to affect their access to education up until university years. They do not experience these oppressive dynamics in similar degrees. An intersection of gender and class is more effective than ethnicity in impeding educational access of some of interviewees, while relationships of ethnicity and gender have a greater impact than socio-economic class in shaping some others' access to education. Besides, the particular forms of resistance they develop against those shifting dimensions of subordination are also bound up with different constellations of oppressive mechanisms. Secondly, I seek to contribute to the existing literature with an intersectional analysis of ethnicity and gender which have shaped Kurdish women students' experiences in the urban space of İstanbul as well as their forms of political engagement. Their experiences with respect to dynamics of ethnicity and gender are not in similar degrees. For some, the oppression with respect to Kurdishness have been more influential than womanhood on their experiences while the reverse is the case for others. Hence, the way they voice their political concerns and demands have been related with differentiating degrees of these dynamics. Hence, I argue that intersections of ethnicity and gender with shifting boundaries have shaped my interviewees' political subjectivities. Politics of Kurdish women university students in İstanbul can not be adequately analyzed solely as part of the Kurdish movement. They manifest a new form of political subjectivity and novel forms of action beyond the discourse of the traditional politics in general and the Kurdish movement in particular. The shifting factors behind Kurdish women students' subordination and resistance with regard to education and politics are explicit in structural, disciplinary, hegemonic and interpersonal realms. Not only has their experience of oppression, but also resistance seemed to display variation among different interviewees as well as between different spatio-temporal contexts of their life.

1.2.2. Historical Background of the Kurdish Question

Turkish nationalism was a constitutive element in the Turkish nation-building process. Kemal Kirişçi and Gareth Winrow (1997) show how the founding fathers of the Turkish Republic implemented several measures in order to transform a "traditional religious society" into a "modern and secular one" demonstrating that the driving force of this transformation was Turkish nationalism (Kirişçi & Winrow, 1997:89). Indeed, in the Ottoman political regime, until the foundation of the Turkish nation-state, nation indicated a religious belonging instead of an ethnic community. Hence, there was a Muslim nation rather than a Turkish, Kurdish or Arab nation (Kirişçi &Winrow, 1997:90; Yeğen, 1999:557, Lewis, 1965:329). Yet, the discourses of westernization/modernization, centralization, secularism and nationalism through which the Turkish nation-state has been founded turned the leading elites of the state towards a formation of a new nation which is not based on religious affiliation. (Yeğen, 1999) Yet, the "traditional society" that had to be transformed was multi-ethnic; hence the dominant logic of the nation-building process could not be based on ethnicity. That is why Mustafa Kemal, borrowing from Ziya Gökalp's formulation of Turkish nationalism, suggested a definition of nation on the terms of territory, morality, language and education which he would support until the mid-1920s (Kirişçi & Winrow, 1997: 97). Particularly, the first two decades of the Republic witnessed the implementation of several policies which would create a modern, secular nation who lives on the same piece of land and shares a common morality and language. Yet again in the same period this "civic" understanding of Turkish nationalism could not be realized in practice. Kirişçi and Winrow show how non-Muslims faced severe discrimination despite the fact that religion was not emphasized as a defining characteristic of Turkish nationalism. Moreover, according to Kirişçi and Winrow, the strong emphasis put on Turkish ethnicity and language in this period constituted a serious departure from Gökalp's notion of civic nationalism (Kirişçi &Winrow, 1997:97-98).

Once Turks became the dominant ethnic component of the Turkish nation, the nationalist project was directed against all kinds of ethnic and religious minorities such as Greeks, Jews, and Kurds. They suggest that the aim was to maintain the process of building a homogenous nation. Kirişçi and Winrow argue that especially from the late

1920s to the mid-1940s Turkish governments did not maintain civic nationalism (1997:97). The Settlement Law (*İskân Kanunu*) was adopted in 1934. The Law divided citizens into three groups: "those who spoke Turkish and were of Turkish ethnicity; those who did not speak Turkish but were considered to be of Turkish culture, and finally those who neither spoke Turkish nor belonged to the Turkish culture" (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997:99). Although there was no clear reference to the Kurds, the second group mostly referred to Kurds and Arabs (1997:99). Quoting from Beşikçi, Kirişçi and Winrow state that the aim with the Law was to assimilate Kurds into Turkishness (1997:99). The nationalist project which emphasized Turkish ethnicity and language highly manifested itself in the early 1930s with the declaration of the Turkish History and Sun-Language Theses. The aim was to imagine a national consciousness by building a continuation between the distant past and the present of Turks (Kirişçi & Winrow, 1997:102). As Tanıl Bora claims, the Kemalist regime adopted the policy of assimilating Kurds for the sake of Turkish national identity and hence paved the way for the introduction of an argument that Kurds were actually Turks (Bora, 1996:37).

Kirişçi and Winrow show that in this period Kurds were considered as "Mountain Turks". According to the Kemalist discourse of the 1930s, Kurds were originally of Turkish ethnicity, but had, in time, changed their language and remained uncivilized (Kirişçi & Winrow, 1997:102) The attempts of the Kemalist regime were met with the "discontent" of Kurdish populations throughout Turkey (Yeğen, 2007: 127). Kirişçi and Winrow notice that out of 18 rebellions that broke out between 1924 and 1938, 16 of them involved Kurds (1997:100). Metin Heper shows how the Kurdish populations were subjected to "forceful assimilation" since the revolts were responded with "brutal repression" by the armed forces of the new Turkish Republic. (2007:8). Mesut Yeğen argues that the Kurdish resistance against the centralization of state power was considered as a pre-modern form of resistance, since according to the logic of modernization and centralization, the Turkish state was "civilizing" the country through the consolidation of state power (Yeğen, 1999:563). As Yeğen argues, the Turkish Republic denied the existence of Kurds for a long time: "From the mid-1920s until the end of the 1980s, the Turkish state 'assumed' that there was no Kurdish element on Turkish territory" (1999:555). Hence, "the Turkish state has, for a long time, consistently avoided recognizing the Kurdishness of the Kurdish question." (1999:555) Yet, although Kurdishness of the question remained silent, the Turkish state kept talking about the question itself in various ways, initially as a question of banditry, tribal

resistance or backwardness, later as a question of regional underdevelopment, but never as an ethno-political question (Yeğen, 1999:555). Yüksel argues that the Kemalist nationalist project led to the "crystallization and development of the Kurdish 'question'" (2006:780). According to him, the Kurdish issue has become "a 'problem' and/or 'question' in Turkey primarily due the Kemalist nationalist policies denying the existence of the Kurds" (2006:780).

In 1977, Abdullah Öcalan and his colleagues adopted a programme which is based on the use of violence (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997:127). Their targets would be "members of Turkish extreme nationalist groups and 'social chauvinist' groups (…) as well as state collaborators and feudal landlords (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997:127). The leadership of the PKK[11] fled to Syria and Lebanon upon the military coup in Turkey in 1980. When the PKK returned to Turkey in 1984, "the range of their targets had expanded to include economic and military as well as civilian targets (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997:127). In August 1984, the PKK began its armed insurgence. Until 1999, when Abdullah Öcalan, the leader of the PKK, was arrested, 30,000 people have been killed during the clashes between the PKK and Turkish security forces. "The PKK militarized and popularized Kurdish nationalist to a significant degree" (Yavuz 2001, cited in Yüksel, 2006:780).

The government responded to the PKK threat mostly in a militarist way. After the declaration of the *Olağanüstü Hal* (State of Emergency) in Eastern and Southeastern Turkey, the new "security" policies were introduced to the region (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997:128-). The law of the emergency rule entitled civilian governors with the right to exercise "certain quasi-martial law powers, including restrictions on the press and removal from the area of persons whose activities are believed inimical to public order" (US Department of State 1992, cited in Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997:128). The security politics employed in the region went hand in hand with the state's increasing military presence in the provinces under emergency rule:

> According to the International Institute for Strategic Studies, the normal level of Turkish troop deployments in the area was around 90,000. (…) By the end of 1994, taking into account also the number of police, special forces and village guards, there were 300,000 security forces deployed in eastern and southeastern Turkey. (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997:130)

[11] *Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan,* Kurdish acronym for the Kurdistan Workers' Party

The same period also witnessed the phenomenon of forced migration from Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia which escalated after 1993, when village evacuations were intensified (Çelik, 2005:139). Çelik mentions three factors as leading to forced migration:

> the evacuation of villages by the military, allowed by the 1987 emergency rule; the pressure of the PKK (*Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan* - Kurdistan Workers' Party) on villagers who do not support the PKK to leave their villages; and insecurity resulting from being caught between the armed insurgents and Turkish security forces. (2005:139)

After leaving their villages many Kurds moved to the nearest cities or cities located in the Western Anatolia (Çelik, 2005:139-140). On the basis of the report prepared by a committee of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, Çelik states that 820 villages and 2,345 hamlets were evacuated in six Eastern and Southeastern cities (Diyarbakır, Hakkari, Siirt, Şırnak, Tunceli and Van) under the State Emergency Rule and five nearby cities (Batman, Bingöl, Bitlis, Mardin and Muş), while 378,335 people were forcibly migrated (2005: 140). Moreover, she also refers to the number estimated by many human rights organizations which is two to four million (2005:140).

Tanıl Bora claims that, in the 1990s, the conception of Turkish nationalism about the Kurdish issue oscillated between classical assimilation and racism. Official nationalism principally followed the line of assimilation although it allowed the racist discourse in the period of "low-intensity warfare" (2005:231). This racist discourse together with an "anti-Kurdish hatred" is still evident in contemporary Turkey especially among the ultra-nationalist *Ülkücü* (idealist) youth of the Nationalist Action Party (Bora, 2005:250). Even though the Kurdish issue can be discussed more freely today with reference to human rights, cultural and political identity, ethnic Turkish nationalism continues to shape the tone of the ongoing debates on the "Kurdish issue."

The recent policies of *demokratik açılım* (democratic opening out) or *Kürt açılımı* (Kurdish opening out) of the AKP government vitalized this debate and contributed to the recognition of certain Kurdish demands as "rights". Yet, these brief periods of debate and constructive policy-making were followed by repressive policies of the government on Kurdish political organizing, as a result of which demands with respect to Kurdish identity once again became criminalized.

This thesis aims to contribute to the literature on the Kurdish issue along two lines. First, I seek to analyze the dynamics of ethnicity, gender and class which shaped the educational access of my interviewees within the political and conflictual context of

the war between the PKK and the Turkish state in the 1990s. The present literature fails to adequately address the question as to how the repercussions of the Kurdish issue (especially embodied by the war, the marginalization of the region as well as the ethnic nationalism of both the Turkish state and the PKK) frame the schooling practices of the Kurdish female children in the region. So, I aim to analyze how Kurdish female children in the region in the 1990s experienced the Kurdish issue, particularly with respect to education. Second, I seek to contribute to the existing literature with my intersectional analysis of ethnicity and gender which shape the political subjectivities of my research participants as young university students. So far, Kurdish women are mostly imagined as part of the Kurdish movement in the public discourse and hardly as a part of the young student population in Turkey with political concerns and demands going beyond ethnic identity claims. I aim to trace Kurdish women students' perception of the Kurdish issue and their articulation of political subjectivities in relation to the ways in which it reflects on their personal lives. In recent years, the state's approach to the Kurdish issue and politics has become increasingly oriented towards silencing the Kurdish struggle and identity demands by terrorizing the lives of and imprisoning political subjects of the movement, among whom are also Kurdish students. Hence, it seems crucial to address the particular positions Kurdish women students occupy as political subjects within a context defined by increasing censorhip toward Kurdish politics. In this thesis, I explore the ways in which Kurdish women students, under such challenging circumstances, open up new spaces of articulation for their political subjectivities, largely around Kurdishness and womanhood.

1.2.3. A Revisit of the Literature on Kurdish Women

In the post-80 period, the feminist movement developed a strong resistance against the "patriarchy of the nation-state" which also found its articulation in feminist scholarship. Tekeli introduces the concept of "woman's point of view" in order to characterize the development of this new wave of feminism in Turkey (Tekeli, 1995). According to Ayşe Gül Altınay; the concept of "woman's point of view" developed in the 1980s became diversified as "different women's points of view" in the 1990s, because throughout this period differences among women within the feminist

movement made them organize around more pluralist feminist demands (Altınay, 2000:29-30)

Moreover, Kurdish women and Islamic conservative women came to be increasingly more organized in this same period. Since ethnicity was introduced to feminist analysis in the 1990s, the dual suppression of Kurdish women came to the forefront in the discussions of scholars and activists.

Since the 1990s, a growing body of literature has been addressing the history and contemporary modes of Kurdish women's activism. Rohat Alakom mentions the significance of *Kürt Kadınları Teali Cemiyeti* (Society for the Advancement of Kurdish Women) which was established in İstanbul in 1919. He states that although this first Kurdish women's association was very active in this period, it has received very little attention by the feminist scholarship working on the Ottoman woman's movement (1998:36-37).

Metin Yüksel analyzes how Kurdish women were oppressed by the Kemalist regime since the establishment of the Republic. Kemalist modernization project while aiming to "emancipate" Turkish women to some extent, yet it had been blind to "other" (ethnically non-Turkish, religiously non-Sunni-Muslim) women. It can be argued that Kurdish women have been experiencing double yoke, one for being Kurd, second for being woman of non-Turkish descent. Yet, Kurdish women and their specific subordination, by virtue of their Kurdishness in addition to and in relation to their womanhood could not find place in the Turkish feminist literature emerging in the 1980s.. It seems that the Kemalist modernization project prevented most Turkish feminists from recognizing the "Kurdishness of the question" of Kurdish women in the first decade of the second wave feminist movement, a situation partly effective in their silence on the ethnic-based oppression of Kurdish women. Metin Yüksel's argument pointing to an undeniable relationship between Kemalist nationalism and feminism in Turkey is important here: "It is also necessary to state that Kemalist nationalist ideas seem to have penetrated into the views and analysis of Turkish feminist women to an important extent. Thus, it seems that feminism in Turkey has failed to completely sever its links to Kemalism when encountering Kurdish women" (Yüksel, 2006:786). According to Yüksel, Kemalist modernization project did not advantage Kurdish women as it did Turkish women and moreover feminism in Turkey implicitly or explicitly perpetuated the Kemalist nationalist discourse. As Arat previously suggests: "Until the 1980s, there was a consensus in society that Kemalist reforms had

emancipated women and that this "fact" could not be contested" (1997:103). Yüksel (2003) in his study entitled as *Diversifying Feminism in Turkey in 1990's* claims that feminism in Turkey was ethnic blind until 1990s. What is new in his analysis is that he shows how intersecting dynamics of ethnicity and gender can be effective in the suppression of women, thus underlining the dual oppression of Kurdish women.

Yeşim Arat points out how Kurdish women demanded recognition throughout the years that witness the development of feminist activism and the Kurdish conflict in Turkey. Kurdish women have been subordinated not only by their Kemalist "Turkish sisters" but also by the Kurdish patriarchy (Arat, 2008:414). That is why Kurdish women tried to develop their own alternative movement in order to mobilize those who experience a distinct type of oppression different from that of Turkish woman and Kurdish man. As a result, they gathered around journals such as *Roza*, *Jujin* and *Jîn û Jîyan* in the 1990s so as to express the different experiences of Kurdish women. (Altınay, 2000:30; Altınay, 2004; Arat, 2008:414) In the same period the feminist monthly *Pazartesi*, although not established by Kurdish women, gave voice to Kurdish feminists. Yeşim Arat points to the collaboration between Kurdish and Turkish feminists as *Roza*, *Jujin and Pazartesi* have similar positions on a range of feminist causes such as protesting against violence towards women as well as the state policies on the Kurdish issue. This solidarity between Turkish and Kurdish feminists again shows how the feminist movement in Turkey diversified in the 1990s (Arat, 2008:415-416)

Handan Çağlayan, another feminist scholar, also engages in an analysis of Kurdish women's experience in political terms. She looks into the motivations behind the participation of Kurdish women in the Kurdish political movement beginning with the 1980s and how the identity of Kurdish woman has been constituted within this movement (Çağlayan, 2010). She spotlights that especially the 1990s witnessed the coming of Kurdish women to the forefront as political actors within the parameters of the Kurdish movement. The mobilizing strategies of Kurdish nationalism required women also to get out of the patriarchal house circle they are confined to; however once Kurdish women started to engage in political practice they manifested extensive and active political agency (Çağlayan, 2010:87). Çağlayan claims that throughout this process of political mobilization Kurdish women turned from a mere symbolic political object into political subjects (Çağlayan, 2010). However, in this period, Kurdish women

had to resist not only the patriarchal tendencies dominant in the Kurdish community, but also all sorts of state violence.

Lale Yalçın Heckman and Pauline Van Gelder made a historical analysis of the roles attributed to the Kurdish women throughout the process of Kurdish nationalist movement. They argued that Kurdish women have been both symbols and actors in this period because not only certain images of mother, guerilla and politician have been ascribed to them but they have also been active in the reproduction and evolution of these roles. (Yalçın-Heckman & van Gelder, 2010: 344-345)

There are also studies about the linguistic dimension of the oppression of Kurdish women. Yeşim Arat underlines the splitting of Kurdish feminists from Turkish feminists in 1989 over the usage of the Kurdish language in International Women's Day celebrations (Arat, 2008:414). Formal education in Turkey is only available in Turkish and that was one of the points what Kurdish women criticized about state policies since the restriction of the use of the Kurdish language limits Kurdish women's access to the public realm which is defined by the dominance of the Turkish language (Arat, 2008: 415). Jeroen Smits and Ayşe Gündüz Hoşgör also analyzed the socio-economic consequences of the lack of Turkish knowledge for Kurdish and Arab women in Turkey, defining the knowledge of Turkish as "linguistic capital" which many Kurdish women lack. They show how this language problem prevents their access to the public resources and positions available in Turkish society (Smits &Gündüz-Hoşgör, 2003:830). Moreover, since those women do not have a command of Turkish, they are more under the control of patriarchal traditional values, their relations are restricted to their own social group and their participation in the formal economy is more limited (Smits & Gündüz-Hoşgör, 2003:829-831). Ayşe Betül Çelik (2005) explores the experience of forced migration and demonstrates that after their forced migration to the city, Kurdish women encountered many problems in İstanbul such as social isolation poverty and social exclusion. The language problem had been effective in migrant Kurdish women's low social integration into the city. The poverty-based oppression, Kurdish women experienced in the city, is also related to the political mechanisms through which the state subordinates the Kurdish community. Çelik observes that Kurdish women's rediscovery of gender identity in the urban space went together with their increasing Kurdish consciousness.

My interviewees also migrated to İstanbul yet not out of forced migration but in order to pursue their education. Moreover, they did not encounter a language barrier,

since they were able to speak Turkish. The existing literature seem to address Kurdish women's experiences of forced migration, but Kurdish women university students as migrants from Eastern and Southeastern Turkey could not have place in it. I aim to contribute to the literature on forced migration with an intersectional analysis of Kurdish women's experience in İstanbul as university students. I argue that the experience of Kurdish women students in İstanbul is different from those of forced migrants, particularly Kurdish women. My research participants' spatial practices in the city have been shaped by the interplay of ethnicity and gender as well as their positions as university students and characteristics of their universities. Hülya Çağlayan (2011) in her study on the subordination and resistance of working class Kurdish women, in the Aydınlı neighborhood of Tuzla employs an intersectional analysis of ethnicity, gender and class in order to explore the social exclusion these women experience in their daily lives. Following from her theoretical framework of intersectionality, I offer the category of studentship as a factor intersecting with ethnicity and gender to frame the spatial practices of Kurdish women students in İstanbul.

Considering the literature on the distinct experiences of Kurdish women, it seems that education has not received adequate attention in academic analyses. The existing literature deals with the ways in which Kurdish women are oppressed under local patriarchy and the nationalist sentiments of various state mechanisms. Moreover, how Kurdish women display certain forms of political resistance towards both patriarchal tendencies of the Kurdish community and Turkish nationalism has been analyzed. Yet there is no examination of the intersecting dynamics of ethnicity, gender, class in the oppression of Kurdish women in terms of educational access. Kurdish women, as mothers, guerillas, politicians or forced migrants have been analyzed (Çelik 2005; Yalçın-Heckman and van Gelder, 2010, Çağlayan, 2010; Çağlayan et al. 2011; Bruinessen, 2001), yet Kurdish women as university students have escaped academic analysis. This is one of the other gaps in the literature which I try to address in this thesis.

This thesis also seeks to contribute to the existing literature on Kurdish women with an analysis of the political subjectivities of Kurdish women students which have been shaped by dynamics of ethnicity and gender. The politics of Kurdish women have been analyzed mostly within the context of the Kurdish movement, yet Kurdish women students as political subjects display diverse political subjectivities as well as novel forms of political action which can not be accounted merely within the framework of

traditional politics in general and the Kurdish movement in particular. I suggest that they are situated at the crossroads of education and politics which shaped the way they voice their political concerns and demands with respect to ethnicity, gender and many other axes of difference. I aim to analyze the ways in which those students manage to maintain their education up to university years in a socio-cultural and economic environment defined by male dominance and strict gender roles as well as by the state's exclusionary policies of national education disadvantaging those in Eastern and South Eastern Turkey. Furthermore, I plan to engage in the discussion of oppressive mechanisms to which Kurdish women students are subjected in İstanbul and their subjective agencies in dealing with repressive policies on the oppositional politics.

1.2.4. Reconsidering Youth Politics in Turkey

Demet Lüküslü, in her study on the post-1980 youth in Turkey, asks an insightful question: "is youth a political category by definition?" Although it is not, Lüküslü argues, the active role youth played in the history of Turkey since the 19th century led to the emergence of a "myth of the youth" in Turkish society (2009:14). Lüküslü identifies the "myth of the youth" as the construction and definition of the youth as a political category whose thought and action are shaped by state-centrism (2009:15). Lüküslü traces the history of the myth to the 19th century, the period in which the Ottoman Empire sought to restore its power by modernizing its institutions. In this period, a youth – which will later be called as *Jön Türkler* (Young Turks)- expected to save the country, had been constructed by the state. (2009:15). This mission, which is indeed defined by state-centric politics, was actually internalized and practiced not only by the Young Turks, but also by the following generations in Turkey until the 1980, namely the first generation of the Republic (belonging to the period between 1923-1950), '68 and '78 generations.

With the founding of the Turkish Republic, youth became the "symbol of the Republic" as Atatürk, in *Gençliğe Hitabe* (Address to the Youth), entrusted the Republic to the youth, assigning them a mission of protecting and perpetuating it (2009:15). Anthropologist Leyla Neyzi, in her analysis of the construction of youth in public discourse during three periods in Turkish history (the periods of 1923-1950, 1950-1980 and post-1980) also points out that in the same period especially the

educated youth was attributed with the embodiment of the new nation (2001:412) and perceived as the "guardians of the regime" (2001:416). In the second period (1950-1980), which is represented by '68 and '78 generations in Lüküslü's account, although the youth was divided into political camps as "rightists" and leftists" they had the same goal: "saving the country" (Lüküslü, 2009:15; Neyzi, 2001:416). Hence, according to Lüküslü, '60s and '70s were characterized by the continuance of the "myth of the youth" as young people -mostly university students- were still manifesting a state-centric political orientation. Neyzi maintains that although in this period, young people were reconstructed as "rebels and threats to the nation" for challenging the state, it was the youth which found the government as illegitimate (2001:412). Hence, actually in these two periods (1923-1950 and 1950-1980) the mission of the educated youth which was to transform the society from above was kept intact (Neyzi, 2001:412), although the discourse on youth had shifted "from vanguard to rebel" (Neyzi, 2001:418). Yet, Neyzi points to the fact that how in that period the voice of many young people could not reflect on the public discourse just like the rural population in the country.

The third period (post-1980) represents the first serious break from the modernist construction of youth in Turkey (Neyzi, 2001:412) as it also coincides with the interruption of the "myth of the youth" since the position and activities of young people have been more on individual basis than state oriented (Lüküslü, 2009:15). Post-1980 youth in Turkey are generally represented as selfish, apolitical consumers and profit-seekers not only by the elder generations but also by their peers (Lüküslü, 2009; Neyzi:2001). Indeed quantitative studies on the post-1980 youth also reveal the withdrawal of the youth from traditional politics and ways of organizing. The study entitled as "Turkish Youth 98: Silent Majority Highlighted", which is conducted with 2.223 young people in 12 different cities in 1998, indicates that only 3.7 percent of the respondents have a membership in a political party. Moreover, only 2.5 percent of them are found to be participating in a political, social or cultural organization (1999:117). Another research, *Türk Üniversite Gençliği Araştırması* (Turkish University Youth Survey), this time on university students, a particular group among the youth, reveals a similar finding: only 1.4 percent of the university youth dedicate their free time to associations or political parties (2003:85). *Türk Gençliği ve Katılım* (Turkish Youth and Participation), a study on the political participation of the youth shows that the voting, with a percentage of 61.5, is the most prevalent form of political participation among young people while other forms of participation -such as being a member of the youth

organization, participating in a demonstration or a boycotte, being a member of a non-governmental organization engaged with politics- is low (Erdoğan, 2001:10).

Actually, this individualization and estrangement from traditional politics is not specific to the youth of Turkey, but rather a global phenomenon characterizing the condition of young people in many countries as UN's World Youth Report 2005 indicates. The report underlines young people's "apathy towards politics", "lack of interest in joining traditional youth organizations" or political parties and voting. It draws attention to the changing political attitudes of the youth as well as the patterns of the youth movements (UN, 2005:73). Yet, the report warns that this condition does not imply that young people do not care about the conditions of their society. Instead most student movements have a wide array of concerns associated with the political issues as they appear in their daily lives, from democratic reforms and racism to employment and environmental challenges (UN, 2005:73). Hence, their political orientations are shaped by a search of politics and action that would speak to their daily realities, which politics, in its traditional form, fails to do.

As Lüküslü underlines, although youth in Turkey have distinct and specific characteristics and problems originating from this country itself, they have several things in common with young people of other countries since they were born into and have grown up in the same planet in the same period (Lüküslü, 2008:294). They were born into the neoliberal global order, facilitating the circulation of money as opposed to the thickening of national borders for individuals. They witnessed the fall of the Berlin War and the Soviet Union, left with a little energy to dream another possible world under conditions of increasing unemployment and poverty, militarization and violence while being collectively alienated from the state mechanisms of decision-making. Under such conditions, Lüküslü suggests, young people's retreat from politics includes a secret criticism of the current condition of politics and the political system (2009:162). So what is perceived as "apolitism" appears to be a political stance in itself (2009: 17). Based on the narratives of her 80 young interviewees between the age of 18-25, Lüküslü observes that their reluctance to participate in organized politics have several reasons, which generally amount to a lack of belief in a change even if they resist and struggle. Young people perceive politics as a dirty business and a clientalist space occupied by corruption. Besides it is seen as a rigid system closed to meaningful effective changes. (Lüküslü, 2009:150). Moreover, they consider political organizations as authoritarian structures where they as individuals can not express themselves freely (Lüküslü,

2009:157). So, although they are actually interested in social and political problems and have serious concerns about the future, they do not translate their dissident individual subjectivities into organized activism (2009:162). In Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's terms they are behaving as "actively unpolitical" since their individualism and apathy towards politics do not imply an indifference or selfishness but an active rejection of traditional political institutions (2001:159). "They are an actively unpolitical younger generation because they take the life out of the self-involved institutions and thus force upon the Hamlet question: to be or not to be?" (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2001:159). Lüküslü suggests that it is possible to call this young people as "freedom's children", as Beck and Beck-Gernsheim do, instead of accusing them for being "too" individualistic (Lüküslü, 2008:295).

Kentel (2005:17) argues that beginning from 1990s, one of the defining caharacteristics of the young population is the "feeling of relativity" (*görelilik hissiyatı*) which lead them to manifest various combinations of identities with different references. Referring to Kentel, Lüküslü suggests that youth's "feeling of relativity" is partly shaped by their distant position to politics and ideologies. While attachment with different ideologies keep them apart, common experiences as young people have a potential to bring them together (2009:164). As Kentel suggests, this "feeling of relativity" does not exclude the "other" but carries the "other" in itself, hence it has a greater potential, than ideologies, of uniting individual subjects. According to Kentel, recognition of the "other" in oneself would pave the way for a "new politics" young people demand (Kentel, 2005:17).

Neyzi points out that young people are increasingly creating alternative spaces for themselves and novel forms of political action, such as new communication technologies, to manifest their subjective identities (2001:427). According to her, the vision of the post-1980 youth in Turkish society is both ambivalent and paradoxical. "Studies show that youth tend to be viewed ambivalently by adult society, which romanticizes them vis-à-vis visions of utopia while castigating them in practice for being "trouble." (Neyzi, 2001:413) What is puzzling here is that while on the one hand the youth is accused of being selfish and apolitical and is also paradoxically approached with the hope that they would make the utopia real, they are on the other hand defined as trouble-makers and are hindered when they get into practice. Neyzi resolves this question by saying that in order to express the new politics of the period, a new language is needed and that existing categories are not sufficient to depict the young

people. “The denigrated “individualism” of young people seems to be about their hesitancy in linking their subjective identities and lifestyles to a single national project. Youth, like Turkish society as a whole, seems to be fragmenting into identity-based enclaves." (Neyzi, 2001:425)

As illustrated above, most studies on the post-1980 youth, both quantitative and qualitative (such as Lüküslü’s study) appear to address the general youth population or university students, a specific segment of the young population. Yet these studies fail to address the dynamic of ethnicity as part of the analysis. There are also recent studies on the politics of Kurdish youth in Turkey such as Haydar Darıcı’s (2009) study on the politics of Kurdish children and youth in Gündoğan, Adana, which is a neighborhood inhabited predominantly by the forcibly displaced Kurds. He analyzes the ways in which Kurdish children and youth construct and manifest their political subjectivities in the urban space. He suggests that the repetitive narration of stories of violence, experienced by the older members of families in the hometown, as well as their own memories of present experiences of state violence in the urban space play a considerable role in the formation of their political subjectivities (Darıcı, 2009:10). The children and youth perceive Gündoğan as their home and manifest their belonging to the neighborhood and remake the urban space through violence and struggle against the state (Darıcı, 2009:11). According to Darıcı, as a result of the displacement of millions of Kurds, the Kurdish movement has turned into an urban-based opposition. As adult members of forcibly displaced families have difficulty integrating to urban life, Kurdish children provide the maintenance of the family which in turn increases their power within the household (Darıcı, 2009:119-120). Their elevated position in the household contributes to their mobilization in Kurdish politics, but reversely it is also their politicization which empowers them within the household and Kurdish society (2009:119). Darıcı suggests that “Kurdish children occupy a political subject position that has the potential to challenge/transform the very discourses, practices, and agenda of the Kurdish movement itself” (2009:120).

Darıcı succinctly shows how spatial practices, of children and youth, with respect to gender have shaped their politics. While female children and youth are mostly confined to houses, male children and youth are “pushed out” to the street since they are unwanted in the household. While the male children and youth politicize in the streets and during struggle, “the politicization of girls occurs within the boundaries of the household” (Darıcı, 2009:80). Darıcı observes the invisible position of female dwellers

of the neighborhood in politics and public life. Indeed, the few female activists in the neighborhood are constituted mostly by university students while there are also a small number of female children participating demonstrations (Darıcı, 2009:89). Darıcı suggests that the rules of honor and modesty prevent young women from struggling in the street since it carries the possibility of arrest. Hence for them, "the only way to be political is becoming a guerilla" since the PKK, as opposed to the prison, is considered by families as a private space where they would be in safety (Darıcı, 2009:89).

There is also Zeynep Başer's (2011) study on the Kurdish children and young people in Diyarbakır. Başer analyzes their perceptions of peace and conflict with respect to the Kurdish issue. She suggests that young Kurds' definitions of peace are basically shaped around demands of equal citizenship rights in Turkey and having constructive relations with the Turkish society (Başer, 2011:129). Başer argues that Kurdish children and youth are not only the victims of the conflict environment in multiple forms on a daily basis, but they are also politically active agents with multiplicity of roles (2011:129). Başer states that none of the female participants of the focus group discussion have ever been involved in the demonstrations as opposed to the male ones. She suggests possible reasons that might have influenced the invisibility of female participants' positions and perspectives within the conflict. One of these reasons relates to the attitudes of families constructed around cultural norms and gender roles which constrain female participants' mobility outside home as they get older (Başer, 2011:128). Another dynamic is that while there is peer pressure among boys with respect to participation in the demonstrations (which include practices of violence) as "a site to prove loyalty to the community," there are not such expectations within peer groups of females. "Hence the manifestations of their politicization take place in more rhetorical forms." (Başer, 2011:128) Başer also points out that these practices do not only suggest that they encounter a weaker social pressure in their daily lives, such as "having to prove their Kurdishness," but also help explain "their ability to imagine alternative, non-violent means to bring peace" (2011:128-129). Başer's analysis open up a space to articulate "the potential roles that the young females might play as peacebuilders within their communities" (2011:129).

Although two recent studies by Darıcı and Başer (both unpublished MA theses) introduce ethnicity and gender dynamics to their analysis of political subjectivities of the Kurdish youth, they fail to adequately address the intersectional role ethnicity and gender play in the formation of young people's political subjectivities. Especially

Darıcı's study is based on the lifestory narratives of predominantly male Kurdish children and youth while he interviewed with only one female research participant. Moreover, both the studies of Darıcı and Başer, and other quantitative and qualitative researches on the post-1980 youth in Turkey, appear to not address the relations between studentship, ethnicity and gender, as a result of which the politics of Kurdish young women as university students has not found place in the literature on youth in Turkey. Hence I seek to contribute to the existing literature on youth politics in Turkey with my intersectional analysis of ethnicity and gender as shaping the political subjectivities of Kurdish women students in İstanbul. I suggest that their childhood years in their hometowns as well as experiences in İstanbul as university students have a crucial impact on their ways of politicization and the manifestation of their subjectivities. Hence their relation with politics is different from other young people in Turkey as well as the Kurdish youth who are not university students.

1.3. Methodology

I started to conduct my field work in November 2011 and conducted oral history interviews with 13 university students from five universities in İstanbul, namely Boğaziçi, İstanbul, Marmara, Bilgi and Yeditepe University, between December 2011 and April 2012 Three of these universities, Boğaziçi, İstanbul and Marmara are state institutions, while two others, Bilgi and Yeditepe, are private. İstanbul University is the one which has the largest student population of 72435 according to the Higher Education Statistics for the 2011-2012 Academic Year issued by ÖSYM (Student Selection and Placement Center). The second one is Marmara University with a student population of 51896. Yeditepe University comes third with 15531 students. Bilgi University has 9083 students. Lastly, Boğaziçi University with 9022 students is the one with the smallest student population. Among my interviewees, ten of them were undergraduate students, while the remaining three were doing their graduate studies either at the universities they had graduated from or at another university. At the time I made the interview, Mizgin was an undergraduate student at Boğaziçi University, whereas Lavin and Jin had graduated from Boğaziçi. While Lavin was pursuing her graduate study at Boğaziçi, Jin was a graduate student

at Bilgi University. Zozan, Newroz and Zelal were undergraduate students at İstanbul University. Havin, Mori and Belçim were studying at Marmara University. Hazal was an undergraduate student at Bilgi University while Ruken had graduated from the same university and pursuing her graduate study at İstanbul Ticaret University. Lastly Öykü and Mordemek were undergraduate students at Yeditepe University. My interviewees were studying at the following programs: Turkish Language and Literature, Sociology, Teacher Education of Mentally Disabled, International Trade and Business, International Relations, Translation and Interpreting Studies, Anthropology, Law, Music Education, Secondary School Mathematics Education, Philosophy, Electrical and Electronics Engineering, History, and Public Relations and Advertising.

In order to reach my interviewees I used the snowball sampling technique and I also received help from my various friends studying at the same universities with my interviewees. The critical role my gatekeepers played in my smooth entry into the fields is undeniable. One of them was the owner of a cafe in İstanbul, where Kurdish students frequently hang out. The cafe also provides workshops on various cultural activities as well as Kurdish language courses. Hence my gatekeeper, who was also a politically active Kurdish man, has a wide network of acquaintances from various universities in İstanbul. Another gatekeeper was a professor at one of the universities that constituted my fields. I had considerable difficulty and hesitation while trying to get into this particular university as a field due to the ethnicity policies of the university as well as the fact that neither me nor my network of friends knew any student from this university. I conducted semi-structured, in-depth and open-ended interviews with the research participants. During the interviews, I tried to intervene as little as possible while also asking not questions that would push her to the answers I had in my mind, but those through which she could construct her life history in her own words, I tried to be "a partner in the dialogue, often as a 'stage director' of the interview, as an 'organiser' of the testimony." (Portelli, 1981:105) I prepared an interview script, including a set of questions beforehand so that it would guide the interviews. During the interviews, I did not ask all the questions on the list while also creating new questions or adapting existing ones in relation to the narratives of my research participants. After some interviews, I felt the necessity to integrate new questions to the interview script. The interviews were recorded by a digital recorder with the permission of the

participants. I myself did all the tape recordings and transcriptions. The duration of the interviews ranged from 2 hours to 4 hours.

Since all my research participants are university students, their ages are very close to each other, between 20 and 26. Öykü, Zelal, Mori, Belçim and Hazal have rural backgrounds while the rest have grown up in city centers or small districts in Eastern or Southeastern Turkey. The cities they came from are as follows: Adıyaman, Hakkari, Şırnak, Bitlis, Muş, Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, Kars, Tunceli and Elazığ. Apart from my two interviewees, namely Öykü and Hazal, all the others came to İstanbul in order to attend university, so their migration was on an educational basis. Öykü came to İstanbul after she graduated from primary school since there was no school in her village beyond the 5th grade. When Öykü came to İstanbul, she began to live with her married brother and a single sister who were living together. Hazal, on the other hand came to İstanbul so as to attend high school. Since she could not bear the ethnic discrimination she experienced in Bartın, where she attended high school for two months only, she transferred to another high school in İstanbul. Hazal stayed in the dormitory of the school during her whole high school education. I especially preferred to make interviews with Kurdish women students who were born and raised in Southeastern and Eastern Turkey, at least until the primary school, since I was interested in the education structure of the region and how they overcame the structural challenges in their hometowns and pursue further education. State's low level of education investments in the region, the insufficient number of schools and teachers, the low quality of schools, the armed conflict between PKK and Turkish security forces which suspended educational activities at intervals in the region in the 1990s, which coincide with the childhood years of interviewees, as well as local patriarchy and lower economic means were some of those structural challenges. Moreover, I wanted to learn how the war influenced their subjectivities, approach to the Kurdish issue and political orientations today. In addition, I was curious about the experience of being a university student in a different city. My interviewees had come to a city located in Western Turkey, one that harbors a multicultural environment and a large Kurdish population in itself. So the urban space of İstanbul was both distant and close, strange and familiar to them, depending on where they would go or with whom they would interact. Lastly, I was wondering how they would construct their narratives with regard to their hometown, where they passed their childhood, after living in İstanbul for some time.

During the research process I encountered various difficulties. First of all, both my interviewees and I were university students from different universities. Besides I was staying on the campus of Sabancı University which was about one-hour away from both Taksim and Kadıköy by the university shuttle. Hence, at particular times me and my interviewees could not match our programs and had to reschedule the interview for a future date. Under these limitations of time and space, I could make interviews with 13 women in the course of four months. Moreover, some of my interviewees were staying at the dormitory like me, and in cases we could not find a suitable house of a friend, we had to make interviews at cafes in Taksim and Hisarüstü, where the outer noise was not under our control. So I had really hard time transcribing the taped recordings of some of the interviews and could not put into text some parts of them since I could not hear them from the noise. In cases that I think those missed parts create gaps in the whole narrative, I preferred not to use particular sections of the transcription. Yet, we were alone with my research participants during the interviews, so I did not encounter the problem of a constant interference by other people.

Another point I found important during the whole process of the research is my similar position to the research participants as a university student. We have more or less similar socio-economic conditions and share the characteristics of the same sub-culture, hence I did not have difficulty in building rapport with my interviewees. More importantly, although I was born and and have grown up in İstanbul, my family is also from a city in Eastern Turkey, Van. In our chats before the interviews, my hometown was one of the first questions they asked and when I said it is Van, most of them immediately considered me as a Kurd, which I was not. Yet, what made them feel sympathy and friendliness for me was not actually the possibility that I would be a Kurd, but that I was also from the region, "Our East"[12]. It was especially clear in my interaction with Newroz who was from Şırnak, Cizre and is currently an undergraduate student in İstanbul University. Our interview lasted for 4 hours with me asking solely a few questions while Newroz was talking without the need of any question. After the interview, I told her that I was happy to see her so relaxed during the interview, since we indeed had met on that very same day. Newroz answered me with the following words: "After all, you too are from our East."[13]

[12] Tr. "Bizim Doğu"

[13] Newroz: "Sonuçta sen de bizim Doğu'dansın"

Besides being a student, I was also a researcher, making interviews with them and learning their life histories. Yet, being from "our East", I was not a cold and indifferent observer in their eyes. This was important I think, because the increasing body of academic work and researches "on" the experiences of Kurdish people seemed to bother some of my research participants. Jin was one of them. During our chat before the interview, Jin responded to someone else's remark about his current study on the Kurds, in a low voice so that only I could hear, saying that: "The Kurds have too become objects of study."[14] I immediately took this resentment personally and responded to her by saying that I was not considering her as an "object" of my study, but both of us as subjects of a mutual interaction. Afterwards, I learned that her reaction was not against me. Nevertheless, her remark initiated a self-questioning of my own position and goal as a researcher. After all, our relation was an artificial one; we came together for a specific purpose and with my initiative. Probably during the interview I would learn many things about her as a Kurd while her knowledge about me would be restricted to some minor comments, because we would be meeting with the aim of talking about Jin's life history experiences. In my analysis, I struggled against "objectifying" her or my other research participants. Jin herserf constructed her life history narrative while also producing new meanings with respect to her past and present in the process. I listened to her and tried to understand her experience in order to rethink the history of the country from the concrete experience of an individual subject. So in the last analysis, I was struggling to understand also my own life history and present condition and the dialogic process of the interview paved the way for such an interaction. After all, as Neyzi (1999) states, oral history is a good method to understand ourselves as well.

However, there was another significant dynamic that should be problematized with respect to the nature of our interactions and the positions we took in these conversations. It is that our mother tongues were different and we were speaking in my mother tongue, Turkish. Most of my interviewees did not feel themselves as proficient in Turkish, although I thought they had no problem of communication. What was at stake in the interview context is that they were speaking in a language they were not so comfortable with. After all, no matter how good they were expressing themselves, Turkish was the language I felt more secure with. During the interviews, this created a

[14] Jin: "Artık Kürtler de çalışma konusu oldu."

hiearchical situation among us. I tried to subvert this by uttering the few Kurdish words and sentences I know, but it remained a symbolic effort at introducing Kurdish as a possible means of communication. Among my interviewees only Newroz came with a suggestion to make the interview in Kurdish, and expressed disappointment when she learned that I could not speak that much Kurdish. So when I began the interview with "çawani"[15] in order to make a gesture, she uttered the following words after replying me back in Kurdish: "I would really have wanted to do [this interview] in Kurdish, but…"[16] The language problem stood between us as a curtain during the whole interview. Although it took four hours, and she spoke almost entirely in Turkish, I had significant difficulty in understanding her, and requested her to repeat herself several times. Newroz was swallowing her words while speaking Turkish. Indeed although she was an active agent in the Kurdish movement as well as believing that she needed to protect her mother tongue and thus trying not to speak Turkish much in her daily life, Newroz had also been attending a diction course since her future job would require a "standard" Turkish. On the other hand, my other interviewees used Kurdish words and phrases during their narration of specific events since their "memory language" was Kurdish. As Neyzi (1999) also clarifies, it was important at which context a multilingual interviewee used which language. During my interviews I also tried to be alarmed to this situation and since I knew the meaning of the words they used in Kurdish I did not need to interrupt them and disrupt the continuity of the narrative. For instance, Zelal used the word "kesk û sor û zer" (green, red, yellow) each time she mentioned the Kurdish flag. When uttered in Kurdish, these colors seemed to identify the Kurdish flag itself for Zelal since it was inscribed in her memory language, Kurdish. On the other hand, Jin used the word *çîrok* to refer to "story" she had read in the Kurdish language course she took. Jin loved literature, hence when she was identifying something concerning literature she immediately choose the Kurdish word for it.

[15] Kur. "How are you?"

[16] Newroz: "Çok istedim [mülakatın] Kürtçe olmasını ama…"

1.4. Thesis Outline

This introductory chapter seeks to explain the purpose and main arguments of this study, contextualizing it within the existing literature on intersectionality, education studies, Kurdish women and youth studies in Turkey. Throughout the thesis, I aim to highlight the multiple levels of Kurdish students' relation with education and political engagement which have been shaped by the intersections of ethnicity, gender and class with shifting boundaries.

In the second chapter, I argue that Kurdish women in Eastern and Southeastern Turkey are not passive "wild flowers" victimized by poverty and "Kurdish" patriarchy, but active subjects who are faced with multiple structural challenges and oppressive mechanisms impeding their access to education. Those oppressive mechanisms are associated with state's low level of educational investments in the region, the low quality of schools with an insufficient number of teachers, the war between the PKK and the Turkish state, which suspended educational activities at intervals in the region in the 1990s, the ban on the use of Kurdish language in education as well as the discriminatory practices against Kurdish children at school such as humiliation and stigmatization nourished by the collective hatred against Kurds. Their lives are shaped by these mechanisms and their own struggles against them. I suggest that an intersectional analysis of ethnicity, gender and class do not only have the potential to better account for the education problem of Kurdish young women in Turkey, but also for the ways in which they managed to continue their education up until university unlike most of their female peers in the region. My interviewees could access and receive further education although they have been subjected to those intersecting impediments with shifting boundaries and two dynamics play a key role in paving the way for access to education. First, most of my research participants are the younger children in the family which is a critical factor in overcoming major impediments shaped by the interplay between ethnicity, gender and class. Second, in order to cope with ethnic and gender-based impediments to their education my interviewees engaged in complex forms of performances and plays while navigating within different contexts of the house, school and the community.

In the third chapter, I focus on Kurdish women students' experiences of schooling until the university. In the second section of this chapter, I explore my interviewees' earlier experiences within the national education system, especially with respect to the monolingual language practices employed at school which exclude their mother tongue. In the third section, I analyze the ways in which they display different forms of resistance, to subordination in terms of ethnic identity and language, which generally took place in "offstage domains". Turkish monolingual practices at school seem to reproduce gender roles imposed on Kurdish speaking female children. Narratives of some of my interviewees indicate the intricate relationship between domination and resistance as they took shelter in a resistant silence so as to avoid possible mockery, by peer students or the teacher, for their Turkish accents. I reserved the fourth section for the analysis of the complicated relationship Kurdish women students have with their mother tongue. Monolingual policy at primary school initially created semilingual students who could not express themselves fully in any of the languages. As they became bilingual in time, Turkish language constituted the language of learning, as well as of their daily interactions. Those times also marked an increasing Kurdish consciousness, which created or reinforced an inner contradiction for most of my research participants. In the fifth section, I analyzed the multiple socializations my interviewees experienced at home, in the community and at school during their education years up until the university. I suggest that while they are navigating within different socializations, they negotiate also the borders of identity. Interconnections between these socializations with respect to ethnic identity positions are influential in their politization during their high school years. I argue that school, as a highly political space, creates the context in which Kurdish women are not assimilated but instead become politicized with respect to Kurdish identity claims.

In the fourth chapter, I explore my interviewees' experiences in İstanbul with respect to dynamics of ethnicity and gender. I argue that since my research participants migrated to İstanbul for educational purposes and live in İstanbul as university students and, except for some, without the company of family members, their experience in İstanbul is different from the experience of other Kurdish women in the city. Furthermore, as they are introduced to the city through different universities their experiences in the urban space also differentiate from each other especially with respect to ethnicity, hometown and political participation. Most of my interviewees assume Kurdish identity in the urban space of İstanbul which is characterized by diversity and

free encounter on the one hand, and discrimination and stigmatization on the other, depending on the spatial context. Besides, gender is a dynamic which brings their perceptions and experiences of the city on a more or less common ground. They also assume womanhood in İstanbul, in a space which is characterized by different, yet related, gender norms as well as by the distance to patriarchal constraints of their own families. I suggest that although the form of their gender subordination changed vis-à-vis the different gender norms and roles employed in İstanbul, their experiences point to a striking continuity between Eastern Turkey and İstanbul in terms of gendered character of the public spaces.

In the fifth chapter, I analyze the ways in which my research participants politicize in İstanbul and on their university campuses with respect to factors of ethnicity and gender. I argue that they are situated at the crossroads of education and politics in a spatio-temporal context defined by increasing criminalization of oppositional political activities, particularly with respect to expressing Kurdish identity claims. Moreover, they manifest a growing discomfort with the political system, authoritarian structure of political parties as well as the traditional forms of organizing. I argue that their politics and ways of manifesting their political subjectivity is characterized by these two interrelated dynamics of the political in Turkey. Their subjective forms of political action, in this double bind, are shaped by both shifting boundaries of their experiences with respect to intersections of ethnicity and gender as well as the diverse characteristics of their universities as political, social and cultural spaces. I argue that the current oppression of oppositional politics as well as their disavowal with traditional politics led my research participants to find their own personal ways out of the limited terrain in which politics is imagined and practiced in Turkey.

CHAPTER 2

EDUCATION AT THE INTERSECTIONS OF ETHNICITY, GENDER, AND CLASS

> "Memleketin bir ucunda Formula 1 pisti, öteki ucunda ipten, makaradan "kaydıraç"larla dağ, ırmak aşıp okula gidenler! Hasan Hüseyin gelmez mi hatıra: "Dostum dostum, güzel dostum/ Bu ne beter çizgidir bu/ Bu ne çıldırtan denge/ Yaprak döker bir yanımız/ Bir yanımız bahar bahçe." Dünya, tek bir gezegen değil, bir çelişki yumağında metafordur." (Küçük İskender, Medusa'nın Makası)

2.1. Introduction

Ayşe Kulin entitled the first part of her book "Snowdrops"[17] as "Wild Flowers of a Thousand Colors"[18]. Yet it is hard to find any story in the book different than the one colored by the modernist sentiments of the Kemalist education project. The book is based on Kulin's face-to-face interviews with girls in the "distant corners" of Turkey who have benefited from the "Turkcell scholarship" as part of the education campaign of the "Association in Support of Contemporary Living"[19], namely "Modern Girls of Modern Turkey"[20]. Not surprisingly, these "distant corners" correspond mainly to villages and small cities in Eastern and Southeastern Turkey with few exceptions such as Bolu, which is located in Western Turkey. The main plot in all of Kulin's stories is as

[17] Kulin, Ayşe. 2005. *Kardelenler*. Remzi Kitabevi.

[18] Tr. Binbir Renkli Kır Çiçekleri

[19] Tr. Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği

[20] Tr. Çağdaş Türkiye'nin Çağdaş Kızları

follows:[21] The girl is born into a poor, miserable life in her hometown, has too many siblings and an uneducated mother who has no hope in life except for the education of her daughters. However, the fate of the girl changes with this scholarship and she is now very happy. Her only hope is to complete her education and to change the destiny of both her family and the region. If the girl is 'intelligent' enough to be brought to TED College in Istanbul, then she has the chance to meet "civilization" with its toothbrushes and toilet papers.[22] She has no problem to leave her hometown or village behind apart from her "trivial" longing for her home and mother. It is trivial, as Kulin implies it, because she will transform from a "poor and narrow-minded country girl" into an "educated" and "enlightened" girl "suited to the modern world" thanks to this education (Kulin, 2005:13).[23]

Although Kulin interviewed many girls, many of whom were most probably Kurdish, from different cities and backgrounds, were born into specific socio-economic and political conditions, have different stories, problems and hopes, she has no problems with reducing this diversity and multiplicity into the general formula summarized above. This formula is embodied in the image of the "wild flower" which is associated with these girls taken to school. As Akşit claims, Kulin depicts these girls as passive wild flowers, rather than honorable individuals and subjects with their own past, specific knowledge and experience (Akşit, 2009:23). Given this picture, it comes up as a necessity to educate and "civilize" these girls. Hence the only obstacles for girls' education are presented as poverty and patriarchal norms of Eastern and Southeastern Turkey, while on the other hand education is presented as the only and perfect cure to all social problems. Kulin chooses not to present other political and socio-economic

[21] Of course this story applies mostly to those girls living in Eastern or Southeastern Anatolia in the book. The plot of Kulin's story depicting girls coming from Bolu, for instance, is different: "Şımarmasını, arzularını ve şikayetlerini dillendirmesini biliyorlardı. Annelerini hep, babalarını daha sık görüyor, onlardan daha çok sevgi ve ilgi alabiliyorlardı. Anneleri Türkçe konuşuyor ve az da olsa okuyup yazabiliyorlardı. Evlerini daha çok özleyip daha fazla hasret çektiler, daha geç uyum sağladılar yeni okullarına" (Kulin, 2005:39).

[22] "Çoğu diş fırçalamayı okula geldikten sonra öğrenmişti. (…) Tuvalet kağıdını da ilk kez görüyorlardı." (ibid, 15)

[23] "Doğdukları, yetiştikleri toprakları unutmaya niyetli değillerdi ama yoksul ve dar ufuklu birer taşralı küçük kızdan çağdaş dünyaya ayarlanmış, eğitimli, aydın, ufku geniş genç kızlara dönüşmek için gelmişlerdi buraya kadar. Bu nedenle değişime direnmiyorlardı." (Kulin, 2005:13)

dynamics into her picture nor does she discuss them. She avoids using the term Kurd or Kurdish as much as possible, at times substituting it with other expressions such as "citizens with tribal origins"[24] in a way identifying Kurdishness with Tribe. Furthermore, in an orientalist manner, Kulin reduces the complex diversity of cultural norms and practices in Eastern and Southeastern Turkey into an imaginary *töre*[25] which applies to the whole region in the same way.[26] On the other hand, she presents no discussion of striking continuities in the lives of these girls: we hardly get any idea about why these people are poor, why those girls can not go to school in their villages, or more basically, why there are no schools in many villages, what happened to those who are not "intelligent" enough to get a scholarship, or what they have undergone throughout their education years. In other words, while the book is celebrating the "success" of the joint educational project developed by the Association in Support of Contemporary Living and Turkcell, it curtails the intersecting dynamics of ethnicity, class and gender effective not only in girls' inability to attend school, and in some cases pursue their education further, but also in the practices of national education in Turkey.

I start my discussion with the book *Snowdrops* because it is emblemetic of the Kemalist modernist framework of other education campaigns for girls in Turkey such as "Let's Go to School, Girls"[27] and "Dad, Send me to School"[28]. These campaigns are

[24] "Öğrencilerin %55'ini erkek çocuklar, % 45'ini kızlar oluşturuyor. Ama inanın, bu yüzde diğer Doğu kentlerine göre düşük bir orandır. Nedeni de Iğdır'da iki kesimin olması. Eskiden buranın nüfusunun %70'i Azeri, %30'u Aşiret kökenliydi. Göçle birlikte Aşiret kökenli vatandaşların oranı %50'ye yükseldi. Aşiretlerde kız çocuklarını okula göndermemek daha yaygındır. Bunun bir nedeni, çok sayıda çocuğun hepsini okula gönderecek maddi imkanın olmaması halinde, tercihin erkeklerden yana kullanılması, ikinci nedeni de okulların ilçe ve köylere uzak olması duruunda kızların gidip gelme sorunlarıdır. Azeri vatandaşlar ise çocuklarını, kız-erkek ayırt etmeden okutma yanlısıdır. Iğdır'daki Azeri varlığı kız öğrenci oranını yükselten önemli bir faktör." (Kulin, 2005: 67)

[25] Eng. Customary law

[26] "Bir diğeri ona dokunulduğunda irkiliyor, bir kirpi gibi büzüşüveriyordu etrafa ürkek gözlerle bakarak. Çünkü ne anası, ne de babası, aslında hiç kimse sevgiyle dokunmamıştı ona, bu okula gelene kadar. O kadar çok kardeştiler ki, işi bir türlü bitmeyen anasının, şefkat vermeye, sevgiyle sarılmaya vakti olmamıştı çocuklarına. Babalar zaten kız çocuklarına dokunarak sevmeyi bilmezlerdi o yörelerde. Töre uzaktan sevmeyi emrederdi" (ibid.,15).

