REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

POLITICAL SCIENCES AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CHANGING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

OF WOMAN IN POLITICS IN SOUTHEASTERN ANATOLIA

MA.THESIS

Nurlana JALIL

Supervisor

Assist. Prof. Dr. Filiz KATMAN

ISTANBUL - 2014

T.C.
İSTANBUL AYDIN ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ

Yüksek Lisans Tez Onay Belgesi

Enstitümüz Siyaset Bilimi ve Uluslararası İlişkiler Ana Bilim Dalı Siyaset Bilimi ve Uluslararası İlişkiler(İngilizce) Tezli Yüksek Lisans Programı **Y1112.110006** numaralı öğrencisi **Nurlana JALIL**'in'ın **"CHANGING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF WOMAN IN POLITICS IN SOUTHEASTERN ANATOLIA"** adlı tez çalışması Enstitümüz Yönetim Kurulunun 29.05.2014 tarih ve 2014/13 sayılı kararıyla oluşturulan jüri tarafından *oybirliği* ile Tezli Yüksek Lisans tezi olarak ..*kabul*..edilmiştir.

Öğretim Üyesi Adı Soyadı	İmzası

Tez Savunma Tarihi :08/10/2014

1)Tez Danışmanı: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Filiz KATMAN

2) Jüri Üyesi :   Prof. Dr. Celal Nazım İREM

3) Jüri Üyesi :   Yrd. Doç. Dr. Özüm Sezin UZUN

Not: Öğrencinin Tez savunmasında **Başarılı** olması halinde bu form **imzalanacaktır**. Aksi halde geçersizdir.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that all information in this thesis document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results, which are not original to this thesis.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this Master Thesis to ***my parents*** Ruhangiz Muradova & Mahammad Jalilov.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

AKP	Justice and Development Party
BDP	Peace and Democracy Party
DEHAP	Democratic People's Party
DEP	Democracy Party
CHP	Republican People Party
EU	European Union
MHP	Nationalist People's Party
PKK	Kurdistan Workers Party
TBMM	Turkish National Grand Assembly
UN	United Nations Organization

TABLES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

IDENTITY FORMATION IN KURDISH WOMEN

CHAPTER II

POLITICAL MOBILIZATION OF KURDISH WOMEN

INTRODUCTION

In the period since the end of the twentieth century, women's movements have been quickly developing, organizing and strengthening, and in so doing have been putting forward an alternative to the patriarchal management system that exists throughout the world. Although possessing the potential to influence the way the social order is formed (but still not achieving the expected outcomes), these activities have been subject to many political and academic studies. This study explores the social and political activity of Kurdish women that has emerged over the last 30 years in Turkey, and is based on both ethnic identity and gender.

The current Kurdish problem is perceived from different points of view: a problem of ethnic identity, an economic problem, terror, separatism or a national problem. The aim of this thesis is not to study the core reasons of the Kurdish problem. Nevertheless, the reasons behind the politicization of Kurdish women will necessitate investigating the core reasons of the conflict and looking into its causal factors. There are also some feminist elements in the ideological basis of the Kurdish movement, and these strategies influence the position of women in society and shape their collective power. The successful incorporation of women in mass into politics is one of the main features of the Kurdish political movement in the post -1980 periods.

Overtime, Kurdish women have become the most influential part of the movement. They initially started by taking roles in the political party establishments and street demonstrations (*Saturday's mothers, Peace's mothers*), then in the armed struggle (*women of PKK)*. Although it is argued that Kurdish women engage in political struggle for reasons of

ethnic identity, in reality, they struggle not due to being left behind, but in order to change their oppressed role in society. Even today, young Kurdish women who cannot get out of their homes due to the strict control of other family members join political parties and participate in street demonstrations very easily as a way of fighting for identity and gender equality in society.

In written and visual sources found in the public sphere, women with colorful and bright dresses symbolize the Kurdish culture, while women in front of prisons are characterized as symbols of *victimization and demand for rights*, women in military uniforms are represented as *signs of salvation*. As a very important component of the struggle for the recognition of ethnic identity and a mechanism that allows for new practices, *de-genderizing* has strengthened the Kurdish political ideology and covered both sides of the society by ensuring the involvement of both sexes.

Today, total politicization and representation of Kurdish women in all fields of Kurdish political struggle is the main issue. Through their activeness, women establish and run their own trade unions, political parties, media organizations, magazines and newspapers, while contributing to different activities within and outside of the country. Either active or backstage (there is no passive one) activities of women at all age groups - children, young adults, adults and the elderly - have reached a level that cannot be ignored. Various sides perceive the situation differently; either as a revival, a rise of awareness, an emancipation and livening-up, or as having fallen victim to propaganda, exploitation and abuse of women's power.

Considering that the East part of Turkey suffers from economic and social underdevelopment in comparison with other parts of land, it is captivating

how the **masses** have managed to change and mobilize. Besides symbolizing identity (consciously or unconsciously), the participation of Kurdish women in the struggle – as a result of being touched by the situation from the male perspective (father, spouse, brother, relatives, etc.) – in the Kurdish political struggle comprises the emotional aspect of the issue.

Relevant books, academic papers, studies and experimental data that have been looked through discuss these cases. Nonetheless, it is necessary to consider the questions that trigger this opinion: The underlying question is whether emotional reasons are a satisfactory trigger for the mobilization of a strong army of women. In order to find out the other underlying reasons for and factors of the politicization of women, answers to the following questions have been provided in this study:

- What is the policy for women in the Kurdish political movement and political parties?
- Which factors have had an impact on the mobilization of women in legal Kurdish political parties and Kurdish illegal movements, such as the PKK and similar organizations?
- What kind of responsibilities do Kurdish women bear in nation building?

This thesis, which provides answers to these questions, is divided into the following sections:

Chapter one presents and analyzes the identity of Kurdish women in political, social and cultural aspects. However, firstly the formation of Kurdish woman is explained in order to provide historical context to this chapter. Moreover, the impacts of cultural factors such as tradition, religion

and geographical aspects are analyzed here. The **picture (description)** of Kurdish women is described in the first chapter.

Chapter two is the main chapter that investigates the research questions and problems. The factors behind the political mobilization of Kurdish women are analyzed according to political movements, political parties and institutions. The relationship between feminism and Kurdish feminism as the third wave feminism (2.3) is also the research aspect relating to their politicization. Nationalism and feminism are related in this chapter as well.

As a research method, literature is researched; including books, articles, periodicals, reports, conference presentations, interviews, reportages, movies and documentary films and news announced at the web sites. According to the qualitative methodology the participation, observation and focus groups are used in this thesis.

The scope and limitations of the thesis are as follows; the three main areas to be investigated are Kurdish society (in historical, cultural, civic and political terms), Feminism (the third wave feminism and gender politics) and Nationalism (country, nation, army and women). Limited objective resources are the aspects that make this research harder.

In the first chapter, an answer is provided as to who Kurdish women are, and what the background of their political, social and cultural life is. The contents of this chapter will be necessary in order to understand and provide comparisons for the Kurdish women described in the second chapter.

In the second chapter, all the aspects of the changing role of Kurdish women, as well as the factors contributing towards their political mobilization are researched. These include the party programs and policies towards Kurdish women, their current socio-political life, and the military aspects that have contributed to Kurdish women's changed status and the changing process of Kurdish women overall.

CHAPTER I

IDENTITY FORMATION IN KURDISH WOMAN

1.1. THE POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE OF KURDISH WOMEN

The Kurds are one of the oldest communities in the Middle East. Today the Kurds inhabit the territories of four countries: Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey. The Kurds view themselves as one of the Mesopotamian peoples, whose history dates back to the very early ages, and, although they have differences in regards to which country they live in, as well as their denominations and their dialects, they are generally accepted as a single separate people (Caglayan, 2008:2). The superpowers of the region and the great countries of the historical past always impress the political history and political agenda of the Kurds. Some politicians, historians and authors describe the Kurds as a biggest *non-state nation* (Mojab: 2001) of the 21st Century.

The Kurds are a homogenous (*türdeş*) community and have kept their culture unchanged until today. Currently the Kurds in all four countries are assimilated [*cultural acculturation* Heper: 2010] and integrated [*ethnic cultural case* Heper: 2010] to these four societies (Tan, 2010). They speak the official languages of the four countries that they live in and the languages of other ethnicities whose neighborhoods they also inhabit. (For example the Kurds in the Eastern part of Turkey speak Arabic, and the Kurds of North Iraq speak Arabic and Turkmen languages, too). The Kurds consider their mother tongue as a symbol of national existence. The language is the most important part of the national identity of the Kurds and the most important carriers of the mother tongue are Kurdish women. From this stems the first symptoms and steps of the politicization of

females in Kurdish nation. According to Bruinessen, (1992) the politicization of Kurds also has its roots in reasons such as political and social problems, migration, economic development etc.:

"…It was the political and socio-economic developments in Turkey itself that made the re-emergence of Kurdish nationalism possible. Migration from the villages to the big cities in western Turkey made many Kurds aware of both the cultural differences between eastern and western Turkey and of the highly unequal economic development. Moreover, increasing numbers of young Kurds found the opportunity to study and became politicized (Bruinessen, 1992:32)."

However, with their responsibilities, Kurdish women took part in the past in an explicit and positive manner and they sustain today a new order for the development and reconstruction of the Kurdish nation with their new identity. Dryaz (n.d.:5) argued this point in the article *Women and nationalism: How women activists are changing the Kurdish conflict:*

"Women's participation in politics and war creates an expansion of women's autonomy and it changes the nature of relationship that they keep with the family. There are new institutions all structures, which serve to replace traditional ties with family members and relatives. However, the gender equality embraced by the discourse of this new institution is not necessarily reflected in real life."

Actually, Kurdish women had different identity in different ages of political and social history. The character of the Kurdish woman was described as a leader, a warrior and free in history books until the beginning of the twentieth Century, or before the collapse of the Ottoman Empire (Bruniessen: 1992; Çağlayan: 2013; Soane: 1902; New York Times: 1887). The patriarchal system in the Kurdish society historically did not allow many opportunities for women to appear in public life where the discussion about main issues of society took place (Dryaz, n.d.: 4). But the western author Brunissen (2001), who traveled to the Middle East and Turkey and is a Kurdolog writes in his article *"Von Adela Khanum zu*

Leyla Zana": Weibliche Führungspositionen in der kurdischen Geschichte, (From Adela Khanum to Leyla Zana: Woman Leader in Kurdish History), that Kurdish society is considered usually as a society where the men dominated, but that there had been woman recorded to have held high-level positions in political and military actions. However, another author Caglayan (2008), emphasized in her article:

"Although "Kurdish woman" identity was a construct like all other collective identities, it had a real history composed of personal, social and political processes. What constituted the history of this identity were the pressures and obstacles against this identity and the injustices they lived as a result of carrying this identity. The reason for their adoption of this identity was not restricted with political and ideological factors and their personal histories with this identity."

