

EXPLORING THE INTERSECTIONS:
SUBORDINATION AND RESISTANCE
AMONG KURDISH WOMEN IN AYDINLI, TUZLA

by
Hülya Çağlayan

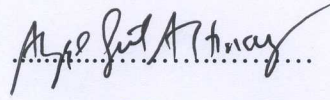
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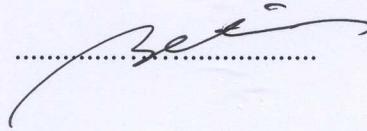
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*To my mother, Hatice,
sisters, Hasibe, Hümevra
and my nephew, Engin*

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ABSTRACT

EXPLORING THE INTERSECTIONS: SUBORDINATION AND RESISTANCE AMONG KURDISH WOMEN IN AYDINLI, TUZLA

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Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Ayşe Gül Altınay

Keywords: social exclusion, urban poverty, intersectionality, ethnicity, gender, feminism.

This study aims to explore the intersecting dynamics of social exclusion in low-class Kurdish women's lives in the Aydınlı neighborhood, Tuzla-Istanbul. Women's narratives show that Aydınlı is a setting of urban poverty and marginalization. This thesis argues that Kurdish women are "urban outcasts", who are subordinated by the intersecting dynamics of gender, class and ethnicity. Based on in-depth interviews and participant observation, this study argues that there are multiple agents consisting of class, ethnicity and gender, which lead to women's subordination. Women's narratives on language, identity, poverty and patriarchal oppression show that, these multiple agents should not be analyzed separately from one another. This thesis argues that, there are heterogeneous identities as well as differing factors of intersectionality, since women do not encounter the pressures of gender, ethnicity and class at the same time and in equal degrees. This study aims to contribute to the existing feminist literature in Turkey by posing these complex dynamics of intersectionality. Besides, aiming to provide an intersectional approach for poverty studies in Turkey, this research argues that women encounter constant threats which may approximate them to absolute poverty. These threats are determined and reproduced by the intersectionality of gender, ethnicity and class. The ways women manage to display particular resistances against these multiple agents constitute another focal point of this research. This study argues that women perform resistances against the dynamics of marginalization, which are reproduced at the neighborhood, as well as in households and workplaces with the intersecting dynamics of class, gender and ethnicity in Aydınlı.

ÖZET

KESİŞİMSELLİKLER ÜZERİNE: AYDINLI, TUZLA'DA KÜRT KADINLARIN MADUNİYET VE DİRENİŞİ

Hülya Çağlayan
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Anahtar Sözcükler: toplumsal dışlanma, kent yoksulluğu, kesişimsellik, etnisite, toplumsal cinsiyet, feminizm.

Bu çalışma, İstanbul'un Tuzla ilçesinin Aydınli mahallesinde ikamet eden alt sınıf Kürt kadınlarının yaşamlarındaki toplumsal dışlanma dinamiklerinin kesişimselliğini araştırmayı hedeflemektedir. Kadınların anlatıları, Aydınli'deki kentsel yoksulluğu ve dışlanmayı göz önüne serer. Bu tez, toplumsal cinsiyet, etnisite ve sınıf dinamiklerinin kesişimselliğiyle baskı gören Kürt kadınlarının, “kent dışlanmışlarını” oluşturduğunu savunur. Derinlemesine mülakatlar ve katılımcı gözlem ışığında şekillenen bu çalışma, kadınların maduniyetinin ardında, sınıf, etnisite ve toplumsal cinsiyet gibi faktörlerin var olduğunu savunur. Kadınların dil, kimlik, yoksulluk ve ataerkil baskı üzerine yoğunlaşan anlatıları, mevzu bahis çoklu faktörlerin birbirinden bağımsız incelenmemesi gerektiğini gösterir. Kadınlar toplumsal cinsiyet, etnisite ve sınıf bağlamında ortaya çıkan baskılarla aynı zamanda ve eşit derecede karşılaşmazlar; bu tez, kimliklerin heterojenliğini öne sürmenin yani sıra, kesişimselliğin farklı etkenlerinin var olduğunu savunur. Sunduğu bu kompleks ilişki ile bu çalışma, Türkiye’de bugüne kadar yapılmış feminist araştırmalara kesimsel bir tespitle katkıda bulunmayı hedefler. Ayrıca, Türkiye’de var olan yoksulluk çalışmalarına da yine kesimsel bir analizle katkı yapma gayretindeki bu çalışmaya göre kadınlar, onları mutlak yoksulluğa itebilecek tehditlerle karşılaşır. Bu tehditler, sözü geçen çoklu faktörlerin kesişimselliği ile belirlenmekte ve yeniden üretilmektedir. Bu çalışmanın diğer bir odağını, kadınların bu çoklu faktörler karşısında ne çeşit direniş gösterdiği oluşturmaktadır. Bu tez, kadınların mahalle, hane-içi ilişkiler ve çalışma hayatında karşılaştıkları dışlanmanın, sınıf, toplumsal cinsiyet ve etnisite gibi çoklu faktörler kesişimselliğiyle yeniden üretildiğini ve buna karşılık kadınların çeşitli direniş biçimleri geliştirdiğini savunur.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

It was December 22, 2010, the initial days of my field experience when I went to see a concert by “Kardeş Türküler” in Tuzla İdris Güllüce Center of Culture. It was the first time I saw my favorite band perform live on stage. Kardeş Türküler is known for its multi ethnic and multi cultural music, producing songs in different languages spoken in Anatolia, especially Turkish, Kurdish, Armenian and Arabic. I saw the announcement of the event during one of my field trips. I was there to enjoy the concert and have fun.

The concert tickets were very cheap. It was 2 TL for students and 4 TL for adults. The concerts of Kardeş Türküler in the main performing halls in İstanbul are usually priced much higher, between 30 to 70 TL. The prices were significant; it showed that they were regulated for the low-class neighborhoods of Tuzla. I saw many women attending the concert, arriving and leaving the hall on foot, which probably meant that they lived in the neighborhoods nearby. The audience was already very engaged with the concert when the lead vocalist said: “Since we are in Tuzla, it is inevitable to sing a song for the workers.¹” The song was in Kurdish. With this remark and the song that followed, the engagement of the audience reached a peak. I witnessed three elements at one occasion, that is, the significance of class, gender and ethnicity.

With great excitement and joy, many Kurdish women in the audience joined in the song for the workers and sang together with the vocalists. The concert hall was full to its limits, with many standing in the back, among whom were women taking active part in this Kurdish song dedicated to the working class in Tuzla. The music, in this particular instance, became the mediator of something intriguing which was worth investigating in Kurdish women’s lives. I, too, was very happy. Not only because I was listening to my favorite band live, but also because what I witnessed encouraged me to continue my research further. The complex dynamics of ethnicity, gender, and class that this concert experience underscored constitute the main theoretical framework of this research.

¹ Tr. Hazır Tuzla’ya gelmişken bir işçi şarkısı söylemeden gitmek olmaz.

The particular image of Tuzla in the media has been built around the accidents that result in male workers' death in the shipyards, with little reference to their identities and belongings as Kurds, or to women workers. The images have focused on death, but life is going on. What exactly are the dynamics behind the appreciation of Kurdish women in hearing a song in Kurdish sang for the working class? In a low-class, marginalized neighborhood populated by Kurdish inhabitants, it is not hard to guess that there are mechanisms of oppression resulting from distinct agents of social experience in varying degrees. The particular concert atmosphere was introducing the concomitance of these oppressive agents, which was met by Kurdish women in excitement. Kurdish women's experiences of their daily lives, determined and affected by intersecting dynamics of class, ethnicity and gender, which led to a striking outburst sensation in a Kardeş Türküler concert, calls for exploration and examination.

1.1. Purpose of the Study

After the concert experience, I continued my critical interrogations about the ways in which Kurdish women experience distinct yet interrelated variables of oppression, that is, ethnicity, gender and class in the urban setting of Aydınli, Tuzla. Rather than making such generalizations as "women suffering poverty" or, "low-class Kurdish inhabitants of Aydınli neighborhood", my aim is to bring together seemingly distinct poles of ethnicity, gender and class, which lead to complex forms of subordination. In this study, I chose to centralize my focus on the ways in which Kurdish women experience poverty during their daily life interactions and experiences which consists of differing yet interrelated poles of subordination. Consequently, poverty constitutes the focal point of this academic inquiry, which will proceed with a concomitant emphasis on the interplay of gender and ethnicity as simultaneous factors, which lead to particular forms of subordination. In the urban setting of Tuzla, low-class Kurdish women in Aydınli are positioned in the lowest ranks of a social hierarchy. Their positions cannot be analyzed by distinguishing and isolating the effects of ethnicity, gender and class from one another. Rather, an analysis, which would cover the complexities of such hierarchization can bring a critical interrogation of the mechanisms of subordination. In this thesis, I aim to analyze the simultaneous existence and operation of oppressive factors such as class,

gender and ethnicity, rather than solely focusing on a particular one or two as factors operating autonomously and independent from one another.

In the following section, I find it necessary to refer to the theories of intersectionality which have inspired my research. Afterwards, my aim is to open up a discussion on the existing literature, which covers the issues of women's subordination in Turkey either from a gendered, ethnicity oriented or class-based point of view. Following a careful observation of the literature, I will discuss the ways in which my research seeks to contribute to the literature with its emphasis on intersectionality.

1.2. Theoretical Considerations

1.2.1. Defining Intersectionality

Kimberle Williams Crenshaw introduces the theory of intersectionality in order to unfold the marginalized situation of Black women and argues that since the existence of a woman of color is related to the conditions of poverty, the notions of race, gender, and class are implicated together (1991). Hence, black women's oppressed situations are shaped by the interrelations of race, gender and class dimensions. Besides, intersectional theory does not only deal with the intertwining of those three categories, but opens a connection for all other social and cultural categories such as ethnicity, sexuality, disability or nationality (Knudsen 2006). In other words, an intersectional perspective examines "the relationships and interactions between multiple axes of identity and multiple dimensions of social organization—at the same time" (Dill 2002: 4).

One of the prominent works in this literature was undertaken by Patricia Hill Collins, who also applies the theory of intersectionality to her research of Black women in USA. According to Collins, intersectionality deals with the different intersecting types of oppressive agents such as race and sexuality. What is significant in this theory is that it reminds us that oppressions in the society do not arise from one single factor; it rather points out the interplay of different factors, which cause injustices to arise. Collins notices the shifting boundaries of intersectionality in women's experiences of subordination when she states the following:

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. (2000: 274-275)

More importantly, Collins draws attention to class as a factor, which proceeds intersectionally with gender in Black women's life as she highlights the fact that low-class Black women end up in poverty compared to the better life conditions of low-class Black men (2000). In the light of Collins, my project aims to analyze the intersection of gender, ethnicity and class, which results in the oppression of Kurdish women workers. I aim to provide an answer to the question raised by Collins:

For another, can this version of intersectionality's trajectory, namely, its visibility within the American context, be fruitfully used in other Western societies as well as within non-Western settings? (2009: xii)

In order to make a contribution the above question, the aim of this study is to make visible the intersecting dynamics of women's subordination in Tuzla, Istanbul. Here, the specific attribute of the field necessitates a feminist intersectional analysis of poverty. The intensity of poverty exists among the oppressive mechanisms embodied by ethnic and gender markers within social hierarchy. Emphasizing the prominence of class relations in society, which works hand in hand with dynamics of gender and ethnicity, Lynn S. Chancer and Beverly X. Watkins also emphasize the visibility of multiple agents leading to women's subordination and aptly conclude that "gender, race and class turn out to be closely entwined; at the same time each cannot be reduced to an effect of the others." (2007:76) Brah and Phoenix define intersectionality as follows:

We regard the concept of 'intersectionality' as signifying the complex, irreducible, varied, and variable effects which ensue when multiple axes of differentiation – economic, political, cultural, psychic, subjective and experiential – intersect in historically specific contexts. The concept emphasizes that different dimensions of social life cannot be separated out into discrete and pure strands. (2004: 76)

What is more, Collins concentrates on the operations of domination and power, which undertakes an analysis of subordination of the individual in an intersectional manner. She finds it important to understand the ways in which individuals perceive themselves within the systems of power and domination. For this aim, rather than solely relying on one particular factor in order to locate subordination, Collins favors an approach, which would analyze "how intersectionality creates different kinds of inequalities" with a further emphasis in the

ways in which certain cross-cutting influences affect social change. According to Collins, intersectionality, maintaining the interplaying domains of oppressive mechanisms, proceeds within “a matrix of domination”. This particular matrix is organized by four interrelated systems of power: structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal; where the structural consisting of law, polity, religion, and the economy; the disciplinary as bureaucratic organizations; the hegemonic as the cultural sphere of influence which legitimizes oppression and the interpersonal as influencing the everyday life of individuals, their daily interactions (2000:18).

Building on Collins’ theorizing of intersectionality, the purpose of my study can be narrowed down in the following ways. The aim of this study is to trace the different subjectivities of Kurdish women in Aydınlı. By this I aim to analyze the way in which they experience particular oppressions and pose certain forms of resistances within the hierarchy of social domination. Specifically, this thesis analyzes the mechanisms of oppression resulting from Kurdishness and womanhood. They are manifest in structural, disciplinary, hegemonic and interpersonal realms, with different interviewees experiencing varying degrees of oppression within what Collins calls the ‘matrix of domination’.

As a consequence, following an intersectional approach will lay out the shifting factors behind Kurdish women’s subordination. It will focus on the visibility of multiple agents in such subordination. Meanwhile, by doing so the social hierarchies that are embedded in the neighborhood will become more visible.

1.2.2. A Historical Overview of Feminism in Turkey

Since gender constitutes a major agent among multiple agents in women’s subordination, I will survey the feminist literature in Turkey. To begin with, Şirin Tekeli characterizes the feminist movement in Turkey in two distinct eras: 1910-1920 and post-80. (1998:337) For Tekeli, Ottoman women’s movement through the late period of the Ottoman Empire was the first feminist collectivity to be established among women. According to her, the period of the early republic throughout the 1920’s and 30’s signaled aridity in terms of feminist activism, which is paradoxical considering the republic’s granting of women’s suffrage in 1934. Despite such positives on behalf of women, suffrage paradoxically hindered women’s feminist movement in Turkey. Since women were assumed as equal to men, the regime saw no further need for collective activism towards feminist solidarity (338). The republican

argument claimed that women are liberated and equal to men, yet it was not the case at all (Kandiyoti 1987). The Women's Party and Turkish Women Association (TKB) were closed down by the government (Çakır 2007:65, Toprak 1998). Although there was such kind of a manipulated emancipation of Turkish women in the early republican period, what stands significant is how those reforms for women's rights were part of the project that aimed to construct a new and modern Turkish nation. Eventually these reforms did not speak to the real needs of women in terms of rights. Shahrzad Mojab suggests that the republic's official policy proceeding through the idea of emancipation of women was "one means of subordinating women to the nation state" (2001:4). Fatmagül Berktaş argues that the nation-state significantly aimed at creating the "mothers" of the new nation who will be the loyal servants. For her, it didn't promise them an actual emancipation against patriarchal oppression (2001:348-360).

The silence of women's movement continued till early 1980's, during when a new wave occurred, influenced by the second wave feminist movement globally. The post-80 period marked the emergence of a new feminist activism. In this period, feminist activism declaring women's subordination in this era was much more oriented around class-consciousness, during when socialist-feminist organizations evolved. By opening itself to different perspectives, feminism in Turkey managed to appeal to the masses more than it did in the past throughout the republican regime with its focus on distinct experiences of women. This era marked the emergence of various forms of feminist activism such as publications, protests, consciousness-raising groups and gatherings, which attempted to introduce the women's subordination to the agenda in Turkey once again (Çakır 1996:753, Sirman 1993:16-21). Eventually, the aridity, which was caused by the authoritarian tendencies of the republican regime met with a strong resistance by feminist scholars and activists in the post-80 period. Tekeli calls this new wave of feminism in Turkey as the development of "woman's point of view" (1998). According to Ayşe Gül Altınay, what was first evolving as "woman's point of view" developed into "different women's points of view" in the 1990's, as the feminist movement in the 90's challenged the movement in the 80's by appealing to a more pluralist feminist activism and discourse (2000:25).

Throughout this period, the differences among women within the feminist movement were given more attention. Further, Kurdish women and Islamic-

conservative women became increasingly more organized in this period. With the introduction of ethnicity to the feminist agenda in the 1990s, the multiple axes of oppression of Kurdish women came to be recognized and analyzed by activists and scholars. Rohat Alakom makes a historical analysis on Kurdish women in Istanbul at the end of 20th century. She shows the importance of Kürt Kadınları Teali Cemiyeti² (KKTC), which was very active in this period (2001:60). Yavuz Selim Karakışla also analyzes the significance of KKTC. He shows that under the organization, Kurdish women were resisting patriarchal subordination. He argues that the activists were at the same time Kurdish nationalists as they had dreams for an independent Kurdish nation (2003:111). Yeşim Arat stresses the transformation of Kurdish women's position within the major feminist discourse. Her analysis points out that Kurdish women became aware of the distinct type of oppression they are subjected to which was different than Turkish women, thus they mobilized in order to found an alternative movement for themselves (2008:414-415). For this aim, in order to break up their dependence to Turkish women, men and Kurdish nationalist groups, they organized their cause around the journals such as *Roza* and *Jujin* both of which were founded in 1996 during when the feminist movement in Turkey became more open to addressing the complex relations between different groups of women (Altnay 2000:26, Arat 2004:289).

The 1990's witnessed increasing interest on the problems of Kurdish women in feminist scholarship. Metin Yüksel analyzes the ways in which Kurdish women were subordinated by the republican regime since the 1920's. According to him, the Kemalist modernization project merely liberated Turkish women to a certain extent despite the problematics mentioned above, yet Kurdish women were excluded from this particular project of modernization (2006: 786). Yüksel's analysis focuses on a critical interrogation on the experiences Kurdish women in terms of politics: their perceptions of feminism and identity, hegemonic Turkish nationalism and patriarchy. Additionally, in his analysis of "Diversifying Feminism in Turkey in 1990s"³ Yüksel mentions that feminism in Turkey was ethnicity-blind until 1990s, as it was implicitly assumed that all women in Turkey are of Turkish ethnic origin. He introduces the concept of ethnicity next to gender in his analysis of feminism in Turkey. He asserts that Kurdish women face 'dual suppression', both in terms of gender and ethnicity.

² En. Society for the Advancement of Kurdish Women

³ Unpublished master thesis

His comparison of black women in USA and Kurdish women provides an ethnicity based comparative analysis of the two seemingly distinct cases of women's subordination. It sheds light on the ways in which ethnicity and gender works cooperatively in the suppression of women. Projecting his analysis on this particular comparative case to the Turkish context, Yüksel draws attention to the fact that Kurdish women have been subjugated by their Turkish sisters. For him, the republican understanding on gender, highlighted women, who were "potentially able to benefit from the secularizing and modernizing Republican periods" (2006:777). This particular sense necessitated an ethnicity-oriented approach within feminist scholarship in Turkey. Eventually, Yüksel manages to introduce an ethnicity-based approach to feminist scholarship in order to better comprehend the subordination of Kurdish women in Turkey. He further suggests that a class-based analysis is necessary. For him, it can enrich the ways in which feminist scholarship can better analyze the subordinating conditions of Kurdish women.

Handan Çağlayan is another feminist scholar who focuses on Kurdish women's experience. In her research, Çağlayan engages in an analysis of the motivations behind Kurdish women's participation in the Kurdish political movements beginning with the 80's (2010). Çağlayan's research highlights the ways in which Kurdish women perceive themselves as political actors within the Kurdish independence movement. She argues that Kurdish women managed to maintain active agencies among oppressing conflicts. For her, these conflicts arise from patriarchal oppression in Kurdish community. She further notices that they are also pressured for being agents of Kurdish political opposition in this process. Çağlayan argues that this particular process turned Kurdish women into political objects/subjects throughout Kurdish opposition movement. In her suggestions for further research, Çağlayan mentions the importance of a class-based analysis on Kurdish women.

Yüksel and Çağlayan's researches analyze the political engagements of Kurdish women within the general movement for Kurdish independence since the late 1970's. Martin van Bruinessen also undertakes an analysis of Kurdish women's relations to the macro-level political opposition. He argues that Kurdish women expressed their active agencies in this process (2001:95-112). He analyzes the significance of the political experiences of Kurdish women during Kurdish resistance, which occurred between late-1970 and early 2000's in Turkey. Leyla Zana, one of the first Kurdish woman parliamentarians in the national assembly who was met with a

fierce opposition in 1991, constitutes one of the focal points of van Bruinessen's research (106-107).

Having in mind the different approaches towards the question of Kurdish women, one can point out that the existing literature focuses almost exclusively on the political engagements of Kurdish women. It analyzes the ways in which they are subjectified, oppressed or coerced by the state apparatuses; as well as the ways in which they manage to manifest particular forms of resistance to such policies. This thesis draws from this literature and seeks to follow up on the need identified by Çağlayan and Yüksel to analyze the class-based oppression of Kurdish women in Turkey. This thesis aims to contribute to the existing literature on Kurdish women with its intersectional analysis of poverty, as experienced and resisted by a particular group of Kurdish women in Aydınli, Tuzla.

1.2.3. Theoretical Approaches to Urban Poverty

The term "poverty" needs careful elaboration. Ülkü Şener summarizes the two prevailing approaches to define poverty. According to her, the first approach defines poverty on the basis of income and consumption. The second approach defines it in terms of life conditions such as health, education, nutrition and free time (2009, 2). İlhan Tekeli suggests that these two definitions of poverty have different bases and should be named differently. First one is "absolute poverty." Tekeli explains that people who cannot acquire the necessary food for survival are defined as absolute poor. He mentions that the term is defined on the basis of humans' biological qualities, and therefore regarded as "absolute." (2000:142) According to UN, absolute poverty is identified with "...severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. It depends not only on income but also on access to social services" (UN 1995, 41)

The second definition, according to Tekeli, can be named as "relative poverty." He underlines that this approach takes into account people's socio-cultural positions, rather than their biological qualities. People who are below the accepted consumption level are counted as relative poor (2000:142). Tekeli reckons that this consumption level is higher than the absolute poverty. He argues that relative poverty refers to the necessary conditions for an individual "to reproduce his/her well-being socially rather than biologically." (142) Tekeli notices that today, poverty is

understood as relative poverty (143). Buğra and Keyder refer to a study by Eurostat conducted in 2004, which suggests that, “relative poverty, measured by less than 60 percent of the median income in the country, is 23 percent in Turkey.” They emphasize that Turkey’s is the highest figure among all EU members and candidates. They focus on the significance of relative poverty and argue that, “Turkey has to consider alleviating poverty seriously.” (2005:20)

According to the United Nations Development Program, poverty should be addressed in many dimensions other than the lack of income in a given society. It should address the shortcoming choices and opportunities for individuals. For the Program, poverty can be measured by “indicators of the most basic dimensions of deprivation such as a short life, lack of basic education and lack of access to public and private resources.” Further, the three indicators of the human poverty index (HPI) concentrates on the deprivation in the three essential elements of human life: longevity, knowledge and a decent standard of living.⁴

Necmi Erdoğan argues that poverty should not be understood in scientifically objective, fixed, quantitative terms. For him, such an approach would cause a miscomprehension. Therefore, he suggests the term, “positional poverty.” For Erdoğan, positional poverty takes into account individuals’ relative and differing experiences of poverty (2001:7-9). He shows that the conditions leading to poverty are relative. Every individual perceives his/her conditions of deprivation in a different manner. Erdoğan eventually argues that poverty is “a condition of multifaceted deprivation.” (3)⁵

Ahmet Insel also argues that poverty should not be considered solely in terms of lack of income. Rather, it should be defined as “a process of exclusion.” (2001:71)⁶ He argues that it is possible to be above the level of absolute poverty but be relatively poor (71). Amartya Sen also argues that poverty should not be defined solely in terms of income and consumption. She suggests the term “capabilities” to characterize it better. Sen argues that poverty is not to be relatively poorer than others in a society. Rather it is the lack of capabilities to have the rights and facilities that the social welfare presents. Sen argues that the income/consumption-based analysis of poverty is a static approach. She shows that poverty is not a “state”. It is a “process”.

⁴ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/indices/hpi/>

⁵ Tr. “Çok yönlü bir mahrumiyet hali”

⁶ Tr. “Dışlanma süreci”

According to Sen, looking from the perspective of “capabilities” provides a dynamic approach on poverty (1985, 1992). Melih Pınarcıoğlu and Oğuz Işık argue that this dynamic nature shows the poor’s willingness to use capability to alleviate poverty (2001a, 2001b, 2008). Similarly, İnel emphasizes the need for this dynamic approach. He argues that, “poverty produces the conditions by which it is reproduced.” (2001:70) He points at the process, which makes poverty more comprehensible. In this thesis, I take poverty as a dynamic process, which is reproduced by Kurdish women’s lack of capabilities to access basic rights. I aim to expose the intersectional dynamics of social inequality that reproduce their poverty.

Necmi Erdoğan further analyzes the cultural representation of low-class individuals in Turkey (2001). Following a Foucauldian terminology, Erdoğan illustrates the ways in which the impoverished and the subordinate are subjected to “governmentality”. He argues that their poverty is governed to reproduce the neo-liberal market dynamics (9). Erdoğan further refers to Bourdieu’s interpretation of “symbolic violence”⁷. He shows that it is the counterpart of governmentality. For him, the impoverished meet symbolic violence, which legitimizes the inadequate living conditions of them. Erdoğan further refers to Spivak, and concludes that the poor and the subordinate cannot speak so long as they are regarded as “subjects”. He asks the question, “How do the poor/subaltern give meaning to the processes of marginalization and exclusion and how do they react against such processes?”⁸ (7). Erdoğan suggests that the poor and the subordinate should be taken as “subjects” since they have relative experiences of poverty (18). He argues that only then the poor and the subordinate can speak among the troublesome conditions in the era of neo-liberalism (19-20).

Erdoğan’s discussion on poverty is fruitful in comprehending poverty in Turkey with an approach emphasizing diversity. Erdoğan later edited a volume of articles in his later work, *Yoksulluk Halleri*, which contributed to the existing literature with perspectives on gender and ethnicity. Yet his previous article lacks the

⁷ Bourdieu explains the term as follows: “Symbolic violence, a gentle violence, imperceptible and invisible even to its victims, exerted for the most part through the purely symbolic channels of communication and cognition (more precisely, misrecognition), recognition, or even feeling. This extraordinarily ordinary social relation thus offers a privileged opportunity to grasp the logic of the domination exerted in the name of a symbolic principle known and recognized both by the dominant and by the dominated” (2001: 2).

⁸ Tr. Yoksul/madunlar marjinalleştirilme ve dışlanma süreçlerini nasıl anlamlandırıyorlar ve bu süreçlere nasıl bir tepki veriyorlar?

significance of gender and ethnicity in individuals' perceptions of marginalization and impoverishment. Following these definitions on the new pathways in measuring poverty and the general question that Erdoğan poses, I propose to ask the question in the following way, "How do Kurdish women in Aydınli, Tuzla give meaning to the processes of marginalization and exclusion at the intersections of gender, class and ethnicity?" Accordingly I aim to seek for the answers through their reflections throughout this research. I propose that the intersecting dynamics of subordination and exclusion will bring forth their diverse experiences of poverty.

Among the existing literature on poverty, the book *Yoksulluk Halleri*, edited by Erdoğan, consists of several different articles on poverty. It introduces a fieldwork project by discussing poverty with regard to gender, religious belonging, ethnicity and social space (2002). In this edited collection of essays, Mustafa Şen and Aksu Bora's researches on poverty make key contributions to the existing literature. Aksu Bora's study focuses mostly on the experiences of unemployed women in Turkey. She focuses on women regardless of their ethnic belongings. Her analysis discusses women workers' relations to waged labor. She further investigates the structural obstacles against waged labor. In her study, Bora points at the traditional gender roles as one of structural obstacles. Traditional gender roles oblige with household activities and child caring duties. She shows that they prevent women's employment (2002). Mustafa Şen undertakes a class-based and ethnicity-oriented analysis. He investigates the ways in which Kurdish identity could be a factor in giving meaning to poverty (2002).

In addition to the above-mentioned literature, Ayşe Buğra and Çağlar Keyder also stand as two of the most significant researchers on poverty in Turkey. In their collaborative report entitled "New Poverty and the Changing Welfare Regime of Turkey", they come up with a unique definition of poverty. Buğra and Keyder made researches in Istanbul's different provinces such as Esenyurt, Bağcılar, Bakırköy, Eyüp, Eminönü, Büyükçekmece and Ümraniye (2003). They firstly stress the importance of Istanbul as a global city. They show that Istanbul hosts the newly emerging class of the urban poor. They refer to the phenomenon of migration as determinant for the flow of people to Istanbul. They argue that these migrants constitute the urban impoverished and the subordinate (6-8). Buğra and Keyder show that migrants are subjected to economic marginalization and exclusion, which triggers their cultural and political exclusion in the public sphere. They argue the urban poor

no longer manage to progress and develop towards an upper class status in the global city. Therefore, according to Buğra and Keyder the unique conditions of the “new poverty” emerge (9). Buğra and Keyder further suggest that the welfare policies should take into account this newly emergent dynamics of poverty in Istanbul (23-24). Their observations on the “new poverty” is insightful for me to consider the case of Tuzla. I aim to introduce a gender and ethnicity-based perspective to the understanding of this unique dynamics of poverty. In short, this thesis will contribute to the existing literature with an intersectional approach on “new poverty”.

In their studies, Pınarcıoğlu and Işık suggest the term “poverty in turn” (“*nöbetleşe yoksulluk*” 2001a, 2001b, 2008) Similar to Keyder and Buğra, Pınarcıoğlu and Işık also draw attention to the migrant movements that directly effect the social hierarchies in Istanbul. According to them, the former migrants who take advantage of the job opportunities in the informal sector transfer their poverty conditions to new comers. The new comers in return suffer from insufficient material and economic conditions. Yet they are not resistant against the conditions of being exploited by the former migrants. They are also content with the living conditions since they maintain their hopes for survival. This simple circular relationship between former migrants and the newcomers in the host city with respect to the economic conditions points at poverty in turn (2001b: 32, 2008: 1354).

Pınarcıoğlu and Işık show that “solidarity networks” play important roles in sustaining new urban poor’s survival (2001a, 2001b, 2008). Within the existing literature on poverty, there are also researches regarding the solidarity networks of the low-class urban neighborhoods. Particular researches point at the importance of solidarity networks, which helps to solve the problems of urban poor in economic, social and cultural arenas (Ayata 1989, Erder 1996). By the help of these networks, the newcomers manage to deal with the subordinating conditions of the economic insufficiency. Pınarcıoğlu and Işık also argue that poverty is even more visible in Istanbul since the contrast between the rich and the poor increased more than ever. They notice that the problem of poverty should be tackled. According to them, the problem of poverty should not solely be regarded as a problem of material inequality. They argue that it also brings about inequalities in cultural and political lives as well (2001b: 32-25).

In this thesis I aim to concentrate on another urban area, Aydınlı, Tuzla, where the material inequalities are strongly felt. As an industrial district with shipyards and

vast organized factory areas of textiles, marble and leather industry, Tuzla hosts a substantial amount of working class population experiencing poverty in turn. The poverty in turn is more intensely felt due to the coexisting forms of subordination on the basis of class, gender and ethnicity. Just as it is a center of industry, Tuzla is also the center of culture due to the four universities⁹ and Formula 1 facilities that it hosts. The working class populations are isolated from cultural attractions. As mentioned, Pınarcıoğlu and Işık emphasize the concomitance of economic and cultural exclusion. Yet they do not specifically undertake a gender and ethnicity based analysis in their research on Sultanbeyli. In this thesis, I aim to deepen the sphere of the “cultural,” particularly along the axes of gender and ethnicity. The urban setting displays the ways in which Kurdish community is excluded not only on an economic basis but also on a cultural basis. Besides, the class-based, patriarchal and ethnicity-based subordination contribute to women’s economic and cultural exclusion. In this thesis, I aim to contribute to the existing literature on poverty by presenting the intersectionality of multiple agents leading to women’s subordination in Tuzla.

1.2.4. Reconsidering the “Kurdish Question”

Kemal Kirişçi and Gareth M. Winrow (1997) show that Turkish nationalism existed before 20th century. It was systematically developed after the foundation of the nation-state at 1923. Until the mid-1920’s, there was a sense of “muslim nation” rather than a “Turkish nation” (Yeğen 1999: 557, Kirişçi & Winrow 1997: 93) Kirişçi and Winrow analyze the policies of the nation state during the 1930’s when Turkish nationalist project became even more visible (100). Kirişçi and Winrow show that the nationalist project was directed against Jews and Greeks as well as Kurds. They argue that purpose was to consolidate the process of nation-building (104). They further show that Kurds were considered as “mountain Kurds” in this period since for the Kemalists, they belonged to Turkish ethnicity, yet remained uncivilized (108). Tanıl Bora argues that Turkish ethnic nationalism developed in order to target Kurds for assimilation (1996: 37). Bora also argues that the “anti-Kurdish hatred” is still evident in contemporary Turkey. He argues that anti-Kurdish hatred is actually a growing contemporary discourse with many new elements in it (2005:250). Yeğen shows that the attempts of the Kemalist regime were met with the “discontent” of Kurdish

⁹ Sabancı University, Okan University, Piri Reis University, Istanbul Technical University Maritime Faculty

populations (2007:127). He argues that the regime considered the Kurdish unrest as reactions against modernization (129). According to him, Turkish nationalism is still effective in the subordination of Kurds in contemporary politics. To illustrate this, he mentions the existence of Nationalist Action Party, left-wing nationalism, nationalism in Islamism, and the popular nationalism, which aim to oppress Kurds (2005:120).

Besides the historical approaches on the “Kurdish Question”, the existing literature also covers Kurdish women’s subordination. I already discussed some of the references on Kurdish women under feminist literature. In this section, I aim to survey another literature on Kurdish women’s political experiences. Heidi Wedel analyzes the Kurdish migrant women in Güzeltepe, Istanbul (2001). She aims to show Kurdish women’s political participation in their new environment. She shows the constraints and resources for political participation. She discusses the external factors such as the women’s movement, the Kurdish movement and the religious movement, which contribute to their political participation (113). Wedel argues that the political participation of Kurdish women in Güzeltepe is very low. She shows that Kurdish women are nevertheless not content with the status quo and develop ideas to overcome the obstacles. Wedel argues that for a better political participation, Kurdish women need to be empowered in several spheres of their lives such as family relations, social values, the education, the economic realm, the creation of new facilities in the quarters, and the political arena (128). Wedel’s arguments focus on the constraints for Kurdish women’s political participation in the host-town. In this thesis, I aim to add to Wedel’s arguments by focusing on particular constraints from an intersectional perspective. Rather than focusing solely on politics, I will show that these constraints also reproduce women’s subordination in terms of class, gender and ethnicity.

Cihan Ahmetbeyzade examines the Kurdish exile community in Esenyurt, Istanbul (2007). She focuses on the significance of Kurdish women’s forced migration from their homelands to Istanbul. She aims to show Kurdish women’s notion of violence, which is related to their memory, silence and loss of ancestral land. She argues that the state violence and memory are influential in the creation of an internal diaspora (160-161). She shows the gendered imageries of the ideal Kurdistan that women long for (161). Ahmetbeyzade’s arguments focus on forced migration and gender. My aim is to contribute to the existing literature by opening a perspective of class in Kurdish women’s interactions at host-town. My aim is to

analyze it together with gender and ethnicity in an intersectional manner. Derya Demirler and Veysel Eşsiz also analyze the significance of forced migration (2008). They argue that forced migration creates a particular trauma in Kurdish women. According to them, this trauma is mostly visible through their use of “language” (177). Demirler and Eşsiz argue that forced migration cannot be included in the collective memory of the society. They show that the voice of Kurdish women becomes weaker under the state discourse (177).

Ayşe Betül Çelik analyzes the case of forced migration and researches the ways in which Kurdish women were socially isolated, excluded and impoverished (2005). In her research, Çelik investigates the dynamics of such phases of subordination, constituted and reproduced on the basis of political conflict and violence as a result of the nation state’s repressive repercussions against the Kurdish community. Her analysis is insightful for bringing up the political dynamics inherent behind the mechanisms of subordination that Kurdish women experience on the level of poverty. In my thesis, I will show that my interviewees do not migrate to Istanbul as a result of forced migration, but as a result of poverty they suffer at hometown. Focusing on the significance of language and political conflict, I aim to contribute to Çelik’s and Demirler and Eşsiz’s arguments with an intersectional perspective on my interviewees’ subordination in Aydınlı.

Deniz Yüksekler shows the processes of social exclusion of Kurdish people who were subjected to forced migration (2006). She emphasizes that forced migration took place in a time period when Turkey was suffering from financial crises. She points at the lack of employment opportunities within this particular period (48). Yüksekler emphasizes that Kurdish migrants were unable to speak Turkish, which was an obstacle for their adjustment to the society (48). In sum, she undertakes a class and ethnicity based analysis and argues that the two factors enhanced Kurdish migrants’ social exclusion. Her analysis is significant for my research regarding language issues. I would like to add to Yüksekler’s arguments with a gendered perspective. By introducing the gendered perspective to the picture next to ethnicity and class, I aim to provide an intersectional analysis of my interviewees’ subordination in Aydınlı.

In brief then, first, a gendered analysis of poverty is one crucial field of inquiry among particular diverse approaches within poverty studies. It highlights the ways in which women experience and perceive their life conditions of economic/material insufficiency and further marginalization in social hierarchy

(Şener 2009). Second, as Buğra and Keyder propound there are three critical concepts in analyzing urban poverty that refuse to determine poverty with certain quantitative analysis but rather highlight the dynamics it signifies: Social exclusion, underclass and marginality (2003:19-20). So, all these considered, in this work, I aim to explore the experiences of ‘Kurdish women in Tuzla’ on the basis of these three dynamics inherent in their daily lives such as ‘gender’, ‘class’ and ‘ethnicity’. What this thesis aims to contribute to this literature is to suggest an alternative approach in investigating Kurdish women’s poverty conditions. My interviewees have not migrated from rural areas to Istanbul for the reasons of political conflict and violence. Rather, the main motivation for their displacement is related to poverty conditions that they suffer in their hometowns. I aim to show that they come across radically new mechanisms of marginalization and poverty structures in the urban setting. I argue that there are multiple intersecting agents leading to women’s subordination in Aydınlı, Tuzla.

1.3. Methodology

1.3.1. Justification of Field Choice

For the purpose of this thesis, I chose to analyze the Tuzla district known for its dense working class population occupied in universities and shipyards. As Aslı Odman shows, Tuzla constitutes an urban setting where dichotomies around class structure appear most visibly (2010). On the one hand private universities, shipyards and factories constitute the main structures of culture and neo-liberalism. Therefore they mark the rising upper class in the city, while the rest of the population consists of working class people who have migrated from various cities in Turkey to work in these emerging institutions.

To explore the dynamics of urban marginalization, poverty and subordination in this particular urban setting, I initially conducted field trips to one of Tuzla’s neighborhoods named “İçmeler” thanks to Alev, a women worker living in this neighborhood whom I had the chance to meet earlier. With the concert of Kardeş Türküler that I attended in this neighborhood, I had the opportunity to observe the audience and the intersectionality present. The band’s countrywide popularity and the hall’s proximity to the highway would make it comfortable for people residing in provinces of Istanbul other than Tuzla to attend the event. Yet the feelings of isolation

stroke me. There were only people attending the concert from nearby working class neighborhoods. This further encouraged me to think how women experience urban marginalization in Tuzla.

I had a couple of visits to İçmeler neighborhood to visit Alev, whom I met at the dorms of my university, working as a cleaning lady. The neighborhood is substantially populated with Kurdish-Alevi workers. Soon, I realized that people were calling the neighborhood “Bingöl Neighborhood” rather than İçmeler. İçmeler was the official name that coexisted with Bingöl in their imaginations. With my interactions in the field, I learnt that an inhabitant of the neighborhood, Hasan Albayrak was murdered by the police in May 1 demonstrations in Kadıköy, 1996.¹⁰ The homeland of the deceased was an eastern city called Bingöl, therefore the neighborhood began to be called in that name for his memory. In the informal interviews I made with the residents, they were calling him a “martyr”.

With what I witnessed in the field, I decided to turn my attention away from this neighborhood. I didn’t want to concentrate on this particular event since my aim was to analyze the intersecting agents leading to women’s subordination. There were no organizations for collective resistant activism. The only activism I observed was the speech act of uttering “Bingöl Mahallesi.” The particular working class community in this neighborhood was based on *loss*. It comprised a collective mourning for Albayrak, and which further reproduces the very sense of the community. My readings on Judith Butler further sophisticated the way I approached the neighborhood. She was suggesting the paradox of loss in the following: “Loss becomes the condition and necessity for a certain sense of community, where community does not overcome the loss, *cannot* overcome the loss, without losing the very sense of itself as a community” (2003, 468).

The way that the residents uttered the word “Bingöl” with respect to their neighborhood was an act of commemoration as well as a resistance. Following J.L. Austin’s use of the term (1962), which was later elaborated by Butler (1997), it was a

¹⁰ “OLMAZ” DEMİŞLERDİ OLDU! 2007’DE “İŞTE TAKSİM İŞTE 1 MAYIS”! by Temel Demirer:

<http://www.mesop.net/osd/?app=izctrl&archiv=153&izseq=izartikel&artid=404>

“Alanları Zaptedişimizin Tarihi”:

http://www.ozgurluk.org/kitaplik/webarsiv/vatan/vatan_arsiv/vatan37/haberler/vatan/maya_tar3.html

“1 Mayıs Nedir?” http://www.iscibirligi.info/T/102/1_mayis_nedir

“1 Mayıs’ın Tarihçesi” by Suleyman Celebi: <http://www.suleymancelebi.org/1-mayis>

“1996 1 Mayıs: 1 Mayıs Şehitleri Anısına Hasan Albayrak’ı Anmak”

<http://www.binlom.com/dc/?p=2434>

“performative speech act”. The expressions showed that the daily lives of the inhabitants of the neighborhood were imbued with such a performance. But I realized that they didn’t necessarily need the urge to unionize on a collective, organizational manner.