[27] For more information about this campaign, see the following website: http://haydikizlarokula.meb.gov.tr/

[28] For more information about this campaing, see: http://www.bababeniokulagonder.org/BBogMainPage.aspx

mainly based on the providance of scholarship to girls, mostly living in rural parts of Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia, who are unable to attend school. Similar to *Snowdrops*, the discourse that shapes these campaigns brings out poverty and patriarchy in the Kurdish community as the main reasons behind the problem of girls' education. Indeed, especially in the poor rural and urban areas in this region, education is less accessible to girls than boys, partly because of parents' preference to invest in their boys' education or their reluctance to send their girls to distant Yatılı İlköğretim Bölge Okulu (YİBO - Regional Boarding Primary School) in case of the absence of schools in the village. Although these are the conditions of many girls who are unable to attend school in the region, they give only a partial idea about the whole picture which is far more complex. Moreover the over emphasis of these campaigns on this "cultural" background, while ignoring other social, economic and political dynamics, serves the modernist, and in this case orientalist desire to educate, civilize and thus "save" those "narrow-minded" Kurdish girls who are enchained by their "uneducated" and "backward" fathers. In other words, definitions of "modern" and "traditional" are being reproduced within the context of education (Akşit, 2009:11).

A closer look at the issue would bring out how the intersecting dynamics of ethnicity, gender and socio-economic class do not only keep girls away from school but also push them out of school early in their education process. In the modernist framework, of which Kulin's book is an example, solely poverty and patriarchy are considered as obstacles to girls' education problem in Eastern and Southeastern Turkey. Moreover, oppressive dynamics, these girls encounter during their schooling life, do not find a place in this framework, nor are they disccused as possible effective factors pushing girls out of school. I aim to contribute to the literature on women's education problem with an analysis of ethnic-based oppression, geographical marginalization and nationalist practices on the part of the state and the PKK which facilitate and contribute to the poverty and local poverty. In my research, I did not only try to add other dynamics, but I also tried to look at their intersections in order to better grasp the complex structure inhibiting girls' education. The present study is a humble attempt to understand how oppressive dynamics of ethnicity, gender and class contribute to and reinforce each other, limiting girls' access to education. More importantly, I suggest to consider these girls as active participants in the whole process, trying to overcome structural challenges especially which they encounter during their education life, instead of passive "wild flowers" which are brought to "light" by benevolent adults.

In the second section of this chapter, I want to take a closer look at the socio-economic, political and cultural structures my interviewees were born into, which generally prevented their elder sisters from accessing or receiving further education. While doing this, I will make use of statistical data on the subject only to the extent that they relate and speak to the personal narratives of my interviewees. This way, I aim to refrain from totalization, of different individual experiences, which is prone to ignoring the power relations based on social inequalities as well as ethnic and class differences. Reaching conclusions solely based on numerical indicators such as schooling rates without seriously considering the multiple axes of domination would be misleading (Derince, 2012:9). Some studies based on statistical data highly exemplify this situation to the extent that they emphasize cultural and religious patterns of the region together with poverty as main reasons of the lower level of schooling of girls. Yet, on the other hand they ignore state's insufficient educational investments in the region, ban on the use of mother tongue in education, discriminative practices against Kurdish students and especially girls at school or the armed conflict between the PKK and the Turkish security forces which severely affect the live of the population in the region both physically and psychologically. Considering the interrelations of these different dynamics would also give a hint about why the level of schooling on the part of the boys in the region is also lower than the western parts of the country. In this research, I also tried to understand how come my interviewees continued their education even in conditions of poverty, ethnic marginalization, gender discrimination while others can not and what kind of oppressive dynamics they encountered and dealed with during their education years. So in the third section, I will explore various factors which paved the way for my interviewees' schooling. I argue that alongside the help in the form of institutional support or personal help from teachers and family members, there are two influential dynamics which help my interviewees go beyond the multiple oppressive mechanisms at the intersections of ethnicity, gender and class: their generational status at home as younger children and performative strategies they employ in different spatial contexts with various forms of oppression in terms of ethnicity and gender.

2.2. Structural Challenges: Socio-Economic, Cultural and Political Framework

According to the Education Sector Study (2005) prepared by the World Bank in association with the Education Reform Initiative of the İstanbul Policy Center, there are significant disparities in access to education between genders, socio-economic classes and geographical locations in Turkey (Mete 2004, Hoşgör 2004, Berberoğlu 2004, etc.) In other words, children of poor households, girls and those living in particular geographical areas, one of which are the poor villages in Eastern and Southeastern Turkey, have less access to schooling. Even if they do have access, they enroll in schools which have less quality in many aspects ranging from teachers' level of experience to availability of learning materials and books.

> Tens of thousands of children, especially girls and children of extremely poor households are not enrolled in basic education. A far greater number of children living in poor villages spread across the east and southeast of the country, the *gecekondus* of the larger cities, and marginalized urban peripheries nationwide have little choice but to enroll in schools that lack resources available to children in other parts of Turkey. (World Bank, 2005:9)

This means that even if those disadvantaged groups are able to receive compulsory primary education, they have less opportunity to continue their schooling because of many reasons, one of which is the low quality of the education they receive. *"Differences in primary school quality have direct implications for students' access to secondary, and ultimately, tertiary education"* (World Bank, 2005:14, original emphasis). Furthermore, high-income families have economic resources to finance their children's private lessons and cram schools which help those children to prepare better for examinations like OKS or LYS. Hence the children of families with economic means have the greater chance to score well and secure the prestigious secondary and tertiary schools. On the other hand, the children of poor families more often fail to achieve in the selection examinations for further education, if they have the opportunity to take those exams in the first place. So they go on to attend general public secondary schools or lower-prestige vocational schools which further minimize their chance to continue with the tertiary education. "*Household income thus seems to play a large role*

in determining access to all levels of post-compulsory education" (Tansel and Bircan, 2004; Mete, 2004, original emphasis).

The situation is worse especially for girls living in poor villages which have no primary or middle school. In that sense when the lack of education facilities in the village accompanies poverty, less and less girls find the opportunity to attend school: "Access to secondary school is limited both by availability of school places and economic status. Gender differences in enrollment at the secondary level are extremely high" (World Bank, 2005:12).

It shows how poverty, patriarchal subordination and marginalization of the hometown on the basis of education facilities work together to keep female children from enjoying their right to attend school. This situation is highly visible especially in Eastern Anatolia where "girls enroll in secondary school at half the rate of boys" (World Bank, 2005:47). For, when there is no primary or secondary school in the village, girls need to use the shuttle service to the school in the nearest district. Yet, if fathers who are already unwilling to send their girls away are poor, then they would not prefer to invest their already small amount of economic resources on their girls' transportation expenses. There are more schooling opportunities for boys in rural areas of East or Southeast Anatolia. They would be sent to the nearest school with bus or to the Regional Boarding Primary School (YİBO) which is far less probable for the girls again due to the patriarchal dynamics in most communities in this region.

Hence in order to understand the complex picture behind the lower level of schooling on the part of the girls in East and Southeast Turkey, looking at the cultural makeup or the socio economic condition of the region is not enough. As I noted earlier, availability of education facilities, quality of schools and also additional tutoring facilities, which bring us again to the economic means of the family, also affect the schooling opportunities of girls in the region. In that sense, one of the most severe issues about this education problem, albeit not mentioned much in those education campaigns for girls, is the way state's financial resources are allocated for education:

> *ESS research finds that financial resources do not appear to be allocated with the aim of reducing inter-regional, inter-provincial, or urban-rural educational disparities.* For example, average expenditure per student was approximately YTL 1,250 (US$925) in 2004, but in some provinces, principally in the southeastern and eastern regions of the country, per-student expenditure was only about half that amount (World Bank, 2005: 33, original emphasis).

Considering how the average expenditure of those regions have already reduced the total average of the country and it is still half of the total average, it is not hard to estimate how small the amount of per-student expenditure in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia is. It seems that the state's education investment in Eastern and Southeastern Turkey is as poor as the population in the region in a way reinforcing existing interregional inequities based on education.

I tried to draw the above picture in order to give a rough idea about how the overall socio-economic and cultural structure of the region is reflected on the relationship of the women in the region with the apparatus of education, yet along statistical lines. However, this picture tells little about the political side of the question which revolves mainly around the Kurdish Question and almost 30 years of armed conflict between the PKK and Turkish security forces. The most direct effect of this conflict on the education of Kurdish girls in the region is burning down or closing the schools in the villages for a while which deprive Kurdish female children to start school in the first place or interrupt their education thus facilitating the ending of their schooling life. Hence, together with the constant war in the region, villages of Kurdish girls are further marginalized by the state in the sense of making already available schools nonfunctional and not serving to the inhabitants of the village.

Nonetheless, not all Kurdish girls living in the rural or urban parts of the East or Southeast Turkey are affected in the same way, in terms of education, by this multiple axes of subordination and marginalization. My interviewees had the chance to access primary and high school and now attending university although many of them have encountered the same dynamics of subordination on the basis of ethnicity, gender and class. Yet, those mechanisms keeping girls in the region away from education have also prevented the elder sisters of some of my interviewees to start or to continue their schooling. Some of my interviewees, mostly those who were grown up in a village, spoke about the absence of a primary or middle school in their hometowns and how that situation made their elder sisters unable to attend school such as Jin mentioned: "The [primary] school was opened there a few years before I was born. My elder sisters could not receive education since there was no school in their times." Although male children, like Jin's brothers, could go away for schooling, her sisters could not enjoy their right to attend school because of patriarchal subordination and the lack of educational facility in the hometown. On the other hand, Öykü underlined the lack of middle school in their village. Her elder sisters could not continue their education

beyond the primary school because of that reason.[29] Indeed, Öykü was the first girl in the village who continued education after the five years of primary school although male children had been getting education either by going away for schooling or through YİBOs. Again patriarchal dynamics in the local community together with the state's marginalization of their hometown on the basis of education kept many female children in the village away from the education after the primary school.

The ongoing armed conflict between the PKK and Turkish security forces had also been effective in shaping girls' access to education in the region. Öykü stated that because of the constant skirmishes, murdering of teachers and burning down of villages, their school was closed down for two years:

> "After my first two years in primary school, the school was closed down for two years in our village. Those were very nervous times, there were problems (…) Teachers were killed in nearby villages. There were skirmishes. (…) Villages were raided, burned down."

Kirişçi and Winrow quote the report, prepared by the TIHV[30] and entitled as "Olağansütü Hal Bölgesinde Eğitim Raporu" (The Report on Education in the State of Emergency Region), which states that "128 teachers were murdered between August 1984 and November 1994. The report attributed more than 80 per cent of these deaths directly to the PKK" (1995:128). Moreover, 5210 schools were closed down in Southeastern and Eastern Turkey between 1992 and 1994 due to the atmosphere of insecurity in the region (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1995:128). Öykü was indeed pointing at the same period between 1992 and 1994 when their primary school was closed down. As Kirişçi and Winrow stated, not only teachers but also schools were targeted by the PKK: "According to government statistics the PKK burned down 192 of these schools, and according to İmset schools were targeted because the PKK believed that Ankara was using its national education system to assimilate the Kurds" (1997:128). Öykü's

[29] Please note that all quotes in Turkish are cited exactly as spoken by the interviewees. Otherwise nuances in personal speech and in talks among themselves may be lost on the reader. Öykü: "Zaten o zaman diploma şeydi, beş yıllıktı. Sadece beş yıllık okuyup bırakıyorlardı. Hatta bizim aile diğerlerine göre çok çok iyiydi. Çünkü çoğu kişi okula da göndermiyordu kız çocuklarını. Erkekler okuyodu aslında. (…) 5 yıl bittikten sonra hani köyün dışına çıkmak demekti, o anlama geliyodu. O yüzden [ablamlar] okumadılar."

[30] Turkish acronym for *Türkiye İnsan Hakları Vakfı*. En. Human Rights Foundation of Turkey. For more information about the activities of the foundation, see: http://www.tihv.org.tr/index.php?english-1

narrative as well as the reports with regard to the issue are indicative of PKK's and Kurdish nationalist leaders' approach to national education in Turkey. National education system in Turkey has been considered, by Kurdish nationalists, to be a strong mechanism of assimilation, with the discursive practices at school working to transform culturally different students into Turkish citizens who speak the Turkish language. In the 1990s, this critique translated into the killing of teachers and burning down of schools by the PKK. Yet, as Öykü's narrative succinctly indicates it was mostly girls in the region who were influenced negatively by the situation. Öykü recounted how the closing down of their school for two years put an end to the educational life of many girls in the village: "Many girls did not return to school again. For instance, we were only three girls in the graduating class. Only three girls graduated. Afterwards they too left school, I continued."

Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989:7) argue that one of the ways in which women have participated in ethnic and national processes is "participating in the ideological reproduction of the collectivity and as transmitters of its culture". But how do women perform this role and why women in the first place? Anthias and Yuval-Davis continue to explain:

> "The role of women as ideological reproducers is very often related to women being seen as the 'cultural carriers' of the ethnic group. Women are the main socialisers of small children but in the case of ethnic minorities they are often less assimilated socially and linguistically within the wider society. They may be required to transmit the rich heritage of ethnic symbols and ways of life to the other members of the ethnic group, especially the young." (1989: 9)

Yalçın-Heckman and Van Gelder suggest that Kurdish women have been called to perform a similar role in the Kurdish movement. They underline that Kurdish culture occupies a central sphere of interest in the Kurdish political movement. Hence, Kurdish women have been expected to protect and transmit the Kurdish culture and language. (Yalçın-Heckman and Van Gelder, 2011:347). This role given to Kurdish women in the Kurdish nationalist project seems to have constituted another impediment for Kurdish women's education (especially in rural areas). Kurdish women's education in Turkish has been perceived as a significant threat resulting in assimilation and contradicting with their mission of transmitting Kurdish language to next generations,.

Öykü's narrative indicates that since children's education was interrupted in the village, many girls did not return to school. Indeed, political turmoil and two years off of school made girls' schooling less "necessary". It seems that since girls physically

grew up through those two years, their schooling became less compatible with gender norms controlling the bodies of women. Indeed, Jin's older sister was removed from school by her uncle because of similar reasons. Since education is not available in Kurdish and since Jin's sister had known no Turkish when she began primary school she failed the first grade. According to Jin if her sister had not failed the first grade and had to repeat it, perhaps she would not be taken from school later in the fourth grade.[31] Jin's sister failed the first grade because she started education from a disadvantaged position compared to the children whose mother tongue is Turkish. National policies of the state regarding education do not allow the use of Kurdish language in education. Hence, Jin's sister had to learn to read and write in an unfamiliar language. Following Baker; Coşkun, Derince and Uçarlar (2011) point out that it is hard for a child to make a successful start in school if she has to learn and write in a language she does not know at all. For, in that case the child does not have the necessary oral skills to acquire reading and writing skills. The experience of Jin's sister is a good example of how Turkish language education policies implemented by the state reproduce the social inequality. Kurdish students who start school with little or no knowledge of Turkish can not receive a proper education in primary school and this partly explains their low rate of success in high school and university exams. In other words, Kurdish-speaking students start education from a disadvantaged position and this minimizes their opportunity of pursuing further education reproducing their low positions in the social strata. Moreover, ban on the use of Kurdish language in education contributes to the patriarchal subordination in the local community in this case. In other words, Jin's narrative underlines the intersectionality between ethnicity and gender. Ethnic subordination and local patriarchy seem to work together in preventing Jin's sister from pursuing higher education.

Zelal's primary school experience indicates how the language problem combined with the insufficient number of teachers affect the quality of education students receive in primary school. While Turkish-speaking students acquire reading

[31] Jin: "Mesela benim ablam çok sıkıntı çekti, 1. sınıfta kaldı sınıfta. (…) Bilmiyodu Türkçe, sınıfta kaldı. […] Ama kötü, o sınıfta kalmasaydı hani belki okuldan almıycaklardı onu. Sınıfta kalınca bi sene hani atıyorum işte ergenliğe girdi, işte ne bileyim memeleri büyüdü regli oldu falan filan… İşte büyümüş falan diyip, o bi sene kaybının da bi etkisiyle, yani kötü oldu onun için. (…) Ondan sonra 4. sınıfta okuldan aldılar."

and writing skills generally in the first grade, it may take a much longer time for Kurdish-speaking pupils. Because of the lack of teachers in Zelal's village school in Hakkari, those who learned how to read and write had to skip the third grade without the knowledge of the third grade curriculum: "We were about to start the third grade. The school examined us and promoted those who had learned how to read and write directly to the fourth grade." Besides, those who skip the third grade could not have the chance to learn the rest of the curriculum of the primary school efficiently, hence adding less to their reading and writing skills. "It was a very troubled time. (…) For instance, we had no teacher. *İmam*[32] of the village came to our classes in the fourth and fifth grade." Hence, those children were not sufficiently equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills that would increase their possibility of receiving further education.

Belçim also mentioned how she could not prepare well for the high school entrance examination for she was receiving education just from two teachers in the village school: "I was in the eight grade, but I had two teachers: teachers giving Turkish and Mathematics lessons. We had no teacher apart from them" Belçim was living in the same village with Öykü who was almost four years older than Belçim. Belçim's narrative shows that the village school was giving eight years of education in her time, yet this time with insufficient teacher capacity. Furthermore there was no *dershane*[33] in Hizan district: "This year, *dershane* is opened in Hizan for the first time. I could not go to Bitlis either because it was two to three hours away." So while children of wealthier families living in a relatively central location could receive education in a quality school while also attending *dershane* in order to readily prepare for entrance exams for higher education, children such as Belçim and Zelal had to prepare for those exams under conditions of severe deprivation. Stories of Zelal and Belçim highlight that not only the lack of school but also the lack of teachers, added to the state's nationalist policies regarding education as well as marginalization, put Kurdish students at a disadvantaged position, partly effective in girls' low level of schooling in the region.

Hazal's narrative also points at how the violent conflict in the region made things worse for the local population, making even their basic rights as a trivial part of a miscalculation. Hazal started education in the primary school in her village. However at the end of the first week, her school was burned down by the soldiers in order to prevent

[32] En. priest in a mosque

[33] Eng. Private tutoring center or cram school.

PKK guerillas from taking shelter there at night. While Hazal could pursue her education in YİBO[34] most of the female children could not attend school for a while or permanently withdrew from it after their school was burned down since "girls were by no means let go away from the village." The school was rebuilt when Hazal was in third grade and only after that some girls could start schooling again. Yet, since there was only primary school in the village, "girls were sent to school until the fifth grade at best." Those who graduated from primary school had to continue education either in YİBO or they had to use busing service which requires that family had enough economic means to finance it. Hazal's three eldest sisters could also have education until the fifth grade. Hazal's narrative about one of the elder sister actually is a good example of the way patriarchal dynamics work within the extended family in the local community. According to Hazal, her second eldest sister Ayşe was a successful student yet her grandfather and his brothers did not let her pursue education beyond the fifth grade:

> "I have an elder sister named Ayşe. She really wanted to go to school and indeed she was a successful student. At that time, my father was doing his military service. Since he was not present, the decision was left to my grandfather and his brothers and they did not sent her to school."

According to Hazal, his father was a powerful and respected figure in the extended family and in the village. As a result, in line with the patriarchal norms of the community, he had the authority to decide about the lives of his daughters all by himself even contrary to the wishes of his father. Yet, when he was not physically there to have control over things, his authority passed onto the eldest men in the family who did not send Ayşe to school. Hazal believes that they were lucky to have such a father since he wanted all his children to be educated no matter how poor they were. Yet, Ayşe's story reveals that it was again the father, the patriarch who had control over bodies and lives of women in the family; and when this relatively preferable figure was absent, the control passed into the hands of other men within the family who had not such positive intentions. In other words, the power of the patriarch is absolute and it is only him who is responsible for the bodies and behaviors of the women in the family (Yalçın Heckman, 2002: 218; Çağlayan: 2010:42). The person of the patriarch may change but the rule remains intact. Similarly in the case of Jin's sister, the powerful figure was her

[34] Yet it was not easy for her to overcome patriarchal barricade, the details of which I will explore in the third section of the present chapter.

uncle who was older than her father and thus had the authority to take Jin's sister from school.

The role of poverty in the inability of Hazal's three sisters to pursue school beyond the fifth grade seems also to be crucial. Since there was only primary school facilities in the village in Kağızman, girls had to go away in order to receive further education. However, since they did not have sufficient economic means to use the busing service, they had to go to YİBO which Ayşe was not allowed to do. The situation of Hazal's two other sister shows that it can be sometimes the girls themselves who decide to quit school as Hazal mentioned: "My eldest sister and the third eldest one themselves did not want to go to school." What is interesting here is that Hazal brought two different but interrelated explanations for her two sisters' decision to quit school. First she told me that since their economic condition was not good, her sisters could not make use of the busing; hence they had to quit school. But then she explained the situation on the basis of her sisters' intentional decision to leave school. These two explanations, I think, point to poverty as a major factor in the inability of female children to enjoy their right to education. Yet, although poverty was a highly determining factor preventing Hazal's all three sisters from pursuing higher education, in case of Ayşe it was the patriarch who decided on behalf of Ayşe who might otherwise prefered to attend YİBO. On the other hand, Hazal's two other sisters themselves made the decision to quit school while they were not forced to do so by an authoritarian male figure. However poverty left them only the choice of attending YİBO and actually it was not a very preferable option considering the bad reputation of YİBOs' conditions- shaped by strict authority, constant use of violence as well as mechanisms of assimilation- among the local community. So, although it was a choice of her sisters themselves, it was made within a framework defined by poverty, state's marginilization of the village and ethnicity.

Similar to Hazal's two sisters, Ruken's elder sister Delal also decided to leave school after she finished primary school: "She herself left the school after the primary school. She chose to work instead. After working as an apprentice in hairdressing salons, she herself became a hairdresser and took care of us." Ruken has 8 sisters and 2 brothers one of whom is younger than her. Her father died when Ruken was 8 years old and at the time Delal was the only person in the house who was working while Ruken's brother was attending university in İstanbul:

> "In fact, all the women in the household are *emekçi*[35], but she is the most *emekçi* one, because at the time my father died, she was the only person in the household who was working. So others could go to school for instance."

Delal herself decided to quit school but considering the tough economic conditions of the family, it seems to be a choice partly determined by poverty as in the case of Hazal's two elder sisters. Since Delal was working, she could support her siblings and thus they had the opportunity to attend school. Another one of Ruken's elder sisters, Heval, also started working after she finished high school. Ruken mentioned the economic difficulties they underwent after her father died, living solely off a pension and her sisters' salaries. Her elder sisters had to take the responsibility to take care of the family while their brother was schooling in İstanbul.[36] He was much loved and valued by the members of the large family as the first person who ever attended university in the extended family and also as the only man in the house. As a result of gender discrimination accompanied by poverty, Ruken's elder sisters had to make a choice in favor of working instead of receiving education, while their brother did not need to make such self-sacrifice as the precious son of the family. It was thanks to the elder sisters who worked so that their siblings could enjoy their right to education.

Mizgin had to struggle hard with both patriarchal subordination and poverty in order to receive education. As opposed to most of my interviewees, she is the eldest child in the family, so there was not an elder sibling to make things easier for her. Yet although his father supported her education against the relatives who were highly

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[35] En. laboring

[36] Ruken: "…işte bizim evin çoğunluğunu kadınlar oluşturuyor. O yüzden hep kadınlar çalıştı, hep hep emekçi oldular. Babam vefat ettikten sonra da işte annem bir emekli maaşı var, ablam kuaför ama işler tam oturmuyor. Abim İstanbul'da okuyor ama hem okuyor hem okumuyor aslında, çünkü ben 10 yıl boyunca hep abimi okuyor diye biliyordum. Okulu bitirmemiş, bırakmış, işte tiyatroya filan katılmış MKM'de filan. Öyle, hep okuduğunu zannediyordum. Babam öldükten sonra annem şey de yapmış, hani çağırmamış da aslında abimi. Hani şey dememiş, gel işte. Hani genelde öyle söyleniliyor. Çünkü 9 kız var ve 1 erkek var küçük, işte o benim küçüğüm. Baba ölüyor, baba ölünce başımızda kimse olmuyor. Ve şey yapabiliyorlar işte, hani gel, kardeşlerine bak, hepsi kız çocuğu filan diye. Öyle bir şey yapmamış annem zaten, çağırmamış. Bütün sorumluluk tabi ablamların üzerinde. Bir ablam kuaför... (…) İlkokuldan sonra o da okumamış. Okumamış, kendisi okumamış. Hep çalışıcam falan filan demiş. Öyle, hep bir yerlerde çıraklık filan etmiş. Sonrasında kuaför olmuş. O bakmış. Sonra ablam liseden mezun olur olmaz o çalışmaya başlamış filan. Öyle o şekilde büyüdük. Yaa amcamlar filan yani kimseden pek yardım almadık açıkçası. Hani ablalarla, emekli maaşıyla filan biraz yoksulluk içerisinde büyüdük."

suspicious about Mizgin's schooling, he did not provide the economic means because he was not working. On the other hand, her mother who got mad with relatives opposing to Mizgin's schooling, was also covertly expressing her patriarchal suspicions which seemed to have economic concerns on the surface.[37] Poverty has been a critical factor in Mizgin's life, in a way facilitating and contributing to the patriarchal control over her choices. Education was already not a proper thing a girl at her age should be engaged with according to the patriarchal dynamics within Mizgin's extended family. Moreover, since her family did not have economic means to finance her education, it was further incomprehensible that she was schooling instead of getting married. So poverty was also strengthening patriarchal arguments of Mizgin's relatives. Mizgin's grandfather claimed that she was more vulnerable vis-à-vis outside dangers as a girl going to school on an empty stomach.[38] So indifference of Mizgin's father against financing her education, albeit he wanted her to attend school, is not so different from patriarchal discrimination against the schooling of female children. For, in both situtions the female child has to cope with two oppressive mechanisms at the same time.

Until now I explored the structural challenges, in terms of education, my interviewees encountered one way or another. State policies discriminating villages as well as nont-Turkish ethnic groups in the region, poverty and and local patriarchy appear as the main structural problems they have to cope with. While my interviewees were able to pursue education further, elder sisters of many of them either could not begin schooling or had to leave school somewhere in their educational life.

Newroz's own experience about the fear of school, on the other hand, points to a different but a highly related dimension of the education issue. Newroz herself did not want to start schooling since she knew that her brother had been beaten by his teacher

[37] Mizgin: "…bir yandan babam bu kendi sınıfını değiştirme mücadelesiyle benimle çok gurur duyuyordu, ama akraba çevremizde gidişatım hoş gözükmüyordu. Çünkü benim belli bir yaşa gelince evlenip yuva kurmam lazım, yoksa okuyan kız olarak laf söz getiricem. Ve işte sürekli birileri bizim eve geldiğinde şey muhabbeti vardı, işte şunun da okuyan bir kızı varmış, daha ilkokuldayım yani, evden kaçmış falan böyle. Annem çok sinirlenirdi işte. Hem onlara kızardı hem de bir yandan da yani öyle bir bilinç de yoktu. İşte 'kızım okuycak da bir şey olucak' değil de, 'yani keşke sen de okumasan, bir de senin masraflarını nasıl yetiştiricez' falan."

[38] Mizgin: "Babam istiyor ama sadece manevi destek. Dedemler de eve gelip, işte annem kaçmak için babası okula gönderiyor gitsin diyor, onlar da diyordu ki haklı olarak, babası gitsin diyor da napıyor yani. Hatta dedemin çok net şey yaptığını hatırlıyorum, 'bir kız aç karnına okula mı gönderilir, biri gelse para veriyim şunu yapayım dese yapar naapsın kız' falan gibi."

and saw his reluctance to go to school: "I did not want to go to school, because my elder brother was going and every day he was coming home from school in tears." Before moving from Şırnak to Cizre, her brothers attended school in Şırnak for two years, where the schools were frequented regularly by soldiers. Through her brothers, Newroz, too, was affected by this atmosphere of ongoing conflict and fear. Newroz's mother sent her to school although she refused it. However, the hateful attitudes of teachers against Kurdish students kept her 'fear of school' intact. Teachers were coming to Cizre in order to fulfill their obligatory service. It was 1990s during which the conflict between PKK and the Turkish state reached its peak in violence, making life more insecure for the people in the region. The war was also accompanied by an extreme hatred against Kurds which pushed even a primary school teacher to see her students as traitors as Newroz's experience manifested:

> "All teachers were coming for obligatory service. Going there in the 1990s… We were all traitors in their eyes. They were looking at us with so much anger that you fear from going to school. Their looks were just enough to make you reluctant to go to school."[39]

Newroz's narrative reveals how the collectively mobilized hatred against Kurds, explicit in state apparatuses such as schools, could be a crucial factor in pushing Kurdish students away from school. Newroz thinks that the low level of education in the region is not a surprise considering these circumstances. Her elder brother who quit school after five years of primary education has been a perfect example of this situation for her.[40]

My interviewees' narratives about the socio-economic, cultural and political context they were born into indicates that low level of education on the part of Kurdish

[39] Newroz: "Hepsi zorunlu görev olarak geliyodu. 90'lı yıllarda oraya gitmek… Bi de hani onların gözünde direk biz hani hepimiz vatan hainiydik, o küçücük halimizle… Bize öyle öfkeyle bakıyolardı ki sen okula gitmeye artık korkardın yaa, onların bakışlarından bile yetiyordu senin okula gitmek istememen."

[40] Newroz: "Okul Allah hak getire yani, ders yok bi şey yok. Gelen hocaların hepsi bezgin. Ders anlatmaya niyetli değil. Bu dönemde birisinin okulu sevmesini bekleyemezsin. Bazen diyolar ya, niye orda okuma yok, niye insanlar eğitime karşı bu kadar soğuk bu kadar şey? Hani ilkokul 5'e kadar okulu sevmemiş bi insan, hocasını kendisinden nefret eden birisi olarak gören, onun gözündeki o öfkeyi hisseden bi insandan okula sıcak bakmasını bekleyemez kimse yani. Mesela abim ortaokula kadar okudu, ortaokulda hiç istemedi yani."

women in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia can not only be explained by the local patriarchy and poverty. State's discriminatory policies such as the insufficient educational investments in the region left many villages without a school. Moreover, the militarist and nationalist approach of both the PKK and the Turkish state to the "Kurdish Question" has deprived especially Kurdish women living in the region of basic rights such as education. For, many villages in Eastern and Southeastern Turkey has suffered not only from the shortage of teachers or the lack of quality schools, but also the burning down of already existing schools during the war and the murdering of teachers. When the absence of a school in the village combined with poverty and local patriarchy, especially female children could not start schooling or had to quit it early in their educational life. The state's nationalist policies concerning education such as the ban on the use of mother tongue in education also contributed to these subordinating circumstances. Finally the discriminatory practices against Kurdish children at school such as humiliation and stigmatization nourished by the collective hatred against Kurds also ailenated the Kurdish children from schools. As a result, sisters of many of my interviewees could not receive any education or had to quit school after some time. As the narratives of my interviewees indicated, the interplay of ethnicity, gender and class were effective in (re)producing the lack of education of many Kurdish women in the region.

2.3. Breaking Oppressive Mechanisms

Narratives of my interviewees showed that Kurdish women do not only have difficulty in starting school, but even if they make a start, they may have to leave it early in their educational life. However, my interviewees could receive further education although they have been subjected to one or more of those oppressive mechanisms in some way or another. One of the first things their narratives indicate is that although they were more or less liberated from the patriarchal circle of the household through schooling, this time they were subjected to the oppression and domination enacted by the national school system with discursive practices of nationalism and state patriarchy.

Mori's village in Varto, Muş had no school when she came to the age for attending primary school. So, she had to attend Regional Boarding Primary School (YİBO) in Varto: "There was no school in the village. Hence we had to go there. I mean, if you want to receive education, you have to go there." YİBO in Varto was almost one and a half hour away from Mori's village and considering the harsh weather conditions in Muş, it was hard for the children living in the village to go to the district every day especially in the winter and the spring. Besides, poor economic conditions of families in the village also created an impediment to the schooling of every single child.[41] Mori's family was the first family in the village who sent their female children to school. When I asked Mori what made her family send them to school, she explained as follows: "I don't know, (…) maybe because our elder brothers had already been schooling. They were considered as the people whom we could be entrusted. But the rule did not change afterwards. They sent all of us to school"

Many of my interviewees were younger children in the family and that was partially effective in their ability to receive primary and higher education. Mori was one of them. Since her elder brothers were also schooling in YİBO, they could have taken care of their younger female sibling Mori, which increased Mori's opportunity of attending school away from home. In this case, too, the schooling of a female child is dependent on the existence and care of an elder male figure. It seems that Mori overcame the impediments based on her gender and accessed education by the advantage her generational status in the household provided her. On the other hand, since there were many children in the family, not all of them could receive further education, especially the elder sisters of Mori[42]. Mori's own elder sister could attend school only until the 8th grade and had to quit due to economic reasons. Her narrative indicates how poverty is effective in reproducing gender inequality on the basis of education. The family had low economic means, but this situation did not constitute an

[41] Mori: "Yani bir- bir buçuk saat uzakta. Bir de bizim o zamanlar köy yolu çok iyi değil zaten. İlkbaharda sürekli bir heyelan, sonra işte kışın zaten kapalı… Böyle kışın mesela eve geldiğim zaman bir başka köyde işte yolların kapalı olmasından dolayı şey oluyorsun, bir köyden başka kendi köyümüze yürüyerek geldiğimizi hatırlıyorum, atların üstünde ve eşeklerin üstünde. Yani çok öyle zaten çok zordu çok çok zordu. Hem aileler açısından… Çünkü çocuk çok, maddi açıdan zaten zorluk yaşıyorsun, o yüzden zordu."

[42] Mori's father had been working in France until his death in 1995. So Mori, her mother and her siblings lived with her uncle who had 10 children. During the interview Mori called his elder male cousins as big brother and elder female cousins as big sisters.

impediment to education of boys but girls: "But later they removed some girls from the school. The household was crowded, so they could not school all the children. I think that was also a reason. (…) They didn't remove us, but our elder sisters from the school." Mori's narrative indicates that economic conditions of the family did not influence educational access of all female children in the same way. Again, the younger the female child is, the more she had the chance to pursue her education. As elder sisters and brothers got married and left the house decreasing the economic burden of the household, or as they began to work and contribute to the income of the the family, her parents were able to afford sending Mori to school. So Mori's generational status was a factor breaking the intersectional impediment of gender and socio-economic class.

After Mori graduated from YİBO, she passed the *Parasız Yatılılık ve Bursluluk Sınavı* (PYBS – Free Boarding and Scholarship Examination) and began high school in İzmir. Mori's narrative reveals what is ironic about the scholarship or free boarding procedures especially when the Kurdish students in the region are the case. Mori, like all students of her age, had to be successful in the exam in order to receive the right to free boarding. Yet, the education she had received until then combined with her lack of Turkish language knowledge when she began primary school were serious impediments to a possible academic achievement. In other words, in order to get a scholarship or a free boarding the poor economic conditions from which the child came from is not sufficient, she also has to score well in the examination. Mori could achieve it, so she could pursue her education. Yet, many other female children suffering from poverty and receiving a worse education in village schools which have teacher shortage could not, since they are also expected to be successful in order to get some kind of a scholarship.

Mori's first two years in İzmir was a traumatic experience as a Kurdish student in a high school located in a Western city:

> "The environment is very different, friends are very different. The question you are always asked there is: "Are You Turk or Kurd?". The accent is different. You are afraid to speak. Since you are different they see you in a different way."[43]

I will explore Mori's high school experience in İzmir, which is her first serious out of hometown experience before she came to İstanbul, in the following chapter. Here

[43] Mori: "Ortam çok farklı, arkadaşlar çok farklı… Şey yani, zaten orda sordukları soru şey geliyor, işte Türk müsün Kürt müsün sorusu geliyor. Şive farklı… Bir şey konuşmaya utanıyorsun. Yani farklı olduğun için sana değişik bir gözle bakıyorlar."

I want to mention how the "anti-Kurdish hatred", as Bora (2005) coins it, Mori encountered at school and dormitory in İzmir alienated her from education: "I was constantly crying on the phone, asking my family to remove me from school, saying that I did not want to go to school" However, since she did not have any other choice for pursuing education, her family did not remove her from school.[44] Mori lived in disguise so that she could survive there in more bearable terms and continue her education. She could be more comfortable there only after she began to perform the expected mode of speaking and behaving. For instance, listening to music in "Kurdish" was not considered as something "legitimate" since it was also a clear manifestation of her ethnicity. So Mori was feeling like a Kurd who performs Turkishness:

> "After some time you begin to live under more tolerable conditions, but it is because you have become like them. But you can't speak. Yes, you are Kurd and that's all. Nothing more… For instance, it is not a good idea to listen to music in Kurdish."[45]

Hazal is another one of my interviewees who could not attend primary school in the village since the school was burned down at the end of her first week in the first grade. After the village school was burned down, Hazal's education became a matter of dispute among the patriarchs in the extended family and other men in the village. Hazal had to go to YİBO in Kağızman; yet, since she was a female child, it was not deemed as a "proper" behavior for his father to send his daughter away for schooling. Although Hazal's father, as a man who could not attend school at all, wanted his daughter to continue schooling[46], he had to discuss this matter with other men who were highly

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[44] Mori: "Ama olmadı, ailem beni okuldan almadı, çünkü evet hep böyle yalan söylediler, hep bir bahane buldular, tamam işte seni almaya gelicez geliceksin. Çünkü eğer Muş'a geri dönmüş olsaydım hayatım bitmiş olucaktı. (…) Zaten bir okula yazılmıştım, kayıtlar bitmişti. Merkezde evim yok. İlçesinin köyünde kalıyordum. Öyle imkânım da yok her gün işte merkeze git gel."

[45] Mori: "İzmir'deyken şunu düşündüm, Allahım hani tamam evet lisedeyim ama bari Doğu'nun olduğu bir yer olsaydı, hangi il olursa olsun fark etmezdi, yeter ki bizim gibi olan insanların içinde kalsaydım diye düşünüyordum. Tabi kaldıkça şey değişiyor hani, bu fikirler değişiyor. Ama onlar gibi olduğun için hani biraz daha rahat bir ortama giriyorsun. Ama işte konuşamıyorsun. İşte sadece evet Kürtsün, yani budur. Başka ötesi yok yani. Başka bir şey konuşamıyorsun. Ama yok Kürtçe müzik dinliyceksen bu pek de hoş bir fikir değildir".

[46] Hazal: "Babam hiç okula gitmemiş. Hiç gidememiş. Onun yaşıtları okula giderken o çobanlık yapmış. (…) Hani ben, bilmiyorum bu bence bizim şansımız, çok büyük bir lütuf bence. Hani şey, böyle çok kötü şeyler yaşarsın ya… Mesela benim babam, okul, okul çantası, defter hatta kalem yaa sürekli içinde kalmış bi insan. Bu hani kötü yönde

against her schooling in YİBO.[47] When finally his father decisively acted to send Hazal to YİBO in Kağızman, it was too late for registrations; so she had to wait for one year in order to restart the first grade in YİBO. Even though Hazal was excited that she would attend school in Kağızman and became so disappointed when they were late for registrations, her school experience in YİBO was also traumatic in many senses. I will deal with her experiences in YİBO in the next chapter. Yet, here I want to underline that the state's militarist and nationalist approach to the solution of Kurdish issue did not only deprive Kurdish people in the region of their basic rights such as education but it also traumatized them. Hazal was not only torn apart from her mother tongue, her family and her feeling of integrity at a very early age, but she was also subjected to a militarist form of discipline and assimilation practices in YİBO which she herself associated with "the military" as she spoke about her experiences there. In the narratives of both Mori and Hazal, YİBO was depicted as a space defined by prohibition, punishment and violence.[48] There was an extensive array of behaviors students were strictly forbidden to do and speaking Kurdish was on the top of the list. In Kızılkaya's terms, it was "*very* prohibited" (Kızılkaya, 2010:17, emphasis added). Remembering

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de ters tepebilirdi. Bize de aynısını yaptırabilirdi. Ama yani tam tersi olmuş. Hani ben yapmadım, onlar yapsın, ben görmedim, onlar görsün, ben okumadım, onlar okusun olmuş."

[47] Hazal: "Ben sevinmiştim biliyor musun, Kağızman'a gidicem, hani şehir gibi geliyor ya bana, orda okurum diye felan. Ondan sonra, işte ilk başta göndermediler. Hani hem kız küçük, nasıl olcak, işte gitmesin… Mahalle baskısı denilen bir şey var ya böyle, otururlar böyle akşamları evde, nasıl kızını gönderceksin falan filan diye böyle… (…) Hani amcam, işte babamın amcaları, ondan sonra işte mahalledeki diğer o erkekler… Hatta şey hiç unutmıycağım sözlerden biri daha var. (…) Şey demişti bir tanesi babama, o da şey imam olmadığı zaman felan böyle camide ezanları felan okuyan biriydi. İşte şey diyor, Kuran'da diyor ki eğer bir baba kızını okula gönderirse o kafirdir diyor, bizden değildir."

[48] While depicting his experince of YİBO in Hakkari, Muhsin Kızılkaya gives a list of these prohibitions, which echoe those Hazal and Mori mention: "Çarşıya çıkmak yasaktı. Ziyaretçilerle dilediğin an görüşmek yasaktı. Okula yiyecek sokmak yasaktı. Yüksek sesle konuşmak yasaktı. Manasız çocuk oyunları oynamak yasaktı. Öğretmenler "hazrola" geçmeden konuşmak yasaktı. Üstünü başını kirletmek yasaktı. Yatakhanede fısıldamak yasaktı. Aşkam ayaklarını yıkamadan yatağa girmek yasaktı. Anneni özlemek yasaktı. Yemekleri beğenmemek yasaktı. Önüne konulan ekşimiş bulgur pilavını, suyun içinde yüzen mercimek çorbasına benzer şeyi, maşrapalara konulmuş soğuk çayı, kapuskayı, siyah mercimeği beğenmeyip yememek yasaktı. (…) Ve en önemli yasağı, daha okula gittiğim ilk gün öğrettiler bana: Kürtçe konuşmak çok yasaktı!" (Kızılkaya, 2010:17)

YİBO with connotations associated with the military and army is indeed an experience shared by many Kurdish people having received education in this school. Many others remember YİBO in close association with the military. In his account on his experiences in YİBO, Kızılkaya resembles the school to a "military concentration camp" (2010:15), with students forbidden to speak to teachers without standing at attention (2010:17). Identifying YİBO in close proximity with the military, Hazal, too, mentioned practices of military-discipline, including students being beaten unless standing at attention in the presence of teachers. In her high school years in İstanbul, Hazal was surprised to see other students sitting on a bench in the school corridor, not caring about the teachers passing by. In their study on being a child in Southeastern Turkey in the 1990's, Akın and Danışman quoted a sentence of Aşî, one of their interviewees whose schooling experiences revealed that the military discipline was indeed not limited to YİBOs, but a pervasive practice at schools in the region: "In that period, all schools resembled the barracks" (2011:93).[49]

Hazal was also the younger female child in the family; so the existence of her brothers and a sister also schooling in YİBO made boarding a more endurable experience for her especially in the first year. Otherwise she would have quit school since she had difficulty not only with the military discipline of YİBO but also with understanding and communicating in Turkish language as a Kurdish speaking little child. Hazal recounted that it was not the teacher but her brother who taught her Turkish language in the first grade. Since Hazal learned Turkish language together with reading and writing skills in the first grade, she did have a relatively successful primary school experience as opposed to other Kurdish-speaking pupils in school.

Like Mori, Hazal had to attend high school out of her hometown due to economic reasons. She also won the right to free boarding in PYBS and started high school in Bartın. Again, discrimination against her Kurdish identity made schooling in Bartın unbearable for Hazal. She told even her accent was enough for the pupils to stigmatize her:

[49] Aşî: ""O dönemde bütün okullar kışlaya benziyordu. Şimdi bir öğrenci dövülse medyada manşet oluyor, ama o dönemde öyle değildi. Eti senin kemiği benim anlayışıyla okula teslim ediliyorduk. Onlar da bu anlayışı çok seviyordu. Özellikle ortaokul sürecinde çok dayak yedik." (Akın and Danışman, 2011:93)

> "There, no one used to have tolerance for the word "Kurd", no one. But, it was not necessary for me to say that I am Kurd; it was understood from my accent. I mean, after all you can't speak good Turkish."[50]

After a short period of time in Bartın, Hazal also decided to quit school out of loneliness and humiliation and turn back to her village. However, her father refused to remove her from school as she recalled: "I told my father that either I would return back and he would send me to school there or [I would not go to school]. (…) But he did not told me to come, he definitely did not." Hazal was decisive about not turning back to Bartın when she went to her village for vacation, but the intervention of her Kurdish teacher from YİBO solved her problem. He made arrangements for her transfer to another high school in İstanbul.[51] Hazal's narrative was clearly laying the significant role teachers' active support could play in breaking the oppressive mechanisms, which is ethnic-based in this case, pushing Kurdish students out of school. If Hazal dropped out of school in Bartın, she might have not pursued her education back at her hometown because of poor economic conditions her family had. As a result, her educational life would most probably have ended. So, in the last analysis Hazal's teacher's supportive intervention played a key role in overcoming her education problem lying at the intersection of ethnic oppression and poverty.

Mizgin was living in Gaziantep, so she did not suffer from the lack of education facilities. Also she was raised bilingual and could understand both Turkish and Kurdish. Hence, she did not encounter with a language problem in primary school. However, Mizgin's life has been heavily captured by patriarchal control and economic deprivation. Her uncles and other relatives were strictly against the schooling of female children. On the other hand, Mizgin's father thought he was humiliated when he came to Gaziantep from his village due to his Turkish accent. So he wanted her daughter to speak "good" Turkish and receive education as a result of which they would as a family

[50] Hazal: "Orda mesela hani Kürt kelimesine hiç kimsenin tahammülü yoktu, hiç kimsenin tahammülü yoktu. Hani Kürt değil, benim zaten Kürdüm dememe gerek kalmıyodu, direk şivemden anlaşılıyodu. Yani doğru düzgün Türkçe konuşamıyosun."

[51] Hazal: "Böyle tam yani karar vermiştim artık dönmüycem. Sonra işte şey oldu, bu hocamla görüştüm böyle (…), hani geçiş yapabilirsin felan dedi. Burda ben bi tane okulda işte müdür arkadaşım var felan dedi. İşte seni oraya alalım, orda oku felan yaptı böyle. İşte neyse o halletti çok sağolsun. Hatta şey Bartın'a kendisi geldi, ordan beni aldı, kaydımı getirdi, buraya kaydımı yaptırdı."

rise in the social strata.[52] Her father considered education of Mizgin as part of his struggle to rise in the social hierarchy. However patriarchal control over Mizgin's body made her pursue education under constant surveillance and fear. For, although Mizgin's father supported her schooling, he was constantly threatening her: "I had never had a boyfriend until the university, because I had grown up with a fear about it. My father had been constantly telling me this: "We trust you, but if you dishonor our name, I will kill both you and myself"." Besides, Mizgin's father's disregard for financing her education left her more helpless in the face of patriarchal oppression of mostly male relatives who consider her education more unnecessary in such poverty.

Mizgin's narrative reveals how active encouragement and initiation of her teachers was effective in her all education life up to university. Mizgin was a successful student; hence her teachers did guide her to DPY examination (Devlet Parasız Yatılılık)[53] through which she could get scholarship beginning from the fifth grade. Moreover, the expansion of compulsory education from five to eight years also paved the way for Mizgin to continue her education after the fifth grade.[54]

However, after Mizgin finished the eighth grade, again a discussion within the extended family, about whether she would go to high school or not, came up. Besides, Mizgin could not afford even the application fee, leave aside *dershane* many students in Turkey attend while preparing for LGS. Here again her teachers' guiding support both economically and in the sense of persuading her parents led Mizgin to a prestigious Anatolian High School in Gaziantep.[55]

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[52] Mizgin: "Okul meselesi ilginç oldu hayatımda. Çünkü babam, bir yerde amcamlardan da ayrışan yönü, işte bu Antep'e geldikten sonra kendi çok ezildiğini ve ikinci sınıf insan olduğunu düşündüğü için yükselmeye çalışıyor."

[53] The former name of the PYBS, that is Free Boarding and Scholarship Examination

[54] Mizgin: "…ilkokul 5'te de yine bir hocam, ben hiç bilincinde değilim tabi bazı şeylerin, DPY sınavı vardır burs para almak için devletten, ona sokmuştu beni. Ben de başarılı olmuşum yani. Sonra benim üç ayda bir maaşım olmaya başladı. (…) Tabi ortaokula okulun 8 yıllık eğitim olarak bağlanması işime geldi. Çünkü zaten ben 4'teyken şeyin kavgası vardı ortaokula gidecek mi. Ortaokul ayrı bir kayıttı çünkü ondan önce. (…) Ama ortaokul bağlanınca biraz rahat ettik. Sonra işte lisede de devam edecekmiş DPY, onu da öğrenince bir mutlu olmuştum zaten."

[55] Mizgin: "Hocalarım beni sınava sokmaya çalıştılar, işte LGS'ydi o zaman. Ama tabi herkes dershaneye falan gidiyor o sınav için. Benim öyle bir imkanım yoktu. Yine de hocam bir tane kitap vermişti, işte hazırlık kitapları olur, onu çalışıyordum falan. Yine hocam kendi parasıyla sınava soktu. DPY'de de LGS'de de benim kendi hocalarım gidip yatırıp dekontumu getirmişlerdi bana yani. Sonra işte konuştu böyle, liseye

Mizgin performed the "boyish girl" while schooling since her education as a female was posing serious challenges against the patriarchal norms. Mizgin's father wanted her to be an educated, but "boyish girl", maybe because she was supposed to be like a boy in order to "deserve" what is already her basic right: "My father used to call me "my boy-girl" constantly and I also considered myself as such."[56] Mizgin transgressed gender boundaries and secure her position in "male territory" by asexualizing herself and performing the "boy-girl" (Weiss, 2010:72). As Weiss, following Bordo (1990), suggests: "When thus women appropriated new (public) space and challenged traditionally male domains, the female body has often been sexualized, masculinized and purified" (Weiss, 2010:72). However, performing the "boy-girl" was not enough; Mizgin also had to be very successful in order to deserve what is already considered an inalienable right for male children. After high school she wanted to attend university but she had to get into a prestigious university which would be indispensable and good enough to convince her family. Moreover such a university would also respond to her economic needs with a scholarship so that no excuse would be left for not sending her to university. It seems that Mizgin tried to find a common ground that would overcome both patriarchy and poverty.[57]

Unlike Mizgin, Jin did not encounter a serious challenge to her schooling within the family maybe because she started school at a relatively young age, 5,5. However, until the end of high school, Jin performed like a boy/man with her way of dressing and behaving so as to avoid a possible patriarchal intervention against her education. Jin knew that expressing her femininity would pose a threat to her precarious position in the

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gidiceksin di mi falan diye. Dedim yani gitmek istiyorum ama biraz tartışıyorlar evde, bilmiyorum demiştim. Ve 8 tane hocam böyle işte fen hocam işte tarih hocam bilmemne hepsi toplanıp bizim evi ziyaret etmişlerdi, bu kızı mutlaka okutun, siz göndermezseniz biz yardım ederiz falan diye. Bizimkiler de tabi biraz gaza geldi."

[56] Mizgin: "Babam sürekli erkek kızım derdi bana, ben de kendimi öyle zannederdim. Öyle bir ilüzyon var, ben erkek gibiyim ooo falan diye. Sonradan ayıyorum her şeye de, çok güzel bir yöntemmiş bütün cinsel kimliğimi örtmek için."

[57] Mizgin: "Çünkü şeyi biliyordum, çok iyi bir şey yapmadığım sürece şey bahanem çok olmıycak. İşte okula yani mesela ne bileyim, bir Antalya'da Akdeniz Üniversitesi'ni kazansam hem nasıl bir burs bulabilicem, hem işte vasat olucam ve aman okuma nolucak falan, bu gündemden kaçmak için en iyisini yapmam gerekiyordu."

"male territory" of school.[58] Jin's experience, I think, is a remarkable example of how the norms of accepted behavior are internalized through dynamics of surveillance in the local community. Since Jin saw that her elder sister was removed from the school when she reached puberty, she felt the necessity to conceal her feminine qualities from patriarchal eyes. This reminded me of Foucault's articulation of power, which, according to him, is capillary and productive as well as repressive.[59] As power was being exercised through dynamics of surveillance available in her community, Jin was one of the agents reproducing the gender roles since she had developed her own mechanism of self-discipline. She was regulating her body and behavior in accordance with the gender norms accepted in her community which lets a woman go into the public realm only if she gets rid of her sexuality. Hence, both Mizgin and Jin transgressed gender boundaries by performing the "boy-girl" and asexualizing themselves in order to secure their position in the public space of the school.

As I noted earlier, there was no middle school in Öykü's village. So after five years of primary school, children had to get out of the village in order to pursue further academically. One of the decisive factors helping Öykü to pursue education was the eight-years of compulsory education, which had not been in effect in the time of her elder sisters. Öykü's narrative pointed at state's paradoxical attitude toward increasing the level of education of girls, especially in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia. Although state expanded the compulsory education from five to eight years with the adoption of the Basic Education Law in 1997, the school in Öykü's village was giving

[58] Jin: "Ben liseye kadar, yani hatta lise bitinceye kadar da hiç böyle kadınsı davranmadım yani. Giyim kuşam hareket ne bileyim falan hiç böyle kadın gibi davranmadım. Hani asla sanki yani doğurgan değilmişim, erkekmişim gibi falan. Öyle giyindim, öyle yaşadım, çünkü biliyodum hani birazcık kadınsılaşsam, birazcık böyle hani bir salınmaya başlasam, biraz feminenleşsem 'aaa noluyo lan bu kızın amacı okumak değil' falan moduna girilecekti yani. Ben hep abimin falan tshirtlerini giydim yani, abimin pantolonlarını giydim. Biliyodum ki o benim için bir korunaktı, başka çarem yoktu yani. Çünkü okumak istiyodum, (…) ve hani bunun çaresi buydu yani."

[59] Foucault explains this situation as follows: "But it seems now that the notion of repression is quite inadequate for capturing what is precisely the productive aspect of power. In defining the effects of power as repression, one adopts a purely juridical conception of such power, one identifies power with a law which says no, power is taken above all as carrying the force of a prohibition…If power were never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but to say no, do you really think one would be brought to obey it? What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure forms knowledge, produces discourse" (1980:119).

five years of education. So while state was trying to increase access to basic education it was not pursuing educational policies or allocating financial resources in the East and Southeastern Turkey in line with this education project. After all, because of the lack of middle school in the village, it has been again the male children who continued school after five years and got a diploma, not females. So a formal change in the law could not create a genuine impact in the schooling opportunities of female children; instead in some cases it reproduced the already existing disparities in educational access between genders and geographical locations.

Secondly, like Mizgin, Öykü was successful enough to attract the attention of her teachers in primary school who frequently told her father to support her further schooling. However, considering tough weather conditions in the winter, Öykü could not go to secondary school in the district every day. There was one option left, which is living with her elder brothers in İstanbul while schooling. Although her mother was reluctant to send her away she came to İstanbul: "That was my only option. If I didn't come, I could have not pursued my education."Again an elder sibling, which is Öykü's brothers in this case, was effective in increasing the schooling opportunity of the younger sister. Like Mori, Öykü was a younger child in the household as well. Hence, her generational status helped her to overcome dynamics of gender and marginalization of her village, in terms of education facilities, impeding her access to further education. Ruken could pursue higher education because her two elder sisters were working and taking care of the family while also financing their younger siblings' basic needs for education. As for Öykü, on the other hand, it was vital that there were male figures in the family who were living in a city with lots of educational facilities, because they could "protect" and take care of their sister as "a female in a dangerous city".

The narratives of Öykü, Mizgin and Hazal actually made me think about the considerable advantage of school success while Kurdish female children are dealing with poverty and local patriarchy so as to receive further education. Success did not only provide them with the opportunity of scholarship but was also a critical factor in persuading their parents that it is worth sending them to school. As the word 'success' came up several times in interviews, I thought about its implications over and over again. Could I consider success an objective thing perfectly measured while some students are deprived of their right to education in mother tongue and while some others do start the "race" from disadvantageous positions in many ways? What have my interviewees gone through while trying to show a better performance at school? Above

all, did those Kurdish children who were not deemed as successful not deserve the right to education just because they fell behind in the academic race which is geared towards reproducing the social inequality in the first place?