There are differences between the positions and status of Kurdish women in the past and present, as well. The political, social, and cultural life of Kurdish woman will be explored in the following parts of the chapter.

1.2. MATRIARCHY IN THE KURDS

Matriarchy in societies is not found in any society of the current world. The alternatives for matriarchy are patriarchy or gender equality, the latter of which that is implemented only in democratic and open societies. The real matriarchy belongs to the far past but its roots can be found in some societies.

Kurdish society is a society which is impressed by religion and patriarchal traditions and the domination of men by the rolling of tribes (*aşiret*). The Kurdish tribe is a socio-political and generally also territorial (and therefore economic) unit based on descent and kinship, real or putative, with a characteristic internal structure: A tribe is a community or a federation of

communities which exists for the protection of its members against external aggression and for the maintenance of the old racial customs and standards of life (Bruniessen, 1992:51-63).

It is considered that Kurdish society is structured in a tribal system, where the main power belongs to men; this case means it is unlikely that there could be matriarchy amongst the Kurds. The Kurds patriarchy is a system that is similar to a cultural institute and social networking, connected with the Islamic life style, patriarchal system, rolling of one class, tribal, feudal and national traditions (Caglayan, 2013:40). But Bayrak (2010) posited with different arguments that there was matriarchy in the Kurdish society.

Bayrak (2010) wrote about the leadership of the Kurdish woman and female warriors. There are manifold examples of leader and warrior women that help to define his hypothesis. Kurdish women have had many roles, such as military leaders or leaders of public administrations and families, but this do not reflect all levels of society; these cases took place in the marginal communities. Kurdish patriarchal society is based on tribal and strongly Islamic life standards. There are some important factors, which can refuse the probability of matriarchy. Factors such as religion, tradition, socio-economic and of course geographical, climatic elements made the Kurdish patriarchy strong and gave no space for the matriarchy. This hypothesis is analyzed below:

Religious Factor: Kurdish people can be considered as one of the strongest [*conservative*] Muslim societies of the Middle East (Tan: 2010). Islam's patriarchy concept is reflected in this. As a lifestyle, Islam reflects the political, social, economical and cultural systems of the society. First of all, the limitation of active or open participation in political and social

activities removes the visibility of women and constricts their free activity. As a strongly Islamic society, it can be seen that the existence of matriarchy in the Kurds is virtually impossible. In Kurdish feminist journal "Roza" it is said that [it reflects]

"The matriarchal image of family positively, but indicates that after the acceptance of Islam, the structure of family transformed to patriarchy. Islam is perceived as having damaged the original structure of Kurdish family." (Ozcan, 2011: 49)

Political Factor: Kurdish oppositional understanding interprets that the aim of the state is the assimilation of Kurdish women, and, by extension, the institutions of motherhood and family. According to Heper (2010:19) there was and are no assimilation policies towards Kurds in Turkey but there was a *cultural acculturation*. In this case, the state does not recognize the Kurdish identity and has decided to ignore it. Nor does it allow the recognition of the second [Kurdish] identity (Heper: 2010, 19). However Kurdish women teach the Kurdish culture and language to their children in the family (Ozcan, 2011: 49). According to oppositional understanding of the assimilation [*cultural acculturation*] of Kurdish women, they are not allowed to go schools and remain at home (Çağlayan: 2013).

Tradition Factors: Kurdish traditions are highly influenced by Islamic values and this is also reflected in specific elements of the Kurdish mentality. The wedding and the process towards wedding, blood feud (*kan davası*), marriage with cousins among the tribal members and other social factors do not provide power for women, but even the powerful domination of fathers, brothers and uncles. Additionally the tribe's culture is a dominating pressure on women.

Socio-economic Factors: The Kurdish society is agricultural and stockbreeding. Housework is the only part of a Kurdish woman's work. Some people think that women become an authority figure in the family due to working hard at home (Caglayan, 2013: 51). According to Ozcan (2011: 47) Kurdish feminists illustrated that Kurdish women have different experiences to Kurdish men and addressed Kurdish society, saying that the same reaction should be given in case a Kurdish woman is killed by a Kurdish man or solider.

1.3.   KURDISH WOMEN LEADERS IN HISTORY

Prior to the collapse of Ottoman Empire, the character of Kurdish woman leaders was typically described in history books as both a warrior, and free (Bruniessen: 1992; Caglayan: 2013; Soane: 1912; New York Times: 1887). Words employed to describe Kurdish women as "leaders", "warriors", and "free" are included in this, and these characters existed during the period when some women still dominated amongst the Kurds. Western historians in particular wrote about the leadership of these Kurdish women.

A militarist woman, who lived during the Ottoman period and was called the "Kurdish Amazon" in historical books and newspapers, was *Kara Fatma* - in Kurdish literature *Fatarash*. She was a member of the Kurdish community and she was the wife of a tribal chief. After the death of her husband she commanded a group of more than seventy Kurdish men. Foreign newspapers such as the New York Times have written about her rolling of the group as well as her fights. *Kara Fatma* was an extraordinary case for the western community. Her arrival to the capital Istanbul and her support for Ottoman sultan in the Ottoman – Russian War (Crimean War) became a particular focus of interest groups in the western community. Her

singularly daring fight with a large body of Kurdish volunteers for Turkey (New York Times, November 8, 1987) is detailed in this article which focuses on her appearance:

"She is tall, thin, with a brown, hawk-like face; her cheeks are the color of parchment and seamed with scars. Wearing the national dress of the sterner sex, she looks like a man of 40, not like a woman who will never again see 75. Slung across her shoulders in Cossack fashion is her long sabre, with its jeweled hilt; decorations shine and sparkle on her breast, while the stripes across her sleeve show her to be a Captain in the Ottoman Army " (New York Times, November 8, 1987).

It was interesting for the West and published in the western news for following reasons: The Islamic religion and Eastern traditions do not give dominating power to the woman in the Muslim world. Moreover, the matriarchy does not match the Islamic concept and religious values. The singularity of *Kara Fatma* meant that western historians and authors were unable to compare it with other cases. The popularity of patriarchy in Westland and the non-participation of woman in the military (except in special cases), especially in a rolling position, meant that it was perceived as an extraordinary case:

"All the men in camp turned out to listen to it and discern its origin, when from over the hills they saw a band of some 300 horse men approaching them at full gallop. At their head rode a brown-faced woman, with flashing eyes and lissome limbs, the very picture of an Amazon, Vaulting iron her saddle, she gravely saluted Gen." (New York Times, November 8, 1987)

A similar approach is taken by Kutluata in her thesis *"Gender and war during the late Ottoman and early Republicans periods: The case of black Fatma(s)",* she made the following commentaries:

"A woman warrior in 1850s in the Ottoman Empire constituted more danger for the West. An Ottoman warrior woman leading a cavalry could then be an attractive model for Western women. So, the more Black Fatma becomes an alien due to her ugliness, age and ambiguity of her sexual identity, the less she could be a threat for the Western context. She was not a member of Western icon of women warriors; however despite this fact, the West represented her in the pages of the journals. The reason was in what Black Fatma says in those pages to the Western women: "I am different from you, I am not even a woman, I am too ugly to be a woman." So, the message that was sent by the West to its women was, to be a warrior woman was an uncivilized position in itself whichis suitable for an ugly Eastern woman." (Kutluata, 2006: 48-49)

"Despite the conventional idea that women do not fight, historical researches have shown that women have joined wars also as warriors. However, although women have fought in wars for centuries, they have been relegated to second-class status in the military. Public resistance to women as warriors is rooted in traditional ideas about femininity and masculinity. These ideas become more flexible in certain political contexts. But once the context changes and the war ends, women return to their traditional roles. In recent decades however, we witnessed a shift toward increasing, although not equal, numbers of women in the military along with expanded roles for them. While a small percentage of women hold high ranking positions, most women are relegated to traditionally feminine roles within the army." (Kutluata, 2006: 10)

Kara Fatma is an example of a leader woman in the military field. There were also women rulers in political positions, who represented the tribe and rolled provinces. One of them is other Kurdish woman, called ***Adela Khanum from Halabja***.

Adela Khanum (1847–1924) was from the biggest and most famous tribe "Jaf"[1] *(Caf),* dating back to the Kurdish King Zahir Beg Cafa, who was born in 1114. *Adela* was the wife of Osman Pasha who was the grand seigneur of the Ottoman government called *qa immaqam* in the Shahrizur province,

---

[1]Jaf clan with the population of 500.000 was spread in Kurdish geographical areas of Iran and Iraq. During the Ottoman Empire they were respected for their loyalty and services to the state, it was one of the most killed clans by SeddamHuseyn in Halabja in 1988.

and from the Jaf tribe (Bruinessen: 2000). After the death of her husband, (1909) *Adela* inherited his position and ruled not only his property and family but also Halabja until her death in 1924. Being from Jaf tribe, *Adela Khanum* made significant contributions to Kurdish literature, heritage and culture. During this period many people besides her became famous in Kurdish literature and contributed to the development of the heritage and culture which also took part in social and political fields (Soane: 1912).

Those who wrote and conducted research on her life first of all referred to *"To Mesopotamia and to Kurdistan in Disguise"* by Ely Banister Soane (1912). In 1909, the year of the collapse of the Ottomans, Soane visited Iraqi Kurdistan while working for a British Bank in Iran, where he met with her dressed in Persian clothing (it is not known whether this was because of his interest or semi-official task) (Martin Brunissen (2000: 9-33). It is claimed that the Western world met *Adela Khanum* for the first time on this occasion. During World War I, 1914-1918, *Adela Khanum* saved many English officers and she therefore became known as the *Princess of Brace* (*Han-Bahadır*). Under her administration a new prison, a court of justice led by her, new residences and a spectacular bazaar were constructed.

1.4. SOCIAL LIFE OF KURDISH WOMAN: FAMILY AND SOCIETY

As written above, the Kurdish woman is a member of a tribal system of society. Her role is in the frame, where the measure of her limited visibility is reflected. The patriarchal values of Kurdish society make the Kurdish woman of both secondary sex and secondary class. The image of Kurdish woman also takes several negative influences from gender inequality and ethnicity. There exist three main fields of oppression for the Kurdish woman: these are nation based, class based and gender based (Caha, 2011: 440). The problems of these exclusions **made a frame** of her activity

and visibility. Kurdish women are perceived differently in Turkey. They are understood as "Eastern" and "rural" women or as tribal women but not as "Kurdish women" (Yuksel, 2003: 49). So, in all spheres of life, the place of Kurdish woman comes after that of man. The responsibilities and obligation of Kurdish woman in the family and society will be analyzed in this next section.