Eventually, I came across problems in reaching Kurdish women for the purposes of interviewing. I was unable to reach out to the networks. The neighborhood was primarily a patriarchal space. Without networks, I couldn’t find any means to socialize with the locals. I took photos of the neighborhood, capturing the wall paintings, zooming in the images of Che Guevera and Deniz Gezmiş, which were beautifully drawn on the walls of the parks. Yet with my subsequent visits to the Aydınlı neighborhood, which was located approximately 5 km away from İçmeler, I realized that there were even no parks so that the residents can convey messages through its walls via street art. İçmeler neighborhood was located only a hundred meters away from the E-5 highway, which connected the neighborhood to the rest of Istanbul. Aydınlı stood five kilometers north of İçmeler. Aydınlı was much more marginalized than İçmeler in terms of transportation. From the community of loss, I turned my attention to the community of utmost urban marginalization. Here I had the chance to meet low-class Kurdish women experiencing life in the depths of a deprivation. I was able to reach them via collective networks where Kurdish women workers take active roles.

1.3.2. Personal Reflections on the Research Process

In the following days I thought of the possible ways by which I can do some kind of field research so that I can find other informants individually. I made some researches about the industries and factories in Tuzla. I got on the minibuses which travel from *Tuzla Deri Sanayi Bölgesi*¹¹ to Pendik and visited several places such as industrial districts and neighborhoods inhabited by working class people like Aydınlı and Konaşlı. The neighborhood of Aydınlı particularly fascinated me. I came across many Kurdish people, who were speaking in their mother-tongue. The urban condition of the neighborhood was not good at all. It was definitely a working class neighborhood. I observed many people getting in and off the minibus who were supposedly working in the nearby factories. And what is most significant was that

¹¹ En. Tuzla Leather Industry Area

Aydınlı displayed a much more lively neighborhood in terms of politics and culture. There were various hometown organizations of the South Eastern provinces. There was a “Cemevi”¹² in the neighborhood and offices of several political parties. I saw many women walking in the streets and getting involved in the public space, which was not the case in the İçmeler Neighborhood. Thus I decided to revisit the Aydınlı neighborhood to talk to the locals, instead of simply waiting for Alev to help me with my research.

I visited the neighborhood once again. I was very lucky to meet Hevali to whom I stopped by to ask about the neighborhood. She was very eager to listen to me. She asked about my interest and when I said that I was coming from Sabancı University to conduct research on Kurdish women’s experiences based on gender, class and ethnicity, she was very enthusiastic to help me. She told me that she could introduce me to some Kurdish women who can be interested in my research. What was striking was that she herself was a sociologist. She was 45 years old and had studied sociology in Ankara University. She was involved in activism for workers in the region. It was a great chance to meet her totally by coincidence I must say. She told me about a woman worker whose job was recently terminated and that she was going to meet with her that day. She asked me to accompany her. This was incredibly important for me and I accepted immediately. We had a 5-minute chat while we were on the road to the house of Çiğdem who was once a leather worker.

The experiences that I gained in the following stages of my field trips helped me to narrow down my area of research and fieldwork. After a couple of visits to these neighborhoods, Aydınlı neighborhood stood out as a significant and accessible site for research. With the help of the existing networks of resistance and activism, I

¹² Sunnism and Alevism are branches of Islam. There is a sectarian difference between Sunnis and Alevis. There has been a historical conflict between the two sects since the 7th century. Aydınlı Neighborhood consists of a substantial number of Alevi population. Alevi populations living among Kurdish community predominantly speaks Zazaki. The ones who continue their lives among Turkish communities speak Turkish.

Aydınlı neighborhood hosts a Cemevi where Alevis can enjoy their religious and cultural belongings (there are 61 Cemevis in total in Istanbul). The narratives of my interviewees show that Sunni Kurds and Alevis are not in conflict with each other in the neighborhood setting. There were conflicts during 1970’s, when the neighborhood was not yet crowded with Kurds. One of my interviewees, Cigdem told me that, during Ramadan, her mother used to wake up late at night and open the lights for *sahur*. She wasn’t fasting, but she did this in order to avoid Sunni Turks’ reactions. According to my interviewees, when the neighborhood was crowded predominantly with Kurds through the late 90’s and early 2000’s, the sectarian conflict in the urban setting subsided. Yet the conflict was existent in the factory setting between Sunni Kurds and Alevis. I will analyze this in detail in the fourth chapter.

had the chance to meet various women. There are currently three political parties active in the neighborhood: BDP (Peace and Democracy Party, a Kurdish political party also represented in the national parliament), ESP (The Socialist Party of the Oppressed) and EMEP (Labor Party). Besides the political parties, there is also a civil political organization called “Mayıs’ta Yaşam Kooperatifi”¹³ (MYK). The organization aims to provide the students of the district with free lessons to support their education. The cooperative is a very lively civil organization. Its members organize weekly meetings, panels, and movie screenings in order to discuss and debate the conditions of working class poverty.

In addition to the civil and political organizations, the activism in the urban setting of Aydınlı can also clearly be observed on the walls in the streets. Most of them contain written messages on workers’ subordination and Kurdish oppression. A number of them refer to specific issues such as: “*Deri İşçisi Yalnız Değildir!*”¹⁴. There are the slogans and propaganda notes by the political parties ESP and BDP as well. I also came across a wall on which it writes “*Hepimiz Ermeniyiz*”.¹⁵ UIDDER organizes occasional meetings for the problems of workers. Among the civil organizations, there is also a number of small groupings for hometown associations, such as “*Erzincanlılar Derneği*”, “*Bingöllüler Derneği*” and “*Vartolular Derneği*”.¹⁶ They are significant in terms of showing the process of migration of the workers from Eastern Anatolian cities of substantially Kurdish and Alevi population.

In this neighborhood, throughout my field trips, I conducted in-depth interviews with 10 Kurdish women of low class. My main interest in this research was to examine the existence of multiple agents of women’s subordination. For this purpose, I focused on Kurdish women’s distinct experiences on the basis of gender, class and ethnicity. The in-depth interviews that I conducted with Kurdish women in Aydınlı provided me with very important insights on the issues of marginalization and exclusion.

Hevali and members of MYK helped me to meet with some of my interviewees and other women whom I haven’t interviewed. Yet, I also experienced problems in attending the meetings of MYK. Their members assumed that I have a political view

¹³ en. Life in May Cooperative. See Appendix C image 16. The cooperative has offices in other low class neighborhoods such as Yenibosna, Ümraniye and Sultanbeyli.

¹⁴ en. “Leather workers are not alone!”

¹⁵ en. “We’re all Armenians” See Appendix C image 22.

¹⁶ See Appendix C images 14, 15.

similar to them. Despite their generous helps in contacting me with the possible candidates whom I can interview, I constantly felt the pressure to act like “one of them” in return. In the meantime I attended several meetings and facilities of MYK and conducted two of my interviews in their place, with two women who came to attend a movie screening in the cooperative. I reached the remaining 8 women through other means and conducted the interviews in their houses (in one case, in the house of a relative). Two of my interviewees were taking active role in BDP and one in ESP. The remaining ones were not affiliated with any political organizations. Despite their political affinities, I was happy to see that our interviews were not dominated by party politics. To the contrary, we focused on the daily life experiences and concerns of Kurdish women in Aydınlı on the basis of class, gender and ethnicity.

1.3.3. The Process of Interviewing

The snowball sampling technique was used in this study. December 2010 was the month when I spent the most amount of time in the field. I conducted the interviews between January and February 2011, the first being on January 30 and the last on February 21. I conducted semi-structured, open-ended, and in-depth interviews with the participants. The interviews can be categorized as semi-structured interviews since I was “prepared and competent” but I was not “trying to exercise excessive control over the respondent.” (Bernard 2000: 91) The interviews were recorded by a tape recorder with the permission of the participants. The duration of interviews ranged from 30 to 120 minutes. During the interviews, an interview script, including a set of questions (which are presented at the Appendix B) was prepared beforehand to guide the interaction. These preplanned questions were not asked to all interviewees; some of them were customized, some others were left unasked. The majority of the interviewees are between ages 20 and 40. All of them have rural backgrounds and have been living in Istanbul for a period of time that is ranging from one and a half to almost four decades. All of the interviews were tape recorded and transcribed by me. I also took notes before and after the interviews.

This research was conducted under various limitations. First, due to the time and access issues, the population of the study was restricted to ten women. Second, I intended to be alone with the respondents to avoid the interference of other people. But I could not always succeed in maintaining privacy during the interviews. The most important problem was regarding the weather conditions in the middle of winter.

Since the houses of my interviewees who lived with their small children were usually cold and without proper heating systems. Hence, we could not find the chance to move to another room, which would have provided a quiet environment for the interview. Their houses were crowded with the relatives of my interviewees. I had to conduct several of the interviews with the husbands and the mothers in law listening to our interaction. In six of my interviews, I was alone with my interviewees. In one of these six interviews, I asked questions to my informant in the kitchen. We were alone but she was busy with housework throughout the interview. In four of my interviews, I wasn't alone with my interviewees. In two of these interviews, the husbands of my interviewees were present; in one of these my interviewee's children were also present. In one them the husband was not present but only the children were. In the other one, the mother-in-law of my interviewee was present throughout the interview.

In addition to the limitations that I encountered throughout my field research, I had one advantage regarding my status as a researcher. The fact that I was a researcher in Sabancı University (SU) drew their attention since this university for them was not just an ordinary university. All of them heard of and knew about SU in their daily interactions. The fact that a researcher from this university, with which they were sharing the same environment in Tuzla, was of special attention. In our interactions with each other, they were referring to SU as “the university” without necessarily mentioning its name. Therefore, I had the feeling that they welcomed me with sincere feelings when they realized that I am a part of the university. They were caring for me while I was visiting their houses, such as preparing dinners for me, asking whether I was cold or hungry all the time.

Besides the formal interviews explained above, I conducted another qualitative method, participant observation, which helped me tremendously in contextualizing my interviews. I had the chance to get acquainted with the daily dynamics of my interviewees and had the opportunity to witness the ways in which respondents react to what happens around them. I conducted informal interviews, observed collective discussions and organization's usual setting and also took notes. I became more aware of my own location and relatedness to the social setting I inhabited. The participant observation method was especially useful in the initial stages of my field research when I first began to conduct frequent visits to the neighborhood. It was influential for me to observe the daily life dynamics going around me, such that I realized that

there were no children parks in Aydınli unlike İcmeler, which hosted two parks in the different places of the neighborhood. The absence of children parks was a crucial motive that my interviewees were also emphasizing, whose significance I will explore in the following chapter.

In the meantime, I had the chance to talk to various other people in the neighborhood such as the grocers, different kinds of salesmen in the streets, the *muhtar*, activists in ESP and MYK and many others with whom I had informal interviews. My daily interactions were insightful since the locals defined the neighborhood as “*varoş*”¹⁷. Supermarkets such as DIA and BIM, which are spread all around the country even in the small neighborhoods, were absent. Instead, there were small grocers and other local shops. These were my initial significant observations, which distinguished Aydınli from Tuzla’s other neighborhoods in terms of urban marginalization.

1.4. Chapter Outline

This introductory chapter aims to explain the purpose and methodology of this study, contextualizing it within the existing literature on intersectionality, feminism and poverty studies in Turkey. The following three chapters of my thesis follow what Chandra Talpade Mohanty refers to as a ‘spiral structure’, moving “in and out of similar queries, but at many different levels” (2003:13).

The second chapter is composed of four sections. In this chapter I argue that Aydınli is a site of urban marginalization. In the first section, I aim to provide an analysis of the economic, physical, and political characteristics of the neighborhood. In the second section, I open up a discussion on my interviewees’ narratives on homeland and migration. I aim to show that my interviewees constantly refer to their homelands during their narrations of Aydınli. In the third section, I argue that my interviewees develop particular survival strategies. I aim to show that my interviewees are active agents rather than passive subjects. Their strategies highlight their agency. The last section is reserved for a discussion on the patriarchal oppression they face in the neighborhood. I argue that the patriarchal oppression is one of the multiple agents leading to women’s subordination, which enhances their urban marginalization. In sum, in this chapter I argue that Kurdish women are “urban

¹⁷ en. “Slum” the word in Turkish connotes a marginalized working class district without proper urbanization.

outcasts”, who are subordinated by the intersecting dynamics of gender, class and ethnicity.

In the third chapter, I aim to show the multiple agents leading to women’s subordination, with a special focus on ethnicity. In the second section of this chapter, I provide a historical background of Kurdish oppression. In the third section, I show that the lack of education is a significant motive in my interviewees’ narrations. In this section, I show that the intersecting dynamics of class, gender and ethnicity subordinates my interviewees and prevents them to pursue their educations further. I argue that such multiple agents contribute to the reproduction of poverty for my interviewees. In the fourth section, I analyze my interviewees’ relations to their mother tongue, Kurdish language. I aim to show that my interviewees are distanced from Kurdish language due to the dominance of Turkish in the neighborhood. I argue that, despite their detachment, they nevertheless emphasize their Kurdish identities. In this section I also show that the dominance of Turkish in their lives enhances their marginalization. In the fifth section, I aim to show the significance of two phenomenon that appeared as important motives: *Andımız* and ROJ TV. In this section, I emphasize that the nation-state’s official education system traumatizes my interviewees, whereas the Kurdish TV channel ROJ TV becomes a means for therapy. In this section, I argue that education may not necessarily be key for a better life without poverty. Contrarily, education makes visible the multiple agents leading to women’s subordination, such as gender, class and ethnicity. In the sixth section, I aim to show how my interviewees react to the particular question: “What does it mean to be a Kurdish woman?” In this section, the perceptions of my interviewees again expose the intersecting dynamics of class, gender and ethnicity. In the seventh section, I discuss the significance of my interviewees’ political engagements. I argue that my interviewees are active agents, rather than passive subjects since they discuss the “Kurdish Question” in Turkey and seek solutions. In sum, in this chapter I show that language and identity should not be analyzed separately from gender and class dimensions since they expose the dynamics of multiple agents leading to women’s subordination.

Chapter four concentrates on the analysis of the specific dimensions of Kurdish women’s experiences regarding their laboring activities. For this aim, it focuses on two different modes of women’s labor, domestic and factory level. An analysis regarding the ways in which Kurdish women of different ages and

backgrounds experience and interpret their work activities either as home-based workers or as industrial laborers is the focal point of this chapter. Accordingly, I focus on their memories, which begins from their childhood experiences as workers, the reasons for quitting or being fired from their jobs, their experiences at home and the household relations especially regarding childcare. This section is two-fold, first highlighting the significant theoretical approaches within feminist scholarship on the effects of neo-liberalism on women, the ways in which women experience particular forms of subordination through their household labor are subjected to a careful discussion. In the following section, I focus on Kurdish women's working experiences in different industries. Despite the fact that not all of my interviewees are employed in an industry right now, all of them have experiences of laboring in a factory in Tuzla for certain periods of their lives. In this chapter, I aim to contribute to the existing literature on poverty and intersectionality with the term *poverty on the edge*,¹⁸ which shows the significance of the intersecting dynamics of subordination.

¹⁸ Tr. Yoksulluğun Kenarında.

CHAPTER II

The Neighborhood in the Face of Marginalization and Struggle

2.1. Introduction

“Does not Tuzla consist of merely shipyards and factories?” asked my mother, who visited Istanbul for a couple of times but spent her entire life in cities in central Anatolia, when I first told her that I met with a woman living in Tuzla and will be visiting her house. Referring the fame of Tuzla narrated by the Turkish media, she was very surprised at the moment when she recognized that Tuzla does not consist solely of industrial areas and are also crowded by all other mass public buildings inhabited by a vast amount of people of different social and economic backgrounds. The stereotypical public image of Tuzla brings forward the meta-narrative of a “mere industrial space” with factories and shipyards, which are often depicted as the spaces of incidents resulting in deaths of workers’ lives. As an urban setting, Tuzla is occupied with the huge industrial areas and the suburbs inhabited by the workers. The image of Tuzla in the national media is represented as a mere industrial site. It also figures as such in people’s imaginations. Yet, a deeper investigation on this urban setting exposes the complexities especially the lives of people. The experiences of people often remain invisible when the urban setting is merely represented as an industrial area.

I must confess that my initial thoughts on Tuzla were not much different when I settled in the area. I was invited by the Cultural Studies Program in Sabancı University in June 2009 for graduate interview. Back then, I didn’t know about the shuttle facilities from the main centers of the city such as Kadıköy and Taksim to the campus. Therefore I took the train to Istanbul and got off at the Pendik stop. It was early in the morning at 6 AM. I went to the minibus port nearby and asked whether it was possible to find a transport, which would take me to Sabancı University. I got on the minibus populated almost entirely by men. It was a one-hour trip to the campus when I got off the minibus under curious and surprised looks. I immediately realized that it is an unusual occasion for them to come across a female university student getting off the minibus at Sabancı University.

This would be my only trip to Sabancı University by public transportation, until I undertook this ethnographic project. Soon after this trip, I actually became one of the residents of Tuzla, yet my residency was markedly different from other

residents of Tuzla with whom I have interacted as part of this project. I was using the shuttle services of the university to travel to the center of Istanbul, whose route was directly connected to the superhighway without any visit to the suburbs of Tuzla. I was living in Tuzla, yet with a specific difference: Borrowing from Pierre Bourdieu, Sabancı University was an entirely different *habitus*¹⁹ than the nearby working-class neighborhoods, including Aydınli where I conducted my ethnographical research. Sabancı University, with the facilities it offered, the students it inhabited, the kind of economic and social capital that it welcomed, stood in isolation. Feeling estranged by the contrast and the gap between the university and its neighborhood, I became more and more curious about the lives of the inhabitants of Tuzla, particularly women. There were many women cleaning workers at the dorms living in the nearby neighborhoods in Tuzla such as Aydınli and İçmeler. I began to build up relations with them and I got more familiar with working women's experiences and perceptions of our shared urban setting. Based on interviews and interactions with a diverse group of women living in Aydınli, one of the aims of this research project is to problematize the stereotypical image of Tuzla, reflected in my mother's remark, as a mere industrial site without any reference to the experiences of its working class population.

In this chapter I will first focus on the ways in which Aydınli neighborhood is isolated and marginalized and refer to the narrations of my interviewees. I will discuss the neighborhood's connection routes to the rest of the city and discuss the significance of public transportation. The lack of social welfare facilities makes life difficult for women. My interviewees' perceptions of the neighborhood are accompanied with their experiences of the homeland. One section is reserved for their comparison between the homeland and Aydınli. Their expressions will be useful in analyzing the intersecting dynamics of subordination on the basis of gender, class and ethnicity. Among troubling conditions, my interviewees display particular resistances. I will reserve another section for discussing the active agencies of my interviewees. I

¹⁹ Bourdieu defines *habitus* as "systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively "regulated" and "regular" without in any way being the product of obedience to rules, objectively adapted to their goals without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to attain them and, being all this, collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor".

(1977:72)

will then discuss the patriarchal oppression in the neighborhood. In this section, my aim is to mention the significance of women's gendered experiences of the neighborhood.

2.2. "Aydınlı Neighborhood" as a Site of Urban Marginalization

As Aslı Odman suggests, Tuzla inhabits five organized industry sites, a shipyard area which undertakes the production of 80 to 90 per cent of Turkey's ship production, Formula 1 facilities, which attract thousands of tourists from all over the world, and four universities (2010). These industrial, academic, sports, and touristic facilities are socially far and distinct from each other and exist without any kind of interaction. Yet, these facilities mark Tuzla as a site of "development," with no recognition of the fact that it is at the same time a "reservoir of the working class"²⁰ (Odman 2010). Additionally, there is a particular ethnic gap between the university populations and the working class neighborhoods. The university populations are predominantly Turkish, yet the neighborhoods are mostly inhabited by people of Alevi and Kurdish origin. Tuzla is an urban setting where poverty intersects with the dynamics of ethnicity, culture, and gender.

One of my interviewees Yeter, a 32 year-old cleaning-worker in Sabancı University describes her neighborhood as one marked by "*mahrumiyet*" (deprivation). She is the mother of two sons and has been living in Aydınlı for 20 years. Her smaller child, 2 year-old Arzen Fırat accompanied the interview since he was sick and Yeter couldn't leave him alone. Among the frequent cries of her baby, Yeter was trying hard to narrate her story: "Everyone calls my baby Fırat except me. You call him Arzen, since you are a researcher, an educated university student." Yeter is a Kurdish-Alevi woman who named her son "Arzen," a Kurdish name, yet refers to him as "Fırat" in public. Yeter's narrative on her experiences of Kurdishness in the neighborhood constitutes one of the ways in which she experiences "deprivation." She feels deprived in other ways as well:

"There is no transportation after 9 pm. You really do not have any social rights regarding transportation. How would I say, you cannot even find a bank around.

²⁰ I formulated this definition borrowing from Odman's reference to Tuzla as "işçi havzası". She explains this definition as follows: "İstanbul'daki sekiz organize sanayi bölgesinin beşi Tuzla'da. Bunun üstüne bir de Türkiye'nin en büyük Tersaneler Bölgesi var güneyinde. 1990'lardan beri buraya şehrin içinden tersanecikler, deri sanayi, mermer sanayi, boya/vernük sanayi kaymış. O yüzden hala Tuzla'da çalışanların çoğu, Pendik-Gebze ile sınırlanabilecek bir havzada yaşıyor. Çalışmak ve yaşamak içiçe. İşçi havzasının tanımı işte bu."

There is only one health center and it is closed after 5 pm. If you get sick after 5, you need to go somewhere else. There are no banks. There is no transportation. You don't have any social rights regarding the transportation. It is the same for 20 years. This neighborhood is not developed. Orhanlı is much more developed.”²¹

Here, Yeter draws attention to the poor physical conditions of the urban setting in terms of transportation. Moreover, her narrative on the lack of banks and the limited access to health facilities highlights the non-existence of what she calls “social rights”, what can also be called “welfare rights” following Marshall’s definition (1964). When asked about the reason for such under-development, she replied: “The ones who are in charge of government do not consider the people living here as ‘humans’. Indeed, let me say they do not consider us as ‘citizens’, which would be more proper.”²²

In her response, Yeter explains the underlying conditions of such deprivation of social rights. She applies a “we-narrative” when she constantly refers to “us” while telling her experiences. This particular narrative conveys a collective perception of the neighborhood, rather than an individual one. Yeter is not the only person living in deprivation. Her we-narrative suggests that she belongs to a community of people who are conceived as “non-citizens”. Her critique of the municipality’s perception of the locals of the neighborhood as non-citizens points out the dynamics of discrimination. These subordinating mechanisms do not only invalidate citizenship rights but also human rights in the urban setting. Yeter considers Aydınli as a space of deprivation of the most basic welfare resources. Further, the government is also indifferent to the deprivation. Yeter’s narrative suggests that the under-development of the neighborhood is sustained due to the indifference of the political authority. This relation eventually reproduces the conditions of deprivation.

According to Yeter, Aydınli is the one of the most “under-developed” neighborhoods in Tuzla: “Orhanlı is not like Aydınli, which is much more advanced.” Yet among many other neighborhoods in Tuzla, Aydınli hosts a lively activism as Foucault’s famous dictum suggests: “Where there is power, there is resistance.”

²¹ Hülya: “Aydınli nasıl bir yer?” Yeter: “Mahrumiyet! Şöyle dokuzdan sonra ulaşım bulamıyorsun. Ulaşım konusunda gerçekten hiç bir sosyal hakkın yok ki aslında. Bir bankası olsun ne bileyim hiç bir şey yok. Bir sağlık ocakları var, o da saat beşe kadar. Beşten sonra hasta olsan başka yerlere götürmek zorundasın. Hiç bir ulaşım yok, gelişmemiş. Yirmi senedir biliyorum hep aynı. Orhanlıya bakıyorum Orhanlı daha güzel gelişmiş.”

²² Yeter: “Başa gelenler burada yaşayan insanları insan olarak görmüyor. Vatandaş olarak görmüyor diyeyim daha iyi olur.”

(1978, 95) Among the organizations in which Kurdish women take active roles, there are currently three political parties and civil organizations active in the Aydınlı neighborhood: BDP, ESP, EMEP and MYK. In addition to the civil and political organizations, the activism in the urban setting of Aydınlı can also be observed on the walls in the streets; most of the graffiti on these walls highlight the subordination and oppression of workers, sometimes with specific references (e.g. “Deri İşçisi Yalnız Değildir!”²³).

The politically dynamic neighborhood of Aydınlı, inhabited predominantly by Kurdish and Alevi workers, is surrounded by not only the (Turkish dominated) universities, industries, and Formula 1 facilities, but also by a growing number of gated communities. As I was doing my fieldwork, several projects to turn some of the spaces in Aydınlı into a middle and upper-middle class neighborhood were underway²⁴. The sites that are built by TOKI to be inhabited by the middle-class, as well as the growing number of gated communities constructed by private holding companies such as Dumankaya for the factory owners and white collar workers stand close to, yet separated from, the residences of the working class individuals under conditions of “depravity.” What the low-class neighborhood crowded with Kurdish worker populations in Aydınlı and the upper-middle class neighborhood have in common is sharing the same geography and not much more. The working class neighborhoods of Aydınlı distinguish themselves from upper-middle class settings in the way that Keyder describes: “... by the unfinishedness of three- and four-storey buildings, constructed out of cheap concrete and brick and often lacking a final plastering, that are located haphazardly within what seem to be random settlement patterns.” (2005:127) Aydınlı on the one hand contains gated communities with more than adequate physical conditions for middle and upper classes; and a neighborhood of low-class workers most of whom have migrated to Istanbul from various Kurdish-populated cities in Eastern Anatolia in the past 30 years.²⁵

Çiğdem is a 42 year-old woman from Dersim. She is the mother of a daughter named Roza. She worked as a leather worker for many years. She is currently

²³ En. “Leather workers are not alone!”

²⁴ See Appendix C images 9-13.

²⁵ 8 out of my 10 interviewees do not own their own houses and they pay rents in Aydınlı. Zozan lives in a small house in the garden of the school where she is employed as a cleaning worker. She doesn’t pay rent. She is given the housing in exchange for her labor at school. Nazmiye also does not pay rent. She lives in her brother-in-law’s house, with her husband and three children. Her husband is a textile worker.

unemployed. Çiğdem shares the same demand for a child-friendly neighborhood, and goes further to ask for more public spaces for arts and leisure: “Other than parks, you cannot even go to see films with your children or to theatres with your family.” At first, I thought that Çiğdem was making very valid points in highlighting the lacks of theaters and cinema halls in Aydınlı because I had not come across those kind of public spaces in my observations as well. However, when I realized that there are cinema halls only 6-8 kilometers away from Aydınlı such as in the shopping centers Viaport and Pendorya, or in the coastal neighborhoods of Tuzla, I was once again reminded of the isolated nature of life in Aydınlı. In a globalized world where people travel thousands of kilometers in short hours across the world, there stood the very fact that Çiğdem did not have the means to reach the public spaces only 6 to 8 kilometers away from her neighborhood, or even be informed about them.

The lack of transportation and communication between Aydınlı and the middle-upper class neighborhoods around it contribute to its isolation and its perception as a place of “deprivation” by its inhabitants. Aydınlı is a neighborhood with population 23105.²⁶ It resides near “Orhanlı-Aydınli Highroad” which connects Aydınlı to the E-5 highway. The highroad is 1 kilometer away the neighborhood center. Aydınlı is the second stop for the public transport after İçmeler. It stands 5-6 kilometers north of İçmeler, and 4-5 kilometers south of Orhanlı. The second possible route to travel Aydınlı is the Pendik-Aydınli connection route, which lasts approximately 15 kilometers. The minibuses depart at Pendik and stop by at the center of Aydınlı and travel north to Orhanlı.

It is significant to note that the public transportation is handled primarily by private companies. There is no bus route whose schedule is regulated by Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality to travel directly to Aydınlı. Only early in the morning and in the evening during the rush hour, a couple of buses depart from Tepeören (4 kilometers north of Orhanlı), connect to the E-5 highway and travel to Kartal. The

²⁶ It was not easy to access the population numbers of the neighborhood. I visited the Tuzla municipality, but they didn't respond. Finally, I was able to learn the numbers from Tuzla District Governorship (Tuzla Kaymakamlığı). The number was dated 2008. Aydınlı is Tuzla's most populated neighborhood. After Aydınlı comes Yayla (20485) and Şifa Neighborhoods (20095). According to the Kaymakamlık data, Aydınlı recorded the highest population growth rate between 1990 and 1996 with %380. Although the rates are lower today, I guess that currently Aydınlı has a population between 30000 and 35000.

people in Aydınli are mostly using the private transportation.²⁷ The private transportation does not have a regulated time schedule. It only departs if there are enough passengers at the first stop, or if the drivers expect to take enough passengers on the road. Those minibuses are more expensive than the public transport service of the Municipality. Plus, it is hard to find minibuses after the rush hour. Moreover, the numbers of minibuses become very rare in the weekends, since few people travel to their workplaces. Despite the neighborhoods' proximity to the rest of the city, the transportation is organized in a way that aims to bring workers back and forth their workplaces and homes. Other than that, there are no sufficient means to travel to the city in the evening for leisure and relaxation.

"I cannot enjoy the rest of the city with my daughter" said Çiğdem to me, "there are a few minibuses available in the evenings and weekends and I cannot risk using them, their hours are not regulated." These complaints regarding the lack of public space and of transportation are not unique to Çiğdem. All of my informants spend their lives only in the neighborhood by visiting their relatives or nearby neighbors. None of them have the opportunity to interact with the urban facilities of art and leisure nearby. Transportation is among the main factors for such deprivation. Plus, in the informal interviews I had with women, they complained about the patriarchal urban setting. It is very hard for them to use the public transportation as women especially in the evenings. Some of them experienced problems even walking down the road under men's suspicious looks between Orhanlı-Aydınli Highroad and the neighborhood center, which is only one-kilometer walk.

In addition to the lack of arts and leisure facilities such as theaters and cinema halls, Çiğdem also remarks that in the urban setting of Aydınli, there are not even "cafes" where she can take her children out for a few drinks and have fun with them. According to Çiğdem, "Aydınli has grown much bigger in the recent years, it was a

²⁷ The district governorship of Tuzla explains the transportation as follows: "Transportation through highway is realized indirectly by various ways from the west side of Tuzla. The private mass transportation, bus services which run between Tuzla and Topkapı, an important distribution center, constitute the backbone of transportation to Tuzla from the center of Istanbul. Other indirect buss routes are run between Beşiktaş – Bostancı, Beşiktaş – Kadıköy, Taksim – Bostancı, Şişli – Kartal, Mecidiyeköy – Bostancı, Mecidiyeköy – Pendik, Şişli –Kartal. All these services use E-5 and TEM highways. In the east side, transportation to Tuzla is realized by direct bus services from an important distribution center of Kadikoy. It is also possible to reach Tuzla by minibuses that go to Gebze from Harem."

The governorship also mentions that the busses organized by the municipality travels from Topkapı to İçmeler. The data doesn't mention any means for transportation to Aydınli. This was the main reason why I posed İçmeler as less marginalized and isolated than Aydınli.

small village years ago but it is not that small now”, which legitimizes her demands for more public spaces. Meryem, on the other hand, comments on the environmental problems inherent in the nature of Aydınli and says: “I would like to live in a tidier neighborhood, everywhere is full of dirt.” She mentions that she misses the color green in the neighborhood, and would like to see Aydınli much more filled with parks and trees. Similar to Meryem, Zozan also notifies that the air in the neighborhood is very polluted and it is very dangerous for them to breathe such an air.

Referring to Loïc Wacquant, Meryem, Zozan, Yeter and Çiğdem’s narratives show that Aydınli is the setting of “urban outcasts”. Wacquant points at the advanced marginalization in capitalist societies. For him, “the new urban marginality results not from economic backwardness, sluggishness or decline, but from rising inequality in the context of overall economic advancement and prosperity.” (1999:1641) Wacquant traces the emergence of marginalization among the growing societal wealth, which he finds “puzzling”. He remarks that urban marginalization “is spreading in an era of capricious but sturdy growth that has brought about spectacular material betterment for the more privileged members of First World societies.” (1641) He draws a direct link between the growth of capitalism and marginalization as follows:

The more the revamped capitalist economy advances, the wider and deeper the reach of the new marginality, and the more plentiful the ranks of those thrown into the throes of misery with neither respite nor recourse, even as official unemployment drops and income rises in the country. (1999:1641)

For Wacquant the distance between the low and upper classes in the capitalist societies grow higher in terms of income (2007). He argues that the people at the lowest ranks of the society is not granted with welfare rights; contrarily, they are pushed into the low-waged, part time positions without any work safety. Wacquant notices that the state normalizes poverty in this regard. He emphasizes the state retrenchment in the districts where urban outcasts live. He explains as follows:

In the analysis proposed here, the disappearance of a minimal social state is a self-standing source of marginalization, and the range of state policies oriented towards the populations trapped in the bottom tier of social and physical space is treated as a full-fledged causative force before it can be discussed as possible curative answer. (2008: 91)

Wacquant further notices the emergence of gated communities, which isolate the upper classes from the urban outcasts (2007). Aydınli hosts new wave of

urbanization in terms of gated communities. My interviewees' narratives show that the lack of transportation and social welfare facilities serves to the neighborhood's marginalization. The neo-liberal policies and the lack of social welfare, which marginalize my interviewees in Aydınlı also necessitates a discussion of the state. By sustaining the urban marginalization, the state employs a patriarchal oppression in this regard.

2.3. Narrating the Neighborhood: Between Homeland and Host-land

Migration and hometowns are crucial themes in many of my interviewees' narratives. All of my interviewees who touch upon the issue of migration clearly state that the reason behind their families' migration is economic insufficiency back at their hometowns. In their narratives, Aydınlı is often juxtaposed to their hometowns. For example Yeter talks about the reasons of her migration with her family when she was a child as follows: "Winter was so difficult in such a place like our homeland, there was illness but there was no transportation to go for the hospital". Similar to her previous point about the lack of social rights in Aydınlı, she refers to the limited access to basic health services in her hometown and poses this factor encouraging migration to Tuzla. The lack of access to basic human needs such as health facilities is an important factor behind Yeter's family's migration to Tuzla.

The poor economic conditions they suffered at hometown was the main reason for their migration. Yeter's family migrated to Tuzla with the expectation to reach a better economic status. However, Yeter observes a paradox on the basis of economic inequality: "Now, when my son gets sick or a neighbor's kid gets sick, we take a taxi to go to hospital, which costs a lot whereas we earn so little. This is why it is so difficult to live here." The conditions of Aydınlı are similar to the conditions of her hometown in terms of the lack of transportation. The seemingly an advantage of the urban setting of Tuzla in terms of health facilities, turns into a disadvantage due to the isolation of Aydınlı from the rest of the urban setting and due to their economic status.

Like Yeter, all my interviewees posed poverty as the crucial factor behind their or their families' migration to Tuzla. Yet none of them has been able to reach the socio-economic status that they had expected or envisioned while migrating. One can argue that the ethnic markers play an important role in their ongoing poverty in the urban setting of Tuzla. Nevra Akdemir and Odman point at the Kurdish migrants

from Eastern Turkey being automatically positioned in the lowest strata within the relations of production in Tuzla, being hired mostly for low skilled jobs with minimal wages (2008:73-74). They argue that the Turkish workers migrating from Central Anatolia and the Black Sea Region enter the job market also from below, but from a higher position compared to the Kurdish workers. Such that in the workplaces, it is frequently expressed that “Kurds who do not know the business came and this decreased the wages”; an expression which otherizes Kurdish workers among other migrant groups such as Turks who are supposed to be “skilled workers” (74). Yeter and other interviewees point to the difficulty of increasing the economic and material life conditions for Kurdish workers with the discriminatory discourse regarding the Kurds being constantly reproduced. Therefore, Yeter perceives her migration to Aydınli as a disappointment, rather than a salvation, and highlights the gap between her expectations and real life experiences.

Besides the crucial phenomenon of socio-economic expectations of Kurdish migrants remaining unfulfilled, it is important to note the physical isolation of Aydınli being a disappointment. The urban conditions constituting the isolation of Aydınli are different from the self-imposed isolation in gated upper-middle class settlements in Tuzla. The newly emerging upper-middle class settlements are isolated for the maintenance of a habitus with particular social and economic capital that is distinct and hierarchically higher than the working classes living in Aydınli. According to Yeter, Aydınli maintains such isolation from the adjacent settlements since the Kurdish working class settlers are not perceived as “citizens,” or even “humans”. In Mizgin’s words, Aydınli “is like our *memleket*, we still aren’t on the European side.” Despite the fact that Aydınli stands so near to the centers of social and economic capital (particularly the universities and industries), it still resembles their hometowns due to its strict isolation. When it comes to discussing the kinds of improvements in terms of their living conditions, Mizgin draws attention to the continuity of the living conditions between their hometown and the host-town:

“Everything is the same as it was in the village of our past. As in the village, when we arrived in Aydınli, we all had to work to earn a living. I was very young [when I started working], only 12 years old.”²⁸

²⁸ Mizgin: “Geldiğimizde hepimiz yeni gelmiştik İstanbul’a. Aslında memleket gibiydi. Değişen bir şey yok, Avrupa yakasına geçmedik. Anadolu yakasında, aynı köy gibi. Burası köy gibi. İlk geldiğimde bakmışım, aynı tas aynı hamam. Ama aynı o sıkıntıyı çekmedik o başka. Hepimiz el ele verdik çalıştık. On iki yaşında on iki on üç yaşında.”

Mizgin is a 25 year-old woman living in Aydınli for 12 years. Her family migrated from Bitlis for economic insufficiency. She was married at a very young age with patriarchal pressures. She worked in textile industry in Tuzla for long years. According to Mizgin, there haven't been any improvements in terms of economic and material conditions of her family. She remarks another continuity as follows: "The amount of labor we put never matched the income we got, whether it be in the village or here in the city." Within the isolated and the unchanging dynamics of Aydınli, what Mizgin inherits from the previous generation is not wealth but poverty: "How can you achieve it if your father couldn't do it? Their poverty passes on to us. At least if my father wasn't poor, maybe I wouldn't be in such a position."²⁹ For Mizgin too, Aydınli is an "isolated" urban setting, which is intertwined with the unchanging dynamics of "deprivation". Eventually, this situation positions this urban setting nowhere above or below their hometown.

Meryem and Zozan talk about their sense of estrangement in Aydınli and yearning for the motherland in relation to their perceptions of deprivation. Meryem is the youngest of my interviewees, at the age of 21. She was the most educated person among my interviewees, having graduated from high school of accounting³⁰. She is from Bitlis. She was working for an accounting office. She had to leave her job after she got pregnant. Zozan is 35 years old and she is from Muş. She is working as a cleaning lady for a high school in Aydınli. I met her at the school she worked since she was living there. She later told me that the school management offered her family a place to stay in the school building in exchange for their services. In their narratives the continuum of deprivation between the hometown and the host-town finds a different interpretation. Meryem's family was working in animal husbandry back at their village. According to her, her family was living a much more "peaceful" life at her village during her childhood, although they migrated to Aydınli for economic reasons: "At least those places are our own lands, they are familiar to us, we could feel at home despite difficulties." For Meryem, Aydınli is "like a foreign country". Next to poverty, her alienation in Aydınli is shaped by the suppression of the Kurdish language in public: "While you speak Kurdish, you all of a sudden arrive at a place where everything is in Turkish." Similarly, Zozan says that she doesn't feel herself as

²⁹ Mizgin: "Baban yapamadıysa sen nasıl yapacaksın? Onların fakirliği bize de geçiyor. En azından babam zengin olsaydı belki de bunları düşünmezdim."

³⁰ Tr. Meslek Lisesi-Muhasebe Bölümü.

a local of Aydınlı and the urban setting is very alien to her: “I’ve been living in Aydınlı for 15 years, but I do not feel myself belonging here.” Zozan describes her experience of migration from her hometown to Aydınlı as a displacement from the home country to a foreign land: “We’re strangers here, far from our *vatan*³¹.” Yet unlike Meryem, she doesn’t explicitly define her alienation in terms of cultural belonging:

“We’re working here all day long. Our lives in the village were no different than today in Aydınlı. Surely I would like to return to my *memleket* if there were enough working opportunities.”³²

Migration from homeland to Aydınlı was an attempt towards providing occupational possibilities for the families of Meryem and Zozan. However they inevitably feel themselves as strangers in the host town. Eventually Meryem declares her wish to return to her homeland: “Even the air you breathe in your *yurt*³³ is enough, it is peaceful and free”, she says.³⁴ Zozan further expresses her dream to return to the homeland one day, although the desperate expression in her face suggests this to be wishful thinking, rather than an actual plan. Due to their experiences of alienation on the basis of poverty and ethnicity in Aydınlı, Meryem and Zozan develop a passionate longing for their homeland. This is a nostalgic revival of the homeland image of the village, which was once left behind for a better life in Aydınlı.

Our talks with Çiğdem opened up a new perspective in terms of the comparison between the homeland and the host land. In the previous section, I talked about her insights on the transformation of Aydınlı into a more woman and children-friendly environment. Çiğdem was talking about the deprivation but she was also putting a particular emphasis on “transformation” of urban space in terms of “rights” which she feels should be granted to her as a woman with improvements in the public sphere. Çiğdem does not conceive of Aydınlı in juxtaposition to an image of the homeland that is longed for. She made the following formula:

“You live wherever you labor to survive. Yes, my motherland is very important to me but here we live in a reality, we labor and feed our family.”

³¹ En. Motherland.

³² Meryem: “Elimizde olsa yine şu an memleketimize gitmek isteriz. Bir iş imkanı olsa, mesela bir fabrika olsa, yine kendi evimizde dururuz. Kendi evimiz var, tarlalarımız var. Ama hani değerlendiremiyoruz. Eğer bu imkan olsa mesela bir iş yeri kurulsa gideriz biz.”