Bourdieu's analysis of education and reproduction shows how success is defined along the parameters of the dominant group that control the economic, social and political resources. "The schools, he argues, take the habitus of the dominant group as the natural and only proper sort of habitus and treat all children as if they had equal access to it" (Harker, 1990:87). Since schools are structured to favor those who already possess cultural capital, the habitus of this dominant group becomes the criterion of success. So initial cultural inequalities and differences are ignored and students of disadvantageous backgrounds are expected to operate according to the habitus of the dominant group so as to be successful (Bourdieu, 1974:38; Bourdieu and Passeron 1979:21). In other words, system of schooling works to maintain and reproduce the existing social hierarchy. The educational system transforms social classifications into academic classifications which is not based on a neutral definition of success (Bourdieu, 1984:387). In that sense, providance of scholarship on the basis of academic merit and only then economic condition of the student is an example of how the system of schooling and academic classification works against those disadvantageous groups who lack necessary economic and cultural capital. The situation is even worse for the low-class women whose poor achievement in the school further contributes to the gender-based inequality they suffer in terms of education.

My interviewees managed to be successful and hence pursued their education, yet they also acquired appropriate cultural capital which required a great effort on their part while it was sort of given to the children of dominant groups, namely Turkish-speaking, male and well-off children. As I will elaborate further in the following chapter, my interviewees tried hard to speak Turkish well since after some experience in the classroom, they considered speaking Turkish without an accent as a safe avenue to success. In other words, the habitus engendered by the school works in such a way that they came to accept the criteria which recognized their success. (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977:31-54) Yet, I suggest that, acceptance and practice of those criteria, one of which is speaking good Turkish, is a performative act, not a passive subjection to authority. They perform the Turkish subject-citizen at school, while articulating a different identity position at home and in the community.

2.4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I tried to address the education problem of Kurdish women in Eastern and Southeastern Turkey with an intersectional analysis of ethnicity, gender and socio-economic class. I argue that Kurdish women in the region are not passive "wildflowers" oppressed by the Kurdish males, but instead active subjects, displaying particular forms of agency in dealing with the structural challenges and oppressive mechanism impeding their access to education.

Although poverty and local patriarchy are presented in the public discourse as the exclusive reasons of women's education problem in the East, I suggest that the political, socio-economic and cultural framework of the region as well as the oppressive mechanisms operating on a daily basis should be considered in their complexity in order to better account for impediments to women's access to education. During the interviews, those structural challenges and oppressive mechanisms are frequently associated with the state's low level of educational investments in the region, the low quality of schools, the war between the PKK and the Turkish security forces, which suspended educational activities at intervals in the region in the 1990s, the ban on the use of Kurdish language in education as well as the discriminatory practices against Kurdish children at school. I aim to contribute to the literature on women's education problem with an analysis of ethnic-based oppression, geographical marginalization and nationalist practices on the part of the state and the PKK which reinforce, interact with and contribute to poverty and local patriarchy in distinctive ways. I argue that as a result of these intersectional dynamics of oppression, Kurdish women do not only have difficulty accessing education, but are also pushed out of the education early in their school life as the elder sisters of my interviewees experienced.

I observe that there are two significant factors in facilitating my research participants' access to education and pursuing it. First, most of my research participants are the younger children in the family which is a critical factor in overcoming major impediments shaped by the interplay between ethnicity, gender and class. I argue that their generational position in the household play different roles at encounters with different forms of subordination. As elder sisters and brothers got married and left the house decreasing the economic burden of the household, or as they began to provide contribution to the income of the household, the family was able to reserve a greater

amount of economic means in order to afford education of my interviewees. Hence, they overcome the class-based impediments to education through their generational status in the household as younger children. Ruken could pursue her education through the university, because as her two sisters began to work, the economic means of the family increase and suffice to afford Ruken's education. On the other hand, the existence of elder brothers receiving education or living in the city with educational facilities is a factor in overcoming the gender-based impediment to my interviewees' education. Hazal could be sent to YİBO since her brothers were also receiving education in the same school. There was no secondary school in Öykü's village, but she was sent to İstanbul to receive education since her brothers was living in İstanbul. Lastly, the existence of already schooling elder siblings in the household (who could speak Turkish), did not only make their encounter with an unknown language at school, but also made the whole school experience more manageable as they were oriented to the disciplinary and discriminatory ethnic practices at school with the company of elder and more experienced family members. Their generational status in the household pushed on one of these oppresive dynamics in some cases while different combinations of them in others. As a result, they are among the few female children in the family or in the hometown who received education.

The second crucial factor which facilitated their schooling is the complex forms of performances and plays they employ while navigating within the different contexts of the house, school and community. While they tried to learn "good" Turkish and perform the position of Turkish student-subject in order to be successful at school and pursue their education, they operate within the ethnic practices of their Kurdish family and community at home. Following Secor, I argue that as different spaces require "different performances of ethnic identity and citizenship", they enact different identity positions in different spatial contexts (2012:364). Hence, school experience was actually not characterized by passive submission to authority and assimilation, but instead active agency displayed both by the choice and practice of particular forms of performances. Furthermore, as explicit in the lifestories of Mizgin and Jin, they also negotiated the boundaries of gender by performing different gender roles in different spaces in order to reclaim the "male territory" of education as female children. Mizgin and Jin performed the asexual child or "boyish girl" in order to overcome the gender-based subordination in terms of educational access. So I seek to make a contribution to the existing literature on Kurdish women's education on the basis of the analyses of Kurdish women's

generational status in the household and performative strategies as effective in overcoming the intersectional dynamics of ethnicity, gender and class in order to continue schooling.

CHAPTER 3

CURRICULUM, LANGUAGE, AND RESISTANCE

"It is not even possible to talk about the political dimension in education; it is political throughout." Paulo Freire

"Hiçbir söylediğimi anlamıyorsunuz di mi? İyi, ben de sizi anlamıyorum zaten…"
İki Dil, Bir Bavul

3.1. Introduction

At school, my interviewees were introduced to a different set of meanings and values which negate and exclude what they had been grown up with at home. So, indeed upon beginning education their life split into two distinct but related spheres, which are contradictory sometimes while reproducing each other at other times. In this chapter, I look deeper into the discursive practices at school which interpellate culturally different students to take on subjectivity of Turkish citizen and how my interviewees' assume, resist and negotiate this identity position through different practices and at certain contexts.

In the second section of this chapter, I will explore my interviewees' earlier experiences within the national education system, especially with respect to the monolingual language practices employed at school which exclude their mother tongue. In the third section, I will analyze the ways in which they display different forms of resistance, to subordination in terms of ethnic identity and language, which generally took place in "offstage domains". Turkish monolingual practices at school seem to reproduce gender roles assumed in the patriarchal circle of the household. Narratives of

some of my interviewees indicate the intricate relationship between domination and resistance as they took shelter in a resistant silence so as to avoid a possible mockery, by peer students or the teacher, for their Turkish accents. I reserved the fourth section for the analysis of the complicated relationship Kurdish women students have with their mother tongue. As Turkish language had become the dominant factor in their life, in a way excluding their mother tongue especially throughout their education years, they experienced a relative loss of mother tongue during the high school years. Although today, they reclaim their mother tongue through attending Kurdish language courses and have already learned Turkish in the "academic" sense, they feel themselves having developed neither language in which to fully express themselves. This experience with respect to language plays a key role in framing their political demands within the context of university. In the fifth section, I analyzed the multiple socializations my interviewees experienced at home, in the community and at school during their education years up until the university. I suggest that while they are navigating within differen socializations, they negotiate also the borders of identity. Interconnections between these socializations with respect to ethnic identity positions are influential in their politization during their high school years.

3.2. Schooling and Language

"Before I came to the age of 7 and started school, I didn't know my name, I had never been called with it until then" Belçim said to me. She learned her official name only after she began primary school: "The teacher was calling my name repeatedly but I couldn't raise my hand and say 'present'; because I didn't know it. That's how I first learned my name." Her parents could not make her real name registered since it was not allowed to give children Kurdish names back then. It was an official manifestation of the suppression of Kurdish language[60] and identity and Belçim was of one of the

[60] Throughout the study I use the word "Kurdish language" to refer to Kurmanji. Indeed Kurdish language is composed of four main dialects, mainly Kurmanji, Zazaki, Gorani and Sorani. Except for Mordemek, my interviewees' mother tongue was Kurmanji, but during the interviews they almost never used the word Kurmanji but Kurdish instead, maybe because Kurmanji is the dominant and most spoken dialect in the Kurdish language. On the other hand, the mother tongue of Mordemek is Zazaki but her parents

children who directly experienced it. Actually, her name was one of the things which delineated official space from her private life:

> "I experienced dissociation. At school my teacher was calling me with a different name, at home, in the village they were calling me with another name. Because I lived in the village, I heard my name only from my teacher. Except for my teacher nobody addressed with my other name.Well, it was quite strange.If they ask me why we want education in our mother tongue, why we want this, that's what it hurts me the most, I haven't been called with my own name for years."

Hazal, Mordemek and Newroz also underwent the same ailenating experience in primary school. Yet Mordemek's situation was slightly different: "ismim değiştirildi ben okula başlamadan önce". She was from Tunceli, yet her family moved to Elazığ before she was born. So she lived in Elazığ until she was 9 years old. Mordemek told that not only their Kurdishness but also their hometown and Alevi identity was something they had to conceal.[61] Considering the political turmoil back then, it seemed dangerous for her to use a Kurdish name at school:

> "I had a Kurdish name and as I said before, at those times, leave Kurdish identity aside, I was facing problems for being an *Alevi*, I couldn't tell where I was coming from and as a child if I went to school and used my Kurdish name, they would either beat me or exclude me etc etc."

I could not understand why her parents decided to change her name when she began school instead of giving her a Turkish name when she was born. She explained this situation with her father's general fear of death and losing those akin to him. He lost his parents one year after Mordemek was born. Morever, him and his siblings were politically active and he was taken into custody while his brother was put into jail for a period of time. Besides they were already experiencing marginalization and violence for their Alevi identity in the first place. So he did not want Mordemek to undergo similar experiences:

> "Would he risk loosing his child, especially in his situation where he had the fear of loss and fear of death, of course he wouldn't risk it. Therefore my name was completely changed and I was named after my dead grandmother."

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spoke mostly in Turkish with her, so she learned Zazaki rather in a passive way, through listening to their parents speaking.

[61] Her birth place was registered as Tunceli in her identity card.

On the other hand her father did not know how to explain the awkward situation to Mordemek who was already used to her own name. So Mordemek met with her new name before beginning to school with an explanation convincing to a certain extent: "…my father took me out to dinner. (…)Of course he lost his mother after my birth.'I want to give you my mother's name', he told me this. Because he needed to give me an explanation. He had to convince me somehow…" However this explanation did not entirely make the situation more meaningful for Mordemek who had to use another name at school:

> "Imagine how it would make you feel to be called with x, I mean to know yourself that way, to be born, to grow up like that. But why would it change when you go to school, I mean can give it a meaning?Well I couldn't find a meaning for it.I couldn't explain it anyhow. But at school, you are officially named after y."

They had the chance to exercise their right to education yet only as "Turkish" citizens since the Turkish nation-state did not recognize them with their Kurdish names. Their name "represents a difference that is not permitted within the official narrative of citizenship and nation in Turkey" (Secor, 2004:359). For some of my interviewees, primary school also meant confrontation with a totally unfamiliar language in which they had to learn how to read and write. Öykü, Hazal, Newroz, Mori and Belçim did not know Turkish at all when they started primary school. So the introduction of a totally different language was also one of the things which separated their school period from their pre-school years. Actually these two experiences, namely the first encounter with their official name and a new language, are siginificant in the sense that they were precursors or leading indicators of the set of discursive practices my interviewees would experience throughout their education years.

Narratives of my interviewees were full of experiences revealing the ways in which "ethnic identity" and "difference" are constructed, experienced and negotiated within different institutions such as family, community and school. Moreover, their perception of "identity" and "difference" had a significant relationship with language. With beginning school, they were introduced into a new social space which was exclusively dominated by Turkish identity and language. That is why Belçim, for instance, realized a 'difference' when she began primary school, a new "selected range of meanings, values and practices" which she had to learn as a part of her "socialization" at school. Raymond Williams draws attention to socialization as a

process by which hegemony is reproduced. School is actually one of those spheres in which such socialization is realized:

> "What is abstracted in orthodox sociology as "socialization" is in practice, in any actual society, a specific kind of incorporation. Its description as "socialization", the universal abstract process on which all human beings can be said to depend, is a way of avoiding or hiding this specific content and intention. Any process of socialization of course includes things that all human beings have to learn, but any specific process ties this necessary learning to a selected range of meanings, values, and practices which, in the very closeness of their association with the necessary learning, constitute the real foundations of the hegemonic" (Williams, 1977:117).

Yet those meanings and practices associated with Turkish subjectivity were in a sense contradicting with what Belçim grew up with:

> "When I started school I actually realized that there was a difference, because for years [I was called] with a different name, there was a different way of communication, a different language, I had the feeling that I was different there. I don't know how to express myself but let's say I realized that it was a matter of identity at a later age.But I knew that I was different, I mean at least I was aware of the fact that all of us, the whole class was different from my teacher. Because we couldn't speak the same language, we couldn't alreadycommunicate."

Belçim did not start school with an acknowledgement or consciousness of Kurdish identity but only with her Kurdish name and language. And as difference was introduced into her life especially through language, she explained the situation with not her being Kurdish, but "different". She saw herself and her classmates different from their teacher because the teacher was speaking in a language unfamiliar to them.

Even though some of my other interviewees grew up bilingual, speaking both Turkish and Kurdish in varying degrees of fluency, schooling was a new challenging experience for them as well. For, they were expected to exclude their mother tongue and come into terms with monolingualism in school and public life. In most cases, the teacher was the significant agent carrying out monolingual school practices. Jin could speak both languages when she began primary school, but her mother tongue was Kurdish after all and her teacher was speaking only in Turkish. That is perhaps why she was wondering if her primary school teacher could also speak Kurdish, or in other words, whether he was 'like her':

> "For instance my teacher was from Siirt then. I mean he was Arabic and perhaps he spoke Kurdish as well, or he was half Kurdish. As you know then they didn't speak such things out. We were like 'happy is who says I'm a Turk' and stuff like that. I mean for example I dreamt of my teacher

> speaking Kurdish which was quite irrelevant. But I mean why would you dream of such a thing, perhaps it's because you don't understand what this man is like, I mean is he like me or not."

Mizgin's narrative also points at the relational character of ethnicity. She experienced 'difference' before primary school since she was living in Gaziantep, in a neighboordhood inhabited predominantly by Turks:

> "Moreover when I was a child I was very much surprised once… I had many friends from our neighbourhood, I grew up there, one day one of my friends' mother said that, what was it, 'there's no salt left, will you go and take some from those Kurds' or something like that. I was so much suprised to hear that. I had never had such a picture in my mind before. I mean I didn't consider that we were different from them as Kurds, but when I saw that the neighbourhood named us after Kurds, from then on I started to realize that there was a difference."

Mizgin could also speak both languages back then and was raised as a "Turk" with her parents speaking only in Turkish with her: "They were speaking Kurdish among themselves; but what was schizophrenic was that I was being raised as a Turk." Even though she did not see herself as different from her neighbors, also because she was able to communicate with them in Turkish, her neighbor distinguished Mizgin's family from themselves by identifying them in ethnic terms. Barth considers ethnic identity not an isolated, essential and fixed category but as product of social interaction among ethnic groups and continuous "self-ascription and ascription by others in interaction" (1998:6). He claims that "ethnicity is a matter of social organization above and beyond questions of empirical cultural differences: it is about "the social organization of culture difference"" (Barth, 1998:6). Mizgin considered herself as different only after Kurdishness was ascribed to her by another ethnic group. Her experience is an example of how ethnic identity is constructed and maintained through processes of inclusion and exclusion. Mori talked about a similar experience as well. She remembers that they were not allowed to speak at all especially in her first years in YİBO, partly because they could only speak in Kurdish. However, this is an explanation she brings today after being subjected to various oppressive mechanisms based on ethnicity. However, she could not make sense of it back then since she did not have an idea of ethnic identity and difference:

> "You see, we were children… I have just realized some of the reasons. For instance then, we were asking why they din't let us speak and stuff like that. When I think of that, when we reflect on it with my friends, we say that, I mean because we couldn't speak a language other than Kurdish, because

> only Kurdish words came when we said something, it was forbidden to us to speak. Because we couldn't speak at all."

Mori explained that as a child she was seeing everyone like herself. However during her high school years in İzmir she came to see herself as "other" because her ethnicity and language was the object of constant exclusion and subordination and this time she was not surrounded by Kurdish-speaking peers:

> "When you are a child you don't know enough or you're not aware of everything, you're not aware of your language. You suppose that everyone around you is Kurd, you don't realize that there are foreigners around you. You realize all these when you grow up or when you go elsewhere. For example I realized entirely that I was different when I went to İzmir."

The above discussion actually reveals how boundaries of ethnic identities change on the basis of experiences. School is one of the social institutions where identities are constantly negotiated. Various subject positions are constructed through discourses and practices at school and students identify with a constellation of them and become social subjects (Luykx, 1999: 125). So neither subject positions nor identities are given but produced and negotiated via the agency of students who are transformed in the meantime. "The question of identification is never the affirmation of a pre-given identity, never a *self*-fulfilling prophecy - it is always the production of an image of identity and the transformation of the subject in assuming that image" (Bhabha 1994:45). So, instead of telling the story of how ethnic identity of my interviewees has been suppressed, I want to explore the way national education in Turkey interpellates them as Turkish subject-citizens via a set of discourses and disciplinary practices and how they encounter, assume and resist the images of identity produced in this process.

Especially the primary school experience of my interviewees brings forward a set of practices which produces the Turkish subjectivity as the desirable subject position while excluding and discriminating other ethnic-based subject positions. Turkish language is considered as one of the indispensable components of Turkish national identity which should be embraced by every student. So those who do not know Turkish or speak Turkish with an accent may face a direct discrimination and humiliation at school in addition to their difficulty of acquiring reading and writing skills.. This situation forces those students to change their language practices in favor of Turkish so as to be successful and not discriminated. Hence, the hegemonic order reproduces through the agency of students.

Narratives of my interviewees who did not know Turkish when they began school- they are also those who were born and grew up in a village with children who also lacked knowledge of Turkish language- pointed at a significant communication problem between students and teacher. Since in most cases the teacher was giving the lessons with the assumption that all students could speak Turkish, they could neither understand the teacher nor learn what they were supposed to learn. The situation was tragicomic in cases when there was hardly any student in the class who understood Turkish as Newroz pointed out:

> "The teacher came into the class. She said that her name was Nesrin and stuff like that. She was telling us something but we couldn't understand it at all. I didn't understand, I didn't speak Turkish.For example the teacher was telling me to go somewhere and I assumed that she was telling me to open the window. She was telling me to close the door and I thought that she was asking for something. We couldn't communicate. For instance she was trying to explain me something and I didn't understand it. There was probably only one student among us who spoke Turkish and he was a soldier's son."

Öykü, on the other hand, drew attention to another dimension of this language problem. Since the students were supposed to "know" the content of the curriculum no matter what, they memorized what they read without knowing the meaning. And of course one of the initial things they had to memorize was *İstiklal Marşı*[62]:

> "That was totally nonsense, we were memorizing the flash cards.(…) We started reading the books. I mean we didn't know the meanings but we read. I remember one thing very clearly. I memorized the Turkish National Anthem. I always read poems, I read the Turkish National Anthem or so. I memorized it but I didn't know many of the words' meanings."

Hazal and Jin also mentioned about the indifference of their teachers to students' language problem. Hazal said how their primary school teacher in YİBO was following the curriculum without any initial attempt to teach them Turkish so that they would know what they were doing:

> "They made no effort at teaching Turkish. That's the biggest problem. I mean, the teacher comes and directly starts the lesson. For example, now we are at the university; we attend a class and the professor comes in and without even asking how we are s/he starts doing the lesson, covering the topic and s/he goes away.That was exactly the case with our primary school teacher. S/he would come to the classroom and start asking about a line on

[62] En. Indepedence March. It is the national anthem of Turkey.

> the board. I don't even know what 'a line' is, I cannot even pronounce the word. Hold on a second!"

Hazal's narrative actually revealed how Kurdish speaking students could not get any recognition from their teacher before they learned Turkish. They were deemed as worth teaching only after learning the language, which paradoxically the teacher did not even try to teach. So, Kurdish-speaking students were experiencing a double bind: they were supposed to learn Turkish by themselves and in the mean time they had to acquire reading and writing skills through the agency of a teacher speaking in an unfamiliar language. Hazal succinctly presents the situation as follows:

> "Can you imagine, you come from Kars, the language you speak is Kurdish and she doesn't accept you. She doesn't take you seriously until you learn Turkish. She doesn't see you as a student and she doesn't teach you ... That's the worst and the most painful part of it. She neither teaches you nor does she take you seriously until you learn that language. And after you learn it, she no more lets you speak another language."

Jin was able to understand Turkish when she began primary school, but she witnessed the difficulties some of her classmates were experiencing about communication. Their teacher was not only indifferent to helpless children but also ignoring their language dilemma, behaving as if it was a problem of intelligence: "I mean it was like, well as if there was no other problem but the child was stupid and therefore s/he couldn't learn to read. Yes, that was the situation in general." So her classmates who began primary school with a lack of Turkish knowledge could not acquire reading and writing skills for a long period of time: "The child was at the 5th class but s/he still couldn't learn to read and write." Moreover, Kurdish-speaking students were not allowed to speak in their mother tongue, so they were also forced to be silent during both classroom activities and the breaks, especially considering that was the only language they knew back then. Besides, they were deprived of the means to share their thoughts and problems even among themselves as Belçim recounted: "They were also telling us not to speak Kurdish in the breaks, not to speak Kurdish among ourselves, not to speak outside."

Öykü underlined the political conditions prevailing in the region during their primary school years which coincide with the intensive violent conflict of the 1990s. She explained that since there was a serious political tension in the region, the teachers were afraid to prohibit their speaking in Kurdish. Their own teacher was also a Kurd who was speaking in Kurdish with his students from time to time:

> "And I had a teacher. My primary school teacher Haydar, he was from Diyarbakır. I think he was *yurtsever* as well. He took extreme care of us, he spoke Kurdish and stuff like that. Therefore I didn't experience this 'speak Turkish in any case' thing. But we had difficulties during the lessons anyways."

Yet, Öykü told me how in her elder brother's schooling times, there were strict rules to ensure that students spoke Turkish in and outside of the school and those rules were maintained partly through violence:

> "It was not the case in my time but I know that once Kurdish was forbidden. (…) One student was assigned in the class and the one who spoke Turkish was reported to the teacher. Here! S/he spoke Kurdish! And s/he was beaten. Not only at school but also in the villagewhen they spoke Kurdish, they were beaten. I didn't witness it, my brother told me."

This anectode actually indicates that teachers' surveillance over students' language practices was not limited to the school. It also operated through the agency of "ideal Kurdish pupils"[63] who acted as the agents of the teacher and the school, protecting the dominance of Turkish language from the "danger" of Kurdish. In fact, through introducing "successful" type of Kurdish students as the ones who speak and protect Turkish language, school system was not only producing models which students should copy, but also reproduced the hegemonic order through the agency of Kurdish students.

Hazal's experience of learning Turkish in such a double bind is exceptional and telling. She remembers having had difficulty in adapting to in her first weeks. So, school administration let her spend time with her elder brother who was in the 6th grade of the same school. Hazal told me that it was thanks to her brother she could learn Turkish as early as possible. Since her brother knew both languages, he could teach her Turkish with references to their mother tongue.

> "I was for instance always with my brother and his friends. Well firstly they taught me the Turkish National Anthem. As my brother was teaching me,

[63] Hülya Çağlayan (2011:83) in her study with Kurdish women living in Aydınlı neighborhood, Tuzla, refers one of her interviewees who was spying on Kurdish-speaking children in the primary school in her hometown as the "ideal Kurdish pupil". Her interviewee, Zehra was a successful student in primary school. But since she spied even on her closest friend and saw her beaten by her teacher she ended up in trauma. When they migrated from her hometown to Aydınlı after she graduated from primary school, she could not pursue her education any more. She was a successful and ideal student in her hometown and also powerful with her spying activity, yet she could not find the same self-confidence in İstanbul to pursue her education further.

> for example he was doing as such, he was telling me to write down the words in it. And you know, he was asking me, well he was explaining it to me in Kurdish, for example he was saying don't be afraid or stuff like that, and well when I told its Kurdish translation, he was telling me to write it down."

Hazal could learn Turkish through memorizing *İstiklal Marşı* since it was of paramount significance in her socialization process at school. According to Mc Laren, "signs, symbols and rituals are central to the construction of a student subjectivity and to the interpellation of students within it" (in Luykx, 1999:127). Hence, memorizing *İstiklal Marşı* and reading it aloud is one of the rituals which prepare culturally different students to take on Turkish subjectivity. It was also telling that she could get the recognition and attention of her teacher only after she played her proper role in this ritual: "Well, when I read *İstiklal Marşı* in the classroom, probably then my teacher realized that I existed.There was such a student in class, she said to herself."

On the other hand, even after memorizing *İstiklal Marşı*, the lack of good command over the Turkish language continued to haunt Kurdish-speaking students such as Öykü. Having told how she memorized *İstiklal Marşı* without knowing the meaning of many of the words involved, Öykü underlined her great aspiration for learning and speaking Turkish well. When I asked her the reason, she explained as follows: "because it was related to, it meant being civilized and hardworking at the same time. It meant being successful. Therefore I wanted it [to read] extremely when I was little."After having some experience in the classroom, she identified Turkish language with civilization and success. I wondered what specifically made her feel that way in a classroom occupied entirely by Kurdish-speaking students.. Her answer reveals how "success" is indeed defined by the parameters of the dominant group who hold the cultural capital:

> "For example there was this girl. She and her family were migrated from a village. They came to our village from that burned village I call 'Şen'. For a short period she went away to Aydın, to her relatives and she came back. She spoke very good Turkish. She knew Turkish songs and so, she was successful. I mean I wanted to be like her. (…) It was very good, her Turkish, she learned it very well. She was more successful. I mean there was this idea that if we had known Turkish we would have been more successful."

Bourdieu argues that the culture of the dominant group is embodied in the school and this embodiment operates as a reproduction strategy for the dominant group (in Harker, 1990:87). The schools in Turkey take the habitus of Turkish elite as the only

proper sort of habitus. As a result, those who lack the cultural capital, which is the Turkish language fluency in this case, strive to acquire it with great effort. Hence, Turkish education system which is based on the dominance of Turkish language reproduces through interpellating each and every student as Turkish speaking subjects. And those who do not properly perform this subject position can not be successful and are unable to rise in the social strata. Likewise, Öykü came to see the knowledge of dominant language as the primary criterion of success and tried her best to achieve it as her friend did. Şerif Derince in his article "Gender, Education and Mother Tongue" makes reference to Homi Bhabha's concept of "mimicry" in order to claim how Kurdish students in the classroom mimic linguistic and cultural forms of behaviour and thinking of those who speak Turkish (Derince, 2012:13). According to Bhabha, mimicry basically means "the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite" (Bhabha, 1994: 86). This mimicry works in the circulation of colonial effect and thus reinforces the assimilationist policies. Derince says that the most clear example of this situation is the shift of language practices in favor of the dominant, majority language and the loss of mother tongue on the part of individuals and the society in question. (Derince, 2012:13) Öykü's story shows that since she identified success in the classroom with speaking Turkish, she tried to mimic her friend who had a good command of Turkish. Besides, Öykü considered this "Other" as a civilized form of herself since her friend was reformed with the acquisition of Turkish fluency and thus became recognizable.

Narratives of my interviewees also indicated how speaking Turkish could be considered as a cultural norm and ideal mode of behavior among the Kurdish community in relation with the humiliation of the Kurdish language through various oppressive mechanisms. Kurdish-speaking children could actually assume this norm even before they were subjected to discursive practices of "Turkification" at school and took speaking Turkish as something superior as Belçim recounted:

> "…my sister had started school before me, she was in the second grade. I was always jealoused of her. When she spoke Turkish I tried to speak Turkish as well, as if it was something superior. In fact you can witness it a lot in our East, one tries to soften a Kurdish word, if s/he doesn't know its Turkish."

Kurdish parents also played an efficient role in this process, by intentionally speaking in Turkish with their children so as to "prepare" them for the school and protect them from a possible discrimination as parents of Mizgin, Lavin, Zozan and

Mordemek did.[64] So family is also one of the institutions where children are properly socialized in line with the hegemonic order. One of Jin's anectodes clearly depicts her childhood environment characterized by Kurds' self-contempt and sometimes contempt for their relatives whose language practices were even more "inferior" than their own. Her story explains how hierarchies among thosespeaking minority language were also constructed according to their relation with the dominant language:

> "When we were little, well my aunts came to the village, to Tatvan later for example. I remember then, that they [my parents] were complaining about how their children's Turkish was getting worse as they spoke Kurdish and stuff like that.(…) I wonder how the state imposes it that people thought, I mean even Kurds themselves thought that they were ignorant, that they were already finished, dead or so. They were considering the matter as such.(…) I mean it was like, don't endanger us or something like that."

Jin's experience underlines the ways in which ideological mechanisms work. Just like the teachers who did not let children speak Kurdish with the argument that it would impede their learning Turkish, Jin's parents also wanted their children be exposed to Kurdish language as little as possible so that she would speak "perfect" Turkish. So, learning the language is not enough, they also had to speak it without an accent, as "normal" and "standard" as possible. Jin's father is speaking "proper" Turkish, so to speak, and according to Jin, it has much to do with the population structure of Tatvan which she illustrated as follows: "Half of our Tatvan's population consists of speacialists, I mean specialist segeants, and the other half consists of the natives.Well, perhaps that was the reason why Turkish was spoken." After the 1980 coup, the dwellers of the district have promoted good relations with the military personnel inhabiting the district, partly because of the reign of fear prevalent in the region. And since Jin's father had a grocery at the time, he has been in a constant interaction with the military employee which in turn shifted his language practices in favor of Turkish. For, building good relations had much to do with complying with the rules of "proper" communication as a "Turkish" citizen. Having experienced the benefits of speaking good Turkish, Jin's father played an effective role in the disciplinary mechanisms in the family institution which were structured to "raise" Jin to the standards of Turkish citizen.

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[64] Narratives of Mizgin, Lavin, Zozan and Mordemek reveals that they learn Kurdish rather in a passive way especially by being exposed to conversations among parents in Kurdish. Moreover, the existence of a grandmother, who does not speak Turkish, at home was also effective in their acquisition and practice of Kurdish knowledge.

However, this early socialization in the family conditioned Jin to despise herself and her Turkish accent in a possible encounter with an "ideal" student. Since she grew up with self-contempt available in the community, in terms of their language practices, she ended up with lack of self-confidence at primary school. There was the child of an army officer in Jin's classroom and he was the only student with "perfect" Turkish. Jin told how all the students were admiring him since he had a very white skin and could speak Turkish well: "Well for instance this kid seemed to us very… Because his Turkish was very different, it was very fluent. He was extremely white, I guess he was an Albanian, he wasn't Turk or so"[65] Jin told how they were despising themselves and considered that child as superior to them and wanted to be like him. She clearly summarized the source of her admiration as follows: "Because he was a Turk and he spoke Turkish, he spoke very well, he didn't know Kurdish.You see, speaking Kurdish was a sign of ignorance." What is particularly telling in Jin's narration is her shifting depiction of the child's ethnic identity. She was identifying the child as Turkish so long as his language skills fit the parameters of a proper Turkish citizen while she also doubted it by looking at the color of his skin. However, it was clear that the basis of her admiration for the child was revolving around his Turkishness, Turkish fluency and his lack of Kurdish knowledge which made him a "desirable other" to mimic in the first place. So, mimicry was working together with self-humiliation.

It seems that as a result of operating within various mechanisms of institutions such as family, community and school, Kurdish-speaking students came to "learn" contempt for their own language practices, namely total inability to communicate in Turkish, lack of Turkish fluency or speaking Turkish with accent. So, it did not take much time to end up with lack of self-confidence at school. School was particularly effective in this process because it was where they frequently experienced

[65] [65] Jin: Nasıl diyim, hani popülerdi anlıyo musun? Hani çünkü şey vardı, yani herkese böyle bir cahilsin yaklaşımı vardı ya Kürtlere karşı ve Kürtlerin de artık hani kabullenip içselleştirip kendini cahil diye gördüğü bir andı yani o zaman. Yani mesela çocuk bize çok şey geliyodu. Çünkü Türkçesi çok farklıydı, çok düzgündü falan. Bembeyazdı çocuk, bence Arnavut'tu yani, Türk falan değildi de. Pınar: Çocukla okuldaki iletişiminiz nasıldı? Jin: […] hani şeydi böyle, ulaşılamaz bi şey gibiydi. Yani ben hakkaten çok ciddi söylüyorum, hani şu an düşündüklerimle o an deneyimlediklerim arasında çok fark var. Çünkü o zaman bizi hakikaten çok şey olarak yetiştirdiler. Yani devlet öyle bir hale getirmişti ki o insanları, hani hakkaten kendini çok ciddi küçümseme hali vardı yani. Hani kendini ne kadar değersiz, ne kadar aman Türkçe bile bilmiyo, aman konuşmayı bile bilmiyo falan… Hani kendisine dair her şeyin hiçbi şey olduğu bi zaman dilimiydi yani.

stigmatization and discrimination by their teachers and in particular occasions by other students. Moreover, speaking Kurdish could also bring violence as Zozan exemplified: "In the fifth grade, I remember my teacher beating a child since he had spoken Kurdish." As a result of these experiences, Zozan for example came to perceive her mother tongue as something inferior and dangerous. So she was ashamed of it in the primary school and tried to hide that she knew Kurdish, also because of the fear of discrimination.[66]

Earlier in our interview, Zozan told me about the dominant language practices in city center of Bitlis and how its inhabitants could be skeptical about someone speaking Kurdish:

> "Bitlis center does not resemble the other Eastern cities. I mean while Kurdish is spoken in other Eastern cities, Turkish is spoken in Bitlis. Moreover, when you go to the grocery and say something in Kurdish they look at you weirdly, trying to understand with which purpose you did that."

So I wondered and asked whether there were no Kurdish-speaking children in Zozan's classroom. There were actually students coming from the village and speaking Kurdish among themselves; however, mood of the class was characterized by caution in general, the reason of which Zozan explained immediately after mentioning it: "Well, everybody was a little shy; because parents had this warning,: 'Don't speak Kurdish at school!" It should again be recalled that 1990s in Eastern Turkey were the climax years of the armed conflict between PKK and the Turkish state. Moreover, state's militarist approach to the question had already captured schools as part of "security" politics.[67] It

[66] Zozan: "İlkokulda Kürtçe bildiğimi saklardım. […] Utanırdım. O yaşlarda utanırdım, çünkü hani dediğim gibi Bitlis'in ortamı biraz farklı. Şeyi hatırlarım, iki tane kız arkadaşım vardı hani, ikisi de Kürtçe bilmezdi, ikisi de Kürt kökenli. O kızlardan birinin kardeşi Kürtçe bir şey söylemişti, ablası bağırmıştı ona, kızmıştı konuşma diye. Ben de hani dışlanacağım korkusuyla Kürtçe bildiğimi saklamıştım. Öyle, ikisi bilmezdi benim Kürtçe bildiğimi. Öyle, hani o şeyden utanırdım, Kürtçe biliyor olmaktan."

[67] Zozan's narrative reveals how Kurdish students were traumatically "educated" to obey in a threatful and militarist manner: "Bir de şeyi hatırlıyorum, bize şey yaparlardı, mesela dağdakileri yakalayıp öldürüp öğrencilere cesetleri gösterirlerdi. Hani sizin de sonunuz böyle olur... Ben ceset görmedim ama abimin anlattığı, benden üç yaş büyük abimin, önce dirisini sonra ölüsünü gördükleri gerilla olmuş mesela. Sonra şey olurdu, ben çok sık kütüphaneye giden bir öğrenciydim ilkokulda, evimiz de yakındı. Kütüphanede bir sergi vardı ama ben de bu serginin aslında ne olduğunu yıllar sonra anladım. O zaman bilmiyordum. İşte hani böyle, işte terörü lanetliyoruz gibisinden, işte ölü bebekler, işte ölü insanlar, işte terör böyle, terörle ilgili düşünceleriniz ve ben ne

occured not only through the surveillance and control of the schools in the region by the military; but also by fostering of the hegemonic understanding of the national security within discursive practices at school.

Ayşe Gül Altınay (2004), in her insightful study on the national security course in the high school curriculum, analyzes the militarization and "securitization" of education in Turkey. She underlines that among her interviewees, mostly "the students from the East" expressed "strong discomfort with having to take such a course" partly because their identities were depicted as "threats" by the course itself. "The security of Turkey, as defined from a military perspective in their textbooks and in lectures, was based on their insecurity" (Altınay, 2004:150). The national security course is actually a direct and clear manifestation of how "securitization" of political issues, especially within the context of the Kurdish issue, indeed contributes to Kurdish students' growing feeling of insecurity and fear. Since the course requires "at least minimal identification with the "national self", "those who can not identify with it have to deal with their locations of "otherness" and designated positions of "potential threat" on a daily basis" (Altınay, 2004:147). Although Zozan's account refers to her experiences in the primary school, her fear of speaking Kurdish in school and families' reservations with respect to the issue were shaped by the same feeling of insecurity originating from the sense of "otherness" associated with the Kurdish identity. "Securitization" of education is manifest in the hegemonic discourse and teaching of the national security course which codes a possible dissent of students as a clear indication of their "threatful" position, but it is not limited to it. The language practices of these students were also perceived as a danger to the national unity and security as a result of which students perform as if not-speaking Kurdish so as not to be targeted as an enemy. My research participants had grown up in a geography ruled by the terms of an ongoing war. As young women, born and lived in the *Olağanüstü Hal Bölgesi* (State of Emergency Zone), "State of Emergency" was not a metaphor but an everyday reality" for them (Altınay, 2004:151). In such an atmosphere of fear combined with state's official attitude towards Kurdish identity, it is not surprising that parents were trying to protect their children by socializing them in line with nationalist practices at school. Yet, here again, we witness family as an institution contributing to the reproduction of linguistic ideology at school.

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olduğunu bilmiyorum. Hani sürekli gider gezerdim o sergiyi, bir hafta falan kaldı. Bütün çocukları getirip işte dolaştırırlardı orda, sonra düşüncelerini yazarlardı."

Some Kurdish parents deliberately spoke in Turkish with their children, but that was not enough. They also felt the necessity to warn them not to speak Kurdish at school in order to save them and maximize their opportunity to get further education. Parents' attitude was also shaped by a sense of insecurity fostered by the "securitization" of politics, instead of a pro-state orientation.

On the other hand Jin pointed at a more extreme situation prevailing in her primary school. All students took shelter in disguise with regard to their ethnic allegiance and mother tongue, yet paradoxically they also knew what they were hiding from each other:

> "Well, for instance we were all Kurds, we all knew that but strangely nobody was talking about it to each other. "Do you speak Kurdish?', 'Not at all, I don't speak Kurdish' or so. Or they tried to avoid the question saying 'well yes, I do.' and stuff like that."

With a mechanism of self discipline developed under constant surveillance at school, they seemed not to give up playing the role of "Turkish" citizen even among themselves. Those children were living in a district even physically positioned according to the military[68] who also had changed the face of the place in ethno-linguistic terms. Moreover as Jin mentioned, their house was occasionally invaded by the soldiers as part of "security" policies. As Scott (1990:3) summarizes it, "The more menacing the power, the thicker the mask" and school was also one of the places where mask should not be removed.

Ruken's narrative comes very close to that of Jin in her portrayal of the dominant psychology in the classroom. On the other hand, Ruken's primary school experience shows how the contempt for speaking Kurdish is indeed reproduced through the agency of students themselves who also speak Kurdish. Self-humiliation goes hand in hand with humiliating peers akin to oneself in an atmosphere defined by total fear and perceived insecurity:

> "…unexceptinally everbody was also hiding the fact from each other that they spoke Kurdish. I know that, for instance, my friends or so, when I think about it now, unexceptionally everbody used to speak in Kurdish at home, I know it, for example my mother doesn't speak Turkish as well. But nobody

[68] During the interview, Jin mentioned that the market of Tatvan district was positioned and organized with respect to the military: "Tatvan şu şekilde bi yer (…) Merkez o çarşı dediğim, daha doğrusu çarşı neye göre belirlenmişti, askeriyeye göre. Esas asker yemin kışlası şeydeydi (…). Bi de hani çarşının tam göbeğinde vardı. Biraz ona göre konumlanmıştı çarşı yani…"

could, I mean, they didn't say that they knew Kurdish, we used to insult each other anyway."

In their discussion on "ideology of language", an approach developed by Joseph Errington, Ceyhan and Koçbaş made reference to what Nancy Dorian called as "ideology of contempt" for subordinate languages. Dorian argues that subordination of a language in a society is justified by claiming that the language itself is incomplete and hence inferior in the first place (Ceyhan and Koçbaş, 2009:15). Narratives of my interviewees pointed at their perception of inferiority about their native tongue, especially in the primary school. This partly had to with the dominant ideology of language, available in Turkey as a nation-state, which deems Kurdish language to be inferior to Turkish. In this context, Turkish national education and related discursive practices in schools have played a prominent role in the sense of promoting the superiority of Turkish as a standard language together with the contempt for Kurdish.

Actually this ideology of contempt is functional not only against Kurdish as a subordinate language but also against the non-standard usages of Turkish, reproducing "hierarchies among languages and their usage."[69] Hence, speaking Turkish with an accent could also be a source of stigmatization and humiliation as high school experiences of Hazal and Mori imply. Hazal first went to high school in Bartın and Mori spent her whole high school years in İzmir, in Western Turkey. Although they had learned Turkish until then, their Turkish accent was still a mark of their "difference" as students speaking with an Eastern pronunciation. It was easily making them objects of constant ridicule.[70]

During our interview, I asked Mori the ways in which she coped with the constant fear of mockery. I was wondering whether this linguistic oppression caused a shift in her language practices. She answered as follows: "Yes I tried to correct it. Well İzmir

[69] Foucault argues that linguistic practices in schools are effective in creating those hierarchies as Coşkun, Derince and Uçarlar write: "Foucault states that linguistic practices in schools "regulate" how the language should be used; this results in the emergency of hierarchies among languages and their usage, rendering some languages more or less valuable than others (2011:83).

[70] Hazal: "Yani şiveli konuşuyosun zaten bi kere, kesinlikle şiveli konuşuyosun. İkincisi hani kelimeleri tam anlamıyla çıkartamıyosun ağzından. Ondan sonra işte neyse ve onlar zaten bi şekilde anlıyolardı ve işte sürekli böyle laf atmalar… İşte böyle konuşuyosun ya, böyle dalga geçiyolar tamam mı sürekli konuşmanla. Böyle bi topluluk var. Yurtta bi böyle 5-6 kız var. Okulda da böyle 3-4 tane böyle saçma sapan çocuk var. Onlar tamam mı sürekli takılıyo, sürekli ama."

dialect is a little different, they say '*geliyom'*[71] instead of *'geliyorum'* for instance. I even spoke like that." Mori's account reveals how she was trying to "correct" her accent while also speaking like dwellers of İzmir so as to reduce her "difference" as much as possible. She was not only in the attempt to perform the accepted way of speaking but also copying her peers' speech practices which were also dominant in her environment. However, it barely changed her situation: "But, they still tease you."

These experiences underline a significant relationship between language practice, ethnicity and gender. As I will explore in the next section, Hazal and Mori mentioned how their Turkish accent negatively affected their participation in class. They took shelter in a resistant silence with the fear of ridicule by teachers and classmates. Hazal's childhood experiences, especially, open up a space for rethinking girls' reluctance to outspeak in class especially in conditions of ethno-linguistic oppression. Patriarchal dynamics shaping the gender roles effective in her village kept her away from social interactions and the opportunity of freely expressing herself. Her body and actions as a female child were strictly determined by her position as inferior to males. This background combined with ethnic discrimination led her to silence and lack of self-esteem at school. Mori also pointed at the intersection of gender and ethnicity in order to explain her still-continuing "silence" and "low voice". Following these experiences, it seems that nationalist education practices imposing education in single dominant language reproduce gender roles and oppressive conditions of women speaking the minority language.

The imposition of Turkish monolingualism in Turkish education system seems to reproduce and reinforce the gender roles imposed on Kurdish speaking female children. My interviewees' lower position in Kurdish community and silence were reproduced by the exclusion and marginalization of their mother tongue at school. Moreover, the ideology of contempt for their ethnicity, culture and mother tongue forced them to embrace the so-called superiority of standard Turkish language. Besides, this ideology presents Turkish national education as a safe and perfect way out of "ignorance", "backwardness" and patriarchal control which are claimed to be innate properties of Kurdish culture in general. So my interviewees tried to shift their language practices. For, the hegemonic order imposes the idea that success at school and the ability to pursue further education reside in embracing the subject position of Turkish

[71] En. I'm coming. That is how people of İzmir pronounce the word.

citizen who speak fluent accentless Turkish. As a result their language practices shifted in favor of Turkish[72] although they switched to bilingualism.

3.3. Between Oppression and Resistance: "Weapons of the Weak"

Aurolyn Luykx (1999), in his book *The Citizen Factory*, explores the challanges a group of students in a Bolivian normal school confront as they try to maintain their indigenious identity. The book includes a comprehensive account of school practices which operates to transform "Aymara Indians" into "Bolivian citizens" through interpellating "culturally different students as certain kinds of subjects within a self-reproducing social order." (p.xxxiv). Luykx analyzes the resistant practices of Bolivian students to the hegemonic structures at school through the concept "weapons of the weak" which anthropologist James Scott(1985) has used to characterize "everyday forms of peasant resistance". As opposed to overt resistance of oppositional student subcultures in the First World,[73] Luykx resembles resistance of Aymara students to that of Malaysian peasants since "their strategies were less constant and confrontational, more subtle and situational" (1999, p.218). While Scott's "everyday resistance" is anonymous, resistance of Aymara students may purport to be compliance which is in both cases "an advantage for the relatively powerless when faced with opponents who hold the power of decision over their future plans." (Luykx, 1999:219)

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[72] Derince also makes a similar observation. He argues that discrimination within family and dependence on men and nationalist monolingual policies in Turkey forced Kurdish female students to shift their language practices in favor of Turkish. He underlines that dominant ideology of monolingualism shows Kurdishness as the reason of disadvantegous position of Kurdish women.. Besides this ideology presents education and speaking Turkish as the only way to get rid of gender oppression which in fact has to do with both patriarchy and state policies (2012:22-24).

[73] As an example of such student resistance, Luykx mentions Willis' (1981) study of "a group of English working-class "lads" whose antischool values and practices ultimately reproduced structures of inequality by channeling students into menial jobs." (Luykx, p.217) Luykx argues that resistance of Bolivian students can not be analyzed with the parameters of student opposition in the First World. Following Levinson, Foley, and Holand (1996), Luykx states that: "…oppositional student subcultures are rarer in more recently schooled populations, such as indigenous groups in Latin America. Thus First World models of student resistance are not wholly adequate for analyzing schools in developing nations" (1999: 217-218).

Narratives of some of my interviewees also pointed at a similar kind of resistance to nationalist practices at school which are structured to interpellate students as Turkish subject-citizens. Hazal mentioned the significance of "respect and courtesy towards teachers" which is also "a cultural standard that few students dare to (or care to) challenge" in Bolivia (Luykx, 1999:218): "…well teachers are sacred for us." The respect towards teachers has also been inculcated by parents who want their chidren to "truly" socialize at school so as not to be further discriminated on ethnic terms. Hazal's father also taught Hazal to overtly express respect to her teacher saying "…do never forget to stand up when you see your teacher." The sanctity of teachers together with the atmosphere of constant fear and ethnic subordination led my interviewees and their classmates to a covert form of resistance which avoids direct confrontations with school authorities. Their resistant practices, either conscious or unconscious in the sense of resisting what subordinates them, did not seem to challenge the very structures of subordination. Yet, they opened up a space for themselves in which they could control their "own meanings and actions, at least in some limited, "offstage" domain" while also gaining "subversive pleasure" from those subtle moments of empowerment (Luykx, 1999:219). Narratives of my interviewees indicated that the use of nicknames for the teacher, refusal to attend ceremonies and celebrations of the national days or changing the words of *Andımız* (our oath)[74] while reciting, or secretly attending

[74] The oath recited every morning by primary school students in Turkey. It goes as follows:

"Türküm, doğruyum, çalışkanım,
İlkem; küçüklerimi korumak, büyüklerimi saymak, yurdumu, milletimi özümden çok sevmektir.
Ülküm; yükselmek, ileri gitmektir.
Ey Büyük Atatürk!
Açtığın yolda, gösterdiğin hedefe durmadan yürüyeceğime ant içerim.
Varlığım Türk varlığına armağan olsun.
Ne mutlu Türküm diyene!"

En. "I'm a Turk, I'm honest, I'm hard-working,
My goal is to defend my juniors, respect my elders, and to love my nation and country much more then my essence.
My ambition is to rise, and go forward.
Ataturk, the great!
I swear that I will walk forward in the path that you opened for us without any hesitation.
Let my existence be a gift to the existence of the Turks.

demonstrations forbidden by the school administration are some of those resistant strategies. On the other hand, sometimes their resistance may have a more intricate relationship with oppression such as in the case of self-silencing in the classroom. Walsh considers such resistance as students' "conscious and/or unconscious decision not to risk self-disclosure" within certain power arrangements that subordinate them for who they are (1991:114).

As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, Hazal's memories of her first week in the village school were shaped by remarkable happiness and enthusiasm as she insistently underlined it. Her classroom was constituted entirely by Kurdish speaking students as opposed to their teacher who did not know the Kurdish language. Although the very practices at school were subordinating on ethnic terms, students were experiencing a relative safety and solidarity in a familiar environment:

> "For example I was extremely happy there, you see! You attend the class, after that you see your friends, whom you all know, I mean you feel extremely safe and there's nothing called fear, not at all… You can speak at the break time for example, you can communicate with your friends, you can tell your problems to others… Ok, you still don't hear your teacher but at least you're happy. I mean you don't feel any trouble, any fear, any worries. (…)And another thing is that you have your mother and father you see… That's the greatest assurance, you know that you can go to them. You don't fear at all."

On the contrary, her memories of especially her first year in YİBO were almost entirely of fear, loneliness and inability of self-expression in an environment far away from the safety of home and family:

> "But I for example, the year I started that boarding school, as the teacher looked at my face, I started to quakewith fear.(…)For instance when my teacher said something to me I dreaded. I used to stay in the classroom all the time, I was afraid that otherwise I would get lost."

Hazal's narrative of her short schooling experience in village is a good example of how an oppressed language may be a tool of opening up an alternative sphere of solidarity within the official space of the classroom. Hazal and her classmates tried to cope with the oppressing conditions in the classroom-e.g. receiving education in an unknown language- through gossip, laughter and the use of nicknames in Kurdish for

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How happy for one who can say I'm a Turk!"

their teacher among themselves: "Yani orda hani ne bileyim derse gidiyoduk gülüyoduk, öğretmen bi şey söylüyodu anlamıyoduk, öğretmene laf söylüyoduk kendi aramızda, lakaplar takıyoduk böyle…" They were forced to learn how to read and write in a language they did not even know, so they were responding to this injustice with their own language. It might not be a conscious strategy since it was the only language they could communicate among themselves after all. However, they did not only get pleasure out of it, but also subverted the subordinate role conferred on them while also enjoying a greater degree of freedom, at least, of self-expression.

On the other hand, as Luykx (1999: 220) also carefully underlined in his discussion of Bolivian students' similar forms of resistance, "while students could deride faculty only behind their backs, teachers scolded students to their faces, secure in the knowledgge that students could not break the mask of deference even to defend themselves". However, what differentiates resistance of Hazal and her classmates from those Bolivian students is that the main axis of resistance is Kurdish language in the former while it is "symbolic compliance" and secret mockery in the latter. Hazal and her peers were speaking not in the "offstage" domain but in front of their teacher in the classroom, yet it was teacher this time who could not understand them. So the hierarchy in the classroom was being suspended ironically through a subordinated language.

When teacher scolds or belittles a student for her Turkish accent or lack of Turkish fluency in the classroom of such a village school constituted entirely of Kurdish speaking peers, it may not be a big deal. Yet, the situation changes when the student faces this humiliation in YİBO or other schools, in an environment far away from home, shared with Turkish speaking students. Hazal's experiences in YİBO, concerning language, perfectly exemplify this humiliation and her subsequent silence in the classroom. She was already having difficulty with following classes in the first grade and resented what she perceived as discrimination by her teachers. And when one of her teachers scorned her for her Turkish, she started feeling more shame for not only her Turkish accent but also for her mother tongue.[75] Especially after this incident, Hazal

[75] Hazal: "Yani dalga bile geçiliyo yani şiveyle. Bi kere şey olmuştu, işte şey böyle tiyotroya alıcaklar felan beni böyle. (…) Ondan sonra işte öğretmen bi şeyler soruyo bana böyle, anlatıyorum felan işte. Ondan sonra yanımdaki hocaya döndü, işte Engin hoca siz ne diyosunuz dedi. Hoca da "Hı tercüme mi edeyim bunu sana" dedi. (…) aşırı derecede kendimi o kadar böyle rencide edilmiş hissettim, o yaşta o kadar gururum kırıldı ki, böyle nefret ettim konuştuğum şiveden dilden nefret ettim, Kürtçeden nefret ettim resmen. Orda hocam demişti yani Türkçe konuşuyo tercüme etmenize gerek yok,

developed a more resistant silence in the classroom due to the possible threat of ridicule and, in Walsh's words, "not to risk self-disclosure". So Hazal's strategy of self-silencing was a product of an earlier experience of humiliation as well as a response to current power relations in the classroom which was working in favor of Turkish-speaking students:

> "That was the biggest problem anyway. For instance you know the answer but you can't speak. You know the answer of the question but you can't answer because you fear.(…) I mean you think that you won't be able to speak properly and that s/he will tease you. For instance I exprienced it many times, I mean after that theater thing, I exprienced it many many times…"

Öykü experienced a similar kind of shyness in class while she was schooling in İstanbul where she came after she finished fifth grade in her village school. Even though Öykü was a successful student, she preferred not to speak much in class as a result of self-consciousness about her Turkish accent among students whose mother tongue was predominantly Turkish:

> "But for example here, at school I used to say 'Turkish'. Well you know there are these reading sessions, one starts reading and the other continues, there are texts, Turkish school book etc. I always pronounced badly.(…) I felt so bad. I didn't speak a lot in class."

Narratives of Öykü and Hazal, which point at an explicit fear of speaking in class, share much with Luykx's account of rural girls' silence in class mainly due to "their difficulty in speaking correct Spanish and their fear of being laughed at by their classmates or corrected by the teacher" (Luykx, 1999:223). Luykx draws attention to the gender dimension of this self-silencing, saying that boys did not generally refrain from speaking in such circumstances while girls became extremely self-conscious about their accent or lack of Spanish fluency and refused to respond to the teacher's question. It seems that sexist practices make girls less outspoken than boys. Aymara girls, as children, are confined to house and busy with domestic chores in their non-school hours as opposed to boys who have more freedom to engage in outdoor plays and social interaction. Moreover, gendered relations of power in the school context also shaped

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ama hani sonuçta yanındaki öğretmenim hani, yani kutsadığım, böyle bir anda beni yerin dibine sokmuştu."

girls' negative perception of their "linguistic competence" as Bourdieu argues that: "women differ from men not so much in strict technical competence as in their manner of affirming it" (in Luykx, 1999: 232).

Narratives of Öykü and Hazal did not include an emphasis on gendered relations of power in class, which would also be effective in their self-silencing. But Hazal's detailed account of the patriarchal system of gender relations prevailing in her village is telling, considering her extreme self-consciousness about her accent after her teacher's ridicule:

> "You will do all the service. You won't answer when you're asked a question. You won't speak when you are with men. You will only serve them meal or tea or anything they wantand that's all.First of all then you are already aware of the fact that you are not of value as an individual until you finish the elementry school. I mean you always devaluate yourselves, you think that you are already the loser from the very beginning."