1.4.1. Kurdish Woman in Family

In Kurdish family, sons are more coveted than daughters. First of all, the continuity of the generation is interpreted via the male gender. Boys are perceived as potential *agha*s and *sheikhs* for tribes. In Kurdish society today the women have no chance to take part in ruling positions.

"The relationship between father and daughter is distant. [The] Daughter is absolutely under the authority of fathers. Only Father has right to decide of marriage of her and he can let [her] marry someone whom he likes. " (Tekin, 2005: 68)

But the female members of the Agha's family have more freedom in comparison with other women. Their husbands are not allowed to behave in a hard and harsh manner against these women since they come from the Agha's family and they have powerful supporters such as, for example, their fathers, brothers, or uncles behind them. Additionally, these women are educated and are not "second class" like other women / non-Agha family members. However, there are dissociative gender roles and additionally the dissociation of male and female places (Caglayan, 2013: 49). According to Caglayan, the places are divided for man and woman.

This division corresponds also to political and social division and it divides the woman's and man's life from each other. Caglayan emphasized that spending time at home is an uncharacteristic thing for a man. The closed-

off areas like the home are for the women, and it is considered a shame for a man to have to sit at home and not go out every day:

"The villagers have to visit there (Divan) every evening. In case of not going one evening, they are asked for an explanation. If they do not go out for some days, the Agha and all the men will scold them. "What kind of man are you, do you prefer the babbling of your young woman? Are the issues being discussed here not interesting for you? Are you a man or a woman?" (Caglayan, 2013: 50)

"Use of the house and the significance of the division of the home are put in order after gender and age hierarchy. The large space of the home belongs to the male head of house. The places for men are large and well-organized rooms or open spaces, but for women they are the small and closed places. Between those closed places is the kitchen, the place that belongs to her most of all." (Caglayan, 2013: 50)

1.4.2. Beliefs of Kurdish Woman

Most Kurds are orthodox Sunni Muslims, and among the four schools of Islamic law they follow the Shafi'i rite. Not all Kurds, however, are Sunnis and Shafis (Bruinessen, 1992:23). Each Kurdish society in these four countries has different religious streams. In Turkey, most of them are Sunni and Alevi Kurds. The Shiite Kurds live in Iran. Besides Orthodox Shiites and Sunni Islam (…) the adherents of heterodox, syncretistic sects, in which traces of older Iranian and Semitic religions, extremist Shiism (ghulat) and heterodox Sufism may also be detected (Bruinessen, 1992:23). The third heterodox sect is that of the Yezidis (Ezidi in Kurdish), often abusively and incorrectly called "devil-worshippers" (Bruinessen, 1992:23). According to Tan (2010: 95) Kurds experience all religions including, for example, Zarathustra, Manichaeism, Yezidizm, Christianity and Islam.

1.4.3. Apparel of Kurdish Woman

The conservative Kurdish woman wears clothes that cover her; not exactly a hijab but long socks and pullovers and headscarves, but they do not wear purdah. (Caglayan: 2013, Brunissen: 1992). Their dresses are colorful and glossy. The most commonly used colors are colors such as white, red, green, blue and yellow. The typical three colors of Kurds of red, green and yellow were previously forbidden, and the use of these colors could result in imprisonment, but they can be used today. Wedding dresses especially are prepared not only in white but also in those three colors. The colors reflect the Kurdish culture, geography and beliefs. The colors of red, green and yellow are considered the main Kurdish colors. The meaning of those colors is:

Red– Fire

Yellow –Sun

Green – Nature

This philosophy comes from Zarathustra and symbolizes the genesis of the human being. However, traditional dresses are worn in the villages. In the Newroz celebration especially, the national spring festival of Kurds, all women dress in Kurdish clothes and bind yellow-red-green ribbons to their heads. Women prepare the clothes themselves or they order them. The peace mothers[2] in particular wear a white headscarf, which is typical for Kurdish women. The women in the big Kurdish cities, like Diyarbakir, Mardin, Batman do not wear them in everyday life traditionally. For them wearing traditional clothes is valid only during Newroz and at weddings.

---

[2] It is a political statue for mother, whom children are killed in political struggle. More information is given in second chapter, 2.2.4.

1.4.4. Kurdish Women and Marriage

Kurdish women look after the housework, take care of children and work in the land fields. The Kurdish woman typically has five to ten children. She is judged by her behavior because women are also responsible for the honor of tribe:

"There is not said, don't go here or there. But you know what can be accepted negative and what positive. There is a clear line and you behave in this boundary" (Yildiz) (Caglayan, 2013:51)

Being a tribal woman is a very demanding job; it is unbearable being the backbone of the society. You can be daughter of your mother and father but you are also the daughter of tribe.[3] The wedding tradition and its ceremony are also out the will of the woman. The father is responsible for deciding the marriage of his daughter. Women cannot decide or choose their own husband and lover. In the instance of free choice and leaving home to live with a lover there are often conflicts between families and tribes:

"There is a clear preference for marriage with the father's brother's daughter (real or classificatory). In fact, a girl's father's brother's son has the theoretical right to deny her to anyone else. If her father wishes to marry her to a stranger, he has, in theory, to ask permission to do so from his nephews, unless these have already renounced their right of first proposal" (Bruinessen, 1992:72).

Today there are different types of marriages:

- ***Kinship marriage (marriage with father's brother's son)***: This is based on marriage with the family of the Kurdish woman's uncles and aunts. This marriage ensures a close familial solidarity. According to some

---

[3]Aşiret Kültürü Kadın için soylu bir baskı demektir. 21.11.2010 http://www.sabah.com.tr/Pazar/2010/11/21/asiret_kulturu_kadin_icin_soylu_bir_baski_demektir

claims, the marriage with the Kurdish woman's cousin ensures retaining the ownership in the family (Yuksel, 2006: 73).

- **Berdel (peguhork) marriage:** This is based on the exchange of daughters or sisters due to an agreement between families. The wedding of two couples is usually held on the same day. This tradition has been criticized by Kurdish feminists and the woman's movement:

"...It is criticized that Kurdish women are seen as exchange value as exemplified by the practices of *berdel*, peace treasure, and *kuma* (second wife)." (Ozcan, 2011: 48)

- **Agha's and Leader's Family Marriage:** These families marry with people who are in same social stratum. One of the most important targets is to preserve the pre-existing social status (Yuksel, 2006: 74).

- **Kuma (Second wife):** This type of marriage occurs when the wife is not loved by husband or family members, or does not bear children.

Father demands money before the marriage for of his daughter, called *baslik parasi.* But in the case of the Berdel (peguhork) marriage and marriage with cousins, it is dropped. According to Bruinessen (1992:72), (…) the bride-price a father's brother's son is required to pay is considerably lower than that for strangers, which – quite apart from what the origins, causes or fictions of this custom are – favors the choice of father's brother's daughter as a marriage partner. According to Caglayan (2013:56-57) short interviews with the affected women followed:

"I married when I was 14 years old. At that time I did not know more about marriage. (…) I saw in the evening that my father and mother talk and say "I gave Fikriye to Haci. It is better when she serves for uncle and aunt." (Fikriye)

"They gave me when I was 11 years old. I did not know it. I did not understand such things. They told me that I was already given. I cried silently, how can I play? The children

will call me an engaged woman and will not play with me. I thought that at first. Then when I was 14 years old I was married." (Makbule)

"I married in accordance with the *berdel* style. My brother got married. And nobody asked me my opinion. He was old. He was 30 years old and I was12. I hadn't begun menstruation yet. After my wedding party he came to me. I screamed and was scared. Two years after the wedding I menstruated for the first time." (Zeri)

"When a girl is not married to a first cousin, second or more distant (patriarchal) parallel cousins are preferred over other relatives and distant relatives over unrelated persons. There is usually a strong social pressure to marry within the lineage; at some places, village endogamy rather than lineage endogamy (not always distinguishable from each other) seems to be the desirable pattern." (Brusinessen, 1992:73).

1.4.5. The Blood Feud and Kurdish Woman

The "Blood Feud" is a typical act in Kurdish society. Tekin (2006: 76) defines the blood feud as the following:

"Blood feud is killing somebody from another group instead of person who already killed in other group. In other words, blood feud is the response to spilling blood by spilling blood. Spilling blood or taking revenge is tribe's law. After this law, the kinsmen of killed person have the right to kill the killer or somebody of his kinship."

There are few social reasons for the blood feud such as a disagreement over territory or field issues, usufruct of springs or plains (Tekin, 2006). Nowadays, women can be a reason for a blood feud too. As was said above, the "closed" and "rolled" woman is the honor of her father, her brother and of all the tribe. In this case a brutal attitude or rape by two persons can lead to a blood feud. In other cases, the mothers push her sons to kill the rapist or killer. Kurdish women are more conservative than

Kurdish men in terms of upholding traditions. It is important for men that women possess this role.

1.4.6. Differences between Kurdish Women in Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria

In general, the situations of Kurdish women in these countries are very similar. But, by comparison, Turkey has a more modern and open society than the other three countries. There are Kurdish women in Turkey who are well educated and well integrated into the modern society. They tend to be teachers, actors, journalists, parliamentarians, politicians, writers etc. As such, Turkey cannot really be compared with the other three countries. However this does not mean that there is gender equality and freedom for women in Turkey. According to Bozkurt (TQP, 2013: 35) in Turkey, the main obstacle in the way of achieving gender equality has never been the legislation; it has been the patriarchal mentality. When implemented with an eye to upholding gender equality, Turkish laws have always permitted the improvement of women's situation in Turkey (Bozkurt, 2013: TQP, Volume 12, Number 2: 35). According to Sharifi, Kurdish women have very limited chances for a free and respected life in Kurdistan [*Autonomous region of Iraq*] as well:

"A study by the Kurdish Institute for Political Research revealed that 60 percent of women in Kurdistan [*Autonomous region of Iraq*] face violence. In the name of family pride, women and young girls are murdered in open daylight in different cities by their husbands, brothers and other family members; a young girl is beheaded by her family members; a young girl elopes to avoid forced marriage; husbands beat up their wives to teach them a lesson in obedience; many women who live in cities like Erbil, the political capital be moan the fact that they cannot even freely go out for a walk alone around the old city; many complain of the offensive and aggressive behavior they have to endure; women who work for television stations often become objects of draconian surveillance and malicious

attacks of some clergy men under the guise of breach of chastity. These shocking facts speak to the unchanging medieval and precarious conditions under which Kurdish women live".[4]

However it is the ethnic identity in all four countries that forms the main barrier in front of Kurdish women and Kurdish identity:

"…Kurdish identity is fragmented for Kurdish people in four different countries: Syria, Iran, Iraq and Turkey. The image of Kurdish women is constructed as women who don't belong to the state, which leads to various types of assimilation policies….their ethnic identity is forbidden by the state" (Ozcan, 2011: 50).