³³ En. Native country. In Meryem’s narrative, *yurt* and *memleket* are used synonymously.

³⁴ Meryem: “Özgürsün istediğini yapıyorsun sonuçta senin kendi yurdun. Orada çok rahatsın ondan dolayı çok istiyorum. En önemlisi havası yeter.”

In a realist manner, Çiğdem engages in an active brainstorming and critical analysis, which would bring forth the problematic of the neighborhood. Çiğdem refuses to concentrate on a narrative of oppression. She also doesn't prefer to point out clear-cut dichotomies between the hometown and the host town. She lives in deprivation. The life conditions in Aydınli are a disappointment for her. Yet she doesn't develop a longing or nostalgia for the homeland. Between homeland and Aydınli, she points out an alternative outlook on the basis of survival and labor. She is an urban outcast, struggling to survive. Accordingly, she locates her hometown as the space of her labor, which she does in order to survive.

2.4. From Deprivation to Resistance

Within such troublesome survival, Kurdish women in Aydınli develop particular strategies to cope with deprivation in the urban setting. The aim of this section is to discuss the individual and collective resistances that they undertake against the various forms of oppression they experience. One of my aims in emphasizing "resistance" is to challenge the widespread understanding of Kurdish women (particularly working class Kurdish women) as "passive" beings rather than as "active agents". I find Said's critical interrogation in "Orientalism" (1979) useful in rethinking the dynamics of class, gender and ethnicity in my research and in investigating the possible venues of resistance attempted by Kurdish women. Although there are oppressive mechanisms as exemplified in the case of an "isolated" urban setting of Aydınli with respect to its being a space of "deprivation", posing Kurdish women living in this urban setting as totally "passive" in determining their lives would be a miscomprehension. Rather, in the midst of deprivation, Kurdish women seek to find various ways of struggle.

Çiğdem's insights mentioned above pointed out a form of resistance. Rather than yearning for the motherland due to the deprivation in the neighborhood, she prefers to struggle through labor in order to survive. When I asked Meryem whether she is currently happy to be living in Aydınli, she also reacted in a positive manner: "I'm happy in this neighborhood because there are lots of fellow *hemşeri*³⁵ with whom I can interact and ask help whenever I need anything." The neighboring ties among Kurdish women in Aydınli enables a particular solidarity to be formed.

³⁵ En. Somebody from one's own town.

Another of my interviewees, Zehra is a 36 years old woman from Bingöl. She only received her primary school education. She is now working as a cleaning worker in the houses around Bağdat Caddesi, an upper class neighborhood. She is an activist in BDP. Regarding the solidarity networks, Zehra made a sophisticated remark on this issue: “The reason why we came to live here is that our feudal network is all here, and we would like to gather around this network which makes life a lot easier.” Meryem and Zehra’s narratives show the importance of solidarity networks for the urban poor, as suggested by Ayata (1989), Erder (1996). With the help of these solidarity networks, Zehra and Meryem were able to adjust life in Aydınlı.

Nevertheless, it was only when Meryem made the following remark on language that I once again realized the co-existence of the dynamics of resistance with oppressing power structures:

“There are lots of Kurdish women in the neighborhood, who migrated from different regions. Sometimes we cannot understand each other’s language, for example there are people from Dersim and Bingöl who speak *Dersimce*,³⁶ we just had difficulties in communicating. Therefore the Turkish language comes to the stage one more time, so that we can understand each other.”³⁷

The first time when I heard her comments on the presence of Turkish language among Kurdish women, I immediately considered the inevitable oppression of Kurdish women for not being able to speak in their mother tongue. However, as I got to know Meryem better on this issue, I realized that the presence of Turkish language means much more than I expected: “Turkish language becomes our common language when we need to communicate adequately.”

³⁶ En. Dersim Language. In my research, I didn’t come across any scholarly interpretation of what “Dersimce” is. The expression was frequently used by Kurdish women from Dersim area, which covers the cities of Erzincan, Dersim, Mus and Bingöl. Recently, there has been a debate on the expression after Kemal Kilicdaroglu, the leader of CHP (Republican People’s Party) uttered the word. Kilicdaroglu said that his family was speaking Dersimce at the household during his childhood in Dersim. Ali Rıza Ergün, faculty in Tunceli University responded as follows: “In the literature, there is no expression such as Dersimce. It refers to the Zaza dialect of Kurdish language.”

http://www.agendakurd.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=197:klcdarlu-dersimce-bilmiyorumu&catid=48:nuce-ji-kurdistane&Itemid=117

³⁷ Meryem: “Memnunum burada herkesten. Komşuluklar çok iyi. Bir şeye ihtiyacımız olsa kaynanam burada olmadığı için rahatlıkla gidip geliyorum. Bir ihtiyacım olduğu zaman isteyebiliyorum, onlar da aynı şekilde öyle. Onlar da Kürtler, ama şeyler, dilleri şiveleri çok farklı, yani Bingöllüler. Dersimce mi bilmiyorum ama hiç birşey anlamıyorum konuştuıkları zaman. Yine Türkçe anlaşıyoruz. Ortak dil Türkçe oluyor. Ne onlar kendi dillerini benim yanımda konuşabiliyorlar ne ben. Ondan dolayı Türkçe. Ne yaparsan yap dil yine Türkçeye geliyor.”

Many Kurdish women in the neighborhood couldn't speak their mother tongue properly. This was due to the fact that they weren't allowed to receive their official primary education in Kurdish. They were speaking Kurdish in their communities at hometown. When they arrived at Istanbul, speaking in Kurdish publicly became a problem. One of the reasons that my interviewees express their longing for *vatan/memleket/yurt* is because they are far away from their mother tongue. Nevertheless they do not interpret this condition with clear-cut boundaries between Kurdishness and Turkishness. Rather they aptly utilize Turkish language pragmatically in order to interact with each other. Eventually, they manage to ease the conditions of deprivation.

Meryem's comments point out that Aydınlı does not consist of a homogeneous population of Kurdish people; there exist different tongues, if not languages, and cultural belongings of Kurdishness. In this sense, the Turkish language is instrumentalized for communication and solidarity. Nazmiye on the other hand, acknowledges that she goes out public very rarely only to visit her relatives on some occasions. She is 41 years old and migrated from Bingöl. She was my only interviewee, who didn't receive any education. Nazmiye usually spends her entire day at home busy with crafting hand-made textiles to earn money and help the financial means of her family. In the midst of the struggle against poverty, Aydınlı is still connoted with positive meanings for her although she agrees with the fact that it is a space of deprivation: "This is our place, you know everybody, everybody knows you." As a Kurdish Alevi, Nazmiye frequently visits the *Cemevi* near her house during her free times for her religious activities. She can speak in Kurdish with her fellow women and establish relation with them. When I asked her about the things that she would be happy to change in Aydınlı, "No" she said, and said the following:

"I wouldn't consider changing anything. I love this place. In our society, when you have some trouble, your neighbors are with you, when you have a funeral, everyone visits you, the same is for weddings."³⁸

Nazmiye's response was striking to me the first time I encountered it. I was having presumptions about Aydınlı as a place where no one could be happy. I thought as if everybody would like to transform it in some way or another. However Nazmiye

³⁸ Nazmiye: "Valla ben burayı seviyorum. Bir hastan olsun bir ölün olsa hepsi birlik olur. Bir de bizim şeyler şey değil, insanlarımız bir cenaze olsa şey olsa hepsi birlik olur, bir düğün olsa, öyle bir toplum."

only finds herself troubled with poverty, and she is content with her overall life. Meryem and Nazmiye emphasize the sense of community in the neighborhood. Nazmiye's remarks are striking for two reasons. Firstly, following Lyotard (1984), it clearly depicts that there is no single "grand-narrative", which focuses on Kurdish women's oppression among the expressions available for the Kurdish women I interviewed. Rather their perceptions on Aydınli are diverse and complex. As opposed to a grand-narrative of oppression which relates Kurdish women's experiences to a single concrete basis, as a root out of which all mechanisms of oppression spring, the experiences of Kurdish women is *rhizomic* in Deleuze and Guattari's terms (2005, 3). Their perceptions and reflections of the urban setting are affiliated with multiple roots that are unique and distinct from each other. Secondly within this rhizomic structure, the way in which Nazmiye depicts her positive affiliation with the urban space is itself a powerful resistance. It suggests that despite the disadvantages and poverty, Nazmiye nonetheless finds a way out of her problems and manages to cope with pressures in the life that she constructs for herself in Aydınli.

The rhizomic structure of my interviewees' narratives is also evident in Zozan's depiction of the neighborhood in terms of solidarity. As presented previously, her narrative on Aydınli is pre-occupied with comparisons between Aydınli and her hometown, which is accompanied by her passionate yearning to return. Here is what Zozan says:

"I miss the life in the *köy*.³⁹ People in the village are much more eager to help you, to be with you in times of crisis such as funeral or in weddings. Here you are alone by yourself. If you have a trouble, you suffer it alone. The help from the fellow neighbors is much less when compared to the village."⁴⁰

Unlike Meryem and Nazmiye, Zozan does not emphasize the sense of solidarity. Mustafa Şen shows how Kurdish urban poor do not benefit from solidarity networks in the host town. In his research, the narratives show that Kurds are economically insufficient to help each other (2002:182-183). Şen's focus is on the economic/material contributions that the solidarity networks provide. My interactions with women also marked similar results. They did not help each other economically.

³⁹ En. Rural setting, village.

⁴⁰ Zozan: "Köydeki hayatı arıyorsunuz. Havası olsun insanlığı olsun. Köyde bir kişinin sıkıntısı olsa hepsi elle başla yardım ederler. Bir cenaze olsaydı bir düğün olsaydı buradakiler gibi değil. Burada sen kendi evinde herşeyi yaşıyorsun. Herşeyi. Maddi olsun manevi olsun sıkıntın olsun cenazen olsun, sen kendin tek çekiyorsun evinde, ama oradakiler öyle değil."

Meryem and Nazmiye's narratives rather show that they feel more secure for living among Kurdish community.

Kurdish women experience the urban setting differently, which makes their perceptions rhizomic. The image of Aydınlı strikingly transforms into a positive one when Zozan compares it with other neighborhoods in Istanbul:

"I wouldn't want to live elsewhere. It is a quiet neighborhood. Things in *memleket* continue here. There is solidarity to some extent; at least there is couple of families who migrated from our homeland to Aydınlı. This is a place where you can relax."⁴¹

Zozan does not put emphasis on the strong solidarity ties among neighbors. Her narrative shows that there is "solidarity to some extent"; she doesn't receive economical help but she feels secure living among Kurdish community. Aydınlı is the best possible place to live when compared to other neighborhoods in Istanbul. Although Zozan's comments seem to be opposing to Meryem and Nazmiye's insights, for Zozan, too, Aydınlı is not only a deprivation zone but also a quiet site of relaxation.

Diversity of the positionalities and experiences of the Kurdish women lead to different perceptions of Aydınlı. Yeter for example, is a mother of two sons. When I asked her about the shortcomings of the physical conditions of Aydınlı, she underscored the need for children's park. Yeter's experience of motherhood invokes a perception of Aydınlı as a place less appropriate for child caring. Yeter also complains about the non-existence of walkways in the streets, which becomes very troubling for her children, especially when she goes out with her two year-old Arzen Fırat. Besides, Yeter imagines a neighborhood not only with children's parks, but also with football pitches so that her older 15 year-old son can play sports with his friends:

"I'm no way satisfied with these conditions. My son is playing football in the middle of the streets because there is no available place assigned. There should be parks. Football pitches. And I'm sure %99 percent of the neighborhood is not satisfied with this either."⁴²

⁴¹ Zozan: "İmkanım olsa gene burayı seçerdim. Diğer taraflara göre sakin. Memleketten çoğu şeyleri var burada. Yardımlaşması var az da olsa, birbirilerine gidip geliyorlar insanlar, birbirilerini soruyorlar. Sessiz sakin. İnsanın dinlenebileceği bir yer."

⁴² Yeter: "Bir top sahası yok, halı sahası yok. Mesela benim oğlum on beş yaşında niye gidip sokaklarda orada burada oynasın? Halı sahanın olması bence güzel bir şey, bir parkın olması güzel bir şey. Çocuklar bütün gün sokakta oynayacağına park olsa parkta oynarlar. Daha güzel olurdu, sağlıklı olurdu. Ama ne bileyim hiç memnun değilim. Yüzde doksan dokuzu da memnun değildir."

In other words, Yeter presents her complaint as a collective one shared by others living in Aydınlı. Yeter imagines a more “child-friendly” Aydınlı for the present and the future of her children. Yeter tries to find out solutions for deprivation and engages to an activism for this absence. She stresses her determination to have a say in the transformation of the urban setting when she said me the following:

“I talk to other women about this situation. It is very critical. Not only for our children, but for us too. The governors should anticipate it. I am planning to write a petition for this request of mine.”

Eventually, Yeter’s experiences introduced a critical interrogation of the urban setting of Aydınlı on the basis of gender. Her insights bridge the shortcomings of the physical conditions of the neighborhood with a gender conscious analysis. What kind of difficulties do Kurdish women encounter for surviving as women within such physical conditions of the urban setting? What are the ways in which they manage to struggle and cope with such problems? What are the particular shortcomings of social welfare that becomes disadvantageous to women in the neighborhood and where to trace their active resistances against such challenges?

2.5. Unfolding the Patriarchal Oppression in the Neighborhood

2.5.1. Locating Patriarchy: The Community, the Neighborhood and Women

The narrations of my interviewees regarding the patriarchal ties in the community, which leads to their subordination touch upon various dynamics of the neighborhood. One of the common themes among all of their responses is “neighborhood pressure” that prevents women from leading “free lives.” Although many of my interviewees emphasize the importance of strong ties and solidarity in the neighborhood, they problematize the implications of this solidarity on the basis of women’s subordination. Mizgin, for example, complains about the physical conditions of the neighborhood that directly affects her life as a woman. Her being very close to her relatives prevent her to act freely as a woman: “there is a lot of gossip” she says, “they take small issues and make them big problems.” Mizgin has been married for 7 years, but she complains that whenever a man goes out of her house, she goes out and says, “say hello to my aunt” so that people wouldn’t misunderstand and be assured that the man is a relative of hers:

“I don’t have to prove anything to anybody. I would like to live far from my relatives. There is lots of gossip. They disrupt my psychology. I cannot even freely guest my cousin. When we go outside I tell him loudly ‘Say hello to my aunt’ so that people wouldn’t misunderstand. It is very conservative. I want to live in a place where I wouldn’t be interrogated for speaking to men. If I have a *dost*⁴³ one day I should even be able to take him into my house and have time with him freely. But there is no freedom in Kurdish society.”⁴⁴

Meryem makes a similar point about close proximity to relatives leading to increased patriarchal control: “The more distant I am from my relatives, the happier I am.” Meryem and Mizgin suggest that this particular kind of oppression is related to the patriarchal dynamics of the Kurdish community. Zozan on the other hand, who always expresses passionate longing for the homeland, depicts her village back in Muş as a free space for women where they could freely interact with everyone in the public space. For her, Aydınli neighborhood does not allow for such interaction:

“Once or twice I went out to see my friends in the streets, they looked at me weirdly, so I don’t do it anymore.”⁴⁵

Zozan and Mizgin express the pressures of patriarchy in the neighborhood in differing ways. Mizgin suggests that the patriarchy is inherent in Kurdish community, whereas according to Zozan, it is inherent in the urban setting. They point out two different realities. Zozan comments that the patriarchal ties are much more stronger and the pressures of being a women in the public space is much more higher than the hometown. Though both the home and the host town inhabit similar Kurdish communities with solidarity ties. Her insights reveal that it is the urban setting of Aydınli, which makes it a lot harder for women to socialize.

Şükran is a 30 year-old woman from Muş. She is the mother of two-sons. She worked in textile industry for many years. She is currently busy with domestic labor, doing handicrafts. Şükran points out the pressures for expectations from women as

⁴³ En. “close friend”. The word connotes “lover”. It is an indirect expression.

⁴⁴ Mizgin: “Yani böyle biraz ailelerden uzak olmak isterdim. Çok dedikodu var çünkü. Küçük bir şeyi görüp, bu durum olduktan sonra insanlar tedirgin oluyor. Mesela teyzemin oğlu geliyor ama toplum o kadar şey ki. O kadar tutucu ki, kapıdan çıkıyorum, teyzeme selam söyle diyorum. Ne gerek var, niye psikolojimi bozuyorlar. Böyle bir toplumun içerisinde olduğum için, böyle hani, özgür, ben evimde ne yapıyorsam afedersin belki dostumu içeri alıyorum, ‘bana ne’ diyen bir toplumda yaşamak istiyorum. O toplumda olmak istiyorum. Herkes kendi özgür hayatını yaşasın ama o özgürlük yok bu Kürt toplumunun arasında.”

⁴⁵ Zozan: “Köyde daha serbest çıkıp dolaşabiliyoruz. Mesela bir arkadaşlarımızla görüşüp gidip gelebiliyoruz. Burada o yok. Bir iki kez gidip geldim, yanlış bakarlar. Bu var eksiklik. Her yere istediğimiz gibi çıkıp gidemiyoruz.”

“mothers” when she says: “when you get married, and don’t have children, you are in trouble.” Yet Şükran does not solely concentrate her analysis to Kurdish society, for her, “it doesn’t matter if this happens among Kurds or Turks. The same is true for every woman.” She claims that this pressure comes from the women of the neighborhood, “it is women, our relatives who pressure us for having children immediately, no one else.”⁴⁶ Şükran maintains a critical stance against the women of her community. Rather than emphasizing the urban setting or the Kurdish community, Şükran tells the ways in which patriarchy is internalized and reproduced by women of any ethnic origin.

In November 2010, when I was conducting my initial visits to the neighborhood, a 14 year-old girl was raped in Aydınlı. The neighborhood, especially women were shocked by this terrible event. The locals brought the girl to the hospital the next morning when they found her unconscious but this was not their only activity. Only in a week’s time, the news spread all over the neighborhood and provoked a huge debate among the activist organizations in Aydınlı. One week after the incident, the women gathered around the organizations such as International Workers’ Solidarity Association (UID-DER), Leather-Workers Tuzla Organization (Deri-İş Tuzla Örgütü), activists of the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), Democratic Free Women’s Movement, Socialist Party of the Oppressed (ESP) and Labor Party (EMEP), and organized huge protests in the center of Aydınlı. They walked through the streets with slogans regarding women’s oppression and released a press statement in which they declared the growing numbers of murders and the rapes of women in Turkey and complained about the insufficient legislations in the law for these crimes. Further, they emphasized the role of capitalist society and the inhumane dynamics that it brings up which leads to the women’s oppression.

For them, laboring women were subjected to increasing forms of violence within the repressive dynamics of capitalism, which directly reflect its effects on women’s bodies. They consequently declared that these dynamics will only be

⁴⁶ Şükran: “Çocuğun olmaması da sorun. İşte etraf ne der, ay ben evlendim iste, hamile kalmadım. Kalır mıyım kalmaz mıyım. Etraf soruyor hamile misin diye. İşte çok kötü bir şey. Kürt Türk farketmiyor yani. Hamile mi değil mi. Evlendi kac aylık. Sen niye hamile kalmıyorsun. Çok zor kadın için zor bu. İşte bizimde annem dört sene çocuk doğurmamış acaba bende mi doğurmayacağım, o korku oldu içimde. Aha çocuk yok, kaynanamgil korkuyor, çocuğu olmuyor. Ben sekiz aydan sonra kaldım diyor. Kız kardeşim de öyleydi. Şimdi yeni hamile, sekiz ay hamile kalmadı. Gene kadınlardan geliyor. Gene kadınlardır bunu yapan. Kadınlardan geliyor. Bir de bizde irsi olduğu için hani çocuk olmama şeyi. Benim görümcem yedi yıllık evli çocuğu yok. Teyzem görmüşündür belki on beş yıl evli çocuğu yok.”

overthrown when female and male workers unite and display resistance to these kinds of women oppression. It is also interesting to note that from the photos that I've seen about the gathering and the chats I had with women, there were quite a few working-class men chanting slogans next to women. Yet, this was primarily a women's protest, against oppression, which has its roots in patriarchal structures and capitalist dynamics that are experienced in the neighborhood. Among women who identified themselves as "*emekçi kadınlar*"⁴⁷ there were not only activists, but also Kurdish women of the neighborhood who had no political or activist affiliation. In the end, the slogan that the women declared throughout the gathering was striking since it was drawing attention to three kinds of exploitation of women; national, sexual and class-based, and calling for solidarity and struggle⁴⁸:

Kadına karşı şiddete son!

Ulusal, Sınıfsal, Cinsel Sömürüye Son! Cinsel Suçların Cezaları Arttırılsın!

Emekçi Kadınlar Mücadeleye!

Kadınlar Mücadeleyle Özgürleşecek!⁴⁹

In addition to calls for struggle against class-based and sexual exploitation of women, the slogans used in this protest draw attention to "national exploitation," marking the perception of oppression vis a vis Kurdishness. I arrived at the neighborhood as this three-fold struggle of women was being publicly expressed, which inspired me further to undertake a research that explored the dynamics of these different forms of subordination. In this section, based on the narratives of my interviewees, I will concentrate on the relation between the urban setting and the patriarchal structures of the neighborhood. Just as women like Yeter complained about Aydınli failing to be a child-friendly urban setting, during our informal interviews together many women pointed at the failure of Aydınli as a women-friendly public space.

Aydınli's women-unfriendly nature became apparent to me during my initial visits to the neighborhood. In those visits, I felt strange when I interacted with the

⁴⁷ En. laboring women

⁴⁸ http://www.uidder.org/aydınli'da_basin_aciklamasi_siddete_tacize_ve_tecavuze_hayir.htm

⁴⁹ en. Stop violence against women!

Stop national, class, sexual exploitation!

Increase the sentences for sexual crimes!

Laboring women to the struggle!

Women will be emancipated through struggle!

locals in the public space, which consists primarily of men. My estrangement was not due to my ethnic distinction as a “Turkish” individual nor the “social class” to which I belonged as a researcher from a private university. Rather it was mainly due to my gender difference from the men who occupied the public spaces in the neighborhood or used the public transportation in and out of Aydın. Besides, it was winter during those visits and while I was wandering around to get to know the neighborhood better, similar to what Çiğdem said to me later, I also recognized that there are no cafes or restaurants that I can escape from cold and have some rest to get myself together. All of them were crowded with male customers and it was very unusual for a woman to be visiting those places. Women’s lives outside of their houses were limited to relatives’ or neighbors’ houses in nearby. Women move from one domestic space to another, remaining almost invisible in public.

The only publicly visible activity of the Kurdish women in Aydın consists of going back and forth to their workplaces in the nearby industries. Although this particular form of socialization through occupation is possible to (some) women, neither the women laboring outside their homes, nor others can go out of their houses in their leisure time to socialize publicly with friends, relax in a park or enjoy some time out with their children. The limited public space of Aydın displays the ongoing reproduction of the patriarchal relations. The urban setting was designed in a patriarchal way that it was an obstacle against women’s socialization. As many of their complaints show, women imagine a more egalitarian urban setting where they can freely enjoy the neighborhood. Despite the fact that the neighborhood is strictly woman-unfriendly, Kurdish women still manage to gather around particular organizations and make their voices heard, such as during the protest after the rape of the 14 year old girl.

2.5.2. “My dear Roza, I’m protesting so that you can be a free woman”

I talked to Çiğdem about the public meeting mentioned above. During our chats, Çiğdem recounted that there have been various protests in the neighborhood, the last one being the protest against that particular incident of rape. She was one of the locals who attended the protest and shared her reflections as follows:

“This protest was done so that similar things would not happen again. We women were there to raise our voices against such terrible things. We have a responsibility for the victim, she should be aware that we’re with her, and that she’s not alone.”

Çiğdem says that public meetings forms a particular “spirit” and a form of solidarity in the neighborhood:

“There were lots of women, mostly Kurds. Although people came here from Erzincan, Bingöl, Dersim, Muş, all those cities where they had various problems for Kurdishness and for being a woman, they attend such activities. They are forced to marry at small ages. They are very tired of oppression, they are perceived as secondary people in their *yurt, memleket*. So they try their best and resist. There were lots of women who told me that they would attend the meeting if they knew. For them, it is not important which woman got raped. For them the injustice is important. They unionize.”⁵⁰

For Çiğdem, it is very unfortunate for women, who were conceived as “inferior citizens” in their homelands under patriarchy, can still not be free individuals in Aydınli. She agrees with my observation about the lack of cafes and restaurants where women can socialize with fellow women in the neighborhood. The lack of parks for children and for women to interact with each other is an obstacle against women’s socialization. Çiğdem remarks the patriarchal pressures in the neighborhood as follows:

“There is only one patisserie but it is also visited by men, a woman cannot go and sit with her children or friends because when a woman sees the men sitting and chatting there, she cannot enter.”⁵¹

Women cannot socialize firstly because of the lack of welfare such as parks. Second, the patriarchal setting prevents their socialization. They cannot enter the patisserie since the place is crowded with men: “If one of your relatives see that you sit in a café full of men, you will be in trouble.” Despite the factors preventing women’s socialization, Çiğdem sometimes brings Roza to the theater in the nearby İçmeler neighborhood early in the weekends so that her daughter can see a few kid

⁵⁰ Çiğdem: “Bütün kadınları bir araya getiren bir şey oldu. Kürt ağırlıklı kadınlardı ama. Kürtler ezilmişlikten kaynaklı aslında, biraz daha adım atıyorlar. Onlar bir çok şey yaşıyorlar, zorla evlendirme, görücü usulü, ne bileyim, erken yaşta evlendirme. Bu tip şeyler. Onlar yaşadıkları için birebir bir şey olunca hemen başkaldırabiliyorlar. Ona karşı çıkıyorlar. Bir çok Kürt kadın da gördüm ben, bizim haberimiz yoktu biz de geldik, diye üzüldüler. Tacizi hangi kadının yaşadığına çok bakmıyorlar. Hangi şeyden olduğu değil, orada bir haksızlığın olduğunu görüyorlar. Burada o kadar çok göç var ki kürtlerden. Muş da var Bingöl de var Erzincan var Diyarbakır var Mardin, Siirt. Bir çok şey yaşamış gelmişler buralara biliyor musun? Ondan belki de biraz da artık yorulmuşlar mı desem, hep baskı altında kalmışlar, hep ikincil olmuşlar kendi yurtlarında memleketlerinde. Burada da ondan kaynaklı bir şey var, ama yine de dinamik var harekete doğru, bir yerde yürürsen, doğru yer, derken ortaklaştırırsan, kadın eylemindeki gibi geliyorlar, sahipleniyorlar.”

⁵¹ Çiğdem: “Bir tane pastane, pastane yani cafe bile değil. Orada da kadınlar çok gelmiyor, genelde erkekler geliyor. Erkekler fazla olunca da kadınlar girmiyor.”

plays on stage. However “it is very hard” she says, “transportation is very limited even to those places.” She can only take Roza early in the weekends firstly because there is a lack of transportation in the evenings on weekends. Second, she cannot go out public with her daughter towards the evening since, as she remarks it would be “a misappropriate behavior” for a woman to “wander around the streets without her husband in the evening.”

Çiğdem acknowledges that the lives of men in the neighborhood are much easier:

“They get their beers and go out to the streets from the evening till late night. And as a woman you cannot go out and walk among them. If a man wants to go out, he does. They take their beers at night and go out. But a woman cannot. There is no other chance for socialization for women and children.”⁵²

Besides her complaints about the deprivation of socializing spaces for women in the neighborhood, Çiğdem narrates her experiences of activism around this issue:

“When the mayor visited Aydınlı. I told him that they should build some facilities for women, walking tracks and parks for example. The people who accompanied the mayor all laughed at me. There were also women laughing. But think of it, there are no places for women so that we can walk and do sports.”⁵³

Çiğdem criticized women for not being conscious of their deprivation. She mentioned that women in the neighborhood internalize the particular gender dynamics that prevent women’s socialization: “When you talk to men, they laugh at you, even when you talk to women, they just don’t give any responses.” She makes claims for women’s socialization not only publicly, as in the case of the mayor’s visit, but also at home. She recounted frequently discussing with and convincing her husband about the lack of socialization for women. Çiğdem put an effort to transform Aydınlı into a

⁵² Çiğdem: “Biz akşam kadınlar, çocukları alıp dolaştıramıyoruz. Erkekler için belki çok kolay. Eline bir tane bira şişesi kapan sokakta. Bundan rahatsızlık duyuyorsun. Ama bir erkek çıkınca çıkar yani. Kadınlara yönelik çocuklara yönelik hiç bir şey yok yani sosyal anlamda.

Küçük parklar, onu da akşamları gör artık. Gidemezsin. Yani kadın olarak gidip arkadaşını alıp gidip oturacağın bir yer yok. Bir tane pastane, yani cafe bile değil. Orada da kadınlar çok gelmiyor. Genelde erkekler geliyor. Erkekler fazla olunca da kadınlar girmiyor. Bu anlamda hiç bir şey yok. Etkinlik yok. Tuzla’ya ya da Kadıköy’e başka bir konsere gitmek isteyince de akşam dönüşünü düşünüyorsun. Nasıl geleceğim diye düşünüyorsun. Sosyal anlamda aslında hiç bir şey yok. Burada tabi insanların sosyal şeylere ihtiyaçları var yok değil, var yani. Bir sürü insan oturuyor. Bunların içinde hiç mi kimse bir yere gitmek istemiyor? Ulaşım çok kısıtlı.”

⁵³ Çiğdem: “Geçen belediye başkanı geldi, ben de şey dedim, ya biz de kadınlar için şurada bir yürüyüş alanı, spor yapabileceğim bir alan olsaydı. Sonra bana güldüler. Erkeğe söyleyince erkek güler, kadına söyleyen kadın başka. Düşün kadınların rahat gidip yürüyebilecekleri bir yer yok. Spor yapmak isteyen bir kadın, yürümek isteyen bir kadın mahallenin etrafında dönüp duracaktır.”

women friendly neighborhood. For this purpose, she talked to the mayor in the public. She also continues her resistant activism at home, by the discussions with her husband.

The anxieties raised by Çiğdem's outspokenness on these issues are reflected in her 5 year-old daughter Roza's perception of her mother. On one occasion I was in Çiğdem's house, chatting with her and playing with Roza. Çiğdem told Roza that she is knitting a hat for one of her friends. Roza reacted as follows:

“But if they learn that you're an *eylemci*⁵⁴, they won't accept your present, they won't be friends with us.”

Çiğdem confronts the terrifying image of an *eylemci* for the five-year-old Roza by explaining to her the need for transforming oppressive mechanisms. When Roza told me that she becomes very unhappy when her mother attends the protests and public meetings because she misses her mother and wants to spend time with her, Çiğdem in response, said to Roza: “but my dear Roza, I'm protesting so that you can have a better future, and be a free woman.” Afterwards, Çiğdem told me the another event smilingly: “I told Roza that the girl from the university will visit us shortly. ‘I remember her’ said Roza, ‘the white, tall girl, right?’” Various images occupied Roza's imaginations, an *eylemci* mother doing dangerous things and an image of a white girl to whom her *eylemci* mother narrates her experiences for her better future in Aydınlı...

Mizgin on the other hand, was exhausted with the patriarchal pressures and said the following:

“My uncle has seven sons, I always wished they would all be girls. They always want me to give birth to a son, whenever they say this, I just get angry. I want to have a daughter. I want a daughter from God, not a son.”⁵⁵

As she reckoned the patriarchal pressures, she further told me her biggest regret in her life:

“Thanks to God, I didn't live in despair, but I didn't live in luxury either. I don't worry about that. People always ask why I am different. They say that people who don't have children always talk about having children one day. I am not that kind of

⁵⁴ En. Activist. The word has a negative connotation in the public discourse, it refers to a person who disrupts the social peace with his/her activism.

⁵⁵ Mizgin: “Amcamın yedi tane oğlu var. Keşke hepsi kız olsaydı diyorum. Benim çocuğum yok, kız olsun istiyorum. Oğlan deyince cinlerim tepeme geliyor. Allah oğlan vermesin diyorum, bak yengem biliyor. Verecekse bir kız versin ben oğlan istemiyorum.”

person. I have a personality who is devoted to service. I just regret that I got married at the age of 17 and left the school for men.”⁵⁶

Mizgin’s narrative suggests that she is not suffering from poverty. She is not rich but she managed to survive somehow or another, with the working opportunities and the communal ties in the neighborhood. Now the very communal ties were pressuring her to give birth to a baby boy. After 7 years of her marriage with no children, Mizgin’s only ideal is to give birth to a daughter:

“I pray to God so that I won’t give birth to a son one day. I want a baby girl, I always dream of her.”

In an urban setting where women are marginalized by the pressures of motherhood under patriarchy, Mizgin is courageous enough to dream of her baby girl, a passionate desire for the unknown to be fulfilled one day.

2.6. Conclusion

In this chapter I tried to situate the Aydınlı neighborhood within the wider urban setting and discuss the ways in which my interviewees situate themselves in this neighborhood. The insights that I gained from my interviewees encouraged me to open up several discussions. To begin with, I discussed the ways in which Aydınlı neighborhood is isolated and marginalized. My interviewees experience problems in making use of health facilities due to lack of public transportation. There are social welfare facilities but the only way they can reach them is through taxis, which are very expensive. The common motive that they emphasized that there was lack of social welfare in the neighborhood. Some of them claimed that the state recognized them as non-citizens.

The neighborhood is indeed close to the rest of the city since it is connected to E-5 highway, which is 5-6 kilometers away. However, the lack of public transportation prevents women’s interaction with the rest of the city. The public transportation has rare shifts on weekends. This constitutes one aspect of urban marginalization. The public transportation is handled by private companies, and there are no organized bus schedules by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality to the

⁵⁶ Mizgin: “Yaşamadım hani, çok da lüks de yaşamadım, çok da ezik de yaşamadım. Ama şükürler olsun, bir misafir geldiği zaman ikram edebildiğim için. Yedi sekiz yıllık evliyim, çocuk özlemi demiyorsun. Ben okul özlemi diyorum o beynimde. Çocukları olmayan kişiler çocuktan başka birşey konuşmazlar, sen niye farklısın diyorlar. Ben kendimi hizmete adanmış bir yapım var bilmiyorum. içime dert olan hep okul, bu da neyden oldu. On yedi yaşında evlendik o güzelim eğitimi bırakıp kocaya gidip.”

neighborhood. In the light of their narratives, I argue that Aydınli is a setting, which shows the dynamics of Foucauldian “governmentality.” Erdoğan discusses the term when he points at poverty being governed to reproduce the neo-liberal market dynamics (2001: 9). The public transportation organized by municipality is only available for the people to go to their workplaces nearby and return home at rush hour. It makes Aydınli a “disciplined” urban setting. The urban setting is governed in a way that reproduces marginalization. By sustaining the urban marginalization, the state employs a patriarchal oppression in this regard. In the sense of Wacquant, I aimed to show that Aydınli is a neighborhood of marginalization, which hosts “urban outcasts”. I argue that the lack of transportation, air pollution, lack of socialization for women show “the state retrenchment” that Wacquant suggests.

Aydınli is a neighborhood of urban outcasts; it maintains a proximity to the rest of the city yet it’s marginalized. Here the term “urban outcasts” maintains a gendered interpretation. The inhabitants of the neighborhood are marginalized due to the lack of transportation. Women further experience a higher degree of marginalization because of patriarchy. My interviewees interpret the ways in which patriarchy is reproduced in different ways. For some, it is inherent within the dynamics of the Kurdish community. There are expressions, which suggest that patriarchal relations are internalized by women, regardless of their ethnicity.

Some of my interviewees suggest that the urban setting itself is a patriarchal space. This is an obstacle against women’s socialization since they cannot enjoy the neighborhood freely. The absence of cafes and parks also make Aydınli a women-unfriendly and a children-unfriendly neighborhood. Meryem, Zehra, Nazmiye and Zozan mention the solidarity ties among Kurdish community, which helps them enjoy life to some extent. In the light of their narratives, I aimed to show that these networks do not provide women with economic wealth, but with the feeling of security. Meryem told me that she received help from her *hemşeri* whenever she needs. During my field trips, I came across many *hemşeri* associations in the forms of cafes. These public spaces were dominated by men. Therefore I conclude that women enjoy *hemşeri* facilities without going into the public, whereas men socialize in public. I argue that this constitutes another aspect of Kurdish women’s marginalization in Aydınli.

Their imaginations regarding the neighborhood were sometimes accompanied with the images of the hometown. All of my interviewees migrated from cities in

Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia to Aydınli. Some of them migrated with their families during childhood. Some were already grown up when they arrived at Aydınli. The main motivation behind the reasons of their migration was the economic insufficiency they experienced at their hometowns. They migrated to Aydınli to find job opportunities and to end poverty. Most of my interviewees did not define their current economic conditions as poor. Yet they did not express that they live in economic welfare either. In this chapter, I focused on their perceptions of the neighborhood, which were accompanied by their memories of their hometowns. For some of my interviewees the hometown was connoted with positive meanings. According to them, they felt the patriarchal pressures in a lesser degree at their hometowns. They were able to speak their mother tongue freely. Besides, their economic conditions didn't get better as much as they expected. Aydınli brings about their frustration on the basis of gender, class and ethnicity. The urban setting hosts the intersecting dynamics of subordination. On the other hand, some of my interviewees did not develop a yearning for the homeland. However, they also remarked that they do not feel themselves belonging to Aydınli. Çiğdem was an exception when she declared that, "I live wherever I labor to survive." She had a particular attachment to Aydınli with laboring. However, the rest of my interviewees did not develop any belongings to the neighborhood. They make use of the community ties and nostalgia for the *vatan* in order to survive.

In the midst of deprivations, their resistances were crucial. They had differing opinions and imaginations on the neighborhood. There was no single narrative of oppression in their experiences. What I came across was a rhizome of differing perceptions of gender, class, ethnicity, poverty and urban marginalization. They didn't position themselves as passive subjects. They developed different approaches in order to cope with the conflicts. Some of my interviewees come up with pragmatic acts, which would enable them to cope with the difficulties they face. This was evident in the way they utilized Turkish language in their relations. Some others emphasized the usefulness of strong community ties, which enabled their survival. Çiğdem remarked the particular "spirit" of the neighborhood in the public meetings. They are urban outcasts who refuse to maintain positions such as absolute victims or passive subjects. Rather they actively engage to critical evaluations, come up with solutions and activism.

In this chapter the narratives of my interviewees show the significance of “relative poverty”. İlhan Tekeli explains “relative poverty” as the lack of the necessary conditions for an individual “to reproduce his/her well-being socially rather than biologically.” (142) On the other hand, “absolute poverty” refers to the condition when people cannot acquire the necessary food for survival (Tekeli, 142). Şener (2009) explains that absolute poverty defines poverty in terms of income and consumption (2). In his analysis on relative poverty, Ahmet Insel (2001) reminds us that it is possible to be above the level of absolute poverty but be relatively poor (71). In this chapter, I aimed to show that my interviewees acquired better life conditions in Aydınlı since they found employment opportunities. Their income and consumption levels increased in Aydınlı, compared to their hometowns. Yet, their narratives show that they still suffer from poverty in the host town. I argue that their narratives point at the relative conditions of poverty. Although they have higher incomes in Aydınlı than hometowns, they still suffer from relative poverty.

İnsel (2001) takes poverty as a dynamic process and argues that poverty reproduces the conditions by which it is reproduced (70). He argues that poverty should be defined as “a process of exclusion.” (71) In this chapter I aimed to show that Aydınlı hosts Kurdish women’s process of exclusion. In the perceptions of people, the image of Tuzla is affiliated to *death*, due to the shipyard accidents, which caused the deaths of more than hundred workers. Therefore, experiences of subordination go unmentioned. They remain *invisible*; in this chapter my aim is to make visible the multiple agents of gender, ethnicity and class leading to my interviewees’ subordination. My interviewees’ narrations show the process of exclusion they face on the basis of these multiple agents. I aimed to make visible the gendered structures of domination, which make my interviewees urban outcasts. I argue that having in mind the patriarchal urban setting and relative poverty, the urban marginalization is reproduced by these multiple agents.

CHAPTER III

Narrations on Schooling, Language, and Identity

3.1. Introduction

In the previous chapters, I have discussed various mechanisms of suppression, particularly along the axes of class and gender that shape the lives of Kurdish women living in Aydın. Aydın is at the same time an urban setting where issues regarding Kurdish language and identity play prominent roles in triggering those mechanisms. The experiences of women in terms of the oppression of Kurdish language and identity figure as one of the most important determinants for their marginalization. The narratives of Kurdish women point to various exclusionary mechanisms based on ethnicity.

The oppression of Kurdish identity and language occupies a crucial role in my interviewees' depictions of poverty. The marginalization on the basis of ethnic identity and language should not be considered as an isolated issue. Not only does it intersect with gender in multiple ways, but it also contributes to the poor material and economic conditions of the Kurdish women inhabitants of Aydın. It is not surprising, then, that in their narratives; issues related to language and ethnic identity frequently accompany a discussion of poverty.

Aydın inhabits a community which is predominantly Kurdish. They began to migrate to the district in the early 70's. Yet, the suppression of Kurdish language and identity in Turkey has a much longer history. This particular suppression continues as it also figures in the narratives of my interviewees. The suppression of Kurdish language and identity is a historical problem. It has its roots at the foundation of the Turkish nation state. In this chapter, I will begin my discussion on language and identity with a brief historical overview and will argue the historical significance of the suppression of Kurdish language and identity. Following this second section, the third section will be reserved for my interviewees' narratives on education. My interviewees had to leave school at a certain date to start working in industry in Aydın. Their narratives show crucial links between the lack of education and gender- or ethnicity-based subordination. These intersecting factors all contribute to the poverty they struggle with. In the fourth section, I will show how my interviewees define their relations with Kurdish language. Finally, the fifth section is reserved for an alternative approach towards education. Almost all of my interviewees regret not

being educated. However, two particular stories show that there may be occasions when education is not enough to end impoverishment. As I will concentrate on the narratives of my interviewees, this section will focus on the significance of Kurdish TV channel ROJ TV and the national morning ceremony for primary school students in Turkey, *Andımız*⁵⁷. In the sixth section, I will analyze my interviewees' responses to the question: "What does it mean to be a Kurdish woman?" This section shows the intersecting dynamics of gender, ethnicity and class in how my interviewees defined their existence. Despite the struggles, Kurdish women are active agents who are engaged to political activism. In the seventh section, I will discuss the significance of their resistant approaches.