Those practices were actually more strict when there were male guests in the house. I asked Hazal whether they could speak when there were no guests there only to hear the following words: "Konuşabiliyosun çok fazla olmamak şartıyla". Although Hazal's father was more liberal than other patriarchs in the village in some respects, he was, in a way, exchanging those limitations with more strict rules in other spheres. Hazal could attend school, and she did not have to cover her head, neither did her elder sisters until they got married; but they were confined to the house as uncovered and silent young women:

> "On the other hand, my father raised us with very strict rules.For instance we couldn't go to ours neighbours, with neighbours I mean my father's uncle or close relatives you see, and put neighbourhood aside, we didn't know how their streets looked like.(…)It's like, you're always at home, you stand in front of the house until your father comes, then you get in. You're always in your own territory…"

So Hazal's experience echoes that of Aymara girls being confined to the house in their childhood. In both cases, ethnic and gender-based subordination intersect to push girls into a resistant silence with the fear of humiliation and mockery by their teacher or classmates. Hazal has been raised in an environment where "too much" talking of women is not welcomed. Moreover, especially until the primary school she did not have much chance to get into social interaction with others. So when her accent or imperfect Turkish was despised by her teacher after all this background and already existing

ethnic oppression in the school, she prefered to remain silent so as to avoid any further discrimination.

Along these lines, their attitude may not seem as a bold and spectacular practice of resistance decisive to subvert the oppressive mechanisms, nor does it have to be. On the other hand, as opposed to the resistance of Hazal and her classmates in the village school through Kurdish language, this resistant silence is "less an expression of solidarity than a defensive reaction to the threat of ridicule" (Luykx, 1999: 231). Their attitude did not stem from a decision to change the overall suppressing conditions in the abstract sense, but it was caused by "the frustration of incomprehension, the shame of a disparaged accent, and the fear of their classmates' ridicule. As a product of these experiences, their silence- resistant though it may be- is a resistance born not of solidarity but of isolation. The threat of ridicule may be more perceived than real, but that perception arises from a long history of very real discrimination" (Luykx, 1999:232). Actually, this observation also explains my interviewees'- especially those who learn Turkish afterwards- narratives on their considerable effort to speak "perfect" and accentless Turkish throughout their education years. They resisted to discrimination and ridicule with silence. Yet, they were also trying hard to get rid of their accent so as to better conceal their "difference" and eliminate any further potential of exclusion. All in all, they have been undergoing an experience between oppression and resistance at the intersections of ethnicity and gender. They were resisting ethnic oppression by avoiding the "risk of self-disclosure" with a strategy partly determined by earlier experiences of gender subordination. Moreover, they strived to speak standard Turkish without accent which implies their attempt to be a more "successful" and "promising" student. Although it was a possible advantage in the face of gender-based impediments to education, it also contributed to linguistic standardization which is a part of ethnic oppression and assimilation.

Mori's high school experience in İzmir was also revealing of how this kind of self-silencing is actually part of a total disguise vis-à-vis ethnicity. Mori had to struggle with the constant threat of ridicule by her classmates due to her Turkish accent. Mori told how lack of self-confidence shaped her overall experience in İzmir, especially in her relations with her friends most of whose mother tongue was Turkish:

> "For instance there's always this lack of self-confidence, you know the answer of a question for example but you can't easily raise your hand and answer it, for you fear that they would make fun of your accent. I mean

there's always this lack of self-confidence. And I still have it, it has never changed."

Like Hazal, Mori also took shelter in silence in class with the fear of facing mockery, yet this time by fellow students. However, unlike Hazal she has maintained her mode of resistant silence up until today, still cautious of public speaking and self-expression. After coming to İstanbul for high school, Hazal could establish empowering friendships at school and dormitory, which provided her with the atmosphere of solidarity against the "anti-Kurdish hatred" among students and teachers[76]. Hazal told me that among such politically conscious friends who had gone through similar experiences she no longer pursued to live under disguise. On the contrary, she eventually managed to make peace with herself: "after I came here I really felt at ease. Well because you don't need to hide yourself here, you don't let people gossip about you, first of all you yourself accept your existence. That's something very very very good." On the other hand, Mori's life in İzmir was defined by constant surveillance, fear and disguise. Her extreme self-consciousness about her "difference" was constantly fed by her peers' negative perceptions of the Kurds.[77] In such an atmosphere of hostility against Kurds she tried to conceal her Kurdish ethnicity as much as possible. She deliberately spoke with her family in Turkish on the phone. However, since her mother

[76] Hazal: "Biz [sınıfta] 30 tane kızdık, 3, sonradan da iki kişi daha geldi, 5 tane de erkek vardı ve onlardan bi tanesi Kağızmanlı çıktı. Mesela o bana çok yardımcı olmuştu. Böyle derslerde felan böyle çok çok aşırı derecede geriydim. Bi de sınıfta pasif olunca böyle kendimi gerçekten çok kötü hissediyodum, böyle hiç yok yani tamam yani yapamıycam felan diyodum başlarda. Sonra işte onun aracılığıyla böyle onun arkadaşlarıyla tanıştım. Onun arkadaşları da işte böyle hani yurtsever çocuklardı felan böyle. Hani İstanbul'da olunca daha çok bilincinde oluyo insanlar, gerçekten onu da gördüm ben. İşte onlarla resmen ben kendimi buldum diyebilirim. (…) ... kanın gerçekten deli akıyo ve yeni yeni bilincindesin bi şeylerin. Ondan sonra, e bulunduğun ortamda da hani kendini dile getirebileceğin bi şey var, öyle bi ortam var. Cesaret alabileceğim bi kitle var orda. Öyle olunca gizlemiyosun zaten sen de."

[77] Mori: "Gittiğim zaman ilk defa ayrı farklı olduğumu o zaman ben öğrendim. Ya çok farklı… Mesela çünkü onlar sürekli işte Kürtler böyledir şöyledir diyebiliyorlar. İşte ben böyle ailemle telefonda konuşucam, benim önümde bir arkadaşım var, işte o arkadaşlarıyla konuşuyor falan, erkek arkadaşı falan da yurtta kalıyor. Bir şeysi çalınmış, kız orda şey diyor, diyor sizin yurtta Kürt varsa kesin o çalmıştır. Allahımm, çok değişik bir duygu! Bir şey diyemiyorsun. Çünkü niye böyle, çünkü bir şey desen suçlu sen olucaksın. Kavga çıkacak seni savunacak hiç kimse olmıycak yani. Ama onların gözünde biz hep hırsızdık."

could not speak Turkish, Mori made telephone calls with her in places where she could be alone so that no one would hear her speaking Kurdish. Her fear was constant as well as inevitable: "Because you fear, somehow you feel so much fear. Maybe they won't do anything to you but there's still this fear. Somehow they make you feel that way." Nevertheless, not only language but also the content of her conversations could make her prey to stigmatization unless she was careful enough:

> "Once in the toilet I was talking on the phone about the elections, thinking that nobody would hear me. Well I asked who had received the votes, what had ours done and stuff like that. Were we DEHAP then, I guess it was DEHAP. (…)I was talking secretly on the phone but I didn't realize that my roommate was also there in the toilet. I entered the room and this friend asked me if I was a terrorist. I couldn't say anything, I didn't make a sound. Because I was very much scared."

Mori was silent not only in classes, but also at her dormitory room, getting along well with her roommates and refraining from dangerous talks. So, she could "get away with" her deviant attitudes. That is why, as she explained, this incident did not cause further trouble to her:

> "They said, 'look, this is a terrorist!' and stuff like that. But then it didn't continue this way too much because I had a quite personality, I mean I gave such an impression, perhaps that's why she didn't say anything. (…) Somehow I gained their confidence, I mean I used to get on well with them, perhaps I that's the reason I could get away. If I had a problem with any of my roommates, they would certainly report me."

Finally after two years of such incidents, Mori perfectly learned the rules of safety. When she came to the third grade of high school, she was already feeling "like them": "You are in İzmir; you hate AKP anyway, because you are like them. I mean, I felt like pro-CHP. I felt like a Turk." She dealt with exclusionary practices at school and dormitory by concealing not only her identity, language and voice, but also her thoughts. She was avoiding direct confrontations even with her friends, exchanging the risk of punishment for disobedience with sympathy of her friends: "they used to love me because I behaved like them. But if they, because yes, I was totally Kurd, but I was Kurd and that's all. Apart from that I couldn't say anything, I couldn't have a view opposite to theirs." So it seemed to me that Mori's attitude was involving more than a disciplined behavior and can be analyzed along the lines of "infrapolitics" as J. C. Scott puts it. Scott defines infrapolitics as forms of resistance of subordinate groups on the basis of avoiding the tension the confrontation with the dominant and powerful would

bring (in Çağlayan, Doğan and Özar, 2011:118)[78]. Mori seemed to comply with the rules of being a Turkish citizen and wore a mask of "Turkishness". However, this submission was part of a "hidden transcript"[79] which she kept intact for a long time in order to pursue her education while also eliminating the potential of any further control. Following Scott, Kelly (1994:8) aptly defined "infrapolitics" as the sphere of "daily confrontations, evasive actions, and stifled thoughts". Mori's relations with her friends were actually characterized by the burden of "stifled thoughts". They loved her, because she was not telling what she really thought. So it was a "communication" of unequals actually:

> "For example they claim that they had Kurdish friends with whom they got on very well. Well when I think about it now, I see that they didn't even give them the right to speak! How can you get on well in this situation? You don't let her/him speak, you don't let her/him express her/himself, always what you say is accepted."

Mori's narrative indicates that her silence and mask was making her daily confrontations less risky and her "hidden transcript" safe. Thanks to this seeming compliance with the public transcript, her friends no longer considered her as a threat, hence Mori achieved to speak with them about those pressing matters, albeit not openly:

> "But later on, yes, I was more open. Though it was not worthy enough, but when we started talking to each other, for they were my close friends, they had accepted us, at least they saw that I didn't give them harm, I didn't say anything... Maybe not very openly but at least a little, we started discussing these topics at least a little."

Narratives of Ruken and Jin also pointed at a different form of resistance strategy, which is changing the words of *Andımız,* in a way rejecting the national identity they are forced to belong. *Andımız* refers to the oath pupils are expected to read alound during

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[78] Çağlayan, Özar and Doğan (2011:118) in their study on Kurdish women's experiences of forced migration also mentioned how Kurdish women conceal their identity as a way of struggling with exclusion at work and school. They also analyzed this attitude of women along the lines of Scott's infrapolitics, instead of a shame over Kurdishness.

[79] J. C. Scott defines hidden transcript as follows: "Every subordinate group creates, out of its ordeal, a "hidden transcript" that represents a critique of power spoken behind the back of the dominant. The powerful, for their part, also develop a hidden transcript representing the practices and claims of their rule that cannot be openly avowed. A comparison of the hidden trancsript of the weak with that of the powerful and of both hidden transcripts to the public transcript of power relations offers a substantially new way of understandin g resistance to domination" (1990: xii).

the compulsory daily morning gatherings in Turkish primary schools. This national morning ceremony is one of the ideological mechanisms through which Turkish subject-citizens are reproduced. Students are expected to develop a belonging to the Turkish nation through pledging every morning that they actually do. Ruken told how they replaced the word "Turk" with "Kurd" while reciting the oath while also giggling at the back of the ceremony line: "well, we always changed these 'happy is who says I am a Turk' stuff.You always laugh at the back. You do something, you say I'm a Kurd instead of Turk." Jin also mentioned how they did not have the political consciousness of today's Kurdish children in the primary school[80] and underlined the dominant athmosphere of fear prevailing back then. However, their expression of Kurdishness, as a resistance against the ethnic oppression, was emerging through funny incidents, such as playing with the words of *Andımız*: "Well actually there was nothing political in the class, sometimes funny things happened, that's it.For example someone was shouting from the back saying 'I'm Kurdish, I'm righteous.' and stuff like that as the *Andımız* was read." Students who did not develop a belonging to Turkish nation could neither manifest their own subjectivity nor overtly challenge the compulsory morning ceremony. So their resistance was anoynmous as standing at the back of the line and collectively gigling during the oath suggest. Instead of openly refusing to recite the oath, which would bring down a direct confrontation with school authorities and a following set of sanctions, they appropriated the oath to their own purposes. So they could control their own meanings, albeit in an "offstage" domain.

During the interview, Ruken carefully emphasized that in high school years she was engaged in political acitivites with her family and did not discuss about the political issues with her school friends. Ruken's family, mostly her elder sisters and brother, was politically active in those years and Ruken was raised in such a politically vibrant atmosphere. Her family refused to send her to ceremonies and celebrations of national days taking place at school, such as 23 Nisan[81] and 29 Ekim:[82] "My family didn't let us

[80] She was talking about the middle school here. However, since the compulsory primary education was expanded from five to eight years, primary school also includes the connotation of middle school today.

[81] National Sovereignty and Children's Day held on April 23 each year. April 23 is the anniversary of the establishment of the Turkish Grand National Assembly in 1920.

[82] October 29th, Republic Day which is the anniversary of the declaration of the Turkish Republic.

go to celebrate the feasts, 19th of May and 23th of April or so. We didn't join any of them." Later in our interview, I asked Ruken how they explained their reluctance to send her to ceremonies in order to understand her approach to the issue back then. Her answer showed me that in such an atmosphere of political opposition fueled by all forms of ethnic pressure and state violence against Kurdish community,[83] Ruken herself also rejected to attend national ceremonies as a way of resisting to nationalist practices at school: "Well actually they couldn't explain it very well.It develops itself in time. (…) After a while you start reacting it yourself, you say that you are not going or so."

Moreover, during her high school years, Ruken did not go to school on Newroz days in order to attend celebrations. Yet, since she was a student, the school was playing an instrumental role for the state's control over her as a Kurdish student. State could take record of at least high school Kurdish students who attended *Newroz* celebrations. So, Ruken got three-day medical report in order to avoid a possible sanction for not attending the school on *Newroz*.[84] Newroz celebration symbolized an alternative political sphere for Ruken where she could manifest her Kurdish allegiance and identity. However, although she was not at school, it was still playing the role of a surveillance mechanism through which the state controlled actions of students in order to minimize "deviant" behavior. But, albeit covertly, Ruken was resisting state's control over her political activity and took control over her meanings and actions.

3.4. "It is Like a Wound in My Memory": Two Languages, One Silent Line

Many of my interviewees stated that today they do not have good command over their mother tongue and communicate themselves better in Turkish, albeit not fully either. For Hazal and Ruken, this situation has resulted in the deterrioration of relations

[83] Ruken told how their house in Diyarbakır was being raided and searched by the police almost every night in her childhood.

[84] "Şey yapıyordum ben, mesela lisede Newroz'a gitmek için 3 gün rapor alıyordum, okula gitmiyordum. Şey vardı çünkü, okula gitmediğin zaman Newroz günü polis geliyor zaten, okula geliyor, bütün okulları dolaşıyor. Eğer okula gitmemişseniz o gün isminizi alıyor. (…) Hani Newroz'a gitmek için… Önemliydi çünkü Newroz bizim için."

with their mothers who do not speak Turkish. However, what is more striking here is that many of my research participants do not feel that they can properly express themselves in Turkish either since words do not meet what they truly mean. Since they are forced to distance themselves from their mother tongue while receiving education in the dominant language they seem to end up with semilingualism, unable to fully express themselves in either language. The situation is more pressing especially for those who learned Turkish after beginning primary school; yet some others also touched upon the same point during our interviews.

As I noted earlier, Hazal did not know Turkish when she started YİBO and really had difficulty adapting to school under these conditions. However, she has been away from home throughout her entire schooling life. So she could not find much chance to speak in her mother tongue except for the short periods of times spent with family. Unlike Hazal, her elder sister and brothers have not faced such a lack of communication among family since they were spending more time with family members. Moreover, she has been living in YİBO and then in dormitories, spaces where Turkish language has been dominant and deemed as superior to her mother tongue. As a result, her language practices clearly shifted towards Turkish, making her unable to communicate in Kurdish: "Well, not speaking Kurdish for a long time you forget it as well." Especially during high school years she had a severe problem of communication with her mother who did not speak Turkish. Hazal could understand her mother speaking in Kurdish but could not respond to her sufficiently as she told:

> "For example I couldn't talk about my problemswith my mother and she couldn't either. For example she says something in Kurdish, though I understand her, she doesn't understand me when I respond… This time you can't talk to each other and the relationship ends involuntarily."

She really needed to have chats with her mother, telling her problems, aspirations and hopes yet their conversations did not move beyond a couple of words: "…well 'how are you', 'how is it going', and that's all... For instance you can't come together and talk about anything that happened to you." Hence, she got angry with her mother for not knowing Turkish:

> "I mean I was very angry that my mother didn't know Turkish. (…) Now I get angry with myself for thinking that way then. I think I dealt with the issue very selfishly. I mean how come could this woman know it? She is like how you were in the first grade..."

Today she felt sorry for accusing her mother for their communication problem yet she also understands her motivations for such an attitude back then: "Well you always grew up with the idea that you have to know it, the main language is this, yours is inferior." Since she was constantly imposed upon with the ideology of language which deems her mother tongue as inferior to Turkish, in the high school she was blaming her mother who was the one speaking Kurdish and lacking Turkish knowledge. It seems that ethnicity and gender have worked cooperatively to prevent the communication between even a mother and daughter. Her mother could not speak Turkish since she was not sent to school due to patriarchal reasons; on the other hand Hazal could not speak Kurdish because of the ethnic oppression and imposed Turkish monolingualism available during her entire schooling life. In both cases, Kurdish women were deprived of means to share experiences with each other, particularly across generations.

Coşkun, Derince and Uçarlar (2011) mention how subtractive linguistic policy and practices[85] end up in semilingualism in students speaking minority language. Semilingualism "suggests that when children belonging to minority language groups are thrust into the majority language especially through schools, excluding their mother tongue, in the long run they are unable to acquire full command of either the language of instruction, which is generally the majority language, or their mother tongue" (Coşkun, Drince and Uçarlar, 2011:91). Since my interviewees were forced to receive education in the dominant language, excluding their mother tongue, not only they could not speak fluent Kurdish but also they could not develop linguistic proficiency in Turkish. Hence they end up with inability to fully express themselves in either language. Mori's account simply shows how she feels stuck in between: "Well, you are good at neither Kurdish nor Turkish. You are somewhere in between, in purgatory."

Jin could speak Turkish; yet she has been subjected to practices of a subtractive linguistic policy at school. She also mentioned how she had a problem of expressing

[85] Following from researches on the matter Coşkun, Derince and Uçarlar explain a subtractive situation as follows: "in cases where monolingual policy and practices are implemented and where a monolingual life and education are the main priority, children who speak a language other than the official language are generally made to renounce their mother tongue and learn the dominant language. Through these practices, generally observed in submersion models, students having a different mother tongue are taught a second language and their first language is thus subtracted from their linguistic repertory. Educational practices of this kind, which comply with monolingual ideologies, destroy children's opportunity of adding another language to their mother tongue, and are subtractive" (2011:90).

herself for a long time. She was explaining it with the lack of command over language rather than a problem of accent: "Most of the time I seriously thought, though I don't think that way now, for years I thought that I had problems expressing myself, I thought I couldn't express myself, I couldn't talk.I mean apart from the accent, I couldn't express myself." Jin did not feel herself sufficiently proficient in Kurdish, yet it was her mother tongue; so her lack of command over her mother tongue was also negatively influencing her use of other languages:

> "….once this thing happened, we were making a presentation. (…) In the advanced English course we were telling*Yezidi*s, the subject was different religions and stuff. We were telling that. The teacher said: 'How many Yezidis do you think in Turkey', he asked something like how many Yezidis there were in Turkey. I said: I think there are sed people. The class was looking at me asking what sed was… I was looking back at them, what is sed, I say sed, how can't you understand it or so. Sed means a hundred in Kurdish. I mean I was perplexed you see. Well I can't speak Kurdish that well but it's my mother tounge after all. There came a moment and I was lost, I mean sed. Hundred doesn't come to my mind, *yüz* doesn't come to my mind, there's sed, there's sed in the world, I'm grown up with sed."[86]

Öykü also touched upon a similar point. She could speak both languages but had sufficient control in neither of them. She was communicating in Kurdish almost only with her mother. However she could not translate the pleasure she found generally in Kurdish and in conversations with her mother to her every day life which was dominated by Turkish:

> "When I talk to my mother, she doesn't speak Turkish, she speaks very little, we always talk in Kurdish. I can't find that pleasure in Turkish. For example when telling a fairy tail or talking about something, I can't translate a Kurdish word to Turkish."

Since most of her feelings, hopes and concerns were lost in translation, Öykü had to live with a wound in her memory which she could not find and heal: "…therefore the thing that makes me sad…Like a wound in my memory, or like something missing, like

[86] Jin: "Bi ara şey oldu, üniversite birinci sınıftayken sunum yapıyoruz tamam mı… (…) Advanced English dersinde Yezidileri anlatıyoruz, konu farklı dinler falan. Onu anlatıyoruz. Hoca şey dedi, How many Yezidis do you think in Turkey, kaç tane işte Yezidi var gibi bir şey sordu. Ben dedim ki I think there are sed people. Sınıf böyle bana bakıyo, sed ne falan… Ben böyle bakıyorum sed ne yani, sed diyorum, siz nasıl anlamazsınız falan. Sed, yüz demek Kürtçede. Yani kafa durdu anlıyo musun hani. Ya ben öyle süper Kürtçe konuşan bir insan da değilim, ama anadilim o. Yani öyle bir an geldi ki ben kitlendim, yani sed. Hundred gelmiyo aklıma, yüz gelmiyo aklıma, sed var ya, dünyada sed var! Ben sed'le büyüdüm…"

a loss...” Moreover she thinks that she could not develop linguistic proficiency in other languages since she did not have command over her mother tongue and could not translate her oral memory in Kurdish into other worlds and languages of meaning: “…I don’t have a good command of Kurdish. Because I can’t read and write very well in Turkish, I think I also don’t have a good command of Turkish and I don’t have a good command of English as well.”[87]

Havin has also grown up in Diyarbakır like Ruken and could speak both languages when she began school. However she also pointed at the implementation of single language policy at school and how she was forced even to think in Turkish from the primary school onwards. Today she feels she can express her sorrow, but not her happiness with her mother tongue:

> “Sometimes this is something that irritates me a lot. I mean one prefers to think in her own laguage. Well alright, I myself, spoke Kurdish until I grew up, until the age of seven, but later on I always thought in Turkish.This is one of the most important issues in Turkey for instance …This is a pain for instance, in my opinion it’s a problem.If they ask me to tell my sorrow I would tell it in Kurdish.I can tell my sorrow in Kurdish but I can’t tell my joy in Kurdish.”

[87] Öykü: “Ben hep ona karşı çok mahcubum. Çünkü ben çok hakim değilim. Ama mesela Kürtçe okuduğum zaman bazı şeylerle karşılaşıyorum, çok büyük haz veriyo bana. Mesela ben sevgilimle Kürtçe konuşmuyorum. Bazen konuşuyoruz, o da biliyo, ben de biliyorum ama çok az konuşuyoruz. Niye böyle? Birçok sebebi var bunun. Annemle konuştuğum zaman, annem Türkçe hiç bilmiyor, çok az biliyor yani, hep Kürtçe konuşuyoruz. O hazzı ben Türkçede bulamıyorum. Mesela masal anlatıyo ya da bir olaydan söz ederken, bir şeylerden söz ederken o Kürtçedeki kelime, Türkçede ben karşılığını bulamıyorum.(…) Yani şey gibi, bu yüzden hep böyle beni mutsuz eden bir şey… Sanki hafızamda bir yara gibi, yani eksik bir şey gibi, bir kayıp gibi yani. Türkçeye direk şey yapamıyorum tercüme edemiyorum evet. O yüzden hep böyle başarısızlık varsa ya da yeterince hakim olamıyorsam bir şeylere bir metne okuduğum bir şeye, bunun ondan kaynaklı olduğunu düşünüyorum. Çok sonradan birkaç yıl önce başladım Kürtçe okumaya, çok az okudum. Ama çok farklı bir hafıza var Kürtçede sözlü, benim duyduğum öğrendiğim konuştuğum. Şeye gelince bunu hiçbir şekilde aktaramıyorsun. Çok böyle suskun bir çizgi gibi kalıyor yani o orda. Mutsuz ediyor insanı. Bunun için bence işte anadilde eğitim olursa insanlar o dilde eğitimlerini alırlarsa isterlerse sonra diğer dillerden de… Çünkü ben Kürtçeye hakim değilim. Çok iyi okuyup yazamadığım için Türkçeye de çok bence çok hakim olamıyorum, İngilizceye de çok fazla hakim olamıyorum. Hep şey denir ya, o bir avantajmış gibi denir, farklı dilleri bilmek. Ama ben hiçbir zaman Kürtçeyi, karşımda bir metinde bir şeyde görmedim ki, resmi ya da akademik bir şeyini okumadım ki. Ne kadar hakimim ki? Çok böyle masalsı bir şey gibi geliyor, sanatsal bir şey gibi geliyo kulağına. Sana ait bir şey gibi kulağa hoş geliyo. Konuştuğun zaman, sohbet ettiğin zaman çok daha derin oluyormuş gibi geliyo, ama öyle orda kalıyo.”

After she remarked these words I wondered why she could communicate her sorrow but not her happiness with Kurdish considering her proficiency, at least orally, in Kurdish. Her answer showed me that she is related to her mother tongue in such a way that now she is identifying Kurdish with pain, feeling that she can express her misery only through Kurdish. On the other hand her account implies that she has difficulty finding words in Kurdish to depict her joy: "I mean Kurdish seems to be closer to sorrow. It seems to be as if my sorrow would be understood that way. Or it seems as if I can express my sorrow only in Kurdish." Since Havin spent most of her life in Diyarbakır speaking Kurdish with her family and came to İstanbul a year ago[88], today she does not have a big problem of communicating in Kurdish at least in daily basis. However, she received her entire education in Turkish and besides she did not attend a course in Kurdish language so as to improve her Kurdish in terms of grammer and literacy skills. So she does not consider herself "academically" sufficient at Kurdish: "I know daily Kurdish, daily expressions or so; but academically I don't know it very well." Havin would like to make the interview in Kurdish, but was not sure if she could truly communicate herself that way:

> "I wish so much that I could speak Kurdish very fluently. Of course I can speak it; with my mother, father, grandfather I speak Kurdish, but I wish I could say every word of what I told here in Kurdish, in my own language."

She speaks Turkish "academically" well; yet it is again somewhat insufficient in which to fully express herself, especially her misery:

> "H: I have the feeling that whatever I do I won't be able to express my sorrow in Turkish. For instance I want to use the word *xezebê.* When I say *Xezebê* will the other understand me?
> P: What does it mean?
> H: Well how can I explain it to you? Rage… But for me there's no translation for this word in Turkish. (…). I mean when you say it in Kurdish, it sounds as if you are telling your trouble. It sounds as if you are letting everything in you out with a single word. You need a million sentences in Turkish in order to express it."[89]

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[88] Havin studied at Dicle University in Diyarbakır for a couple of years before she quit and came to study at Marmara University.

[89] H: "Ben mesela Türkçede ne kadar acımı anlatsam yetmeyecekmiş gibi. Hani şeyi kullanmak istiyorum, *xezebê* demek istiyorum. Xezebê desem ne anlıycak karşımdaki!"

P: "Ne demek?"

H: "İşte nasıl söyleyeyim ben sana bunu. Gazap… Ama bana göre bunun Türkçe bir şeyi yok, karşılığı yok. Hani Kürtçe söylediğinde şey oluyor, hani o başındaki belayı

It is ironic that we were talking about her expreinces, emotions and the language problem; however she was again deprived of means to narrate her language problem again because of the language itself. On the other hand the situation derives not only from her relative semilingualism but also from my lack of Kurdish knowledge.

Narratives of my interviewees showed that they were experiencing a situation which is called in literature as "subtractive bilingualism". They are actually speaking both languages today; yet education based on a single language did not only alienate them from their mother tongue, but also prevented them from developing linguistic proficiency in Turkish as well. So today they are unable to fully express themselves in neither language. Necmiye Alpay states that "subtractive bilingualism" is experienced under conditions where individuals' mother tongue is deemed unvaluable with respect to the dominant language. On the other hand, an education which does not exclude individual's mother tongue and consider it as equally respectful leads to "additive bilingualism" (2003:228). My interviewees' above accounts indicated that it is not only those who do not speak Turkish when they began school, but also those who speak both languages may suffer from subtractive bilingualism. Moreover, they could experience the problem of self-expression in later stages of their lives even during university years. So, academic education of Turkish language in terms of vocabulary and grammar and long years of schooling in Turkish are not sufficient to help them communicate their inner world via Turkish, since their mother tongue is excluded and marginalized throughout this whole process. Yet, it seems that this inability of self-expression does not only remain as linguistic problem, but also as social, educational and pyschological one. For, educational policy based on monolingual ideology has damaged their social relations, whole education life and academic success and above all it turned them into individuals with a great deal of inner turmoil.[90]

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anlatıyormuşsun gibi. Böyle bütün içindeki her şeyi söküyormuşsun gibi geliyor tek bir kelime. Türkçe milyon tane cümle kurmak zorunda kalıyorsun bunu anlatmak için."

[90] Coşkun, Derince and Uçarlar make a similar observation in their study on experiences of Kurdish students in Turkey with respect to the ban on the use of mother tongue in education: "In fact many people from the first group, namely Kurdish students, stated that if Kurdish had been used for their education, they would have been more successful both at school and in later life. The vast majority said that the use of their mother tongue

3.5. Family, Community and School: Negotiating Identity through Multiple Socializations

In the previous sections, I mentioned about the ways in which influence of family contributes to the practices of ethnic normalization at school. However, in some cases socialization in family could also be contradictory with the national values promoted at school. "The influences of family, community, school, and other institutions act simultanesously, and at times contradictorily, mirroring the complex cross-currents of hegemony and the multiplicty of subject positions that social identity entails for each individual" (Luykx, 1999:124). Some of my interviewees actually pointed at a similar situation. Parents wanted their children to get no harm and pursue their education under conditions of maximum security. Hence they provided them with the conditions under which they could mask their Kurdishness better. Yet, on the other hand they could inculcate children with the conciousness of Kurdish identity. Zozan's account of her father is exemplary in that sense. He deliberately spoke Turkish with Zozan, but he also raised her with awareness of Kurdish ethnic values and a sympathy with the Kurdish political movement as she aptly observed:

> "My father used to play Kurdish music for us in those forbidden times. When I was a child I used to know the songs my friends learned at the university. (…) When we were at primary school, our rooms were full with the posters of Che Guevara and Musa Anter."

Hazal's father, on the other hand, socialized her in accordance with the demands of Turkish identity. He did not only raise her as a Turkish subject-citizen with respect and gratitude to Atatürk, but also as one who refuses the existence of Kurdish ethnicity:

> "For instance my father always used to say things like, don't mention the word Kurd, there's nothing called Kurd, we are all Turk, Atatürk saved us, if Atatürk didn't exist we wouldn't exist as well, he always used to say, stop when you see Atatürk, talk good about him, love him more than you love me.He could go that far. He said that we existed thanks to him…"[91]

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would have made them feel more self-confident, more at ease, less frustrated and free of inner turmoil" (2011:91).

[91] Hazal: "Mesela babam böyle şey yapardı sürekli hani, Kürt kelimesini ağzına alma, ondan sonra işte hani Kürt mürt diye bi şey yok, hepimiz Türküz, işte Atatürk bizi kurtardı, Atatürk olmasaydı biz olmazdık, sürekli böyle Atatürk'ü gördüğün zaman dur,

Her father wanted Hazal to get no harm for her possible "abnormal" behavior disrespectful to values of Turkish identity. His attitude actually confirms Scott's observation about the way subordinate groups educate their children: "In any established structure of domination, it is plausible to imagine that subordinate groups are socialized by their parents in the rituals of homage what will keep them from harm" (Scott, 1990: 24). Hazal's father wanted her to rise in the social hierarchy and have better socio-economic conditions; and she had to receive sufficient education for this end. Hence, he taught her the ways in which she can show her respect to the authority. However, one of Hazal's anecdotes also introduces a remarkable example of how the child could undergo two contradictory socializations even in family and also at school. Her elder brothers and uncle were sympathizers of the Kurdish political movement and the leader of PKK, Abdullah Öcalan. So several times she witnessed their passionate conversations in favor of Kurdish politics and of Öcalan. As a result of these experiences, Hazal came to identify the concept of leadership with Öcalan. She had no idea about either intricacies of the Kurdish issue or the red lines of Turkish politics: "Well how can I say, what is politics, what is this Kurd-Turk distinction, I mean the struggle between them, language, I didn't know any of these." That is why maybe Hazal hoped to get the admiration of her teacher when she voluntarily answered her question as to whom might be considered as a leader. However, the result was opposite to her expectation:

> "I was in sixth grade. Well, we were talking about the leadership in the Turkish course. I mean the teacher was telling us the characteristics of a leader. And she told us to give an example of a leader and I said Abdullah Öcalan. The teacher opened her eyes wide and started to tremble.(…)I still had the feeling that I said something good. Then I saw her approaching me, she held my arm and threw me out of the classroom. You see, she said 'get out of here, I don't want to see you', she shouted 'you dirty terrorists. It's clear where you're going to end up'… And many other things, insults, beating... Then she sent me to the disciplinary commitee."[92]

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ondan sonra sürekli güzel şeyler söyle, yani beni bile sevme onu sev… Hakkaten o kadar yani ileri gidebiliyodu. Ondan sonra, biz onun sayesinde varız…"

[92]Hazal: "6. sınıftaydım. Şey işte, hani liderliği felan böyle işliyoruz Türkçe dersinde. Hani liderlik özelliklerinden felan bahsediyo böyle hoca. İşte liderlerden birini örnek verin demişti, ben de Abdullah Öcalan demiştim. Kadın böyle gözleri kocaman oldu yaa, titremeye başladı… (…) Ben halen böyle hani çok güzel bi şey söylemiş gibi hissediyorum kendimi. Ondan sonra kadın bi baktım böyle tuttu kolumdan attı beni dersten dışarı. Çık dedi dışarı tamam mı, gözüm görmesin seni pis teröristler yaptı

Hazal's experience reveals how she underwent "not one socialization, but many"[93] which were contradictory in this case. As a result she could not differentiate the appreciated mode of speaking and behaving from punishable attitude at school. Her father had educated her in accordance with the established order, so she knew she needed to speak in Turkish, feel as a Turk and respect Atatürk. On the other hand, through other members of her extended family, she had been introduced to political demands and references of the Kurdish political movement. Yet, she was too young to understand the contradictions between these different positions. Nor had she developed a critical understanding of either one. Her narrative actually points at the paradoxical situation children of subordinate groups may find themselves in. School and family are highly politicized spaces and children encounter, assume and negotiate various subject positions constructed within discursive mechanisms of those institutions. Those subject positions may be paradoxical with regard to their relations with hegemonic and opponent discourses. Of course any child or adult may operate between contradictory subject positions: "There is no essential, unitary 'I'-only the fragmentary, contradictoy subject I become" (Hall, 1985:109). However, what makes Hazal's situation worthy of notice is that she was an ethnically subordinated child and was operating within a highly politicized and conflictual environment both at home and at school. Her manner of speaking in the classroom derived from influences of contradictory socializations, not from any sort of political motivation; but she was treated by her teacher as such. It was not until high school that Hazal developed a critical understanding of the imposition of Turkish identity thoughout her primary school years. Her uncle and books she read were also effective in the development of her political opposition:

> "Well it started with my uncle. I mean I started reading. Then afterwards, I started, like, I don't know, questioning or so. And when the other tries to impose himself this way, you see, you get suspicious. I mean he imposes himself insulting you all the time. Actually at one point they trigger you. Because he praises and exalts himself by insulting you."

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böyle. Hepinizin nereye çıkacağı belli felan… Neler neler, hakaretler diz boyu, böyle dayak… Ondan sonra disipline felan…"

[93] Following Walsh, Luykx states that "children undergo not one socialization, but many, through their encounters with various social institutions" (1999:124).

Moreover, she was surrounded by friends who were mobilized by the Kurdish political movement and actively engaged in politics. That was a totally different experience for Hazal. She had been raised with the dominant ideological approach against the Kurdish identity and political movement which she had halready embraced when she came to middle school: "ortaokulda Kürtlere laf söyledikleri zaman ben de söylüyodum". But during her high school years in İstanbul, she was away from home having constant interaction with peers highly opponent to the Turkish state discourse on Kurdish issue. That is why maybe she came to accuse herself and especially her father for the way they had been approaching the issue:

> "When you come to Istanbul and see the people who struggle for it, be aware of the ones who paid a price, after seeing them, first of all you get angry with yourself, you start to blame your family. I blamed very very much. Especially my father or so… My father was more then a prophet for me.(…) After I realized all these, I compared what my father told us and what he experienced and I hated him. He lost all his value, his authority for me, really, nothing has left you see."

What was especially significant in Hazal's narrative is that her father's take on the issue, has also been paradoxical like Zozan's father, yet only on the surface. However, Hazal could realize his motivations not until the last year of high school when she heard her father speaking contrarily to his previous speeches. This time he was advicing her not to be ashamed of her ethnicity. It sounded meaningless to Hazal, considering his reverse indoctrination till then:

> "I asked my father in high school. I asked him why he had made us deny… We had a quarrel then. He said yes, they were always unfair to us, they have neither brought us roads nor industry, then he said never forget all these facts, never be ashamed of yourselves or so. At that point I was encouraged and I asked him this question. I said father, why did you make us forget then. He said if he hadn't made us forget we would neither be living this life nor seeing all these facts. (…) He said that I wouldn't be studying if he hadn't done that."[94]

[94] Hazal: "Ben babama onu lise sonda sormuştum. Baba dedim hani sen niye bizi inkar ettirdin… Bi de tartışma olmuştu işte. Şey dedi hani, evet bize sürekli haksızlık ediliyo, hani ne buraya yol getirdiler, ne sanayi yaptılar, ondan sonra bizi hep geri bıraktılar felan. (…) İşte şeydir, hiçbi zaman unutmayın, ondan sonra hiçbi zaman utanmayın kendinizden felan yaptı böyle. O haliyle artık, bi de hani daha cesaretleniyosun, sordum işte. Baba dedim o zaman niye bize unutturuyodun. E dedi ben size unutturmasaydım sen şu an ne bunları yaşıyor olucaktın ne bunları görüyor olucaktın. (…) Ben sana öyle yapmasaydım sen şu an okumuyor olacaktın felan yaptı böyle."

Just like Zozan's father, he wanted his child to pursue education but it would not be possible if she had been labelled as a "terrorist" and expelled from the school. School was not only a political but also a disciplined space where abnormal behavior is avoided by exemplary punishments. So while explaining his previous attitudes, Hazal's father also referred to the incident about Öcalan, she had with her teacher in class. It was like a trace of an alternative scenario which might have ended up with her out of school. Hazal had come very close to be expelled from school after she attributed leadership to Öcalan. However, she took care of the situation performing the "ideal student" with the help of her father and her favorite Kurdish teacher. [95] Hazal followed the advices of her Kurdish teacher, who recommended her to write Turkish poems in her notebook, praising Atatürk and tried to convince committe members about her love and respect for Atatürk. Hazal did not forget to add that her father loves Atatürk as well.[96] Hazal "loves" Atatürk, so does her father! The sentence was not only implying how she remembered the education her father gave her, but also that her father was not a "terrorist" either.

My research participants were children born into the heart of an armed conflict and banality of violence. Actually, many of my interviewees referred to gunshots and aircraft noise as background voice of their childhood. One of my interviewees especially underlined how the noise was a part of her daily life, having learned living with that: "Actually I was very much used to it. Do you know when I was first

[95]Hazal's account of her Kurdish teacher and his wife, who was also a teacher, occupied a large place in her narrative. She frequently made comparisons with them and other teachers, underlining the crucial difference in their approaches to students. Hazal was identified especially with this male teacher and encouraged by his speaking of Turkish with the local accent: "İşte mesela onlar hani en azından bize de dilimize de hani insan gibi bakıyolardı gerçekten, hani olduğu gibi kabul, ilk defa mesela onun karşısında o hocamızın karşısında konuşurken böyle kasılmıyoduk tamam mı ve içimizden gelen her şey… (…) çünkü o da bizim gibi konuşuyodu. Yani o da mesela şivesini olduğu gibi konuşuyodu mesela. Biz bi de onu görünce böyle herkesle böyle konuştuğunu, müdürle felan konuştuğunu görünce iyice cesaretlendik".

[96] Hazal: "Ondan sonra işte öğretmenim sağolsun, o öğretmenler odasında disipline gideceğimi duyunca gelip beni uyarmıştı işte, defterine Türkçe şiirler yaz, Atatürk'ü öven şiirler yaz felan filan diye. İşte ben de savunmamı yapmaya gidince onları götürmüştüm böyle. Ben çok seviyorum, sadece lider diyince hani biz öyle duyuyoruz felan sokakta, televizyonda görüyoruz felan, onun için ben de lider dedim felan böyle yaptım işte. Yok biz nefret ediyoruz. Zaten ben Atatürk'ü çok seviyorum, babam da çok seviyor. Böyle, ama neler neler… Defterimi gösteriyorum felan. Öyle okuldan kovulmaktan yırtmıştım."

disturbed? I was first disturbed when I didn't hear the voice of my violin while studying for the conservatory." Jin, on the other hand, remembered her childhood as a period of time defined by fear. Battle noises were part of their daily routine; yet people were afraid even to talk about what is common: "there, noises of gunfires, jet planes or so were very much annoying. Yet, nobody named it, it was something to be feared of."[97] The reality of war was disclosed by the songs about torture and freedom the students sang in class; yet they were hardly aware of their implications.[98] Jin's narrative underlined how they were exposed to diverse political messages and meanings at home, community and school while also living in the state of war. They were not only learning songs about freedom and torture but also memorizing nationalist poems taught by a mathematics teacher. Actually it was amazing that Jin still remembered lines of poems her mathematics teacher urged them to memorize in the middle school.[99]

Belçim also pointed at a similar classroom practice. She mentioned how in the sixth grade they were forced to memorize a nationalist song several times: "We were in the sixth grade and we had a teacher from Tokat Reşadiye. She constantly had us memorize '*Ölürüm Türkiye*'. After we memorized s/he told us to memorize again, we memorized, and then again…" Belçim and Jin's primary school experiences are highly reminiscent of Luykx's discussion about the way identity of the students are transformed through discourse and symbolic practices in the Bolivian normal school. "The transformation of identity that students undergo in the normal school is largely symbolic-not in the sense of "less than real," but inasmuch as it occurs through discourse and other symbolic practices and is aimed at students' acceptance of a

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[97] Jin: "Orda mesela silah sesi duyulurdu, işte o jet sesleri falan çok böyle can sıkıntısı şeylerdi, ama hani onun adı konmazdı korkulurdu yani"

[98] Jin: "Mesela şey söylenirdi tamam mı, şarkı, 'Özgürlük Mahkumları' falan. Öğretmen şey diyodu biri bi şarkı söylesin, çocuk kalkıyodu işte, 'İşkencede günlerce…'. Yani 2. sınıftayız falan. Böyle bi psikoloji vardı anlıyo musun. Hani değişikti yani. Mesela o şarkının tam olarak nereye gittiğini hiçbirimiz farketmiyoduk. Hani gerçekten bugünkü çocuklar gibi değildik. Farketmiyoduk…"

[99] Jin: "Mesela Matematik öğretmenimiz de şey dersimize yani adam güya şiir seven biriydi. Bize Arif Nihat Asya'nın şiirlerini falan yazıyodu. Ve sen de hani şiir ya, ezberliyosun. Mesela hala da unutmadım heralde, o Arif Nihat'ın o hani var ya, 'Ey mavi göklerin kızıl ve beyaz süsü' falan… Ondan sonra şey ya da bu adı ne, 'yelkenler biçilecek yelkenler dikilecek' falan, 'Fatih'in İstanbul'u fethettiği yaştasın'… 'Yürü sen de Fatihler doğuracak yaştasın' gibi bi şiir var böyle uzun uzun, böyle onu bize hani çok çok güzel şiir diye tahtaya yazdı ve ben bunu ezberledim."

particular symbolic order and their own (and others') place in it" (Luykx, 1999:127). Likewise, memorization of nationalist poems and songs implies the transformation of Kurdish students' identities in symbolic terms. Through such symbolic practices which were repeated as a ritual, students were expected to accept the symbolic order defined by Turkish nationalism. "A change of identity entails a move out of one symbolic construction (a subject position or set of subject positions) into another and adoption of the symbolic practices associated with the new identity" (Luykx, 1999:127). My interviewees were educated to adopt some symbolic practices associated with Turkish national identity. Learning and speaking standard Turkish, feeling gratitude to Atatürk, reading aloud Andımız, memorizing and singing İstiklal Marşı and learning other poems and songs with nationalistic themes were some of those symbolic practices.

At the same time as Jin was memorizing all those poems she was also reading Kurdish political books, like those of Mehdi and Leyla Zana, which she got from her uncle's library. However, like Hazal, Jin did not develop a political consciousness and opposition until she got out of her hometown. Jin came to Diyarbakır for high school which she characterized with "serious fascism" and discipline of "military camp". Besides, it was Jin's first time that she met with fellow students who had a hostile attitude towards their Kurdish peers:

> "I started high school when I was 13 years old, well leave three years aside, everything I had accumulated until then came up in this period. I mean at that time I realized what I was aware of and not. Because I mean it was a boarding school, there were people who came from Adana for instance. I mean they were constantly underlining that they were Turks. (…) These people were like, I mean they were raised thinking that Kurds are dangerous people."[100]

It was through the encounter with the "other" and introduction of her "difference" that Jin came to identify herself as "Kurdish". Political books she read and previous nationalistic and oppressive practices in her primary school years were also effective in the sense of reinforcing her reactionary attitude. Yet, she embraced Kurdish identity only after her confrontation and conflict with Turkish peers. While narrating her

[100] Jin: "Ben 13 yaşında başladım liseye, (…) hani 13 senenin 3 yaşını at, 10 senede biriktirdiğim her şey o zaman ortaya çıkt yani. Hani neyin farkındaymışım neyin değilmişim o zaman ayırt ettim. Çünkü hani o zaman şey vardı böyle, yatılı okul ya… Mesela Adana'dan falan gelen insanlar vardı. Yani ne bileyim biz Türküz falan modundalardı böyle... (…) Bu insanlar şeyler[di] yani, Kürt var ve bunlar tehlikeli bilinciyle yetiştirilmiş insanlardı."

childhood, Jin frequently made a comparison with children of her times and today's Kurdish children. She stated that Kurdish children are more political today since they are the kids of a 30-year war and have more opportunity to get information about the agenda:

> "New generation is more like, I mean, they are very different. Because after 30 years, this 30 years of war that we are talking about, they are the children of these 30 years. Well, we were at the beginning of this war back then. (…) Now children are more political, they hear more, because television, internet and stuff like that somehow exist everywhere. But in those days there was something else, I mean today for instance a child can learn what is happening in the world only by turning on the TV accidently and watching the news. But it was not the case in our time. I mean we were looking at the cows or so."[101]

On the other hand, Jin thought they were raised as apolitical due to the constant fear of their parents since death was more common: "There was such a big fear then. Because things were much worse at that time. I mean the one who had gone, didn't come back."[102] Parents of Jin and Hazal tried to raise them as apolitical as possible, yet this choice itself was a political one. Besides, the school itself was already a politicized and politicizing space, ironically mobilizing them against the dominant order. So when Jin and Hazal came to high school, after all years of self-contempt for their own ethnicity and language, this time they did not refrain from openly expressing their Kurdishness and getting into trouble for that. Moreover, they felt empowered and more self-confident; so they managed to deal with oppression more openly. However, it is ironic that in the same period Hazal's Kurdish was not sufficient enough to communicate with her own mother, as I elaborated in the previous section. Moreover, she had been angry with her mother for not speaking Turkish. She was experiencing an inner turmoil in fact, a tension between the feeling of political sensibility towards Kurdish identity and the relative loss of mother tongue in the daily life:

> "Well it's like, you actually get angry with yourself but because you can't confess it, you get angry with your family. Because I can't express myself to

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[101] Jin: "Şu anki çocuklar daha şeyler daha farklılar. Çünkü hani artık 30 yılın ardından, 30 yıllık bi savaş diyoruz yaa, hani o 30 yılın çocukları. Biz o zaman hani o savaşın başlarında sayılırdık ya… (…) Şimdikiler daha politik, daha çok şey duyuyolar, çünkü yani televizyon, internet falan her şey bi şekilde var. Ama o zaman şey de vardı yani, hani bugün mesela bi çocuk dünyada ne olduğunu yanlışlıkla haberleri açsa öğrenebiliyo. Ama bizim o kadar şey değildi yani. İneklere bakıyoduk falan yani…"

[102] Jin: "O zaman çok daha büyük bi korku vardı yani. Çünkü o zamanlar durumlar çok daha kötüydü yani. Hani ne bileyim giden gelmiyodu yani.

> them in Kurdish and on the other hand I risked my life for Kurdishness. You go to them but can't tell your problem in Kurdish, you get lost and translate it to Turkish. You can't get angry with yourself, therefore you get angry with the other"[103]

As I will explore in the fifth chapter, the burden of this contradiction became partly effective in Hazal's language-oriented political engagement in university years. At this point, it is necessary to note that not all of my interviewees underwent the same experience in high school, not even Mori who attended high school in İzmir. The way she dealt with her encounter with the oppressive "other" was more characterized by a resistant silence, mimicry and disguise, than an acknowledgement of Kurdish identity and an open expression of it.

All in all, it seems that nationalist practices at school played a prominent role in their adoption and emphasis of Kurdish identity since it triggered reaction and resistance. On the other hand, though, my interviewees' extensive account of their school years indicates that school has been a space of constant negotiation for them. It is not only in the sense of negotiating identities, but also that the education system in Turkey subjected them to state patriarchy and nationalism while reducing the patriarchal control of their family. Education provided them with the potential of better socio-economic conditions, enhanced their status within the family, breaking -to a certain extent- discriminative mechanisms working in favor of men at home. Yet, again, they spent most of their lives at school where they were constantly discriminated and silenced as Kurdish females.

3.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I argue that Kurdish female children are subject to multiple socializations at home, school and the community, similar as well as contradictory depending on various encounters and circumstances. Following Williams, I suggest that discursive practices of the Turkish national education system are geared towards a

[103]Hazal: "Tam böyle hani şey yapıyosun, aslında kendine kızıyosun ama kendine itiraf edemediğin için ailene kızıyosun. Çünkü ona Kürtçe de derdimi anlatamıyorum burda da Kürtlük için canımı koymuşum ortaya. Gidiyosun ama ona Kürtçe derdini anlatamıyosun tıkanıyosun Türkçeye çeviriyosun. Kendine kızamıyosun, karşındakine mecburen kızıcaksın."

particular form of socialization characterized by the incorporation of "a selected range of meanings, values, and practices" which constitutes "the real foundations of the hegemonic" Turkish subjectivity (Williams, 1997:117). Although education plays a particular role in liberating women from the patriarchal control of the household, it also subjects them this time to nationalist and gendered practices at school. Moreover, the nationalist character of the education system, which excludes ethnic identities and languages other than Turkish, seems to reproduce the gender roles Kurdish speaking female children are often grown up with. My research participants' lower position as female children at home and the silencing mechanisms related with their position in the patriarchal hierarcy were reproduced by the exclusion and discrimination of their mother tongue at school. This time, they themselves chose to remain in a resistant silence in order not to risk the self-disclosure and experience disparagement for their Turkish accent.

The hegemonic order imposes the idea that success at school resides in assuming the "superior" position of Turkish subject-citizen who speak standard accentless Turkish. The ideology of contempt for their ethnicity and mother tongue led them to perform the so-called superior position of Turkish subject-citizen at school while also negotiating the borders of ethnic identities with their resistant practices in the "offstage" domains. While performing the Turkish citizen on the surface, they also created for themselves an alternative sphere at school through which they could manifest their "othered" subjectivity with respect to Kurdish ethnicity. Especially Hazal and her friends' speaking Kurdish in the class, making sarcastic remarks about their teacher who did not speak Kurdish is a good example of how what is oppressed itself could return into something resistive in the hegemonic space of the school. Since direct confrontations with school authorities would bring further control, restriction and oppression, my interviewees reclaim control of their own meanings in invisible ways which seem not challenging the authority on the surface, but bring pleasure and temporal moments of self-confidence. Hence I argue that school is not a space where Kurdish women students became the passive objects of ethnic subordination, but instead they display active, albeit invisible, forms of agency and resistance while negotiating ethnic identities within different contexts of the home, the school and the community.

Experiences of my intervieweees especially in high school and afterwards coincide with their increasing inner turmoil with regard to their relation with the Kurdish language. Monolingual policy at primary school initially created semilingual

students who could not express themselves fully in any of the languages. As they became bilingual in time, Turkish language constituted the language of learning, as well as their daily interactions. Those times also marked an increasing Kurdish consciousness, which created or reinforced an inner contradiction for most of my research participants. As Hazal's narrative exemplified, these inner contradictions were translated into particular forms of political participation which were usually associated with their subjective experiences. Hazal was engaged in a language-oriented politics at university. I argue that school, as a highly political space, creates the context in which Kurdish women are not assimilated but instead become politicized with respect to Kurdish identity claims. Secondly, their experiences within the discursive practices of the national education system as well as the mutiple socializations they are situated in have a considerable impact on shaping their political subjectivities.

CHAPTER 4

MANY ISTANBULS:

TRACING SPACE, IDENTITY, AND DIFFERENCE IN THE CITY

As I mentioned in the previous chapters, there were no education facilities other than five-years of primary school in Öykü's village at the time she graduated. Hence, Öykü arrived in İstanbul so as to pursue education beyond the 6th grade and she began living with her elder brother, who was married, and an elder sister. Hazal's life in İstanbul also began before her university years. Since she had difficulty in adapting to high school in Bartın, after a few months she transferred to another school in İstanbul. Zelal, on the other hand, spent one year in the city, attending a *dershane* so as to prepare better for the university exam.[104] Therefore, their experiences about İstanbul dated back to years before the university. All of the other interviewees came to İstanbul in order to attend university. Most of them had never been to İstanbul before. Experiences of my research participants in İstanbul as an urban space frequently intertwined with their narratives of the university as a social space, as well as the dormitories and houses they were staying in. As opposed to those people migrating from Eastern and Southeastern Turkey to İstanbul primarily for economic and/or political reasons and sometimes as victims of forced migration, my interviewees' major motivation for settling in İstanbul was studying in the university. Hence their spatial practices and experiences in the urban space have been partly determined by their status as university students. Moreover, their living areas typically extended around their university campuses and the surrounding neighborhoods. Except for Havin and Öykü, who have been living in a

[104] Zelal attended *dershane* for three years in three different cities, respectively in Hakkari Yüksekova, İstanbul and Van while preparing for the university exam. After studying for the exam in Van, in her third year, she got into İstanbul University.

house with their siblings,[105] all of my research participants had experienced dormitory life. Some of them still live in dormitory, whether it be the university dormitory or a state facility, while others (Jin, Lavin, Ruken and Mordemek in particular) have been living in apartments, shared with friends, for some time now.[106]

One of my first questions had to to with their choice of İstanbul as a destination. Moreover, I was curious about their perception of İstanbul before their first arrival. Their motivations for choosing İstanbul, as the city where they would attend university, accompanied narratives on how they perceived İstanbul as an urban space. Newroz's choice was determined by her strong affiliation with the Kurdish movement and her perception of the city as harboring diversity as well as the recognition of the Kurdish identity. Newroz grew up in a highly vibrant political atmosphere in Şırnak, Cizre. She was raised by her mother as a Kurdish nationalist, faithful in the struggle to protect "the essence of the Kurdish identity." She was mobilized in BDP early in the high school partly by the influence of her politically active mother who also inculcated her with

[105] Upon entering Yeditepe University, Öykü could move in another house with her elder sister and little twin brothers. After her elder sister got married she lived with her twin brothers for some time. At the time we did the interview, she had been living with her boy friend and twin brothers. Havin, on the other hand, came to İstanbul this year. Her elder brother and sister had come to İstanbul for university education before Havin and had been living in a house. When Havin came to university, she began staying with them. She has been contributing to the household expenses thanks to a part time job which brings a relatively high income.

[106] It is significant that three of them, namely Jin, Lavin and Ruken are now graduate students and have been living in İstanbul for many years. I think their living in a house as university students has partly to do with their rising economic conditions as well as a network of friends they have acquired during university years. For, Lavin is now a research assistant at the university and has a regular income to make her living, while she had been living off of part time jobs and KYK (Kredi Yurtlar Kurumu- Credit and Dormitories Institution) scholarship during her undergraduate years. At the time we did the interview, it was Jin's first year at Bilgi University as a graduate student and her friends' economic support had been critical in her subsistence until then. She had recently received a scholarship. As for Ruken, economic support from her elder brother and sister was vital. On the other hand, Mordemek is my only interviewee whose family has relatively high economic income. She is not a scholarship student in Yeditepe University. That is why perhaps after living in university dorms for two years, she could move into an apartment with her friends nearby campus. My other research participants who live in the dormitories have low economic means insufficient to finance a rental apartment. They have been either paying low amounts of money to their dormitories or have had scholarships for dormitory.