1.5. THE NEW IDENTITY OF KURDISH WOMEN

"Men are slaves of the state but our sisters are slaves of the slaves and we are women who struggle for a so-called a sexual utopia" Sibel Dogan (Özcan; 2011: 52)

As seen above, Kurdish women accepted these limiting conditions until quite recently. The political inflammation of the Kurdish question as well as the activation of a well-organized Kurdish Movement in the 1990s have provided a new platform and conceived formational protection and changed the mentality, above all with regards the tribal values of Kurds.

This new challenge has created a new roadmap not only for the military struggle but for the civil society as well. The most important and effective issues on the Kurdish Movement's program and concept in order for there to be Kurdish women are first of all *a) awakening, b) liberation and c) modernization of Kurdish nation.* Kurdish women as a marginalized and limited body are coming under consideration as the new and significant

---

[4]Sharifi 2013. Kurdish Women, their plight and socio-political inertia http://kurdistantribune.com/2013/kurdish-women-their-plight-sociopolitical-inertia/

factor for deliverance of the Kurdish nation. The new identity, which will be explained below, is made up of the following elements:

- ✓ New woman
- ✓ New man
- ✓ New family

These are factors that the Kurdish Movement strongly protects and they are spread amongst the Kurds. They will be analyzed in great detail. According to Caglayan (2013: 104), the first researcher on this issue emphasized it as follows:

"In the new identity matrix the old family is replaced by the new family, the old and slave woman is replaced by the new woman and the old – fake man is replaced by a new man; additionally, being a goddess and killing man takes the place of womanliness and manliness."

1.5.1. Definition of the New Kurdish Family

Family is considered a "cooperation institution" (Caglayan, 2013:105). As seen above, the socio-political structure of the tribe is based on that of the family. This is the main factor in the existence of tribal system, which consists of both conservative elements and anti-democratic values for national society. This was for the protection of oneself or common families from foreign pressure and attacks. In this case, Kurds are limited to care about families in a tribe but not those Kurds who are not part of their tribe. Old family can be considered as a separate existence, i.e. not an existence of a nation. In this case, the new family idea brings values for the unity of Kurds under one umbrella. According to Çaglayan (2013: 105) the new family is considered as a **"nation's family"** *(ulusailesi)*. It is needed for the empowerment of women for the development of the nation. Nation building

requires that the idea of the family be significant. The country is symbolized through family and, by extension; the family ensures the unity of the nation (Caglayan, 2013:105).

1.5.2. Definition of the New Kurdish Woman

The position and life standards of Kurdish women are often changing due to political, economic and cultural reasons. This was the character of Kurdish women until the end of the 1990s and during the early 2000s. The new Kurdish woman is now politically active and takes part in all social and political actions. Intelligent Kurdish women are more able to realize their power. Their power, combined with their feeling as "second class" stimulates Kurdish women into being active and proving their bravery. Women's issues are one of the high-priority cases of the political parties (HEP, DEP, DEHAP, BDP, HDP). The strong protection of gender equality and active performance of women have made the Kurdish Movement and political parties more humanist, peaceful and modern.

Women's social networks such as "Saturday's mother" and "Peace's mother" have especially increased since the 1990s. Heavy propaganda associated with gender values are also presented in books and papers, which have been used in this thesis (see list of literature). Today, there are no Kurdish parties or institutions that do not protect or accept gender equality in the Kurdish society.

1.5.3. Definition of the New Kurdish Man

Man, who is dominant in the Kurdish family and society, has easily adapted to the change of balance in genders. However, man, who is considered as

the leader of Kurdish awakening, is in charge of these changes. The character of the new man is at peace with his own self and with that of women. Men accept the new image of woman and fight with them together. The participation of women presents the man with new and alternative approaches towards the development of the nation. The Kurdish man who is the leader of a tribe, (also known as tribes man), who disempowered their wife, daughter and sisters is already changed and protects the balance of gender. According to Caglayan (2013:105) the "fake" man was a considerable barrier to the building of large families; the pressure that the man puts on the woman is produced from political pressure from the state and from society. The "fake man" had complete power over the family and could mistreat or abuse women. With the death of the "fake man", the new man has emerged who respects the gender balance, who shows no violence towards women, and who realizes and supports her in her education.

CHAPTER II

POLITICAL MOBILIZATION OF KURDISH WOMAN

2.1.   KURDISH MOVEMENT – A FEMINIST MOVEMENT?

It cannot be said that women do not play an important role in Kurdish society. Their role is highly significant. But women are not in the right place in society. The hegemony of the male leads to woman's invisibility and man does not respect her personality correctly. She is an important element for keeping the traditional society unchangeable, even the protection of national identity via conservative and sometimes unfair methods as written in the previous chapter. Woman's life has not typically been considered part of the security of nationality and national identity.

There exists a dream in which Kurdish women become key decision-makers in political parties and institutions, become members of Parliament, human rights lawyers, leaders of parties, even founders or co-founders of movements and organizations of vital importance. This dream comes through via the strategic and conceptual approaches of gender policy.

Bringing the woman into the foreground and challenging over her activity and lifestyle in the Kurdish Movement's program represent revolutionary changes in Kurdish mentality and political life. There are theories that the Kurdish Movement is a struggle for national identity and liberation. But this is not a fully accurate description: During the research process it became clear that actually the Kurdish movement was something of an intellectual revolution, especially in so far as its concept of women in society. However, the movement's ideology is based on feministic values.

Zubeyde Zumrud, from Diyarbakir, the local representative of *Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party* (BDP) commented that the Kurdish Movement is a Feminist Movement. She said that:

"Actually it is a feministic movement. It made a mental and spiritual revolution among Kurds. Our female Leader is Sakine Cansiz. Woman can fight a battle and struggle for peace too. There is today a woman's army. The women are decision-makers for their own issues. There was the situation of refusing woman. Now Kurdish women have a free and unique character under one network. " (Zubeyde Zumrud, private interview, 07/2013 Diyarbakir /Turkey)

Another Kurdish interlocutor, *Sheyhmus Cakan*, a reporter on Kurdish issues, clarified the hypothesis about feminist challenges of Kurdish movement in the following manner:

"Woman today occupy the foreground of the movement…her role is at the first place. This is the same situation in the Kurdish party BDP as well."

According to Dryaz (n.d.: 3), the style of women's mobilization and their capacity for action in these movements are not at the same level and every one of these movements has formed different perceptions of femininity and has offered various interpretations of the relationship between nations and woman. In the year 1986, the earliest texts on the emancipation of Kurdish woman appear in the writings of Ocalan[5] (Dryaz, n.d.:3).

There are arguments concerning Kurdish Women and the concept of woman in Ocalan's book *„Jenseits von Staat, Macht und Gewalt" (2010).* In this book Ocalan compares the role of woman with the state and emphasizes the models of family-state relations bellow:

---

[5] The new reflections of Ocalan (Leader of PKK) about the man-woman relationship are interpreted as the result of ten years of tension between him and his wife Kesire Yıldırım herself a member of the PKK's central committee until the third congress in 1986.

"The State implements itself as "micro-model" in the family and the family orientates itself towards the State as its "macro-model". […] The despot on the head of State is the same with head at the family: Man."(Ocalan, 2010: 229)

The critics against state-ruling and ordering who compare the disadvantages of injuring gender balances in both institutions – both *State* as a macro-model, and *Family* as a micro-model – bolster the feminist ideology in the Kurdish Movement. The most significant fact is that the issue of women has now developed extreme importance, and has become a priority for the Kurdish nation. According to the "new woman" concept, women are not anymore honorable than men, and are replaced with the country, the homeland: "Woman questions are today in an urgent problem-like state in the Middle East." (Ocalan, 2010: 229)

The Kurdish movement considers that the women's rights could be implemented only when society can remove the notion of "pseudo masculinity". Free society and victory are emancipated with resignation from the concept of pseudo manliness. According to Caglayan (2007:122) by publicizing his resignation from pseudo manliness, the Kurdish leader could make a challenge for these changes. The Kurdish feminism concept is included in this thesis, in which the liberation of women and men depends on the actions of each other. In other words, Kurdish men must have a shift in mentality, which will encourage them to support the liberation of Kurdish women.

However the Kurdish Movement does not support Western values, and it considers that Western modernity has not achieved the liberation of women. The trafficking of women, bodily abuse of women in the work place, and abuse of women's ability in the work place are regarded as the results of capitalist development etc.:

"It is not only tradition that makes problems. The concepts of values, which are produced in the European civilization, are just as destructive as dogmatic traditions. The woman is confused in-between the culture of pornography and pitch black deception." (Ocalan, 2010: 266)

2.2. GENDER POLICY OF KURDISH OFFICIAL POLITICAL PARTIES

"[...] Kurdish youth should understand that women and family are issues of existence and life. Above all, the ways of raising the femininity of "Kurdishness" should be investigated. It is very well known that clever and wise mothers are as essential as food. [...]"
Ergani Madenli Y.C., Roj-i Kurd, 12 September 1913

The above text is taken from an article published under the title of *"The issue of Women in Kurds"* in the journal *Roj-i Kurd* by *Ergani Madenli Y.C.* from 12 September 1913. Although there is no clear evidence as to how influential this article was at the time, it calls for women in the current Kurdish movement to mobilize, be they Kurdish women from rural or urban areas. Although Kurdish women's need for power in this struggle is perceived as strengthening the ideological and ethnic struggle, in fact, it is related to the fact that women are the main carriers of ethnicity, language and culture in Kurdish society.

What makes the situation different is the change of methods and roles (from invisible to visible), which thus become influential by adapting to the conditions and criteria of the modern struggles. Indeed, even before the emergence of the Kurdish political movement, the Kurdish woman was an important actor, yet one lacking mass visibility in public and social life. They have taken part in the struggle as individuals and fought for the

survival of their ethnicity and culture both biologically and culturally by keeping their identities and cultures alive (in particular the language).