3.2. Background of the "Kurdish Question" in Turkey

Kemal Kirişçi and Gareth M. Winrow (1997) trace the emergence of "Kurdish Question" at the progression of Turkish nationalism with the beginning of 20th century. Referring to Ziya Gökalp's analysis, they remark that the Turks were an "ethnic category" under the Ottoman rule until 1908. There was no collective sense as "Turkish nation" (93), which is also suggested by Mesut Yeğen (1999: 557). The nationalist Young Turks came to power in 1908. Between 1908 and 1923, various intellectuals wrote on the idea of the Turkish nation including Ziya Gökalp, Gaspıralı İsmail Bey and Tekin Alp (Kirişçi and Winrow 1997:94). However, the idea of Turkish nation could only be consolidated with the foundation of the nation state. The World War 1 was followed by a struggle to recapture the lost territories of the Ottoman Empire between 1919 and 1923. For Kirişçi and Winrow, Ottomanism was

⁵⁷ National Celebration Oath cited by primary school pupils. It goes as follows:

"Türküm, doğrucum, 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.
How happy for one who can say I'm a Turk!"

still favored in this period. Still there was no sense of Turkish nation, but “Muslim-nation”, which was evident in Mustafa Kemal’s speeches (Kirişçi and Winrow 1997: 95, Yeğen 1999: 557). The calls for independence struggle were directed towards the “brotherhood of Ottoman Muslims”, rather than “Turkish nation” (Yeğen 559). Under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal, their aim was to save the caliphate and “to recapture the lands which were seized by the non-muslims” (Kirişçi and Winrow 1997: 95). In 1920, the national assembly was constituted in Ankara. In its opening speech, Mustafa Kemal declared that the assembly was not founded on the basis of Turkish, Kurdish, Laz and Circassian ethnic groups. Rather it was the assembly of the individuals who belong to the Muslim community (Kirişçi and Winrow 1997: 96). The political discourse was inclusive as Mustafa Kemal frequently referred to “the country of the people of Turkey”, instead of “the country of Turkish nation”. (Kirişçi and Winrow 1997: 97) According to Tanıl Bora, the process of national struggle aimed solely at establishing an independent state from the remains of the Empire. For him, there was no “national-identity engineering” in this particular process (1996: 22).

Kirişçi and Winrow notice that Turkish nationalism developed after the foundation of the nation state, whose official language was Turkish language (1997:99). For Bora, the new regime was in “alarm” to “homogenize the relation between identity and the nation”. (1996:22) The transformation did not happen all of a sudden. In this period, the regime at first negotiated between different identities. It further legitimized the dominance for the unification of Turkish nation on the basis of “race” (Bora 1996: 22, Kirişçi and Winrow 99, Yıldız 2001: 299). The history books prepared by the ministry of national education introduce the topic “History of Humanity” with the concept of “race” (1931, 14-19). In follows, it tells that Turks are the prominent race among others, which “managed to preserve its specialities.” (20) Kirişçi and Winrow also remark that the law declared the official religion of the state as Islam (1997: 99).

In 1924, the caliphate was abolished, the traditional education system was shut down and a national education system was introduced. These attempted at the secularization of the country and the Turkish nationalist project became even more visible (100). However, the perception of Islam as the sense of the nation lasted till the end of 1920’s. Kirişçi and Winrow suggest that the regime did not maintain a citizenship based nationalist idea throughout 1930’s (102). *İskan Kanunu* was declared in 1934, which distinguished citizens in three groups: “People who speak

Turkish and of Turkish ethnicity”, “people who doesn’t speak Turkish but has proximity to Turkish ethnicity” and “people who do not speak Turkish and of non-Turkish ethnicity.” (103) The regime aimed to strengthen the “Turkishness” of its citizens who belonged to the second category. Kirişçi and Winrow quote İsmail Beşikçi, who claims that the aim of this project was to assimilate Kurds within the rest of Turkish speaking community (104). Bora also shows that Turkish ethnic nationalism developed in order to target Kurds for assimilation (1996: 37). According to Kirişçi and Winrow, the project was organized against all kinds of ethnic and religious minorities such as Jews and Greeks as well as Kurds. Its purpose was to consolidate the process of nation-building (1997:104).

The attempts of the Kemalist regime were met with the “discontent” of Kurdish populations (Yeğen, 2007: 127). Kirişçi and Winrow notice that 18 rebellions occurred between 1924 and 1938. 17 of them happened in Eastern Anatolia and 16 of them were organized by Kurds (1997:105). Metin Heper (2007) shows how Kurdish populations were subjected to a “forceful assimilation” as the revolts were met with a “brutal repression” by the armed forces of the nation-state (8). Mesut Yeğen (2007) argues that the regime considered the Kurdish unrest as reactions against modernization (129). The nationalist project continued with the official declarations of Turkish History thesis, which claimed that Turkish race was the source of civilization (Kirişçi and Winrow 1997: 107, Bora 1996: 35, Yıldız 2001: 297). The Sun-Language thesis was posing Turkish language as the first language of civilization (Bora 34, Kirişçi and Winrow 107, Yıldız 297). The project of Turkish nationalism was at the same time posed as a project of modernization by the Kemalists (Bora 23-24, Kirişçi and Winrow 106). Bora shows how Ancient Greek heritage in Anatolia was Turkified for the claims of civilization, when the regime declared that the Greeks were indeed ethnically Turks (25-26).

The emphasis on civilization was instrumentalized for subordinating the Kurds. Yeğen shows how Kurds enjoyed autonomy under the Ottoman rule and did not need the urge to integrate with the center of the empire (1999: 562). Yet as Metin Heper shows, such autonomy did not mean Kurds were not suppressed. The central administration of the Ottoman Empire called Kurds “Black nation” as opposed to the “grey nation” of Turcomans (2007:28). For Yeğen, Kurds remained mainly peripheral, and the foundation of the Turkish nation state brought about the problem of integration. Although Kurds were called as “Black nation” under the Empire, there

was no problem of integration due to decentralized administration. Therefore, Yeğen argues that Kurds were pressured for the nation-state's aims for centralization (1999: 562). Yeğen further remarks that this lack of integration was seen as a lack of civilization (564-565). Kirişçi and Winrow show that the state discourse evolved in such a way that it made "scientific" claims on the backwardness of Kurds. For the state discourse, the Kurds were considered as "mountain Kurds", who belonged to Turkish ethnicity, yet remained uncivilized (108). As quoted in Heper, in 1935, Prime Minister İsmet İnönü suggested that the Kurds should receive their primary education with the Turks since "that would help 'Turkify' the Kurds." (2007:162) Nesrin Uçarlar analyzes the education projects for Turkification by referring to Şükrü Kaya's⁵⁸ report on Dersim, which articulates the aim of opening schools in the region "to have Dersim people learn that they were originally Turkish." (2009:116).

Ahmet Yıldız also argues that the scientific claims were performed to consolidate the sense of "us" which enables the policies of assimilation (2001: 299-300). In this process, Yıldız shows the effects of Turkification in his analysis of "Citizen, Speak Turkish!" campaigns (284). Yıldız remarks that the minority names were Turkified and it was mandatory for all citizens to speak Turkish in public (284). As quoted in Heper, Mustafa Kemal expressed his will for a unified nation of a single language as follows:

"A person who inspires to be [an integral] part of the Turkish nation should before everything else ... speak Turkish. ... Those who speak another language may collaborate with others and act against us." (2007: 86)

Mesut Yeğen shows how Turkish nationalism is still effective in the subordination of Kurds in contemporary politics with the existence of Nationalist Action Party, left-wing nationalism, nationalism in Islamism, and the popular nationalism of the last decade. For him, these variants of Turkish nationalism accompany "the mainstream Turkish nationalism, which built the modern Turkish state and a secular nation-society." (2007: 120) In his article, Yeğen shows how the discourse of Turkish nationalism changed over time due to the experiences of communism and globalization between 1950 and mid-2000. According to him one thing remained unchanged, that is, the idea that "Kurds could become Turkish." Kurds figure as "future-Turks" in the current discourse of nationalism, which still

⁵⁸ Şükrü Kaya was The Minister of Interior Relations at that Era.

subjects them to assimilation (137). As Yeğen shows, Kurds can enjoy their citizenship rights in full “so long as they are assimilated into Turkishness” (138). Tanıl Bora also remarks the contemporary dynamics of Kurdish suppression within the discourse of Turkish nationalism. He shows how Kurds are considered as subjects of assimilation by the Nationalist Action Party (2005: 232). Bora reckons the importance of gender when he argues that the hate against Kurds is propagated through the image of Turkish women. Analyzing the newspaper clips, which pose Kurdish men assaulting Turkish women, Bora shows how anti-Kurdish campaigns are reproduced with the image of Turkish women versus the Kurdish threat (235). According to him, as a response to the rising Kurdish political opposition in the mid 2000’s, “the anti-Kurdish hatred” is still in action (250). The literature on “Kurdish Question” is important to understand the dynamics of subordination that my interviewees encounter. In this chapter, the narratives of my interviewees point at the intersections of ethnicity-based subordination with gender and class dimensions.

3.3. Lack of Education at the Intersection of Gender and Ethnicity

While mentioning the unequal conditions for social welfare rights, my interviewees focus their attention on the marginalization of their hometowns especially on the basis of education facilities. Zozan for example draws attention to the lack of middle school in her village and says: “Our elders wouldn’t find the courage to send us out of the village for our study, they also did not have sufficient economic conditions for that.” Zozan’s village, which had a predominant Kurdish population, was deprived of educational facilities. Zozan and many others were unable to enjoy their right to attend school, which would have contributed to their future material, cultural and economic welfare. Zozan describes an occasion, which shows the state’s disinterest in her hometown.

Yeter and Nazmiye’s analyses also highlight the effects of patriarchy as well as the state’s disinterest. Yeter told me that she couldn’t receive her education since her father sent her to Aydınlı when she was 10 years old:

“My father sent me to Aydınlı to live in my older brother’s house. He was in need of a person who would look after the house, cook and clean while he was out at work. I wish I received education. If I have a chance now for that, I will never miss it. Indeed I have some options but I can’t. I have a baby.”

Yeter was busy with housework until the age of 10. Her narrative doesn't focus on the lack of education facilities. She could not attend school because of patriarchal subordination. She is currently employed as a cleaning worker in Sabancı University. Later in our interview she told me the following: "I would like to receive education, I even looked at some places where I can be registered. However my working hours are so strict and intense." She also has a baby to look after, which prevents her from undertaking such a project for her self-development.⁵⁹

Besides the discouraging factors in the workplaces and at homes, I noticed another significant agent, which prevents my interviewees from continuing their educations. There is an "open school" system in Turkey. It provides the opportunity for people to complete their education degrees from primary, middle and high schools. The official paper needed to attend these schools could only be acquired from the schools back at their villages. In the interviews, most of my interviewees emphasized the same point. They wanted to attend the open school and get their degrees. However none of them succeeded in obtaining that official paper from their village school. The schools in their village didn't provide them. It was a bureaucratic burden, which set an obstacle to pursue further education. Yeter was one of my interviewees to experience this obstacle. She still wants to pursue education: "Now that I have a baby, and don't have free time, but I still think of this possibility." "There is nothing more beautiful in life" whispers Yeter yearningly, "than studying". Education points at a better life beyond the struggle with poverty. For Yeter, it is an impossible dream whose mourning she constantly breathes among the walls of a top-academic environment, Sabancı University.

Nazmiye emphasized the lack of education facilities in her hometown; "there was no school in our village, the only one we could attend was very far away." When she came to the age for attending primary school, an education facility had just been constructed for the children of their village: "We went to primary school with my sisters at least until the fifth grade" she said, immediately comparing their situation with the male children of her village: "But of course the elders helped the boys to

⁵⁹ Yeter: "Ya babam okula geç vermişti. Ondan sonra da buraya gönderdi. Onlarda da, hani yemek şu bu hizmet lazımdı, o yüzden buraya gönderdi. O yüzden okuyamadım. Ama okumamanın eksikliğini çok yaşıyorum. Keşke okusaydım. Şu an fırsatım olsa hiç kaçırmam. Gerçi var ama saatlerim uygun değil. İstesem vakit yaratırım da, bir saat iki saat olsa insan yaratır, ama şu an bebeğim var. O yüzden sesimi çıkarmıyorum, yoksa düşünüyorum yani. Okumak kadar güzel bir şey yok."

pursue their education further and sent them to the far away schools with dormitories.” For the elders of the Kurdish community, “nothing would happen to the male children, unlike a girl who was considered to be in danger outside the village.” “The male children occupied their prime interests”, remarked Nazmiye, “we girls worked as shepherds as they were receiving their education, we girls worked at home and they were schooling, all of my brothers went to school.” Her narrative was clearly laying the role of patriarchal dynamics back at her hometown. These dynamics reproduced the marginalization of Kurdish women beginning with their early childhood.⁶⁰

Although I had begun to analyze the oppressive dynamics behind women’s lack of education vis a vis state policy and local patriarchy, my interview with Çiğdem enriched my view on the issue. Çiğdem also carefully noted the lack of education facilities at their village, and she said that she would have liked to receive education after primary school, which didn’t happen. Yet the reason for her deprivation was different from Nazmiye’s. According to her, her father did not let her to go to the city for her high school education because of the political chaos that existed in the urban settings in the late 1970s and early 1980s. During this time, the cities in Western and Eastern Turkey were witnessing protests and armed conflicts between nationalist and leftist students. Although she cites urban chaos as a major factor, she also suggests other dynamics being at work as she compares herself to a friend of hers who was “sent” to high school by her father: “She was my cousin, and we were at the same age. She continued her education in the city and I didn’t.”

Çiğdem’s remarks on her cousin complicate the issue of Kurdish children’s deprivation. It depicts the heterogeneous experiences of female children with education among Kurds living in the same town. Yet the ways in which female children were “allowed” or “disallowed” by their fathers for their education was nevertheless a point of emphasis during our interview. In our interview, I was eager to ask her to make a comparison between male children and females in terms of schooling. Çiğdem remarked in a similar fashion to Nazmiye:

⁶⁰ Nazmiye: “Orada dediler bayandır. Tabi erkeklerin okulu yatılıydı. Erkekleri okuttular tabi canım. Bişey olmaz erkeklere diye. Sürekli öncelik erkeklerde. Herhalde rahatsız ediyor. Biz çobanlık yapıyorduk, biz evde çabalyorduk, erkekler okuyordu. Erkek kardeşlerimin hepsi okudular. Nasıl diyeyim yani okul yoktu uzaktı. Sonra bizim köye yapıldı. Küçük kız kardeşlerim onlar orada beşe kadar okudular en azından.”

“Of course, fathers get anxious because they think women are more vulnerable than men. And their excuse is that we don’t want to send our girls away for school because there are dangerous places and can harm children.”

Çiğdem aptly marks the discrimination of female children in her following statement:

“But I heard of no boy who was taken back to the village due to the bad conditions in the city. My father said that nothing would happen to him even if he sleeps on the streets because he is a man. But we should protect the girls, he said.”

Çiğdem’s protection from the dangers of the city continued after their migration to Aydınli. She wasn’t sent to the high school in İcmeler neighborhood, which was only 10 minutes travel with a minibus. Instead, she became a factory worker. This narrative challenged my image of the village as a place of total deprivation and discrimination of Kurdish women both on the basis of patriarchal dynamics and state policies. Despite the existence of education facilities close to Aydınli, Çiğdem was unable to enjoy her right to pursue education due to patriarchal dynamics that remained prevalent. At this point, my focus shifted once again to the specificities of Aydınli neighborhood. Çiğdem’s experiences reveal that the lack of education facilities was not unique to the hometown. As a Kurdish individual, she was experiencing the disinterest of the state. Further she was also putting forth a critical analysis of the very urban space of Aydınli. In Aydınli it was not only poverty, which was continuous from village to the city, but also the lack of basic social rights, including education rights, that Kurdish women could enjoy.

In Çiğdem’s narrative, there is a patriarchal continuum between the village and the city (Aydınli – Istanbul) in terms of women’s access to education. After she migrated to Aydınli with her family during her early youth, Çiğdem was employed as a worker in a factory. Her father didn’t allow her to attend school, but encouraged her to do factory work. Çiğdem’s experiences show that patriarchy determines what is dangerous for a woman and what is not. 10 minute travel to school is regarded as dangerous whereas Çiğdem’s father is content with her doing factory work. The danger was defined in such way so that Çiğdem’s family aimed at struggling impoverishment in short-term. By the decisions set by the patriarch, Çiğdem remained as worker and her position as a low-class individual was reproduced. In other words, for Çiğdem, deprivation from the right to basic education based on her gender constituted the grounds for and contributed to her class marginalization. In the

interview, she told me the following: “Gender, begins when you are a child, could I make myself clear?” Çiğdem’s emphasis on “gender” was the result of a gender-conscious analysis. She suggests that the effects of gender begins with early childhood and ends up contributing to future marginalization on the basis of poverty. Her expressions reminded me Simone de Beauvoir’s famous dictum: “One is not born, but rather becomes a woman.” Çiğdem may have been born into a poor family and village, but she could have broken the chains of poverty had she entered the job market as an educated woman. She identifies her gender as having been a major obstacle along the way.⁶¹

Mizgin’s narrative, on the other hand, introduces the dimension of poverty as a major obstacle in Kurdish women’s enjoyment of social rights, including education. Mizgin could only attend primary school at her village. During our interview, she told me a very striking story about the relations between social rights and poverty. She was a very successful student at school and her teacher wanted to speak to her father about her success. Her father was very happy to hear fascinating words from her teacher, and emphasized his determination to send her away for high school. Mizgin therefore was very happy, hopeful and ambitious until the economic crisis in her family worsened. Her father was involved in animal husbandry and due to financial problems prior to Mizgin’s attendance to high school; he had to leave the village and travel to the city of Erzurum with his cows and sheep in order to trade them. “It took months for him to do this business” Mizgin said sadly, “as my elders waited for my father so that I could attend high school.”

The subordinating effect of patriarchy is also evident in Mizgin’s story. Similar to what Nazmiye and Çiğdem suggested, the father appears as a decisive

⁶¹ Çiğdem: “Sekiz kardeşiz ama şey, abim okudu. Bir sürü okuyan var ailede. İki kız kardeş sadece okumadı. Onlar da ablam köyde olduğu için okumadı. Diğer kardeşim de okumak istemedi. Benim de okumam, öğretmenim felan da ille de okusun dedi. Okul bize uzak, İcmeler’de başka bir yere gitmem gerek. Babam da kaygılanıyor. Sonra ben kendim gitmek istedim, bu defa da işe başlayınca. Bir de şey oluyor, çocukken eline para geçince şey yapıyorsun artık veriyorsun kendini fabrikaya, paradan da değil de, uğraştığın bir şey oluyor hani. Ama tabi ki okumak çok isterdim ben. Amcamın kızı var şimdi işte, biz onunla yaşıyoruz. O okula devam etti ama ben. Babam sözde beni çok sever bilmiyorum artık, o kaygılandığı için göndermedi. Çok da uzak değil ama onlar da büyüttüler kafalarında. Köyden geleli belki yeni olmuş ne bileyim. Yatılıya da kızları göndermiyorlardı. Ne olur ne olmaz diye. Tabi kadınlıktan dolayı düşün şey olmuyor, abim yatılıda okuyor hani. Kaygılanma olmuyor çünkü erkek hani. Babam tam da öyle düşünüyor. Kızıma bir şey olmasın, kız çocuklar kendini koruyamazlar. Mesela abim o kötü koşullarda okuduğunda hani biz onu okuldan alalım diye hiç düşünceleri olmadı. Erkek çocuk birşey olmaz diye. Sokakta yatsa da erkeğe birşey olmaz. Kızları korumak lazım diyor babam. Cinsiyet daha çocukken başlıyor, anlatabiliyor muyum?”

figure. Yet Mizgin's experiences are much more complicated in this respect; despite her father's will to provide Mizgin with the opportunity of pursuing higher education, poverty prevented them from actualizing this will. "When my father arrived, the registrations for high school had already finished", said Mizgin grievingly, "and the next year we migrated to Istanbul for better life opportunities." As the Aydınli neighborhood at first glance offered better life possibilities for her family, Mizgin instantly found herself at the margins of economic and social relations in her new home: "I began to work at the age of 12 in textile industry." My meeting with Mizgin helped me to complicate the existence of the shortcomings of social rights of Kurdish women. Their narratives show that the conditions which poverty brings along were as important as the patriarchal dynamics inherent in Kurdish community.⁶²

Mizgin and Çiğdem's experiences show similarities in the experience of patriarchy in the Kurdish community. Eventually, two important analyses can be argued. First is about the intersectionality between poverty and patriarchy. The dynamics of Kurdish community in terms of patriarchal relations and poverty caused Mizgin and Çiğdem's subordination. Second is about the different interpretations of this particular intersectionality by different women. Mizgin and Çiğdem have similar experiences, but they interpret those in different ways. In their experiences, the figure of the father is crucial in determining women's lives. Mizgin portrays a more positive image of the father who cannot send his daughter to high school due to economic insufficiency. Çiğdem's father on the other hand didn't want her to pursue education. However, both ended up in factory work.

I could further this crucial link during my interview with Zehra, who like many others could only receive five years of primary education. After she graduated from primary school at Bingöl, she migrated to Aydınli with her family. "I was going to attend high school here", she said, "however the economic conditions didn't let this happen." Similar to Mizgin, Zehra also began working in industry as a child, which signaled the end of her education. However, what is crucial in Zehra's experiences is the fact that it was Zehra herself who actually could not find the courage to attend

⁶² Mizgin: "İlkokulu bitirdim. O zaman beş yıl okunuyordu. Hocam da çok takdir ediyordu, babamla görüşmek istedi. Babam dedi, kızımı okutacağım. Ben bırakmam dedi. Ama işte dediğin gibi hayatın zorluklarıyla mecbur kaldı, Erzurum'a hayvan götürdü. Gidiş o gidiş. Bir ay sonra geldi şimdi de o şekilde. Büyüklerimiz varken biz hiç bir şey yapamayız. Biz ondan tam olarak cevap duymak istedik. O cevap verinceye kadar kayıtlar bitti. O zaman orada kaldık. İkinci senesinde de İstanbul'a geldik zaten. Bu sefer de tekstil hayatı. Hayatın zorluğuylan on iki yaşında başladım."

high school. “My family wanted me to continue my education,” she said, “however, economic conditions were worsening and I should support my family.” The crucial intervention of Zehra in this respect just came after: “Actually, I didn’t resist the idea of leaving school because I was lacking self confidence,” she said, “I was a very successful student back at the village, but when I came here, I immediately thought that other children are much more intelligent and successful than me.” Zehra defines this as a fear that she couldn’t even confess to her family and more than that, it was a fear that she could not even tell herself:

“Maybe my family would send me to high school despite my fear but I didn’t want it, I was afraid because everyone else seemed much more intelligent than me.”

The particular phobia that Zehra developed can be interpreted as the manifestation of the very social and economic hierarchies, which altogether prevented her to pursue her education further. As a female, Kurdish, low-class individual, Zehra was exposed to the oppressive dynamics of the urban setting which marginalized her from the rest of the society. Like others, she was also introduced to the social space from the most disadvantageous rank of social hierarchy. Kurdish students in Turkey start their education in a disadvantageous position since there is no education available in Kurdish. Besides, there are no courses for teaching Turkish as a second language. They find themselves in a double bind; they first have to pursue their studies and in doing so they have to deal with the language. Compared to the conditions of the advantageous Turkish students in Istanbul, Zehra feels afraid because of the gap between her and others. Therefore she withdrew herself from the school when she realized such a gap.

Zehra’s narrative can also be analyzed with reference to Bourdieu. Aydınli/Istanbul urban setting is a particular habitus, which continuously tends to reproduce the ongoing hierarchy of social inequality. After all, the parameters for determining “who is intelligent” and “who is successful” are not neutral and objective but are very much shaped by cultural perceptions and by material relations, reproducing social inequality. Bourdieu in this respect points out the ways in which “academic systems of classification (grading and ranking performance of students)”, which seem to be neutral and objectively handled actually “tend to reproduce social class strata.” (Bourdieu, 1988:207) Indeed, Zehra was able to analyze such dynamics of social inequality later in life:

“It was only much later that I understood that this is not the case. I was actually much more successful and intelligent than them.”

Zehra could only overcome her phobia by fixating her position at the lowest strata of the society. This situation resulted in the reproduction of poverty and further prevented her from the enjoyment of education rights as a Kurdish woman living in the neighborhood of Aydınlı.⁶³

Until now I discussed the significances of the experiences of my interviewees in terms of the lack of education. Their experiences point to the intersectionality between class, gender, and ethnicity. Poverty and patriarchy inherent in Kurdish community appear as crucial factors that prevented them from pursuing higher education. All of my interviewees said that they would have liked to pursue higher education, as it was not their choice to give up such an ambition. At a certain point in my research, these intersecting dynamics were becoming clear to me. However, my meeting with Şükran challenged my analysis.

Similar to others, Şükran was only able to attend primary school in the city of Adana. “My father was in Saudi Arabia for work,” she said, “because we were suffering from poverty and he was working anywhere he could find a job.” Şükran’s brothers Kasım and Vasıf continued their education after primary school despite the difficulties and Şükran told me a family meeting where all members gathered to discuss Şükran’s further education: “We all gathered and they said, ‘you will continue your education no matter what the difficulties are.’ ‘I won’t’, I replied.” I was very surprised to hear her reaction as she elaborated it further: “I decided not to go to school further and work instead to help my family.” Şükran explained one by one the reasons behind her declared decision:

“The school uniforms had changed, I had to buy new ones. All the school books were new and we didn’t have the money to purchase them all. I didn’t want to put my mother into more difficult conditions.”

⁶³ Zehra: “Köyde okudum beşe kadar. Ondan sonra İstanbul’a geldiğimizde aslında okula devam edecektim. Ama yine o dediğimiz ekonomik sebeplerden dolayı ben çocuk işçi olarak çalıştım. Yani çırak işçi olarak çalıştım. Bu sebepten dolayı da kaldı eğitim hayatım. Tabiki zaten ailemde istiyordu okumamı, biz ilk geldiğimizde okullar açılmıştı, seneye veririz dediler. Başarılı bir öğrenciydim. Ama arkasından bende de bir şey var, köyde çok başarılı bir öğrenciydim. İstanbuldaki çocuklarla kendimi kıyasladığımda, ben bunlar kadar akıllı değilim, ben bunlar gibi yapamam, diye de aileme itiraf edemediğim bir korkum vardı. Okumak istiyordum diye diretmedim yani. Söylesem onlar yine çaba gösterirlerdi ama kendime bile itiraf edemediğim bir korkuydu bu. Çok sonradan anladım aslında ben başarı olarak onlardan çok daha iyiymişim. Çok sonra farkettim.”

Nevertheless, despite these challenges, Şükran did begin middle school, only to quit a year later: “I should only walk to the school and everywhere was covered with dirt. I didn’t have money to get on a bus. I was often late to the school because of this.” Şükran’s story shows the effects of poverty, and is similar to Mizgin and Çiğdem’s in that sense. What is challenging is to see that she intentionally decided to quit school despite her family’s insinuations. Çiğdem and Mizgin had to leave school for the decisions made by the patriarch. Şükran however decided by herself regardless of the patriarch.

After a year of struggle through mud and dirt, Şükran eventually decided to quit school and began to work in a textile workshop: “I worked very hard, and as the time passed, I learned how to use the machines, and began to work much better.” Şükran worked in that workshop for 4 years and became a master in the end: “I educated lots of workers there”, she says proudly. Şükran’s experiences, and the way she conveys them, constitute an emphasis on the agency of the individual. Responding to the existing economic difficulties, Şükran determines a life for herself and in doing so she consciously gives up the possible opportunity for furthering her future welfare by quitting school. Yet, this act of agency inherently exposes a dynamic of subordination. Under the terrible conditions for survival where education requires unaffordable expenses such as books and transportation, Şükran’s agency to give up education is constrained by the economic structures that shape her family’s existence. Given the economic hardships faced by her family, Şükran is hardly left with a choice other than becoming a laborer, which consequently tends to reproduce social inequality.⁶⁴

Kurdish women began their education from disadvantageous positions. They also suffer from patriarchy inherent in Kurdish community, which enhances their

⁶⁴ Şükran: “İlkokulu bitirdim, ortaokula gittim bir sene. Maddi durumumuz olmadığı için babam Arabistandaydı. Kardeşim vardı. Kasım o okula gidiyor, Vasıf okula gidiyor, ben de okursam dedim, aile meclisi toplandı, illa okuyacaksın. Ben dedim okumayacağım. Ne bileyim hani eve yardım etmek için dedim okumam. Üniformam değişmiş, eski önlükler kalkmıştı. Önlük olsa sorun değil giderdim, şey yapardım, eski kitapçılar felan vardı, kitapları alırdım. Kitapların da hepsi değişti. Yeni kitap alacak param yok. Anneme yük olmak istemedim ben. Üniforma değişmiş, okulun yeri değişmiş. Yürüyerek gidilmiyor, otobüsle gidiliyor. Para bulamıyordum o yağmurda çamurda. Kaç defa okula geç kaldım. Dedim ben okumayacağım. Evimizin karşısında siparişi vardı gittim oraya haftasonları çalıştım. Haftasonları gittim makineyi öğrendim. Önce çıraklıktan başladım, iki haftada makine öğrendim. O kadar azim vardı ki bende. Para da yükseliyor, makineye geçtim onun için. Orada dört sene çalıştım. Usta oldum orada siparişte. Eğittim, makineci çok eğittim. Onlardan da yaptım. Usta yardımcılık yaptım bir dönem. Yani ustanın yanında şey yapıyordum, makinecilerin kalite kontrolü olsun, hatalı iş göndermiyordum. Şunu şöyle yapın bunu böyle yapın. Ondan çok yaptım mesela.”

subordination. Many of them are not allowed to pursue higher education due to the poverty their families suffer. Eventually Çiğdem, Mizgin and Şükran end up being workers. In sum, the experiences of my interviewees show what Erdem Yörük⁶⁵ suggested as “the Kurdification of working class”⁶⁶ in Turkey. Due to the lack of education, Kurds cannot pursue better life opportunities and constitute the lower classes. Kurdish women experience these conditions in a further level because of patriarchy. The narratives of my interviewees show that, the intersectionality of class, gender and ethnicity enhance the reproduction of social inequality. It also reproduces poverty. Kurdish women can only become workers since they lack the sufficient means to overcome such hierarchy. Consequently, the particular Kurdification of the working class is enhanced, intersecting with the dynamics of gender and patriarchy.

3.4. “A prison resides within me”: “Speaking Kurdish in Turkish”, or *Çakma Kürtçe*

“My teacher at primary school got angry with me when I said to her that my name was Zozan” she said to me. She continued: “I loved my name, why would they take it from me? I loved to be called Zozan, and there is no way that I’m using my other name.” Zozan could gain her state identification card only prior to beginning primary school. This was significant to hear because it immediately made me explore the link between language, education and citizenship: Zozan became a citizen only when she was exposed to national education performed in Turkish. Her official name is “Suzan”. Zozan says the following regarding the suppression of her language:

“We are all humans in the end, what difference does it make if we are Turkish, Kurdish or Alevi? We cannot go anywhere with our language, we always have to leave it aside.”

As a result, Zozan reacts as follows: “Why use another language when you already have one?” She explains the meaning of her name: “Zozan means a flower, it means freedom” she says, “we are all children of God, we all come from Adam and Eve, why isn’t there equality? I’m not interested in whether it is Turkish, Kurdish. It means freedom, flower.” Referring to Saskia Sassen, Zozan’s narrative shows that she is an “authorized but not recognized” citizen (2003: 283). She is authorized so long as she gives up her language and identity. Since such detachment doesn’t occur, she is

⁶⁵ Erdem Yörük is a PhD candidate from Sociology at Johns Hopkins University.

⁶⁶ <http://www.firatnews.org/index.php?rupel=nuce&nuceID=17765>

unable to enjoy those rights. The suppression of the Kurdish language constitutes Kurdish women's non-recognition. Zozan currently lives in a public-primary school, in exchange for working as a cleaning lady in the school. She struggles with poverty in the very space that made her a citizen. Yet since her language and identity is non-recognized, the conditions of poverty are reproduced. The oppression of Kurdish language and identity serves to the reproduction of social inequality.

I was carefully listening to Zozan while she was narrating the suppression of her language and identity. Suddenly, she stopped, and said the following: "I don't know, I cannot explain myself enough." She was having difficulties in explaining herself in Turkish: "It would be very good, say, you know my language and I would express myself to you more comfortably." Yet the case was the opposite: I was the researcher who spoke Turkish and I expected to hear from Zozan in Turkish in return. I felt the power relations between us. Yet what I could do most for Zozan is to share her story of survival and to say "I do understand you" even though, maybe, I could never do in most occasions.⁶⁷

"I want my mother-tongue", says Mizgin, a statement which tells much about the suppression of the language. In her call for the mother tongue, Mizgin says the following: "Just as one does not become American when he/she speaks English, I do not become Turkish just because I speak Turkish publicly."⁶⁸ Mizgin carefully distinguishes her identity from the Turkish language she speaks in public. The daily lives of my interviewees are surrounded with Turkish language. Mizgin feels alienation for this occasion. The mother tongue appears as a crucial phenomenon in

⁶⁷ Zozan: "Kabul etmedi. Suzan diye yazıldı, halen de öyle. Ben çok üzülmüştüm. Yani neden? Sonuçta hepimiz insanız, Kürt, Türk, Sünnî Alevi farketmez. O beni çok üzmüştü. Ayrımcılık her zaman oldu. Kendi dilimizle bir yere gidemiyoruz. Bazılarımız işte, ilkokulu okuduğumuz için biliyoruz, bazıları bilemiyor, serbest gidemiyor, hastaneye olsun, hani bir doktora bir şey diyeceğinde. Bu ayrımcalıktır bence. Başka hani, kendi senin ana dilin varken neden başka bir dil. Güzel bir şey mesela, hani şöyledir böyledir diyor, hani konuşmak güzel bir şey, ama kendi dilini anlatabiliyorsan. Şimdi sen benim tam dilimi anlasan, ben kendi dilimi konuşsam, ben kendimi daha rahat ifade edebilirim. Adım Zozan diye neden? Hani Zozan çok güzel bir isim, çiçek ismi, özgürlük ismi. Onu biliyordum. Ben hani Kürt ismidir, Türktür Kürttür bilmiyordum, Alevidir bilmiyordum. Sonuçta Allah'ın kulu yuz, hepimizi kardeşiz sonuçta. Hani Adem Havva'nın çocuklarıyız, böyle biri eşitlik olmayınca çok zor oluyor, bilmiyorum, su an kendimi tam ifade edemiyorum ne bileyim. İnsan ister kendi ana dilini her yerde. Mesela bir hastaneye gidiyoruz az da olsa artık biliyoruz, alıştık ama çoğu insan gelip kendi derdini anlatamıyor. İnsan üzülür yani, az da olsa niye anlatamıyor. Keşke herkes okusaydı, şey olmasaydı arada, ne diyorlar, tam anlatamıyorum işte onu, bu sınıf olmasaydı arada."

⁶⁸ Mizgin: "Ben bugün ne olarak dünyaya geldim, annem babam kim? Ana dilimi istiyorum. Bugün ben gidip Amerikalı olabilir miyim? İngilizce konuşabilirim ama Amerikalı olamam. Kendi ana dilimi kullanmak istiyorum."

my interviewees' imaginations. I asked Meryem the following question: "What is your mother tongue?" She responded as follows:

"You have to speak Turkish to survive, otherwise no one understands you and you cannot express yourself to anybody. Therefore Turkish becomes something like a mother-tongue."⁶⁹

For Meryem, Turkish language points to a paradox. While Mizgin refuses to define Turkish as her mother-tongue, Meryem's narrative suggests that Turkish language is almost her mother tongue. Yet this is because Turkish language is a "must" for survival. Therefore in both narratives, the suppression of Kurdish language is evident. Turkish language dominates the lives of Mizgin and Meryem.

Later in our interview, Meryem made the following remark: "but normally, my mother-tongue is Kurdish because I speak to my relatives in Kurdish." Despite Meryem's emphasis on Turkish as almost a mother tongue, Meryem nevertheless draws clear-cut boundaries between the two languages. Meryem acknowledges that Kurdish is her mother tongue but she lives in a public sphere, which is dominated by Turkish. Therefore Turkish language becomes the inevitable tool for survival. Meryem told me about a very interesting assignment that she has done with her husband:

"We came together one day with my husband, and said, let's speak only in Kurdish because we should develop our speaking the mother-tongue. We spoke Kurdish one or two days, and then we inevitably used Turkish words to express ourselves. And that moment is when Kurdish ends and Turkish begins. What we speak is no longer Kurdish."

Meryem admits that they should work even harder to overcome the dominance of Turkish in their daily expressions but they can't. "We're among Turks" she says, "and no matter how much we want to develop our Kurdish speaking, we cannot because we have to speak in Turkish in most of our daily interactions." Meryem's narrative shows that the domination of Turkish is also experienced within the private sphere. Meryem also says that, "Kurdish language course is opened in İcmeler. We can go and develop our Kurdish, but we can't. I have to look after the child at the house." Meryem's attempt for speaking in the mother tongue inevitably fails also on gendered grounds.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Meryem: "Yani sürekli Türkçe konuşuyorsun ister istemez, artık ana dilin gibi oluyor."

⁷⁰ Meryem: "Ama normalde ana dilim Kürtçe. Yine annemle olsun büyüklerimle olsun Kürtçe konuşuyorum. Burada kendi ailemde Kürtçe, hepimiz Kürtçe konuşuyorduk, ama burada Türkçe

For Meryem and Mizgin, Turkish language is a burden, which she has to carry within herself for survival. It is a means for alienation, and directly effects the ways in which they perceive their belonging. Meryem wishes that, “I would like to return and live in my *yurt*. I can speak Kurdish there all the time.” For Meryem, the homeland signifies the essential place where Kurdish language lives. Meryem continues comparing the hometown with Aydınlı as follows:

“When you speak Kurdish in the streets, there is always a suspicion, a discomfort. People look at you suspiciously and warn you not to speak Kurdish next to them. But you are free in the hometown.”⁷¹

Meryem lives under surveillance and she has to regulate her language all the time in public. Therefore she is alienated:

“I think language is very crucial. I can express myself better in mother-tongue. And in order to build good relations and have a good life here, I should express myself better.”

Zozan also experiences difficulties in her daily life activities for not being able to speak in Kurdish. “When you have work to do in public, and have to speak to someone, you can’t, because you cannot express yourself in Turkish properly.” Zozan also acknowledges herself in an advantageous position when she notices that she was at least graduated from primary school and learned Turkish sufficient enough to survive, but on the other hand, “there are people who do not know a single Turkish word because they didn’t even go to primary school.” According to Zozan, they encounter much more troubles than she does for example when “they go to a doctor, the doctor doesn’t understand, so they should always bring someone with them to help them in communication.”

konusuyoruz. Yani Kürtçe konuşayım dediğim kimse yok. Bazen eşimle tartışırız hani şey yapalım, Kürtçe konuşalım diye, hiç kendimizi geliştirmiyoruz. Bir iki gün Kürtçe konuşuyoruz ama bir iki lafın arasına Türkçe girdi mi Kürtçe kalkıyor. Tam kendimizi ifade edemeyince ondan dolayı Türkçe koyuyoruz. Aslında bu doğru bir şey değil. Sonuçta kendi anadilimiz Kürtçe. Sonuçta biz Türklerin içindeyiz, e biz kendimizi Kürtçe konuşarak ifade edemeyeceğimize göre, onların şekillerine gitmek zorunda kalıyoruz. Ondan dolayı Kürtçe kayboluyor git gide. Yapılabilecek bir şey de yok sanki. Gerçi var da, İçmeler’de şey açılmış heralde bu Kürtçe dil kursu açılmış. Hani gidip şey yapsak gidip kendini eğitsen ama bu sefer imkan el vermiyor, evde çocuk var bırakıp gidemiyorsun, imkan yok bu sefer de. Yapılabilecek bir şey olmuyor.”

⁷¹ Meryem: “Geri dönmek isterdim. Ne olursa olsun orada kendi dilini rahat konuşabiliyorsun. Rahatsın orada, kimse senin diline kültürüne başka bir gözle bakmıyor. Burada dışarıda başka bir yerde Kürtçe konuştuğun zaman, anlamayan birisi ister istemez başka bir gözle bakıyor, bizim yanımızda bu şekilde konuşmayın. Söylemese de der gibi bakar, bakışlarından anlıyorsun. Orada öyle bir durum yok. Özgürsün istediğini yapabiliyorsun sonuçta senin kendi yurdun.”