"Kurdish consciousness".[107] So she desired to live in a city where she could not only protect her "essence" but also defend Kurdish identity against "others":

> "For instance in our neighbourhood people talked a lot about the change of personality in people who studied university and came back. Studying at the university was a privilidge, that's right; but coming back without losing your essence was something else. Because in a place like Cizre everybody is Kurd, everybody speaks Kurdish, everbody is your culture, namely they all understand you. Therefore you don't feel any discrepancy. Everybody seems alike. It means that even if you struggle, you get confused about for whom or for what purpose you struggle, because everybody is alike after all. You ask yourself, am I going to convince *these* people about Kurdishness, am I going to teach *these* people Kurdish? You don't face that 'other'."[108]

She made her above depiction of Cizre, as a space of homogeneity, during our conversation about her decision to come to İstanbul. However her narration on especially her high school years in Cizre was drawing a more heterogeneous picture of the district, more open to conflicts and negotiations, especially with children of the military personnel at school. Yet, despite the clear paradox in her portrayals of Cizre, her perception of her hometown (the one illustrated above), partly explained the political in her preference in favor of İstanbul. Newroz wanted to pursue her political activism in the Kurdish movement in a city sheltering "others" who did not know the Kurdish language, but on the other hand she dreamt of an atmosphere of peaceful and free encounter, possible to find in İstanbul, where she could manifest her Kurdish identity. So, she desired to live in İstanbul, Ankara or İzmir, metropoles she perceived to recognize difference and acknowledge people "like her":

> "I was looking for a place where I wouldn't get reaction, where I would find an atmosphere closer to my struggle, where I could at least take a breath.

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[107] Newroz lost her father while she was a baby due to the war in the region. So Newroz and her siblings (her elder sister and brother) have been raised by her mother who was a dominant figure at home. Newroz's mother encouraged her children to speak Kurdish at home: "Mesela biz evde Türkçe konuşunca bizi azarladı. "Kürtçe konuşun! Niye Türkçe konuşuyosunuz? Okulda yeteri kadar öğrenmiyo musunuz?" (…) Bana Kürtçe şiir yazdırırdı. Mesela ben hala Kürtçe şiir yazıyorum. Hep ona yönlendirdi mesela."

[108]Newroz: " Mesela bizim orda üniversite okuyup gelen insanlardaki kişilik değişimi insanlar arasında çok konuşuluyodu. Üniversiteye gitmek bi ayrıcalıktı evet, ama ordan kendi özünü kaybetmeden gelmek farklı bi şeydi. Çünkü Cizre gibi bi yerde herkes Kürt, herkes Kürtçe konuşuyo, herkes senin kültürün, herkes seni anlıyo yani. O yüzden bi ayrılık hissetmiyosun. Herkes sana aynı gibi geliyor. Yani bi mücadele yapsan da o mücadele kimin için ne için, farkını anlamıyosun, çünkü herkes aynı zaten. Bunlara mı ben Kürtlüğü kabul ettiricem, bunlara mı Kürtçe öğretecem diyosun. O 'öteki' yi hissetmiyosun."

> Therefore large cities, where different personalities exist together, where people like us are accepted… Therefore I was telling myself Istanbul, Ankara, or at least İzmir… I was looking for large cities."

Newroz's political consciousness shaped around an allegedly "pregiven" and "essential" Kurdish identity led her to a search of politics defined along sharp-edged conceptions of identity and difference. Yet, while she wanted to struggle against the oppression of her identiy, as embodied in her depiction of the encounter with "the other", she also wanted her difference to be recognized. However, in her first semester in İstanbul, Newroz had difficulty coping with "the difference" she encountered in the urban space.

> "People here, the way they spoke, the way they dressed, buildings, everything looked strange to me.) Çünkü ben hep Cizre'de büyüdüm. Because I grew up in Cizre. Maybe I came to Ankara for several times for a meeting, I came to Diyarbakır for a meeting or for something like that. Apart from that I always stayed in Cizre. Then, this time, I had difficulty."

Newroz characterized her hometown as a "different" place marked with Kurdish identity, language and cultural practices, which she depicted as homogeneous. That is perhaps why she sought to find her hometown space of identity in the metropole, feeling uneasy of "suddenly seeing her own ''difference'' through the eyes of urban others" (Secor, 2004:359). Since she felt uncomfortable in spaces she "perceived to be both elite and culturally different" (Secor, 2004:357), she took shelter in a "strategic space of Kurdish (…) identification" (Ibid, 358) as Secor observes for other Kurdish migrants in Istanbul Newroz came from Cizre to İstanbul with a friend, Arjin who had relatives in Sultanbeyli:

> "So I was visiting Arjin's uncle all the time. 'Arjin, let's go to your uncle, see, it's beautiful there, everybody speaks Kurdish there, Sultanbeyli, it looks like our own neighbourhood there.' and stuff like that. Because children are playing football there, I hug them, kiss them. Houses are single-storey, houses are a little far away and dirty and things like that. I don't know, it smelled like Cizre, I felt that way. I was going there very often in the first semester. If not every week, I went there like biweekly."

As Newroz represented Sultanbeyli as a space of identity and belonging that reminded her of Cizre, her narrative evoked an ethnic homogeneous Sultanbeyli (Secor, 2001:361), similar to her perception of Cizre. On the basis of recent studies, Secor (2001:362) underlines that İstanbul harbors migrant neighborhoods which tend to be ethnically, religiously and regionally segregated spaces. Sultanbeyli is one such

neighborhood, as Işık and Pınarcıoğlu (2001) show in their compelling analysis of the development of this neighborhood. Newroz found not only Kurdish speaking people, but also poverty and Sunni conservatism in Sultanbeyli. Hence it was reminding her of Cizre where veiling was a dominant practice and poverty was common as her narrative on her childhood clearly reveals. She felt a sense of belonging there, being reminded of her hometown.

I think Zozan's narrative on her perception of İstanbul and its dwellers, before she came, is significant at this point. As opposed to Newroz for instance, Zozan did not have a clue about the diversity and arenas of peaceful encounter available in İstanbul. Zozan stated that she came to İstanbul with an extreme self-consciousness about her Kurdishness and how she thought she would be oppressed for her Kurdish belonging. That is perhaps why, in her first months in İstanbul and in her dormitory she explained every unpleasant experience with her peers with her Kurdishness, thinking that she was treated in a particular way for her Kurdish ethnicity:

> "But the thing is, I was like very unassured when I first came here. Because I had the idea that I was going to be oppressed for being a Kurd. I was thinking that every thing done to me was because I was Kurd. When I first entered the dormitory, my roommates were constantly changing; I mean whoever came, left immediately. Every time, I was thinking that they were not staying just because I was a Kurd and I felt so upset for that."[109]

Maybe it had nothing to do with her Kurdishness or even with herself that her roommates were changing their rooms after a period of time. However, it seems that as a result of certain childhood traumas with regard to her ethnicity, Zozan came to İstanbul with a preconception about the people she would met there and it shaped the way she interpreted their attitudes. What is more interesting is that Zozan was constantly manifesting and underlining her Kurdishness, in a way trying to get her peers' recognition as a Kurdish woman. Zozan explained this situation by her inferiority complex about her ethnic belonging. She concealed that she knew Kurdish in primary school and she had been refraining from openly expressing her Kurdishness due to a possible discrimination until the university. So, when she came to university she

[109] Zozan: "Ama ben şey böyle, hani çok kompleksliydim buraya geldiğimde. Çünkü şu vardı bende, ben Kürt olduğum için ezilicem. Bana yapılan her şeyin Kürt olduğum için yapıldığını zannederdim. Hani ilk yurda gittiğimde benim oda arkadaşlarım sürekli değişiyordu, işte gelen gidiyordu gelen gidiyordu falan. Ben hep şunu düşünüyordum, ben Kürt olduğum için kalmıyorlar ve çok üzülüyordum."

developed some kind of a defence mechanism in order to cope with a potential threat of discrimination, wanting her peers to know her by her ethnicity and acknowledge her that way. Moreover, Zozan and her Kurdish friends were constantly performing "Kurdishness" in order to outwardly manifest themselves[110].

Although many of my interviewees encountered discriminatory practices with regard to their ethnicity up until university years, none of them mentioned about fear of ethnic-based oppression and marginalization while coming to İstanbul. On the contrary, they deliberately chose the city because of the diversity it embodied. So I asked Zozan what made her specifically think that way. Her answer revealed that she had a pressupposition of İstanbul as a space of exclusively Turkish identification. Moreover, her brother's negative experiences as a Kurdish student in Aydın also made her consider all cities in Western Turkey, through the lens of a binary opposition, as both "Turkish" and marked by "animosity towards Kurds".

> "Well, I knew that, in the end, Kurds were oppressed everywhere. Besides, well, I didn't know the cosmopolitan structure of Istanbul. Actually it has a complicated structure; there are lots of Kurds, for instance, who are organized, but I was imagining it like the other cities. There would be only Turks who didn't like Kurds, who were chasing them, naming them tailed, I don't know, who didn't make friends with them thinking they were thieves… I was expecting such an environment. However, İstanbul is actually a place that keeps Kurds as well. I mean you can find that environment as well. That's why I did not have difficulties much. But if I had gone to another city, if I had gone to Aydın like my brother, I don't think that I could have made it."[111]

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[110] Zozan: "Bir de bende de şey vardı, özellikle kendimi belli etme isteği çok vardı. Mesela odama gittiğimde direk hani, ki o zaman Kürtçe okuma yazma bilmiyordum ben, sonradan kursa gittim, Kürtçe kitabı masanın üzerine koymuştum, görsünler bu kız Kürt bilsinler. Hani bazen gerek yokken çok fazla bahsederdim bizim oranın insanından, Kürtlerden. Hani çok böyle bazen ben de parmağımı gözlerine sokuyordum, hani bilsinler ben Kürdüm, bunu kabullensinler diye. Ben de çok şey yapıyordum kompleks yapıyordum. Sonra tabi yurtta bir iki tane Kürtle tanıştım. Onlarla da hani sürekli mesela halay çekiyorduk yerli yersiz. Hani etütte halay çekiyorduk, bahçede halay çekiyorduk, okulda halay çekiyorduk, işte böyle Kürtçe konuşmaya çalışıyorduk falan, hani hep kendimizi belli etmeye çalışıyorduk."

[111] Zozan: "Hani sonuçta Kürtlerin her yerde ezildiğini biliyorum. Bir de şey, hani İstanbul'un aslında bu kozmopolit yapısını bilmiyorum, hani karmaşık bir yapısı var, hani birçok Kürt var mesela örgütlü falan ama hep öteki şehirler gibi hayal ediyorum. Hani sadece Türkler olacak, işte Kürtleri sevmeyen, işte kovalayan, kuyruklu diyen, ne bileyim hani hırsız olduğu için arkadaşlık kurmayan, sadece böyle bir ortam zannediyordum. Hâlbuki İstanbul aslında dediğin gibi hani kendi içinde Kürtleri de barındıran bir yer, hani o ortamı da bulabiliyorsun. O yüzden hani çok zorluk

Hovewer, especially one of her roommate's reaction to Zozan's Kurdish identity was shaped more by ignorance about Kurdish culture and language in general than by hostility and discrimination. Since she was not hostile, but unaware of cultural and linguistic practices of Kurdish people, Zozan explained the situation with her being apolitical:

> "One of my friends was very apolitic, she didn't know anything and was constantly asking me bizarre questions. (…) For example once I was listening to Kurdish music and she got so much surprised and asked me if Kurdish music existed at all. I was shocked. How could it be? She was living in Turkey? Had she never heard it? She grew up in Ordu; it was her first year. She said she didn't know it at all. Then she asked me stuff like, do yours also release albums or she asked me how we created Kurdish, how we made it up. But she was asking naively. I mean she didn't have a bad intention"

Ruken's account on her life in İstanbul as a Kurdish woman coming from Diyarbakır was crucial in the sense of revealing how Kurdishness is experienced differently in Diyarbakır and in a Western city such as İstanbul. Although İstanbul was marked by diversity and recognition of ethnic differences, there were critical moments when differences were challenged and called for justification by those considering Turkish identity as the sole legitimate subject position. One of the most striking themes recurring in Ruken's whole narrative was her weariness with the need to constantly explain and justify her Kurdishness in her six-years of experience in İstanbul:

> "Well, even when you take a taxi, a conversation opens and you start quarreling. I took a taxi recently. We had a friend who came from Afghanistan, she was an Afghan who was living in Canada. They said that she was an Afghan. Then he asked where we came from. I said I was from Diyarbakır. Something happened and I said that I was Kurd. Then he said 'but you live in Turkey, don't you?' I said 'yes, I live in Turkey'. He asked insistently, 'but you say that you are Kurd'. I said 'yes', 'In Turkey?'. He asked about ten times, 'but you live in Turkey, don't you?'. I said 'yes, I live in Turkey, I am a Kurd and Diyarbakır is a part of Turkey'. I got so much annoyed, only then he shut up."[112]

çekmedim, ama başka bir şehre gitseydim, abim gibi Aydın'a gitseydim yapabileceğimi zannetmiyorum."

[112] Ruken: "Ya bi taksiye bile binince şey yapabiliyorsunuz, hani konu açılıyor kavga ediyorsunuz. Taksiye bindim geçen. Afganistan'dan gelen bir arkadaşımız vardı Afgan olan, Kanada'da yaşayan, gelmişti işte. Afgan filan dediler. Sonra, siz nerelisiniz filan dedi. Diyarbakırlıyım dedim. Bi şey oldu, Kürdüm dedim. İşte, sonra diyor ki ama Türkiye'de yaşıyorsun di mi? Evet dedim, Türkiye'de yaşıyorum. Israrla soruyor, ama

Ruken's account was full of such encounters in which she tried to make herself understood. In many of them, the person she talked to was trying to convince her to identify herself as a Turk. The above quotation includes a similar connotation as well. According to the taxi driver, it was unthinkable that she would consider herself as a Kurd if she was living in Turkey. Having experienced such encounters many times, Ruken thought she could not stand any more the situations in which she had to justify her existence.[113] Based on such experiences, Ruken finds it hard to believe in a dream of co-existence under these circumstances. In that sense, she also did not have hope with regard to a possible solution of the "Kurdish Question", seeing that in the best scenario, she would be considered as "a Kurd, **but** a good one":

> "I mean you become very hopeless. I'm so hopeless in that sense. I mean things like living together and stuff like that seem to me a big lie. I don't know, maybe people in Southeast are more hopeful. Because I mean, I have had to defend myself for 6 years. Somehow you get to know them, I mean you make friends with them, you fight or laugh with them and so on. You become friends with someone but she is not concerned about you at all. She is not curious about yout language or anything else. She considers you to be like… You become a "good Kurd", I mean "still Kurd, but a good one. I mean, that's a little… To be honest, I don't have any hope."[114]

Kürtsün diyorsun. Evet dedim. Türkiye'de mi… On defa filan… Türkiye'de yaşıyorsun ama di mi filan yaptı. Evet dedim, Türkiye'de yaşıyorum, Kürdüm, Diyarbakır da Türkiye'nin bir parçası dedim. Artık sinir oldum, öyle sustu."

[113] Ruken: "Ama şimdi tahammülümün kalmadığı bir noktadayım yani, o kadar söyliyim. (…) çünkü anlatmak istemiyorsun kendini artık yani, sıkılıyorsun. Hep aynı şeyler, hep aynı soruları hep aynı saçma sapan soruları soruyorlar, hep aynı savunmaları yapıyorlar, sen hep aynı şeyi anlatmak zorunda kalıyorsun, yani bitiyorsun artık tükeniyorsun yani. Ben 6 yıldır hep kendimi anlatmaya çalışıyorum. Baya bir zor oluyor yani."

[114] Ruken: "Yani çok fazla umutsuz oluyorsunuz. Ben çok fazla umutsuzum o konuda. Yani mesela birlikte yaşamak falan filan, onlar çok bana artık şey geliyor, çok yalan geliyor yani. Şeyler, belki Güneydoğu'dakiler daha mı umutlu o konuda bilmiyorum da. Çünkü hani 6 yıl boyunca hep kendimi savunmak zorunda kaldım. E bir şekilde biraz tanıyorsunuz, hani o arkadaşlık kuruyorsunuz kavga ediyorsunuz gülüyorsunuz birlikte filan. Biriyle arkadaşlık kuruyorsunuz filan, sizi hiç merak etmiyor ama. Siz onunla ilgili her şeyi biliyorsunuz. Dilinizi merak etmiyor veya başka bir şeyi etmiyor. Siz onun için işte şey olabiliyorsunuz işte, iyi Kürt oluyorsunuz, işte hani o da Kürt ama iyi oluyorsunuz yani. Yani o biraz şey… Açıkçası hiç inancım yok."

Belçim's narrative, on the other hand, introduces "hometown" as one of the main axes of difference, alongside ethnicity, effective while tracing the urban space of İstanbul. For Belçim, the relationship between "hometown" and Istanbul was interwoven with social exclusion and discrimination. She is from Bitlis which she believes to be not as politically prominent as Diyarbakır, Van, Tunceli or Şırnak. According to Belçim, it was effective in her less frequent encounter with prejudice in her daily interactions in İstanbul, compared to her friends from these cities:

> "Bitlis as a city is not very much… Politically it's not like other cities such as Diyarbakır, Van, Tunceli. It's not a prominent city.. Bingöl and Bitlis mostly remain in the background, especially in these issues. (…) Considering also election returns, BDP is not such an [powerful] party in Bitlis. I mean, for instance while Van can delegate four deputies or Hakkari can delegate all of its three deputies from BDP, there are four deputies in Bitlis and it can delegate only one of them. Another point is that, taking political identity into consideration, it's not very desirable to be from Bitlis. Besides, when you say you are from Bitlis, people don't consider you as much [dangerous] as a political identity".

Those "politically prominent" cities mentioned above are also cities which are frequently associated with skirmishes and "terrorism" in the mainstream media. Each and every day, especially with the deaths of soldiers in battles between the PKK and the state, those cities have been reconstructed in the national psyche as lieus of terrorism and violence and people coming from those cities are hold responsible for the deaths. One of the anecdotes of Belçim's friend who is from Hakkari Çukurca is a clear instance of this situation. Following a skirmish between the PKK and the Turkish security forces in Çukurca where many soldiers died, the interactions of Belçim's friend in İstanbul were defined by anger and prejudice against him. Since he is from Çukurca, he was held responsible from the incident and seen as capable of a potential violent action.[115] According to Belçim, she could "pass" as a harmless university student for

[115] Belçim: "Şey yaşanmıştı. 20 miydi 30 asker ölmüştü. Arkadaşım Çağdaş Yaşam'a burs başvurusu yapmıştı. (…) Çağdaş Yaşam şey istemiş çocuktan, öğrenci belgesi falan istemiş. Rektörlüğe gitmiş. Biz şey yapıyoruz sekreterden imzalatıyoruz. Kapıda bekliyomuş. İçeri ondan önce takım elbiseli milliyetçi bi çocuk girmiş, belli ülkücü olduğu. Diyo ki sekreterle konuşuyo. Bi de şey işte, öldürülen gündü. Hocam nolucak bizim bu halimiz demiş, 30 askerimiz şehit oldu ama hiç kimsenin umrunda değil. Herkes hiçbi şey olmamış gibi davranıyo, gülüyolar eğleniyolar, geziyolar falan. Hasan da Hakkari Çukurcalı ve olay Çukurca'da yaşanmış. Diyo ki böyle bakıyorum, allahım napıcam falan. Birazcık tedirgin olmuş. Neyse çocuk sekreterle konuşmuş konuşmuş çıkmış. Diyo ki gittim kapıyı çaldım, bi de saygılı bi şekilde girdim dedi, öğrenci belgesini bırakmış. Şey bakmış buna böyle sekreter. Sen Çukurcalı'mısın demiş, evet

most of the time, while her friends from those cities were considered as potential "threats" to be feared of.

> "Compared to other Eastern cities, they consider you more like…. For example I experienced it on last weekend. On weekend I and a friend of mine worked in a supermarket. We worked for the promotion of a product. (…) We enter the supermarket, they were looking for the ID's, they were taking the ID's of the workers. He saw my friend's ID and asked if it wrote Şırnak there, the girl said yes. 'There aren't any molotov coctails, are there? asked s/he?', my friend got shocked and said nothing. I said 'what are you talking about?' (…) 'How dare can you say that?', I asked. S/he said: 'I don't know, it's always the case'. I said 'how is that so?', 'You wouldn't give us harm, would you?' s/he asked my friend the same question. (…) Because Bitlis is not that active, people are not that much afraid."

Belçim was not considered as a "danger" by the urban "others" because of the low "reputation" of her hometown. However, after all she was from a city in Eastern Turkey. Hence her encounters with other dwellers of the city in the urban public spaces were sometimes marked by humiliation when her hometown was in question:

> "Likewise, a woman came to me on the weekend.We were promoting tea. I promoted it, I was telling with a smile on my face. (…) Then she stopped for a second and asked me where I was from. There was this woman and her husband. (…) I said I was from Bitlis. The woman seemed to be disappointed, but then she smiled and said, 'but you are sympathetic'. I was shocked, I said 'it happens, sometimes [sympathic people] would emerge from us too."

Hazal also encountered prejudice frequently because of her hometown, Kars. Yet, she thought it did not have to do with its Kurdish content, which was in fact lesser compared to other cities of the region: "Well only a few districts of Kars are Kurdish. Actually there aren't many Kurds in Kars, I mean compared to the region." Also the city was not notorious for skirmishes between the PKK and the Turkish state. The prejudice

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demiş. Bu yaptığınız nedir falan yapmış. Ben ne bileyim yaa demiş. Çocuk böyle kalmış, hani ben ne yapabilirim, ben de sizin gibi burdayım falan. Neyse imzalatmış çık demiş. Ama böyle çok sert davranmış. Çağdaş Yaşam'a gitmiş bu. İçeri girdiği gibi şeyin, mülakata alacaklar çocuğu, girmiş işte oturmuş. Gelmiş Çağdaş Yaşam'da çalışanlar. Sarışın bizim arkadaş, burnu da birazcık Karadenizliler gibi. Hiç yani Doğu insanına benzemiyo. Dur tahmin edeyim, sen Rizelisin demiş, yok demiş. Bir daha demişler Kastamonu falan o zaman. Saymışlar böyle Karadeniz'den, yok demiş. O zaman sen nerelisin onu söyle demiş. Hasan da Hakkari Çukurca demiş, adam böyle tamam teslim ne istiyorsan al demiş, her şey senin olsun götür demiş. Hasan böyle kalmış. Bir de o gün hani 30 kişi öldüğü için direk tepki öyle olmuş."

against Kars as a city and its inhabitants is a phenomenon I have grown up with as well. So I could empathize with the experiences shared by Hazal. Since my childhood, I have heard the phrase that "people of Kars are not trustworthy" several times. Yet I could never make sense of it. I had no idea what people referred to when they expressed distrust of people from Kars. According to Hazal, the situation could be related with the diverse ethnic identities the city harbors. Considering the dominant monist mentality, especially in terms of ethnicity and language, prevailing in Turkey, it seemed to me a plausible explanation:

> "For example being from Kars, yes, it's really very difficult because there is a great prejudice against people of Kars. (…) I mean, we have a title, 'duffers'. And well I don't know, I think the fact that there are people from many different ethnicities may cause it, but there is a great prejudice. At least that is what I saw in Istanbul."

Some of my research participants narrated experiences of exclusion based on their hometowns during apartment searches. University students usually prefer to rent houses nearby their campuses for transportational and economic reasons. In that sense they seem to have more alternatives than migrant families, especially coming from rural Eastern Turkey to İstanbul, who generally concentrated in the peripheries of the city. Vicinities of university campuses have turned into habitats of university students, making the situation profitable also for both landowners and shopkeepers. Sharing the same house with a couple of friends significantly reduces the price of the rent for each student. Yet if they come from Eastern hometowns especially associated with "terrorism" and "Kurdish identity", the students are likely to encounter exclusionary housing practices in İstanbul. Many landowners would be unwilling to rent to them. Belçim recounted how her friends who were from Van could not rent any house due to their hometown:

> "My friends from Van were looking for an apartment on the weekend, the guy is from Yıldız Technical University.He said that estate agents asked them where they came from and he said they were from Van. He said that the man disappointed and then he said "anyway, you are too human beings. It's really bad, I mean people's point of view… Even if they come out and say that we are sisters and brothers, it's not the case. Then my friend said that he gave up. Since they were not giving them apartments, he did this in order to further annoy them: He went to the last estate agent, the man asked him 'where are you from?" and he answered 'Diyarbakır', but in fact it was Van. The man got suprised. They didn't arrenge them an apartment, they came back without finding one."

As Samuel (1991:389) argues: "the spoken word can very easily be mutilated when it is taken down in writing and transferred to the printed page." The above quotation includes a clear instance of this situation. Since this is a written text, I can not truly reflect Belçim's performance, tone of voice and emphasis while uttering the word "Diyarbakır." Yet the way Belçim mimiced her friend's voice was truly revealing of his general frustration about exclusion and his motivation for choosing Diyarbakır as a fake hometown for himself. What is striking in Belçim's friend's last conversation with an estate agent as to his hometown is that he seems to consider Diyarbakır as a city characterized by Kurdish identity more than, for instance, Van. As a result of encountering various discriminatory attitudes regarding his hometown during his one day search of a rented house, her friend finally chose to utter the name of a city which he perceived to be more "Kurdish" and "dangerous". Since he knew he could not rent a house after all, he covertly protested the situation by claiming and underlining his Kurdish identity. Listening to similar stories from several interviewees, I wondered where these university students coming from Eastern and Southeastern Turkey live after all. Belçim's answer indicated that, like migrant families, they also concentrated in certain neighborhoods, which, in some cases, were positioned to university campuses:

> "University students, at least the ones who study at Marmara at Göztepe, they all settle in Fikirtepe. Mostly Kurdish students settle there, because the Kurdish community, people from Eastern Turkey mostly live there. For example, I have girlfriends who want to rent an apartment in Fikirtepe, or somewhere near the university. They are from west, either from Bursa or the Black Sea. They say that they can't live around Fikirtepe. I ask them 'why?'. 'Well…' they say. They can't tell us directly since we are Kurds, but in fact that's what they are afraid of."

Belçim's above narrative underlines that not only Kurdish students can not rent houses in every neighborhood, but also the spaces they live with Kurdish neighbors are not prefered by other students for their Kurdish concentration. It seems to be another dynamic of exclusion, returning migrant neighborhoods into segregated ghettos. Belçim also underlined the same situation, pointing at specific neighborhoods in İstanbul which were populated largely by Kurdish migrants:

> "Have you noticed that, for some reason Kurds mostly live in same specific places. (…) On the Anatolian side, for instance Ümraniye, 1 Mayıs, Mustafa Kemal are full of Kurds. Besides, there are also lots of Kurds around Kayışdağı. (…) Bağcılar is nearly full of Kurds; Bağcılar, Fatih district are all full of Kurds."

Belçim's observation about her Kurdish friends, renting houses in Fikirtepe, a space already populated by Kurdish migrants actually echoes Secor's observation of Kurdish migrant women's spatial practices in İstanbul. İstanbul shelters ethnically, regionally and religiously segregated spaces. Hovewer; "while this segregation often results from informal networks and chain migration (whereby migrants from one village or region move to the same urban neighborhood) and may provide spaces of solidarity in the city, Kurdish migrants also find themselves operating across urban boundaries not of their own making" (Secor, 2004:362).

Mordemek and Öykü are attending Yeditepe University which is located in Kayışdağı and they both live in apartments in Kayışdağı very near to the campus. Unlike other universities my interviewees attend, namely Boğaziçi, İstanbul, Marmara and Bilgi, I had never been to Yeditepe University before my field trip. I also did not have an idea about Kayışdağı. Kayışdağı is a neighborhood of the Ataşehir district which is on the Anatolian side and is almost one-hour away from Kadıköy with public transportation. I met several times with Öykü and Mordemek in Kayışdağı, either in the tea garden they hang out most of the time, in Öykü's house or on campus.[116] I wanted to learn about the past of the neighborhood, population structure and how they spend time there and asked questions along those lines in our private chats or during the interviews. Kayışdağı is an interesting neighborhood, sheltering a private university and elite cafes on one side, and poor households (some illegal) on the other. I was curious about the past of the neighborhood, the times when there was no Yeditepe University. Öykü knew those times, because when she came to İstanbul in 1997, she moved into her brother's house in Kayışdağı. Her brothers were one of the migrant families in the neighborhood. Kayışdağı was inhabitated mostly by migrants coming from Sivas, Kars, Tokat and the Black Sea Region and Öykü especially underlined the existence of those migrants coming from Kars and Sivas. In fact her landowner was also a migrant coming from Kars who improved his economic condition in time and now renting his own house to university students like Öykü. So in such a neighborhood populated largely by migrant families, among whom were Kurds, Alevis and Sunni conservatives, Öykü and Mordemek did not have serious difficulty in renting a house. Yeditepe University was founded in 1996, yet "the 26 August Campus" on Kayışdağı was established in 2000.

[116] Öykü and Mordemek are good friends and actually I met Mordemek through the agency of Öykü. So when I went to Kayışdağı, I generally spent time with both of them.

Öykü mentioned how the face of the neighborhood changed with the establishment of the campus, with improving transportation facilities, increasing number of expensive cafes and construction of new buildings.

Since the campus is far from the city center, Öykü and Mordemek spend most of their time in Kayışdağı on weekdays, while going to the city center on weekends. As opposed to my other interviewees whose universities are located in more central districts, their contact with İstanbul as an urban space is more limited to the vicinity of the campus and Kayışdağı. They generally go to Kadıköy on weekends. However their spatial practices in Kayışdağı are also limited and they spend time mostly in the tea garden opposite to the campus, the prices of which are cheap. This tea garden is the place where not only lower-middle class and/or Kurdish students but also dissident ones, such as socialists, hang out. Mordemek has higher economic means, yet she prefers to hang out in that tea garden too. Other cafes in Kayışdağı are not only expensive places, but they are also considered by students like Öykü and Mordemek as spaces which are both elite, culturally different and appealing to upper-middle class students as Mordemek's account clearly reveals:

> "There are lots of cafes around the university, but there is the fact that… After all the university is private, students have high economic conditions. Of course there are also students who study with a scholarship; but if we talk about the majority, it's the case. Therefore the places appeal to these students, who make up the majority. They are too expensive, they seem artificial to me. These people who hang around there are the ones with whom you have trouble with during the school time. So you don't want share the same space there again. There you can't listen to the music you like, you can't eat what you want, I don't know, let's say, you can't find the warmth you are looking for. We only have a tea garden opposite the school. We only hang out there, we spend all our time there."

During my field trips to Kayışdağı, I also spent time alone in those cafes in order to make further observations. Compared with the tea garden, they were much more expensive places with an elite ambiance. The music played as well as the clothing practices of the students hanging out in those cafes were indicators of a different *habitus*[117] than the tea garden. As I will mention in the next chapter, Öykü and

[117] Bourdieu defines *habitus* as "systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predis- posed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. Objectively

Mordemek are not fond of the general school policies, political makeup and student profile of Yeditepe as a private university. As Öykü mentioned, the campus is not a culturally productive environment. That is why for instance they have been trying to spend as little time as possible on the campus, going solely to attend classes or study in the library most of the time: "It's not a place where there is a lot of production. People only spend time there, they attend the classes and then left." They delienate themselves from the dominant student population of the university, who are mostly upper-middle class students, also outside the campus, hanging out in a tea garden which is not preferred by them. Moreover, food is quite expensive on the campus as Öykü stated: "Student menu costs 6 liras. You can't even eat on campus. There are two cafe's, like the ones on the [Bağdat] Street." Hence, they prefer to eat at home thanks to the proximity of their houses to the campus. Especially for Öykü, it is kind of a necesitty due to her socio-economic means. As many students studying in universities located at the periphery of the city, they are socially excluded from the urban space. Moreover, the university does not provide them an intellectually and cullturally vibrant atmosphere or a democratic environment where each political idea would de freely expressed. Such an alternative would tolerate their urban exclusion to some extent, but in this case it only deepens their isolation.

Öykü's campus was away from the town. Yet, during this academic year, the amount of Öykü's scholarship has enabled her to allocate time for herself, going to the town at least on weekends and engaging in activities she liked. Yet, the previous two years were even more difficult for her since her scholarship was not enough to make a living. Besides her parents did not have sufficient economic means to support her while Öykü and her twin brothers refused to get money from them in order to have full control over their lives. Öykü told me how for those two years she worked on weekends and in summers in order to earn a living. Her brothers were also working and have not been receiving money from their parents.

> "We were working. For instance, I was working in the weekends. In summer, for a several times, I stayed here and didn't go to the village. We never took money from our family. I never took money from my family. (…) It's still the case. I mean I was taking scholarships or I worked in the

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`regulated' and `regular' without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor". (Bourdieu, 1990:53)

> weekends. Because otherwise you can't have a voice. They don't have money to give anyway. If they send you money, this time you will have to obey them. In time, it became something like an important principle.".

Öykü's narrative is significant in revealing the significance of economic independence as a factor in liberating university students from the control of the family, especially for women students. On the other hand, the effort to make a living while also attending university highly restricts the social life of the students. Öykü was coming from a place where strict gender roles were decisive in regulating women's life. So in order to construct and live her own life, she tried to be as less dependent on her family as possible. So it seems that not only the location of her university's campus but also the interplay of socio-economic class and gender was effective in limiting her social and spatial activities, especially for the previous two years.

Another one of my interviewees, Jin is a graduate of Boğaziçi University and is now doing her graduate study at Bilgi University, while also living in an apartment with friends. Jin's experience underlines that although she lives in the town she operates within a limited space. Istanbul has different faces; yet not all of them are equally welcoming for everybody, especially in daily personal interactions:

> "As a Kurd there is this thing, I mean I realize that I always spend time in specific areas. I guess that's very important. Specific people, specific areas, you don't have the chance to live everywhre… Because for example you go to the market in a strange district, something happens, the man asks you where you are from, you say 'Muş', the man immedeately changes his attitude.Therefore anywhere you go, anyone you meet extend around that predetermined line. You can't get out of it very much."

Jin's narrative on İstanbul reveals not only that she lives within limited spaces but also her personal interactions were restricted to a specific network of friends which extends in somewhat similar direction. Jin also mentioned how her hometown would constitute a problem when she wanted to rent an apartment in certain neighborhoods: "If the place I am going to is a little strange, for instance if I'm going to an estate agent, the man may not arrenge you an apartment since you are from Muş, you know it already. As a result of such encounters revealing prejudice, Jin explained how she usually tried to avoid conversations which would bring out the issue of hometown and how she sometimes even preferred to conceal her hometown or made up a fake one: "Mostly you try to avoid the subject of hometown. When they ask you your hometown, sometimes you make it up, I don't know, you feel obliged to say that you are from here and there."

Although Jin explained her limited mobility in the urban space with her ethnicity and hometown, a person need not be Kurdish in order to live in particular places in the urban space of İstanbul. Although some cosmopolitan neighborhoods, such as Taksim, tend to be public spaces of "unassimilated difference where all kinds of people coexist" (Secor, 2004:358); there are still many other places delineated along religious, ethnic, cultural or socio-economic lines. So, in fact many people in the city live in particular spheres of their own habitus, getting in contact with people of "difference" in rare occassions and in specific places like Taksim. Moreover, as Jin could be treated with prejudice in a "strange" neighborhood because of her hometown and refrained from going there; similarly an İstanbulite would abstain from going to Fatih, for instance, because of the way s/he is dressed.

Narratives of Öykü and Mordemek indicated that the distance of their university campuses to the city center is limiting their spatial practices to the confines of Kayışdağı neighborhood. Yet, living in Kayışdağı and spending most of the week there was not a very satisfactory experience since neither the campus nor the neighboorhood itself provide them with culturally and intellectually rich atmosphere to engage in. However, narratives of Jin and Mizgin (Mizgin is now a undergraduate student at Boğaziçi) with regard to Boğaziçi University point to an alternative relationship between the university campus and its neighborhood. Boğaziçi University is located in Hisarüstü, a more central place in İstanbul. However, Mizgin explained how she spent most of her time in "Boğaziçi" which is like a "utopia" for many Boğaziçi students because of its relatively liberal atmosphere where identities are more easily manifested and negotiated. Mizgin believed that "Boğaziçi" was distinguished from Turkey's general political mood thanks to its utopic character. However, it also created an illusion, isolating its dweller-students from Turkey's pressing realities:

> "For most of the students, who live in the dormitories in the school, (…) the school provides a different habitat and I think it's a utopia. Because it is different in many aspects, I mean it is different from Turkey or from other place with its political situation. (…) On one hand this difference is very good, you try to create a different world for yurself But on the other hand, when you get out of there, to a job interview for instance, you realize that real world is not like that. And therefore you get addicted to it."

Since I also studied at Boğaziçi for six years and stayed in the dormittory for all that period of time, Mizgin did not need to explain to me in detail what she meant by that "habitat" or "utopia". I had also been in the same illusionary atmosphere, which

tied students to the neighborhood for most of the week. So, during the interview I was more able to interpret her choice of words while depicting her life in Hisarüstü. In both Jin and Mizgin's narratives, the word "Boğaziçi" was not just standing for the campus itself, but also the Hisarüstü neighborhood with its streets, cafes, houses and restaurants being constantly reproduced in interaction with the atmosphere and population of the university. In the past couple of years, new bars have opened in Hisarüstü and manager of one of them is actually a senior student from the university. Mizgin explained how they were now even more tied to Hisarüstü, preferring the neighborhood bars to have a drink instead of going to Taksim as they previously had done.

This closed life in "Boğaziçi" was the thing that led Jin to choose Bilgi University for her graduate study. For, she also spent most of her undergraduate years in Hisarüstü and she wanted at least to experience what is beyond the confines of "the utopia" of Boğaziçi:

> "Well, I don't know, after having stayed too long in Boğaziçi and having graduated, I really got a little bored. I wanted get out of it… Ok, maybe Bilgi is not a good way to get out of Boğaziçi, but getting out of it at least in terms of neighborhood. Because there, students are behaving like everything is great and that they sorted everything out. Because everyone assumes that they got over themselves."

Jin's words were indeed pointing at the illusionistic side of the utopia. Looking at Turkey from the lens of "Boğaziçi," most of the time it seems as if life and politics in Turkey is like a bed of roses. It is not because there are no problems, clashing political ideas or conflicting political orientations in the environment, but because different views and positions are open to discussion and negotiation, at least in principle. That is also what Mizgin meant while distinguishing "Boğaziçi" from the general politics of Turkey. According to Jin, this illusion also spread into attitudes of students. Jin was sick of the prevailing contradiction between discourse and practice, in the sense of students' personal life, in "Boğaziçi". Yes, as Mizgin's narrative implies, it was pluralistic, multicultural and democratic in discourse, yet Jin believed that what is political in this discourse was not reflecting on people's personal lives. Jin underlined that this situation was not specific to Boğaziçi University, yet since her spatial practices had been limited to that particular area, she wanted to see what was going on outside the lantern:

> "People think that they are not feudal any more, that they are totally against violence towards women, or I don't know, they believe that they possess everything that is best about the human. Pluralistic, multi-cultural, democratic and so on… But after witnessing how unfair a man who defends

> all these thoughts be, or how cruelly he can treat his girlfriend… Bu sadece Boğaziçi'yle ilgili bi şey elbette ki değil, ama o hani kapalı ortamdan çıkıp dışarda ne oluyo yaa demek için birazcık da hani Boğaziçi'nde olmak istemedim bi süre daha. Of course it's not just about Boğaziçi but I wanted to get out of this reserved environment for a while and see what was happening outside."

As I explored above, Jin believed that she was living in particular places and operating accross certain urban boundaries in İstanbul. Both her and Mizgin's narrations referred to "Boğaziçi" as one of those "particular places." But it seems that both Mizgin and Jin actively participated in the process of delinetaing their life spaces. So Jin's life areas in the urban space of İstanbul were not only drawn by the prejudice against her ethnic belonging or hometown, but she, and Mizgin also, preferred to spend most of their time in Boğaziçi during their undergraduate years. Here, I think it is plausible to talk about something like "Boğaziçi identity" which gives most Boğaziçi students, especially those living on the campus or near to the campus, a feeling of belonging to that particular habitat.

Zozan's narrative reveals another significant dynamic decisive in shaping housing or everyday practices of Kurdish women students in İstanbul, which is gender. Neighborhoods with a large Kurdish population would not be preferred by a Kurdish woman because of the gendered practices prevailing in that space. Zozan's narrative especially pointed at this situation. Her Kurdish friends in İstanbul University who are mobilized in the Kurdish movement choose to live in neighborhoods populated by Kurdish people. However, she explained that she does not prefer to live in spaces of Kurdish identification due to what she perceived as neighborhood pressure: "Well, for instance in a place like Çapa, nobody cares if your boyfriends visit you. But for example in Esenyurt, I think they would mind it. I suppose it would be the case and I don't want such places." Zozan's narrative indicates that not only ethnicity, hometown or socio-economic class but also gender is a significant factor in determining the living choices of Kurdish women students in İstanbul.

Mori also touched upon gender dynamics as restricting her spatial practices in the city. When I asked about her experiences as a woman in İstanbul especially in comparison to her hometown she answered as follows: "I think everywhere is the same for a woman. If it's not dark, or if it's crowded you can be a little more at ease. But in a quiet place it's a horrible thing to be a woman." As a university student in İstanbul, away from her family and hometown, everyday practices of Mori were less restricted. It

was not only because she was not under the physical control of her family, but also she was away from the constant surveillance mechanism available in her village where strict gender roles, gendered use of spaces and patriarchal norms have a decisive role. However, urban space of İstanbul is not necessarily a "heaven" for women. Women's spatial practices are restricted especially at nights and in secluded streets as Mori also underlined. So it is plausible to argue that spaces are not gender-equal and are regulated in favor of men not only in villages or cities in Eastern and Southeastern Turkey, but also in big metropoles, albeit in different ways. That is perhaps why Mori, as a woman, is considerably afraid of walking by herself in the evening:

> "For a several times, because the classes finished late, I went home late. I don't know, I get so much scared, (…) for example I can never look back. When I hear any noise, I freeze there and I get so much into a panic that I can't look anywhere."

Mori was pleased to be living in İstanbul for similar reasons which brought Newroz to the city. It was crowded with all kinds of people who constitute the diverse pattern of the urban space. Mori believed that everyone is different from each other, and felt good about "passing" as an anonymous citizen while walking among the crowds. On the other hand it was not that possible to be "invisible" in a small and relatively less cosmopolitan city:

> "People are so much crowded and nobody knows who is whom. (…) Therefore it's a little more easygoing. I think, as a Kurd, it's better to live in Istanbul. It's better to get lost within the crowd of a large city rather then living in a small town: nobody knows you and you don't know anybody. Because everybody is different while you are walking here."

The promise of safety, invisibility and anonymity in places of diversity was partly determining Mori's spatial practices in the city. She did not want to catch attention, get marked and fear so as to smoothly trace the urban space. Hence, she considered walking at night, especially on secluded streets, as a terrible experience. Because she suddenly saw her "difference" as a woman vis-à-vis the very reality of night and the lonely street, as strategic dimensions of male identification.

Ruken also underlined the ways in which experiences of womanhood in Diyarbakır, her hometown, and İstanbul resemble each other. According to her, no matter where, women find themselves in a situation to control their own behaviors and look more serious in the public space in order not to attract the attention of men:

> "I have had it it since my childhood. I have always walked scowling so that nobody could say anything to me or nobody could make a comment. Now, for instance I look at here and then Diyarbakır, I see that there is no difference, though we think that Istanbul is a little more."[118]

Women can not speak, walk and behave freely in the public arenas because of the symbolic oppression of the anonymous male gaze which can desire, judge and govern the female body at one and the same time. Women may be found even guilty for their dress, their smile or their presence on the street at a late hour which is considered as a "legitimate cause" of their harassment or rape by men. It is this male gaze which had forced Ruken to develop a mechanism of self-control with respect to her attitudes in the public space. Ruken asked "why do I have to conform to the society?" considering that its norms are characterized by limitation and self-limitation of women's spatial practices.[119] Indeed, Ruken did not need a lot of words in order to depict her experience of womanhood on the street since the very metaphor of scrowling was enough to revive my memories as a woman in İstanbul and my own frustration for inability to freely trace the urban space. Ruken's narrative was crucial in reminding me that the patriarchy does not only work through the authority and direct control of a male family member but also through the agency of each and every person in the society, claiming authority on the speech, body and behavior of women. But, above all, it was striking in revealing the continuity of women's lives across different geographies, from Western Turkey to Eastern Anatolia. Ruken was grown up in Diyarbakır and me in İstanbul, and both of us

[118] Ruken: "Ama işte o kadınlık durumu zor bir şey. Bazen şey yapıyorsunuz çünkü, alnım karışık benim böyle, çünkü yolda yürüyünce hep kaşınızı çatıyorsunuz. O çocukluğumdan beri hep vardır yani. Yolda yürüdüğümde hep kaşım çatık yürüdüm yani şimdiye kadar, hep birileri laf etmesin birileri şey söylemesin diye. Şimdi şeye de bakınca mesela burda da bakıyorum, Diyarbakır'da da bakıyorum hiç fark etmiyor yani, hani İstanbul biraz daha şey diyoruz filan ama. Biraz güldüğünüz zaman hemen bir erkek size yanaşmaya başlayabiliyor. Çünkü direk şey oluyorsunuz, onun gözünde çok farklı oluyorsunuz. Yani direk size potansiyel gözüyle bakıyorlar. O çok rahatsız edici yani."

[119] Ruken: "Diyarbakır'da filan benim bir arkadaşımın sevgilisi vardı. İşte topluma göre filan ayak uyduralım cart yapalım curt yapalım filan diyordu, sevgilisini kısıtlamaya çalışıyordu da. Öyle onla hep tartışmaya giriyordum, diyordum biz zaten yeterince şey yapıyoruz zaten hani kısıyoruz kendimizi. Ben yolda gidince gülemiyorum istediğim gibi, yürüyemiyorum istediğim gibi, bağıramıyorum istediğim gibi. Yani zaten bütün bunlar var, bir de sen üzerine diyorsun ki şöyle yapma böyle yapma, topluma ayak uyduralım. Niye ben topluma ayak uyduruyorum ki?"

had have been always to scrowl beyond the confines of our homes. We had many experiences of womanhood different from each other up until then, originating from the specifics of the geographical location we had lived, our-socio economic conditions, ethnicities, structures of our families and so on. Yet, there were also many commonalities which enabled us to understand each other, without many words, as two young women angry with the voice of the patriarchal society echoing in ourselves and forcing us to control our behaviors in the public space. While women in Eastern Turkey were frequently depicted as "victims" of the patriarchy and feudal relations, the similar experiences of women, in terms of gender-based suppression, all over Turkey have escaped orientalist gender analyses. Almost all of my interviewees mentioned the dynamics which contribute to the gender subordination of women in Southeastern Turkey and make their conditions more oppressive then for instance a Turkish middle-class woman in İstanbul. These dynamics were associated with poverty, low level of education and ethnicity, of course for those of non-Turkish descent. However, their narratives on these oppressive conditions were frequently accompanied with emphasis on shared experiences of women all over Turkey. Especially Öykü complained several times about the West's conception of the East in general and the way her women friends in İstanbul perceive women in the East as "too different" from themselves in particular. It was one of the things she usually emphasizes in her discussions with her women friends in İstanbul:

> "Another thing is that we have always criticized the West. For example I try to do it. I mean if there is *töre (customary law),* maybe it's not called *töre* in İstanbul but here is violence and slaughter against women as well. This doesn't belong to anywhere too… (…) Sen çok farklı görüyosun beni ya da kendini çok farklı görüyosun, aslında o kadar farklı değiliz, hani benzer şeyler de var. (You think that I am very different or that you are very from me but actually we are not that different, I mean there are similarities as well."

Mizgin's narrative was also marked by the nuanced continuity of her experience of womanhood in Gaziantep and İstanbul. Gender subordination had been characterizing Mizgin's life in Gaziantep especially in her relations with the household. According to Mizgin, since she had not grown up in "a political region of Kurdistan" that would be defined by more conflict and oppression with respect to the Kurdish identity, her experience of oppression was associated more with womanhood, than Kurdishness. This situation had maintained in İstanbul as well, albeit not in the form of

control of the family, since she was alone, but more as a woman in a society marked by strict gender roles and patriarchy:

> "Of course if I spoke with an accent or if I had a nose pin, if I hanged around with a *puşi* maybe I could experience my Kurdishness better, but the ones I meet don't realize that I am a Kurd until I tell them. But, I face my womanhood everywhere."

According to Mizgin, since she was not easily marked as a Kurd, she had not encountered direct discrimination much in her daily interactions in İstanbul, also partly because of the liberal character of Boğaziçi, her university, where she had been hanging out most of the time. Yet womanhood is a position which is so plainly visible that it is produced, experienced, and reconstructed each and everyday. As also Lavin succinctly explains "you are woman everyday. You are harrassed on the street, in the bus. You are living it every day over and over again."[120] However, Mizgin thought she began to "live" Kurdishness as well due to the silencing mechanisms on the expression of Kurdish identity in the current context, as the detention of the increasing amount of people engaged with Kurdish politics indicate: "I experienced womanhood so much until now but from now on I started experiencing Kurdishness as well. Because even writing the fact that I speak Kurdish to my CV is a matter of debate."[121]

As narratives of research participants would indicate, their experiences in İstanbul with regard to ethnicity, hometown and spatial practices had not been very similar, although they converge with regard to certain encounters. Their political orientation, the location and characteristics of their universities, the way they speak Turkish as well as the political reputation of their hometowns were effective in diversifying their relations

[120] Lavin: "Her gün kadınsın. Ne bileyim sokakta gezerken otobüste işte taciz ediliyorsun bilmemne. Yani her gün yeniden yaşıyorsun hani."

[121] Mizgin: "Politik bir Kürdistan bölgesinde büyümediğim için, biraz daha yani hayatlarındaki politikayı göremeyen kör bir kültür bölgesinde büyüdüğüm için kadın olmanın şeyini daha çok yaşadım, kadın olmanın ezikliğini orada daha çok yaşadım. Ha buradaki hayatımda da belki bir şivem olsaydı, belki hızmam olsaydı, puşiyle gezseydim geldiğimde daha çok Kürt şeyini yaşayabilirdim ama tanıştığım insanlar ben söyleyene kadar Kürt olduğumu çok anlamıyor yani. Ama kadın olduğum her yerde karşıma çıkıyor. Ama artık şeyi de daha fazla yani, kadınlığı bugüne kadar çok yaşadım ama şimdiden sonra Kürtlüğü de yaşamaya başladım. Çünkü şey bile cv ime Kürtçe bildiğimi yazıp yazmıycağım bile bir tartışma yani."

with and perceptions of the city from each other and also from mine. On the other hand, being a woman student in İstanbul is a position which their narratives reflect on the most, speaking to each other as well as being reminiscent of my memories as a woman student in İstanbul. Moreover, although certain characteristics of İstanbul as a Western metropole with a diverse pattern had changed and shaped the form of their gender subordination, there had been also striking similarities between their experiences in their hometowns and in İstanbul.

Except for Öykü, Havin and Ruken all of my interviewees had been living in İstanbul alone, away from their family. This does not only mean they had had more control over their everyday practices, but also that they had had to take care of themselves without the support of their families on a daily basis. University campuses had been, in most cases, the very place where they made an introduction to the city, to new people and to political consciousness. While dealing with hardships associated with settling into a new life in a new city and creating strategies to cope with the situation, they were also making friends from diverse backgrounds and with different experiences, points of view and values. These circumstances had been critically decisive in the formation of their subjectivities and the empowerment they had gained throughout their years in İstanbul. They had been subject to multiple axes of oppression in terms of ethnicity, gender -both in their hometowns and in İstanbul- and studentship, especially when their political engagements were in question. Yet, these experiences of oppression had been accompanied with increasing political consciousness and characterized by active agency in dealing with the mechanisms, rather than a passive subjection to the power relations. They were all highly conscious of the political, social and cultural framework they were situated in as Kurdish women students. Their narratives were not only rich with critical analyses of their conditions, but also with their own nuanced ways of dealing with them. Hence, during the interviews they were not speaking with the language of a passive victimhood, but with a critical and empowered voice cognizant of their agencies.

One of the most striking dimensions of this empowerment had been associated with their experience of womanhood. Above all, İstanbul is the place where they came to "assume womanhood" as Jin underlined frequently during the interview. As I mentioned earlier, she had to asexualize herself and behaved like a "child" or a "man" in her hometown in order to escape the attention of her family and community as a female and be able to pursue her education. It was not like obeying the rules of the

community, but responding to it with a game, performing the "child" in order to ease her conditions as a woman. Jin achieved an empowerment in İstanbul as a woman, through her political engagements and solidarity with friends as a result of which she did not need the game any more:

> "I realized that for living in Istanbul, I mean for hanging on to it, I need no more to be masculine or to behave like that. I no more have a perception that I would be harmed if I do not be masculine. I mean experiencing sexuality or how to experience it, I all learned them in Istanbul. To become aware of your womanhood or rather to assume it, for you're already aware of it, takes place in İstanbul."

Today, Jin associates her perception of İstanbul more with "leaving behind the roles attributed to the womanhood in her hometown" than its geographical characteristics such as "neighborhoods, the sea or the Bosphorus." In İstanbul, Jin, as a woman, was not only away from some of the oppressive and exclusionary practices of her conservative hometown, but also developed a gender-conscious analysis of both her previous life and her current position and life choices:

> "When I first arrived in İstanbul, I engaged with new experiences I had never had back in my hometown. They were very unusual for me as a woman grown up in a feudal and conservative environment. For example the fact that chastity is still considered as important hurts you a lot. For the first time, here, you have a sexual relationship or wear clothes you could not in Tatvan."[122]

[122] "Jin: İstanbul'a ilk geldiğimde yani memleketimde hiç deneyimlemediğim şeyleri denemiş oldum, bi kadın olarak. Yani hani bizim oranın feodal ortamında yetişmiş bi kadın olarak da, ya az buçuk muhafazakar bi çevrede yaşamış bi insan olarak, mesela giyim kuşam anlamında, mesela ne bileyim cinsellik anlamında çok farklı şeyler… Mesela şey, yani hani hakkaten bekaretin hala önemli oluşu içine dokunmaya başlıyo. Hani ilk defa burda cinsel anlamda bi şey yaşıyosun, ilk defa burda atıyorum Tatvan'da giyemediğin kıyafetleri giyiyosun. Hani (…) bunu bütün Kürtler için diyemiycem, çünkü Diyarbakır falan öyle değil de, ama bu hakkaten çok yani her yere göre değişebilecek bi şey falan da. Ama mesela bizim benim yaşadığım çevre Muş, Tatvan çevresi için hani fiziksel anlamda çok ciddi şeyler var yani… Hani mesela dini arkada bırakmak, hani dinle ilgili bütün bağlarını koparmak vs vs… Yani kadınlığa atfedilen bütün her şeyi, bizim ordaki o rolleri falan arkada bırakmak, o çok ilginç yani. Mesela şu anda orda bi şey yaşadığında oraya vereceğin tepkiye bazen şaşırıyosun yani. (…) Senin oranın değer atfettiği birçok şeyi arkanda bırakmış olman çok ilginç. İstanbul biraz bunlarla özdeşleşen bi yer. Yani hani İstanbul'un semtleri, işte denizi falan boğazı değil de herhalde bu yani en büyük anlamı en büyük şeysi bu yani…"

I started my discussion by exploring the particular spaces of İstanbul lived and traced by Kurdish women students. These spaces include not only neighborhoods largely populated by Kurdish migrants, as in the case of Newroz or the friends of Belçim and Zozan, but also areas of diversity, cosmopolitanism and free encounter as many of my interviewee's depiction of, for instance, Taksim imply. My interviewees encountered various mechanisms of discrimination due to their hometown and/or Kurdish identity in the urban space, as the narratives of Belçim and Jin especially underlined, which in turn limited their spatial practices. Following Mitchell, Ruddick and Smith, Secor (2004:353) states that: "While the diversity of cities has been celebrated and urban public spaces idealized as arenas of tolerant encounter, cities are also marked by processes of exclusion, segregation, and repression." Yet, spaces of Kurdish identification are preferred not only because of exclusionary housing and everyday practices visible in the urban space, but also because of the relative safety, harmony and solidarity they promise.