The Kurdish political movement and revival of its feminist movement have led Kurdish women out of a passive, restricted, oppressed, and deprived situation similar to enslavement. The leaders of the movement have understood the benefits of this development for Kurdish people as a whole, and have thus, set about promoting this ideology. In this manner, after 1980, as it was before it, the position of women in the society has developed as an indicator of the socio-political situation of the Kurds (Caglayan, 2013: 87).

Caglayan explains that, while before 1980 Kurdish women were a symbol of "separate" and "civilized" nation, it was in the post-1980 period that an image of "free, strong and leader" Kurdish women were developed. At first there was the image of Kurdish women as "slaves" and "depressed", who characterized the Kurdish nation of the time. Afterwards, an image of free Kurdish women emancipating their nation was promoted in the agenda (Caglayan, 2013: 87). At this point criteria were brought into politics that would strengthen the identity, and in particular the movement.

In the Kurdish movement today, freedom and equality are the cornerstones of women's liberation ideology (10thCongress of the Movement, 26 August 2008). Especially since the 1990s, there has been a distinct proliferation of political parties, organizations and trade unions built upon these criteria, as well as books and research defending and promoting these values. Today, there is almost, no single political party or organization that contributes to the Kurdish struggle but does not engage in anti-sexism, or promote libertarian and egalitarian principles. In order to investigate the issue in

detail, it is useful to analyze the issue of women in legal Kurdish political parties (an organization which reflect the spirit of people, understanding them and thus, ruling) involved in Turkish politics. Indeed, the women policy in the charter and programs of the political parties mentioned below have developed overtime, and with each step the policy has become more and more comprehensive.

Support to women in the programs of the banned Kurdish political parties (HEP, DEP, HADEP, DEHAP[6]) is conventional. But the issue was dealt with more effectively by the BDP. In fact, until the BDP, other Kurdish political parties set the basis of the current activeness of Kurdish women as well as contributing to the popularization and comprehensiveness of the women issue by considering it in a conventional dimension.

It can be considered that the Kurdish movement either directly or indirectly affected the gender composition, institutional basis and formation of the policies of political parties established in the 1990s such as HEP, DEP and HADEP (Caglayan, 2013: 129). As mentioned above, although the banned political parties had a women policy, none of them were active in this issue, and it never appeared as one of their major strategic concerns. This was due to the conditions under which they operated and restrictions they faced.

On the issue of women in charters and the programs of political parties regarding women (both in legal political parties and in terms of the identity of women politicians), Caglayan (2013) finds that the attitude of the HEP

---

[6] HEP – Halkın Emek Partisi – People's Labor Party; 1990-1993
DEP – Demokrasi Partisi – Democracy Party; 1991-1994
HADEP – Halkın Demokrasi Partisi – People's Democracy Party; 1994-2003
DEHAP – Democratic People's Party; 1997-2005

towards women's rights in its 64-page party program was summed up over just a single paragraph:

"Schooling ignoring the equality women and men and excluding women from social life will be prevented, rules against the equality of women and men will be eliminated from laws, economic, social, cultural and legal measures will be taken to ensure the equality of women and men in all ways of social life" (HEP: 1992:53).

All those mentioned in this paragraph can be defended in the program and charter of every party that bears secular, liberal, socialist, etc. values. If that is indeed the case, then there is nothing specific that addresses the politicization and mobilization of Kurdish women. But in the new period, it is one of the first steps towards the exacerbation of the women issue. Classically speaking, DEP is on a similar track as the HEP, and yet DEP covered the issue of women in its program in a more comprehensive way.

"Formal or informal gender discrimination and violation of human rights is a serious problem for democracy. Laws will be redesigned in order to ensure the equality of women and men and their equal participation in all ways of social life, all ideological and social barriers will be cleared. In the work life, women will be protected from repression and exploitation." (DEP, 1993a:11, Caglayan: 2013)

The text taken from HEP's program defends the basic principles of self-expression, finance, employment and education, all of which ensure the position of women society. However, DEP elaborated on these in great detail in its program:

- Gender inequality was taken hand-in-hand with human rights. (Caglayan, 2013: 130)

- The equality of women and men is not a generalization here; the emphasis was made on the amendments of law providing the equality of women with men.

- By paying close attention, it is possible to see that equality is not horizontal (equality of women and men) but vertical (equality of women with men); equality is emphasized and in terms of gender-equality nothing is mentioned in regard to the protection of men (and there is no need for this).

Thus it is not just for general reasons, but also for the development of the situation of women, for which the amendments of laws are being considered, which are emphasized.

The question of female labor, (i.e. the employment of women whose care work goes unnoticed), is defended in the public sphere. At this point, DEP reflected one of the three strategies prescribed by *Simone De Beauvoir – a feminist writer* in her work on the topic of "how women can overcome being the second sex" - "the employment of women in the public sphere" in its program (Beauvoir: 1970, Sasman: 2007).

In HADEP's program, the women policy was moved from the section of social policies to the section on democratization. Despite having almost the same characteristics as the DEP, the sentence stating, "maternity institution - a "social and natural responsibility" will be taken under protection" carries special importance (HADEP, 1994:12). Although mothers who lost their children in the armed struggle were also paid special attention to in the program, women were considered as an

important instrument in the formation of the nation in their potential roles of mother. Considering women policy in a philosophical and romantic way, DEHAP defended Kurdish women as below:

"[...] Today's world is the product of a history in which women have not taken part but have been excluded and silenced…it does not find solutions to the problems of humanity. Equality while ignoring half of the society is not true equality, democracies where women are not represented with their differences are incomplete democracies" (DEHAP, 2003: 18-19) (Caglayan, 2013:136)

The women policies of banned political parties, all of which supplemented each other, were developed more and more while being inherited from one to another. Consequently, all were re-shaped in BDP's program, which included its own amendments and additions.

BDP describes itself as a party that is based on the values of the times of democratic civilizations: i.e. libertarian, egalitarian, a defender of justice, pacifist, pluralist, participatory; a party that considers the difference of wealth in society and rejects all kind of discrimination; one that is focused on humanity and society, that embraces horizontal and vertical democratic functioning based on dialogue and re-conciliation; that defends internal democratic functioning with resoluteness, that understands peaceful and democratic politics as essential, adopts global values and defends novelty; sees the freedom of human in gender equality, aims to build a democratic-ecological society, libertarian and egalitarian leftist mass-based party (BDP's Charter: Description of Party, Article 2) and one that is represented in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey.

In its charter, BDP deploys 40% of the gender quota based on both sexes in its selection of candidates for general and local elections, as well as any kind of party structures. The added value of the party's gender quota and

the most important feature is the application of positive gender discrimination at all levels. If one of two candidates with the same amount of votes is a woman, then, preference is given to her (BDP Charter. The Functioning Principles of Party: Article 4, g).

Provision of this opportunity is one of the strategic details mobilizing, motivating and accelerating the politicization of women. BDP has been represented with 29 among 548 deputies in the 24th term (Turkish Grand National Assembly) (TBMM). According to gender, while 46 out of 327 deputies of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), 19 out of 134 deputies of the Republican People's Party (CHP), 3 out of 52 deputies of the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), 2 out of 6 independent deputies are women, BDP are represented in the TBMM with 9 women deputies out of 29 deputies in total (TBMM). In terms of share, the proportion of women in the parliament is as below in the Table 1:

Table 1. The Distribution of Deputies of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey

Name of the Party	Women		Men		Total
	In actual	In percentage	In actual	In percentage	
AKP	46	14.06%	281	85.93%	327
CHP	19	14.17%	115	85.82%	134
MHP	3	5.76%	49	94.23%	52
BDP	9	31.03%	20	68.96%	29
Independent	2	33.33%	4	68.66%	6
Total	79	14.41%	469	85.58%	548

Source: TBMM

Women are represented in the party structures and boards of BDP as well as in local (Town and District Women Assemblies) and central

organizations (Central Women Assembly) and in Party Groups (BDP Charter: Structure of Organization, Article 15). Including legal budget support, 15% of the income at town, district and provincial levels is directed to women assemblies. (BDP Charter: Budget and Final Accounts, Article 108). However, the most surprising issue is that, in defense of women's rights in civil law emerging from the principle of gender equality marriages, more than one at a time resulted in the cancellation of membership (BDP Charter: Terms and Conditions of Membership, Article 5)

2.2.1. Kurdish Woman in Political Life

The philosopher Socrates says that even if you are not interested in politics, politics is always interested in you. The Kurdish woman has been a part of politics throughout every period of Kurdish history, but her participation has been partly visible and often absolutely invisible. She has not always been active in social and political life; her place has been at home, caring for children and speaking Kurdish to them. The measures of her political visibility, and the number of female politicians, have been limited but she has become a powerful influence on society. The Kurdolog Bruinessen (2001) defined this period as "from Adela Khanum to Leyla Zana" and emphasized that there was a political participation of Kurdish woman and that over time this has changed the methodology and strategy of political life.

The invisible political participation of Kurdish woman was massive and effective. Kurdish women who used to stay in their houses and be fully obedient to their husbands, today stand up for their rights, struggle for their languages, cultures and identities, and all of these things create an

individual consciousness and foster an independent personality in them (Caha, 2011:438). They talk politics even at home; the language and Kurdish culture are the main issues for which she is responsible. If today almost all Kurds in Eastern Turkey speak Kurdish, then it is the result of Kurdish women's fight against the suppression of the Kurdish language. The principles of nationalism led to ethnic problems but this has not been able to work effectively for a homogenous Kurdish society until today. Heper wrote:

"The Turkish state has not resorted to forceful assimilation of Kurds, because the founders of the state have been of the opinion that for long centuries both Turks and Kurds in Turkey, particularly the latter, had gone through a process of acculturation or steady disappearance of cultural distinctiveness as a consequence of a process of a voluntary or rather unconscious assimilation. " (Heper, 2010:6)

In his article *Turkishness and Turkification of Kurds* Yegen (2009) maintains that this policy began in 1924. It can be noticed that this responsibility to care for the mother language was officially given to Kurdish women during this period. Yegen argues that, according to assimilation strategy, the Kurds are considered citizens of the Republic and that there is no longer a Kurdish nationality but rather a notion of the Turkish citizen. Yegen considers this to be the origin of the Kurdish question in Turkey. Moreover, after the first Kurdish rebellion in 1925, the settlement of Kurdish families began, leading to the changing of Kurdish surnames, the names of villages and the names of local places. The author described the relations of the Turkish state with the Kurdish community in his research. Tekin (2010) cites a further example of language policy: There was a campaign for language, called "Citizen, speak Turkish – *Vatandaş, türkçe konuş*". This functioned as an invitation to share Turkish identity (Be Turk!) and yet it was at the same time a form of discrimination

(You are not Turk –*Türk değilsin*) against non-Turkish nations. But Heper (2010) maintains his opinion about language:

"The Kurds are a large isolated ethnic group in the regions where they live. During Ottoman Empire and in Republic of Turkey they boasted a high population. Additionally they are a homogeneous community. Although (after Turkish) Kurdish is the second language, they preserve their own language. The Kurdish society has been a special community that even during the Ottoman Empire,the Republic of Turkey should have paid attention to." (Heper, 2010: 69)

These aspects created new challenges for women who take on both an invisible and visible role in political life. Other instances of invisible activity developed as well, such as having an influence on decision-making in family, or latent dominating of mothers, mothers of husbands and grandmothers, which could be accepted as the domestic hegemony of woman. Unfortunately, this power was a part of man's hegemony and in reality those women made contributions to tribal and unjust systems. They were not free, and nothing occurred of their own free will when they ruled. This system made known the notion of the "male woman." However the participation of Kurdish women in political life can be distinguished in two different aspects: *legal participation and illegal participation*.