Nazmiye mentioned her experiences in a hospital: “I would like to speak in Kurdish everywhere. For example when I’m sick and go to the hospital to see a doctor, I would say my complaints more comfortably.” Nazmiye’s “authorized but not recognized” existence was realized during her first years of residence in Aydınlı, when she didn’t know Turkish very well and faced real difficulties in adjusting to life in a new city and a second language. “I was going to the bazaar to get some goods, but I didn’t know how to call things because I didn’t know Turkish well.” She got more and more acquainted with Turkish language when her children began school, it was only then that Nazmiye’s Turkish became “good enough” to survive. Nazmiye’s narrative illustrates Bourdieu’s conception of symbolic power. Symbolic power is exercised through Turkish language in the public space, which excludes Nazmiye from her daily interactions.⁷²

Referring to Bourdieu’s conception of “structures”⁷³ (1977:78-87) Nazmiye’s experiences clearly depict the double role that language plays: In this context Turkish language becomes both a “structured structure” and a “structuring structure”. On the one hand the particular structure in which Turkish language occupies the dominant position is a result of the nationalist project of a uniform, homogeneous nation-state. Consequently, this particular structure of domination also structures further mechanisms of domination, which is evident in the case of Nazmiye’s interaction with the market. The dominance of Turkish language in society further points out the dynamics where one even cannot acquire the basic needs for survival without speaking Turkish. Marginalization of the Kurdish language is an obstacle for Mizgin, Meryem, Zozan and Nazmiye, which prevents their interactions in Aydınlı. They need to speak in their mother tongue to “have a good life” but they can’t. The suppression of Kurdish language prevents them to possess better life conditions. Their narrative

⁷² Nazmiye: “Her yerde de Kürtçe konuşmak istiyorum. Mesela hastaneye gittim mi, doktorum Kürt olsa Türkçenin yerine Kürtçe daha iyi ifade ederim, buram ağrıyor şuram ağrıyor. Ama malasef zor. Aslında İstanbul’a geldim mi hiç bilmiyordum Türkçe, doğru dürüst bilmiyordum. Pazara gidiyordum, doğru dürüst şeylerin ismini bilmiyordum. Çocuklar okula gitti geldi öğrendik hiç bilmiyorduk önce.”

⁷³ “The habitus is the product of the work of inculcation and appropriation necessary in order for those products of collective history, the objective structures (e.g. of language, economy, etc.) to succeed in reproducing themselves more or less completely, in the form of durable dispositions, in the organisms (which one can, if one wishes, call individuals) lastingly subjected to the same conditionings, and hence placed in the same material conditions of existence.” (Bourdieu 1977:85)

shows that the oppression of language contributes to the reproduction of social inequality.

Meryem remarks the following to illustrate such reproduction: “It is because of education. When you begin school, you have to speak Turkish. As time goes by, you get acquainted with it.” Meryem is able to speak in both languages, but she is not bilingual:

“When I speak Turkish, I cannot express myself clearly. But when I switch to Kurdish, sometimes I cannot find the necessary words to express myself. It is because of education. You forget Kurdish by time since you are exposed to Turkish in your childhood. In *memleket*, you speak in Kurdish. When you come here, you speak Kurdish and Turkish together. Eventually, one of these languages gets lost in time.”

The official suppression of the Kurdish language reproduces the disadvantageous position of Kurdish citizens. Eventually Meryem ends up with the inability to fully express herself in both languages. Meryem and Mizgin have hybrid existences in which Kurdish and Turkish interplay. However, they clearly declare their Kurdishness and point at the suppression. Later in our interview, Meryem also told me that, “my ancestors fought against the enemies with Turkish soldiers so we also have the right to learn our language.” She puts forth arguments in order to prove her just demand. On another occasion, Meryem questions the reasons for the exclusion of Kurdish language in education, in which English is included. Meryem defines the way she speaks Kurdish as follows: “*Kürtçe’yi Türkçe konuşuruz*” (We speak Kurdish in Turkish). Meryem’s life is surrounded by Turkish. It also effects the way she speaks her mother tongue.⁷⁴

The significant analysis that Meryem formulized as “speaking Kurdish in Turkish” clearly shows the erosion of the Kurdish language. Mizgin makes a similar remark when she says: “We cannot speak Kurdish properly. I am a Kurdish woman born to Kurdish parents, I want to learn and study in my language.” Meryem and

⁷⁴ Meryem: “Okuduğın yerde Türkçe eğitim alıyorsun, eğitimden geliyor, ondan sonra içinde bulunduğın kişiler hep Türk o şekilde yok oluyor. Okulda Türkçe konuşuyorsun, evin içerisine gelince Türkçe konuşuyorsun ister istemez. Bu iki taraftan da peltek yapıyordu beni mesela. Kürtçe konuştuğum zaman baya sıkıntı çekiyorum. Türkçe konuştuğum zaman da öyleydim. İlk geldiğim zaman memlekette Kürtçe konuşuyorsun, küçüksün ama rahat rahat konuşuyorsun. Buraya geldiğin zaman bir Kürtçe bir Türkçe, ikisinden biri yavaş yavaş yok oluyor. Sürekli Türkçe konuşunca da Kürtçe gitti. Sistemin değişmesine gerek yok, İngilizce nasıl öğretiyorlarsa Kürtçe de öğretsinler. Bizim dedelerimiz Kürt Türk ayırt etmeden savaşmışlar, şu an Kürt Türk bir yana bırak herşeyi, biri İngilizce konuşunca aa diye bakarlar. Ama kürtçe konuşunca bu ne konuşuyor diye başka bir gözle bakarlar. Kürtçe’yi Türkçe konuşuruz. Eğitim olsaydı belki başka bir yerde olurdu Kürt dili. Tek sorun bence burada eğitim.”

Mizgin share the same demands for education in mother tongue. Mizgin continues her words as follows: “You are born Turkish and I am born Kurdish. You do not choose to which culture you will be born to, but you should be able to learn your mother tongue perfectly.” Mizgin recognizes that she cannot speak Kurdish properly and defines her Kurdish as *çakma Kürtçe*⁷⁵ because Kurdish language is under the pressure of Turkish. Mizgin and Meryem’s narratives distinguish the language they speak from the essential Kurdish language. When I asked Mizgin about the suppression of Kurdish language, she responded as follows:

“I cannot speak Kurdish in public. For example, when 8 Turkish soldiers were killed by PKK, it was everywhere in the news. You cannot speak Kurdish because you inevitably feel guilty. They put us in the position of guilty. If you speak Kurdish, people just treat you badly, *belki dağda değiliz ama dağdaymışız gibi*.⁷⁶”

Mizgin’s response was striking. It shows the ongoing dynamics of “anti-Kurdish hatred” as Tanıl Bora shows. When she faces such responses, Mizgin does the following: “In such circumstances, you feel yourself guilty, and cannot speak Kurdish publicly.” Mizgin’s narrative shows that the daily experiences of Kurdish women are directly regulated by macro-politics. Meryem talks about the dominance of Turkish language in the public sphere. Mizgin adds to this reality with her experiences, which show the anti-Kurdish hatred.⁷⁷

Mizgin and Meryem’s experiences illustrate the dynamics of constant surveillance. Such surveillance invokes the feeling of guilt in Kurdish women. Following Foucault, power is at work through surveillance as it triggers mechanisms of self-control. It pressures to internalize the proper social behavior in the disciplined society. Eventually, Mizgin and Meryem’s narratives suggest much for marginalization in Aydınli. They are urban outcasts, who are marginalized materially and economically. But they are also pressured psychologically. There is a cognitive dimension, which triggers self-control and regulation through language. Mizgin is

⁷⁵ en. fake Kurdish. Mizgin: “Hrisitiyan nasıl ayrı bir dinse, sen doğarken belki Türk doğmuşsun. Ben Kürt doğdum. Benim bugün ana dilimse, bende ana dilimi tam öğrenmek istiyorum. Bazen Kürtçe bilen insanlarla konuştuğumuz zaman ben böyle bakıyorum, çakma Kürtçe bizimki diyorum, kürtçeyi de tam konuşmuyoruz. Çok Türkçe var içinde. Tam Türkçeyi konuşmuyoruz, Kürtçemiz de çakma olmuş, benim öyle bilmiyorum arkadaşları.”

⁷⁶ En. “We are not on the mountains but they treat us as if we are at the mountains.” The sentence connotes the PKK guerillas fighting against the Turkish army at the mountains.

⁷⁷ Mizgin: “Şimdi toplum içinde konuşamıyoruz. Konuşmayı bırak bir kenara, hani bu şehit olanlar yedi sekiz kişi öldürülmüş, hergün televizyonda verdikten sonra, insan orada kendini bir suçlu hissediyor. Bizi orada suçlu duruma koyuyorlar, belki dağda değiliz ama sanki dağdaymışız gibi bizi suçlu hissettiriyorlar.”

psychologically regulated and marginalized for PKK activism that she has no affiliation.

After Mizgin narrated these particular experiences, I asked her what kind of a country she would like to live in. She replied: “I would like to live in a country where there is freedom. I would like to live freely and speak my language without any intervention.” However, she notices that, “but when you want to express yourself freely, you are sentenced to at least 20 years of imprisonment.” Mizgin further told me how she suffered: “a prison resides within me, I cannot express myself. I want to live in freedom, as an individual and as a society.” Her emotions gave me a few sleepless nights, as I transcribed her interview and cried. We concluded our interview with Mizgin’s dream: “*Gideceğim bir elbise alacağım kendime fiyatına bakmadan*” (I will go, and purchase the dress I desire without even checking its price).⁷⁸ It was the dream she had in her ideal society. She did not dream of living in Kurdistan, or of the freedom of Kurdish language. She criticizes her society as follows: “I want *cahillik*⁷⁹ in Kurdish society to be vanished.” *Cahillik* refers to her previous comments on patriarchal oppression. Although her mother tongue and society meant much to her, her ultimate emphasis was on poverty. “Mizgin” is not her official name. Since it is forbidden to assign Kurdish names to the children, she was officially named “Yıldız”. Mizgin prefers to use Yıldız in her workplace: “I use Yıldız at work so that there won’t be any problems regarding my Kurdish identity.” Mizgin cannot manifest her identity. Otherwise she can face further impoverishment. Besides the oppression of Kurdish language and identity, the prison signifies her imprisonment of another marginalization, whose walls consists of poverty.

3.5. Between *Andımız* and ROJ TV: Trauma and Therapy

I was able to gain more insights regarding the relation between education and Kurdish language and identity when I was exposed to Çiğdem and Zehra’s experiences. They had closer relations to Turkish language compared to my other

⁷⁸ Mizgin: “Özgür bir toplumda yaşamak isterdim. Düşüncelerimi söyleyebileceğim. Söylediğim zaman içim bir hafif. Şimdi ne kadar konuşsak da içimde hep bir hapis var. Özgürce konuşmak istiyorum, hem dil olarak hem toplum olarak. O toplumun yok olmasını istiyorum. Kürtlüğün zorluğu değil de cahilliğin sorunu. Toplum cehalat içinde olursa Kürt de o topluma dahil olur. Özgürce konuşmak özgürce düşüncelerimi paylaşmak, hemen hapistesin yirmi yıl yiyorsun. Odur yani, özgürlük özgürlük budur aslında. Gideceğim bir elbise alacağım kendime fiyatına bakmadan.”

⁷⁹ En. Ignorance.

interviewees. As I mentioned briefly in the previous chapter, I now had a sweet little friend called Roza, Çiğdem's daughter. Our conversations with Çiğdem contained frequent references to Roza. Çiğdem was able to observe the subordination, as she was closely interested in the education of her daughter. Zehra had a striking experience in her childhood. She was the best Turkish-speaking student among Kurdish pupils, which provided her a distinctive position. Yet she was also subordinated.

Çiğdem's Kurdish is worse than my other interviewees and her relation to the Turkish language is much closer. However, she still insists on her Kurdish identity and acknowledges that, "it is the education system and the discourse in society that prevented us to speak in Kurdish better." She admits that she doesn't speak Kurdish well and questions: "How will Roza learn her mother-tongue when her mother doesn't know it well?" Despite the oppressive agents, Kurdish is still their mother tongue as Çiğdem's mother frequently visits their house in order to teach Roza Kurdish. "Ok" says Çiğdem, "let her speak in Turkish, but she should also learn to speak in Kurdish." Çiğdem shared one of her memories while she was watching Roza in the school garden: "The students were calling "andımız" (our oath) as I saw Roza there, frustrated. Roza is attending kindergarten currently. She doesn't cite *Andımız* yet but the oath draws her attention while students cite it. "Andımız" refers to the compulsory daily morning gathering of primary school students who altogether take oaths as members of Turkish nation citing the following text:

"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 than 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.

How happy for one who can say I'm a Turk!"⁸⁰

⁸⁰ tr. Türküm, doğrucum, 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.

The collective oath intensely propagates Turkish nationalism and instrumentalizes the youth for such chauvinism. As a Kurdish student, Roza questioned this since she didn't develop a belonging to the oath. With such frustration, Roza asked her mother: "Would they get angry if I utter "Kurds"?" Çiğdem tried to explain the situation to her daughter in a convincing manner: "There are rules everywhere my sweetheart, we should obey those rules."⁸¹ Çiğdem later told me the following:

"I cannot say her that the oath has nothing to do with your identity. She has to take that oath so that she can pursue her education. She can live a better life than me only if she continues her education in a proper manner. I am sad to behave this way, not being able to say the truth about the oath, but I cannot do otherwise."

Çiğdem remarks that if Roza manifests her ethnic identity at school, she will definitely encounter problems. Eventually Roza will encounter exclusion and subordination. She will also end up in poverty like her mother. Çiğdem noticed that she was also under the same pressure during her childhood in Aydın. Her father warned her accordingly: "My father would say, speak in Turkish, do not speak in Kurdish anywhere, if they realize that we are Kurds, we will be in trouble."⁸² Therefore, Çiğdem lived in total disguise and under constant surveillance. In time, she almost forgot her mother tongue and became more acquainted with Turkish.

The ways in which Çiğdem builds her relations to Turkish are also manifest in her hobbies regarding music listening. When I asked her favorite music, she answered as follows: "I usually like to listen to Turkish folk songs and *özgün*⁸³ music. I also like many of Turkish classical songs, they are really valuable." I was surprised to hear that songs with Turkish lyrics occupied Çiğdem's interests. However in my informal interviews, I realized that most of my interviewees were listening to songs in Turkish. Çiğdem's musical taste is diverse:

"I listen to songs in Zaza, but I usually listen Turkish songs because I am able to understand its lyrics better. I mostly listen to *özgün music*, but I also listen to Zaza

Ne mutlu Türküm diyene!

⁸¹ Çiğdem: "Ben geçen gün şeye gittim, okuldan geçerken andımız okuyor felan, Roza da şey yapıyor, şimdiki çocuklar böyle çok daha sorgulanıyor. Herşeyin farkında olduğunu düşünüyorum. Anne peki Kürt desek kızarlar mı? Roza dedim, okulda bu var annecim, bazı yerlerde kurallar var, uymak zorundayız dedim. Şimdi yok kızım sen öyle de desem olur mu o çocuk orada okuyacak."

⁸² Çiğdem: "Babam bana Türkçe konuş demeseydi, Kürtçe konuşmayın, biz burada bir kaç aile varız, Kürt olduğumuzu bilirlerse şöyle yapacaklar, geleneklerimizi bilirlerse böyle yapacaklar. Düşün biz hep böyle yetiştik."

⁸³ The term usually refers to pop-folk songs or protest music in Turkish.

songs as well. My father used to listen folk songs from the Black Sea region, and I also loved them. But sometimes I come across Zaza women who sing together, they are great. I sometimes listen to songs of Western Classical Music; they are so relaxing.”

After I heard Çiğdem’s factory experiences, I was better able to comprehend her situation. I will mention those in details in the following chapter. Briefly, Çiğdem defines her identity as a “woman worker” rather than a “Kurdish woman”. She is a member of the Socialist Party of the Oppressed (ESP). She frequently says that she loves working in a factory, and she even loves the sounds of the machines. She criticizes the Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) for their ethnicity-oriented politics. She favors policies regarding working class and feminism. Therefore, her detachment from Kurdish language is understandable. She reckons the suppression of Kurdish language and identity. Like Mizgin, Meryem, Zozan, Şükran and Nazmiye, she carefully defines her mother tongue as Kurdish and distinguishes it from Turkish. Yet she is also an internationalist. So she is comfortable with using any language.

Music came out as an important motive in my interview with Zehra as well. Kurdish music for Çiğdem was not essential to her belonging. For Zehra it brings forth a striking awakening and transformation. Zehra said to me, “I was talking to my husband at home mostly in Turkish but occasionally in Kurdish.” Her relation to Kurdish music wasn’t developed. “I wasn’t listening to Kurdish songs until we had ROJ TV in our television.” Her husband did the necessary settings in the TV receiver to get Kurdish TV channel ROJ TV⁸⁴. “We were into a fierce discussion with my husband that day” said Zehra, “I didn’t want ROJ TV, I thought it was unnecessary.” Zehra didn’t prefer to have a Kurdish TV channel at her home since for her “it doesn’t matter of the television speaks Turkish or Kurdish.” Zehra initially was more than indifferent to a Kurdish TV channel; she didn’t want it and had a discussion with her husband on this issue. Later, her husband convinced her to get the channel and made the proper requirements for connection. “I wasn’t listening to that channel at first, my husband used to listen all the time” she said. I was surprised to hear her reaction. Why was Zehra insisting on not listening to Kurdish? After a while, Zehra got interested in

⁸⁴ Roj Tv Tanıtım Metni: “Bütün dillerin en güzel kelimesi ‘Güneş’. Güneş kelimesinin Kürtçe’deki karşılığı ‘Roj’. Roj kelimesinin diğer anlamı ise ‘gün’. Kürtlerin yaşamında ‘Roj’ üçüncü bir anlam taşıyor: Yasaklanmış; eğitim ve yayın hakkı olmayan ve gün geçtikçe eriyerek yok olma tehdidi altındaki bir dilin şarkısını söylüyor Roj TV.”

http://www.gomanweb.com/2010_Klasoru/Mart/15Mart/roj_tv_kapatilamaz.htm

the programs in the channel, when she saw the Kurdish villages and women who sing traditional songs: “I realized that I was getting emotional and I was crying whenever I hear and see something related to those lands.” Zehra got more and more hurt psychologically and she even thought that she was suffering from a severe depression: “I told to my husband, am I going mad? Why do I cry when I listen to those songs and see those images?” Her husband reacted as follows: “No, not at all, on the contrary you are getting back to normal.” Her husband suggests that her mother tongue was oppressed. And for him, ROJ TV was the antidote for such oppression.

Zehra realized that she was inevitably getting emotional when she saw the images of homeland, when she listened to the traditional Kurdish songs. She concludes that, “I was missing my identity, Kurdishness.” ROJ TV was once a TV channel that she reacted against, in time, it gained significance: “I could only realize my Kurdish identity thanks to ROJ TV.” Eventually, Zehra defines her life in two distinct phases. The effect of music and images that convey Kurdish identity through the medium of television is so powerful that she describes two different profiles of herself: “Zehra before ROJ TV and Zehra after ROJ TV.”⁸⁵

I was still curious to know the reasons for her strict refusal to have ROJ TV initially. I felt that there was a story behind such rejection. As our interview progressed, Zehra remarked the importance of official education, which oppressed the Kurdish language:

“Although our community consists of leftist individuals mostly, we are so distanced from our identities. Besides, the society has discriminated against us so much that we came to internalize our inferiority.”

During her initial observations on ROJ TV, Zehra was surprised to see female Kurdish singers dressed up in traditional clothes. She realized its importance later: “The tradition should be sustained and lived. Now I am very happy to have gained

⁸⁵ Zehra: “Bazı zamanlar biz o kadar aşına olmuşuz ki, bir gün eşim eve Roj tv alacaktı. Biz onun için eşimle çok tartıştık. Ben evde Roj tv istemiyorum, ne gereksiz şey dedim. Orada Kürtçe konuşmuş Türkçe konuşmuş ne farkeder istemiyorum evimde dedim. En son eşim aldı uyduyu, uzun süre eşim o izlerdi Roj tv’yi, ben bakmazdim. Sonradan Roj tv izlerken, müzik felan çıktığında köyleri gösterdiğinde şeyi farketdim, ben duygulanıp ağlıyorum. Dedim ki heralde ben depresyona giriyorum dedim eşime. Ben niye Roj tv izlerken sürekli ağlıyorum dedim. Çok duygulanıyorum, yani hıçkıra hıçkıra ağlıyorum. Eşim de yok dedi sen normale dönüyorsun. Orada dedi bizim köylerimizi gösteriyor dedi. Hepimiz izleyince duygulanıyoruz dedi. Sen de yirmi yıldır görmediğin memleketini özölüyorsun dedi. O yüzden dedi duygulanıyorsun, bu çok normal dedi. Benim Kürt kimliğimi tanımam sahip çıkmam Roj tv sayesinde oldu. Ben bir Kürt kadını olarak Roj tv’yi milattan önce millattan sonra, Roj tv’den önce ve Roj tv’den sonra diyorum.”

such consciousness.”⁸⁶ Further in our interview, Zehra told me that she watched women in Diyarbakır gathering for feminist activism and that she would like to organize a similar gathering in Aydın. For Zehra, ROJ TV was a mechanism of consciousness-raising particularly along the lines of ethnicity and gender.

Zehra had a distinctive status compared to other Kurdish families and students in terms of her relations with Turkish language. She told me her striking story, which helped me to make sense of her initial reaction to ROJ TV. She was traumatized in her childhood as a result of a particular event she narrated regarding her very close friend. It was an experience that I haven’t heard before, and was shocked the first time I was exposed to it.

Zehra was a very successful student at primary school. Besides, her older brother and sister were also the most successful pupils of their classes. “When I was in primary school, my parents’ Turkish were perfect, unlike others” she said, “I was very successful and idealist.” For Zehra, the path for success in life was affiliated to her performance in knowing Turkish perfectly: “I was always reading and writing in Turkish, practicing it to be successful in life.” Her parents appreciated Zehra’s endeavor. Zehra was continuing a happy life since her teachers rewarded her for the success in Turkish lessons. Consequently, Zehra was assigned as the head of the “Turkish Language Club” at school. She defines her duty as follows: “I used to spy on students who spoke in Kurdish at school. This wasn’t ordered to me directly, but I already knew what I was assigned to.” Her teachers utilized Zehra as a spy because of her success. Although she wasn’t given a direct assignment, Zehra knew her mission. She began her spying activities at school. And also outside of it:

“I would go to visit my friends houses, we would eat dinner and study together. At that moment, I would be careful and listen to the words they spoke, and write down their names if they spoke in Kurdish.”

Zehra informed those names to her teacher. She said to me that, “the teacher would beat them up very badly.” Zehra spied on her closest friend, a person whom she refers to as *süt kardeşim*⁸⁷. “She beat her in front of me. With a piece of chump. In front of my own eyes. I still regret that.” Zehra witnessed real violence. The children

⁸⁶ Zehra: “Bakınca, sol bir yapıya sahip olmama rağmen kendi kimliğimizden o kadar çok uzaklaştırılmışız ki ve aslında toplum, kendi kimliğimizi o kadar aşağılamış ki, biz farkında olmadan o aşağılanmayı kabul etmişiz. Şu anda bunun bilincinde olduğum için çok mutluyum.”

⁸⁷ En. Milk sister: An expression which refers to a sisterhood without blood ties but very close affiliation.

at the classroom realized that it was Zehra who was spying on them, and as she told me, “they were begging me not to tell their names to the teacher.” Zehra acquired some sort of power. Turkification reached its peak at school. She was the representative of the “ideal citizen”. Yet that power disturbed Zehra and made her uncomfortable especially in her relation to her friend:

“We still see each other, but she refuses to talk about that event. Whenever I see her, I cry all the time, I want to speak to her but she doesn’t speak to me, she just cries. It is like it never happened.”

Zehra migrated to Aydınli with her family after she graduated from primary school. She began working for the industry at a very early age. As I mentioned previously, Zehra was lacking self-confidence in Aydınli and she didn’t pursue her education further. She felt that she wouldn’t be successful as she was in her hometown. Her narrative on spying was an explanation for her lack of self-confidence at Aydınli. It was this very trauma, spying on her closest friend, which didn’t allow Zehra to pursue her education further. Back in her hometown, she was in an advantageous position as a spy. In Aydınli, she was supposed to act just like an ordinary “Turkish” student with no distinctive status. Zehra was a successful Kurdish pupil. But her success was rewarded with “spying” on Kurdish-speaking children. Eventually she ended up traumatized.

Until now I have been mentioning the “better life opportunities” that education could bring along for Kurdish women. Most of my interviewees emphasized this possibility. They couldn’t pursue their education further into high schools or universities and ended up being workers. Zehra’s experience shows that, education does not necessarily bring salvation.

No matter how intelligent and hard-working Zehra was, she was “rewarded” with nothing but a trauma. Zehra was the “ideal Kurdish pupil”, spying on even her closest friend. Yet she ended up struggling with poverty. She managed to overcome that trauma with ROJ TV. It provided her the images of her hometown that she needed to remember. She needed to remember in order to relive such a traumatic event with her closest friend and master that trauma. ROJ TV was a form of therapy for Zehra. On the other hand, Zehra’s was an experience of nationalism. Her experience with ROJ TV turned her into a Kurdish national subject, romanticizing “tradition”, constructing a certain notion of Kurdish nationhood and Kurdish womanhood.

And Roza, the sweet little Kurdish girl? She will be taking the Turkish nationalist oath every morning at school. She doesn't manifest her Kurdish identity so that she can struggle with poverty better in the future. What will she experience? Referring to Mizgin, will Roza break the prison walls of poverty? The heartbreaking questions remain.

3.6. Who Are Kurdish Women? "A Hidden Treasure"

"What does it mean to be a Kurdish woman?" I asked Şükran. She answered: "Kurdish women are not the women residing in this neighborhood. They are the ones who live in the villages." Şükran distinguishes the urban setting of Aydınli from the rural setting. The hometown image once again appears as the real source of Kurdish identity. She explains such distinction as follows: "Kurdish women work on the soil, they work continuously on the soil of Kurdistan." As evident in her statement, Şükran mentions the country Kurdistan, which inhabits the real Kurdish women. Şükran's narrative suggests that to be a Kurdish woman one has to work on the "soil" of Kurdistan.⁸⁸ "I would like to return one day, if Kurdistan is founded" she says, "Everyone would like to return to *vatan* one day."⁸⁹

The foundation of an independent Kurdistan is Şükran's dream. For her, only then Kurdish women can fulfill their potentials. Her narrative suggests that she is distanced from her identity since she is an industrial worker in Aydınli. The real Kurdish women live in Kurdistan, laboring on the soil. "If there were sufficient working opportunities back at hometown, no one would come here" she says, "we are here to earn money, and the ones who still stay there face the real difficulties." Şükran points at poverty as the main reason for her migration to Aydınli. The detachment from her identity is an inevitable journey to struggle with poverty. Şükran once again distinguishes herself from "real" Kurdish women at hometown as follows: "They speak Kurdish all the time, here no one knows and speaks Kurdish properly." For her, the mother tongue determines identity, to which they are distanced as inhabitants of Aydınli.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Tr. Kürdistan toprağı.

⁸⁹ Şükran: "Kürt kadınları memlekettekilerdir buradakiler değil bence. Onlar toprağı işliyorlar şey yapıyorlar. Herkes kendi toprağında herkes kendi ülkesinde olmak ister."

⁹⁰ Şükran: "Kürdistan kurulursa felan, herkes kendi toprağında olsun en güzeli. Herkes kendi toprağında herkes kendi vatanında olmak ister. Memlekette fabrika gibi birşey olsaydı iş ortamı olmadığı için herkes ondan buraya akın ediyor. Çalışma imkanı olursa en azından memlekette

Şükran's narrative suggests that Kurdish women in Aydınli are dispersed within the rest of society and lost their essential identities. They are dominated by industrial work and Turkish language, which are the factors of such detachment. Although Şükran poses women in her hometown as "real" Kurdish women, she nevertheless points at the poverty they suffer. They occupy a more disadvantageous position. For Şükran, they are here "to earn money" while the real Kurdish women struggle with difficulties. Şükran's narrative shows that the imaginations of real Kurdish women is closely linked with the conditions of poverty. In the meantime, the longing for an independent state accompany her perceptions. It is the only way poverty could end, and Şükran can eventually return.

When I asked Çiğdem the same question, she answered sophisticatedly: "Being a Kurdish woman? Well, it has different roots actually. Sexual, national and class-based."⁹¹ Her analysis was pointing at intersectionality. Çiğdem continued as follows: "You are a worker, you struggle. And while you struggle as a woman, you manifest your Kurdishness." For Çiğdem, the identities of "worker", "woman" and "Kurdish" are entwined. They are all related to one another, which points at intersectionality. "The villages were burned by the state", she noticed, emphasizing the violence committed by the state against Kurdish community at hometown. She continued her story as follows:

"Your village is burned, you migrate to Aydınli as a woman, and begin to work in an industry. It is very hard, believe me. You have to think about your nation, your Kurdish friends, your children as a mother, how will you be able to bring them a piece of bread under such conditions?"

Çiğdem's narrative differs from Şükran's. She doesn't suggest that they are distanced from their ethnic identities. Contrarily, Çiğdem experiences the difficulties in being a Kurdish woman worker in Aydınli. She still cares for her nation, but she also has responsibilities as a mother. Besides, she is a worker, which points at the intersection of ethnicity, gender and class. It is important to notice that Çiğdem was not subjected to forced migration by the state. She migrated to Aydınli with her family to struggle with poverty. Now, she has two struggles to deal with: "You have

kimse buraya gelmezdi. Ben kime Kürt kadını derim? Kürtçeyi biliyor kürtçeyi konuşuyor, onun için hani Kürt kadını."

⁹¹ Çiğdem: "Bak düşün yani şöyle de bir sorun var. Cinsel ulusal sınıfsal. Birebir yaşadığım bir şey. Mücadele ediyorsun işçisin, kendini diğer emekçi kardeşlerine ifade etmek için kürtün. Kendi ulusunun mücadelesi."

to work in a factory to make a living and you have to manage to live with your identity, otherwise you are a Kurd, a terrorist.” Çiğdem has to negotiate between her identities in order to survive. She struggles with poverty, and she is also subordinated for her ethnic belonging.

In the following Çiğdem noticed that she was in an advantageous position despite the struggles: “I was very lucky to migrate here and began working in industry as a child worker since I got adjusted to these conditions better than others who migrated at a much older age.” Çiğdem’s labor as a child was a terrible consequence of poverty. However it becomes an advantage for her adjustment to Aydınlı. She eventually defines her belonging: “There is this constant exile feeling. I don’t feel myself belonging anywhere. I have been living here for a long time, but I’m not sure whether I belong here. I simply don’t have that feeling [of belonging].”⁹² Unlike Şükran who develops a passionate longing for (an idealized) Kurdistan, Çiğdem is in “exile” without a motherland. Despite her feeling of being in exile, he doesn’t have a longing to return to her motherland. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, Çiğdem lives where she “labors to survive.” Her identity is deterritorialized, at the intersections of gender, ethnicity and class.

You will probably remember Mizgin’s dream: She would like to live in a country where she would be able to purchase anything she wants. Mizgin once again referred to her dream when I asked her about the possible meanings of being a Kurdish woman: “I would like to buy anything that I want and wear, without Kurdish men insulting and harassing me.” Mizgin’s experiences were emphasizing the intersection of poverty and patriarchal subordination of women. Mizgin’s narrative suggests that, there is a patriarchal subordination in Kurdish community. Mizgin mentions the subordination of women in the hometown as follows: “Kurdish men should leave Kurdish women alone for a minute” and notices that, “only then Kurdish women will reach their true potentials.” Şükran was emphasizing that Kurdish women in Aydınlı are distanced from their identities since they are away from the soil of Kurdistan. Mizgin criticizes the patriarchal oppression at the same soil. She continues as follows:

⁹² Çiğdem: “Ben birazda çocuk işçilikten baslarayarak bilerek büyüdüğüm için zor gelmedi. Hep sürgünlük olayı var ya ben de. Bazen kendimi bir yere ait olarak hissetmiyorum. Ben burada yaşıyorum, buraya ait miyim hissetmiyorum, yani o duygu bende hiç yok.”

“Our elders hold male children in high regards and discriminate against the girls. While they treat boys as untouchables, the girls already began working on the farms with agriculture and husbandry or in the cities as workers. They get to know life better than men.”

For Mizgin, women have life experiences much more than men. She suggests that, “men tend to rule over women with no experiences of life.” According to Mizgin, Kurdish men are passive and inadequate in terms of daily life experiences. Whereas, she says that, “Kurdish women possess *gizli hazine*.”⁹³ For her, “the problem of our *memleket* is that they oppress such a richness, and doesn’t bring it to life. All of these happen because of the ignorance of Kurdish men. Elder women also discriminate against their sons.” Pointing at the patriarchal subordination, Mizgin refers to the hidden treasure, which is repressed by the patriarch.⁹⁴

Mizgin’s narrative is similar to Çiğdem’s since it doesn’t pose the hometown as the essential space of identity. She points at the oppressive dynamics of patriarchal subordination in the hometown and in Aydınlı. In her narrative, too, there is a continuum of patriarchal subordination. This eventually enhances women’s impoverishment. Mizgin’s narrative suggests that, this impoverishment at the same time impoverishes the Kurdish community as a whole. Patriarchy also traps men, as well as women. Unlike Şükran’s narrative, Mizgin criticizes patriarchy at homeland and she wishes to return there as a teacher. She dreams to educate Kurdish women so that they can enjoy freedom. She also resists patriarchal expectations in her desire to give birth to a baby girl. Şükran wants to go back to homeland when Kurdistan is founded, whereas Mizgin wants to challenge the patriarchal subordination of women in the Kurdish community, both in Aydınlı and in her hometown.

⁹³ En. Hidden treasure.

⁹⁴ Mizgin: “Kürtlerin hayatı bu. Kürtlerin kadınların durumu bu. Hep kaynana tarafından eş tarafından hep basılmış. Onların içindeki mücevherleri bir görsen. Benim memleketimin sorunu oradaki mücevherleri çıkartmamak. Kadınlarımız hazine saklıyor. İşte bu cahil erkeklerimizin, cahil diyorum kusura bakma, o cahillerin yüzünden o mücevherler, şimdi gidip araştırırsan ne kadar gizli hazine bulursun.”

“Memleketteki kadınlarımız daha muhtaç, en azından ben açıkça söyleyebiliyorum onlar söylemiyorlar. Kendi odasında çiçekleri suluyor. Oradaki baskılar büyük. Kadınlarımız var ya kaynanalarımız, onların erkekleri el üstünde tutup, kadınları bırakıyorlar. Genç kızken hayatın içerisine giriyor, çocukken olgunlaşıyorlar. Erkeklerimiz bilmiyor, erkek doğurdu el üstünde tutuyorlar, bu şekilde pasif kalıyor işte. Kadınlarımız herşeyi bilerek büyüyor. Erkeklerin ağzının yaptığı iki kelime bu şekilde açık konuşamaz seninle, çünkü bilmiyorlar. Kadın küçükken ezildi. Erkeklerimiz hep böyle pasif kaldılar, onlar da kadınlara izin vermediğinden dolayı biz Kürtler bu şekilde hep yerin dibindeyiz.”

Similar to Mizgin, Zozan notices the patriarchal subordination in Aydınli. In response to the question, “what does it mean to be a Kurdish woman?” she also draws attention to patriarchy. During her initial years of residence, Zozan was unemployed. She explains the reasons of her unemployment as follows: “We Kurdish women aren’t allowed to work in factories.” Zozan notices the existing structures of patriarchy: “Men didn’t want to witness such an image, that is, his wife working outside and feeding him. It is only men who used to work and look after his wife.” In follows, Zozan mentions particular transformation when she says, “at first, this behavior was dominant. After two or three years passed, men began to allow women to work in nearby industries.” Zozan has been working for the last eight years in her 17 years old marriage. For her, “men changed because it was hard to look after families with low wages.” She says, “I am happy that this happened, because not allowing women to work is a backwardness. Now I also help feeding the family. And I get along well with my husband.”

Zozan didn’t display an activism to start working. She didn’t challenge her husband. It was only when her husband was convinced that she could be employed: “At first, I didn’t even think of working because my husband wouldn’t allow me. But then he began to think rationally and offered me to get employed.” She is currently very happy in her relation with her husband: “We help each other economically, we feed our family together and we trust each other.” Zozan’s imagination of being a Kurdish woman is occupied with men’s transformation. Such change in her husband’s attitude was related to poverty. Zozan’s narrative shows that women participate in labor just as men in order to struggle with poverty. However, it doesn’t mean that patriarchy is weakened. On the contrary, the patriarch is the decisive agent in Zozan’s employment. It is also crucial in how Zozan defines Kurdish women.

3.7. Political Engagements and Resistance

Several of my interviewees are engaged in politics. They have various opinions about social problems and their solutions. I met with several responses when I asked them whether they are politically active or not. Zehra responded as follows: “Actually, I never had any political activism before. But when I began to watch ROJ TV, I realized the party organizations of Kurdish women.” ROJTV helped Zehra’s transformation in terms of gender and ethnicity. It also introduced politics to her life.

Zehra went to visit the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) in Tuzla. She wanted to work in the projects for women:

“‘There aren’t enough members to undertake projects’ they told me initially. But I already saw the women organizations in Diyarbakir, and would like to engage to similar activisms here.”

Zehra visited BDP for three years and attended the workshops. In time, she gained experience, eventually becoming the head of the party organization in the neighborhood. “I was focusing on women issues” she said, “I was trying to solve their problems in the neighborhood.” For Zehra, being involved in such an organization was enlightenment:

“Before this work, I assumed that I already know every woman in the neighborhood. However, I realized that there are many women residing near me whose existences and problems I wasn’t aware of.”

Zehra got more acquainted with her surroundings through her political involvement. She later worked as a party representative in Tuzla. It was the highest rank but she wasn’t happy with such an assignment:

“I was dealing with other works of the party there, but my goal was to deal specifically with women’s issues and channel my interests to their problems in order to find solutions.”

Zehra was working as a cleaning lady in the houses near Bağdat Avenue, an upper class neighborhood. She had to leave her occupation in the party because the working conditions were too intense. Her struggle with poverty did not allow her to further pursue a career in political activism. Currently, she is ambitious and plans her political career for the future:

“I am talking to my friends on the problems of women nowadays. But I will be retired from my job in ten years, and after that I will devote myself to women’s issues in the neighborhood.”⁹⁵

⁹⁵ Zehra: “Kendim gittim ve Diyarbakırdaki kadın çalışmalarını gördüm. Burada da var, katılmak istiyorum diye gittim ama hani burada yeterli çalışma yürütecek arkadaşlarımız yokmuş. Burada çalışmalara başladım ben, iki buçuk üç yıl oldu. Mahalle yönetiminde çalıştım, parti yönetiminden değil de dışarıdan serbest olarak çalıştım. Daha sonra mahalle yönetimleri kuruldu, altı aylık bir süre mahalle yönetim başkanlığı yaptım ama çalıştığım için sadece haftasonlarımı ve akşamları verebiliyorum. Ama benim çalışmak istediğim kadın çalışmasıydı çünkü bizim kadınının daha çok sorunları oluyordu. Çalışan kadın olması şart değil, evdeki kadınlar. Ben bu çalışma süreci içerisinde daha çok evlerle diyalog kurdum ve tanıştığım kadınlardan çok ilgiye muhtaç olduklarını ve aslında çok ağır sorunlar yaşadıklarını farkettilim. O kadar komik ki benim yıllarca yaşadığım mahallede arka sokakta hiç tanımadığım bir kadın ve ben uzun yıllardır Aydınli’da yaşıyorum ve ben Aydınli’da herkesi tanıdığımı zannediyordum. Bir arka sokakta kadın o kadar çaresizmiş ki benim hiç haberim olmamış. Ben mahalle yönetiminden ayrıldıktan sonra ilçe

Problems of women in Aydınlı encourage Zehra to actively engage in politics.

Şükran and Mizgin aren't engaged in political activism at the party level. But they are very interested in politics. I met Şükran right after the news was occupied with the civil revolution in Egypt. Şükran displayed a revolutionary character. She was having dreams for an independent Kurdistan. She showed a special interest to the civil uprising in Egypt. She shared her longing for a similar civil revolt: "Our government is acting stupidly against us. Such a revolt in Turkey would be enough to get things on the way." While Zehra maintains a feminist outlook, Şükran's political engagements are based on the Kurdish nation. She is waiting for an uprising of the Kurdish people, which would result in an independent Kurdistan. What she implied was a civil movement, rather than a militarist one. She never mentioned PKK activism for this reason.

Mizgin was very emotional when she told me about her memories in Çanakkale. She visited the sites of the battlefields of the First World War. She commemorated the martyrs. She told me the following:

"I saw that there were martyrs from Bitlis and Muş and I realized that Kurds died for this country. The real war happened between Christians and Muslims. Kurds and Turks were on the same side. Today they say 'look at those PKK carcasses and the martyrs in Çanakkale', how can one put it like this? Who fought in Çanakkale? And who fights for the Turkish army today?"

Mizgin reacts against the mainstream understanding of PKK as traitors. She was my only interviewee to talk about PKK in this sense. She notices that today, Kurdish men also serve in the army and fight for the unity of the country. She is very disappointed to witness that, "brothers are murdering each other in the mountains, two people from the same family can become enemies, one fighting for Turkish army, the other for PKK." Mizgin's narrative shows that she is an anti-militarist, as she asks the following question: "Why do we fight with each other?" According to her, "it is the politicians and commanders, they continue war for their intentions as opposed to

yönetimde yer aldım. Ama sonra baktım hani partinin diğer çalışmalarını yürütmek zorunda kalıyorsunuz. Benim istediğim çalışma şekli bu değil, kadın çalışması yürütmek istiyorum. Taşınma sürecim oldu işte bu eylülde sonra baya bir uzak kalmıştım çalışmalardan. Yeni işte iki üç ay oldu taşınalı, bu süreçten sonra da yeniden bir dönüş yapacağım. Ama kadın çalışması üzerine hani. Çünkü ben kadınlar tarafından da tanınmaya başladım, şimdi amacım kadın çalışması gerçekten de arkadaşlarla konuşuyoruz, diyorum ben on yıl sonra emekli olacağım; asıl emekli olduktan sonra iş başlıyor, kadın çalışması yürüteceğim. Yani her zaman önceliklerimin arasında tutuyorum kadın çalışmasını."