As experiences of Mordemek and Öykü indicated, the location of the university and the cultural atmosphere it provides as well as the socio-economic conditions of the student could also restrict my interviewees' life to the campus and the neighborhood around it. If neither the campus nor the neighborhood provided them with a democratic socio-cultural environment, then their urban exclusion would be more severe. On the other hand, university campuses and the neighborhood where it is located could be spaces of multiculturalism, plurality as well as peaceful encounter as Mizgin's depiction of Hisarüstü and Boğaziçi illustrated. In that case my research participants themselves prefered to spend time within the confines of the campus area. As narratives of Newroz and Mori indicate, İstanbul has an image of diversity and recognition of cultural differences, especially with its particular public spaces and it played an effective role in many of my interviewee's choice in favor of İstanbul. On the other hand, Zozan came to İstanbul with a clear prejudice about its cultural patterns and inhabitants. The city was located in Western Turkey and Zozan thought it would solely be populated by Turks who would oppress her for her ethnicity. Her preconception actually had to do with her experiences of discrimination until the university as well as her brother's negative experiences as a Kurdish university student in Aydın.

As Zozan's concerns revealed, spaces of Kurdish identification need not be ideal spaces for all Kurdish students. There may be many reasons for that, but fear of gender-based conservatism is certainly one of them. Zozan did not make her housing

preferences in favor of specific Kurdish populated neighborhoods which she perceived as conservative. Gender was also a factor limiting Mori's spatial practices to specific times and spaces. It was also the dynamic at which some of my interviewees' experiences in İstanbul and in their hometown display a similarity in certain ways, such as the inability to freely enjoy public space as narratives of Ruken and Mizgin suggest.

My research participants' lives in İstanbul as Kurdish women students were intertwined with their raising political consciousness and empowerment with respect to multiple faces of their identities and distinct types of subordination related with them. They did not only assume Kurdishness, but also womanhood in İstanbul as they were introduced into and participated in a highly diverse environment characterized by oppression, discrimination, recognition of differences, free encounter, struggle and negotiation at different spaces, confrontations and contexts.Their experiences in the urban space of İstanbul differentiated to some extent with respect to dynamics of ethnicity and hometown, yet their positions as women students is the point where their narratives most resemble each other.

They had migrated from Eastern and Southeastern Turkey, not because of political or economical reasons but for educational purposes. Moreover, they migrated alone by themselves, without the company of their families- although some of them had siblings in İstanbul having migrated before- which enable them to have more control over their lifestyles as well as spatial practices. Hence, their positions and experiences were highly interrelated with their status as university students and diversified from the experiences of migrant Kurdish women settled in İstanbul for different reasons.

CHAPTER 5

POLITICS OF KURDISH WOMEN STUDENTS IN ISTANBUL

5.1. Introduction

The university campus as a social, cultural and political space as well as my interviewees' positions, activities and interactions with other actors in this environment occupied a significant place in their oral history narratives. The university campus was often narrated as a space where conflicting cultural and political meanings are produced and negotiated through the agencies of my research participants as well as other actors. Moreover, these produced meanings as well as networks of relations they established on campus have played a critical role in the way most of them construct their lives, subjectivities and politics as Kurdish women students in İstanbul.

In all interviews, I had more or less the same feeling: we as two university students were having a chat about a multicultural, political and conflictual space which had not been discussed very much in the academia in Turkey. Academic knowledge has been produced, disseminated and discussed in this very space, yet neither the academic environment nor the university campuses themselves have rarely been objects of research. This lack of interest in the academia itself has been problematized by some anthropologists in USA. Academy has been taken by most traditional anthropologists as the home from which they set off for a journey to far and exotic places which constitute their field. Gupta and Ferguson summarize this perception of the "field" and the home" as follows: "Going to the "field" suggests a trip to a place that is agrarian, pastoral, or maybe even "wild"; (…) What stands metaphorically opposed to work in the field is work in industrial places: in labs, in offices, in factories, in urban settings,- in short, in civilized spaces that have lost their connection with nature" (Gupta &Ferguson, 1997:8). Hence, traditional anthropology is based on a distinction made between "the

field", the far-off places in which the data is collected and "the home", the world of the academy to which the ethnographer returns and writes her ethnography based on her observations of the field and "fieldnotes" she took. Anthropology in Turkey has been interested in factories or urban settings, yet the academy itself has not received much attention. However, considering the university, the cradle of academy, which is situated in an environment with many facilities at hand, as the "field" appears to further blur the definition of the field and the home. During our interviews, I feel like we were talking about university, the "home" itself, turning it into a "field" which should be problematized instead of taking for granted as a site of objective knowledge production.

My interviewees' narratives point to the university campus as a highly political space. It is not only because ideological mechanisms of the state and everyday politics in Turkey reflect on the university policies and the campus agenda, but also because students themselves are political actors, both trying to transform specific policies of their universities and influence the campus agenda and producing and negotiating their political ideas and subjectivities vis-à-vis state and university policies. What is of significance at this point, and within the scope of the present study, is that university campuses are not homogenous, static or enclosed totalities. They are spaces where several political, ethnic, cultural and socio-economic differentiations are visible. Moreover, there is more or less a continuation between campus life and everyday life in the urban space. The most significant manifestation of this continuity- significant at least for the purpose of this research- is that students' political activities on the campus are not only fed by or respond to the campus agenda, but also respond, to a large extent, to national political dynamics, developments, conflicts and strategic silencing mechanisms. A very explicit indicator of this situation resides in the narratives of most of my interviewees, pointing at the reducing number of dissident students and political opposition on the campuses, mainly due to ever-increasing arrests of university students all over Turkey coupled with increasing self-censorship and fear. Another manifestation of the continutiy is that their campus activities are not only chanelled through clubs or organizations specific to that university, but also by political parties, collectives and non-governmental organizations they are engaged with or represent on the campus. Hence, I do not aim to separate campus activities from every day politics in the urban space, nor do I intend to analyze students' politics along the lines of "inside" and "outside" the university. Yet, for the sake of clarity as well as to highlight dynamics preveailing in my interviewees' universities, I want to reserve the following section

mainly to their activities on the campus as well as universities' cultural, economic and political patterns as they perceived them. My interviewees' narratives revealed several differentiating perceptions of the "campus", the most striking ones being "police station", "utopia" and "conservative corporation." In the third section, I will analyze the political subjectivities of my research participants which are shaped by the intersecting dynamics of ethnicity and gender.

5.2. University Campus as "Police Station"

Zozan, who is now an undergraduate student at İstanbul University (İU), defined her university as a "police station" for the police acts like an oppresive force on the campus, regulating political activities, the fights among student groups, mainly between ultra-nationalist *ülkücüler* (idealists) and leftists, and identifying and taking into custody leftist dissident ones. When I asked Zozan what she thought about the policies of İU as well as the campus itself she answered as follows:

> "Actually, I hate the school in that sense, because I belive there is a great pressure. Even hanging a banner may bring a punishment. You can be punished even for an event you did not attend. Besides, our school is mingled with the police. Sometimes, I feel myself in the police station. Flying squad is always standing at our rear door. And there are also incidents I have been witnessing. For instance, a fight breaks out, *ülkücüler* come and attack students, and then the police come and take *ülkücüler* out of the rear door while taking into custody all other students they find."

The assult of the ultra-nationalist ülkücü youth on the leftist dissident students in universities and the subsequent fights between them was a recurring theme in the narratives of my interviewees attending İstanbul and Marmara University. Ünüvar and Benlisoy (1997:8) also mention about the assaults of *ülkücüler* on university campuses and the critical role the police play in these incidents. They claim that what is aimed with these assaults is to prevent leftist dissident students to reach other students on the campus, by creating an atmosphere of conflict, while at the same time legitimating the existence of the police on campus both in the eyes of the public and of "ordinary" students. They especially underlined that the police seem to intervene in the fights, while indeed reinforcing their position on the campus. Zozan's narrative seems to be in line with this last observation in the sense that she also drew attention to how the police

protect *ülkücü* youth, let them get out of campus while taking others into custody after a fight:

According to Zozan, especially in her first three years at the university, the campus "belonged" to the leftist students because they were politically more active and visible. She still believes that it is the leftists who are powerful as opposed to ultra-nationalist *ülkücüler*, yet their numbers are now reduced due to the recent mass detentions of students. While explaining the situation, Zozan made a comparison with Marmara University (MU), implying that leftists in İU are more organized and high in number as opposed to those at MU. As Zozan frequently used the term "leftists" in order to identify a party in the fights or an actively political group on the campus, I wondered about whom or which political factions she was specifically talking about. In response to my question, Zozan talked about the differentiation between "Turkish leftists" and "Kurdish leftists", stating that she herself contributed to this language of differentiation:

> "All students have this perception: Kurdish leftist, Turkish leftist. For instance we also have the same thing, we differentiate. While talking about all other leftists, we talk about them as Turkish leftists. I had the same thing too, like *yurtseverler*. We differentiate ourselves from other lefts."

During the interview, Zozan underlined several times that *yurtseverler*,[123] or "Kurdish leftists", were high in number compared to "Turkish leftists" on the campus. Although many "Kurdish leftists" were arrested within the scope of KCK investigations, they were still a crowded goup. What was especially striking in Zozan's account was that she did not consider *ülkücüler* as politically active as leftist students, claiming that they came into the campus, accompanied by the police, during particular certain times in order to assault the leftists: "After all, *ülkücüler* come to school at

[123] En. Patriotic. Yet, the common usage of the Turkish word has a different connotation. Sympathizers or participants of the Kurdish movement are generally named as *yurtseverler. Yurt* here refers more to an ideal, an imagined homeland, a free future for Kurds than to a concrete homeland. The term is generally used for Kurdish youth, especially university students, mobilized in the Kurdish movement. Yet, it also operates as a positive adjective used for those Kurds supporting and believing in the ideals of the Kurdish moevement. During my fieldwork, I especially encountered this second use of the term, when some of my gatekeepers call my possible interviewees as *yurtsever*, meaning that she is a "good candidate" to make an interview in the first place. Zozan, on the other hand, also referred to *yurtseverler* when she was talking of "Kurdish leftists" in İU.

certain times. And they come to attack, and come with the police. They can not sit as a group like others and do things."

As explicit in the timing of these "fights" on newspapers- mainstream media usually consider those incidents solely as fights between opposing groups, ignoring assaults of *ülkücüler* which act as a driving force in many cases- those "particular times" coincided with critical events in the political agenda, especially those triggering nationalist sentiments. Belçim, who studied at the Göztepe Campus of Marmara University, also witnessed such a fight between *yurtseverler* and *ülkücüler* at a certain time when soldiers died in a skirmish between PKK and Turkish security forces. Belçim's account, on the other hand, was critical of both sides in the fight although it was *ülkücüler* who attacked. The fight took place within the Faculty of Education and the parties were teacher candidates. It was Belçim's first encounter with such a violent politics and she was shocked and got sorry, thinking how those students political ideas of whom were shaped around radical nationalist sentiments could be a teacher in a country where there are Kurdish and Turkish students in addition to others.[124]

Like Zozan, Belçim also pointed at the critical role the police plays on campus, intervening in fights to protect *ülkücü* students. Belçim mentioned that the undercover cops had also been informed of the coming assault, yet waited for the *yurtseverler* to respond before intervening. Belçim also drew attention to the intimacy between ülkücüler and the flying squad on campus. As Zozan also suggested with her reference to MU, Kurdish students do not display political activism on the Göztepe campus of

[124] Belçim: "Bir gün oturuyorduk çimlerde, yurtseverler falan vardı baya kalabalıklardı. Birden bir kalabalık geldi. Böyle ben, daha önce de yaşamadığım için, 1. sınıf olduğum için şaşırdım, sadece şaşırdım. Yine o zaman şehit vardı, asker vurulmuştu ölmüştü falan. Böyle nasıl hani sıraya dizilmişler ama böyle takım elbiseleri pardösüleri falan çok kitle şeklinde geldiler. Yurtsever çocuklar da toplasan 30 kişi yok. Ama saldırdılar böyle bildiğin. Onların da haberi varmış yalnız bundan. Biz 1. sınıflar saf saf durduğumuz için hiçbir şeyden haberimiz yok. O zaman çok şaşırmıştım ve bilmiyorum üniversitede olması gereken bir şey mi… Üniversite öğrencisisin, 20 yaşında bir insansın ve ileride eğitimci olacaksın. Her iki açıdan da… (…) mesela Anaokulu öğretmeni Anasınıfı öğretmeni, ülkücü… (…) 5-6 yaşındaki çocuğu sana emanet edecekler. Bilmiyorum o kadar katı düşünerek o çocuğa neler öğreteceğini kestiremiyorum ben. Çok kötü olmuştum o zaman. Hani sadece onların açısından ülkücüleri kötülemek için demiyorum; bizim için de aynı şey geçerli. Mesela benim arkadaşlarım da vardı, yurtseverlerdi. Onları da düşündüm. Gidicek ilkokul öğretmeni olucak. Belki Türkmen bir köye gitti. Böyle o kadar şey öndeyse siyasi görüşü öndeyse nasıl bir öğretmen olucak bilmiyorum."

Marmara University. According to Belçim, it has much to do with the mass arrests of Kurdish students: "Indeed, most of the active ones are not present now, they are in jail." Mori, who was also a student at Marmara University, made a similar observation regarding the situation. Her account actually reveals a tragicomic situation about the Kurdish students and their current lack of presence on campus. In the months before our interview, she had not witnessed any fights on campus, which made her to conclude that all politically active Kurdish students had indeed been arrested. It seems as if "order" and "harmony" had been eventually established after the "problem-maker" dissidents were silenced:

> "Last year, there were fights. At least, you knew why the fight broke out. This year nothing has happened yet. Then I realized that probably all Kurdish students were arrested. That is why nothing happens any more. Last year, when fights broke out at least you noticed that Kurds were present here."

On the other hand, Belçim's narrative reveals that idealist students have been conflicting not only with leftists or *yurtseverler*, but also with Kemalists, trying to prevent their activities on campus. Dominance of ultra-nationalist *ülkücü* youth in the campus seems to be a factor shaping the campus agenda especially with idealists' large scope of activity as opposed to others' visible silence:

> "Turkish Culture Club is active in Göztepe. They [*ülkücüler*] constantly organize events. For instance, there is Atatürk Thought Club. They [*ülkücüler*] do not allow their events. In the morning of the days of their events, *ülkücüler* pick up a fight and so the event doesn't take place."

Under the policing activities of ultra-nationalist students, the political agenda of Göztepe campus is shaped around nationalist and Islamic themes while on the other hand dissident student groups, such as *yurtseverler*, can not express their political ideas nor do they display a visible political opposition: "There is no Kurdish activism in Göztepe. What you can see in Göztepe is celebrations for *Kutlu Doğum Haftası*[125] or the Liberation of Azerbaijan, and you can janissary band coming." Belçim's narrative is especially enlightening in the sense that it is indicative of differentiations among political dynamics of different campuses of the same university. Belçim recounted that at the Haydarpaşa campus of Marmara University, Kurdish students have created an

[125] En. Blessed Birth Week, which marks the birth of Prophet Muhammed.

alternative political sphere for themselves, manifesting their Kurdish belonging through several demonstrations and celebrations one of which is *Newroz*.

On the other hand, Zozan's narrative on policies of İstanbul University was actually not limited to the critical role the police force plays with regard to the fights between leftist dissident students and *ülkücüler*. She especially underlined university's strategic policy of deterrence implemented on the leftist students. This strategy did not only include punishing those hanging banners or participating in demonstrations with suspension from school or launching investigations against them, but also, as a form of "pre-emptive strike", punishing those marked as leftist students for activities they were clearly not engaged in:

> "I met a guy a while ago. He told me that he had not been coming to school, but investigations had been constantly launched on him. (…) Then the guy left the school. And this practice is very common in our school; nobody finds it strange any more. Or you are distributing pamphlets with your friend, then a penalty may be imposed on you, but not on your friend. I mean, it's based on deterrence. I think our school has no difference from the Police Station."

As Zozan's account reveals, these policies were in some cases not deterring students from political opposition, but from the university. In fact, with such a mechanism of oppression, the university was selectively determining those who "deserve" to be a university student while eliminating those who did not fit into state's definition of "ideal university student". In the words of Zozan, investigations would sometimes be based on "tragicomic reasons". In "critical" days, the security would not let some "leftist-looking" students into the campus and then launch investigations on them for trying to get into the campus by force.

Zozan considered herself to be more nationalist in the earlier stages of the university, since the "Kurdish Question" had been occupying the sole place in her political agenda at the time:

> "Eveything seemed to me trivial apart from it. For instance, when a friend of mine was talking about the working class, I found it so meaningless. (…) I was saying that I could not care about the wage a worker gets while there are children, university students being killed. It seemed so meaningless to me. In fact, I called leftists who were not interested in the Kurdish issue fake leftists. Actually, since I was not truly engaged with any of their organizations, I could not properly understand positions of any of them."

During her first couple of years at İU, Zozan could not find Kurdish students to make friends with although she was desperately looking for them while also supposing that "Kurdishness" would be enough in order to make friends:

> "In my first week in university, while I was walking on campus, two guys behind me spoke in Kurdish. (…) Then I followed one of them during the break, because I wanted to meet him since he was Kurdish. Then I went to this guy and told him like "You were speaking Kurdish. I am Kurdish as well. Let's get acquainted." The guy was afraid of me and did not say a word. He even did not greet me when we came across later."

She was interacting with leftist students whom she named as "Turkish leftists". Since her political agenda was exclusively occupied by the "Kurdish Question", she had considered them all as struggling for Kurds, especially early on. Yet, according to Zozan it was also a period of her waking up to other political questions in Turkey other than the "Kurdish Question". Even though Zozan was making friends with leftist students and interacting with leftist groups, she did not mobilize in any one of the leftist group:

> "I used to have intimacy with leftists. I often made friends with them. But I was also thinking differently about them. I was even glorifying them. (…) When I first came to university, I was thinking that they all were struggling for Kurds. Then I realized that things were different, and Kurdish issue was not the only problem of Turkey. I learned that they were struggling for workers, for women; I learned what socialism is and that kind of things. Later, I could not warm up to any of those environments."[126]

Later, Zozan made friends with Kurdish students as well and she also got in touch with *yurtseverler* on campus. However she could not get mobilized in their political group either:

> "Then I had Kurdish friends. But I could not get organized. I was obliged to dedicate my life to it, since no space was left for you, and I could not accept it. Besides, I have seen that no group was entirely democratic."

[126] Zozan: "Hani işte böyle solculara yakınlığım vardı, hep onlarla arkadaşlık kuruyordum. Ama onları da çok farklı zannediyordum. Hatta çok böyle yüceltiyordum onları. (…) Şey böyle hani ilk etapta hepsi Kürtler için mücadele ediyor sanıyordum üniversiteye ilk geldiğimde. Sonra tabi her şeyin farklı olduğunu, hani Türkiye'deki tek sorunun Kürt sorunu olmadığını da gördüm hani işte işçiler için mücadele ettiklerini, kadınlar için mücadele ettiklerini, sosyalizm nedir, bu tür şeyleri de hani görmeye başladım. Sonra o ortamlardan hiçbirine ısınamadım tam anlamıyla."

Zozan's narrative on her "inability" to get mobilized in any political group on campus actually carries significant criticisms of political organizations, very similar to those Lüküslü (2009) mentions while analyzing the apoliticism of post-1980 youth in Turkey. Zozan gave several reasons for her "inability" to build strong relations with any political group on campus, one of which was the authoritarian character of political groups. Under such a disciplined organization of intensive political activities, Zozan felt that no time was left for herself as an individual. Moreover she was troubled with the nondemocratic way through which group decisions were made and put into practice:

> "For instance they were coming together and making decisions and doing things. The way they did it seemed strange to me. I was thinking that we should sit and properly discuss it, but I did not tell my friends what I thought either. I was not feeling comfortable beside them in many senses. Actually, the point is that I could not express myself."[127]

Zozan could not find a democratic environment among the group meetings where she could freely express her considerations about the matter. In other words, she did not feel as a "subject" in the group, since she could not actively participate within the group activities due to the over emphasis on the action coupled with the lack of a satisfying critical discussion preceding the action. Before getting in more contact with the group, Zozan had been considering group meetings as providing a democratic intellectual environment where she would express her own intellectual endowment and interests apart from political concerns. However, she encountered trivialization and belittling of her engagement with literature beyond "political readings" (such as novels):

> "I was thinking that they got together, read, discussed, and criticized. I mean I thought they were all like this. Besides, initially I considered them to be very knowledgeable since I knew nothing. But after some time, I saw that they despised me for reading books. For instance, I could not mention about literature or poetry to them. Of course, it is not a specific group. I could not get organized in any of the groups and my friends were generally unorganized ones. For instance we were coming together [with group members], but I could not speak. I was belittled for reading novels. They were like: "Don't read that, take this one."[128]

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[127] Here, it is necessary to note that Zozan has mostly attempted to join into the political group of *yurtseverler* in İU. So most of her observations were about the inner functioning of that group on campus.

[128] Zozan: "Hani çok böyle şey zannediyordum aslında, hani bir araya geliyorlar okuyorlar tartışıyorlar eleştiriyorlar, hani herkesi öyle zannediyordum. Bir de ilk başta tabi ben hiçbir şey bilmediğim için onlar bana çok böyle bilgili geliyordu. Ama belli bir süre sonra kitap okurken küçümsendiğimi bile gördüm hani. İşte mesela edebiyattan hiç bahsedemedim onlara, şiirden bahsedemedim mesela. Tabi bu herhangi bir grup değil.

Zozan's observations of the inner dynamics of political groups on campus actually come very close to some of the criticisms Lüküslü's young interviewees made while explaining their reluctance to join any political organization in Turkey. Based on the interviews made with young people from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, Lüküslü argues that the post-1980 youth, as a heterogenous social category, are not selfish profit seekers as they have been considered not only by the previous generations but also by their peers. Instead, they are interested in political issues, are disturbed by the problems of the country and are hopeless for the future, yet they refuse to transform their political concerns into a political activism by involving in existing political organizations (2009: 161). Lüküslü concludes that one of the reasons behind their reluctance to participate in politics is that they see political organizations as authoritarian organizations where free and open self-expression is not possible. In fact, political organizations are considered by them as rigid groups reducing "individuals" into "militants" (2009:157). Lüküslü warns against jumping a quick conclusion that this criticism applies to all political groups in Turkey, claiming that what is significant here is not whether this situation is the case, but rather how young people perceive and imagine them and why they choose not to be part of those organizations (157). Following Lüküslü's analysis, I do not intend here to make an argument that both leftist groups and yurtsever organizations in universities are rigid, nondemocratic, authoritarian groups. Rather, I want to underline that Zozan's perception of those political groups were partly effective in her "inability" to "belong" to them. I am constantly using the word "inability", because Zozan did make several attempts especially at times when critical events took place in the political agenda, yet she was estranged from the groups after some time.

I think, those critical events and Zozan's reaction to them and to current reflections of the "Kurdish Question" on the political agenda are especially significant here. Zozan could not find what she was looking for among yurtsever organization in İU, yet she was also severely depressed by political developments in the country. Hence her mood was characterized by a double bind: After each political incident increasing

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Çünkü ben hiçbir grupta örgütlenemedim ki benim zaten arkadaşlık kurduklarım genelde örgütlü olmayan tiplerdi. İşte hep böyle şey hani bir araya geliyorduk ama konuşamıyordum mesela. Roman okuduğum için küçümseniyordum, hani bunu okuma, al işte şunu oku gibisinden."

her Kurdish conscioussness she was feeling more political responsibility yet she was unable to transform this political sensibility into self-expression and action, which depressed her even further.[129] Zozan's political inertia was shaped less by her reluctance of self-expression than by her inner turmoil. Her experience reveals that not only those Kurdish children who underwent physical violence during the war in Eastern Turkey in the 1990s, but also others who have grown up with stories of violence narrated both in family and community also end up traumatized. In Zozan's case this trauma, which often found its expression in nightmares, was effective in reinforcing her isolation from the majority of the student body. Moreover the current incidents were also contributing to her traumatic condition:

> "For instance, when an incident took place, I was becoming introverted. I was not telling them about these. I was constantly seeing dreams. I even had difficulty sleeping. For instance, our village was not burned down or raided. After all, since we moved into the city later on, we were not in the village in those periods. But, for instance, in my dreams I was constantly seeing soldiers raiding, burning our house. I don't know, for instance I had never been taken into custody, but I was seeing the police taking me into custody and harassing me. I mean, I was deeply influenced by the incidents around me. I saw especially the police frequently in my dreams."[130]

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[129] Zozan: "Hep böyle ben duygusal hareket ediyordum. Mesela Şerzan Kurt[129] öldürüldü, ben sonra yurtseverlerin arasına gittim. Hani sonra uzaklaşıyordum. Bir şey oluyordu, çünkü bir tek onların beni anlayabileceğini düşünüyordum. Ötekiler [diğer solcular] gerçekten anlamıyordu. Hani ben bir şey anlatınca, onlar hep farklı şeylerden bahsediyorlardı. Tabi onların [yurtseverlerin] arasına gidiyordum hani. İşte tabi bir iki ay sonra örgütlenemedim hani. (…) Tabi onlardan uzaklaşınca en büyük depresyonumu orda geçirdim. Çünkü arada kalmıştım, hani bir şey yaşanıyor çok üzülüyorum. (…) hani bir vicdan azabım olurdu, ben de bir şey yapmalıyım. Ama bir şey yapmaya kalkışınca da yapamıyordum. Hani örgütlenemiyordum, aradığımı da bulamıyordum aslında."

[130] Zozan: " Hani bir olay olduğunda içime kapanıyordum işte. Onlara pek anlatmıyordum bunları, işte sürekli rüya görüyordum. Hatta bir ara uyuyamamaya başladım. Mesela bizim köyümüz yakılmadı, işte köyümüz basılmadı, zaten sonradan biz şehre taşındığımız için hani o dönemlerde de yoktuk köyde. Ama ben mesela sürekli rüyamda askerlerin bizim evimizi bastığını, evimizi yaktığını görürdüm, sürekli. Ne bileyim, mesela gözaltına hiç alınmadım, ama sürekli işte polisin beni gözaltına alıp taciz ettiğini görürdüm rüyamda. Hani çok etkileniyordum etrafımdaki olaylardan. Sonra ne bileyim özellikle polisi çok sık görürdüm rüyamda. En son bir rüya görmüştüm yine işte askerler hani beni öldürüyor, şey abimi erkek arkadaşımı bir de babamı öldürüyorlar, hani durduk yere işte kurşun sıkıyorlar falan. Tabi o zaman bir hafta etkisinden kurtulamadım hani kalktım bütün gün ağladım falan. Ama şeye de gidemiyorum bir psikoloğa gidemiyorum. Çünkü şey diycek, sen benim askerimi nasıl böyle rüyanda görürsün. Ondan da çekiniyordum, hani kime anlatayım."

Haydar Darıcı, in his study on the politics of Kurdish children and youth in Gündoğan neighborhood of Adana, claims that memory of state violence narrated by the older family members and in the public spaces of the neighborhood play a significant role in the formation of political subjectivities of the children and youth in question (2009:10). Darıcı suggests that repetition of stories on violence construct a collective repertoire upon which the children and youth express their oppositional subjectivities and shape the way they manifest their present grievances through struggle and violence (2009:10). As for Zozan, on the other hand, the stories of violence inherited as well as her grievances against the ongoing violence and oppression by the state and the university reflected on her dreams in such a way that she herself became the object of narrated violence. Moreover, this illusion was reinforced inasmuch as she could not translate her political concerns with respect to the ongoing forms of oppression and violence into political activism she wished for.

On the other hand, Zozan's narrative reveals that her father also manifested a seemingly paradoxical attitude toward Kurdish politics. Zozan recounted that her father was constantly threatening her with taking her from school in case she became engaged in politics. Hence she could not express her political subjectivity even at home:

> "My father constantly warns me: "Do not get involved in politics, I will directly remove you from school!", "Do not be taken into custody!" So I always speak very carefully (…) I am afraid, I want my father to think I have no engagement. For instance, I took a book home, a literary book in Kurdish. He shows a negative reaction even to that. But then he reads it secretly."

As I explored in the previous chapter, Zozan's father raised her children with a Kurdish consciousness and faith in the Kurdish movement, yet now he was functioning as an additional force, keeping Zozan away from politics: "Yaa, actually there is more family pressure in our case than pressure from the environment. Like, my father will hear and get furious… Despite my family being so conscious… Actually my father always infused awareness in us, on the other hand he never let us join an organization, to talk."[131] Considering the increasing detention of students, activists, professors, journalists as well as mayors and administrators as part of KCK investigations, the attitude of Zozan's father seem to be characterized indeed more by a feeling to protect

[131] Zozan: "Ya aslında bizde etraftaki baskıdan çok aile baskısı var. Hani babam duyar kızar… Hani her ne kadar ailem bilinçli olsa bile… Aslında bize hep bir bilinç aşılıyordu babam, öteki taraftan örgütlü olmamıza, konuşmamıza hiç izin vermiyordu."

her than a pro-state attitude blended with patriarchal oppression. Moreover, he was not alone in his attempt for many of my interviewees mentioned the same situation. Yet, in any case my interviewees had to deal with an additional force trying to depoliticize them in addition to state and university. So, it seems that the high oppression on opponent students on the campus of İU, the problems Zozan had with the organization logic of political groups and her trauma reproduced by her political inertia and following isolation as well as her father's control on her political expression have worked together to prevent Zozan from translating her political concerns and demands into activism and struggle.

Zozan's narrative on Kurdish students engaged in the Kurdish movement also open up a new space for reconsidering the politics of Kurdish students. Zozan mentioned that activism in Kurdish politics may accompany estrangement from the university and classes. Since students dedicate all of their time to the struggle, they come to consider the other dimensions of their lives as meaningless:

> "I had a friend. She used to be very successful, she had a high GPA. She used to care about her classes. I mean, she was a person who got up at 5 am and studied. All of a sudden, she organized in the movement. If we were told that she would not attend her classes or ignore her exams, we would definitely not believe it. (…) But then the girl became detached from school after some time. (…) When you dedicate your life to the struggle, all other things seem meaningless to you. (…) You want to spend all your time, all your energy for the struggle."

The oppression on the expression of oppositional politics on the campus coupled with the intensive schedule of meetings, activities and demostrations force these students to make a choice between the university and party politics since they can not integrate their politics into the campus agenda.

5.3. University Campus as "Utopia"

Lavin's engagement with organized politics was marked with similar anxieties as Zozan's, albeit in a different context and with different results. Towards her last years as an undergraduate student at Boğaziçi University, Lavin became engaged with Kurdish politics. However, her activism was limited to the campus. She was trying to integrate the demands of Kurdish politics into the campus agenda through especially

club activities. The campus politics, according to Lavin, was a middle ground between remaining solely as a sympathizer of the Kurdish movement while not participating in it and getting mobilized in the youth structure of BDP while also dropping out of university. According to Lavin getting organized in the movement meant dropping out of the university; so although she was an active agent carrying Kurdish politics to the campus, she did not consider herself as an organized student: "I am not organized; becase being organized is a totally different thing. Being organized means droppoing out of school." In Lavin's account, dropping out of school was presented as a logical requirement of participation in the movement. Lavin explained the logic of this requirement as follows:

> "Because you can't do otherwise… It is an understanding which says that there is no point in going to school unless you are free. Indeed, there is no point in living unless your identity, your sex becomes free. At least, this is the first solution they found, to create liberalization in their micro spaces by excluding life."[132]

According to Lavin, for the youth mobilized in the Kurdish movement, consructing everyday life and struggle against the exclusionary structures of the system provides a potential of liberating oneself within micro areas. Moreover, receiving the university education within this oppressive system is not only considered as meaningless, but it is also perceived as contributing to the system itself, hence it should be excluded. Lavin also considered giving up university for the struggle as "self-sacrifice", especially if the university and the program are prestigious.[133]

According to Lavin, for the students of the Boğaziçi University (BU), the situation is more of self-sacrifice, because of the cultural capital it provides, especially for those

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[132] Lavin: "Çünkü başka türlü şey yapamıyorsun yani, onların istediği tarzda bir, yani öyle bir anlayış ki şey diyor, sen özgür olmadıkça okumanın hiçbir anlamı yok yani. Senin kimliğin özgür kalmadıkça, senin cinsiyetin özgür kalmadıkça hiçbir şekilde yani yaşamanın bir anlamı yok. Sen okuduğunun sana hiçbir anlamı yok zaten diyor. Hani en azından buldukları ilk çözüm bu hayatı dışlayarak kendi küçük alanlarında özgürleşebilmeyi yaratmak gibi…"

[133] Lavin: "Diplomanın bir anlamı yok onların, hiç gerçekten hiçbir anlamı yok onların gözünde.Yani şeyi anlatıyım sana, mesela okulu bırakıp girenler sadece İstanbul Üniversitesi'nin dandirik bölümlerinden çıkma değil gerçekten. Ahmet zaten Boğaziçi Politika'dan çıkma. Bir tanesi Cerrahpaşa Tıp'tan çıkma filan. Hani böyle resmen korkunç çabalarla geldikleri bölümleri bırakıp örgütleniyorlar yani. Ellerinin tersiyle itiyorlar. Çünkü anlamlı gelmiyor yani, hakkaten anlamlı gelmiyor bir süre sonra okul."

who come close to graduation. Lavin explains her own reluctance to quit the university in similar terms. When she came to a point at which it is necessary to make a choice between organized politics and the university, she was in the last grade of her undergraduate education. A friend of Lavin tried to mobilize her in the movement, yet she preferred to finish her education:

> "He tried to organize me as well. But I was like... A friend of mine, Selim, used to say that education is such a thing that everything is imposed on you as cultural capital and the more you have investment the less possible it gets for you to leave. I mean, I had come to Boğaziçi; I had taken my classes, I was in the last year, about to graduate; my family had plenty of expectations from me; they had taken care of me for a long time. All these were investments on me and it was terrible to give them up. It is true that capitalism buys you. It has already bought you and you cannot give it up. Giving it up becomes an incredibly radical thing. It is OK if you can, but you can by no means do it."[134]

One of Lavin's politically active Kurdish friends, Ahmet made this choice in favor of the Kurdish struggle. Yet, according to Lavin his situation is somewhat easier, since he passed only one year at the university and failed to pass the prep. "If he could pass the prep exam and began studying at Boğaziçi, maybe he could have not given it up." Lavin seems to agree with her friend's critique that it gets more difficult to disengage with greater immersion into the system. Lavin did not drop out of the university; yet she was working actively in a student club engaged with studies on Kurdish culture and politics. In such a double bind, she chose to channel her already active practice within the club into the demands of the Kurdish politics. Through the activities organized by the club, Lavin and her friends were integrating Kurdish politics into the campus agenda. This is the "middle ground" that Lavin was talking about. Indeed, campus politics was also playing an instrumental role for the politics of the Kurdish movement since it was carrying the Kurdish issue and the struggle of the Kurds beyond the urban public space into the campus environment. As part of the club

[134] Lavin: "Beni de örgütlemeye çalışmıştı. Ben de ama şeyim yani hani, sonuçta Selim diye bir arkadaş hep şey derdi, hani okumak ya da işte öyle bir şey ki senin üzerine her şey bir kültürel kapital olarak yapıştırılıyor ve sen senin üzerine ne kadar invest edilen şey varsa o kadar çok bırakma şeyin azalıyor yani. O kadar çok şey yapamıyorsun, bırakamıyorsun, kopamıyorsun yani. Hani ben şayet Boğaziçi'ne gelmişim; derslerimi almışım; son sınıftayım; artık mezun olucam; ailemin benden çok beklentisi vardı; bana çok bakmışlar bilmemne. Bunların hepsi bir investment benim üzerimde ve bırakılması korkunç şeylerdi. Kapitalizm seni satın alıyor diyor, hakkaten öyle yani. Seni satın almış durumda ve sen bırakamıyorsun hani. Bırakabilmek inanılmaz radikal bir şey oluyor. Bırakabiliyorsan eyvallah ama bırakamıyorsun hiçbir şekilde."

activities, Lavin and her friends organized Newroz weeks, Kurdish language week, a panel about the closing of the DTP[135], etc. Although some panels were being questioned by the university administration, with regard to its content and participants, according to Lavin, it was easier to handle the situation at Boğaziçi with respect to other universities.[136]

Indeed, the activities and panels they organized were limited to the campus only spatially, since through the participation of other people coming from outside the university, the activities were reaching a larger audience. In that sense, the liberal campus environment, tolerating oppositonal politics to some extent, was also creating an alternative sphere for the manifestation of Kurdish political demands. Lavin's narrative reveals that this liberal atmophere of BU provided Kurdish students with the oppurtunity to get organized and express their political demands while also pursuing their education. Lavin thought that operating within this middle ground was specific to Boğaziçi while students in other unviersities had to make a choice between education and politics. It is clear that her interpretation of the situation actually echoes that of Zozan who also spoke of a similar choice students made at İstanbul University. İU was among the universities Lavin was implying in her following account: "That middle ground could be provided only at Boğaziçi. Since in other universities nothing could be done in-between, you become either fully organized or just the sympathizer. It seems that you have no other choice." [137] On the other hand, Lavin's narrative was indicative

[135] The DTP was a pro-Kurdish political party in Turkey. It was the successor of the Democratic People's Party (DEHAP). In 2009, the Constitutional Court of Turkey closed down the DTP, ruling that the party had become "focal point of activities against the indivisible unity of the state, the country and the nation" as the court president Hasim Kilic declared. The party was succeeded by the BDP (Peace and Democracy Party), the current pro-Kurdish party in the Grand National Assembly.

[136] Lavin: "Newroz haftaları düzenledik, her yıl Newroz haftaları düzenliyorduk. Biraz daha radikal bir hale getirdik mesela. Sonra naaptık, Kürt dili haftası düzenledik. İlk defa yaptık bunu biz mesela okulda. Baya güzeldi. Kürtçe kitaplar sattık, Kürtçe kasetler sattık, resmen her tarafı Kürtçe yazıladık filan. Hani Kürt dili haftasıydı yani. Boğaziçi'ndeki her şeyi bir hafta Kürtçe görün, Kürtçe gözüyle görün gibi bir şeydi. (…) Gündeme tepki veren paneller düzenledik. İşte bu neydi, DTP'nin kapatılmasıyla ilgili baya radikal bir panel yaptık hani. (…) Burası daha serbestti hani. Paneli tabi ki sorunsallaştırıyorlar, adını niye bu, kim geliyor filan, ama diğer üniversitelere göre tabi ki çok rahattı yani. O yüzden burda yapabiliyorduk bir sürü şey."

[137] Lavin: "Başka yerlerde zaten, zaten hiçbir şey yapılamadığı için arasında, hani bir tek Boğaziçi'nde yapılabiliyordu o ara hal. Başka hiçbir yerde yapılamadığı için ya tam

of a hierachy she believed to exist between universities and programs. The clearest instance of this lies in the comparison she made between İstanbul and Boğaziçi University. According to Lavin, Kurdish students attending İstanbul University had more tendency to make their choice in favor of Kurdish politics and so could more easily quit school since she considered them as having less to lose in such a choice. She believed that being a student in BU was really difficult in that sense, since giving up from the university meant a greater "self-sacrifice" considering the "high position" of a BU student within the hierarchy of university students. That is why according to Lavin, Kurdish students at Boğaziçi have always been somewhat cowed with regard to politics, even avoiding activism in the "middle ground":

> "Kurds in the school, except for one or too, are not doing any significant thing. They are in a really cowed position. (…) That is why it is bitter to be Kurd in our school. For instance, if you were at İstanbul University, or studying at a trivial program, maybe you would not have much to lose. But it is hard for someone, who came here with great efforts, to walk out. (…) And of course all fear is constructed on this, I mean flight from everything, all activities, even the most trivial one."[138]

However, as the narratives of my interviewees from other universities would also indicate in the following pages, this choice (of quitting school) was not as easy as Lavin imagined, nor do they necessarily have "less to lose". As I have discussed in the previous chapters, my interviewees had to struggle with various oppressive mechanisms at the intersections of ethnicity, class and gender. Moreover, especially in order to overcome poor economic conditions as well as the patriarchal control of the family education was a critical factor since it provides the means to both climb the social ladder and have a higher position in the family. Many of my interviewees mentioned that since they are now a university student they have a relatively more autonomous

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örgütlü oluyorsun ya da sadece sempatizanı oluyorsun. Başka bir seçeneğin yok gibi yani"

[138] Lavin: "Okuldaki Kürtlerin bir ikisi dışında çok büyük bir şey yaptığı yok yani. Cidden sinik bir pozisyondalar yani. (…) Bizim okulda Kürt olmak o yüzden acı yani. Mesela İstanbul Üniversitesi'nde olsan kaybedeceğin çok bir şey yok belki ya da geyik bir bölüm okusan filan. Ama buraya gelmiş, deli gibi emekle hani, hakkaten çok büyük emeklerle gelmiş bir insanın burayı bırakıp gitmesi filan çok zor oluyor. (…) Tabi bütün korku da bunun üzerine inşa ediliyor zaten, hani bütün her şeyden kaçış, bütün eylemliklerden en ufak yani."

position in the eye of their family members, able to make their life decisions more freely and have more control over their life. On the other hand, like Lavin who mentioned about her responsibility towards her family, my other research participants also feel the necessity to support their family mostly in economic terms both because of the poor economic means of their parents and their feeling of indebtedness to them. All in all, I think a student need not be attending Boğaziçi University and endowed with a highly prestigious statute to find it difficult to give up the benefits of the social and cultural capital she has accumulated throughout her education years.

Equally as important is the broadening context of being political in Turkey today, especially visible through the dimensions of arrest of studetns, the content of case indictments as well as the discussions revolving around the issue. According to the Report on Imprisoned Students, prepared by the Initiative for Solidarity with Students in Prison (TÖDİ-Tutuklu Öğrencilerle Dayanışma İnisiyatifi), there are now 771 students arrested as part of several investigations all over Turkey.[139] Yet, as the report states, this number includes only students whom the members of the initiative were able to reach by name and university; so the real number actually far exceeds the ones information of whom were given on the list. As the report reveals, a student could be arrested and judged for their attitudes which are not deemed as a crime by the laws. Yet as the definition of the crime gets broader and more obscure, the detentions are managed to be justified under the guise of struggle with terrorism while indeed the Turkish state is terrorizing the lives of every individual. So the students could be arrested because of the way they were dressed (as clear in the case of Cihan Kırmızgül in whose case indictment the *puşi*, he was wearing at the time he was taken into custody, was shown as a proof of his alleged crime), defending their right to free education or using their right to attend demonstrations. So while the context of being political is getting broader, students' sphere of acitivity gets narrower. As a result, for a student of İstanbul University, engaging in Kurdish politics does not only mean quitting school, but also increasing the possibility of getting imprisoned, being suspended from the university and deprivation from many rights the primary ones of which are self-expression and

[139] For information about specific cases related to the students, indictments, violation of rights students undergo in prisons as well as the ways in which their right to education is violated see the report: Tutuklu Öğrencilerle Dayanışma İnisiyatifi (TÖDİ). 2012. *Tutuklu Öğrenciler Raporu*.

freedom. Of course, in order to encounter detention and deprivation of rights, one need not to engage in Kurdish politics, as above cases indicated.

Indeed, although Lavin displayed her political activism in a relatively safer and freer space, trusting that as a Boğaziçi student she would not be "touched", it did not save her from the threat of internment by the police. In April 2011, Lavin's house was raided by the police at 5 o'clock in the morning. The aim was to take her into custody upon the claim that she is the member of KCK. Fortunately Lavin was not at home since she was in her hometown with her family for the spring break. As Lavin returned to İstanbul a couple of hours later she was welcomed by her friends at the airport and taken to a friend's apartment. The following weeks were full of stress and fear for Lavin. Since her file was secret she did not have an idea about why the police wanted to take her into custody; hence she had to hide and wait for a period of time.[140]

Two months after the raid of her home by the police, Lavin went to the police station where "criminal" photos of her were taken by the police. Yet, she could still not give a statement since the prosecution office is too "busy" to take her statement. Hence the judicial process has not finished yet. Lavin recounted how this condition has been limiting her political activities. Fearful of a possible custody, she has been refraining from attending "dangerous" demostrations:"[141] Lavin's story is a good example of how the state's policy of silencing student opposition through mass detentions shape students' political activities. It is not only students like Lavin, having come very close to a possible detention, who have taken shelter in an increasing self-censorship and have been limiting their politics into particular safe areas. My interviewees' narratives were

[140] Lavin: "Hani ben evde olsam korkudan bayılıp ölebilirdim yani. Tehlikeli bir iş yaptığım filan yok aslında. Yani toplamda en basit bir duyarlılıkla okulda yapabileceğim imkânlarla bir şeyler yapmaya çalışıyorum. Başka yaptığım çok bir şey yok yani, hani anadilde eğitimle ilgili bir iki çabam vardı. Kürt kadın meselesiyle ilgili konferansa gittim Diyarbakır'a, Kürt Kadın Konferansına. Bir oraya gitmişliğim vardı. Hani böyle çok bir aktiflik halim de yoktu yani aslında. Bir de Boğaziçili olmanın verdiği bir şey de var ya hani, işte dokunmazlar etmezler filan gibi. Ama aslında aynı gün dört mü beş Boğaziçili evine baskın yapılmış. Boğaziçililere yönelik bir baskın aslında, bunu anlıyorsun. (…) O zaman böyle bir en az 8 kilo falan verdim. Resmen hani yemediğimden filan değil, stresten yani. (…) Çok çok çok gergin bir süreçti."

[141] Lavin: "Hukuki prosedüre göre hala ifade vermem gerekiyor, ama ifade veremiyorum. Çünkü biz başvuruda bulunuyoruz, ama çok yoğun oluyor Savcılık. Hakkaten yoğunlar, her gün birilerini topladıkları için. Bir türlü ifade veremedim. O yüzden process tamamlanmış değil aslında. Hani o hukuki şey bitmedi. O yüzden hala böyle o günden beri gerginim hani. Bir eyleme gitsem, alsalar seni, zaten durumun karambolmuş diyip içeri tıkabilirler filan diye hep böyle bir tedirginim yani."

full of stories related to relatives or friends recently arrested. This indirect experience of imprisonment and their witnessing of mass detentions which have become an ordinary news item on daily newspapers are a highly decisive factor shaping their current political engagements. However, as I will elaborate in the next section, I do not think that repressive policies of the state silence students' opposition or pushed them into apoliticism, instead it changes the way they voice their political concerns and demands.

Mizgin is currently a student at Boğaziçi University as well. Her narrative indicates that her political subjectivity has also been shaped through her activities in several clubs at the university. One of the earlier and most striking anecdotes of Mizgin with regard to the university coincided with her first encounter with another club on campus. When the club members learned that she was Kurdish, they replied it with enthusiasm:

> "When I went there, they asked "Where are you from?", "From Antep", "Are you Kurd?", "God!" But it is like wondering whether they would discriminate. "I am Kurd.", "Oooh, she is from us too." (…) Later it became absurdly like I was the master race, pure race."[142]

The most of club members were not Kurds, yet approaching Kurdish students with sympathy for several reasons. Mizgin's anecdote actually echoes Zozan's narrative on leftist students' approach to Kurds on the campus. When I asked Zozan how she feels at İstanbul University as a Kurd, her first answer was the following words: "Since we are different, and you know some people may have sympathy towards the oppressed, I see sympathy, a curiosity, an interest in other people, in leftists towards us."[143] I think it is this sympathy, wonder and interest what also made members of the left-oriented student club at Boğaziçi University approach Mizgin with friendliness. Mizgin was impressed by the members' political take on the Kurdish issue, beginning to question her own position:

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[142] Mizgin: "Sonra oraya girince "nerden geliyorsun?", "Antep'ten", "Kürt müsün?" "Allah!" Ama şey gibi, acaba ayrımcılık mı yapacaklar… "Kürdüm", "vaay bu da bizden"… […] sonradan gerçekten çok saçma bir şekilde şey gibi oldu, sanki ben üstün ırkmışım, âri ırk…"

[143] Zozan: "Biraz da biz hani farklı olduğumuz için, hani mesela ezilene bir sempati olur ya kimi insanda, mesela öteki insanlarda solcularda bize karşı bir sempati görüyorum, bir merak bir ilgi görüyorum."

> "Having seen their point of view, I thought that although they were not Kurds they could look at my condition so politically, while I was not aware of the social conditions I was in. Then I began to analyze myself."[144]

Mizgin has been working in various clubs on campus throughout her education years, one of which is engaged with feminist politics. Mizgin recounted that through her work at this club, she has been able to put her childhood criticisms of patriarchy into a feminist framework:

> "After working with that club, several things opened up naturally. I realized that I could not express my own thoughts. For instance, I realized that my position of struggling against not sending girls to school had actually been a feminist one. I started to make sense of the reasons why I constantly told my mother and aunt-in-law not to let men oppress them."[145]

Mizgin had been raised by her parents as a Turkish citizen and with the effect of the mainstream media and the nationalist discourse at school she had internalized the state's approach to the Kurdish Question and to the low-intensity war in Souteastern Turkey. So, when hatred emerged against Kurds among her high school friends, at times soldiers died in sqirmishes between the PKK and Turkish security forces, Mizgin was defending herself as a Kurd by distinguishing PKK from the Kurds.[146] However, during her university years, some activities of this feminist-oriented club have been especially influential in the process through which Mizgin has developed an alternative political consciousness with regard to the Kurdish issue and the condition of Kurdish women.

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[144] Mizgin: "Sonra işte o insanların bakışını görünce dedim ki yani bu insanlar Kürt olmadığı halde bu kadar politik bakabiliyorlar benim durumuma, ben (…) farkında değilim nasıl bir toplumsal koşullanma içerisinde olduğumun. Sonra kendimi analiz etmeye başladım."

[145] Mizgin: "O kulüple de çalışma yaptıktan sonra zaten bir sürü şey açıldı ve aslında kendi sahip olduğum görüşleri dillendiremediğimi fark ettim. Mesela işte kızları okutmuyorlar diye o kadar mücadele verdiğim duruşun ne kadar feminist olduğunu sonradan anladım. İşte annemi, yengemi gidip mutfağa sıkıştırıp şu erkeklerin sizi bu kadar ezmesine izin vermeyin değişlerimin falan altını doldurmaya başladım."

[146] Mizgin: "İşte şehit haberi bilmemne olduğunda [sınıfta] saymaya başladıklarında bir dakka ya ben de Kürdüm ne yani… Ama o zaman şeydi, işte PKK'yla Kürtleri bir tutmayındı. Ben de yani haberlerde askerlerin öldürüldüğünü o dilde duyunca ben de ağlıyordum yani, çok üzülüyordum. Tabi ki hala da çok üzülüyorsun, o ayrı bir mesele. Ama sadece bir tarafından bakmayı öğretildiğim için hem ailemde hem şeyde. (…) Babam zaten CHP'li olduğu için Atatürk sevgisi inanılmaz. İlkokulda falan Atatürk'e şiirler yazdığımı biliyorum. Yani ben lisedeki diğer arkadaşlarımdan daha milliyetçi olabilirim, ama Türk milliyetçisi yani. Öyle bir şeydi. Ama şeyi kesinlikle savunuyordum, yani bir insana Kürt diye ayrımcılık yapamazsınız."

> "It was 8th March, or 25th November, during the feminist events in the school when I was prep… There were a martyr's mother and a peace mother in an event, sitting next to each other. And the marytr's mother said: "It hurts me deeply, but it is not Kurds who killed my son, but the system." It was one of those moments of my enlightenment."[147]

Together with the club activities, Mizgin was also making critical readings with regard to recent history of the Kurdish issue and revisiting and questioning her own history under a new point of view shaped along the lines of Kurdish feminism.

> "Then I started to read: burned villages, those incidents in the '90s…. So with Peace Mothers, my feminist studies and the things I had read on the history of Kurdish women, it started to became clearer. Then I started to question: Why were Turkish villages developed then while our village had a road so late? Why did my father have to be pro-CHP? Why did they not teach me Kurdish so that I always speak Turkish? And why had my mother been marginalized in the society since she had a different accent?"[148]

Mizgin had developed a critical approach to the Kurdish issue, different from the one she had in her high school years. She realized that what she had gone through during her socialization in family and school was "assimilation." So, she began to analyze the history of the Kurdish issue and her present condition as a Kurdish woman with this new consciousness. However, another experience she had in an activity of another student club led her into another axis of criticism, this time of the Kurdish politics of *yurtseverler* on campus. As part of the "*Newroz* Week" on campus, this club managed to show the film *Bahoz* (The Storm)[149] and make an interview with the film's director Kazım Öz after the screening. Yet, *yurtseverler* tried to prevent it since they did not approve of the way the Kurdish youth and politics of the 1990s is depicted in the

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[147] Mizgin: "8 Mart mıydı, 25 Kasım mıydı? Böyle okuldaki feminist etkinliklerde, Hazırlık'ta. (…) Bir etkinlik vardı, bir şehit annesi bir barış annesi vardı, ikisi yan yana oturuyordu. Ve işte şehit annesi benim de yüreğim yanıyor ama benim çocuğu öldüren Kürtler değil sistemdir gibi bir şeyler söylemişti. Ben o zaman da ayma yaşamıştım yani."

[148] Sonra zaten biraz da okumaya tabi başladım, yakılan köyler, 90'lardaki o olaylar… İşte bu Barış Anneleri, feminist çalışmalarım, sonra Kürt Kadınlar tarihi üzerine okuduğum şeyler falan filan diyince baya netleşmeye başladı. İşte sonra şeyleri sorguladım: Neden Türk köyleri işte o zamandan beri gelişmişken bizim köye yol o kadar geç Gitti? Neden benim babam gidip CHP'li olmak zorunda kaldı? Neden bana Kürtçe öğretmediler de ben hep Türkçe konuştum? İşte annem neden hep toplumda itildi şivesi farklı olduğu için?"

[149] *Bahoz* was shot by Kazım Öz in 2008. The film is about activism of Kurdish students during 1990s in Turkey.

movie:[150] Although a fight broke out of the concerning quarrel and students aiming to screen the film were beaten by *yurtseverler*, the film was screened, albeit without the participation of the director. Mizgin was disturbed by the pressure of the *yurtseverler* on a club activity and the hierarchical way they tried to impose their ideology on the campus agenda:

> "Then new question marks… Ok, I had already realized what kind of an environment I live in as a Kurd, why my family assimilated themselves, what kind of a past I had been coming from, that I had grown up in a society where I can not even speak Kurdish. And now the hierarchy among Kurds this time…"[151]

As a feminist, Mizgin had already been questioning the violence used by PKK and deification of Abdullah Öcalan by *yurtseverler*, resembling it to the same courtesy being showed to other national leaders. Indeed, Mizgin's analysis with regard to the war between the PKK and the Turkish state was shaped by her feminist antimilitarist approach. Yet, her position as a Kurdish woman who had undergone several mechanisms of state oppression since her childhood was complicating her approach to the violence used by the PKK, especially along the lines of discussion with regard to the legitimacy of violence. Mizgin considered the PKK's use of violence to be a form of defense as opposed to the state's, which, for her, constituted an assault. Yet, certain assaults of the PKK at critical moments of the political agenda, had been making the situation more blurry and too complicated for her to understand. Yet, according to Mizgin, both structures are militarist organizations in the end, reproducing each other as

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[150] For more information about the incident and the director's response to criticisms, similar to those *yurtseverler* on the campus brought, see http://daplatfo.ipower.com/news.php?nid=4907

[151] Mizgin: "O dönemde Kürt Edebiyatı kulübü Bahoz filmini işte okuldaki salonlardan birinde gösterimini yapıp yönetmeniyle söyleşi yapmak istiyor Newroz kapsamında. İşte bu yurtsever gençlik de filmin gösterilmesini istemiyor, çünkü işte bir iç eleştiri olduğu için filme sahip çıkmıyorlar, sevmiyorlar ve işte Newroz'da Kürtleri böyle gösteren bir film gösterilemez. Bunun üzerine tartışma çıkıyor, siz buranın otoritesi değilsiniz göstermek istiyorsak gösteririz, hayır gösteremezsiniz bilmemne. Sonra göstermek isteyen insanları tartaklıyorlar. Bir arkadaşımız işte dayak yedi. Onun üzerine yeni soru işaretleri… Tamam şeyin bilincine vardım, bir Kürt olarak nasıl bir ortamda bulunduğumun, ailemin nasıl kendini zorla asimile ettiğini, kendim nasıl bir geçmişten geçtiğimi, Kürtçeyi bile konuşamadığım bir toplumda büyüdüğümü. Ama sonra Kürtler arasındaki hiyerarşi bu kez…"

well as contributing to the militarist mentality through which the politics has been imagined in Turkey:

> "It is violence in the sense of militarism. But on the other hand, you are also discussing the legitimacy of violence. I mean, one is defense, another is assault. That makes the situation very different. But, on the other hand, for instance a PKK assault takes place at the time when a political success is in question. Then you start to think whether it is a sham fight. For, Turkish Security Forces love the PKK, because TSF could receive as much budget as it likes and become the biggest power of this country as long as the PKK exists; because there is a threat."[152]

Mizgin was questioning whether it was possible to produce antimilitarist solutions to oppression and subordination in a militarist world. Since she did not observe any example of a peaceful solution to the conflicts in the world, she regarded PKK as being left with no choice but violence. The situation is especially clear, considering the Turkish state's irreconcilable attitude with regard to the possible solution of the Kurdish issue which would provide a constitutional assurance for the recognition of Kurds and other ethnic identities in Turkey. On the other hand, according to Mizgin, "A future achieved through violence would most probably be based on violence as well. So it would mean that it will go on like this, without solution. In that case, it would boil down to the the impossiblity of an imagination of an antimilitarist world."[153]

Mizgin also pointed at another discussion on campus revolving around the Kurdish language course opened in Fall 2011 for the first time in Boğaziçi University. Indeed, Boğaziçi is the third university in İstanbul (also the first one as a state university) who started offering an elective course on the Kurdish language. At Bilgi and Sabancı University the course was opened in 2009 within the scope of School of Languages Departments. However, the situation was slightly different at Boğaziçi. Since the course could not be opened as part of other departments, such as School of Foreign Languages and Turkish Language and Literature, it was opened within the

[152] Mizgin: "Militarizm anlamında şiddet. Ama bir yandan meşru şiddet tartışmasını da yapıyorsun. Yani birisi savunmadır, birisi saldırıdır. O tabi ki durumu çok farklılaştırıyor. Ama bir yandan şeyler de oluyor. Mesela tam siyasi olarak bir başarı elde edileceği süreçte PKK saldırısı oluyor. Yani o zaman şeyi, danışıklı dövüş olduğunu düşünmeye başlıyorsun. Bir yandan TSK'nın çok hoşuna gidiyor PKK, çünkü PKK varolduğu sürece TSK istediği kadar bütçe alabilir, istediğini yapabilir, bu ülkenin en büyük kalesi olabilir. Çünkü bir tehdit var."