- Legal participation covers the participation in legal political Kurdish parties, in parliament, and in other political organizations, which are officially recognized by the Turkish government and State.

Example: For the first time in Kurdish history a woman represented a political party in the Turkish parliament when Leyla Zana, who was the first female member of the legal party DHP, was elected in the parliamentary elections of 1991. Thus began the new era of Kurdish women in political

life. She was one of the politicized women who had been educated and took on political responsibility and participated in political activity after the arrestment of her man.

- Illegal participation is being a member of the PKK and of other institutions related to the PKK, such as the Woman's Liberation Party – PAJK (Partiya Azadiya Jinên Kurdistanê), media and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) etc.

Example: Both kinds of female participation began with the establishment of the largest Kurdish Movement. During the establishment of the party some women decided to participate. One of the five founders (Abdullah Ocalan, Cemil Bayık, A. Haydar Kaytan, Duran Kalkan and Sakine Cansiz) was Sakine Cansiz, who was killed with two Kurdish activists on 9 of January 2013 in Paris. She was the only female founder that was active for the PKK in Europe. Over the followed pages this case will be analyzed in detail and will be fleshed out in order to develop further questions about the legal and illegal representation of women in political life, in parties, parliament, movements, media, NGOs and the army.

2.2.2. Kurdish Women in Political Parties

The political experiences of Kurdish women in political parties began with those of Leyla Zana, who was the first Kurdish female politician. She founded the Democracy Party (DEP), which was a continuation of the HEP and the first female parliamentary member of Kurdish opposition in TBMM in 1991. But Leyla Zana could not stay in TBMM and did not realize her mandate over the course of 5 years. Her speech in the Kurdish language while swearing in for the TBMM was considered an illegal felony

and it led to her imprisonment for 15 years. She was re-elected as an independent member from Diyarbakir but was supported by the BDP in 2011. Kurdish parties were not represented in TBMM from 1991 till 2007.

Since 2007, the Kurdish parties have been more powerful and active, with significant achievements regarding ethnic and religious questions in Turkey, as well as questions of democracy. Participation in these parties, which were continuations of each other, increased year by year. Social activity in political parties was a new challenge for Kurdish woman. Political parties ensured the socializing of Kurdish women on a massive scale.

The table below shows some research results of Caglayan (2013) into the scores of female relations with the political party HADEP. Caglayan analyzed the participation by comparing the age, educated situation and profession in the party, as well as taking into account obstacles and other problems for activity in the party. According to Caglayan's research (2013:256) it is women over the age of 41 who make up the largest part of HADEP membership. However, membership is very low in the age bracket from 36-41. Table 2 shows the following:

Table 2. Age groups of female party members

Age groups of female party members	
Age	**%**
18-23	13.5
24-29	14.8
30-35	19.9
36-41	14
41- +	37.8
Total	**100**

Source:Çağlayan, Handan. **Kürt Kadınların Penceresinden**, İstanbul, İletişim Yayıncılık, 2013.

The educational situation of female members is also interesting. Table 3 shows how the education level with regards education in Turkish in South-East Turkey is particularly low:

Table 3. Educational situation of female party members

Educational situation of female party members	
Education	**%**
Illiterate	8.2
Able to write and read	15.8
Primary school	64.7
Secondary school	4
High school	7.3
Total	**100**

Source:Çağlayan, Handan. **Kürt Kadınların Penceresinden**, İstanbul, İletişim Yayıncılık, 2013

From the tables given above one can imagine the educational level of female party members in a party. But there is a question: firstly how are the female members of these parties represented, and secondly, women from which professions make the greatest contribution to the party's activity? (Table 4) It is important to bear in mind that the typical place of the Kurdish woman was the home, until the end of the 90s.

Table 4. Professions in the party's activities

Professions in the party's activities		
Professions	**Frequency**	**%**
Member of neighborhood commission	4	3.3
Member of woman division in districts	20	16.4
Member of woman division in city	59	48.4
Member of Board	28	23.0
Member of Central woman division	5	4.1
Member of council of municipalities	2	1.6

Source:Çağlayan, Handan. **Kürt Kadınların Penceresinden**, İstanbul, İletişim Yayıncılık, 2013

For Kurdish women, being able to actively participate and mobilize in large numbers over social and political issues (with the support of the new Kurdish ideology) is a great victory, especially considering that this is in spite of restrictions from the tribal system. Indeed, the problem of political activation of women has been solved, but there are still restrictions from family members and other members of kin.

In Table 5, given below, Caglayan argued the situation of women in the HADEP party with regards these restrictions:

Table 5. Restrictions from people

Restrictions from people		
Who	Frequency	%
Father	9	7.4
Mother	5	4.1
Husband	2	1.6
Brothers and sisters	1	0.8
Kin	4	3.3

Source:Çağlayan, Handan. **Kürt Kadınların Penceresinden**, İstanbul, İletişim Yayıncılık, 2013

Today, the Kurdish party BDP has 44.156 members and a considerable assembly of women. BDP organized 2 women's congresses. The last women's congress was held in April 2013, in which 10.000 women from different regions of Turkey took part. The motto of the congresses was *"For a well-organized women community, democratic liberation, and free life".*

The women involved consider the 21ˢᵗ Century as women's century and they work strongly on woman issues and develop strategies for party policy on women. In the local elections in 2014, BDP declared its quota of women from the districts.

2.2.3. Kurdish Women in Parliament

Historically, the first experiences of Kurdish woman in Parliament began with Leyla Zana's win of the 1991 parliamentary election. This was groundbreaking development for the Kurdish opposition in Turkey. The women are represented not only in the parties, demonstrations and protests, but also in the parliament. Women's political activity has experienced a wave of popularity, stemming from the legitimization of female political activity, which led to a new beginning of political mobilization of Kurdish women. However, in 1991 there was only one

female Kurdish parliamentarian, and it was only after sixteen years that the Kurdish community was able to win in the elections and enter the Turkish parliament as BDP. The number of female Kurdish parliamentarians was eight persons. In total there have been (and are since the last period) 12 female parliamentarians in the Turkish National Grand Assemble.

These women are ethnic Kurds and Zazas. The education level and social experiences and engagement of these female parliamentarians vary, but their point of focus and connection is in their grasp of the concept. The main point is that some of these female parliamentarians have experienced arrestment or punishment regarding their judgment over issues related to separatism or terrorism. Additionally, several of their activities are heavily criticized and some of them have become topics for discussion in the media and state institutions. A relevant case in point is the example of *Kisanak*, *Tugluk* and *Tuncel* with regards to a meeting with PKK members in the Shemdinli – Derecik region (10/2012).

2.2.4. Kurdish Women in Socio-Political Movements

The movements can be defined as a union of supporters in pursuit of a common goal and common interests. The movements were often the first step of the political parties. Some movements were so strong that they developed into political parties. Movements are also a political and social platform for Kurdish women to claim their own targets, to protest and to make demands.

In this part two popular movements of Kurdish women will be presented. They are:

- 	*Saturday's mothers* (Turkish: *Cumartesi anneleri*)

- *Peace's mothers* (Kurdish: *Dayîkên Aşîtîyê,* Turkish*: Barış anneleri*)

The concept of the factors of "motherlessness" and political activation bolster each other. Mothers have always held special status in society; the state even provides provisos for the rights of mothers with laws. This is the first incident of women carrying the identity of the mother in action. It is important to bear in mind that motherhood is perceived as an institution in Kurdish society and in the Kurdish movement.

"Kurdish feminists who consider motherhood as an institution that keeps society alive, rather than a natural biological and psychological state, often glorify it for this reason. Motherhood is consecrated, especially in those groups whose positions are close to the axis of the ethnic struggle. Names like Saturday mothers and Peace's mothers are correlated to this understanding."(Caha, 2011: 446)

Moreover, these movements cover the political elements and are derived from political concerns. Today, both movements are effective at making contributions, impressing society and challenging the political and social situation. The aim and background of both movements are described in this next section.

Saturday's mothers was established in 1995, inspired by mothers from Argentina, who came together in the *Plaza de Mayo* Square demanding that political groups take action over their sons who had disappeared. Every Saturday, Kurdish mothers went to Galatasaray Square and protested about the disappearance of their sons. Their objectives were to receive a genuine answer from the state about their sons' disappearance.

This movement begun from the initiative of Kurdish women, but it is now presents all over Turkey. The Kurdish men are always the main players in

the political struggle against nationalist strategies and politics, which are direct barriers and have a provocative influence in politics. Junta groups have used this as a means of rejecting the danger that stems from the politicized community.

Peace mothers is an initiative founded by those mothers whose children died in the mountains while taking part in military operations, and who were the victims of a national struggle. The aim of Peace mothers is to promote peace between all ethnic groups in Turkey, especially between the Kurds and the Turks. This civil rights movement was established in 1999 and is still active today. Peace mothers now include mothers whose children died in military operations in the mountains, as well as those whose children serve or served in the Turkish army.

Dondu Engin became a member of Peace mothers after she lost her daughter and son in the mountains. Her other son is a soldier in Turkish Army. This speaks of an inherent conflict by which members of her own family have to fight each other.