Kurds.” She talks about the Kurdish oppression and says that, “I refuse to witness a country where a Kurd cannot speak his/her language on his/her very land.”

I had interviews with Mizgin, both informal or formal, which lasted for hours. She discussed her political views many times. She was very passionate in narrating herself. I was amazed when she made a striking link between politics and poverty as follows:

“I cannot understand the use of war where my brothers are made enemies to each other, while I’m trying to survive in this neighborhood as a woman for 700 liras in a month?”⁹⁶

Her narrative shows the devastating effects of the war on the society. Mizgin eventually links politics to poverty. There is no use of wars and conflicts for society. It doesn’t end her struggle with poverty. The social inequality is nevertheless reproduced. My interviewees have different perceptions of political engagements. Şükran sees politics from the lens of ethnicity. For her, the independent Kurdistan will provide salvation from poverty. Zehra is a feminist and aims to work on women’s problems. She is also critical of the suppression of Kurdishness. Mizgin is another feminist who at the same time emphasizes the importance of class and Kurdish oppression. The narratives of Kurdish women in Aydınli show the ongoing dynamics of intersectionality and the different ways in which these dynamics translate into politics.

3.8. Conclusion

In the second section of this chapter, I presented the historical backgrounds of Kurdish oppression in Turkey. In doing so, I focused primarily on the early Republican period of Turkish nation-state in order to shed light on the foundations of Kurdish oppression.

In the third section, I focused on the issue of education. It was a recurrent theme throughout my interactions with my interviewees. The lack of education is closely linked to their identities as Kurdish as well as their experience of poverty. My interviewees had to leave their education and start working in industry. Some of them couldn’t enjoy the necessary education facilities at hometown due to the disinterest of

⁹⁶ Mizgin: “Vatan sağolmasın, niye burada iç savaşı niye yaratıyorsunuz? Niye benim kardeşim dağa çıkıyor, komutanlar benim sayemde, ben burada yedi yüz milyonla çalışırken, adam benim sayemde dağa çıkmış, ne anlamı var, neyi çözecek, niçin?”

the state. Zozan, Yeter and Nazmiye's remarks illustrate this situation. Some of my interviewees received their primary education in their hometowns. When they migrated to Aydınli with their families, they couldn't pursue their education further and instead became workers. The narratives of my interviewees show that there is another dimension leading to the lack of education next to the state disinterest, that is the patriarchal subordination. Zozan, Yeter, Nazmiye, Mizgin and Çiğdem's experiences show that they couldn't pursue higher education due to the patriarchal subordination in Kurdish community. Thirdly, there is the dimension of poverty. My interviewees had to become workers so that they can contribute to the family budget. Şükran's narrative shows that she had to leave school not because of patriarchal subordination, but because of poverty. I argue that the experiences of my interviewees illustrate what Erdem Yörük calls the "kurdification of the working-class". Due to state disinterest, patriarchal subordination and poverty, Kurdish women are excluded from education. They end up being industrial workers. Therefore, social inequality is reproduced; Kurdish women continue struggling with poverty.

In the fourth section, I focused on the narrations of my interviewees in terms of relations to their mother tongue. Zozan, Mizgin, Meryem and Nazmiye mention the difficulties they encounter for not being able to speak in Kurdish publicly. They want to speak in their mother-tongue in order to have a better life in Aydınli. They all encounter problems since they cannot express themselves clearly in Turkish. They draw clear-cut boundaries between Turkish and Kurdish languages. For them, Kurdish language is their mother tongue, but they need Turkish in order to survive in Aydınli. Their narratives show the symbolic power of the Turkish language. They also point at the relations between Kurdish and Turkish languages and illustrate the hierarchy. Besides, Meryem defines her Kurdish as "speaking Kurdish in Turkish". For Mizgin, she speaks *çakma kürtçe*. Due to the domination of Turkish, Mizgin and Meryem are distanced from their mother tongue. They reckon the possible dangers for speaking Kurdish in public. They also perceive their existence to be under constant threat since others can perceive them as PKK terrorists for speaking Kurdish. Their narratives show the dynamics of surveillance in society through language.

I discussed the significance of Çiğdem and Zehra's narratives in the fifth section. I decided to analyze them separately. It is a discussion of language, yet in a different aspect. In their narratives, they focus on their relations to Turkish language with respect to education. Çiğdem's daughter Roza continues her education in state

school. She hears *Andımız* every morning. In response to Roza's anxious questions regarding her identity, Çiğdem tells her not to reveal her Kurdishness at school. Otherwise she could face problems. For Çiğdem, education is the key for a better life for her daughter. Zehra has a very interesting story of her childhood. Since she was the best Turkish-speaking pupil in the classroom at hometown, she was assigned by her teacher to spy on Kurdish pupils. Zehra and Çiğdem are also distanced from their mother tongue due to the domination of Turkish in Aydınlı. However, the reasons are different. Çiğdem listens to songs with Turkish lyrics. She also can't speak Kurdish properly. Though similar to Meryem, Mizgin, Zozan and Nazmiye, she defines Kurdish as her mother tongue. She has multiple identities as a Kurdish woman worker. Yet the notion of "class" matters more to her. Therefore she doesn't emphasize her Kurdishness as much as she emphasizes her class belonging. It effects the way in which she develops relations with the Turkish language. Zehra however experienced a major transformation after her introduction to ROJ TV. Before that, she was doing assignments with her husband about speaking Kurdish at home. Her meeting with ROJ TV transformed her, enabled to master her childhood trauma of spying. Zehra's narrative shows that education doesn't necessarily guarantee a better life. Zehra was the most educated among other Kurdish children. But she was traumatized.

In the sixth section, I discussed the meanings of being a Kurdish woman. My interviewees responded in various ways. For Şükran, the "real" Kurdish women live in Kurdistan. They face with real difficulties of poverty. They work on the soil. Her narrative suggests that Şükran sees industrial labor as a detachment from essential Kurdish identity. She points at a particular hierarchy. For her, the real Kurdish women suffer more from poverty. She maintains an ethnicity-based interpretation, while Mizgin criticizes patriarchy in Kurdish community. For her, the Kurdish women carry the "hidden treasure" within themselves. However it is repressed by Kurdish men. She dreams the hometown in a distinct manner. Her aim is to return one day as a teacher to emancipate Kurdish women from patriarchal subordination. Zozan also reckons the patriarchal dynamics inherent in women's lives. She was able to work only when her husband allowed her. She considers this as a transformation of Kurdish men in Aydınlı. Çiğdem manifests a deterritorialized identity, saying that she belongs nowhere. She maintains the following formula: "I live wherever I labor to survive." She sees herself as an exile without a motherland. Their perceptions of Kurdish

women bring along the issue of poverty. Their narratives show that Kurdish women are impoverished due to the intersecting dynamics of class, gender and ethnicity.

In the last section, I focused on the active agencies of my interviewees. Zehra was politically active in BDP and she worked as the representative of the party in Aydınlı. Her aim is to work on women's issues. However, she cannot pursue her political career further due to her struggle with poverty. But she maintains her hopes for the future. Mizgin and Şükran are not engaged to political activities directly. But they sound their opinions for a better society. Şükran dreams the independent Kurdistan. Her narrative implies that only then Kurdish women's poverty can end. Mizgin points at the ongoing war between the state and PKK. For her, the war is of no use. Poverty remains. My interviewees' engagements to politics are related to the poverty they struggle with, although in different ways.

In this chapter, I concentrated on my interviewees' perceptions of subordination on the basis of their ethnicity. Their narratives show that ethnicity should not be regarded as a separate agent of subordination. My interviewees' narratives on ethnic subordination also contain references to class-based and gendered forms of subordination. I argue that these multiple agents work together to reproduce the marginalization of my interviewees and social inequality. Sen (1985, 1992) argues that poverty is the lack of "capabilities" to have the rights and facilities that the social welfare presents. He shows that poverty is not a "state" but a "process". In this chapter, I aimed to follow Sen's "capability approach" in analyzing my interviewees' experiences. My interviewees cannot speak Kurdish in public due to possible threats they might encounter. Their narratives show that it makes life harder for them in Aydınlı since they have problems in expressing themselves to the doctors, acquire the necessary food from markets and build relations with other people. I argue that they have a lack of capabilities to access welfare and rights due to their ethnic belonging. Their narratives also show how gender-based subordination prevents them to enjoy rights and welfare such as education, employment and socialization in the urban setting. I argue that patriarchy in Kurdish community is another agent, which make my interviewees incapable of enjoying rights. Therefore, women end up in poverty. The lack of capabilities points at the multiple agents leading to women's subordination such as ethnicity, class and gender.

CHAPTER IV

Towards a Feminist Intersectional Approach on Labor and Poverty

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I will focus on my interviewees' narrations of housework and factory. My aim in this chapter is to make visible the multiple agents leading to women's subordination. The first section is reserved for a discussion of housework. In the first sub-section, I provide an introduction for this discussion. In the second sub section, I will discuss the theoretical framework on housework by referring to Glazer-Malbin's analysis. The third sub section is reserved to discuss how my interviewees are excluded from public sphere and naturally perceived as house-workers. My aim in this sub section is to point at the dynamics of patriarchy and capitalism, which subordinate my interviewees.

In the fourth sub section, I will make a brief overview on Nancy Fraser, Gulnur Savran and Delphy's analysis regarding housework. In this section, following Fraser, I aim to show the need for a feminist approach in criticizing capitalism's relations to women through housework activities. Delphy points at patriarchal subordination in leading to women's oppression in the house. In the fifth sub section, I aim to contribute to Delphy's approach with a class and ethnicity-conscious analysis since women have distinct experiences of subordination.

The third section is reserved for my interviewees' narrations on factory. In the first sub section, I discuss the visibility of multiple agents leading to my interviewees' subordination, at the intersections of class, gender and ethnicity. In the second sub section, I open up a discussion on the significance of being Alevi in the factory. In this section, I aim to introduce another agent leading to my interviewees' subordination regarding their cultural and religious belonging. I will show that it also intersects with gender and class.

In the fourth section, I will discuss my interviewees' responses to my question: "In your opinion, what is poverty?" In this section, I will analyze their different responses. Their narratives show the conditions of poverty-in-turn. In the concluding section, I aim to suggest a feminist approach to understanding their perceptions of poverty. I will suggest the term poverty-on-the-edge as a possible conceptual tool, and emphasize the intersecting, multiple agents leading to my interviewees' subordination.

4.2. Housework

4.2.1. Introduction

“The laboring of women never ends”, said Çiğdem to me, when I asked her about the time she spent on laboring activities. She continued:

“I wake up at 7 in the morning for work, prepare breakfast and Roza for her school, I come back home in the evening, do the housework, prepare dinner, do all other kinds of household stuff and then the day ends, without me being able to relax for a single moment.”

For Çiğdem, “motherhood is the hardest of all jobs.” She is a worker in a factory and a mother at the same time. Her narrative shows that she is busy with laboring the whole day. Çiğdem emphasizes that the amount of labor she puts at the household is not reciprocal:

“You work in a factory and you get paid for it. But the housework is different, you are not even paid! But you should! Someone should pay you for all the work that you do while you’re home.”

Her narrative shows that it even gets harder for her during weekends since she has to do housework. She needs to have a break from the tiring work at the factory but she can’t. “It is as if it is all my duty, a woman’s duty to look after children, to do the cleaning, to wash the dishes, to prepare food in the household” she says. Her narrative draws attention to the exploitation of women’s labor in the household. “My husband tries to help me a lot, but the whole job is still mine” she says, and complains, “even the people I meet who declare themselves possessing advanced and intellectual world-views do not question this unhealthy relation, why do women have to labor all day for nothing?”⁹⁷

⁹⁷ Çiğdem: “Bir etkinliğe gidip geliyorsan, eşin sosyalist bile olsa bilinçli bile olsa tepki gösteriyor çünkü o senin cinsine bakıyor. Ya işte gerek yoktu gitmeseydiniz, gittin, niye bu saatte geldin, çocuğu niye bıraktın. Çocuk bakmak benim işimmiş gibi, yemek yapmak benim işimmiş gibi. Bunu ileriler de yapıyor. Benim tanıdığım çevrede ilerici olan bir çok insandan gördüm ben bunu. Diyorum heralde biz kadınlar olarak daha çoğalmadık, başka bir şey mi olması gerekiyor. Eşlerimiz bile bunu düşünüyor. Öyle bir noktaya geliyor ki bazen babama bile, babam geniş bakan, aydın. Babam şey diyor işte, baba şuraya gideceğim diyorum. Kızım gitme diyor bazen. Sözde beni çok sever nasıl seviyorsa onu da bilmiyorum. Aramız da çok iyi babamla. Biraz da kadın sayısının çoğalması gerekiyor.

Kesinlikle kadınların mesaisi bitmiyor. Ben hep onu düşünüyorum. Sabah düşün, yedi de kalkıyorum evde yapılacak iş varsa altı buçukta kalkıyorum. İşe gidiyorum eve geliyorum, yemektir vesairedir, hani bir de eşin yardımcı olmuyorsa. Eşim zamanı olduğunda yardımcı

In the previous chapters, I have already tried to show the patriarchal nature of the neighborhood setting. Çiğdem's narrative aptly interrogated the patriarchal nature of the domestic space, focusing on the non-reciprocal aspect of women's labor at home. Çiğdem was the first person I interviewed in my research. Her narrative inspired me to interrogate the phenomenon of housework with other interviewees as well. My interview with Şükran was conducted as she was busy preparing food. Housework is not unique to unemployed women. Women who are employed in nearby industries are not also immune to household responsibilities such as cleaning, feeding, child-caring and husband-caring. The main challenge that I came across was to distinguish two seemingly similar kinds of "housework" that the word connotes: Was it the work done in the house such as cleaning and child caring, or the work done in the house such as manual craftwork and sold in the market? Before I was exposed to Çiğdem's experiences, I was initially thinking of focusing on the latter. Çiğdem highlighted Yet, I came to recognize the fact that the former, non-reciprocal caring and cleaning duties of women is as important in my interviewees' subordination. I realized that housework was one of the multiple agents, which led to women's subordination. It was initially invisible to me, and my aim in the first section is to make it visible.

4.2.2. Theoretical Background on Housework

In her study on "housework", Glazer-Malbin (1976) shows that feminist scholarship had not been able to comprehend the significance of housework activities of women other than home-based paid labor. She argues that by "housework" she particularly suggests not paid-labor, but "the nitty-gritty of cleaning, scrubbing, grocery shopping, clothing care – the work which has been glorified as the creative responsibility of the good woman or harshly and simply judged as 'shitwork.'" (905). She shows that the fact that housework was traditionally seen as women's work prevented men and even feminists to investigate the subordinating dynamics of housework. Besides, she also notices that the studies about the housework of women had begun from the early 20th century yet they were to "rationalize" this form of

oluyor hakkını yememek lazım ama ondan sonra şey oluyor düşün mesai kaçta bitmiş oluyor çoğu zaman on iki, o saatte yatıyorsun hiç dinlenmeden. Evde iş var. Şimdi bir de Roza da var. Kızıma da zaman ayırmam gerekiyor. Artık o kadar yoruluyorum ki fabrikadaki mesai aslında devam ediyor orada ücret alıyorsun da evde ücret de yok. Garip bir durum kadınlara bir şey vermek lazım ev içi emeği için. Mesaisi bitmiyor kadınların."

laboring and “to prepare women better to carry out their responsibilities” (906). For her, none of them were able to undertake a critical analysis of such a rationalization. Referring to this particular traditional perception of women as “naturally” house workers, Glazer-Malbin cites Ann Oakley’s work, to show the reasons for the invisibility of women’s subordination in the household:

“(1) women belong in the family, while men belong "at work"; (2) therefore men work, while women do not work; (3) therefore housework is not a form of work. ... (4) monetary and social rights belong to those who work-to those who are economically productive; (5) women do not work but are parasitic; (6) therefore women are not entitled to the same social and economic rights as men” (906).

Glazer-Malbin argues that such invisibility is legitimized and rationalized with the responses cited above. Her analysis shows that this eventually provides a further rationale for women’s second class status compared to men both in public and private domains.

Glazer-Malbin’s work was conducted in the late 70’s. Since then, there have been various academic inquiries on housework by feminists. Glazer-Malbin’s work is important since she introduces a Marxist analysis on women’s unpaid labor in the household, which I will discuss further below. 1970’s witnessed the globally handled transformation from state centric capitalism to neo-liberalism. It was a new economic approach, highlighting liberalized trade and deregulated market. The system was consolidated during 80’s by the countries, which managed to structurally adjust their economies for such a global model. Nancy Fraser shows that within this period women got more and more employed in numbers given the need for workforce in liberalized and de-regularized markets globally (2000). Glazer-Malbin’s analysis on housework has a shortcoming, since it merely focuses on unemployed women who have not yet been integrated to the neoliberal economy and who solely labor in the household. Nevertheless, her elaboration of women’s work in the household as “labor” is crucial. Women’s integration to the market as wage-earners did not prevent them to quit their housework labor. It didn’t end the perceived, rationalized responsibilities of women at the household. Çiğdem’s narrative also shows, the amount of labor was doubled. Even though women begin to work and become wage-owners, their responsibilities in the households persist. Gülnur Savran also argues the doubling of women’s labor in neo-liberalism (2004:22). Glazer-Malbin, Savran and

Fraser's analysis point at the crucial link between capitalism and patriarchy in women's subordination.

Glazer-Malbin refers to Della Costa, who considers housework as "productive labor" (1976: 916). She shows that women doing housework with child-caring, preparing her husband for work the next day, implies some kind of a productivity of women's labor. I think that the problem in situating women's labor as merely productive disregards the power asymmetries between men and women in the household. Putting women's household labor as "productive labor" inevitably necessitates the positioning of men as "wage-earners" which altogether constitutes the two ends of a capitalist formula: Women at home doing labor and men outside doing labor.

Glazer-Malbin argues that working-class men, who are themselves oppressed by capitalism, "maintain an illusion of power and that this deflects these men from an awareness of their powerlessness outside of sex relations." (1976:918). Therefore, she argues that such an illusion of power on behalf of men contributes to women's subordination in the household even in forms of physical forms of violence. Glazer-Malbin also refers to Marxist theory. She shows that Marxists oppose to the idea that women's household labor is productive labor basically because of the theory of capitalism. From the Marxist point of view, an activity can only be called "productive" to the extent that it produces "surplus value." For Glazer-Malbin, women's household activities do not include such kind of a surplus value. The items that they deal with and the activities that they engage in, have "use-values" rather than "exchange values", which is their value in the market that eventually creates the surplus. Malbin therefore shows that, in Marxist imagination since one cannot mention "surplus" in housework, it is at the same time needless to describe the whole picture as "exploitation." (1976: 918).

In other words, due to the fact that women's labor in the household does not acquire the status of a "commodity." Women are not "exploited" with respect to the sense that Marxist theory of labor conveys. Therefore, Glazer-Malbin exchanges the word "exploitation" with the word "oppression" in order to situate women's subordination in the household. For her, rather than being exploited, women are oppressed. She shows the reasons of oppression as follows:

“By her own economic dependency and that of her children on her husband, whose health and well-being as well as goodwill are crucial; her own economic situation depends on her husband being able to perform his job each day.” (919)

For Malbin, although the condition of women fall away from the trajectory of Marxist theory of labor, it clearly fits into the definition of another Marxist interpretation of capitalism, that is, “alienation”: “She performs dull, repetitive work in the home” Malbin remarks. And what’s more, she is also isolated from her species-being, that is, other women like herself because of her home duties. The expression of “species-being” is not only extended to a gendered meaning but further acquires a class-based connotation. Malbin argues that “upper-middle-class women with access to convenience foods and substitute labor may have some difficulty understanding” the low class women, which constitutes the alienation (1976: 919). Similarly, Bora refers to Simone De Beauvoir, who distinguishes the ways in which “low-class women” and “upper-class women” handle housework. For her, the latter can still enjoy some privileges of life while the former is totally deprived of any enjoyment (Bora 2005:62).

4.2.3. “Why do not women participate in social life? The answer is right there in the house”

In our interview, Çiğdem told me the following: “In the factories they employ lots of women, I can say that they employ women more than men in numbers.” Çiğdem further notices that, “but when the work ends, or if they have to reduce the number of workers, they immediately fire women and the men remain.” “Why” I asked, “why is there such a tendency and discrimination against women?” Çiğdem replied: “Because they say “men are the *reis*⁹⁸ of the household and it is as if they need to earn money, women need not. This is the distinction.” Çiğdem’s narrative links the dynamics of factory and housework. It shows that the patriarchal subordination is reproduced in the factory, which legitimizes women’s non-reciprocal housework labor. Çiğdem wanted me to visit her at her factory to see their working conditions, but I couldn’t find the chance. She told me about the setting as follows:

⁹⁸ En. The leader, the head. The word connotes the traditional gender role of men in the household. They need to earn money and feed the family. They are responsible for the material/economic wealth of the family, whereas women are responsible for housework and childcaring.

“I wish you came to see us, we do the same amount of work as men, we work side by side with men, we all carry 30 kilograms of products regardless of us being women. You work on the same machine, but they fire us, not men. March 8 means that we are equal to men. Our labor is equal. We should have the same rights as men. They all employ women workers, but when the job is done, they fire them first. Some women also accept this condition. They say ‘ok, they fire us, let my husband work.’ The owners employ men first, rather than women. It is the same in the house and in the factory.”

Çiğdem is challenging the perception that hard work such as factory work is men’s job. Her narrative focuses on the equal amount of labor women put on factory job. It implies that women should not be primarily perceived as house-workers. Since the job-givers (who were men as Çiğdem remarks) did not conceive women as the *reis* of the family, women were more easily fired. Çiğdem is currently unemployed for that reason. Çiğdem’s narrative shows that the job-givers assume that women’s unemployment wouldn’t be such a tragedy, compared to the unemployment of men, who is supposed to be the *reis* of the family. Çiğdem is now waiting for the factory owners to employ her again. Hence, her narrative shows that women are perceived as substitute labor, who are employed when needed, and fired due to patriarchal subordination.⁹⁹

Çiğdem’s narrative shows that women’s labor at factory and housework are related to one another. Meryem was another of my interviewees to point at such concomitance: “I would like to work and earn money but then the question arises;

⁹⁹ Çiğdem: “Sekiz Mart kadınların kendi mücadelesi, eşit iş eşit ücretin olduğu bir faaliyet. Diğer erkek işçilerle eşit olduklarını, biz de onlarla eşitiz. Sekiz Mart denilince bende de bir erkekle eşitim. Onlarla eşit işi yapıyorum eşit ücreti almam lazım eşit muameleyi görmem lazım. Kadın olarak eşitsizlik yaşıyoruz cinsimizden kaynaklı ama işte çalışıyorsak, emek eksenli olması lazım. işçi olarak erkeklerle eşit haklara sahip olabilmeyiz. Kadınların genelde sanayide şöyle de oluyor. Sezon çalışıyor. Sezon derken yazın çalışıyorlar, kışın iş bitince hemen kadınları çıkarıyorlar erkekleri çıkarmıyorlar, çünkü neden, kadın ikinci sanki, kadın ikinci bir iş yapıyor esas işi değil. O mantık var hala. Karı koca çalışıyorsa demiyorlarki biz erkeği çıkaralım, o reis hani, evin reisi odur diyorlar. Bunları da biz tartışıyorduk bazen. Kadınlar da artık öyle bir olmuş ki şey diyorlardı, evet o çalışsın napalım biz kadınız.

Kadın ağırlıklı işçi alıyorlar sanayide bu hala var, kadın işçi çok alıyorlar, sonra iş bitince kadınları çıkarıyorlar erkekler kalıyor. Evin reisidir evi geçindiren kadın değildir yani. Böyle bir ayrışma da yaşanıyor. Kadın sayısı önceden çok daha fazlaydı şimdi azaldı, bundan kaynaklı oldu bu. Önce kadınlar. Diyelim ki şöyle bir şey aslında ben senin görmeni de istiyordum, sana şöyle göstermek istiyordum, senin için de iyi olurdu, bakardın tanırdın. Şimdi makineler var orada erkek çalışıyor, burada kadın yani aynı işi yapıyorsun. Güç olarak, iş olarak aynı şeyi çıkarıyorsun. Aynı makinede çalışıyorsun ama kadını çıkarıyor erkeği çıkarmıyor. Önce de erkeği ise alıyor. Mesela benim çalıştığım yer şu an başlamış bir tane kadın varmış. Erkekler çalışıyor ondan sonra biz kadınlar, ondan sonra çağırıyorlar. Hep ikinci. Hep o böyle bir sistem yani evde de öyle fabrika da öyle.”

‘Who will look after the children?’” Meryem doesn’t possess the sufficient economic means to provide a nanny for her child. She has to do the housework, which is her priority. Therefore, she cannot labor in industry. Meryem remarks that she would like to work for two reasons: “When I work, I could develop myself and I would also have the chance to bring more income for the household.” She says the following:

“I am used to working, I used to earn money and contribute to my family before I got pregnant. Now it is very boring to stay at home the whole day. I would like to go back to work as soon as possible but I can’t. Who will look after the baby?”

In the house Meryem spends all her time with baby-caring, food preparing and cleaning but she is looking into the future: “My aunt will come soon to help me look after the baby and I would like to go back to working when she comes, hopefully.” The arrival of the aunt is a hopeful event for Meryem. The very fact that it is her aunt, another woman who will be assigned for “baby caring” instead of Meryem once again exposes the dynamics of patriarchy and capitalism. Meryem can only labor so long as another woman can do the housework in exchange. Çiğdem and Meryem’s narratives show that neo-liberalism does not necessarily provide laboring opportunities for women. They show that it is patriarchy and the capitalists’ need for labor, which are the decisive factors in women’s employment.

Meryem points at the benefits of working as follows:

“I’m so used to work, and I love working because for example I earn money by myself and I can also spend it for myself. When I was engaged, and was supposed to prepare a *çeyiz*¹⁰⁰ for my marriage, I purchased everything by myself.”¹⁰¹

Her narrative shows that Meryem’s factory labor enabled her to cover her marriage expenses. She refers to the word “*çeyiz*”, which is a practice employed by patriarchy to utilize women “efficiently” for a heterosexual marriage since the early

¹⁰⁰ En. marriage portion. The word connotes a patriarchal ritual. Women are obliged to get prepared for their future marriage since childhood. The *ceyiz* is prepared for years until the woman gets married.

¹⁰¹ Meryem: “Çalışmak istiyorum dediğim zaman çocuğa kim bakacak düşüncesi çıkıyor ortaya. Ondan dolayı sorun çıkıyor ama dediğim gibi, teyzem geldiği zaman o zamana kadar birazcık daha tutarım kendimi, çocuk büyür diye düşünüyorum. Yani kısmetse. Hem eve imkan olur hem kendimi geliştirmiş olurum. Sürekli evde kalmak gerçekten çok zor. Kadınlar hani der bazen akşama kadar şunu yapıyorum bunu yapıyorum, öyle bir şey yok. Evde ugrasacağınız en fazla bir iki saat ondan sonra boş geçiyor.

Ben işte bebek var onunla ilgileniyorum, el işleri odur budur. Sürekli aynı şeyleri yap ne bileyim insan sıkılıyor. Bir de çalışan insan için gel de eve kapan çok çok zor oluyor. Ondan dolayı hem eve katkım olur hem kendimi geliştirmiş olurum. Evdeyken gelin olacağım belliydi, sonuçta kızım, ama *çeyiz* olayını felan düşünmedim şunu alayım bu eksikim var düşünmedim, hattta en son nişanlandıktan sonra bütün *ceyizlerimi* kendim aldım ödedim.”

ages. Her narrative shows that neo-liberalism provides Meryem with employment opportunities. It enables a particular economic freedom for her. In return, the wealth that Meryem accumulated is exchanged with *çeyiz*. Her wealth is acquired and instrumentalized by patriarchy. In her marriage, Meryem got pregnant. She had to leave her job because she had to care for her baby and she was not allowed to work in the factory as a pregnant woman. Her narrative shows that neo-liberalism and patriarchy together subordinate her. Eventually, she became a house-worker, which was considered as her “natural” duty. She currently waits for her aunt to take over this “natural” duty so that she can go back to work.

Şükran was also feeling the pressures between being a house-worker and wage-earner: “I was dreaming of working and earning money when I got married” she said, “but I couldn’t, I was living with my aunt and there was no unmarried, single girl at the household other than me.” Şükran couldn’t find the opportunity for work in Aydınlı because her aunt was sick. She was the only “girl” to look after her: “There were three men in the house and I was also doing the housework for them.” Şükran’s duty was not only to look after her aunt but also to do the cleaning, feeding and caring of three men in the household. “They would allow me to work I think, I don’t think that they would not allow me to work if there was *uygun ortam* (suitable conditions)” said Şükran. Şükran’s narrative suggests that in order for women to become a wage-earner, there should be “suitable conditions.” It shows that, the term “suitable conditions” is very abstract. It is next to impossible because only when there were no men without wives to care and an old aunt and children to look after, a woman can enjoy employment opportunities. Indeed the very vagueness of “suitable conditions” exposes the power relations reproduced by patriarchy and capitalism concurrently. Savran argues that women’s unpaid labor in the household is not even a discussion in the household as long as it is considered as an act of “love” and “caring” of the woman (2004:19).

In Şükran’s statement of “suitable conditions,” there is another dynamic of power relations. Her narrative shows that only the men and the elders of the family have the right to authorize Şükran’s labor. They can allow her promotion from a house-worker to a wage-earner. Şükran remarks that, “I didn’t experience any hard

times because, *beyim*¹⁰² *her zaman elime harçlığını verirdi* (he was always supplying me with pocket money). Her narrative refers to a patriarchal vocabulary such as “*beyim*”. It is equivalent of the Turkish word “husband” but which further includes the connotation of “my superior”. Her *bey* supplies Şükran with sufficient money is during her house working. Şükran currently isn’t employed in a regular work and she does crafts in the house. “My husband helps me a lot” she says, “he even helps me with the works that I craft in the house during the evenings.” When I asked Şükran what it means to be a woman, she responded as follows: “*Eviyle ilgilenmek, eşiyle ilgilenmek*” (To look after the household and care for your husband).¹⁰³ Şükran was collecting money by domestic labor so that she and her husband could afford to purchase a house. Her narrative points at the concomitance of domestic labor and housework. Her domestic labor enabled her to earn her own money. She gains a particular autonomy in the sense that she is not economically dependent on her husband. She contributes to the family budget without doubling her labor like Çiğdem. Besides, she also continues her life without giving up her responsibilities as a house-worker. Şükran’s husband still receives her house work services. Besides, Şükran also contributes to the market relations with her domestic labor. Her domestic labor is utilized by patriarchy and capitalism concurrently.

Çiğdem, Meryem and Şükran’s narratives point at the patriarchal perception, which considers women as “naturally” house-workers. Also as de Beauvoir shows, my interviewees have a class disadvantage. They cannot afford to employ others to do the housework for them. Therefore, they cannot enjoy the privileges of life. In our interview, Çiğdem shared with me the following question:

“I wonder sometimes and ask to myself, why do not women participate in social life? The answer is right there at home, you are dealing with so much housework that there is no way you can further go into public.”

¹⁰² En. my husband. The word connotes the patriarchal dynamics. It refers to the husband, but it also refers to a men who is superior.

¹⁰³ Şükran: “Ya evlenince ben çalışmayı istiyordum. Teyzemin evde bekar kızı yoktu. Görümcem okuyordu, liseye giriyordu. Teyzem rahatsız olduğu için çalışma imkânım olmadı. Bir tane kızı vardı on bir yaşındaydı o zaman okula gidiyordu. Bir ben kalmıştım, üç tane erkek bende işte evle uğraştım. İzin verirlerdi, birşey demiyorlardı da o ortamda çalışılmazdı. Teyzem rahatsız olduğu için eve kimse bakamazdı. Tabi onlar da bırakıyordu da çalışma demiyorlardı, ortam müsait olsaydı bana izin verirlerdir git çalış diye. Yani elimde para olmuyordu. işte o vardı ama beyim beni parasız bırakmıyordu. O konuda ben rahattım, o konuda zorluk çekmedim beyim sayesinde her zaman elime harçlığını verirdi.”

Savran shows that it is this very phenomenon of the housework which imprisons women into the home and prevents them from going into the public, while contrarily men become enabled (by women's household labor) to participate in the public sphere. As Meryem's expectation of her aunt to take over the housework shows, "some women can participate into the public activities of laboring *like men* only to the extent that other women become responsible for the housework." (27) Savran shows that women can participate into the public activities *like men*, rather than *like women*. As discussed before, Glazer-Malbin problematizes the traditional clear-cut boundaries between the "social" men and the "domestic" women. This understanding, until recently, was not uncommon in the social sciences, either. Sigmund Freud, who conceptualized the basis of civilization through psychoanalysis, argued that men were the "civilization founders." He showed that men withdrew their libidinal energy to channel it towards founding civilization, and that women were merely responsible with household affairs especially with child-caring while men were out in the public. Freud's account shows that psychoanalysis legitimized the stereotypes of the "social man" and the "domestic woman." Women were houseworkers as well as targets of desire, whose bodies hosted the remaining libidinal energies of men.

Çiğdem, Meryem and Şükran's narratives show that women struggle to participate in public activities through laboring. Instead of legitimizing this phenomenon with reference to psychoanalysis, one can analyze it as a consequence of intersecting power dynamics that result in women's subordination. Çiğdem says that she does the equal amount of work as men in factory, but nevertheless she is fired. Meryem gets pregnant, and it automatically excludes her from public activities. Şükran's domestic labor is utilized by patriarchy and capitalism. She continues to service men and contribute to the market simultaneously without going into public. My interviewees struggle with particular forms of oppression and alienation. It is also related to the ways in which the neighborhood is marginalized. Housework is one of the multiple agents leading to women's subordination in Aydınlı.

My interviewees are confined to their private spaces as their labor is doubled. As I discussed in the previous chapter, Zehra told me that she began to know about women of the neighborhood better after her political activism. Beforehand, she assumed that she already knew everybody and their problems. Her narrative shows her alienation. In the second chapter, Çiğdem mentioned the lack of cafes and parks

for women to socialize. The lack of children parks prevents Meryem to go out with her child. She has to take care for her baby at home. Şükran does domestic labor and at the same time provides services to her husband and children. The narratives of my interviewees show their alienation and oppression in terms of housework. My interviewees' narratives regarding their marginalization on the basis of their identity and languages as analyzed in the previous chapter also enhances the oppressions. I argue that the oppression and alienation that the housework brings along points at the multiple agents leading to women's subordination. They enhance my interviewees' condition as urban outcasts in Aydınlı.

4.2.4. Feminism and Housework: Going Beyond the “Uncanny Double”

Nancy Fraser analyzes the relation between second wave feminism and capitalism in a historical manner (2009). She summarizes two different epochs that second wave feminism existed: During state organized capitalism until the 80's and during neo-liberalism of the post-80's. Fraser shows that the ideals of second wave feminism have achieved an enormous success during the reigns of neo-liberalism. Fraser interrogates whether second wave feminism “has unwittingly supplied a key ingredient of what Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello call ‘the spirit of capitalism’” (98). For her, the cooperation of second wave feminism with capitalism is a “disturbing possibility” (99). Fraser shows that the second wave feminists contravening the subordination of women under state organized capitalism were focusing on three interpenetrating forms of subordination: (Mal)distribution, (mis)recognition and (mis)representation (104). Further they were in search for an efficient criticism of “integrated economy, culture and politics” in a systematic account of women's subordination in state organized capitalism (105). She mentions that second wave feminists anticipated a participatory democratic state, which empowered its citizens with strong institutions. For second wave feminists, these institutions would promote, express and provide gender justice. Fraser notices that feminists did not engage in a critical interrogation of “the state” itself (105).

Fraser argues that with the transition from state organized capitalism to neo-liberalism, second wave feminism enjoyed popularity: “What had begun as a radical countercultural movement was now en route to becoming a broad based mass social phenomenon.” (107) Fraser shows that throughout this transition of global economical relations, second wave feminism turned its attention “from redistribution to

recognition". She argues that this twist transformed second wave feminism into a "variant of identity politics (108). Hence for Fraser, what was once a reaction against economism devolved into a culturalist perspective (108). For Fraser, this was an unfortunate transformation. She argues that feminists turned their attention from redistribution to recognition in a period which required "redoubled attention to the critique of political economy" (109) which altogether pointed out feminism's "dangerous liaison" with neoliberalism (109). Fraser mentions that the situation that enabled women to get employed more easily under neoliberal conditions was positively welcomed by women of all social and economical classes. She notices that when neo-liberalisms' oppressing results were begun to be felt by women, bureaucratic state institutions handled micro-level projects to fight poverty. Fraser argues that this attempt signified the abandonment of "macro structural efforts" to overcome poverty and achieve social and economical justice. Eventually for Fraser, the absence of feminist criticism of the state became a major challenge. The very strong bureaucratic institutions, which were called for by the second wave feminists in order to maintain a vehicle for citizen empowerment and social justice, came to legitimize "marketization" and state retrenchment (112).

Throughout this striking coincidence of neo-liberalism and second wave feminism, Fraser also reckons that women human rights activists focused mainly on "issues of violence and reproduction" as opposed to poverty (112-113). Fraser notices that neo-liberalism would prefer the campaigns of recognition over redistribution since "it builds a new regime of accumulation on the cornerstone of women's waged labor" (113). For Fraser, neo-liberalism is second wave feminists' "uncanny double" (114). Fraser suggests a way out of this problem. She emphasizes the crucial point at which feminism and neoliberalism "diverge". She exemplifies a paradigm case, which Susan Okin characterized as "a cycle of socially caused and distinctly asymmetric vulnerability by marriage" in which "women's traditional responsibility for child-rearing helps shape labor markets that disadvantage women." Such a disadvantage arising from housework, suggests Fraser, results in unequal power in the marketplace, which in turn "reinforces, and exacerbates unequal power in the family." Fraser considers such market-mediated process of subordination as "the very lifeblood of neoliberal capitalism". Today it should be the major focus of feminist critique, "as we seek to distinguish ourselves from, and to avoid resignification by, neo-liberalism" (115).

Çiğdem, Meryem and Şükran's narratives illustrate Fraser's views well. They show that the employment of women by the opportunities of neo-liberalism should not be celebrated. Their narratives make visible the multiple agents leading to women's subordination. Housework exposes the unequal power relations in their families. Their narratives point at the mechanisms where feminism and neo-liberalism diverge. My interview with Zehra also illustrates Fraser's insights. Zehra distinguishes other men from her husband when she says, "he helps me a lot with housework, does every work in the house without any objection." Zehra told me about his dialogue with one of her neighbors to explain what distinguishes her husband:

"'Are you working?' she asked me. 'Yes' I said, then she replied: 'Do not work, this is the only thing I can advice you. Your husband shouldn't get used to you working and earning money all the time, stay at home.'"

Zehra was surprised to hear this from another woman, who further provided the rationale for her advice:

"'When we came here from the Black Sea region years ago, I told my husband that I want to work. He didn't accept it and told me to look after children and stay at home. But I insisted and told that I can contribute to the family budget this way. When I went to work for the first day and came back home, my husband beat me and said, 'how can you leave the children and go for work!' Despite his attempts I continued to work, now he sits at home, I'm the only one working in the family, it is really hard.'"¹⁰⁴

Zehra was surprised to hear this striking experience from her neighbor and concluded in the following way: "Men get lazy when women work. When women begin to carry the difficulties of life with her, men even make it harder and harder for us." Zehra's neighbor is Turkish who migrated from the Black Sea region to Aydın. For me, it was interesting to observe the dynamics of another patriarchal setting. Zehra's narrative regarding her neighbor illustrates the multiple agents leading to

¹⁰⁴ Zehra: "Mesela ev işinde aslında benim eşim bana çok yardımcı olur, çevremde gördüğüm en yardımcı erkeklerden biridir. Evin her işini yapar su işi yapmam bu bana ait demez. Yeni evlendiminde bir gün işte ise giderken bir kadınla tanıştım, Karadenizli bi kadın. Çalışıyor musun kızım, demişti, evet demiştim çalışıyorum. Ama demişti, kızım ya alistirmayin kocalarinizi oturun evinizde demişti. Yirmi kusur yıl önce Karadenizden çıkıp geldiğimizde dedi, kocam sakın çalışmayacaksın evinde oturacaksın dedi bana. Bende kocam tek başına çalışıyor üç tane çocuğumuz var diye eve katkı olsun istedim dedi. Ben de ilk gittiğimde kocam eve geldiğinde beni dövdü, kadın sen nasıl çocukları bırakır ise gidersin diye, ama demiş kadın sen çok yorulma aile butcemize katkıda bulunuyorum. İkinci kez üçüncü kez günün birinde ben çalıştım kocam evde oturuyor. Biz kadınlar yükü sırtımıza aldığımız müddetçe biz yüklendikçe erkekler daha çok sırtımıza yük verirler."

women's subordination. Her narrative illustrates Fraser's analysis of the unequal power relations in the family. When her neighbor does housework and doesn't work in waged-labor, she is oppressed as her husband accumulates capital and maintains power. On the other hand, whenever the woman begins to work as waged-laborer, the husband seizes the capital that she accumulates. She continues doing housework as well. The market, as Fraser shows, becomes a disadvantage for her. Her labor is doubled, yet she now has the responsibility both for the patriarch and for neoliberal capitalism.

Savran analyzes the role of patriarchy in women's subordination in the household. She provides a useful analysis, which would fit well into the perspective that Fraser pointed at the divergence of feminist critique and neoliberal capitalism. As I already mentioned above, Savran draws attention to the "doubling of labor" (2004:23) when women become wage-earners next to their housework. In such doubling of labor, Savran strongly disagrees that men begin to share housework responsibilities when women's labor are doubled: "The fact that women are more and more employed today doesn't come to mean that they come to share their housework responsibilities with men (22). Eventually, although women are employed as wage earners outside the household, the very phenomenon of the doubling of labor persists. This later becomes the source of women's subordination in the household since it exposes the patriarchal dynamics and the power asymmetries arising from it.