[153] Mizgin: "Yani şiddetle kazanılan bir geleceğin şiddete dayanma ihtimali de yüksek yani. Bu o zaman sürüp gidecek yani şey gibi, çözümsüz yani... O zaman antimilitarist bir dünya tahayyülü yok demek olur."

Sociology department with the title "SOC 499: Directed Research and Readings: Beginner Kurdish".[154] Mizgin recounted that the *yurtseverler* on campus rejected the course criticizing the way it was opened as well as the books used during the course: "It became like a course acting on the sly. It looks like having a sociological content with its description "Kurdish language and ethnic origions", but it is indeed a language course."[155] Mizgin took the course for two semesters and she did not agree much with the criticisms brought to it. She considered that Boğaziçi as a state university was one of the spaces where the struggle for Kurdish linguistic rights should be pursued; and no matter under what title the course was opened it was a gain a within this struggle:

> "My personal opinion is that struggle should be in all spheres. And the opening of a course in our school no matter with which name, having an opportunity to go and learn Kurdish in that course and the fact that it will be on my transcript is a gain."

As I have mentioned in the previous chapter, Mizgin considered the campus of Boğaziçi University as a "utopia". Her conception had much to do with the liberal atmosphere of the campus where political views have been expressed and negotiated in a way more free than on campuses of for instance Marmara and İstanbul University. Mizgin is a Kurdish feminist woman who has experienced the intersecting oppressions of ethnicity, class and gender since her childhood. With this background, she felt more belonging to the campus environment defined by diversity and free encounter since she could live on campus on easier terms as a Kurd and woman:

> "Coming from such a life, I feel so attached to this environment where I can live at ease as a woman, as a Kurd and find such a friendship. I see that

[154] Kurdish language courses have been given by the same teacher, Şerif Derince in both Sabancı and Boğaziçi University. Indeed I learned the process, through which the course was firstly attempted to be opened in other departments, from Derince.

[155] Description of the course given on the website of the university is as follows: "This course is designed as an introduction to the Kurdish language. It aims to help students develop the language and skills required for effective communication at the Basic level and raise their awareness of processes involved in learning to communicate. The students are provided with authentic tasks and a variety of materials which help them to learn and use Kurdish in daily interactions and also read and write in Kurdish. They also gain the awareness of multiplicity of varieties of the Kurdish language and are encouraged to learn differences between these varieties. They also learn and discover about the Kurdish language(s) and culture(s)."

(http://registration.boun.edu.tr/scripts/schedule/coursedescription.asp?course=SOC%20499&section=01&term=2011/2012-1)

people do not want to graduate and go away since it makes you feel like a fish out of water."[156]

Mizgin used the word "utopia" to define the campus not because she considered it to be the most ideal space, but because she felt herself empowered there, able to struggle against ethnic and gender-based oppression:

> "For example, a feminist trend is aimed at the club as well. When a friend tries to bully me there I can bring this up for discussion at the club environment, he knows that he cannot argue. Or I can dress liberally, when someone molests me at school it is not I who is guilty but the one who molesses."[157]

Jin graduated from Boğaziçi University and now she is a graduate student at Bilgi University. While studying at Boğaziçi, Jin was also engaged with student clubs on campus. Jin thought that club activities at Boğaziçi were culturally stimulating, yet the politics constructed through those activities were confined to the university and was not in continuity with the political struggle and activism in the urban space:

> "In our clubs, (…) there were things in the cultural sense, but there was no side to these which led to demostrations on Beyazıt square actively. There was a more Boğaziçi-specific politicization, I don't know, you also know, at Boğaziçi politicization is limited within the boundaries of Boğaziçi or too intellectual. But on the other hand there is this thing, there are people dying around; it is too big a thing for you because you are part of it."[158]

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[156] Mizgin: "Kardeşimden alıyorum haberi, bir arkadaşı birazcık solcu takıldığı ama bir şey yapmadığı için solcu takıldığını bildiği için satırla dayak yiyor Marmara Üniversitesi'nde. Ondan sonra, İstanbul Üniversitesi'ne başörtülü asla giremiyorlardı o dönem. (…) Sonra bu Uludağ Üniversitesi'nde işte başka yerlerde Kürt öğrenciler dayak yerken, ismini söyleyemezken, bizim okulda böyle rahat yaşayabildiğimizi, Newroz kutlayabildiğimizi, ateş bile yakabildiğimizi biliyorum. En ufak bir şeyde muhalif bir örgütlenme oluyor. Ha biraz liberallikten yani, okulun çok inanılmaz politik olmasından değil de her kafanın ses çıkarabilmesinden oluyor. Ben geldiğimde, öyle bir hayattan gelip bir kadın olarak rahat yaşayabildiğim, bir Kürt olarak rahat yaşayabildiğim bir ortam olması, böyle bir arkadaşlık bulmak ve bunla benim önceki hayatımın çok ayrışması baya bağlamıştı yani beni buraya. Şeyi de fark ediyorum, insanlar mezun olup gitmek istemiyor. Çünkü biraz sudan çıkmış balık oluyor yani."

[157] Mizgin: "Mesela kulüpte de feminist bir çizgi tutturulmaya çalışılıyor ve bir arkadaşım orda bana erkeklik tasladığında ben bunu kulüp ortamında tartışıp şey yapabilirim ki bilir tartışamaz. Ya da rahat giyinebilirim, biri beni okulda taciz ettiğinde suçlu ben değilimdir, taciz edendir."

[158] Jin: "Ama bizim kulüplerde pek bi olay yoktu yani hani kültürel anlamda bi şeyler vardı ama böyle aktif çıkıp Beyazıt meydanına eyleme götüren bi tarafı yoktu. Biraz daha Boğaziçili bi politikleşme vardı ve bilmiyorum az çok biliyosun Boğaziçi'nde politikleşme Boğaziçi sınırlarındadır ya da çok enteldir. Çünkü bi taraftan şey de var

Unsatisfied with the way politics is imagined and practiced on Boğaziçi campus, Jin was also engaged in the DTP (Democratic Society Party). However, she was unable to translate her pro-Kurdish politics into activism within the party. Jin considered the "utopic" character of the campus space, where she could freely express her political ideas, as a critical factor shaping her passivity vis-à-vis political activism. Jin's narrative actually points at the illusion the campus "utopia" creates in students' minds. It diverges from the conflictual character of the everyday politics in Turkey where oppositonal politics and political views are hardly recognized as legitimate. According to Jin, the comfort the relatively free expression of dissident political ideas on campus gives students, keeps them from struggle in the urban space.[159]

Lavin also made a somewhat similar observation about campus dynamics. She belived in the value of campus politics, yet she doubted whether it made any difference or created any consciousness in other students that would lead them into political activism. Before getting engaged with Kurdish politics with her *yurtsever* friends, Lavin also took part in political activities as part of campaigns organized by collective initiatives of students on the campus. Those campaigns were "Karanlığı Sorguluyoruz"[160] (We Question the Darkness) and "Kardeşlik İstiyoruz" (We Want Fraternity). Lavin mentioned several times during the interview about how those activities were meant to intervene into the daily order of the campus and raise a

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yani, etrafta ölen kalan insanlar var ya yine de; sana çok büyük geliyo çünkü sen bi parçasısın."

[159] Jin: "Yani mesela şey yapmıyodum yani hani, böyle örgütleyen insanlar vardır ya böyle gezen hani sürekli böyle aktif bi şekilde gezen mahalleri gezen falan… […] Çok ileriye taşıyamıyodum yani. Ya birazcık da bilmiyorum belki Boğaziçi'nin havasındandır. Çünkü orda şey vardı yani, mesela derse giriyoduk, derste şeyi konuşuyorduk. Mesela ben derste çok atıyorum rahat bir şekilde bir şey söyleyebiliyodum, kavga gürültü olmuyodu. Kavga gürültü olmayınca hani o tepkiler de tamam ha söyledim rahatladım falan. Halbuysa dışarıda öyle değildi. Hani başka okullarda başka arkadaşlarım bıçaklanıyodu falan. O açıdan biraz şeydik yani hani, pasifize etmişti hem okul bizi hem de o yaşadığımız ortam biraz pasifize etmişti bence. Hani o anlamda başka bir şey yapamıyodum."

[160] This initiative and the following campaing was organized rightafter the assasination of Hrant Dink on January 19, 2007. The name of the initiative was created by the inspiration of the letter Dink's wife Rakel Dink read aloud in the funeral. For the full text of the letter, see: http://bianet.org/bianet/insan-haklari/90620-sevgiliye-mektup--2. Also for additional information about the initiative and its activities see: http://karanligisorguluyoruz.blogspot.com/2007_02_01_archive.html

consciousness on campus about the pressing matters of the political agenda. As opposed to Jin, Lavin valued the political activism on campus, thinking that through that collective agency of the students, she woke to political subjectivities other than Kurdish subjectivity. Through those activities, Lavin was introduced to new ways in which political concerns and demands could be voiced and learned how struggle could more powerful with politicization of others.[161] One of the most striking political performances conducted as part of the "We Want Fraternity" campaign was constructing a graveyard in the square of the South Campus, belonging to those people died during the war between the PKK and Turkish security forces as well as those killed by the police or due to the policies of the state: "It was really striking! Constructing a graveyard on the South Campus and writing the names of guerillas and Turkish soldiers on the graves… It was more sincere..."[162] Lavin found this activity especially meaningful since it intervened into the campus agenda more than panels, workshops, film screenings or open classess thanks to its performative and visual character possible to attract each constituent on the campus. However, according to Lavin the liberal mentality prevailing in the university which provided the oppurtunity of free expression and encounter also carried an indifference in itself, indifference to the political message the performance was intended to convey. Hence, after all the political activism of particular students on

[161] Lavin: "Bir de hakkaten okulda çok politiktik, okulun kendisinde çok politiktik. Dışarıda hani ben niye burda örgütlüyüm demekten ziyade ben zaten okulda aktiftim. Okulda işte bir sürü iş yapıyorduk yani. Zaten hani gündem de her zaman korkunç olduğu için, biri ölür kıyametler kopuyor filan tabi ki her tarafta. Biz de okul gündemini buna uyarlamaya çalışıyorduk filan. Bence çok iyi süreçlerdi, hem benim daha çok şey öğrendiğim. (…) Hani en basitinden bir pankart hazırlarken bile, bir şey yazarken bile, hani barış pankartı yazarken bile edilen muhabbetler başka insanlarla birlikte yapma onu, hani başka bir politik öznellik katıyor sana yani. Hani senin farkında olduğun Kürt öznelliğinin dışında bir şeyler daha öğreniyorsun. Nasıl politik olmayı öğreniyorsun, politik olmanın başka insanların politizasyonuyla nasıl daha kuvvetli bir hale gelebildiğini öğreniyorsun filan. Hani o yüzden benim için aslında en anlamlı süreçler okulun politik olduğu, okulun işte okulda yapılan eylemliliklerdi yani."

[162] This political performance was presented in 2007 and a short documentary film, entitled as"We Want Fraternity" was also shot about the whole performance. The film ranked among the top ten in the short film competition, namely "Conscience Films", organized by the Hrant Dink Foundation. The film could be seen in the following website: http://www.vicdanfilmleri.org/?see=tvmb5&fb_source=message

the campus could not transform into a lasting struggle that would be inherited by the next generation of students.[163]

Jin's experience as a Kurdish student at Boğaziçi University was also highly reminiscent of Mizgin and Zozan's concerning accounts. Jin felt that what was lying under the sympathy of leftist students for the Kurds was a kind of "secret contempt on the intellectual level." Jin observed that as a Kurd she was approached with curiosity, yet it seemed to her that this curiosity echoed a scientist's indifferent interest in an experimental object. Jin's answer to my question, as to what kind of an experience being Kurd in Boğaziçi was, carried traces from Mizgin's experience at Boğaziçi University and Zozan's in İstanbul University with regard to relations with leftists on the campus:

> "Well, actually it was very easy at Boğaziçi, because "Are you Kurdish, oh you are one of us." (…) Well, there is that thing, because you are more experienced in some issues, when nobody knows anything. That gives an enormous thing. But then… I don't know, I mean something weird… But then you sometimes feel like a test subject, like despised but "these ones are like this"… Just think about a little more intellectual level than this. Just like a very intellectual level of that classic "she is a human being too."[164]

Hazal is currently a student in Bilgi University. As I previously mentioned, she came to İstanbul in order to attend high school. So she was already used to her new life in İstanbul when she began to study at Bilgi University. Moreover, Hazal had developed a consciousness with regard to her Kurdish identity early in high school. She defined

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[163] "Yani şey kötü bir yandan ya zaten, kötü bir şey ya hani. Ya zaten liberalizmin hiç savunduğum bir tarafı yok da. Hani Kürtler de olsun, işte Boğaziçi'nde mezarlık yapmışlar filan… Ama bu değil yani, olması gereken bu değil hani. Senin onu görüp bir şey yapabilme ihtimalini yaratmaktır önemli olan. Liberal öğrenci napıcak, yanından geçicek, ya ben de savunmuyorum ama işte bak kurmuşlar, işte Boğaziçi burası, yapacak bir şey yok, Kürtler de var. Ama bu değil aslında olması gereken ya hani. Kürtler de var demekten öteye geçmen gerekiyor hani. Kürtler eziliyor bu ülkede ve senin de bir yerinden bir şey yapman gerekiyor. Ama bu olmuyor yani, hiçbir zaman olmadı Boğaziçi'nde. En fazla üç beş tane inanılmaz canına tak eden kalktı bir şeyler yaptı, sonra zaten sönüyor, sönümleniyor yani."

[164] Jin: "Yani aslında Boğaziçi'nde çok kolaydı, çünkü hani "aa Kürt müsün aa sen de bizdensin". (…) Hani o şey var, çünkü belli konularda sen daha deneyimlisin, kimse hiçbi şey bilmezken. O acayip bi şey veriyo. Ama sonra böyle, bilmiyorum garip bi şey yani. Ama sonra bazen denek olduğunu hissediyosun, hani böyle aslında küçümsenen ama "aa bunlar da böyle falan"… Hani bunun birazcık daha entelektüel düzeyini düşün. Hani o klasik var ya, 'aa o da insan'ın daha çok daha entelektüel düzeyini düşün."

her attitude towards the Kurdish issue as more reactional since her ideas "lacked a political framework" back then. She was radically defending her ethnic identity, but could not communicate with her mother, who did not speak Turkish, since she could not speak Kurdish well any more. When she came to university she began to develop awareness about her mother tongue and felt the necessity to struggle for a Kurdish language course to be opened at the unviersity. Hence, her inner turmoil with regard to the burden of the contradiction she underwent during high school became partly influential in her language-oriented political engagement in university years:

> "For example, when you are in high school or so you are much more restless. You are on the streets, you yell and shout and all. Here I realized something, I became aware of language at the university (…) First of all, I got involved in things such as the reason why my teacher did not know Kurdish when I started [primary] school, etc. Then I realized that, beyond yelling on the streets, getting these in the university somehow was important. As we were talking about this, a friend of mine said: "Ooo, you are so far back. Do you know how many people are currently inside because of this?"

As Hazal's friend mentioned, in November 2001, students of Istanbul University petitioned the Rectorate of their university demanding a Kurdish language course to be opened in the university, as part of the "Kurdish Education and Training Campaign" which spread onto many other universities in Turkey. During the process of the campaign, students reached a number of petitions more than 15000. Most of the petitions were not even received by the rectorates while the rest were rejected. The campaign was met with the fierce reaction from the YÖK (High Education Board), the Security General Directorate and the Ministry of the Interior. As a result some students were expelled from the university, were taken into custody or arrested while formal investigations were launched on thousands of them.[165] In other words, the demand for an elective course on Kurdish has been considered a major threat for the unity of the country. In 2009, Hazal and her friends petitioned the Rectorate of Bilgi University demanding a Kurdish language elective course to be opened at the university. Hazal recounted how they were very suprised when their demand was easily accepted, without requiring them to launch a further struggle. Upon the demand of the rectorate, Hazal and her friends searched for Kurdish language teachers and found three of them. The university administration made interviews with those teachers and reached an

[165] I reached these information from the following study: *Anadilde Eğitim Kampanyası Dosyası,* http://www.daplatform.com/images/anadil.pdf., Retrieved on July 30, 2012.

agreement on one of them who has been teaching Kurdish in Bilgi University up until today.

Hazal has also been working in a student club on campus which has not only been engaged with studies on language, but also organized activities, such as press statements, panels and documentary screenings that would integrate the political agenda of Turkey into the campus. The club has been pursuing its activities on the campus since its establishment. Yet, as Hazal mentioned, students actively participating in the organizations have decreased a lot due to detentions of some members and increasing self-censorship of many others with the fear of arrest. Hazal answered my question with regard to the participation of the students to their activities as follows:

> "That is a terrible thing. For example, 30 people come at most. Before the previous KCK arrests we were up to around 60 people. For example, we did panels at the hall, there were no seats left to sit. These things, these arrests really intimated people fiercely. None of those people who were already active, meaning those who really dedicated themselves are not outside any more, as you know. They are all inside [in jail]. Those who remained outside, well people are haunted with fear.

State's oppression of oppositional politics, visible through the increasing mass detentions, also affected the university's policies towards the activities of the club. It could no longer organize activities open to the participants outside the university this year due to the restrictive regulation of the administration: "For example, this year our activities were closed to outsiders. Normally ours were always open. (…) For example, there was such a reaction."

Hazal's depiction of the campus space actually comes very close to Mizgin's narrative of the "Boğaziçi". Although she did not use the term, for Hazal, Bilgi University was like a "utopia" as well, especially in terms of freely expressing herself as a Kurdish woman:

> "For example, [it is] a university where I really feel at ease. (…) I feel highly free on campus. Really, I frankly believe that I am strong enough to respond to any possible reaction. I mean there is no problem as far as I am concerned. Presently, I don't believe that anyone could hurt me because of my language or ethnic origin within the university. I believe they can't hurt me even if they wanted to hurt me.

Again, like Mizgin, Hazal explained her sense of freedom on campus as a result of the solidarity she found among her friends in the club as well as the oppositional activities they organized. According to Hazal the existence of such a club through

which they could express their political views and demands empowered them to struggle against any possible ethnic-based oppression on campus:

> "Really, I think the biggest reason why our Kurdish friends who come to this university, myself included, feel so comfortable is definitely this club (…) It gives immense strength. Because we organized such activities that would raise hell had they happened in another university. Be it the Sebahat Tuncel event, Leyla Zana event, the following discussions, talks or be it the language platforms."

Hazal and her friends in the club tried to create an alternative political sphere on campus where they could come together, share their experiences and offer solutions among each other as well as open their present greivances and demands up for discussion with other subjects on the campus. Yet, her narrative reveals that even though they could manifest an oppositional politics on campus it did not touch and relate to other students, sharing the same space, much. Indeed, she felt herself enclosed into a small community of people other than whom she could not meet on a common ground of communication and build a meaningful relationship.[166] Indeed it was not only Hazal but also Jin who could not get used to the dominant student profile of the university which is composed of students from upper-middle class families. The situation is especially awkward for Jin because she studied at Boğaziçi University, which shelters relatively more students coming from lower-middle class. She was shocked by the plenitude of students with high economic conditions at Bilgi University. Bilgi is a private university; hence the facilities at the university also appeal to students with high economic means. So, both Hazal and Jin, who had to make a living with scholarships and part time jobs complain about that they could not eat or drink on the campus much:

> Hazal: I am sick of going to school with a *simit*. Really, one meal costing 7.50 liras is hard on you.

[166] Hazal: "Yani belli bi çevren var belli bi insanlar var, onun dışında başka hiç kimseyle tartışamıyosun. E bi yerden sonra da artık onla tartışmaktan bıkıyosun. Çünkü hani kısa bi süre değil hani, 4 yıl 3 yıl… Hani insan gerçekten çok fazla farklı insanla tartışmak istiyo. Ama yok bulamıyosun. Hani belirli bi şey var, bi kısım var; onun haricinde başka biriyle konuşacak hiçbi şeyin olmuyo koca okulda. Ve farklı bi insanla oturuyosun tamam mı, hani ders çıkışı işte yürürken böyle dersten bahsettim hocadan bahsettim yani diyelim, işte ne bileyim bi çaycı çıktı karşına oturdun çay içiyosun. Onla iki saniyeden öteye muhabbetim geçmiyo, geçemiyo yaa olmuyo yani yapamıyorum. Ya oturup sürekli markadan bahsediceksin, arabadan bahsediceksin, kıyafetten bahsediceksin… Ondan sonra yani bu… Bunun dışında çıkamıyosun."

> Jin: I don't have the chance to drink coffe, a little bit of water costs like 3 liras or something. Luckily my classes are in the evening, if they were in the day time, I would probably be starved there.

There were also many students of Bilgi University who were arrested by the police within the scope of KCK investigations as Hazal mentioned. Jin observed that neither the professors nor the students could create an effective agenda with regard to the detention of Bilgi's students. She was analyzing this situation through a comparison with Boğaziçi University, students and professors of which react in an organized way against the custody or detention of some students of the university, especially in the case of Nejat Ağırnaslı[167] and Şeyma Özcan:

> "For example, our friends were taken in, OK? I don't know, so many people went to jail and for nothing. For example, I told the professor "*Hocam*," I said, "you are a professor after all and you know this person and this school can somehow create an agenda related to this guy's incarceration" For example, such an agenda was created fot Nejat and Nejat was somehow released. He would not be released otherwise."

According to Jin, the student profile of the universities had an impact on this situation. At Boğaziçi, such political mobilization could be reached more easily since there were more students from lower-middle class than Bilgi. So, Jin did not belive that a broad political mobilization could be achieved at Bilgi University, even in conditions directly related to the university itself.[168]

Narratives of my interviewees with regard to Boğaziçi and Bilgi University indicated that because of the liberal atmosphere prevailing in these campuses, students

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[167] Nejat Ağırnaslı was taken into custody in April 2011, as part of KCK investigations and was taken to Diyarbakır afterwards. Nejat was released a couple of days later. During this process, Boğaziçi University students, especially Nejat's friends publicize this situation through both demonstrations on the campus as well as using various means of media. For the text BU students write following the incident, see http://foucaultdayargilansin.blogspot.com/2011_04_01_archive.html. Moreover, for the interview made with Ağırnaslı after he was released, see: http://bianet.org/bianet/ifade-ozgurlugu/129726-agirnasli-hayali-taniklar-uzerinden-suclama-yoneltiyorlar.

[168] "Çünkü çok fazla şey yok yani, hani hakkaten yani bu durumlar için hakkaten dertlenen çok fazla insan yok yani. Ya Boğaziçi'nde çok daha fazla çünkü altorta sınıftan insan var, biraz bununla da ilgili. Ya Boğaziçi'nin eylemleri çok harika diye söylemiyorum ya da çok daha etkili falan diye söylemiyorum, ama hani daha fazla insan var orda hani. (…) Bilgi'de öyle bi mobilizasyon sağlanabileceğini düşünmüyorum yani."

who considered their politics as "oppositional" managed to integrate their political agendas into the campus environment. This situation empowers students in the face of possible oppressive dynamics they encounter on campus thanks to the sense of solidarity achieved through collective action and political self-expression. Moreover the way they construct and imagine politics through their collective activities on campus open up a new space for rethinking the political in Turkey in general and student politics in particular. For instance, Lavin's experience of collective action during the campaigns of "We Question the Darkenss" and "We Want Fraternity" reveals that campus space could provide an oppurtunity to bring together students with different political engagements on a common ground on which they represent their common criticisms against the system. Through their activities students politicize the campus, an area which the Turkish state tried to reproduce as apolitical castles of neoliberalism through various oppressive mechanisms. The increasing existence and visibility of the police and multinational companies on the campus is one of those practices of the state as well as the university administrations. On the other hand, my research participants' accounts indicated that the liberal space defined by relatively free encounter and recognition of differences also carries an indifference to pressing political matters oppositional students try to publicize on the campus. Hence their activities indeed failed to create a lasting and broad political mobilization that would bring other students into the discussion and activism. Under present situation of the political in Turkey which is partly characterized by the oppression, fear and self-censorship of people inasmuch as the definition of what is legal and crime gets more and more blurry with the random mass detentions, such a mobilization is off course hard to achieve on campus. On the other hand, especially narratives of Hazal and Jin with regard to the upper-class students in Bilgi University and their seeming apoliticism have traces of the criticisms brought to post-1980 youth Lüküslü mentions.

5.4. University Campus as "Conservative Corporation"

Öykü started getting mobilized in the high school organization of *yurtsever* youth, namely "Özgür Liseliler" when she was in her senior year. After graduation, she

did not continue with her education for three years and instead dedicated herself to political activism. Öykü recounted her family's disappointment with her:

> "After finishing high school I didn't go to school for 3 years. I did other things. Well, when I was in the senior year we established an organization among ourselves, called *Liseli Gençler* [High School Youth]. With that I became active, I left school. I took part in *Gençlik* (Youth) activities, in the activities of *yurtsever* youth. This caused great stress. My father, they were disappointed, saying "we sent you to get an education" kind of stuff. They were quite sad. I didn't come home and all. I stayed at other places. I wandered with a backpack around there, around neighborhoods etc. I even went to Diyarbakır; there was an association at Batman, I worked there (…) But even as I was doing these, there was this thing, I was thinking that I would go to school some day, I mean not very big deal.

Her family was also supporting the Kurdish struggle, yet they wanted to protect Öykü, considering her future prospects would she continue with her political activism. They wanted Öykü to provide herself a better life, which would only be possible through university education. Öykü thought that it was thanks to that period when she made her own decisions despite her family's pressure and stood on her feet, that she could liberate herself from the control of her family. That was also why she could have control over her life and decisions today:

> "I had many many conflictual periods with them, when we had fights, times when I did not talk with them. I went out and left not seeing them for months… I think if I am actually a little [free] today, I mean if we left and moved into another house four years ago, if we started a life of our own, if I entered the department I want, this is all [thanks] to that period. Because whenever I left they took a step back, their demands started to decrease. It was always the same thing and I stood on my own more."

After that three-year period, Öykü had to leave the organization, because her family had gone through serious economic problems and she felt the need to economically support them by working in the textile mill her brothers had opened. Yet, a short period of leave from the organization turned to become permanent because of the authoritarian structure of the organization. Öykü and her friends, as "Özgür Liseliler" had been organizing activities in connection to the *Siyasi Gençlik* (Political Youth) wing of the *yurtseverler*, yet they were considered to be "anarchists" by the Political Youth due to the autonomous decisions they were making which were sometimes not in line with the central authority. That is why they were called into an internal investigation by the Political Youth which led Öykü to break away from the organization:

> ""I had to go and stay with them for a period; I had to be involved in the interrogation process. I did not accept it under any circumstances. I did not accept this, because [I thought] how can a decision concerning me be taken at a platform of which I am not part of. Actually this was the breaking point."

After a period of time working in the mill, Öykü prepared for the university exam and got into Yeditepe University with scholarship. Öykü broke away with the *yurtsever* organization and did not engage in active politics on campus or outside the university afterwards. Yet she considered that she could contribute to the struggle also through her academic activities. In Öykü's decision to attend university instead of engaging in further political activism, the higher position she would achieve in the family through education was also influential. Although Öykü could liberate from her family during those three years, her relations with her family was spoiled. Besides herself and her decisions were not valued and respected much in the household. After she returned to school, Öykü could achieve a more respectable position as a woman in the household, able to develop her relations with family members in more equal and free terms. :

> ""Well, I had to go to the university. Perhaps in my subconscious was the [idea that] I will convince my family, if I go to school they will accept me, with all my aspects. For example, if I had not gone back to school I would not have much worth for them (…) When I went into the organization all my worth in the family was shattered (…) When I returned to school, now, they care more. Because she is going to make money in the future, she will have a job, and she went to school; there are not many women who go to school in this society. She went to school, she has a worth."

Indeed, Öykü's narrative perfectly reveals that social and cultural capital provided by education not only ensure a higher socio-economic status in the society but also a more esteemed and prestigious position in the household. The situation is more explicit especially if the person in question is a woman who has to acquire the means to achieve independence from the family so as to reduce the patriarchal control over her life and decisions. During our interview, Öykü defined Yeditepe University with the following words:

> "Yeditepe is actually like a company. Even a conservative company, *ulusalcılar*… Money is important… [It's] very very expensive, departments are all very very expensive, very very rich students come… But not everyone is rich. There are people who have scholarships. There are people who do not have scholarship and have limited means. There are students who pay in installments although they pay tuition. (…) I think it's not like a university environment. I think it looks more a like a *dershane*. Really… More like a *dershane* where rich people attend."

Öykü considered her university to be some kind of a cram school attended by rich students, because the campus could not provide a culturally stimulating atmosphere where students would engage in intellectual production both individually and collectively. Öykü was identifying the university also with corporations not only because it was a private university but because she thought all students came to classes as if they were going to work. Hence Öykü perceived that on campus the spirit of the university is reduced to pure education which also works through the mentality of commodity production:

> "It is not a place where everyone feels comfortable, awesome [place] where there are awesome conferences, meetings, talks, where you have several options, where someone like a good man of letters or a good anthropologist comes from the outside and you have the chance to go and listen. There is nothing like that. Only lectures are given, people go home. It's like this… People come as if going to work, I think students also do so, they just go in and out of classes. Many of them [think] "I shall have a diploma, and I shall work at my father's company."

Kemalist ideology is one of the decisive characteristics of Yeditepe University. Indeed, on the English version of the university website homepage, following words immediately draw the attention of the visitor : "Yeditepe University, following Atatürk's renaissance…"[169] Moreover, under the section named "General Information", Bedrettin Dalan, the founder of the university, finishes his introductory comments on the university with the following words: "Let it not be forgotten that Ataturk's principles and the illuminating light of science and scholarship are the most effective means that will pave the way for a developed society and achieve welfare."[170] The nationalist ideology of the university also reflects on the campus agenda determined and regulated by the university administration, rather than the students:

> "On certain days they almost hold demonstrations even. Last year this thing happened, 12 maybe, I don't remember, (but) many soldiers were killed. They held a demonstration recited the Independence [National] Anthem, kept a minute

[169] In the Turkish version of the homepage the same phrase is written as follows: "Yeditepe Üniversitesi, Atatürk rönesansını devam ettiren üniversite."

[170] In order to read the full text, see http://www.yeditepe.edu.tr/home/soz.dot?catId=about-yeditepe&id=general-information&language_id=2

of silence and all. Theb school's bond with official ideology and Kemalizm is very strong."

This ideological framework also shapes the ethnicity and linguistic policies of the university. Although students developed a collective demand for a Kurdish language course to be opened in the university, the course was not opened. Öykü, Mordemek and many other students, about eighty people, petitioned the Rectorate demanding the Kurdish elective course, yet they could not even receive a response. Öykü resented the situation, especially considering the rich variety of language courses given at the university. "For example, there are seventeen or perhaps more courses under foreign languages at school. There is Catalan, Armenian, Hebrew, Spanish, Catalan as I said, but no Kurdish."

Öykü also had difficulty with the way she was treated by her professors as a Kurdish student, but interestingly, the problem was not originating much from discrimination or oppression this time but from an orientalist perception. According to Öykü, they seemed to encourage her for doing her best academically, yet this encouragement also carried the presumption that she as a student coming from the "East" could "probably" achieve the success, if she tried hard, which was always already granted to those students who had started the race from a more advantaged position:

> "Being a Kurd here, my professors are good I think, I mean they are not othering, but nevertheless there is this thing. I think they like me a lot, I mean there are some among my professors who like me. But those seem to say "you can do it, you too can do it" as if "you are Kurdish you can do it." Eee, I already know that, I've come here and I'm trying to do something. You do not need to emphasize it, and this is something like positive othering, there is something positive in it. It is unnecessary."[171]

Öykü observed a similar orientalist attitude among the students from Western provinces as well. Having encountered this situation few times, Öykü felt herself like an authentic object, of the Western Gaze, which was approached and consumed with wonder, desire and the feeling of superiority. This orientalist attitude reproduces the

[171] Öykü: "Burda Kürt olmak da, benim hocalarım iyi bence, yani çok ötekileştirmiyolar ama yine de ister istemez şey var yani. Beni çok seviyolar bence, yani sevenler var hocalarımdan. Ama o da şey diyor sanki, işte sen yapabilirsin, sen de yapabilirsin, sanki sen Kürtsün yapabilirsin. E ben zaten bunu biliyorum, gelmişim bir şeyler yapmaya çalışıyorum. Bunu vurgulamana gerek yok, bu bir de iyi anlamda bir ötekileştirme gibi bi şey oluyo, pozitif bir şeyi var bunun. Buna gerek yok."

constructed categories of "East" and "West" and binary oppositions existing not only among countries but also among the regions of the same country. Öykü's feeling of otherness and estrangement has been constantly reproduced as she has been "reminded" of her "position" within the dichotomy:

> "And the students at school keep authenticizing you like this. Like Eastern, such and such happens in your region, such and such happens in the East… custom killing is given as example in the east, violence on women is in the east, or there is always something like this, they look too much from the West. It's as if that understanding of Europe is right here at Yeditepe. "Aaaa, you are going to go to the East?" "Eee, I am from there, I live there, I grew up there…" "How will you go?" "Eee, I'll go just like the way everyone does." You are always such an other (…) There is always this thing, this perception. You are sitting at the tea garden for example. Let's say someone from TKP comes, says to you "Did the sun of Mesopotamia bring you here?"[172] (…) Always like this, they do this to you, they remind you."

Öykü has been no more engaged in a political activism through which she could translate her political concerns and greivances into political demands. Since she could not also find an environment of organized solidarity on the campus, her feeling of estrangement in the university has been kept intact. This situation even got worse at critical moments when she had to face that what came as a disaster to her would mean nothing for other students on campus. The days following the Uludere Masacre[173] were one of those critical moments:

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[172] Öykü: "Bir de okuldaki öğrenciler de seni böyle hep otantize ediyorlar. İşte Doğulu, sizin oralarda böyle oluyo, Doğu'da böyle oluyo... Töre cinayeti örnek veriliyo doğuda, kadına şiddet doğuda ya da hep böyle şey var, çok fazla batıdan bakıyorlar. Sanki Avrupa'daki o anlayış aynı bu Yeditepe'de de var yani. "Aaa Doğu'ya mı gidiceksin?" "E zaten ben oralıyım, orda yaşıyorum, orda büyüdüm…" "Nasıl gidiceksin?" "E nasıl gidiliyosa ben de öyle gidicem." Hep böyle bir ötekisin (…) Bu şey var hep böyle bu algı. Geliyo oturuyor mesela, sen çay bahçesinde oturuyosun. Bir tane TKP'den biri geliyor diyelim, sana işte Mezopotamya'nın güneşi mi seni attı buraya? (…) Hep böyle bunu sana şey yapıyorlar, hatırlatıyorlar sana."

[173] The massacre happened on December 28, 2011 when Turkish warplanes killed 34 civilians, who had trespassed the border from Turkey to Iraq and were returning home with smuggled goods carried in their backs and on donkeys, in the vicinity of Gülyazı and Ortasu (Roboski) villages of Uludere. For more information, see: http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalDetayV3&ArticleID=1073909&Date=29.12.2011&CategoryID=77 ; http://bianet.org/bianet/insan-haklari/135106-gulyazi-ve-ortasu-koyluleri-anlatiyor ; http://bianet.org/bianet/toplum/135115-basin-uludereyi-nasil-gordu and http://bianet.org/biamag/bianet/135100-uludere-siyaseti-sarsti

"It was terrible, there is a whole different world at school, your friend reads totally different news items, hears totally different things, has a totally different life. You come to school, you are in a very different world. Actually there is a great gap between us. (…) Very very different, you don't hear the same news. There was a massacre, you are in shock. We did not go to school that day, there was a protest on the other side, we went there in fear, we were very uneasy, it was terrible. You feel these things, you live these things, but you come to school, there is no word about these. When the issue comes up, they say "who said they were civilians? But they were killed because they were thought to be terrorists." Or "They were smugglers anyway." There is such great gap in between, a middle ground is very very limited. And you keep silent, and you become incredibly unhappy and you keep silent."[174]

5.5. Weaving Political Subjectivity through Ethnicity and Gender

"The place you were born, the things you have seen make you political" said Mori. Her narrative on politics urged me to rethink about what being political means, especially considering a particular group of young people in Turkey, born and raised in the midst of a low-intensity war. Mori was born in a village in Varto, Muş. By the time she began YİBO, she had witnessed their house being raided by the soldiers numerous times. So she had encountered physical and psychological violence at a very early age. Moreover, as I illustrated in the previous chapters, she experienced multiple forms of ethnic-based oppression throughout her education years, especially in terms of language. As a result, today she considers herself as being political although she is not engaged in any form of political activity. She had been significantly affected by the predicament of the Kurdish issue not only in her daily personal interactions but also via

[174] Öykü: "Çok kötüydü, okulda çok farklı bi dünya var, yanındaki arkadaşın çok başka haberleri okuyo, çok başka şeyler duyuyo, çok başka bir yaşamı var. Sen okula geliyorsun, sen çok başka bir dünyadasın. İnanılmaz bir uçurum var aslında aramızda. (…) Çok çok farklı, sen aynı haberleri duymuyorsun. Katliam olmuş sen onun şokuyla yaşıyorsun. O gün okula gitmedik, karşıda bir protesto yapıldı, korka korka oraya gittik, çok tedirgindik çok kötüydü. Sen bunları hissediyosun, bunları yaşıyosun, ama okula geliyosun, bu söz konusu edilmiyo. Konuşulduğu zaman da onların sivil olduğunu kim söyledi ki deniyo mesela. Ama onlar terörist zannedip öldürüldüler. Ya da onlar zaten kaçakçıydılar. O kadar uçurum var ki arada, ortak geleceğin zemin çok çok az. Ve susuyosun yani, ve inanılmaz mutsuz oluyosun ve susuyosun yani."

its reflections on the political agenda. Moreover, as a woman raised in a geography marked by strict gender roles and patriarchy, she also developed a gender-conscious perspective linked to ethnicity.

Many of the quantitative and qualitative studies on post-1980 youth in Turkey represent the youth in question as apolitical, underlining their increasing reluctance to participate in political organizations. Lüküslü's (2009) study draws attention to the drawbacks of traditional politics and parties as effective in the youth's reluctance to engage in politics and, borrowing from Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2001), suggests an alternative vision of young people as "actively unpolitical" (2009:163), instead of selfish profit-seekers. Yet, Lüküslü's study, as well as others, fails to address ethnicity dynamic as part of analyses. Narratives of my research participants revealed that the experience of Kurdish young women, especially those grown up in Eastern Turkey, have a different relationship with politics. Although not all of my interviewees had an engagement with political activism, they were all politically conscious young people. Moreover, their politics can not only be understood within the context of the Kurdish movement; intersecting axes of oppression based on ethnicity and gender have to be considered in order to better account for their political subjectivity. Experiences in İstanbul as an urban space in general and on their university campuses in particular have been significant in shaping their political subjectivity. However, Mori thinks they had already been political before coming to İstanbul, as Kurdish women grown up in the state of war and in a highly conflictual political space marked by subordination in terms of ethnicity and gender. According to Mori, they have no chance of staying away from politics:

> "I don't know, we were born into politics after all. If you were born somewhere in the East and if you can see through things you can't stay away from politics. I am so tired of constant deaths and no longer can watch news on TV. I tried to withdraw from politics or did not want to defend any political idea. I still don't want it and try to stay out of it. I don't want to judge things only as a Kurd. I try to live only as a human but it doesn't work. (…) You can't stay indifferent to these incidents."

Politics and conflict is an "integral part of domesticity and the everyday experience of the Kurdish community" (Peteet, cited in Weiss, 2010:62). Narratives of Mori and other interviewees revealed that being political can not be solely defined by membership in a political organization or participating in demonstrations. Moreover, voicing political concerns and demands do not require involving in a political activism.

Mori had never engaged in any kind of political activism before, but she discussed the Kurdish issue and the condition of Kurdish women in Turkey at great length. She emphasized that Kurdish women have been experiencing a double yoke at the intersections of ethnicity and gender. Her "low voice" as a woman has been reproduced and reinforced by multiple forms of ethnic oppression: "Men have a louder voice in the East. As women, we couldn't raise our voice much there. These incidents you've gone through, being a Kurd lowered your voice even further."[175] Mori did not want to support or engage in an identity politics defined around Kurdishness and even did not want to evaluate the current agenda from a position of Kurdish identification. Her desire to live "only as a human" evokes the longing for a shared community where individuals pursue a common life while their differences are recognized. However, every new incident in the political agenda with respect to the Kurdish issue as well as in her personal relations pushed her into a (re)justification of her existence as a Kurd. Hence she found herself operating within the discourse of identity politics while loosing the ground on which she could build relations reinforced with commonalities. Mori encountered her friends' indifference to the Uludere Massacre while she was shocked and deeply influenced by the incident. She had to break up with her Turkish boyfriend since their different approach to the Kurdish issue created a problem among them after some time: "For instance, I used to have a boyfriend who was a Turk. Initially, it was like we were getting on well. Later, I'm being Kurd and he's being Turk… I saw there was a great abyss between us or he didn't understand me." It was emphasized throughout Mori's narrative that politics, especially related with Kurdish identity claims, had been effective in Mori's whole life both in macro and micro levels. She was politiced as a Kurdish woman in a society which is marked by strict gender roles favoring men and the domination of Turkish identity.Yet, her hope for the future was not characterized by an emphasis on any identity, like Kurdishness, but a peaceful coexistence of differences, free encounter and communication. She was dreaming of a world where even mother tongues do not matter much as long as people could understand each other.[176] Her

[175] Mori: "Hani Doğu'da yaşadıysan zaten erkeklerin sesi biraz daha gür çıkar ya… İşte mesela ordayken zaten kız olarak sesimiz çok yükselmedi, çok gür çıkmadı. Bu olaylar, Kürt olmak, işte bu yaşadıkların da senin sesinin daha alçalmasına sebep oldu."

[176] Mori: "Evet, kapalıyım ama açıklara laf gelsin istemem, açık olabilirim ama kapalılara laf gelsin istemem. Kürdüm, ama Kürtlüğüm kabul edilsin, ben de onları kabul edeyim her ne şekilde olursa olsun. Uzakdoğulu arkadaşlarım olsun isterim, siyahi arkadaşlarım olsun isterim, fark etmez yani… Ama yeter ki rahat olalım. Dil fark

dream was embodied in the image of "multitude" which Hardt and Negri (2004:99) define as being:

> "…composed of a set of singularities – and by singularity here we mean a social subject whose difference cannot be reduced to sameness, a difference that remains different. The component parts of the people are indifferent in their unity; they become an identity by negating or setting aside their differences. The plural singularities of the multitude thus stand in contrast to the undifferentiated unity of the people"

What Hardt and Negri mean by "the people" is indeed the people of the modernist national model which is based on the assimilation of differences into a homogenous identity. On the other hand, the multitude stands for a community which harbors subjects who can communicate, collaborate and act together on a common ground while remaining different: "The multitude is an internally different, multiple social subject whose constitution and action is based not on identity or unity (or, much less, indifference) but on what it has in common" (Hardt and Negri, 2004:100).

As I mentioned in the previous section, Zozan did not commit herself in any kind of political activism either, although she was in interaction with different political groups on her university campus. It partly had to do with the authoritarian character of the political organizations where she could not freely manifest her subjectivity. Neverthless, it would be wrong to consider Zozan as an apolitical university student. To the contrary, she searches for a new language for politics in which she can fully express herself, a language which is cleansed of classifications and fixed identities excluding other subject positions. She has her political concerns yet those concerns do not have counterparts in the present political language or forms of organizing. When she looks back at her life, she identifies a period when she was outwardly expressing and emphasizing her ethnic belonging by performing "Kurdishness", drawing the boundaries of her identity by self-ascription. Yet, now she does not find any single identity position sufficient to express her subjectivity:

> "Before, I had an intense desire to manifest myself everywhere, to express my Kurdisness. Now I don't. I want people to know me first, I am a human above all. And in the past I was pleased with being labelled in fact. Kurd, leftist, *yurtsever*, pro-BDP… I used to like these labels very much. Now, on

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etmez, din fark etmez, ama yeter ki birbirimizle konuşabilelim yani. (…) Diyorum ya, öyle bir dünya olsun ki çok da anadiller fark etmesin yani."

> the contrary, I hate all of them. I even do not want to accept the label of woman."

Mordemek also touched upon a similar point, her desire to be human first and above all. She rejected being included in any category of ethnicity, gender or class and relating to other people within the discourse of any strict identity:

> "I want to be human above all. (…) I want to listen to others, I don't want to judge people because of their choices. I don't know, it seems very cruical to me. And apart from race or religion, there is a reality in the society: to be woman or man... (…) I want to be human before I'm included in any group, class or sex, etc. I don't want to be blind."

Mordemek recognizes how such categories of identity are effective in our daily interactions, perceptions of the self and others. She emphasized that operating in the current political discourse; we come to imagine ourselves in several identity positions, being pushed to manifest our subjectivities within clear-cut boundaries excluding others. She longed for a new form of society in which all people are free to imagine themselves solely as humans:

> "I wish there was not a concept of nation, etc, but there is. Yes, I am a Kurdish Alevi woman. Ok, I can define it like this if a definition is necessary. But, I wish there was no need for such a thing on earth. I wish we would be only human."

Like Mordemek, Zozan hates categories, yet when I asked her how she could identify herself, she paused for a while and then said that she is a leftist. I wondered how she defined leftism since she previously remarked that she hated being labelled as a leftist. Zozan did not find herself theoretically well-informed, considering herself even unable to properly define socialism. While characterizing herself as a leftist, Zozan was indeed redefining the term in accordance with her own political subjectivity as well as her concrete experiences: "I think, leftism is being on the side of the oppressed."[177] On the other hand, she did not consider herself as a true revolutionist since she had not made her own revolution:

[177] "Zozan: "Solculuk şudur, ezilenin yanında olmaktır bence. (…) Alevi olsun, ne bileyim dininden dolayı olsun, hatta yeri gelir mesela… Ki solcular bunu hani bizim hani kadın öğrencilerin işte başörtüsüyle içeri girmesine mesela karşılardı, işte cemaat girecek falan filan. Ya ben buna bile hani noolursa olsun diyordum, hani onların hakkı diyordum. Mesela onların bile yanında yer alabilecektim ki cemaatten nefret eden bir insanım. Hani bu konularda bile ezilenin yanında olmak diye düşünüyorum."

> "I think, being political means this: to make one's own personal revolution first of all. I always say that, "I am a leftist, but I am not a revolutionist." […] If I still can't rise against my uncle, if I act hypocritically by not openly expressing myself to my friends, it means that I did not make my own revolution."

Zozan was talking about her inability to live an open and free life as a woman in her extended family as well as refraining from expressing her political views vis-à-vis her politically active Kurdish friends. Her uncle was also living in İstanbul. She was respected by him as a university student and enjoyed a relative freedom in their relations as opposed to his daughter who failed to enter into the university and lives under constant surveillance. Yet Zozan thinks that her relations with her uncle was characterized by hypocrisy since she conformed to the "proper" mode of speaking and behaving expected by her while together and avoided manifesting her own ideas and real lifestyle.[178] She could not speak and live as she is neither with her relatives nor with her friends; hence she did not consider herself as truly political. According to Zozan, being political means to live in harmony with one's own political ideology, to change one's own life before changing the world and to struggle for one's own liberation at least in daily basis. According to her, one needs not to be engaged in any kind of political activism so as to be political:

> "For instance, there are people who have no relation with any political party or leftism and maybe have no idea about the left, but struggle against injustice or those who were oppressed as a woman in the household and rise against her family or elope… I think this is what political means."

Zozan's experiences as a woman within the family as well as in İstanbul as a Kurdish woman university student were effective in the development of her subjectivity with respect to dynamics of ethnicity and gender. Up until her university years, she

[178] Zozan: "Mesela benimle yaşıt bir kuzenim var, benden bir yaş küçük ama o üniversiteyi kazanamadı bir türlü. Mesela ona çok büyük bir baskı var. Her şeyine karışılır onun, giyimine karışılır. Ama mesela bana karışmıyorlar. Ben okuduğum için olduğunu düşünüyorum ki mesela şunu söylüyor hani, dayım mesela beni alıyor işte bir yerlere götürüyor ama öteki kuzenime bunu yapmıyor. Şunu söylüyor, ben sana güveniyorum diyor, onun aklı bir karış havada diyor. Ama ben buna inanmıyorum. Beni ne kadar tanıyorsun ki… Ben ister istemez ikiyüzlü davranmak zorunda kalıyorum mesela dayımlara giderken. Atıyorum ben mesela içkiyi çok normal karşılarken içkiden dayımların yanında bahsedemiyorum bile. Onlar da şey hani işte, Zozan okuldan eve evden okula giden bir öğrenci düşünüyorlar, hani dersleriyle ilgili, işte çok efendi. Çünkü onların yanında hep hani konuşabildiğim kadar konuşuyorum."

lived in her hometown with her family. The relations at home were characterized by a patriarchal hierarchy, especially her mother at the lowest level as a woman, being treated indifferently by her father and always busy with household chores. Moreover, her mother was reproducing this gender hierarchy by entitling Zozan with more housework and less freedom of speech as opposed to her elder brothers. Having been raised within such an authoritarian structure, Zozan avoided engaging in political groups during her university years due to the nondemocratic way the things are carried out and her inability to freely express herself within those organizations as well, although Zozan felt a high responsibility towards Kurdish and leftist politics at the time. Zozan could not find the oppurtunity to integrate her own subjective concerns into the agenda of any political group. She came to consider what she perceived as political to be manifested through "micro-political" actions. (Pattie et al., 2004, quoted in Farthing, 2010:189) and found herself as not truly political by failing to do so. Zozan's account indeed comes very close to what Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2001) calls the politics of young people, "freedom's children". They argue the paradigm in which the contemporary youth is represented as lacking values and are apolitical since they reject to engage in traditional politics. They suggest that young people internalize freedom in such a way that the discourse of "decline of values" actually contains the fear of freedom in general and the fear of freedom's children in particular (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2001:158). Young people face new and different kinds of issues to deal with as they internalize freedom:

> How can the longing for self-determination be brought into harmony with the equally important longing for shared community? How can one simultaneously be individualistic and merge with the group? How might the variety of voices which vie within each of us in a confusing world be combined into a political statement and action pointing beyond the present day? (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2001:158)

As Beck and Beck-Gernsheim state, young people reject the traditional way politics is pursued, because they long for a new form of society the possibility and parameters of which can not be negotiated within the discourse of current politics. They ask "questions that slip the screens of the large political organizations" (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2001:158) and which go beyond the language of party politics. Hence young people navigate an entirely new form of society through the "self-actualization of political agendas" (Farthing, 2010:188). Following from many studies on the politics of the youth, Farthing claims that many young people "have turned to a new form of

political participation - the "life politics" of self-actualization, or living your political ideology" (2010:188). Even though Zozan did not consider herself as truly realizing her life politics, her subjectivity was shaped by a belief in necessity to do so in order to achieve freedom first of all in her daily relations. Besides, according to her, political organization is not only a tool through which individuals are organized to struggle for freedom, but also the very place where freedom should be negotiated while different subjectivities are manifested. Although Zozan was acknowledging the basic political demands of the groups on campus, namely leftists and *yurtseverler*, she could not see her differences as equally recognized as her commonalities with them; hence she found herself unable to express her political subjectivity and to achieve a free and open encounter within the groups. So Zozan even did not consider her relatively active times within the groups as truly political since her attitude had not been complying with what she perceived as political participation, "the life politics of self-actualization" (Farthing, 2010:188).

Indeed, Zozan's perception of being political is shared by many other research participants. As I illustrated in the previous section, Mizgin was defining herself as a Kurdish feminist woman underlining the intersecting oppressions of ethnicity and gender as shaping her current political subjectivity:

> "My family experiences discrimination for being Kurdish, women in the family experience further discrimination as women. (…) If I wasn't exposed to subordination as a woman in my family and as a Kurd in the society, I would probably not be a Kurdish feminist woman."

However, she did not experience those multiple agents of subordination in similar degrees: "I know how much I struggle in order to receive education. (…) I had experience of womanhood more; I was oppressed mostly as a woman." The intensity of gender oppression was highly influential and more explicit than her experience of Kurdishness in her whole life, from her period of childhood and access to school to her university years in İstanbul. Mizgin was raised as a Turk by her parents who have spoken only in Turkish with her. She had no problem about inability to speak Turkish with standard accent. Since she was not easily stigmatized as a Kurd during her education years, she had not experienced a direct oppression or discrimination in terms of ethnicity. However, she has lived under constant surveillance of the men in her family. This gender subordination was mostly explicit in her access to education. She struggled against mutually reinforcing dynamics of poverty and male dominance as she

managed to pursue her education. Yet gender pressure was characterizing not only her relations with the family, but it is also a pervasive dynamic of the society at large.. Mizgin maintains a feminist approach not only due to her subordination as a woman in the family and in the society at large, but also to the Kurdish issue and the war in Eastern Turkey. I already mentioned, in chapter 5, about her feminist antimilitarist outlook on the Kurdish movement and the war between the PKK and the Turkish state. Here, I want to emphasize how her experience of gender subordination shaped her imagination of a society as well as the city she wants to live in the future. Although she was born and raised in Gaziantep, she wants to maintain her life in İstanbul, on the assumption that she would not freely manifest her feminist subjectivity in Eastern Turkey due to patriarchal dynamics operating there:

> "I think, the only solution is to learn how to live together. (…) Let's imagine Kurdistan is founded and they told me to go and live there. I can't, because I have a life here, I'm planning to live here. (…) As I said, as a feminist woman I have clearly no place in Kurdistan as well. Women who are more revolutionist and who dissent are considered as marginal and crazy there too."