2.2.5. Kurdish Woman in the Media

Since the Ottoman period, there have been Kurdish activists who have written about and promoted the strengthening and solidifying of Kurdish women. In 1913, Ergani Madenli wrote an article for the Roji-Kurd magazine, in which he called for the promotion of Kurdish women for reasons of nation building. But real feminist magazines were not firmly established until the end of 90s. The first Kurdish women's magazine with an explicit feminist identity was *Roza*: the name of the magazine was

inspired by one of the pioneers of the Marxist struggle, Rosa Luxemburg (Caha, 2011: 439). According to the writer of the Roza journal, Kurdish women suffer the same fate as Roza, who was oppressed and sentenced to death due to her dual identity as a "woman" and a "Jew"; in a similar fashion Kurdish women are oppressed, alienated and despised for being "women" and "Kurds" (Caha, 2011: 439). *Jujin* and *Jin u Jiyan* are examples of other Kurdish feminist magazines. According to Caha (2011:441) the common points, which the three magazines strive to emphasize, can be summarized as follows:

-       The values that stem from Kurdish traditions and pave the way for the subordination of women, forced migration, education and language policies being pursued by the state in the eastern and southeastern Anatolia Regions.

-       The assimilation problem experienced by Kurdish people, problems experienced by women in cities, historical Kurdish woman figures, instances oftorture and rape that women claim to be subjected to while in custody, women's experiences in childhood and adolescence, pressures they suffer within their families, news from the women's movement and the International Women's Day activities (Caha, 2011: 441).

Women's news agency "**Jin News Agency**"[7] uses the slogan *"Voice of woman's world"*. The agency publishes news about Kurdish women. The news is from Turkey's Kurdish regions and other Kurdish regions in Iran, Iraq and Syria. In an interview at Jin News Agency's office in Diyarbakir, the editor said: "From the manager of news to the editor, from the photo journalists to the cameraman, to the correspondent, all of our workers

---

[7] Women News Agency, website: http://www.jinha.com.tr/

consist of women". The agency aims to write material that promotes the dignity of women with little consideration for what men will think of them:

„To understand the reasons for why a woman is used as a pornographic object, we should firstly investigate the history of women. The press continues to reinforce a male-dominated system in the public conscience. The media can slant it in any desired direction. Until today, a male system is governs relations towards women. With masculine language, women have been described as little more than pornographic material or in the role of a villain. Due to this situation, we, as women, say 'STOP' via the WOMAN NEWS AGENCY" (Jin News Agency).

The agency was established on 8 March 2012, and submits online news in Kurdish, English and Turkish.

2.3.   KURDISH FEMINISM AS THIRD WAVE FEMINISM: THE ETHNIC VOICE OF FEMINISM?

Kurdish Feminism is considered as the third wave of women's movements after the *black women's movement*. When one considers the discussions raised by advocates of the third-way feminists, it becomes increasingly difficult to argue that there is no holistic feminist approach in Turkey (Caha,2011:437). Regarding the feminist history of Turkey, first wave feminism started during the last term of the Ottoman Empire, when women demanded political, economic and educational rights from the state (Ozcan, 2011: 42). With the collapse of Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the Turkish Republic, the ideology of feminism changed. The single party system of Turkey embraced the roots of the old movement and established the Union of Turkish Women, whose ideology is based on the "Turkification" and refusal of other ethnic, religious and cultural identities. From this originated the case of "othering":

"It is a reality that women's subordination in Turkey stems not only from patriarchal culture but also from ethnic, religious, cultural and class-related reasons. The history of the women's movement in Turkey is, unfortunately, strictly confined to a holistic approach. The movement that was initiated largely by middle-class Turkish women seems to be the only picture of the women's movement in Turkey. The possibility that this movement might have different voices, colors and aspects is usually ignored. The Kurdish women's movement is one of these voices." (Caha, 2001: 438).

Since Turkish women were pleased to receive political rights, they chose not to criticize state policy over the feminist ideology:

"…And the republican women took their place to serve the official ideology. These women were thankful to Kemalist reforms that granted rights to them. Therefore, they served this ideology without any criticism." (Ozcan, 2011: 42)

The second wave of feminism originated in 1980. The 1980s was a significant period that saw the awakening of an independent feminist movement (Ozcan, 2011: 42). According to Ozcan, (2011: 42) women in the 1980s argued that political, economic and social rights could not prevent the oppression of women, and thus, the motto of second wave feminism "personal is political", clarified the demands of women.

The third wave of feminism began in Turkey in the 1990s. There are varying elements of third wave feminism, and the following subgroups are considered as third wave feminism:

- Black feminism
- Cyber feminism
- Global feminism
- Queer feminism
- Post colonial feminism

Kurdish feminism has its own place amongst these subgroups. However, Kurdish women fight for two aims and in two identities. The object of their struggle is for their identities as *feminine - Womanhood* and *nationality - Kurdishness*. The distinctive feature of Kurdish feminism is the fact that Kurdish women have always presented themselves with a dual identity; women in Kurdish women's movements argue that they are not only women, but also the members of a nation (Caha, 2011: 445). Experts view the links between black and Kurdish feminism in the following manner:

"Black women and Kurdish women seek to define own feminism against Turkish feminism and white feminism respectively. It is emphasized that their womanhood is also affected by their ethnicity." (Ozcan, 201: 46)

Kurdish feminist magazine Roza – in which Kurdish feminism was first introduced – fights for the dual identity (i.e. womanhood and Kurdishness) against Kurdish men and Turkish feminists. In this way, both identities of Roza seek to define its own feminism, which is Kurdish feminism (Ozcan, 201: 54)

There are several categories of Kurdish women who are active participants in social and political life. As in other nations and societies, the Kurdish movement also has different social and political streams. It distinguishes between dependent and independent NGOs and institutions. As far as the present investigation is concerned, it is possible to delineate four broad categories from within which Kurdish women's relationship with feminism can be analyzed. These are: *non-feminist, feminist nationalist, Kurdish feminist and feminist.* (Yuksel, 2003: 73)

By 2013, the majority of the Kurdish women are feminists who consider themselves to be Kurdish feminists.

2.3.1. *Jineloji*– Womanology; Woman sciences of Kurdish feminism

The feminist ideology in the Kurdish movement has been developing over a period of 90 years. But it is some books and articles (of Kurdish politicians, researchers, activists, lawyers etc.), which have clear feminist approaches, which have brought women's policy to the mainstream of Kurdish policy. The comparisons of "women and the motherland" or "free women and a free country" were the first triggers leading to the mobilization of Kurdish women and Kurdish society.

The idea of these feminist approaches, based on woman policy, was discussed for the first time in the first woman congress in Iraq in the year 1993. It was a highly complicated case for male members of Kurdish movement. Members of a feudal and tribal system were not ready for it but they had to make an effort to understand it, in order for there to be an intellectual revolution in Kurdish society. In order to achieve this goal, there have been academic approaches by academics, feminist reforms in the political parties by politicians, as well as propaganda and popularization by Kurdish NGOs and Unions.

However, the result of this popularization has been an evolution for the Kurdish people. This virtually new field in feminist sciencesis called **JINELOJI**, which translates into English as **Womanology**. The word *Jineloji* literally means, "Jin" *woman* and *"loji" (logos)* translated as *studies of woman*. *Jineloji* is a field that encompasses all facets of scientific approaches to the feminist perspective, and constructs new fields from a woman's perspective.[8] According to Kurdish Member of Turkish Parliament *Emine Ayna*, elected from Diyarbakır, *jineloji* and feminism are different things and cannot be compared with one other:

---

[8]Kadın mücadelesinin ideolojisi Jineloji.10.06.2013
http://www.yeniozgurpolitika.eu/index.php?rupel=nuce&id=21156

"Jineloji is the ideological definition. But feminism is the political and organizational field. So, feminism is the political, organizational and actionable area. Feminism is the history of Jineloji. It means feminism is the beginning point, origin and inspirited part of Jineloji. […] We will not build the system with feministic struggle. But we have to introduce the scientific phenomenon of it."[9]

In 2012 a Jineloji conference[10] was organized with the participation of all Kurdish women's organizations to discussing Jineloji, as well as its aims, targets and perspectives. Additionally, the organizations were concerned with contributing towards a solution of Kurdish problems via Kurdish women.

Moreover, Kurdish feminists maintain that all existing systems (and also all sciences) are formulated and developed from the male brain and from a male perspective. Therefore this system should be destroyed and built again from the point of view of a female brain with a dual gender perspective:

"We provide training to men to strengthening their understanding of this. In our opinion, women are the measure of the freedom of societies. We don't consider those societies where women are weak to be strong societies.

[…] We want to give new dimensions to women's science via the conference. This science is formulated by a system that is based on masculine understanding. Therefore we continue to exchange opinions with women's movements of other nations. "[11]

---

[9] Kadın mücadelesinin ideolojisi Jineloji.10.06.2013
http://www.yeniozgurpolitika.eu/index.php?rupel=nuce&id=21156
[10] Jinelojikonferansı yapılıyor. 18.10.2012,
http://yeniozgurpolitika.com/index.php?rupel=nuce&id=14085
[11] Radyoda kadın paneli. 19.11.2013,
http://www.yeniozgurpolitika.org/index.php?rupel=nuce&id=25944

The definition of Jinelogy is explained by Delal Afsin Hurhak below:[12]

"Jineology is formed on the criticism that existing scientific disciplines are structured within the framework of capitalist modernity and therefore are extremely divided and fragmented. Jineology, on the other hand, foresees a wholesome approach to humanity, society and the universe and this is why rather than being a new scientific discipline jineology is a new epistemological approach fuelled by a conscience of freedom."

2.4. KURDISH WOMEN IN THE MOUNTAINS – AN OVERVIEW OF WOMEN'S FIGHTING

Political situations, ethnic conflicts and armed struggles are dimensions that are influenced by women's participation in the national struggle. These issues force women into taking part in harsh and aggressive protests. Societies have assumed that women are not equipped to protest, and that war does not correspond to the nature of woman.

These theories and approaches are based on woman's traditionally silent nature in the past, when women assumed the role of the passive actor in society, in politics, culture, in the army and indeed in all spheres of social life. Today the changing situations, developing feministic ideologies and increasing participation of women in social and political issues has led to different realities, which have changed the approaches towards women and their roles. In her book, which is dedicated to the women fighters of the Liberation Tigers (who sacrificed their lives in the struggle for the liberation of their homeland and for the creation of a new society in which women can live with equality, honor and dignity), author Ann stated that:

---

[12]The Kurdistan Woman's Liberation Movement,
http://www.pkkonline.com/en/index.php?sys=article&artID=180

"Women's entry into the armed struggle is the inevitable extension of their long contribution to national political campaigns against State oppression. However, their involvement in Parliamentary politics and non-violent campaigns did not radically change the cultural images of women. Parliamentary politics and non-violent struggle remain within the acceptable domain of women's behavior. The history of women in combat in the armed struggle is a chronicle of a fundamentally different order. Women in combat belong to a totally new world, a world outside a normal woman's life. And that is what makes these women fighters so interesting and admirable. They have taken up a life that bears little resemblance at all to the ordinary existence of women. Training and carrying weapons, confronting battle conditions, enduring the constant emotional strain of losing close associates, facing death almost every day, are situations that most women not only wish to avoid, but feel ill at ease with."[13] (Ann, 1993)

Today, women's violent behavior and contribution towards a violent struggle is not excused and accepted. People think that women don't choose armed actions of their own volition. The underlying assumption is that *a man made [or makes] her do it* (Bloom, 2011: xi).