With her analysis, Savran stays critical to pose women's work at the household as productive labor. But she challenges this in a different way than Malbin. Instead of highlighting the ways in which capitalism determines value in women's labor, Savran refers to Delphy in her analysis of women's subordination in the household. She aims to explain such dynamics through the mechanisms of patriarchy rather than capitalism itself. Therefore she proceeds from the concept of patriarchy. Savran shows that the patriarchal dynamics are not the direct cause of capitalist mechanisms. Yet, for her, the way in which patriarchy maintains an autonomous system of labor and production exploitation in the household, is later appropriated by the material/economic intentions of capitalism (2004:39).

Savran emphasizes the intersecting dynamics of capitalism and patriarchy. She refers to Hennessy and Ingraham, who express the unique concomitance of patriarchy and capitalism:

The capitalist class historically appropriated the patriarchal social structures, yet these structures may not necessarily serve capitalism's interests at all times. It is evident that rape, violence, female circumcision and all other forms of violence against women are not unique to capitalism. Nevertheless the ways in which such patriarchal performances are directed against women are not undertaken independently from capitalism. (2004:40)

Their insights show that the subordination of women maintains a two-fold mechanism of oppression. It was evident in Meryem's experiences. Whenever she got pregnant, she was immediately excluded outside of labor by the capitalist. The capitalist aimed to ensure the utmost efficiency in commodity production. Her narrative shows that this attempt is legitimized with reference to the idea that women "naturally" belong with housework. Meryem's narrative shows that capitalism appropriates patriarchy in order to accumulate capital more efficiently. The whole performance at the same time enhances and reproduces the patriarchal power asymmetries against women on the basis of gender. Patriarchy and capitalism are connected to one another in a way that they contribute to each other. As Savran argues, this relation makes it clear that "both patriarchy and capitalism benefit from women's non-reciprocal labor." (44)

Savran continues to detect the problematic relations leading to women's subordination within a heterosexual marriage by investigating the basis of power in patriarchal relations. For her, such basis is inherently material. She cites Hartmann who suggests that the basis of patriarchal power is the constant surveillance over women's labor, both in terms of production, reproduction and sexuality (43). On the other hand it is simultaneously capitalism and patriarchy who benefit from women's non-reciprocal labor at home: "Men receive services at home without reciprocity, ensure the caring of their children, thus they maintain a privileged position in the labor arena compared to women." Savran argues that capitalism benefits because women constitute cheap-laboring potentials at the same time being responsible for housework. Çiğdem's narrative shows that women are more easily fired than men from factories. When the capitalist aims to reduce the wage costs, women are fired. They can be employed any time the capitalist needs. In the meantime, Çiğdem is busy with housework. Her situation shows that both patriarchy and capitalism benefit from her subordination.

Delphy extends this discussion by not merely focusing on the relation between women's non-reciprocal housework and capitalism as a macro picture. She rather investigates "the relations of production" between men and women. As quoted in Savran, Delphy argues that women's main enemy is not capitalism but men (2004:47). For her, women are not paid for housework not because housework merely operates on use-values rather than producing exchange-values. Instead, the fact that women's housework is non-reciprocal is related to the unique relations between men and women. As quoted in Savran, for Delphy, the marriage contract is actually a labor contract by which women enter into a particular kind of relations of production. In a relation of production in accordance with a unique household mode of production, which is different from the capitalist mode of production, men seize women's labor (2004:47).

Savran refers to Delphy who argues that, this particular form of exploitation constitutes women as a distinct class in contradistinction to men (2004:47). Delphy's argument is realized with the ways in which Zehra's neighbor was subjected to oppression. With the marriage contract, which is at the same time and more crucially a labor contract, her neighbor was first of all entitled to do the housework and to serve for her husband. These altogether signaled the benefit of patriarchy and neoliberal capitalism. On the other hand, during her waged-labor, her husband has the right and the power to appropriate woman's capital due to the marriage/labor contract and he still is not entitled to do the housework in exchange. Eventually, as Zehra suggests, the load of responsibilities that women carry on their backs do never end. They even get heavier and heavier since "men constantly step on them."

Delphy shows how patriarchy and capitalism work together in women's subordination. She argues that the moment when such exploitation is openly manifested and made visible is the moment when the husband and wife get divorced. The subsistence money given to the woman and the court's preference to assign the children under woman's protection is indeed the confession that women were subjected to non-reciprocal labor throughout their marriage (1999: 87). For Delphy, patriarchy and capitalism are the two phenomenon that have come together and are entwined with each other in the empirical realities of our everyday lives (Delphy/Leonard, 1992: 65-67). As discussed by Savran, Delphy concludes her analysis by arguing that patriarchal exploitation is women's common, unique and primal kind of oppression (2004:47).

4.2.5. Between Class, Gender and Ethnicity: “Dirty Kurds” Doing the Housework

Delphy positions women as a distinct class in contradistinction to men for patriarchal structures of subordination. Yet the assumption that all women possess the same experiences of patriarchy or capitalism is problematic. Aksu Bora shows that there are different experiences of womanhood (2005:77). In her analysis on women’s housework, Bora refers to Bourdieu’s definition of social class, which is, “class formation not in terms of merely given data in real terms but identities that are constituted through conflict” (2005:77). Bora expands Bourdieu’s definition of social class to explain the complexities inherent in gender. She argues that, “gender is not the reflection of biological sexes on the society but should be considered as a process which is constructed in practice.” (2005:77). Bora shows that housework points at the differences between men and women. It also gives ideas on women’s different experiences. As mentioned by de Beauvoir, low-class women face conflicts more than upper-class women, who can exchange the necessary housework with capital and enjoy life. I think that although de Beauvoir’s and Delphy’s analyses are crucial to investigate women’s subordination in terms of housework, the complexities necessitate a more nuanced analysis. In this section, I aim to make visible the multiple agents leading to women’s subordination. I argue that an ethnicity-based analysis is required to expand Delphy’s conclusion. I aim to do this following Bourdieu’s understanding of social class, that is, the very relation between identity and conflict.

“For me, the tragedy of the house-workers is much more dense and critical than the tragedy of Kurdish women”,¹⁰⁵ Zehra told me, when she was mentioning her experiences and observations of paid house-work. Zehra is working as a house-worker for the upper class households in Bağdat Avenue. She narrated one of her experiences as follows:

“I was working in a house in Bağdat Avenue when the sister of the boss¹⁰⁶ arrived. There was a construction yard next to the apartment and his sister wanted to park her car beneath it. The workers in the construction yard were Kurdish, and they warned her not to park her car so near to the construction yard since there could be trouble.

¹⁰⁵ Zehra: “Ben gerçekten ev işinde çalışan kadının dramını Kürt kadınınkinden de ağır görüyorum kesinlikle ve diğer işçi sınıfından da. Bakınca, hani varolmayan bir kadın grubu gibi görülüyor yani.”

¹⁰⁶ Zehra refers to the husband of the house when she says “Boss” rather than the wife.

They said they don't want to be responsible for that. They had a little quarrel as she parked elsewhere and came up. There were guests in the house and I was serving tea for them.”

Zehra was busy doing her chores, when Zerrin (the sister of the husband) came into the house and started shouting in anger:

“The moment she came in, ‘*pis Kürtler!*’¹⁰⁷, she said, ‘*bunların hepsinin kafasına tek tek kurşun sıkacasınız*’.¹⁰⁸ My hands began to shake, everyone realized, I left the tray on the table, I got very angry.”

Zehra didn't keep silent and criticized her insult: “How can you say that you will shoot them in the head one by one?” Zerrin replied, “Don't you see, they won't let me park my car.” Zehra said the following: “This discussion of yours is a very personal one, and it's not about them being Kurdish or not. But you come in and you also insult me with something I'm not even a part of.” During our interview, I felt Zehra's anger in her eyes. She told me that she was so angry that she was about to throw the tray on Zerrin. Zehra told me that “my boss' wife told him about the event and the boss called me the next day and apologized on behalf of his sister.” But Zehra didn't accept his apology because she expected an apology from his sister. Then his boss phoned Zerrin and she apologized as the matter was settled: “The boss said to her that Zehra is a woman who lives with us in our house and you can't insult her like that.” Zehra was happy to see that Zerrin apologized to her for her terrible remarks.

“I also witnessed many instances where those women were oppressed by their husbands” said Zehra regarding women in upper class neighborhoods. She continued as follows, “but their oppression is different than a worker woman, of course.” Zehra's narrative shows that women have distinct experiences of capitalism and patriarchy. As a Kurdish woman worker, Zehra's experiences radically differ from others. Zehra refers to the man in the house as his “boss”. It shows the patriarchal dynamics in the household. Although Zehra does housework for the household and therefore she is in a closer interaction with the wife, nevertheless she refers to the husband as the boss rather than his wife. Zehra's narrative points at different experiences of three women: The wife of the “boss,” Zerrin and Zehra's. The wife and Zehra experience patriarchal subordination. The upper-class woman has the sufficient economic conditions to afford a housekeeper. She enjoys the privileges of

¹⁰⁷ En. Dirty Kurds.

¹⁰⁸ En. One needs to shoot them in the head one by one.

life while Zehra does the housework for her. Following Bourdieu, Zehra's narrative shows that the conflict arises in-between women. Zehra experiences a conflict for her ethnic belonging. The difference between Zehra (Kurdish low-class) and Zerrin (Turkish upper-class) signify the two distinct social classes. Zehra continued as follows: "While I was working, they, together with the female guests, talk about the Kurds occasionally, insultingly, and I keep quiet, there is no problem if I can keep silent." Her narrative shows that while doing housework, Zehra can encounter no problems as long as she doesn't manifest her identity. It also shows that Zehra is subordinated by upper-class Turkish women. She cannot always speak up because she may risk losing her job. Her narrative shows the visibility of multiple agents of gender, ethnicity and class, which leads to her subordination.

In our interview, Zehra asked me the following question: "*Mesela sen dışarıdan bir Türk olarak bir BDP'linin evini nasıl düşünürdün?* (As a Turkish individual, how would you imagine the house of a BDP member?). It was a striking question. I couldn't answer since I hadn't imagined it before. I also didn't expect such a uniform setting of a "Kurdish house" that could be referred to. She said the following: "The problem is not that we do not tell about our lives. The problem is that their perceptions are closed to our lives." Such inquiry matters for Zehra. She wants to know if people can "accurately" perceive her. Zehra's inquiry shows that "the house" is important since it hosts Kurdish women's subordination. My interviewees are subordinated for housework activities. Zehra watched ROJ TV and overcame her trauma at home. Her son comes home from school and asks the following question: "Mom, at school they said every nation has a language, what is our language?" Çiğdem responds to Roza's curiosity regarding her *eylemci* status as a mother. Meryem sits at home all day caring for her baby. She waits for her aunt to arrive so that she can go back at work. Mizgin has been married for 7 years without a child. She feels the pressures of her relatives to give birth to a son, and yet she dreams of giving birth to a daughter. Şükran dreams of an independent Kurdistan. She looks at the photo of the apartment on her refrigerator, and waits for the day when she and her husband will overcome poverty. And many other experiences may follow. The house is more than a metaphor in this regard; as Zehra suggests, it is the space where we can know about women's oppression. It makes visible the multiple agents leading to their subordination.

4.3. Factory Experiences

4.3.1. “I was a good, hardworking, but a terrorist worker”

“I was working in the textile industry when I first heard of the workers’ union” said Çiğdem, and continued with her story:

“They took us to a place altogether, we didn’t know where. ‘Where are you taking us?’ we asked, ‘to the union, so that you can be a member’ they said. We were all women, and he was called Hasan. He gave us all the information about the union. I can’t forget it since it was the turning point in my life. ‘You will gain your social rights’ he said, ‘the union will protect you from your employers’ wrong decisions about you.’ We were just 16 years old back then. We were very happy to witness such an event.”¹⁰⁹

Çiğdem further concluded that she was able to “realize the labor” on that occasion and looked delighted. Her narrative shows the solidarity on the basis of labor. It was a male worker, who undertook a “consciousness raising” activity on 16 year old female workers and encouraged them to be members of the union. Çiğdem’s following experiences after her membership to the union was not enthusiastic: “We came back to work as members of the union, and the employers were uncomfortable about our manners and speeches, we worked there for one more year and then they fired us.” Çiğdem’s contract was terminated due to her speeches about the importance of social rights of laboring people. “Textile industry is such a place of exploitation. You begin working early in the morning and you stay till night. You also work at weekends.” Çiğdem then moved on to the work at leather industry, which was newly established in the beginning of 90’s. “Leather workers are more interested in social rights and they are more into activism”, she said, “as the time passed, I was able to reveal my Kurdish identity to my fellow workers, we had such a solidarity.” Çiğdem is emphasizing a “working-class solidarity” when she said, “no matter where you are from or who are, you are there in the factory to earn your bread, and if we are

¹⁰⁹ Çiğdem: “Tekstilde ilk girdiğim yerde. Yaşımız küçüktü ondan sonra büyüdükten sonra bizi götürdüler. Nereye götürüyorsunuz. Sendikaya dediler. Hasan abiydi. İlk olunca bazı şeyleri unutamıyorsunuz. Kartal’a bir şubeye üye yaptı bizi. Kızlarız biz de, tekstilde genelde kadın çalışıyor. Aysel diye bir arkadaşım vardı, dedi ki ya Hasan abi dedi, sendika nedir, ben dedim ki bize yapacaklar. Adam anlattı, bize dedi böyle bir şey. Sendika böyledir. Sizi götürdüğüm yerde üye olacaksınız. Sosyal haklarınızı alacaksınız. Çıkarken size para verecekler. Tam da on altı yaşındayız. Sosyal haklarınızı olacak. İkramiye verecekler size. Biz kızlarla nasıl mutlu olduk aa demişiz ne kadar güzel felan, niye daha önce getirmediğiniz dedik. Hasan abi dedi ki yaşınız tutmadığı için getirmedi. Sonra salonda oturduk kızlarla nasıl mutlu olduk emeğin farkına da varıyorsun o zaman.”

unionized and can speak to one another without any prejudgments, everything was fine.”

Similar to Çiğdem, Zehra faced discrimination for her worker activism:

“I worked in leather industry after I worked in textiles in Tuzla. I was a member of a union and was fired because of it. It was 1994. And after that occasion, I couldn’t find another work at the industry.”

Like Çiğdem, Zehra was also fired from her job due to her affiliation with the union. Çiğdem continued working in leather industry later. Zehra had problems since she had to deal with the factory owner for some time. She says the following:

“They didn’t allow us to be members of the union. And when we became members, the factory was shut down. We resisted for a long time, all the unionist workers, but it was closed. Our jobs were therefore terminated. It was opened again under another name.”

Zehra’s narrative shows that the factory owners managed to find alternative ways to cope with the unionization of the workers. Zehra began working at the textile industry. She was almost fired when she got pregnant: “I was exposed to psychological pressure”, she said, and continued: “When you get pregnant, your performance at work inevitably decreases, and the employer obliges you with hardest and longest tasks so that you could leave your job without him firing you.” After a few more tries as a worker in the industry, Zehra began to work as a house-worker in the upper-class neighborhoods.¹¹⁰

Çiğdem mentioned several instances of subordination at her factory. For her, the employers were provoking the “Turks” against “Kurds” in the workplace:

¹¹⁰Zehra: “Sendikalı olmamıza izin verilmedi. Biz bir yerde sendikalı olduktan sonra da fabrikayı kapattılar. Uzun süre de direnişte kaldık, kapı önünde çadırda kaldık. Ama arkasından kapatıldı, başka isim altında açıldı. Uzun sürede çalıştık hani iki üç yıl çalıştık o şekilde sanayide. Sendika o zaman iniş sürecini yaşıyordu, deri derken artık o da gücünü yitirmeye başladı deri iş sendikası. Daha sonra fabrikamız kapatıldı, işten çıkartıldık. Ben tekrar tekstile döndüm bir süre. Daha sonra tekstilden ayrılmanın sebebi ilk hamile kaldığımda evlendikten sonra uzun süre geç saatlere kadar mesaiye tutuyorlardı. Başarılı bir işçisin ama hamile kaldığın zaman verim düşüyor haliyle. Verimin düşmesinden dolayı hamile kadını çalıştırmak istemiyor. Çıkartma hakkı yok bunun üzerine psikolojik olarak baskıya maruz kalıyorduk. Geç saatlere kadar mesaiye birakiliyordum, sabahlamaya birakiliyordum. Benim isim değil başkasının işi olsa dahi mecburen sabahlamaya bırakıyorlardı beni. Orada kendi makinesinde olan elemanı gönderiyordu, onun yerine sabahlamaya tutuyorlardı beni. Uzun süre direndim. İnat ben çıkmayacağım işten en son artık pes ettim ayrıldım tekstilden. Onun üzerine de zaten iki yıl felan çalışmadım ben doğum ettikten bir yıl kadar çalışmadım. Doğum sonrası çalışmadım. Arkasından eşimin bir cezaevi süreci yaşandı. O süreçte de ben tekrar ise başlamak zorunda kaldım. Ama tabi ailemin yanına yerleştim mecburen. Annem baktı Sibebe o zaman bebektir Sibel bir yaşındaydı.”

“We were happily living and working together in Aydınlı with Turkish workers from Black Sea region, only then the employers provoked them and said things like, ‘why do you live with those Kurds’, and they were enraged.”

Çiğdem emphasizes that the ethnic-based subordination negatively affects the union activities: “we were organizing a pool of money together with the workers so that everyone can withdraw money in the future according to his/her need in the times of resistance against the management.” Unfortunately, Çiğdem said that the factory management accused them of “arranging money for the PKK terrorists.”¹¹¹

It was between 1995 and 1998 when Çiğdem experienced such events occasionally. In one of our informal interviews, Çiğdem told me the following story regarding the subordination of a Kurdish woman at a leather factory:

“We had a friend, indeed she was very much in need of a job. She was a Kurdish woman. One day in summer, the weather was very hot. We iron leathers at 240 degrees, and we sweat so much. This woman felt suffocated from the hot weather, and tied her headscarf on her forehead, because she sweated so much. She was continuing working like this, then the boss came, saw her and began to yell at her: ‘Are you are guerilla! What do you think you are doing! What kind of a dressing is that!’ And he fired her on that very day. They knew she was Kurdish.”¹¹²

Çiğdem further told me the following: “These things happen. Even when I rise up to a injustice at factory, a boss told the following: ‘Who employed this terrorist!’” Çiğdem told how the factory management perceived her: “*Çok çalışkandır, çok iyidir, çok dürüsttür, ama teröristtir*” (a good, hardworking, but a terrorist worker). As seen in Çiğdem’s narrations, there is no definite source of power and oppression related to solely ethnic, class or gender terms. What is certain is the workplaces of Kurdish woman are “disciplined spaces”, and in Çiğdem’s narratives, these components intersect with each other and embody various types of oppression on women.

¹¹¹ Çiğdem: “Bir bütçe koyuyorsun işte her ay içinden bir lira alıyorsun bir fon oluşturalım diyorsun, yarın öbür gün direnişe geçtiğimizde bizim için bir bütçe olsun diyorsun. iş veren ya da işveren yanlısı biri duymuşsa bunu hemen kullanıyor. işte sizi kandırıyorlar, bu paraları götürüyorlar PKK’ye veriyorlar. O dönemler zaten herkes terörist PKK yani. Onlara da söylemesi kolay mi artık direk teröristsin PKK’lisin. Kürtsen Bingolluysen Erzincanlıysan Kürtsün ve teröristsin.”

¹¹² Çiğdem: “Bir arkadaşımız vardı, çok da işe ihtiyacı olan Kürt bir kadındı. Bir gün, yazın, hava çok sıcak, biz 240 derecede deri ütüleriz ve çok terleriz. Bu kadın da sıcaktan bunaldı, başörtüsünü alnına bağladı, çok terlediği için. Bu şekilde çalışmaya devam ederken patron geldi, onu görüp, bağırmağa başladı: “Gerilla mısın sen! Ne yaptığını sanıyorsun! O ne biçim kılık!” Ve hemen o gün işine son verdi. Sonuçta Kürt olduğunu da biliyorlardı.”

In her factory experiences, Çiğdem mentions that, “no matter how hard working you are, the employer doesn’t prefer you if you’re a Kurd.”¹¹³ Çiğdem’s narrative focused on the factory managers, who were upper-class Turks. Her narrative suggests that the workers were “neutral” actors who were “provoked” by the capitalist-Turkish factory managers. Her narrative pointed at ethnic and class based subordination. In our interview, Çiğdem talked about the subordination she felt on the basis of gender: “Being a woman worker is the hardest thing on earth I swear”, she told me, “it is as if you carry the world on your shoulders, there is such a terrible responsibility attached to you.” Çiğdem mentioned feminist solidarity when she noticed; “you feel that terrifying load on your shoulders until you share it with your fellows. I mean, other women.” Çiğdem does not interpret the existences of women on the basis of ethnicity and refuses to make such differentiation: “For me, it doesn’t matter if you are a Kurdish woman or a Turkish woman, whenever you walk on the street in a protest, the men react as if we’re doing something wrong.” Her narrative focuses on “women workers” of different ethnicities, and the necessity of their solidarity to overcome capitalist oppression. She told me the following:

“We arranged a meeting one day at factory’s dining hall and declared that we won’t work until the working conditions get better for every worker. We would begin 1 hour late and leave half an hour early from the normal routine.”

Çiğdem told me that the activism was organized by women. She noticed that there were also men attending the protest next to women. “The employer came and said to men; *“utanmıyor musunuz siz, erkeksiniz, kadın sözüyle iş yapıyorsunuz?”* (You are men, aren’t you ashamed to do whatever women say?) Kemal was a male worker about whom Çiğdem talks with gratitude. She describes him as “a man who does not attach any importance to the Kurdish-Turkish distinction”. Kemal stood up and reacted the factory manager: “You say that, but these women are much more men than us, are you aware of that?” The employer did not reply. Çiğdem was very happy to feel the support of men with them. But she was uncomfortable of something other. “Thanks for your support” she said to Kemal, and complained:

“I am very disappointed for your words Kemal. You are with us but what does it mean that ‘she is more man than every one of us’? You should have said that ‘she, as a woman, does her job better than all of us, as a woman she is more courageous than all other men.’”

¹¹³ Çiğdem: “Ne kadar iyi olursan ol sen Kürt olduğun için seni tercih etmiyorlar.”

Çiğdem refused the particular expression. She emphasized that women are as strong and hardworking as men to perform such tasks. Çiğdem was performing such activism and agency with around 50 men and only 5 women in the factory. Despite they were low in numbers, Çiğdem told me that, “the presence of those women were much more important and encouraging to me than the presence of lots of men.”¹¹⁴

“What brought us together was our womanhood” Çiğdem remarked, implying the feminist solidarity at her workplace. Searching for a feminist solidarity, Çiğdem also narrates her experiences of Kurdishness at the factory: “I dream to be able to speak Kurdish freely at the factory one day.” She also told me that, “I’m in love with the sounds of the machines, I love working in a factory.” As I mentioned in the previous chapter, she defines herself as an “exile” without a motherland. She told me the following: “I belong to nowhere but to resistance affiliated to labor”. She is a member of ESP, and emphasizes her identity as a “member of the working class”. She says the following: “I attend Newroz celebrations, but I get much more happy when I attend May 1 demonstrations together with other workers.” Çiğdem’s narratives show the multiple agents of women’s subordination existent in the factory setting. Çiğdem on the one hand emphasizes her “worker” identity as her foremost existence. She also acknowledges the instances where womanhood was the common basis for resistance for women workers against capitalism and patriarchy. Her subordination as a Kurdish individual is also another agent leading to her

¹¹⁴ Çiğdem: “Kadınların, Türk kadın Kürt kadın farketmez. Kadın senin ne işin var yürüyüşlerde felan diyorlar. En son çalıştığım yerde elliden fazla isciyiz, beş tane kadın çalışıyoruz. Ben temsilci oldum düşün. Beni önerdiler. işçiler birbirlerini tanıyorlar artık sanayide. Sen yaparsın akıllısın deneyimin var. Sonra ben temsilci oldum. Ben de şey, böyle hani olması gerekeni söylüyordum tabi çok kızılıyordu felan. Bir toplantı yapmıştık hiç unutmuyorum yemekhanede. Çalışmıyacagız dedik. Bir saat ise geç basliyacagız. Yarım saat erken çıkacağız. Bu tıp şeyler. işveren toplantı yaptı konuştu konuştu, sonra utanmıyor musunuz siz dedi, erkeksiniz dedi, kadın sözüyle iş yapıyorsunuz dedi. Biliyorum bunu kullanır ama bu kadar da açık açık. Ben hemen şeyi düşündüm, bu işçiler ne düşünecek diye. Benim çok sevdiğim biri vardı Samsunlu Kemal abi hala görüşürüm. Kürt Türk ayrımını felan aşmış biri böyle bir adam. Kalktı dedi ki, Derviş bey dedi, neden böyle konuşuyorsunuz dedi, sizin o dediğiniz kadın dedi hepimizden daha erkek dedi. Adam hiç bir şey söyleyemedi. Ben tabi çok sahiplenmelerinden ötürü çok sevindim. Ben çok mutlu oldum sonra dedim ki siz böyle dediniz ama o kadın ama bizden daha erkek. Ne demek, o kadın bu işi iyi yapıyor demeniz gerekiyordu. Ne demek ille de bu iş erkeklerin mi?

Orada düşün sahiplenmelerinde bile erkek gibi kadın. Ben kadını yani kadın gibi kadın demek lazım. Onlar da dedi, işte biz öyle dedik kusurumuza bakma gibilerinde. Orada bile cins çıkıyor ortaya hemen şey oluyorsun. Öyle kaynasmissin ki, beş tane kadın kırk beş tane erkek sürekli onların içerisinde. Bir tanesi var işte öne çıkan mücadele eden bir kadın var. Ama tabi herşeye bedel bir tane kadın ama. Oradaki kırk beş erkekten onların mücadele etmesi başkaydı ama o kadınla bizim ilişkimiz mücadelemiz beni o kadar güçlü kılıyordu, iki kadını düşün. Acayip yani her konuda birbirimizi sahipleniyorduk.”

subordination. Against these multiple and intersecting agents leading to subordination, Çiğdem displays resistance and active agency to oppose to them. She looks for ways in which she can maintain solidarity with fellow woman, Kurds and workers.

Mizgin emphasizes that in textile industry, there are many Kurdish factory owners and managers: “My employer was Kurdish, I was having hard times in the factory but that’s not because of my Kurdishness.” Her narrative differs from Çiğdem’s. Çiğdem’s narrative shows that the (Turkish) factory managers provoked Turkish workers against Kurds. Mizgin describes her employer as a conservative Kurdish Muslim. He didn’t behave his workers well: “You work all day, and the employer has no mercy for you. He still cites Islamic verses and so on, he is Kurdish but he was clearly a merciless man. *Devletin bize yaptığıının iki katını da iş veren yapıyordu* (The employer did twice as much as the state did us). Mizgin was so oppressed that she quit her job at the textile industry: “I left and I will never return back there. I was fired when I got pregnant.” She currently works for a company distributing herbal commodities. As a Kurdish individual, Mizgin was oppressed by her Kurdish factory owner. Her narrative introduces a new dynamic to the multiple agents leading to women’s subordination.¹¹⁵

Similar to Çiğdem, Şükran made the following remarks: “Being a woman worker in this industry is the hardest thing in life.” She said the following: “You have to display an authority initially so that they won’t oppress you, otherwise they talk about you all the time.”¹¹⁶ During our interview, Şükran implied that men were insulting women at the factory setting. But she did not go into details about it. “There are lots of Kurds, I had no problem for being Kurdish”, she said. Her narrative was

¹¹⁵ Mizgin: “Kürtlük şeyini ben hiç görmedim. Çünkü çalıştıran da Kürt. İslam üzerinden oyun oynamayı çok seven insanlar. Allah’ın dediği olur su olur bu olur diyorlar, ama en büyük tekmegi de o bize vuruyordu. Hani diyorum ya devletin bize yaptığıının iki katını da iş veren yapıyordu. Çalış çalış eşşek kadar çalış, akşama kadar akşam da geldiğin zaman da bir de ağır kelimelerin konuşulması. Çok ezildim çok. Hani ne bileyim ondan dolayı hiç tekstilde çalışmaya tövbe ettim.

Bak evlendim evlendikten sonra eşimle birlikte çalıştık. Aynı zorluklar bir tarafta ev bir tarafta iş. Baya bir zorluklarla geçirdim ta ki bu yıllarda artık kimseye şey olmak istemiyorum, kimseye muhtaç da olmak istemiyorum. Eşim çalışıyor çocuk da olmayınca, benim için güzel bir yol oldu ve bitkisel ürünler hayatım başladı. O beni kurtardı. Orada da bunlarla tanıştım şimdi gerçekten çok güzel, dil din ırk hiç birşey ayırmazsın, kim olursan ol akıllı ol dürüst ol çalış bizimle, bu pozisyon olduğu için çok seviyorum ve oradayım şimdi.”

¹¹⁶ Şükran: “Tekstilde çok zor kadın olmak. Hani ne bileyim, insan kendini şey yapmassa, göstermezse çok eziyorlar. Kendini göstermezsen iscisiyi çok ezerler, her türlü lâfi söylerler tekstil ortamında. Ağız bozukluğu olsun şey olsun, kendini göstermen lazım ki onlar sana kelimeyi bir daha kullanmasınlar.”

similar to Mizgin's in this regard. I asked her which language they were speaking at the workplace: "We were speaking Turkish because most people did not know how to speak Kurdish, they didn't learn them from their families." Şükran's narrative shows that the factory was another social setting, which displayed the dominance of Turkish language.

4.3.2. Alevi Identity at the Factory

Sevda is a 33 year-old woman from Bingöl. She is an Alevi, working in plastics industry in Aydınli. She told me that,

"I'm not hopeless. People in the factory realized what Alevi means. They learned the basics of Alevism. A friend of mine came and told me that 'you are very good people, you are very helpful. You respect people because they are humans, you don't judge them with their religions."

Sevda told me that in the factory, there are workers from different religions and ethnicities. She says that, "everyone gets along well with each other. There are few people who don't accept differences, but we call them ignorant." Dilek is another of my interviewees of Alevi origin. She is 28 years old and she is from Bingöl. She is also employed in plastics industry. Dilek belongs to a Kurdish speaking Alevi community. She says that, "I feel myself as Alevi rather than Kurdish." She told me that, "we understand Sunnis, we respect them, but we don't receive respect from them." Dilek mentions that, "we Alevis are humanitarian people in all aspects of life. At the factory, we do not say that we drink alcohol for example." Her narrative shows the conflicts that she comes across in factory. She cannot express herself, because Sunni Muslims can react if they learn that she drinks alcohol. Dilek explains her behavior as humanitarianism, rather than pointing at the particular subordination. She is very happy with her identity, "we Alevis are beyond ignorance. We developed ourselves. I'm very happy with my ancestors. We're more progressed than Sunnis in terms of world views." Despite the conflicts, Dilek is happy with her identity and clearly distinguishes herself from Sunnis. She also distinguishes herself from married women: "It is hard to be a woman factory worker. I'm lucky that I'm not married. Married women face real difficulties." Similar to Çiğdem and Şükran, Dilek emphasizes that the toughness of factory working for women. She is more

comfortable as an unmarried woman because she doesn't have a husband and children to look after. Therefore her labor is not doubled.

Zehra began working in textile industry from small age. She was exposed to various kinds of subordination for her identity:

“Do you sleep with your brothers?”, a woman asked to me, when I was working in textile. I was a child back then and replied, ‘yes, occasionally, sometimes our house gets crowded with relatives and since there is no place to sleep, I sleep with my brothers.’”

The woman turned to her friend and reacted in horror: “See, they are sleeping all the time with their brothers and sisters.” Zehra told me the following:

“I didn't realize what they implied immediately. Soon I realized that they were talking about me having sex with my brothers. When I realized what she meant, I began to cry, it was such an immoral question directed to me.”

Afterwards, other women close to Zehra reacted the gossiping women and there happened a huge fight among them, as Zehra narrated:

“It turned into a fight between Alevi and Sunnis suddenly. There were a bunch of Alevi women workers and most of them were children like me, our elders were protecting us within such fight all the time. People who were protecting me had revolutionary consciousness.”¹¹⁷

Zehra says that it was the socialist activist workers, who were protecting her. Zehra belongs to a Kurdish speaking Alevi community. Her narrative shows that she is subordinated by Sunni Kurds as well. Zehra's narrative shows that Kurds perpetrate an oppression against Alevi individuals. It depicts another dimension of power relations where Kurds occupy an advantageous position while the Alevi are

¹¹⁷ Zehra: “Alevi kültüründen dolayı da çok inanılmaz dışlanmalar itilmeler yaşadım. Bunu mesela ilk ben şeyden birlikte çalıştığımız ablamız olarak kabul ettiğimiz bir kadın, beni grubun içine çağırdı, gel dedi sana bir şey soracağım ve bana çok ahlâksızca bir soru sordu: Söyleyeceğim doğru olur mu, sen dedi ağabeylerinle yatıyor musun dedi? Evde çok misafir var bizim ev çok büyük bir ev dedim, çok misafir varsa yer yok, ağabeylerimin yanında yatıyorum ama bizim evimiz çok büyük öyle birşeye gerek kalmıyor dedim. Bak dedi yatıyorlarmış dedi, ben sonra hani böyle yatmaktan neyi kastettiğini anladım ve ağladım.

O zaman bizim yine kendi çevremizden kadınlar vardı çok inanılmaz bir kavga çıktı o zaman. Alevi Sünnî çatışmasına döndü. Yani orada böyle bir sıkıntı yaşadık. Bütün arkadaşlar da bu kavgaya katıldılar ve ister istemez böyle bir gruplaşma yaşandı. Alevi Sünnî şeklinde oldu. Alevi olanlar iki üç tane büyük vardı diğerleri hep çocuk işçiydi ve çocuk işçiler Alevi Sünnî Kürt Türk farketmiyor, çocuk işçi her zaman eziliyor, farklı bir ayrıcalık ama biz hani orada avantajımız şey vardı, hani büyüklerimiz bizden büyük olan abilerimiz ablalarımız bizi çok korularlardı. Yani biraz daha devrimci zihniyetle tanışmış arkadaşlar, onlar bizi koruyup kolluyorlardı, ben bunun avantajını yaşadım..”

disadvantaged and subordinated. Zehra's narrative also suggests the working class as another agent, which takes sides with Alevis against subordination.

"Although everyone is aware of your identity, they still can easily curse you", said Zehra, and told me one of her experiences at the textile industry.

"A worker fellow in the factory was going to do his military service and he said that he will go to Dersim for this reason. 'I will shot the first Kızıldaş in the head that I come across there' he said."

Zehra was enraged to hear this and reacted as follows: "*O kadar uzağa gitmene gerek yok, bak ben buradayım, Ben de Dersimliyim, karşıdayım, oraya gitmene gerek yok, öldürmek istiyorsan burada yap*" (You don't have to go there, here I am, I am also from Dersim, you can kill me here if you want). In response Zehra's reaction, the man replied: "I love you very much sister Zehra, why do you talk like that, why should I kill you?" "You tell inappropriate things for people that you don't even know" replied Zehra, as it was the end of a discussion. Zehra told me that "living as an Alevi is much more harder than living as a Kurd."¹¹⁸

The difficulties of being an Alevi is especially manifest during Ramadan, the religious month of abstinence of Sunni Muslims. "I had many friends at the workplace, and we all had very good relations regardless of our ethnicity. But when Ramadan arrives, all of a sudden our relations break apart." Zehra was facing conflicts in the workplace during Ramadan since her religious views did not oblige her to fast like Sunni Muslims:

"The management was declaring for the ones to come and apply. They were calling for Alevis actually who would not fast so that they could prepare food accordingly. We would go, everyone knew that we were Alevis, and look at us badly."

In one of her early memories as a child worker, one of her friends advised Zehra to act like she was fasting so that other workers can treat her better. Plus, the management would also give them some amount of money for dinner:

¹¹⁸ Zehra: "Örneğin şey vardı ben tekstilde ilk böyle bir şey ile karşılaştığımda bizim bir işçi arkadaşımız askere gidecek, şey dedi, işte biz de hepimiz arkadaşımız ayrılıp gidecek vedalacağımız diye bekliyoruz. Tunceli'ye çıkmış benim şeyim dedi, ne derler askerliğim Tunceli'ye çıkmış dedi. İlk önüme çıkan dedi Kızılbaşı dedi kafasına sıkacağım dedi, geberteceğim dedi ve mesela benim kim olduğumu bilmiyor ve ben hemen kalktım. O kadar uzağa gitmene gerek yok dedim bak ben buradayım dedim. Ben de Dersimliyim dedim, karşıdayım dedim, oraya gitmene gerek yok, öldürmek istiyorsan burada yap dedim. Ve çok şaşırıldı, abla biz seni çok seviyoruz niye öyle dedin. Ama dedim, sen hiç tanımadın insanlar hakkında direkt gidip öldüreceğim yargısıyla bakıyorsun. Ben senin Kürt olduğuna bilmiyordum Alevi olduğuna bilmiyordum dedi. Onlar da benim gibi dedim. Beni nasıl bilmiyorsan onları da bilmiyorsun ve öldürmek maksadıyla gitmek istiyorsun, kafana bunu yerleştirmişsin gideceğim ve öldüreceğim."

“The time came for lunch, all the Alevi went to the dining hall and I stayed. I was a child, I wasn’t aware of things. An elder who knew my origin was enraged to see that I wasn’t lunching and got angry with me.”

A fellow Alevi women took Zehra with her so that she can live in accordance with her identity; “After lunch, we went back to work, and no one was speaking to us.” Zehra’s narrative shows that she was facing dual oppression for being an Alevi. She was obliged to perform her own cultural behavior with fellow Alevi on the one hand and was pressured by her own community. She was also pressured by the Sunni Muslim community due to her identity.

Zehra told me that, “I didn’t want to go to work anymore when I heard it.” What she heard was the following at her workplace from non-Alevi people: “These Alevi girls definitely are not virgins.”¹¹⁹ Zehra was hurt to hear this. Non-virginity without a marriage is perceived as an immoral act in patriarchal society. She was living as a teenager girl in patriarchal setting, which sees virginity as a decisive signifier as “good” or “bad” women. Her narrative shows that Alevi women were characterized as people who “deserved to be shot in the head”, who “are having sex with their brothers” and who “are definitely not virgins”. Zehra mentioned another experience as follows:

“I was working next to a man younger than me, he was a Safi Muslim. And while we were working, our arms occasionally touched each other, it was inevitable and there was no harm done. I didn’t want to seduce him, I was doing my job.”

The man was going to the bathroom with a dissatisfied impression on his face whenever Zehra’s arm touched his: “Then I realized than his *abdest* (ablution) was disrupted when he touches a woman.”¹²⁰

Zehra was befriended with fellow women who were all into union activities. Their aim was to form a feminist solidarity as women workers. They all came together after work and walked towards the bus stop. They saw the man whose ablution was disrupted. Zehra and her friends decided to talk to him on the issue. Zehra told me the following regarding their meeting: “‘I didn’t know that you were such good people’ he said to me. He was a Şafii Muslim. ‘I was always terrified of

¹¹⁹ Zehra: “Bunlar kesin bakire değildir diye konuşanlar bile oluyordu. Daha cinsiyetinin bile farkında değilken, genç kız olmamıştım daha bunları yaşarken, düşün seni böyle şey yaptığı zaman o kadar yaralanıyorsun ki.”

¹²⁰ Tr. “abdesti bozuluyordu”

Kızılbaş people, and was curious about how they looked like.” In his imaginations, Alevis figured as non-humans and were affiliated with monsters, as Zehra continued:

“‘I didn’t know that you were normal people’ he said to me. ‘Touching a normal woman and the disruption of your ablution is a bad thing. But if your ablution is disrupted by touching a Kızılbaş, it is the most horrible thing’ he added. We talked to him, and transformed him.”

Zehra noticed that this young man was beaten by his father. He was accused of “speaking to Kızılbaş people”. Zehra was very saddened. She was aiming to establish interaction between different cultures at the factory so that both can come to know each other to overcome prejudices.

Zehra’s narrative shows the existence of multiple agents leading to women’s subordination, where class, gender, ethnicity and religion intersect. Within such intersections, a young man of Safi Muslim community is also exposed to subordination. Zehra’s narrative shows that there are not only multiple agents leading to subordination, but also multiplicity of actors subjected to subordination. Now I come to know even better why bell hooks (2000) declared that, “feminism is for everybody”. The narratives of my interviewees show that a feminist approach, which takes into account the multiple agents leading to women’s oppression is necessary to resist social inequality and subordination.

4.4. Where is Poverty?

While my interviewees were talking about their factory and housework experiences, I asked them the following question: “*Sizce yoksulluk nedir?*”¹²¹ Nazmiye responded as follows: “*Yoksulluğun içindeyiz.*”¹²² She continued: “In a family consisting of five people, just one person earns a wage at subsistence level,¹²³ what else can poverty be, other than this?” Meryem was frustrated when I asked her the same question, as she answered: “*Zor bir şey ya!*”¹²⁴ She concluded as follows: “You are poor if you cannot work, if you are unemployed. I cannot work right now since I got pregnant, but my husband works so we are comfortable.” Zehra refers to her childhood to elaborate the conditions of poverty: “I remember well, there were times at the house when there was nothing to eat.” Zehra’s father was sick, and her

¹²¹ en. In your opinion, what is poverty?

¹²² (We’re in the midst of poverty).