Mizgin longs for a peaceful coexistence in an equal and free society that would be established in Turkey, instead of a Kurdish nation-state in Eastern Turkey. According to Mizgin, state, nationalism and patriarchy are so interrelated that in such a possible state the problem of women would maintain despite of the current revolutionary process which is empowering on the part of women.[179] Mizgin was not involved in party activism, her political organizing was limited to a feminist club at Boğaziçi University. She organized feminist activities on campus and wrote in the journal of the club. However, according to Mizgin, being political is more than that. She found her feminist activism on Boğaziçi campus as a relatively easy way to engage in politics, considering the liberal atmosphere of the campus. What is harder and more significant, on the other hand, is to carry her activism on campus to every sphere of her life. Mizgin was about to graduate at the time of our interview. Since she had spent her university years in İstanbul mostly within the space of "Boğaziçi", namely on the campus and in the neighborhood, she had not serious difficulty in adapting feminist politics to her life. She had concerns as to how she could carry her feminist subjectivity

[179] Mizgin: "Kurulma aşamasında her türlü devrimci şey mubahken, kurulduktan sonra sistem kurulacak ve her türlü kurulan sistemde maalesef kadınlara yer yok yani şu anda. Bir sistem, bir devlet kurduğunda zaten direk eril olmak zorundasın."

to her life after graduation, to her future workplace to put it more concretely. Boğaziçi is a utopia according to Mizgin and being political resides in the attempt to live, speak and behave as a feminist woman beyond utopia.[180] Like Zozan, Mizgin also defined politics in terms of micro-political actions. She was trying to live in harmony with her own political ideology and to struggle with gender discrimination and sexism as they appear in her everyday interactions with people. She was political just because she was attempting to realize her political agenda in her own life, negotiating the very possibility of a society she longed for through her everyday actions: "The hardest part of the question is to adapt politics to my own life. I am not political so as to pull votes, I am political because I want to live in this way." Lavin also underlined the significance of small everyday actions, rather than big talks in creating a more free life one wishes to have. Her activities on the Boğaziçi campus, as part of a club and through several Initiatives they established as a response to current political agenda as well as demonstrations she participated both in and outside the campus was highly influential in the process of her politicization. She was a Kurdish Alevi woman and believed that multiple axes of oppression linked to these identity positions have been effective in her political activism in many fronts. She was not only sensitive to injustices made against Kurds or Alevis, but gender issue had also been always in her own agenda, determining her political choices as well as her approach to positions of political organizations. In her initial years in Boğaziçi, she was active in ESP (Ezilenlerin Sosyalist Partisi-Socialist Party of the Oppressed) organization on the campus, remaining distant to the

[180] Mizgin: "Feminist bir kadın olarak Boğaziçi'nde yaşamak görece kolayken, ben mesela şeyi düşünüyorum. Bir kere çalışmaya böyle ek iş yapmaya çalıştım. Artık böyle en ufak bir erkek tavır, bir taciz beni daha çok etkiliyor. Eskiden dünya böyle diyip geçebiliyordum. Ama şu anda dünya böyle olmak zorunda değil dediğim için daha çok gözüme batıyor ve şeyi düşünüyorum, nasıl bir iş yerinde çalışabilicem bu kafayla? Feminizmi nasıl taşıyabilirim ki ben işyerindeki erkeklere yani? Hadi sadece şey mevzusu değil, oturup da bana çok eşit davransınlar değil, sadece rahat giyinmek, rahat konuşmak, ezilmemek, tacize uğramamak bile bir şey yani, zorluk... (…) Bir de politik olmanın altını doldurmaya çalışmak daha zor. Yani kulüpte çalışmak, yazılar yazmak, bir şeyleri teşhir etmek kolay. Hakkaten Boğaziçi'ne eleştiri orda gelir ya, 'ha burda konuşuyorsunuz, konuşun bakalım' eleştirisi gelir ya. Starbucks'ta [Starbucks İşgali] oturup feminist konuşma yapmak kolay, bir derste feminist tartışma açmak kolay politika dersinde, ama gidip de gündelik hayatta bunu taşımak kolay değil. Ben onu yapmaya çalışıyorum çünkü diğer türlüsü çok şizofrenik. Hayatıma taşımaya çalışıyorum ve o çok zor. Yani o yüzden ütopya diyorum. Bu ütopya içerisinde yaşayabiliyorsun ama onu gerçek hayata aktarma biraz zor oluyor."

pro-Kurdish party at the time, considering that its agenda is limited to Kurdish identity politics. One of the crucial factors leading Lavin's attention and energy towards the Kurdish movement afterwards was her recognition of the active agency of the women in the movement:

> "While in the ESP I had an explanation that they feature only their Kurdish identities, they struggle only for that, but I am also an Alevi and a woman, and they ignore these problematics. Later, I realized that it was not the case. In fact, women are active in all the organizations of the Kurdish movement, among yurtsever organization, in DTP, BDP… They give priority to the agency of women."

She was mobilized in the ESP, because she believed that although having a leftist outlook, the party had not only concerns limited to the class issue, but also engaged in problematics of gender, ethnicity and so on. However, she left the organization on the campus as a result of what she perceives as the tension between theory and practice in terms of gender issue. The party and its members on the campus were defending women's rights in general, yet Lavin observed that the attitudes of her male friends in the organization did not comply with their discourse on gender. As a result of her political experiences, Lavin came to characterize politics as mostly explicit (in the sense of having a direct effect on people's lives and relations) and worth dealing with in daily interactions. She believed in the necessity to struggle with power relations not only in macro-level, but more significantly in one's personal relations through deciphiring and deconstructing the seemingly trivial traces of multiple forms of oppression. In Lavin's account, power and oppression are not locked into a binary opposition between an active powerful oppressor and a passive oppressed subject. Instead, she underlined that each individual actively participated in articulating and reproducing power and oppression in various forms mostly in daily life. So, according to her, struggle for freedom and change resides more in every day attempts for self-actualization of political agendas in micro-spaces than in self-commitment to a political party or advocating political ideologies[181]:

[181] Lavin: "Hani üniversite bende bu farkındalığı yaratınca aslında ya da işte bu özgürleşme mücadeleleriyle ya da işte okumalarla bilmemnelerle, güzel olanın en azından yapılabilecek olanın, benim kendi adıma yapabilecek olduğum şeyin, sadece kendi hayatımı dönüştürmek olduğu, hani kendi hayatımdaki bütün Foucault'nun tabiriyle en ufak iktidar mekanizmasını bulup da… Çünkü orda bir yerde iktidar yok insani ilişkilerde iktidar var. Tam tersine biz yaratıyoruz, gündelik ilişkilerimizde her gün yeniden belki yaratıyoruz yani. Belki bugün Kürtler çok eziliyor diyip tekrardan bir daha yarattık gibi. Hani bunun en ufak detayına kadar farkına varıp düzeltmek yani. En

> "What I have learned and try to do now is to find the mechanism of power beneath even a trivial word, to think where it comes from and then to uncover it. I think we can create a more free life if we decipher and deconstruct the power relations within minor details, rather than engaging in big talks."

I think, Havin's self-narrative is also emblematic in revealing how my interviewees find their own subjective way out of the limited terrain in which politics is imagined and practiced today. Although every area of my interviewees' lives are highly politicized especially in terms of their identity claims, in the context of 2010s Turkey, the political space in which they can operate as students and young people has been getting narrower on a daily basis as well as their actions becoming increasingly criminalized. In other words, their retreat from party politics does not only have to do with the authoritarian character of the political organizations or the shallow ground on which traditional politics is pursued, but also the fear of a random detention or conviction that might put an end to their education and change their whole life. Havin's refusal to take part in political activism and the alternative way through which she chooses to manifest her political subjectivity is indeed defined by this double bind. Havin thinks "politics is a dirty bussiness" and unable to create any change. Hence, she belives her political participation can not contribute to the difference she dreams to occur in the world: Havin's perception of politics echoes post-1980 youth's disavowal of politics as a clentalist sphere defined by relations of self-interest and widespread corruption (Lüküslü, 2009: 147) and their pessimistic outlook on politics as a rigid sphere closed to any real change (2009:150). Havin also suggests that political endeavor does not only fail to make any substantial difference, but it also brings harm to those

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azından kendi hayatlarımızda o küçük özgür ya da daha iktidarsız daha müdahalesiz bir hayat yaratabilmek hayalidir benimki. Başka bir şey değil. Bu kadınlıkla ilgili de mesela yine öyle. Mesela benim en büyük şeylerimden biri bu oldu hep yani. Hayatının en ortasında duran bir şey ya hani, en az Kürt olmak kadar o da içinde yani, her gün kadınsın, her gün yeniden ne bileyim sokakta gezerken otobüste işte taciz ediliyorsun bilmemne. (…) Bu fiziksel kısmıyla ilgili zaten mücadele ediyorum her gün her zaman. Ama daha küçük ayrıntılar da çok önemli bence. (…) Yani sevgilinle olan ilişkin midir mevzu mesela, o kadar küçük ayrıntılarda çıkan şeyler var ki yani. Küçücük bir beklentinin nereye bağlanabileceğini biliyorsun. O yüzden yapabildiğim şey, en azından şu an öğrendiğim şey küçük bir kelimeden bile ordaki aslında iktidar mekanizmasını bulup onun nerden geldiğini düşünüp bunu açığa çıkarmak. Büyük laflardan ziyade küçük ayrıntılardaki o şeyleri dengesizlikleri bulup deşifre edersek deconstruct edersek bence bunu yaratabiliriz gibi geliyor. Daha özgür bir hayat yaratabiliriz gibi geliyor bana."

struggling for an alternative society.[182] Havin wants to express her subjectivity in an artistic way using her own mother tongue. She wishes to combine her artistic engagement with her political concerns in a distinctive manner by which she would voice her dreams, silenced by the hegemonic discourse of politics, through the universal power of art. Havin does not only reclaim her mother tongue, but manages to turn it into the "language" by which she would negotiate art and politics, the local and the universal, silence and self-expression as well as oppression and freedom:

> "I am struggling to do something good for Kurds, maybe good for the world, but in my language, to do a good thing in my own language. I feel such a struggle would be more useful and the best I can do in the name of Kurds. For, I don't want to take risk, I don't want to perish."

Almost all of my research participants displayed such concerns about the increasing mass detentions of those engaged in Kurdish politics. They are Kurdish women students trying to live, think and act in a highly negative context of politics defined by fear, self-censorhip and introversion. They had grown up in the *Olağanüstü Hal Bölgesi* (State of Emergency Zone), in a political atmosphere defined by a feeling of insecurity and the fear of soldiers on the part of students whose "identities are depicted as potential threats to national security" (Altınay, 2004:155). Moreover, they are also political university students in a period when all dissident activities are criminalized in a way reinforcing their sense of strong insecurity and fear dating back to their childhood years. They do not only witness on TV the detention of ever increasing number of political subjects, but have closely experienced the judicial processes associated with injustices through the arrestment and conviction of their friends and family members. They are cognizant of the slippery ground on which they are positioned and what they may undergo after such a possible detention. For both themselves and their families, university education is a gain which they achieved after a long journey of struggle, and an oppurtunity which promises to provide them better life chances. Engaging in active Kurdish politics is associated with risking all the investment they made on their education and the promise of a better life. In that sense,

[182] Havin: "Bitmiyor, politika kirli iştir yani, kirlidir, bitmez yani kesinlikle bitmez. Şey gibi yani, çamaşır makinasına atılmış gibi… Yüz dereceye alırsın, kaynar küçülürsün, elbise küçülür gibi küçülüyorsun içinde ve zararına oluyor, bir şeyin olmuyor, faydan olmuyor yani, bir şeyi değiştiremiyorsun. Öyle bir şeyi değiştiremeyeceğimi hissediyorum."

their parents' attempt to keep them away from politics is caharacterized more by the fear for their children's life and future than a pro-state attitude or assimilation. Öykü encountered fierce opposition from her family when she was engaged with the *yurtsever* organization for three years after graduating from high school. She explained their opposition in a similar vein:

> "My family have been supporting this movement and giving their votes for years, but your child's involvement in it is a very different thing. They were thinking that I might go and join the guerilla and they would not see me again, or I might end up in the prison and my life would be ruined. Their priority was me, securing my own future which I would achieve through university. That is why they didn't want it."

Throughout her university years, Öykü had not participated in active politics as a *yurtsever*. Fear not only characterizes the mood of her childhood which shapes her experience and position as a Kurdish student in İstanbul, but also her relation with the political. She wants to pursue her education and realize her dreams instead of a life in prison which is very likely under current circumstances:

> "Sometimes I hear sounds of fireworks and get scared. It reminds me of the sounds of skirmishes during the operations towards the evening in my childhood. If I was not scared, I would may not be here. I mean it's a very human thing. Fear narrows your ground, you do not act. There are a lot of activities, demonstrations which I do not attend. I fear, because I would be dismissed from the school, but I want to pursue my education, I want to pursue my life. I will have a very different way if I enter into prison. I will engage in very different things when I get out."

My interviewees' narratives carry the burden of witnessing the detentions of those people akin to them, but more importantly the feeling of guilt for witnessing and staying outside while others are prisoned. Öykü's account is very explicit in this regard. As she frequently referred during the interview, there was a price to be paid, like prison, and she had not paid it: "To be active is to dedicate your whole life to the movement after all and that means to risk the prison and every thing that follows. (…) It sounds embarrasing to many of us speaking like this. You feel like always some others pay the price, but you don't." However, Öykü's position and choice can not be considered as apoliticism or selfishness. Instead, she came up with her own distinctive solution to the double bind she experiences. Like Havin, she wants to realize her political agenda through her individual endeavor. What Havin manages to create through art, Öykü plans to do with the academic study. Öykü thinks that she can contribute to the Kurdish struggle and women's empowerment with her academic engagement, through the

studies she desires to conduct on experiences of Kurdish women especially in terms of language. Öykü wants to look into the communication problem between generations and the inability of old Kurdish women who do not speak Turkish and younger generations in the family who do not speak Kurdish to share knowledge and experiences among each other.[183] Öykü preferred to remain in the academia, instead of delving into party politics. Yet, she is trying to integrate her political concerns with respect to identity and language claims, and dual suppression of Kurdish women into her academic agenda and education. She is political, not in the traditional sense, but in a new and empowered form. Öykü's mother did not speak Turkish. Even though Öykü was able to communicate with her in Kurdish, there had been "a silent line" haunting their relationships, since she could not fully express herself in Kurdish. She had her own individual concerns about the society, partly shaped by multiple axes of oppression she experienced in terms of ethnicity and gender. Hence, she developed her own version of political participation, embodied in the attempt to study the condition of Kurdish women, which responds to these intersecting oppressions on an individual basis.

Personal experiences of my research participants had also been effective in the programs they chose to study at the university. Their perception of oppression was not only associated with Kurdish identity or womanhood, but was also linked to many other axes of difference. One of my interviewees mentioned her interest in "differences" since her childhood and her interest had shaped her choice of the university program, which is the "Teacher Education of Mentally Disabled". She was emphatizing with mentally disabled people, resembling their experiences to her own as a Kurdish individual: "People consider them as insane and label them either this or that way, but they were indeed different. They were definitely a different group just like us, Kurds and they were oppressed."[184] She translated her specific experience of discrimination and "otherness" to a lifelong endeavor oriented toward working with a group of people

[183] Öykü: "Kentte yaşayan göç etmiş ailelerde yaşlı kadınlar Türkçeyi bilmiyor, çocukları ya da torunları Kürtçeyi bilmiyor ve bunlar farklı dillerde konuşup anlaşıyorlar. Ne kadar anlaşıyorlar?"

[184] "Bi de benim böyle farklılıklara karşı ilgim var. Bunlar kesinlikle toplumda farklı kişiler olarak görüyorum ben onları. Ne bileyim insanlar deli diye tanımlasa şu bu diye etiketleseler de farklılar sonuçta. Hani şey olarak bakıyorum, biz nasıl toplum içinde şu an Kürtler olarak farklı bir grup içindeysek kesinlikle onlar da bence farklı bir grup içinde ve ezilen bir grup bence. Kimse çıkıp da bunlara ne bileyim eğitim verelim, şunları bi geliştirelim bir şey yapalım diye bakmıyor."

sharing similar experiences and deprived from many basic rights, one of which is access to education. According to "Turkey Disability Survey" (2002) made by the State Institute of Statistics (SIS- Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü), 36.3 % of the disabled people in Turkey are illiterate and the illiteracy rate of disabled females is 48.01 % (higher than that of males, which is 28.14 %) and it is even higher among mentally disabled people, with a percentage of 66.9. The statistics in general may fail to capture the concrete and diverse experiences of individuals. Yet here they are sufficient to confirm my interviewee's personal observations with respect to the way mentally disabled people are perceived in Turkey, namely as "unable" to learn and improve.[185] In Turkey, there are only 15 universities with programs of "Teacher Education of Mentally Disabled", clearly unable to train a sufficient number of teachers that would meet the requirements. So, it seems that marginalization and discrimination of mentally disabled people, just like Kurdish women, have been reproduced and reinforced within the context of education. My research participant had to overcome many oppressive mechanisms associated with the geographical location of her hometown, ethnicity and gender in order to pursue her education and these experiences led her to a search of solidarity with mentally disabled students. Again, like Öykü she was not engaged in a political activism, but voiced her political demands in a distinctly personal and creative way.

Narratives of Öykü and my other interviewee on their way of engaging with politics indeed helped me to recognize my own motivations in delving into this study. As a woman I grew up in a family, characterized by male dominance and strict gender norms, my authoritarian father controlling the lives of family members. I have lived not only in constant surveillance as a woman, but also in an increasing disguise with respect to my political orientation. My father approached enthusiastically when I chose to study Political Science at university, yet expressed an equal and fierce opposition to my interest in left-oriented political activism throughout my undergraduate years, not only because of his conservative outlook, but also because he knew that dissident politics was not welcomed by the state. I had been raised to be an apolitical student of Political Science, theoretically well-informed but an indifferent observer. I was curious about the relation of Kurdish women students with education and politics, maybe because as a woman born into a patirarchal family coming from Eastern Turkey, I had the need to

[185] "Delidir ne yapsa yeridir, yani bir şey olmaz bir şey yapamazlar bir şey öğretemezsin diye bakıyorlar. Biraz da farklı oldukları için…"

listen to their experiences which would enlighten my own path. But, above all, I decided to voice my political concerns and demands through an academic study based on the narratives of those whom I highly empathize with. I chose academic research, in order to express my concerns with respect to the Kurdish issue, not only because I was also dissatisfied with the present forms of organizing, but also I was aware of the price I would have to pay had I delved into political activism in Kurdish politics, which is a possible detention and a subsequent detachment from my education. The attempt to understand them was intervowen with an equal desire to understand myself and the novel forms of political participation among young people. We had different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, grown up in different geographies, but we had much in common, especially with respect to our past grievances and concerns for the future. Furthermore, we had been situated at the crossroads of education and politics from which we set off for different yet related political and academic journeys.

Our choice of individual struggle rather than organized politics comes very close to Hazal's way of relating with the political. Hazal had been engaged with the BDP, pro-Kurdish party and some non-governmental organizations with feminist outlook, those associated with the Kurdish movement and not. However, she was not satisfied with the way organized politics is practiced. She thinks there is much talking accompanied with little sincere action that would make any change. Furthermore, her ethico-political concerns about the discourse and practice of each organization prevented her from self-commitment and full participation.[186] Eventually, Hazal decided that political struggle may well be carried out on individual basis: "In the end, I told myself that I need not take shelter somewhere [like an organization] in order to give this struggle. You can do it individually as well." Hazal also brought criticisms to Turkish feminist organizations, she engaged with, for excluding Kurdish women when their experience of Kurdishness is introduced to the agenda. According to Hazal, they are

[186] Hazal: "Ya açıkçası şey, ben böyle işin etik tarafını çok sürekli tartıştığım için mesela hani tamam partiye de gittim, kadın çalışmalarına da gittim, ondan sonra, derneğe de gittim. Ama yani barınamadım yaa. Böyle hani ne bileyim yani sürekli bi yerde kafamı bi şey kurcaladı. İstediğim o doyuma ulaşamadım. (…) Yaa ne bileyim, mesela şey, böyle hani sözde o kadar çok şey var ki, bir sürü şey var. Ama uygulamaya gelince sürekli böyle başkasının üzerine yükleme var. Mesela bunu gördükçe ben soğumaya başladım tamam mı… (…) Her yerde bununla karşılaştım. Yani bi de şey enerjin çok fazla, heyecanın çok fazla, beklentin çok fazla… (…) Onu göremeyince ister istemez hani bi bakıyosun pasifleşmeye başlıyosun, böyle enerjin gidiyo ve sen elinde hiçbi şey yok."

standing indifferent to the distinct type of oppression Kurdish women experience which is different than Turkish women. She claims that they reject supporting and collaborating with the struggle of Kurdish women because of the ethnic difference. Hazal underlines that women's common experiences of subordination in Turkey are effective in bringing them together around a common struggle, yet differentiations among women, in terms of ethnicity, are not equally recognized, negotiated and become a dynamic of collaboration: "All set out for feminism, and both discuss the same thing, suffer from the same problem, but when it comes to the struggle of the Kurdish women, she doesn't support her because she is a Kurd."[187] Hazal believes that under these circumstances Kurdish women is bound to struggle with two dynamics simultaneusly as they engage with feminism: "You struggle both with the patriarchy and with other women"[188].

Öykü also drew attention to the dual suppression of Kurdish women in terms of ethnicity and gender. She belives that Turkish women also suffer from patriarchy, yet Kurdish women further experience ethnic-based domination which contributes to and reinforces their gender subordination: "I think Turkish women are also oppressed, but if they can speak their language, then they are in a slightly better condition than me." As Yüksel points out, "Kurdish women's oppression and subordination is to a large extent interwoven with their being both Kurds and women. They undergo these complicated experiences simultaneously rather than at differing 'moments'" (2006:784, original emphasis). However, Öykü also pointed at the common ground on which Kurdish and Turkish women could collaborate so as to struggle with gender-based oppression. She

[187] Hazal: "Hepsi feminizm için yola çıkıyo ama hani mesela Kürt kadınlarının da mücadelesi var ya, mesela oraya geldikleri zaman, mesela aslında ikisi aynı şeyi tartışıyo aynı sorundan muzdaripler tamam mı yani ikisinin de derdi aynı, ama Kürt olduğu için onu desteklemiyo. (…) Bu Mor Çatı felan olsun, ondan sonra Sosyalist Feminist Kadınlar felan olsun… Mesela hani tamam tartışıyosun ama işin içine Kürt kelimesi girdi mi kesinlikle bakış açıları değişiyo, kesinlikle geri adım atılıyo. (…)Yani en basitinden hani mesela bi tane Türk kadın arkadaşımla hani kurmuş olduğum toplulukta işte mesela bunların hepsini tartışabiliyoruz hepsini konuşabiliyoruz, kabul ediyoruz, yani ortak noktalarımızı bulabiliyoruz aynı şey üzerine hani yol almaya çalışıyoruz. Ama sorun mesela benim Kürtlüğüme gelince, hani Kürt olarak varlığıma, dilime, ondan sonra hani konuşmama gelince bu sefer benimle aynı fikirde olmuyor, kabullenmiyo bunu."

[188] Hazal: "Yani hem o ataerkillikle mücadele ediyosun, aynı zamanda kendi hemcinsinle de…"

believes that women should organize independently from men in order to achieve empowerment:

> "The problem is not woman or man, but womanhood and manhood. Man is not guilty alone by himself. But he would not rise against patriarchy, it doesn't suit his interests. There are very few feminist men, ready to give up his privileges. Why would he do that? That's why I think women need a separate organization. (…) They must have a process of conflict and struggle with men. Hence, they a need a different and separate sphere of their own so that they could find more power to struggle."[189]

My interviewees' narratives on the Kurdish movement and BDP was frequently intertwined with the emphasis on the active agency Kurdish women have in the movement. Jin was indeed amazed by the active participation of women during the organization meetings and lectures of the DTP. She perceived those women not as passive members being granted the right to participate, but instead having shaped their position as political subjects by their own agency and activism. Her experiences during party meetings, lectures and discussions were effective in increasing her gender consciousness, so she belived she orientated toward feminism by practising it: "I acquired my knowledge on feminism, women's movement or the condition of women not reading from theories, as some people do, but completely through mechanisms operating there."[190]

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[189] Öykü: "Bir yerde okumuştum, şey diyor, Ingeborg Bachman diye bir kadın var Malina diye bir kitabında okumuştum, şey diyor, Benden büyük erkeklerin olduğu ortamda nefes alamıyorum bunu hissettiğimde. Çünkü hep bir baba ensende bir nefes var, sen onun bir şeyi gibisin. Bundan sıyrılmak için çıkıp gitmen gerekiyorsa çıkıp gitmelisin. Çünkü içinde kalıp değiştirmek çok zor. Biraz dışından kendi şeyini kurabilirsin. (…) Yaa şeyi ben kabul ediyorum, problem kadın erkek değil kadınlık erkeklik. Bu yani kadınlık, erkeklik noktası sıkıntı. Tek başına erkek de suçlu değil. Ama erkekler bunu yapmaz yani. Onların işine gelmez, çok az feminist erkek var. Çok az taviz veren erkek var. Niye bunu yapsın ki! O yüzden kadınların farklı bir örgüte de ihtiyacı var bence kesinlikle. Bu çok basit şey kadınlar 8 marta tek başına mı gitsin erkeklerle mi gitsin şey gibi geliyor basit bir şeymiş gibi geliyor, ama bence erkeğe rağmen kadının da bir şeyi olmalı. Ama bu şey demek değildir. Erkeği reddetmek demek değildir bence. Yani bir sevgilin varsa bu çelişki değildir bence. Ama onunla o şeyin olmalı çatışma sürecin daha doğrusu mücadelen. Bunun için de kendine ait bir alanın, dünyan, farklı bir şeyin olmalı ki o mücadele gücü…"

[190] Jin: "Mesela şey diğer yerlerdeki kadın meselesiyle hani diğer yerlerde gözlemlediğim hani en basit böyle solcu bi örgütte gözlemlediğimle hani bizim işte partili falan gençlikteki kadınların durumunu görünce hakkaten şaşırmıştım yani. Çünkü baya bi değer veriliyo yani. Hani böyle şey anlamda değil, hani sen kadınsın sana değer veriyoruz diye değil de, hakkaten öyle kendine ait kendine özgü bir varlığının oluşu çok … Zaten gerillaların da öyle bi tarafı var ya. Hakkaten değişik yani. Mesela ne

Öykü believed that Kurdish women themselves struggled both against the male dominance within the movement and with the oppression of the state in order to achieve empowerment. According to her, women's active agency had a critical role in transforming the movement's discourse on women. Öykü's personal observations indeed come very close to Handan Çağlayan's argument in her study on Kurdish women's experience in the Kurdish movement. Çağlayan states that in the 1980s the discourse of the movement was shaped by a strategy based on the instrumental role of the women in mobilizing the Kurdish people (2010:99). Çağlayan succinctly claims that in this period Kurdish women were depicted not as the subjects, but objects of the Kurdish nationalist discourse (2010:100). Yet as a result of the increasing political mobilization of the movement at which Kurdish women's active agency played a critical role, the movement's discourse on women also changed. Kurdish women who had been defined as "slaves to be liberated" (*özgürleştirilecek kadın*) in the 1980s was replaced by the image of "liberating woman" (*özgürleştirecek kadın*) in the 1990s as their active participation necessiated a new framework which recognizes them as political subjects (2010:101). The mobilization strategy of the movement which instrumentalized women was actually effective in bringing them out of the patriarchal circle of the household while reducing the control of the "small family" on women. Yet, as women were introduced into the public space they encountered, this time, with the patriarchy of the "large family" as their participation in the public political space took place through the asexualization of women (2010:123). However, as Öykü underlined, Kurdish women's struggle in the public space brought them together around feminist solidarity which not only empowered them in their resistance against patriarchal dynamics of the Kurdish movement and against state violence, but also helped them introduce their demands, associated with their distinct type of oppression, to the larger feminist movement in Turkey.

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bileyim işte eğitime falan katıldığımızda böyle eğitim falan olduğunda gittiğimizde falan hani o kadınların ordaki yürütücü, yapıcı, edici, yani asla hani böyle olayın edilgen kısmı değil de en aktif kısmı olması beni çok etkiliyodu. Ve şey diyosun yani, hani aslında feminizmi falan ya da kadın hareketini ya da kadınların durumuyla ilgili ben bilgilerimin hiçbirini hani böyle teorilerden falan, hani insanlar okur ya öyle öğrenir falan, öyle öğrenmedim, tamamen ordaki işleyişle."

Öykü thinks that the movement's discourse on women can not by itself create a change in the attitude of the men, mobilized in the movement, towards women in their family as one of her anecdotes indicates:

> "My brothers' economic condition was good back then. They opened a textile mill. My elder sisters were working there but they were not paid for their labor. (…) One of my brothers was very active in the party. We were talking all the time, defending women's rights, but my sisters were being exploited in their mill."

Öykü's family was a supporter of the movement and was highly influenced by its discourse. Yet, Öykü believes that the relative freedom she gains vis-à-vis her family had more to do with her own struggle with them than the effect of the Kurdish movement. She believes that not the discourse of the movement or women's active agency in Kurdish politics, but Kurdish women's own everyday struggle with multiple constraints and gender subordination as well as solidarity and collaboration with other women could create a dramatic change in women's private life and position in the household.

However, similar to Hazal, Öykü claimed that other feminists are not willing to collaborate with Kurdish women. Öykü's narrative is striking in revealing that there is an orientalist attitude not only towards the condition of Kurdish women, which depict them as a "traditional other" but also towards their politics, regarding them as unable to be "truly" feminist since they belong to the East. According to her, Kurdish women are labelled as nationalist because of their ethnic identity claims: "They consider themselves as different from you. When you do something, they take you as nationalist, as attached to the traditional order." On the other hand, Öykü thinks that Kurdish women's movement is indeed the part of a larger feminist movement in Turkey. They have been contributing to the process of women's empowerment with their struggle against the male dominance within the Kurdish movement itself: "I think, Kurdish women are one of the most important dynamics of feminism in Turkey. They have very radical decisions. They brought quota to the political party. There is a system of co-presidency."[191]

[191] "Öykü: Mesela ben illa Kürttür diye arkadaşlık kurmamaya çalıştım yani, Türklerle de… Feministlerle kadın şeyleri üzerinden bir araya geldik. İlla Kürt hareketini savunsun ya da desteklesin [demedim]. (…) Farklı ortak şeyler de var, zeminler de var bir araya gelebileceğimiz bence. Böyle arkadaşlarım var. Ama onlar bile hani yine seni kendilerinden farklı görüyorlar. Mesela bi tane arkadaşım var, feminist olduğunu

My research participants as Kurdish women students in İstanbul are manifesting their subjectivity in diverse ways which can not be accounted solely by the parameters of traditional politics. They are displaying new forms of political participation. The authoritarian character of political organizations and my interviewees' wide array of political concerns -the most pressing ones of which are freedom, self-determination, peaceful coexistence, recoginition of differences and equality – which go beyond the limited agenda of political parties lead them to new spheres for political participation and novel forms of action. They do not imagine politics through the narrow language of macro-political processes, government policies, laws or voting system, which generally envisage individuals as passive participants of a representative system. Instead, they see themselves as the active agents in politics, shaping their political agendas and following actions according to their concrete experiences and subjective concerns. Until now, Kurdish women's engagement with politics is analyzed within the context of the Kurdish movement. However, I suggest that the way my interviewees, as Kurdish women students, imagine and involve in politics can not be examined solely within the context of the Kurdish movement nor through the logic of organized politics. On the other hand, their political concerns and demands with respect to issues of ethnicity and gender as well as the empowerment they acquired, although some of them have not joined in any kind of political activism, reveals the widespread influence of the Kurdish movement on young Kurdish individuals whether mobilized or not and the effect of their experience in İstanbul and on the university campus on their politicization. The different ways and varying degrees in which they experienced the multiple oppressions of ethnicity and gender have been effective in the development of their political subjectivities. Some bring criticism to Turkish feminists for indifference to the ethnic

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söylüyor. Ama yine de şey diyo, "sizinkiler de işte bıyıklı, sakal bırakıyorlar, yok tespih sallıyorlar" falan. Yani "siz Doğu'ya ait, daha farklısınız. Siz feminist ya da şey ne kadar olabilirsiniz ki o arkadaşların yanında olduğu sürece." (…) Seni zaten kodlamışlar, kendilerini farklı görüyorlar, senin bi şey yaparsan da milliyetçi olduğunu düşünüyorlar, geleneksel yapıya bağlı olduğunu düşünüyorlar. Hani siz bir şey olamazsınız gibi bir şey var. PKK milliyetçi ya da şey bir çizgidir, işte BDP de böyledir… Halbuki bence Kürt kadınları Türkiye'deki feminizmin en önemli dinamiklerinden biri. Bence çok radikal kararları var. Kotayı getiriyorlar mesela, siyasi parti içinde kota var. Eşbaşkanlık sistemi var. Yani çok özgür ve çok da farklı zeminlere sahip olan diğer feministlerin yapmadığını bence yapıyorlar."

dimension of the experience of Kurdish women and underlined the mutually reinforcing oprressions they undergo. Some others also develop a feminist antimilitarist approach to the Kurdish movement as well as the state of war as explicit in Mizgin's account while still others underline the active agency of the Kurdish women throughout the development of the Kurdish movement and as part of the larger feminist movement in Turkey.

Although experiencing fear and self-censorship by oppressive mechanisms of the state, my interviewees display self-empowerment and agency, creating their own individual ways of political self-expression in accordance with political agendas. Above all, they are educated young individuals with new ways of thinking, hopes and plans for the future. They reject selfless commitment to any political organization or political ideology, but seek to create a position and form of activity for themselves which comply firstly with their own conscience and dreams, and contribute to the possibility of society they wish to live in as individuals. Freedom does not only mean getting rid of the authority of family, strict gender norms, every form of patriarchy, or the ethnic oppression of the state, but also rising against the authoritarian character of the political organizations fighting for freedom. They are seeking for a new form of society where their dream of self-determination and shared community would come true. Hence, they believe in the necessity and power of micro-political struggles and personal everyday revolutions in establishing the society characterized by the freedom of all.

5.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I analyzed the ways in which my research participants politicize in İstanbul and on their university campuses with respect to factors of ethnicity and gender. I suggest that politics of Kurdish women university students in İstanbul can not be adequately analyzed solely as part of the Kurdish movement. They manifest a new form of political subjectivity beyond the discourse of the traditional politics in general and the Kurdish movement in particular. As part of the student population in Turkey multiple axes of ethnicity and gender have a crucial impact on their political concerns, demands and novel forms of political action. I argue that they are situated at the crossroads of education and politics in a spatio-temporal context defined by increasing

criminalization of oppositional political activities, particularly with respect to expressing Kurdish identity claims. Moreover, they manifest a growing discomfort with the political system, authoritarian structure of political parties as well as the traditional forms of organizing. I argue that their politics and ways of manifesting their political subjectivity is characterized by these two interrelated dynamics of the political in Turkey.

Their subjective forms of political action, in this double bind, are shaped by both shifting boundaries of their experiences with respect to intersections of ethnicity and gender as well as the diverse characteristics of their universities as political, social and cultural spaces. The liberal atmosphere of Boğaziçi and Bilgi University enabled Lavin, Mizgin and Hazal to integrate their political concerns and demands, with respect to claims of ethnic identity and gender, into the campus agenda. On the other hand politically repressive make-up of İstanbul, Yeditepe and Marmara University prevent Zozan and Öykü to manifest their political subjectivities on campus. However, in any case, the current oppression of oppositional politics as well as their disawoval with traditional politics led my research participants to find their own personal ways out of the limited terrain in which politics is imagined and practiced in Turkey. Havin thinks politics is a "dirty business" and wants to voice her political concerns and demands through artistic practice in her mother tongue. In a related way, Öykü choose academic study to translate her personal greivances with regard to exclusion of Kurdish language and womens' education problem in the Eastern Turkey to a research on the similar experiences of Kurdish women. As for my other interviewee, who chose to study the "Teacher Education of Mentally Disabled", I think her choice of academic department reveals how subjective greviances with respect to ethnicity and gender frame not only the way Kurdish women students imagine politics but also their concern for other axes of difference. Kurdish women students' imagination of a better society is not limited to their own subjective positions, but also prepares a ground on which they show empathy towards those different from them. My interviewee's interest in studying with mentally disabled people is a way of "self-realization as active compassion" (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2009:159). In short, Belçim's politics is characterized by "a self-organized concern for others" (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2001:159).

My interviewees are women university students in a Western city. Their experiences throughout their education life, from the primary school through university years in İstanbul shaped their political subjectivity which can not be adequately

analyzed merely within the framework of the Kurdish movement. As Kurdish women students in İstanbul, they engage in a different politics and novel forms of action which linked to their process of individualization and empowerment. I argue that Kurdish women students in İstanbul opens a space to rethink the condition of the Kurdish women, the politics of university students as well as the intricate relationship between education and politics in Turkey. I think their distinctive ways of dealing with the political has the potential to prepare the ground on which to imagine a new politics in Turkey.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

"Pro-DTP, Kurdish, not-well dressed…
She is most probably a silly house girl!"

A couple of years ago, Jin worked as an observer of the DTP in the national elections. After the voting was finished (around 10 pm), she told other observers that she was leaving since she need to catch her class the next day. When one of the women observers asked where she was going, she answered Hisarüstü and, added that she studied at Boğaziçi University.[192] We can not know whether other observers had a presupposition about Jin as a "silly house girl" as a Kurdish pro-DTP woman, but the surprise they expressed upon learning that she was a university student at Boğaziçi clearly manifests the common perception about Kurdish women in public and popular imagination. They are conceived as uneducated women confined to the house, visible in the public space only as militants of the Kurdish movement. It is Jin's awareness of the general conception about Kurdish women that led her to read their minds along these lines. Jin had also been working as a private tutor in a cram school where her boss

[192] Jin: "Bi ara ben seçimde oy hani bekliyosun ya müşahit olarak, böyle seçim oldu şey bitti herkes oy kullandı, saat gecenin 10'u. Ben dedim ki "yaa ben yarın okula yetişicem" ordaki CHP'li MHP'li AKP'li falan müşahidlere, "o yüzden ben muhtarlık seçimlerine kalmıycam gidiyorum" dedim. Zaten DTP'nin adayı yoktu. Kadın dedi ki "nereye gidiceksin?" Dedim "Hisarüstü'ne gidicem, Boğaziçi'nde okuyorum ben". Böyle hepsi bi kaldılar, "sen Boğaziçi'nde mi okuyosun?" diye. Çünkü DTP'li, Kürt, tipi falan da yamuk yani, bu kız olsa olsa aptal bir ev kızıdır falan… Anladın mı hani bu çok saçma yani.. Sen onlara hani giydiğin elbise, üzerindeki kapşon falan…"

introduced her to parents of students as "our *kardelen*".[193] So, as a university student, she was defined this time through another stereotype, the poor oppressed Kurdish woman, "educated" and "civilized" by the Western benevolent adults. As Jin navigates her way through different contexts in İstanbul as a Kurdish university student coming from Eastern Turkey, she directly experiences the boundaries of how Kurdish women are imagined in Turkey. On the one hand, she is considered as an uneducated Kurd as a pro-DTP woman while on the other hand she is labelled as a *kardelen* since she, as a woman coming from Eastern Turkey, studies at a prestigious university. These two anecdotes of Jin, which also came up in different forms in the narratives of my other interviewees, indeed outlines the problematical framework within which Kurdish women are imagined in Turkey. In this thesis I try to address this framework on the basis of the lifestory narratives of my research participants with respect to their education and politics.

In the second chapter, I argue that although poverty and local patriarchy are introduced in the public discourse as the main reasons of the women's education problem in the region, I suggest that this hegemonic discourse -which depict women as the "victims" of the Kurdish men- in fact curtails other structural challenges and oppressive mechanisms Kurdish women in the region encounter with respect to education. Those structural challenges and oppressive mechanisms are associated with state's low level of educational investments in the region, the low quality of schools with an insufficent number of teachers, the war between the PKK and the Turkish state, which suspended educational activities at intervals in the region in the 1990s, the ban on the use of Kurdish language in education as well as the discriminatory practices against Kurdish children at school such as humiliation and stigmatization nourished by the collective hatred against Kurds. Overall, I aim to contribute to the literature on women's education problem with an analysis of ethnic-based oppression, geographical marginalization and nationalist practices on the part of the state and the PKK which facilitate and contribute to the poverty and local poverty. I suggest that as a result of

[193] En. snowdrop. Here, the term refers to female children who received scholarship as part of education campaings (mostly for girls in the Eastern and Southeastern Turkey) and received education.

Jin: "Mesela veli geliyo tamam mı… "Bu da bizim kardelenimiz" falan diyo. (…) İşte onlar için de ben bi kardelenim yani, Kürt falan…"

these intersectional dynamics of oppression, Kurdish women do not only have difficulty accessing education, but also pursuing it.

My interviewees could access and receive further education although they have been subjected to those intersecting impediments with shifting boundaries.. Their experiences indicate that institutional support in the form of alternative education facilities or scholarships, or personal support received from a critical person such as a family member or a teacher may play a significant role in overcoming the structural challenges faced by young women and enable them to access and pursue schooling. But, more importantly, there are two other dynamics which play a key role in paving the way for access to education.

First, most of my research participants are the younger children in the family which is a critical factor in overcoming intersecting mechanisms of ethnicity, gender and class. They went beyond the class-based impediments to education through their generational status in the household. As elder sisters and brothers got married and left the house decreasing the economic burden of the household, or as they began to work and contribute to the income of the household, the family, the parents were able to afford sending my interviewees to school. The existence of elder brothers receving education or living in the city with educational facilities also comes out as a major factor in overcoming the gender-based impediment to my intervieweees' education. Hazal could be sent to YİBO since her brothers were also receiving education in the same school. There was no secondary school in Öykü's village, but she was sent to İstanbul to live with her brothers and go to school. Lastly, the existence of elder siblings going to school in the household (who could speak Turkish), did not only help them in dealing with an unknown language at school but also made the school experience a relatively easy one as they were oriented to the disciplinary and discriminatory practices at school with the company of family members. Their generational status in the household pushed on one of these oppressive dynamics in some cases while different combinations of them in others. As a result, each of my interviewees are among the few female children in the family or in the village (as for those grown up in the village) who have received education, while many of their elder siblings could not access school or pursue education beyond the fifth grade.

Second, in order to cope with the ethnic-based subordination at school and the feeling of insecurity, my interviewees engaged in complex forms of performances and plays while navigating within different contexts of the house, school and the

community. While they sought to learn good Turkish and seemed to comply with the position Turkish student-subject in order to be successful at school and pursue their education, they operated within the ethnic practices of their Kurdish family and community at home. Following Secor, I argue that as different spaces require "different performances of ethnic identity and citizenship", they perform different identity positions in different spatial contexts (2012:364). Moreover, as explicit in the lifestories of Mizgin and Jin, they also negotiated the boundaries of gender and performed different gender roles in different spaces in order to reclaim the public space of school as female children. Mizgin and Jin performed the asexual child or "boyish girl" so as to overcome the gender-based impediment to their education. So my second anticipated contribution to the existing literature on Kurdish women's education is based on the analyses of generational status and performative strategies of Kurdish women as effective in overcoming the intersectional impediments based on ethnicity, gender and class in order to pursue education.

In the third chapter, I argue that Kurdish female children are subject to multiple socializations at home, school and the community, similar as well as contradictory depending on various encounters and circumstances. Following Williams, I suggest that discursive practices of the Turkish national education system are geared towards a particular form of socialization characterized by the incorporation of "a selected range of meanings, values, and practices" which constitutes "the real foundations of the hegemonic" Turkish subjectivity (Williams, 1997:117). I argue that although education plays a particular role in liberating women from the patriarchal control and endowing them with the necessary cultural capital to rise in the social strata, it also subjects them this time to state patriarchy. Moreover, the national school system which excludes and discriminates other ethnic identities and languages, seem to reproduce the gender roles imposed on Kurdish speaking female children. My interviewees' lower position as female children in the community and their following silence were reproduced by the exclusion and discrimination of their mother tongue at school.

The hegemonic order imposes the idea that success at school and the ability to pursue further education reside in embracing the "superior" position of Turkish subject who speak standard fluent Turkish. Moreover, the ideology of contempt for their ethnicity and mother tongue has led most of my research participants to perform the so-called superior position of Turkish subject-citizen at school while also negotiating the borders of ethnic identities with their resistant practices at school. While performing the

Turkish citizen on the surface, they also created for themselves an alternative "offstage" domain at school through which they could manifest their particular form of resistance with respect to Kurdish identity. Especially Hazal and her friends' speaking Kurdish in the class, making sarcastic remarks about their teacher who did not speak Kurdish, is a good example of how what is oppressed itself could return into something resistive. Since direct confrontations with school authorities would bring further control, restriction and oppression, my interviewees reclaim control of their own meanings in invisible, subtle ways. Hence I argue that school is not a space where Kurdish women students become the passive objects of ethnic subordination, but instead they display crucial, yet often invisible, forms of agency and resistance while negotiating ethnic identities within different contexts of the home, the school and the community.

Experiences of my intervieweees especially in high school and afterwards coincide with their increasing inner turmoil with regard to their relation with the Kurdish language. Monolingual policy at primary school initially created semilingual students who could fully express themselves in any of the languages. As they became bilingual in time, Turkish language constituted the language of learning, as well as of their daily interactions. Those times also marked an increasing Kurdish consciousness, which created or reinforced an inner contradiction for most of my research participants. As Hazal's narrative exemplified, these inner contradictions were translated into particular forms of political participation which were usually associated with their past grievances. Hazal was engaged in a language-oriented politics at university: demanding a Kurdish language course to be opened at the unviersity was one of her first political activities on campus. I argue that school, as a highly political space, creates the context in which Kurdish women are not assimilated but instead become politicized with respect to Kurdish identity claims. Secondly, their experiences within the discursive practices of the national education system as well as the mutiple socializations they are situated in have a considerable impact on shaping their political subjectivities. I seek to contribute to the present literature on Kurdish students' experience of the national education with an intersectional analysis of ethnicity and gender, emphasizing the agency and performance of students in dealing with oppressive mechanisms at school.

In the fourth chapter, I argue that since my research participants migrated to İstanbul for educational purposes and live in İstanbul as university students without the company of family members (except for Havin, Öykü and Ruken), their experience in İstanbul is different from the experience of other Kurdish women in the city.

Furthermore, as they are introduced to the city through different universities their experiences in the urban space also differentiate from each other especially with respect to ethnicity, hometown and political participation. Most of my interviewees assume Kurdish identity in the urban space of İstanbul which is characterized by diversity and free encounter on the one hand, and discrimination and stigmatization on the other, depending on the spatial context. I argue that the encounter with the urban "other" in İstanbul, which introduced the axis of ethnic difference, plays a key role in their identification with Kurdishness. Besides, gender is a dynamic which brings their perceptions and experiences of the city on a more or less common ground. So they also assume womanhood in İstanbul, in a space which is characterized by different, yet related, gender roles and norms as well as by the distance to patriarchal constraints of their own families. Their perceptions of İstanbul point to a significant, but mostly overlooked, dimension of women's experiences in Turkey. Women's lives in Eastern Turkey and in İstanbul converge at specific encounters although they differentiate in others. In this chapter, I seek to contribute to the literature on migration experiences of Kurdish women with my analysis of studentship as a factor shaping the perceptions of and experiences of Kurdish women students in the urban space of İstanbul. Secondly, I aim to make a feminist contribution to the literature on the condition of Kurdish women in Turkey with respect to their experiences in Eastern Turkey and İstanbul, a Western city. I suggest that although the form of their gender subordination changed vis-à-vis the different gender norms and roles employed in İstanbul, their experiences point to a striking continuity between Eastern Turkey and İstanbul in terms of gendered character of the public spaces which lead women to display particular performances of femininity. Yet, again this observation is limited to the experiences of Kurdish women as university students in İstanbul coming from Eastern Turkey and can not be generalized to all Kurdish women in the city.

In the fifth chapter, I argue that their past experiences in their hometowns, particularly during their school life, and their position as a Kurd, woman and university student in İstanbul have significantly shaped their political subjectivities. I suggest that politics of Kurdish women university students in İstanbul can not be adequately analyzed solely as part of the Kurdish movement. They manifest a new form of political subjectivity and novel forms of action beyond the discourse of the traditional politics in general and the Kurdish movement in particular. As part of the young population in Turkey (more specifically as part of the student population), multiple axes of ethnicity

and gender have a crucial impact on their political concerns, demands and new forms of political participation. In that sense, I aim to contribute to the existing literature on youth politics in Turkey with my intersectional analysis of ethnicity and gender as effective in shaping the political sujectivities of my young interviewees. I argue that they are situated at the crossroads of education and politics in a spatial and temporal context defined by increasing criminalization of dissident political activities, particularly with respect to voicing Kurdish identity claims. Moreover, they display a growing discomfort with the political system, authoritarian structure of political parties as well as the traditional forms of organizing. I argue that their politics and ways of manifesting their political subjectivity is characterized by these two interrelated dynamics of the political in Turkey.

Their personal forms of political participation, in this double bind, are shaped by both their differentiating experiences of ethnicity and gender as well as the distant characteristics of their universities as political, social and cultural spaces. The liberal atmosphere of Boğaziçi and Bilgi University enabled Lavin, Mizgin and Hazal to integrate their political concerns and demands, with respect to claims of ethnic identity and gender, into the campus agenda. On the other hand politically repressive characters of İstanbul, Marmara and Yeditepe University prevent Zozan, Belçim and Öykü to manifest their political subjectivities on campus. However, in any case, the current oppression of oppositional politics as well as their disawoval of traditional politics led my research participants to find their own subjective ways out of the limited terrain in which politics is imagined and practiced in Turkey today. Havin thinks politics is a "dirty business" and wants to voice her political concerns and demands through artistic practice in her mother tongue. In a related way, Öykü chose academic study to transform her personal grievances with regard to exclusion of Kurdish language and womens' education problem in Eastern Turkey to a research on the similar experiences of Kurdish women. As for Belçim, I think her choice of academic department, namely the "Teacher Education of Mentally Disabled" reveals how personal greviances with respect to ethnicity, gender and education frame not only the way Kurdish women students imagine politics but also their concern for other axes of difference. Kurdish women students' imagination of freedom and equality is not limited to their own subjective positions, but also opens out to rights of other ways of becoming. Belçim not only observed the difference between her and mentally disabled people but also recognized her commonalities with them. Hence her interest in studying with them is a

way of "self-realization as active compassion" (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2009:159). In short, Belçim's politics is characterized by "a self-organized concern for others," or by a form of "antipolitics" which:

> …opens up the opportunity to enjoy one's own life with the best conscience in the world, is supplemented and made credible by a self-organized concern for others which has broken free from large institutions. Freedom's children practise a seeking, experimenting morality that ties together things that seem mutually exclusive: egoism and altruism, self-realization and active compassion, self-realization as active compassion (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2001:159)

As university students in a Western city, my research participants unsettle the common perception of Kurdish women as uneducated oppressed individuals. Their experiences throughout their education life, from primary school through their university years in İstanbul shaped their political subjectivity in particular ways, which can not be adequately analyzed merely within the framework of the Kurdish movement. As Kurdish women students in İstanbul, they engage in a different politics and novel forms of action which are linked to their process of individualization and empowerment. I argue that the experiences and narratives of the Kurdish women students in İstanbul, who have participated in this research, challenge the existing perceptions of not only women's education problem in Turkey, but also the condition of the Kurdish women. I believe that their distinctive ways of dealing with the political also shed new light on the changing nature of politics in Turkey in general and the politics of the Kurdish question in particular.

APPENDIX A

PROFILE OF THE INTERVIEWEES

Name	Ethnicity	Mother Tongue	Hometown
Belçim	Kurdish	Kurdish	Bitlis-Hizan
Newroz	Kurdish	Kurdish	Şırnak-Cizre
Havin	Kurdish	Kurdish	Diyarbakır
Öykü	Kurdish	Kurdish	Bitlis-Hizan
Hazal	Kurdish	Kurdish	Kars-Kağızman
Lavin	Kurdish-Alevi	Kurdish	Adıyaman
Ruken	Kurdish	Kurdish	Diyarbakır
Jin	Kurdish	Kurdish	Bitlis-Tatvan
Zelal	Kurdish	Kurdish	Hakkari-Yüksekova
Mizgin	Kurdish	Kurdish	Gaziantep
Mori	Kurdish	Kurdish	Muş-Varto
Zozan	Kurdish	Kurdish	Bitlis
Mordemek	Kurdish-Alevi	Zazaki	Dersim, Elazığ

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONS OF THE IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW

1. Sizi biraz tanıyabilir miyim, kendinizden bahsedebilir misiniz?
2. Çocukluğunuza dair neler hatırlıyorsunuz? Okula başlamadan önce vaktinizi nasıl geçirirdiniz?
3. Bana biraz büyüdüğünüz yerden bahsedebilir misiniz?
4. Aile içindeki ilişkiler nasıldı? Anneniz ve babanız arasındaki, kardeşler arasındaki ilişkiler? Ebeveynleriniz size karşı olan tutumlarından memnun muydunuz?
5. Anneniz ve babanız ne iş yapıyorlardı? Maddi durumunuz nasıldı?
6. Evde hangi dilleri konuşuyordunuz? İlkokula başlamadan önce Türkçe biliyor muydunuz?
7. İlkokula başlamanız nasıl oldu biraz bahseder misiniz? Bu konuda zorluklar yaşadınız mı? Yaşadığınız çevrede okul var mıydı?
8. Aileniz, akrabalarınız eğitiminize nasıl yaklaşıyorlardı?
9. Okuldaki ilk gününüzü hatırlıyor musunuz? Nasıl hissetmiştiniz, neler yaşamıştınız?
10. Okulda dille ilgili problemler yaşadınız mı? Öğretmeninizi rahatlıkla anlayabiliyor muydunuz?
11. Sınıfınızda ve okulda kendinizi nasıl hissediyordunuz? Arkadaşlarınızla ilişkileriniz nasıldı? Yaşadığınız zorluklar oldu mu?
12. İlkokula dair hatırladığınız iyi ve kötü deneyimleriniz nelerdir?
13. Daha sonra eğitiminize devam etmekte zorluklar yaşadınız mı? Ailenizin maddi durumu nasıl etkiledi bu süreci? Aileniz destek oldu mu?
14. Ortaöğretim ve üniversite sınavlarına nasıl hazırlandınız?
15. Üniversiteyi İstanbul'da okumaya nasıl karar verdiniz?
16. Üniversiteden önce İstanbul'a gelmiş miydiniz? Gelmediyseniz şehir hakkında neler düşünüyordunuz?
17. Aileniz İstanbul'a gelmenize nasıl yaklaştı?
18. İstanbul'a ve okuduğunuz üniversiteye dair ilk tecrübeleriniz nelerdir?
19. İstanbul'da nerede kalıyorsunuz?
20. Okul dışındaki zamanlarda vaktinizi nasıl geçirirsiniz?

21. İstanbul'da yaşamaktan memnun musunuz? Kendinizi şehirde rahat hissettiğiniz yerler neresidir?
22. İstanbul'da nasıl geçiniyorsunuz? Hiç çalışma deneyiminiz oldu mu?
23. Bir Kürt ve kadın olarak İstanbul'da yaşadığınız iyi veya kötü deneyimleriniz nelerdir?
24. Memleketinize ne kadar sıklıkla gidiyorsunuz?
25. Bana biraz okulunuzdan ve öğrenci profilinden bahsedebilir misiniz?
26. Kendinizi kampüste nasıl hissediyorsunuz? Kampüste kendinizi ifade edebileceğiniz bir ortam, alan var mı? Kendinizi okulda rahat ve özgür hissediyor musunuz?
27. Okulunuza dair değiştirmek istediğiniz şeyler var mı? Nasıl bir kampüste okumak isterdiniz?
28. Kampüste ders dışında vaktinizi nasıl geçiriyorsunuz? Katıldığınız bir aktivite, bir kulüp var mı?
29. Okuduğunuz üniversitede Kürt olmak nasıl bir şey? Bununla ilgili yaşadığınız iyi veya kötü deneyimler nelerdir?
30. Sizce üniversiteye gitmek veya İstanbul'da okumak size ne kazandırdı?
31. Üniversiteye başladığınızdan beri hayatınızda neler değişti? Ailenizle ilişkilerinizde bir değişiklik oldu mu?
32. Katıldığınız politik aktiviteler oldu mu? Bir partiye, örgüte veya sivil toplum kuruluşunda çalıştınız mı?
33. Öğrenci tutuklamaları hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz? Yakın çevrenizde böyle tecrübeler yaşadınız mı?
34. Bu ülkede neleri değiştirmek isterdiniz?
35. Gelecekle ilgili beklentileriniz, hayalleriniz nelerdir?

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