¹²³ Tr. Asgari ücret

¹²⁴ en. It is a tough thing!

mother went away to look after him at hospital as she sat at home alone with her brothers: “There was nothing to eat. My brother made tea, juiced the breads with hot water, and we drank our teas with sugar and bread. They were the last sugar and bread we had.” Due to her experiences of poverty throughout her childhood, Zehra concludes: “Actually, I cannot say that I am poor now.”¹²⁵

Zehra takes Nazmiye’s perceptions of poverty on the level of minimum subsistence and makes a further remark: “One is poor unless he/she had nothing left to eat other than a cold bread the whole day.” Nazmiye defines herself as poor, whereas Meryem and Zehra do not. Nazmiye currently does domestic labor at her house, selling hand made crafts to the markets. Her husband is a worker in a textile factory. He is earning 700 TL per month. He is the only regular wage earner in the household. Nazmiye’s narrative shows that her family struggle to acquire the necessary resources for survival. Her narrative suggests her proximity to “absolute poverty”, since she faces difficulties in sustaining food for her family. Meryem’s narrative shows that she is not poor because she says that at least one person is employed in the household. Her husband is a worker in a factory producing washing machines in Aydın. Zehra also doesn’t define herself as poor. She refers to her childhood experiences as an illustration of poverty, when she couldn’t find the sufficient food. Meryem and Zehra’s narratives show that their living conditions are above the level absolute poverty.

Mizgin defines poverty as “*hayatın en kötü darbesi.*”¹²⁶ She says that, “I live my life between richness and poverty, I have never been rich, but thanks to God, I wasn’t poor either. I was always able to feed my family and the guests.” Similar to Zehra and Meryem, Mizgin’s narrative emphasizes the sufficiency of food in defining poverty. For her, the signifier for poverty is the inability to serve the guests that visit her house; “thanks to God, I have what it needs to host people, to serve them food when they stop by.” Yeter could not find the adequate expressions to define poverty: “*Yoksulluk çok şey ama ben nasıl anlatacağımı bilmiyorum.*”¹²⁷ Poverty was the signifier of “lots of things”; it was such an experience that language wasn’t enough for her to narrate. Şükran defined poverty as follows: “One is poor unless one is able to find a plate of food.” Similar to Meryem, Zehra and Mizgin, Şükran’s narrative

¹²⁵ Tr. “Açıkçası şu an yoksulum diyemem.”

¹²⁶ the worst strike of life

¹²⁷ En. Poverty is lots of things but I don’t know how to tell it.

focuses on “food” and shows that she lives above the level of absolute poverty. Therefore she doesn’t define herself as poor.

Çiğdem defined poverty by emphasizing the restrictions that it brings along in daily life: “If one cannot bring any fresh bread to the home in the evening, and you cannot feed your children with various kinds of food but with rancid bread, there is poverty.” Çiğdem reckons the inability to choose from the alternatives that is available to a person in life: “Roza cannot ask for alternative meal just because she doesn’t like the only meal. She has to eat it. Sometimes I cannot present alternatives to my daughter, and that’s poverty.” She occasionally feels the poverty conditions when she cannot provide alternative meals to her daughter.

As response to my question, Zozan explained the following:

“I compare my past life and current, I see that I live in better conditions. We can feed our family well, *çok şükür*. There are people newly arriving here. Kurdish people. They are all poor. They cannot speak Turkish well, it is a problem. As the time passed, we developed our Turkish and now we are comfortable.”

Her narrative also focuses on food in defining poverty. Different from other narratives, Zozan emphasized ethnicity and language. Her narrative shows that newly arriving Kurdish people to Aydınli is poorer than Zozan and others who arrived before. Zozan notices that she was able to develop her Turkish and adjusted life in Aydınli, in contrast with the newcomers. She emphasizes that language is a crucial agent in their impoverishment.

Çiğdem told me the following regarding her perceptions of poverty:

“Now I see child workers, and I feel very sorry for them. I was wondering whether there were still child workers today. I began working as a child in 1984, child labor still continues. Child labor continues in this industrial setting, where there is migration. Think of it, there are families migrating consisting of 8 to 11 people. They are all employed in factories. There are lots of child workers. I am very saddened for them.”¹²⁸

Zozan and Çiğdem’s narratives emphasize that the newcomers encounter more difficult conditions. Çiğdem focuses on the child workers as she suggests that their

¹²⁸ Çiğdem: “Şimdi çocuk işçileri görünce çok etkileniyorum. Çok da üzülüyorum, günümüzde var midir aslında, o kadar çok var ki düşün, benim seksen dörtte sigorta girişim olmuş, hala çocuk işçilik devam ediyor. Çok daha fazla hatta böyle sanayilerin olduğu yerde, su günümüzde göçlerden kaynaklı. Düşün aile geliyor sekiz kişi on kişi on bir kişi aileler var yani, onların hepsinin bakımı ne oluyor, hepsi fabrikalara giriyor. Son bu çalıştıkları yerde de hep çocuk var hepsi sekiz dokuz on on bir kişilik aileler, Siirt Ağrı ya da ne bileyim Diyarbakırlı böyle. Ablamın çalıştığı yerde. İnsanlar onları görünce çok etkileniyor yani üzülüyor. Böyle yani Hülya.”

lives is much more difficult than them. Çiğdem and Zozan's narratives show that they live above the level of absolute poverty. Therefore they do not define themselves as poor. Their narratives suggest that the newcomers struggle with absolute poverty.

Çiğdem and Zozan's narratives also show the dynamics of "poverty-in-turn", that Pınarcıoğlu and Işık suggests (2001a, 2001b, 2008). Çiğdem and Zozan encountered problems during their initial years in Aydın. They were struggling with absolute poverty. Child labor is a crucial phenomenon in this regard. In her narrative, Çiğdem notices that she began working at 1984 as a child worker. My other interviewees, Zehra, Mizgin, Şükran, Sevda and Dilek were also child workers in Aydın. Regarding her experiences as a child worker, Mizgin told me the following: "I had to work as a child. Because there is no bread in the house. I had to work. I had no other option." Mizgin's narrative shows that she had to work as a child to struggle with "absolute poverty". Currently, my interviewees other than Nazmiye do not define themselves as poor since they managed to rise above the level of absolute poverty. They can feed their families sufficiently. Their poverty is passed on to the next generation of Kurdish migrants, which points at the "poverty-in-turn".

The narratives of my interviewees show that poverty is not a "state", but a "process" (Insel, 2001: 70, Sen, 1985, 1992). The conditions of poverty are passed on to the next generation of Kurdish migrants, which points at the process of poverty-in-turn. My interviewees' narratives make visible the multiple agents regarding their perceptions of poverty. Zozan's narrative suggests that the newcomers struggle with poverty because they do not know Turkish well enough to survive. Her narrative adds an ethnicity-conscious focus on poverty-in-turn. Her narrative also illustrates Amartya Sen's "capability approach". The newcomers' incapability to speak Turkish language enhances their conditions of poverty.

4.5. Conclusion

Following the introductory section, the second section of this chapter was reserved for a careful investigation of "housework". Referring to Glazer-Malbin, I suggested that women's unpaid labor at housework points at their subordination, which constitutes women's alienation. In the following sub-section, I referred to the narratives of my interviewees, which pointed at the patriarchal subordination at the household. Their narratives show that women are perceived "naturally" as houseworkers; therefore they are subordinated. Çiğdem's job at the factory was

terminated as the factory managers legitimized their decision referring to the word “*reis*”. Since Çiğdem was not perceived as the *reis* of the family, factory managers give priority to men in employment. Meryem’s job was terminated when she got pregnant. Their narratives show that patriarchy and capitalism work together in their subordination. Şükran does domestic labor from her house. She continues to do housework and give services to her children and husband. At the same time she makes crafts at her house and sells them to the market. I argue that her narrative shows the utilization of women by patriarchy and capitalist market relations concomitantly.

In the following sub-section 4.2.4, I made a brief overview on Nancy Fraser, Gülnur Savran and Christine Delphy’s analysis on the relation between capitalism and patriarchy. Their analyses focus on housework, which subordinates women. Fraser’s focus is on capitalism while Savran and Delphy emphasize patriarchy as the source of women’s subordination. Fraser emphasizes the need for a feminist critique of neo-liberalism. For her, housework signifies the point where feminism and neo-liberalism diverge. Çiğdem, Meryem and Şükran’s narratives illustrate such divergence. For Delphy, patriarchy is women’s primal and unique form of subordination. I conclude this sub-section with Delphy’s insights and continue with the following sub-section to contribute to her analysis. Aksu Bora shows that women have differing experiences of patriarchy. In this section, Zehra’s narrative shows the importance of ethnicity, class and gender-based subordination. Zehra is employed as a houseworker in upper class neighborhoods around Bağdat Avenue. She encounters problems for her Kurdish identity. Her narrative shows the intersections of multiple agents leading to women’s subordination related to housework.

The third section was reserved for my interviewees’ factory experiences. In the first sub-section, I aimed to make visible the multiple agents leading to women’s subordination with the narratives of Çiğdem, Zehra Şükran and Mizgin. Çiğdem and Şükran noticed that being a woman worker is the hardest thing in life. Zehra made a similar remark when she told me that she faced psychological pressure when she got pregnant. Zehra and Çiğdem lost their jobs when they became members of union. Their narratives show the class-based subordination they encountered. Çiğdem told me that the factory manager called her “a good, hardworking but a terrorist worker.” She told me that the managers were provoking Turks against Kurds in the factory. Mizgin and Şükran’s narrative introduce another agent of subordination. Unlike

Çiğdem's, their factory owners were Kurdish. Mizgin encountered pressures from her manager and had to leave her job.

In the following sub-section, I aimed to introduce the importance of Alevi identity. It was an important theme in Sevda, Dilek and Zehra's narrations of factory. As Alevi child worker, Sunni factory workers maintained prejudices for Zehra. They insulted her for suggesting that she is having sex with her brothers and that she is a non-virgin. My interviewees' narrations show that they have to conceal their identities in factory especially during Ramadan. Their narratives show the dynamics of subordination at the intersections of gender, class, ethnicity and religion.

The third section is reserved for my interviewees' responses to the question: "In your opinion, what is poverty?" The narratives of my interviewees show that they are not poor. They continue their lives above the level of absolute poverty. The conditions of poverty are passed on to the newcomers. My interviewees' narratives regarding the factory and housework in this chapter illustrate the "relative" conditions of poverty they struggle.

My interviewees live in constant surveillance since they feel pressures at the intersections of being low-class Kurdish (or Alevi) women. Their narratives show the visibility of multiple agents leading to their subordination. My interviewees suggest that they live above the level of "absolute poverty". Their narratives show that they at the same time feel the risk of impoverishment due to multiple subordinating agents.

Meryem got pregnant therefore her job was terminated. Zehra is discriminated as an Alevi woman by her fellow workers. She keeps silent when women insult Kurds at the place where she is employed as a houseworker. She cannot react to them since she cannot risk losing her job. Mizgin had to leave her job because of the oppressive behaviors of her Kurdish factory boss. Çiğdem's job was terminated because for the factory managers, she was not perceived as the *reis* of the family. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, all of my interviewees encounter problems for not being able to speak Kurdish in public. Their narratives show that they encounter discriminations whenever they speak their mother tongue. They face mechanisms of suppression due to patriarchy and their Kurdish identities.

In the light of my interviewees' narrations, I argue that they do not live *in* absolute poverty, but *on the edge* of it. Their narratives show that they live in "relative poverty", and they always face the threat to move towards absolute poverty. They also do not define themselves as poor since they take the notion of poverty on the basis of

food. I argue that defining their living conditions as “relative poverty” is not sufficient to cover the complexities that intersectionality brings forth. Therefore I suggest the term *poverty-on-the-edge* to point at the intersectional subordination, which may impoverish them at any time and may approximate their living conditions to absolute poverty.

I argue that the narratives of my interviewees show the characteristics of “the new urban poor” that Buğra and Keyder suggests. Buğra and Keyder show that the new urban poor in Istanbul cannot overcome poverty and rise to upper classes. Buğra and Keyder’s analysis support Wacquant’s remarks on urban marginalization. Wacquant shows how low-classes are pushed into the low-waged, part-time jobs without work safety, which enhances their marginalization and poverty. In this chapter, I aimed to contribute to Wacquant’s and Buğra and Keyder’s analyses with an intersectional approach. My interviewees cannot overcome poverty completely and become rich due to the multiple agents leading to their subordination. Therefore they live on the edge of poverty, where they experience subordination at the intersections of class, ethnicity and gender.

The conditions of poverty-on-the edge points at a “dynamic process” of poverty. It should not be taken solely as a class-based phenomenon. In this process, the multiple agents such as gender, class and ethnicity based subordination interplay and determine my interviewees’ proximities to absolute poverty. Poverty-on-the edge should not be solely considered in terms of subordination. It also necessitates particular resistances. My interviewees perform resistances against subordinating conditions. In this way, they aim to decrease the subordinating effects of poverty-on-the edge.

CHAPTER V

Conclusion

What I aimed in this thesis was to provide an analysis of the intersecting dynamics of Kurdish women's subordination in Aydınlı. The in-depth interviews, the participant observation and photography that I conducted with my interviewees provided me with very important insights on the issues of intersecting poles of oppression, marginalization and social exclusion.

Urban marginalization in Aydınlı was the focus of my second chapter. Following Wacquant, I tried to show that Aydınlı is a setting of urban outcasts, maintaining proximity to the city yet remained isolated. I argue that state retrenchment, which is evident in the lack of transportation and social welfare facilities, is one crucial factor in the neighborhood's marginalization and poverty. My informants migrated to Istanbul with their families in order to escape from poverty. They and their families are all occupied in the nearby industries. Yet their arrival to Aydınlı does not improve their conditions in a substantial way as they still suffer from poverty to a certain extent. Nevertheless, they manage to maintain sufficient material resources on the level of minimum subsistence. Moreover, they all manifest their deterritorialized identities; they do not feel that they belonging to either Istanbul or their home cities in Anatolia. Concurrently, some of my informants develop a nostalgic will to return to their homelands one day, which is an impossible act for the near future because of their need to work and earn income as workers.

My interviewees complain about the lack of health facilities, the absence of playgrounds for their children as well as the means of transportation in the neighborhood. Besides, among many factors, which directly have a negative influence in socialization of women and their children, women demand cafes and patisseries where they can meet and chat with each other. They also draw attention to the hierarchical conditions between Aydınlı and the coastal district of Tuzla (the city center) in terms of the resources allocated for public services. Some of the women even notice that even the refuse containers in the city center are subjected to better regulation and the services of the municipality is much worse in Aydınlı. It is also significant that all of my informants do not own their houses. 8 of them have to pay their rents regularly. Zozan lives in a small house in the school where she works as a cleaning lady and doesn't pay rent. Nazmiye lives in her brother-in-law's house with

her husband and three children. They also acknowledge that they have no other choices than living in Aydınlı since it is the only neighborhood close to their workplaces. In sum, these common motives display dimensions of poverty other than the lack of income in terms of various horizons intersecting with gender and ethnicity. I aimed to contribute to the term “urban outcasts” with a gender and ethnicity based approach. In this chapter, I argue that Aydınlı is a “disciplined” urban setting, whose marginalization is reproduced with the lack of public services such as health facilities and transportation. Governmentality is visible in the reproduction of the neighborhoods’ marginalization. The state in this regard plays a crucial role in sustaining patriarchal oppression. The lack of social welfare for women is reproduced by the state, which enhances my interviewees’ marginalization and subordination.

In this thesis, I aimed to provide an alternative approach regarding the image of Tuzla. In the imaginations of many people, like my mother, Tuzla is a site of “shipyards” and “the shipyard workers”. Some of my interviewees told me that their husbands were once working as shipyard workers and after a while they changed their occupations. Bearing in mind the continuously shifting dynamics of labor activities, I argue that the expression, “shipyard workers” does not refer to a constant, concrete identity in Tuzla. Rather, a person can work in a shipyard and then move to work in leather or marble industry later. Therefore I aimed to challenge the identification of Tuzla with “shipyard workers”, which refers to a distinct category of laboring individuals, and with shipyards. My interviewees struggle on the edge of poverty by continuously coming in and out different industries or labor activities such as factory working and domestic labor. Their experiences tell much about Tuzla; an urban setting which not only consists of one concrete shipyard industry with distinctive status but hosts adjacent industries causing varied experiences.

The shipyards in Tuzla were well known for the death of over 100 workers due to the accidents. The particular image of Tuzla is affiliated to *death*, whereas in my research I aimed to analyze the significance of *life* in this urban setting. Tuzla is an urban setting where a dynamic process of intersecting forms of subordination is reproduced by conflicts and surveillance; yet it remains invisible compared to the incidents of *death*. Since Tuzla figures in the imaginations of people as a space of *death*, the experiences of Kurdish women in the urban setting goes unmentioned. In this thesis, I aimed to make visible the daily life mechanisms of subordination, which occurs at the intersections of class, gender and ethnicity.

The third chapter was reserved for a discussion on my interviewees' narrations regarding Kurdishness. Aydınli does not consist of a homogeneous population of Kurdish people; there exist different tongues, if not languages, and cultural belongings of Kurdishness. Some of my interviewees know Kurdish better than others. Some of them almost forgot their mother tongue after their arrival at Aydınli at small ages. Meryem mentions that there are Kurdish women who speak in *Dersimce*. There exist different dialects such as Zazaki and Kurmanji. Women in Aydınli face problems in communicating for this reason. Therefore they use Turkish as the common language for interaction. My informants are all stressing the official prohibition of Kurdish language as an official language in schooling and other state-controlled official institutions. Their narrations also point at the dominance of Turkish language in public sphere. They encounter problems for not being able to speak in Kurdish. Following Sen's "capability approach" I argue that my interviewees were incapable of speaking Turkish in the public sphere, which enhanced their exclusion.

All of my informants were emphasizing the dimension of education and language. They complain about the lack of the means for education. Their lack of education is a result of the lack of necessary economic conditions for some informants, and for others, it is related to the patriarchal culture and the oppression of women resulting from it. Due to multiple agents of subordination, my interviewees ended up as workers in industries. I argue that due to the state disinterest, patriarchal subordination and poverty, my interviewees were excluded from education and became workers. They are impoverished as a result of the intersection of multiple agents.

In the fourth chapter I discussed my interviewees' housework and factory experiences. Their narrations show the relation of the two. Factory managers perceive women as naturally house-workers. Therefore their jobs are terminated more easily than men's. Following Nancy Fraser, I argued that housework points at the divergence of feminism and neo-liberalism in the narratives of my interviewees. Wacquant shows how lower classes are pushed into the low-waged, part-time jobs without work safety, which enhances their marginalization. In this chapter I aimed to contribute to Wacquant's analysis of "urban-outcasts" with a gender and ethnicity-conscious approach. I show that patriarchy and capitalism work together in women's subordination. Besides, in the light of their narratives, I emphasize the need for an ethnicity and religion- and sect-conscious analysis in their subordination. I argue that

Alevi identity is another agent for women's subordination in their workplaces. Their narratives on housework and factory show the intersecting dynamics of class, gender ethnicity, and sect.

In this chapter, my other focus was on how my interviewees defined poverty. With this section, I aimed to provide an intersectional analysis through their reflections on poverty. Their focus is almost exclusively on "food". Their narratives show that they continue their lives above the level of "absolute poverty". My interviewees also do not say that they are rich. Having in mind their narrations on urban marginalization, Kurdishness and gender in the previous chapters, my interviewees point at various multiple agents of subordination. I argue that these multiple agents reproduce their marginalization and social inequality.

Referring to Buğra and Keyder, they are the "new urban poor", who cannot overcome poverty and rise up to upper classes. I showed that they pass their poverty to the next generations of Kurdish migrants, who struggle with absolute poverty. This points at the conditions of "poverty-in-turn" as Işık and Pınarcıoğlu suggests (2001a, 2001b, 2008). In the light of the narrations of my interviewees, I aim to contribute to the term "poverty-in-turn", with a gender and ethnicity-conscious approach. Due to patriarchal subordination and exclusion on the basis of Kurdish identity, Kurdish women encounter problems in adjusting to life in Aydınli. The conflicts they face reproduce their conditions of poverty.

My interviewees' narrations show that they are "relatively poor". I suggest that the term "relative poverty" is not enough to cover the complexities arising from intersectionality. The term "relative poverty" is not enough because my interviewees do not define themselves as poor. Rather, their subjectivities suggest that they face "poverty-on-the-edge". I argue that my interviewees do not live *in* absolute poverty, but *on the edge* of it. They encounter constant surveillance and subordination on the basis of multiple agents such as gender, class and ethnicity. The urban marginalization in Aydınli is an obstacle for them to adjust to life and overcome poverty. They risk losing their jobs for patriarchal, ethnic and class-based subordination. Due to intersecting dynamics of subordination, they cannot overcome poverty completely. Yet, they do not live in absolute poverty either. But they feel the risk of further impoverishment due to the intersecting agents of subordination. I argue that they live on the edge of poverty since they are surveilled with constant threats, which may approximate their living conditions to absolute poverty. Therefore, I aim

to contribute the existing literature on poverty and intersectionality with the term *poverty-on-the-edge*. I aim to emphasize the usefulness of this feminist approach, which takes into account the intersectional subordination of gendered lives.

Having in mind the importance of Tuzla, I would like to make suggestions for further research, which are missing in this study. I chose to focus on Aydınlı neighborhood because of its proximity to my academic institution, which made it easier for me to travel to my field. Tuzla hosts various other urban settings consisting of working class inhabitants such as Şifa, Yayla, Akfırat, Aydıntepe and İstasyon Neighborhoods. Some of these neighborhoods are densely populated with individuals of Alevi origin, whose experiences can be significant for another research. Only a few of my interviewees were of Alevi origin so it would be useful to undertake a research to analyze their experiences of subordination. Another possible research can be conducted by a comparative analysis of Turkish and Kurdish women. In the informal interviews I had in the neighborhood, I realized that Tuzla inhabits a substantial amount of ethnically Turkish population who migrated to the city from Eastern Turkey and the Black Sea region. Kurdish and Turkish women workers are employed in the factories together; it would be insightful to undertake research to investigate the ways in which Turkish women's experiences are distinct from or have in common with Kurdish women. My initial inquiry in this research was to investigate the experiences of Kurdish women. Yet as I proceeded in the field, I centralized my focus on a particular neighborhood. Another research can focus on the industries in Tuzla, especially on textile and leather industries, which are very important to the region. The union of leather-workers is very active in Tuzla and they had an office in Aydınlı as well. I had one informal interview with one of the activists of this union and my insights on the relations of production in the neighborhood matured after this interview. Therefore, a concentrated outlook on the leather-workers, which are huge in numbers, would be helpful to better comprehend the conditions of laboring together with other dynamics of subordination in Tuzla.

During my theoretical research, I came across many sociological analyses regarding the social profile in the studies investigating poverty and neighborhoods. The social profile is mostly constituted as “family” rather than “women”. In these researches, women are counted solely as members of the family. Yet, what I find important is that one should critically investigate women's individuality. For this reason, I speak to my interviewees as women, rather than families. I aimed to

contribute to the existing literature by focusing on their individuality, rather than proceeding from the familial whole. Besides, women's conditions are analyzed within the family in the current literature on poverty. My aim was to contribute to the existing literature by going beyond this perspective in an intersectional manner and voice women who said "I".

While manifesting their individualities, I aimed to show that my interviewees do not possess fixed identities. Their perceptions of gender, ethnicity and class are too complex to fit into a particular identity for each of them. Intersectionality reflects this complexity of identities. My interviewees encounter subordination and marginalization in diverse ways. Collins notices the shifting boundaries of intersectionality in women's experiences of subordination when she states the following:

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 (2000:274-275).

In the light of Collins' remarks, in this thesis I argue that my interviewees do not experience the pressures of gender, ethnicity and class at the same time and in equal degrees. Some experience subordination on the basis of gender and ethnicity more whereas others' experiences are based on the intersections of class and gender. Further, my interviewees can encounter different kinds of subordination at different stages of their lives. Some face the difficulties of being female workers in their childhood. I argue that childhood becomes another factor of intersectional oppression, since laboring as a female child enhances their marginalization. Some of my interviewees face pressures for being female Alevi workers at their workplaces. Alevism becomes one of the factors leading to subordination, next to their class and gender. The components, which constitute the intersecting dynamics of subordination, can change over time and from one woman to another. In sum, this thesis argues that there is no homogeneous outcome of intersectional subordination. Intersectionality does not always work in the same way for everyone. The narratives of my interviewees show that there are heterogeneous identities as well as the differing factors of intersectionality.

Additionally, I would like to mention another crucial point regarding the theory of intersectionality. There is abundant literature in political sociology regarding intersectionality at the structural level. In this thesis, I am working through intersectionality at the individual level by displaying the differing ways of intersectionality on my interviewees' lives. It is important to note that recent literature on intersectionality brings in gender, which does not come up unless the research is individualized. Therefore keeping in mind the individual level at which intersectionality is analyzed in this thesis, this thesis emphasizes the significance of gender.

Lastly, a few words are reserved in this conclusive chapter for resistance and active agency of Kurdish women. In this thesis, I argue that poverty-on-the-edge should not solely be considered in terms of subordination. The conditions that my interviewees encounter also necessitate particular performances of resistance against multiple subordinating agents to ensure their survival. For me, the fact that power operates in the lives of Kurdish women within the intersecting mechanisms of gender, ethnicity and class should not mean that they are passive subjects.

Utilizing the language of the oppressor, the Turkish language, for their pragmatic intentions of neighborhood interaction is one way of resistance. Şükran attaches the image of the house that she dreams of purchasing in an unknown future on her refrigerator and she is busy with domestic labor for this purpose. Despite the subordinating conditions, she is not desperate, but keeps her hopes for a bright future. I got to share the same hope with her when she promised to host me in her future home. She was resistant and I was feeling the same enthusiasm with her.

Pressured in the midst of patriarchal subordination, Mizgin dreams of giving birth to a baby girl. She aims to become a schoolteacher one day and travel to her homeland to raise free women. She also dreams to speak Kurdish freely while she could afford to purchase any dress she desires regardless of its fee. At the age of 25, Mizgin is carrying her hopes for the future amidst her experiences of poverty-on the edge.

Zehra's aim to participate more in civil organizations for women's rights in Aydınlı was another instance for resistance.

And Çiğdem, with her daughter Roza... She is not uncomfortable for being called "eylemci", since she needs to resist so that she and Roza can continue struggle on the edge of poverty.

The lives of my interviewees remind me of Orhan Pamuk's famous words, that I read several times during my field trips: "Perhaps what is attractive is not to choose a path, but to be in a place where we can choose all the paths" (1999: 65). I feel that women struggle to travel beyond the only choice of life granted to them in the midst of subordination. Who knows, whether they can enjoy the life that they would like in the long journey of life.

APPENDIX A

Profile of the Interviewees

Name	Education	Job	Ethnicity	Mother Tongue	Birth of Place	Age
Yeter	Primary School drop out	Cleaning lady	Kurdish-Alevi	Kurdish	Bingöl	32
Zehra	Primary School graduate	Cleaning lady	Kurdish-Alevi	Kurdish	Bingöl	36
Nazmiye	Education none	Home based	Kurdish-Alevi	Kurdish	Bingöl	41
Meryem	High school graduate	Former accountant-Quit working after having a baby - motivated to have a job again	Kurdish	Kurdish	Bitlis	21
Zozan (Suzan)	Primary school graduate	Cleaning lady	Kurdish	Kurdish	Muş	35
Sevda	Primary school graduate	Factory worker	Kurdish-Alevi	Zazaki	Bingöl	33
Dilek	Primary school graduate	Factory worker	Kurdish-Alevi	Zazaki	Bingöl	28
Şükran	Secondary school drop out	Home-based	Kurdish	Kurdish	Adana	30
Mizgin (Yıldız)	Primary school graduate	Saleslady	Kurdish	Kurdish	Bitlis	24
Çiğdem	Primary school graduate	Unemployed Factory worker - currently looking for a job	Kurdish-Alevi	Zazaki	Bingöl	42

APPENDIX B

Questions of the In-Depth Interview

- 1) Sizi biraz tanıyabilir miyim, kendinizden bahseder misiniz?
- 2) Oturduğunuz yeri biraz tanıtabilir misiniz?
- 3) Bu mahallede oturmanızın belirli bir sebebi var mı? Burada oturmaktan memnun musunuz?
- 4) Oturduğunuz mahalledekiler en çok nereli?
- 5) Bir kadın olarak bu mahallede neyi değiştirmek isterdiniz?
- 6) Olağanınız olsa bu kentin neresinde oturmak istersiniz? Neden?
- 7) Gününüzü genel olarak nasıl geçiriyorsunuz ?
- 8) Ev ve iş yeri haricinde nerelere gidersiniz? Nasıl vakit geçirirsiniz?
- 9) Göç etmeden önceki (veye köydeki) yaşamınızdan da bahseder misiniz?
- 10) Göç etmeden önce yaşadığınız yerde bir gününüzü nasıl geçiriyordunuz ?
- 11) Şu an çalıştığınız işten ve iş yerinden bahseder misiniz?
- 12) İş arkadaşlarınızla ilişkileriniz nasıldır?
- 13) Sizce ailenizin, arkadaşlarınızın ve komşularınızın işiniz hakkındaki düşünceleri nelerdir?
- 14) İşinizden memnun musunuz? Başka bir işte çalışmak ister miydiniz? Bu nasıl bir iş olurdu?
- 15) Bir Kürt olarak iş yerinizde yaşadığınız en iyi ve en kötü deneyimler nelerdir?
- 16) Bir kadın olarak sizce işinizin en güç tarafı nedir?
- 17) Eğitim durumunuzdan memnun musunuz?
- 18) Hiç evde çalışma deneyiminiz oldu mu?
- 19) Evde, evin dışında yada işte hangi dilleri konuşuyorsunuz?
- 20) En çok ne zaman ve nerede dil ile ilgili problemler yaşıyorsunuz?
- 21) Eşinizle ilişkiniz nasıldır?
- 22) Evlenmeye nasıl karar verdiniz?
- 23) Acil bir durumda kimden yardım isteyebilirsiniz?
- 24) En çok hangi Tv kanallarını seyredersiniz, hangi gazeteyi okursunuz, ne tür müzik dinlersiniz? Neden?
- 25) Sizce bu ülkede yaşayan kadınların en ortak sorunu ne (ler) dir?
- 26) Sizce yoksulluk nedir ve kimler yoksuldur?
- 27) Kendinizi yoksul olarak hissediyor musunuz?
- 28) Sizce yoksulluk nedir?
- 29) Yoksulluktan kurtulmak için neler yapılabilir?
- 30) Memleket nasıl yönetiliyor sizce?
- 31) Nasıl bir toplumda yaşamak isterdiniz?
- 32) Gelecekte beklediğiniz nelerdir?

APPENDIX C

Photographs Taken During the Fieldwork

Image 1:



Image 2:



Image 3:



Image 4:



Image 5:



Image 6:

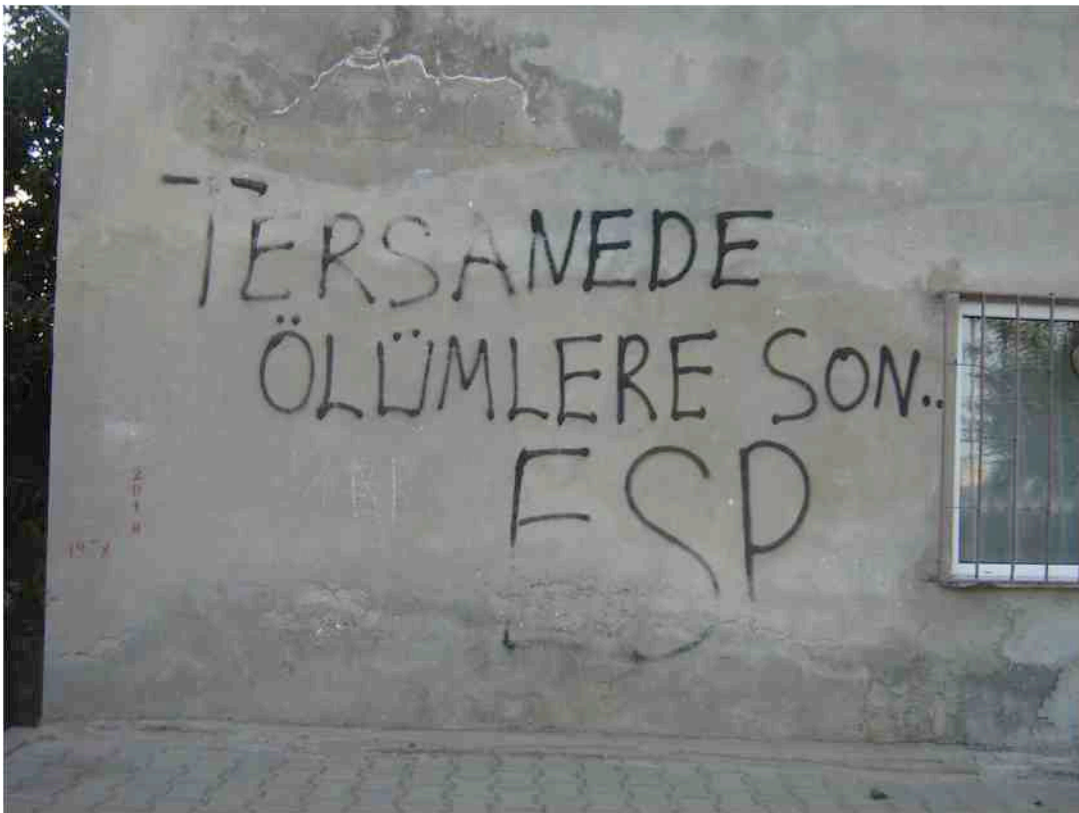


Image 7:

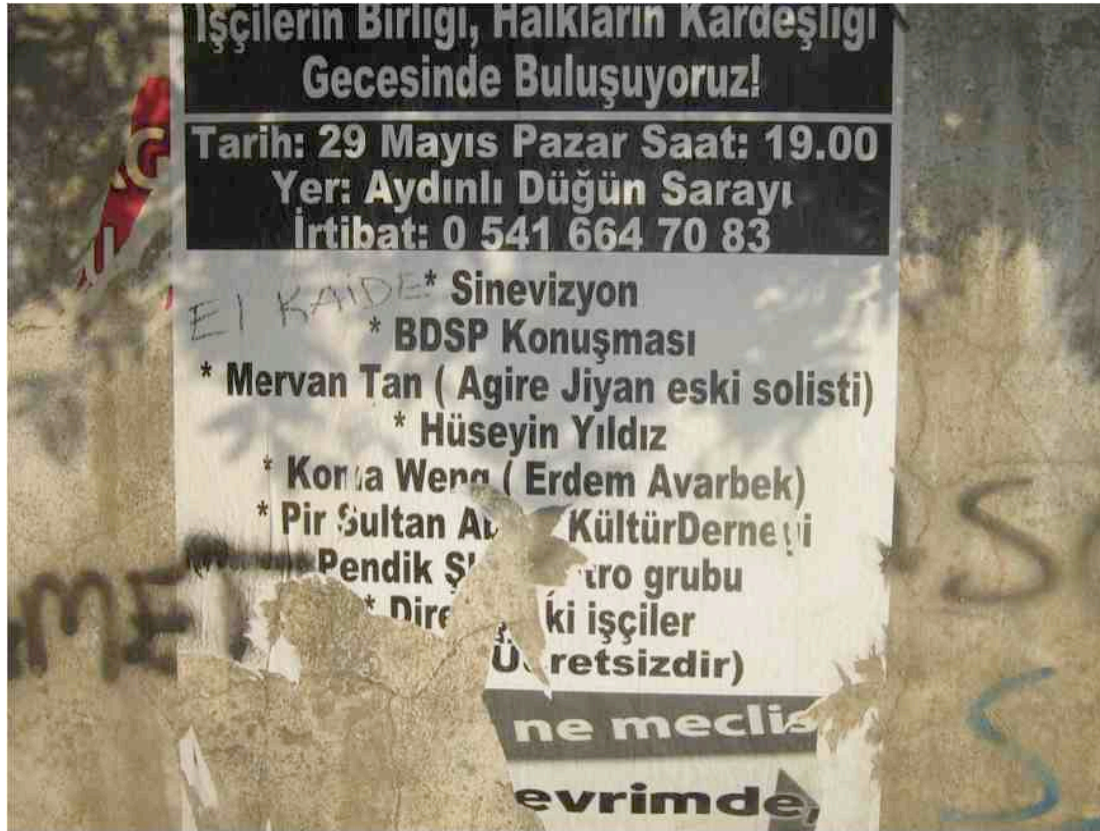


Image 8:



Image 9:



Image 10:



Image 11:



Image 12:



Image 13:



Image 14:



Image 15:



Image 16:



Image 17:



Image 18:

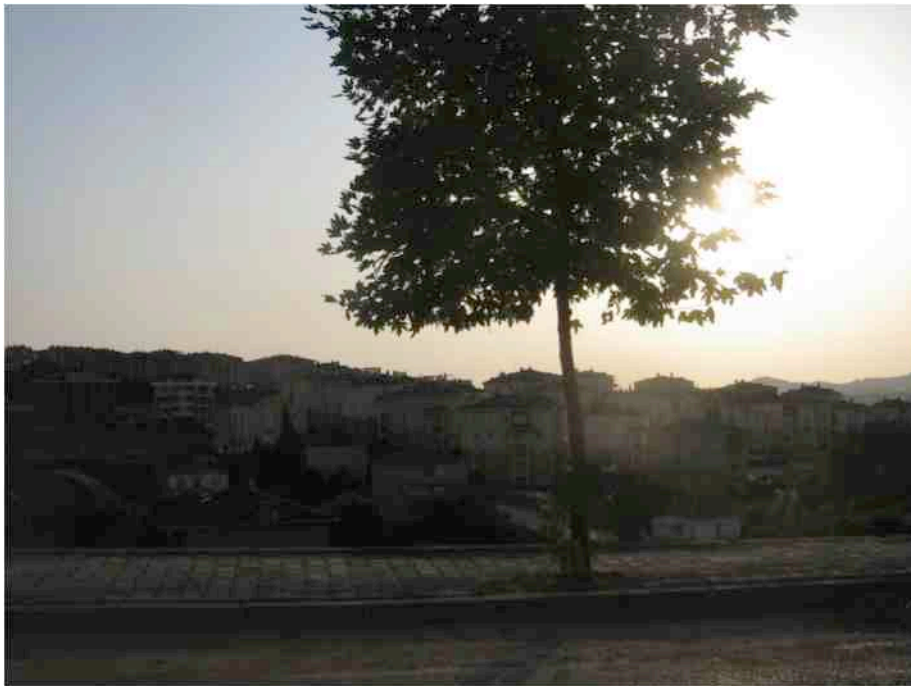


Image 19:



Image 20 :



Image 21:



Image 22:



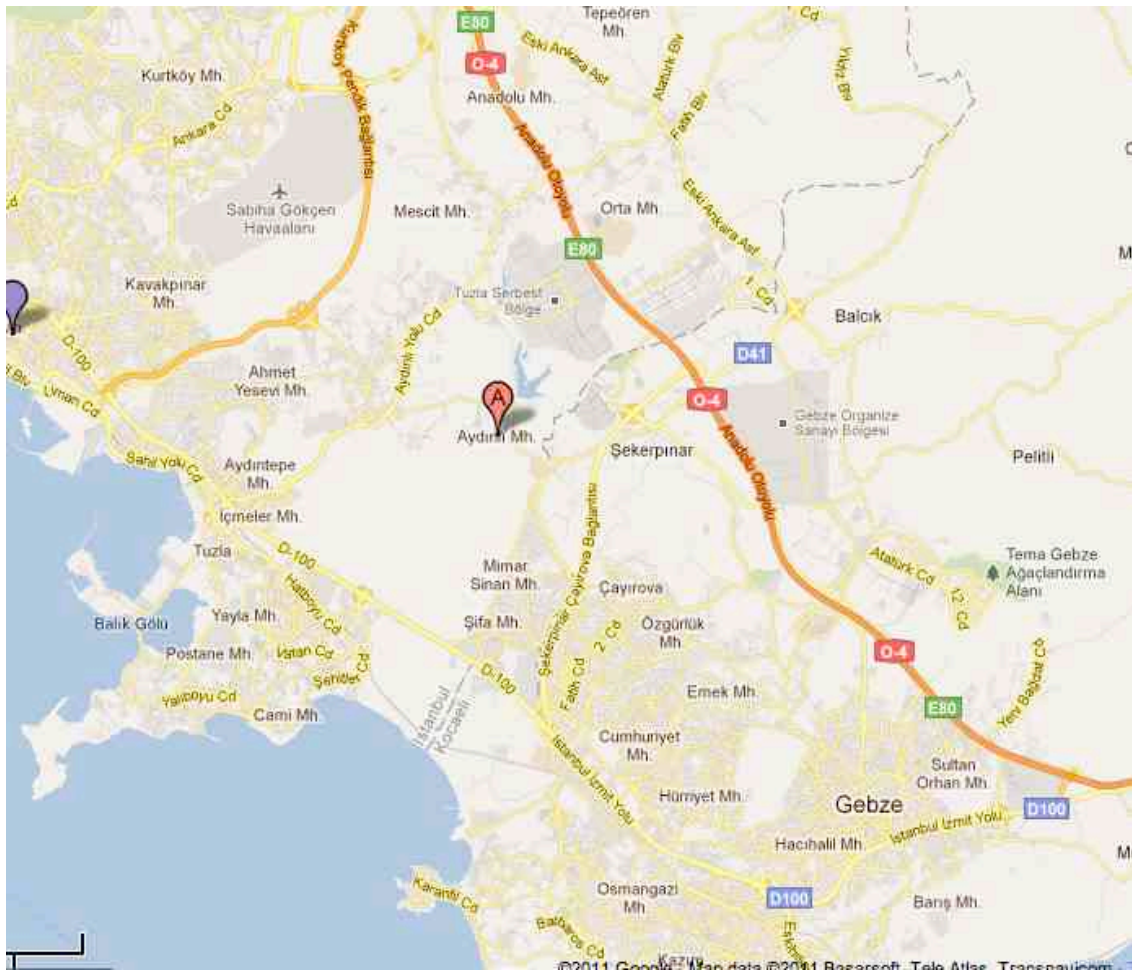
APPENDIX D:

Useful Maps

Image 1:



Image 2:



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