These dimensions and assumptions continue to be valid for Kurdish women in Turkey today. It has been assumed that women could not consciously be part of an armed Kurdish movement. The participation of Kurdish women in this behavior has been considered as an act of terrorism. According to Alkan, terrorist organizations use women as a surprise element for acquiring personnel, and for use in armed operations (Alkan, 2012: 67).

The anti-colonial wave constituted a wide variety of groups and organizations that not only directed their attacks against their colonial masters at home, but also, when they had the means to do so, took the violence to the countries of the imperialists (Bloom, 2011: 17). The political and social background of this attitude will be analyzed from the Turkish and Kurdish perspectives.

---

[13]Women Fighters of Liberation Tigers, http://tamilnation.co/books/Eelam/adeleann.htm

2.4.1. The Political and Social Background of Action

There is a theory that the Kurdish Question still exists: Today there are several opinions on this phenomenon. According to Tan (2010:15) there are five schools of thought on the Kurdish Question:

1.   There is no Kurdish Question;
2.   The Kurdish Question is a problem that is derived from terrorism and separatism;
3.   The Kurdish Question is an economic question;
4.   The Kurdish question is a question of ethnic identity;
5.   The Kurdish Question is a question based on the establishing of a national state.

In the first definition it is assumed that the republic is *one state, one nation and one flag* and that, as a result, no Kurdish ethnicity could exist since all citizens are Turks. As an extension of this theory, some consider that this is a question of terrorism; that there are no Kurds, and if somebody considers her or himself to be a Kurd, then s/he becomes a terrorist. The definition of Kurdish identity is understood only in terms of being a terrorist or a potential terrorist.

But some liberals have defined it as an economic problem, and that in fact the infrastructures of social and economic life are not at a necessary level. The Southeastern region of Turkey is always distinguished from the underdeveloped region. The Kurdish question as an ethnic and national problem brings different challenges between Kurds. The Kurdish Question as an ethnic problem includes factors such as education in the Kurdish language and democratic autonomy. The other type of Kurdish opposition, who is not more active or *radical*, supported the "State of sovereign Kurdistan".

However, in the background of these theories there are different approaches towards the notion of life in the mountains – which means armed struggle. The political and social dimensions that are isolated and recognized by researchers are defined in different perspectives. However, the Kurdish Question is one of ethnic problems, which are dealt with from dual perspectives: on the one hand as *terrorism* and on the other as *liberation*.

a) ***From the Perspective of Terrorism*** – Turkey, EU (European Union) states including Western countries, international organizations such as the UN and NATO have already recognized the PKK as a terrorist Organization. The illegal PKK is still on the list of terrorist organizations. This approach means that these countries and organizations cannot be in cooperation with PKK, cannot promote it and cannot support any of its propaganda.

In fact, PKK members who have left the organization are allowed to move to European countries, to attain residency permits, or to work there. The case of three Kurdish women (Sakine Cansiz, Fidan Dogan and Leyla Shaylemez), who were killed in January 2013 in Paris, is an example of how these countries recognize PKK as terrorist organization only for the sake of a bilateral relationship with Turkey.

Additionally, the most populous Kurdish Diasporas are in EU countries like in Germany and France. Around three million Turkish citizens live in Germany. Some of these families came to Germany in the 60s. Other majorities of Turkish citizens are Kurdish families or individuals, who left Turkey due to ethnic and economic problems.

b)   ***From the perspective of liberation*** – The Kurdish community has assumed that they lost their freedom after the Ottoman period finished. The political development that oversaw the establishment of the Turkish state, the principles of "one state", "one language" and "one nation" has hindered the freedom of ethnic groups and communities. The Kurds began the liberation struggles in the first years of the new established Turkish State but soldiers dealt with them.

The question as to what the Kurds did – and does now – want to liberate, has changed several times. As established by the PKK, the prevailing ideology was that they are against the state; in the following years the request was to establish a Kurdish state on those geographical territories of the Turkish state that were historically Kurdish. The most recent requests towards the Turkish state have been for autonomy, education in the Kurdish language, and a system of self-governance on their territories. However the Kurdish movement is a single armed movement that has changed their political requests (Sirri Sureyya Onder, reportage 2012, Istanbul).

In this context, there is also a dual definition about the fighting of Kurdish woman that is worthy of consideration. The labels of "terrorists" and "guerillas" are used as the definitions of Kurdish fighters. But a question must be asked: who are these terrorists and guerillas? Why is it thought that the repressed Kurdish woman is a terrorist or guerilla? Why are there Kurdish women in the mountains?

It is useful to imagine the political and social backgrounds of these actions from both perspectives in order to best answer these questions. The current example is a topic for investigation of two books:

1.   Book by Necati Alkan, 2012: **"Symbols, Actors and Women in PKK"**[14]

2.   Book by Bejan Matur,2013: **"2013: Looking behind the Mountains"**[15]

2.5.2. Dual Perspective of Political and Social Reason of Kurdish Woman in the Mountains

According to Matur's book (2013) there are several political, ideological and social reasons for Kurdish women's presence in the mountains. These people gave their own reasons, as cited below:

-       "The reason which drove me to mountains was to be witness to the pains of my father." Page 23

-       "Our reason for moving to mountains is to live as a human. ... A human needs an identity." Page 32

-       "In my opinion the state sent us to the mountains. If you drive with a panzer via a village, you motivated the children who see it, to move in the mountains." Page 39

-       We have never said that we will vanquish the Turkish army. We believed that we would worry them. This state will not grow stronger unless the Kurds have their rights. We cannot destroy the state by killing a soldier. And they cannot destroy us by killing Kurds." Page 54

---

[14] Original name: "PKK'da Semboller, Aktörler, Kadınlar", Necati Alkan, 2012
[15]Originalname: "Dağın Ardına Bakmak", BejanMatur, 10.Baskı 2013

Table 6. Dual perspective about the political and social background of
Kurdish Woman in the Mountains <u>Pro/Con Arguments</u>

Dual perspective about the political and social background of Kurdish Woman in Mountains **Pro/Con Arguments**	
Necati Alkan, 2012: "Symbols, Actors and Women in PKK "	**Bejan Matur, 2013: "2013: "Looking behind the Mountains"**
Abdullah Ocalan, Leader of PKK has used the word "liberation" by acquiring the woman to the organization. Page.83	"I walked to my identity…I was broken, injured and I will be healed. I will speak Kurdish without hesitation and make friends. Different area of freedom. I will not have to give an explanation to anybody." Page: 69
PKK motivated the women to join the armed action and stated that the resources are not shared equally by the state. In this way they legitimized their struggle. Page 92	The numbers of evacuated villages in the South East are 3500. Most villages are burned. These villages experience considerable trauma. The witnesses of the burning of the villages went either to the mountains or moved to the big cities to survive. Page 99
Ocalan claimed the liberation of Kurdistan via armed actions. Page 94	Yes, there were bloody actions but every culture and every history pays its price for freedom. Page 70
PKK engaged to create separation between Kurdish nation and state. Page 102	a) During the Ataturk period 30 men were killed in our village. My grandfather is 90 years old and he remembers it. He hid in a cave and survived. Page 101 b) They did not write our

	original name in past time. Not even my family knows my name written in ID. […] My mother explained to me: "Yes, we are Kurds. We live in this country but we are not allowed to use our original names." Page 97
The organization puts obligations on female and male members about fighting against the Turkish Republic. Page 102	Everybody in the mountains would like to come back in Turkey. But to what conditions? Everybody would like to come back to the country, where speaking in your mother tongue is legal, where you are allowed to sing your own songs and to express yourselves. We don't want to see death any more in those areas, which we have already left. Page 72
The expectation for a militant is only the protection of the ideology, going blind for that ideology, dying and killing for that ideology. Page 109	a) I was 5 years old, when the soldiers came to our village. […] One of the soldiers smiled at me from afar. He smiled so beautifully and I smiled at him too. He came to me and took me in his arms and smiled. When I grew up, I went to the mountains to fight against them. Of course, the problem is not the soldiers. The problem is the power behind the soldiers. Page 71

According to an interview with Cakan, by moving to the mountains they adopted an identity:

"These persons on the mountains are the persons, who were victims of violence from the state. Life expectancy in the mountains is between 5-6 years. The state has to promote the education of women. " (Interview, Diyarbakir 2013)

It is difficult to define this action explicitly; is it an act of terrorism or a struggle for liberation? Both the state and the PKK organization have made their own mistakes, which have contributed to this war. Both sides hold politically incorrect and wrong behaviors towards each other. How can this be defined?

State; The constitutions of the Turkish state were and are based on non-pluralistic and non-diversity values. Its principles are not ethnic issues but cultural issues. Due to Turkey's pluralistic society, strategies of nationalism and "one nation state" are not allowed to grow, but the goal nonetheless has been to create one nation. Heper (2010) posited that the Turkish state does not concentrate on ethnic issues and that, for them, the whole nation is equal. Turkey was established not as a nation state but as a fair state of the nation (Heper, 2010: 149). In fact Turkey is a multi-cultural society and there are huge numbers of different ethnicities. According to foreign statistics (in Turkish official statistics there is no information about different ethnicities because everyone is considered to be a Turk) there are 10 million Kurds living in Turkey. Moreover, Turkey is the homeland of other ethnicities such as the Cherkez, Laz, Zaza, Armenians, Greeks, Azeris etc.

The constitutions of the Turkish state from these periods (1921, 1924, 1961, 1982) prohibited the fundamental rights and freedom of ethnicities in Turkey such as speaking in their mother tongue in public places. Lurking in the background of this refusal politics are economic questions and issues of bad governance. The refusal of different identities and the nationalist policy were brutal policies of the state, which provoked radical protesting activities from marginalized ethnic groups, especially by the Kurds.

Kurdish Movement; This movement, also known as the PKK, began as a group of several Marxist communist students in 1978. It was initially intended to be a peaceful ideological struggle but later on it began to develop armed action. The PKK's first armed terroristic attack was on 15 August 1984. The aims of the movement were to protest against the state and its constitutional principles. The opponent was the state, but also the Turkish army and its soldiers.

The activities of the PKK were not able to affect the army, but many civilians suffered under enforcement and armed attacks carried out by the PKK. Thus the frame of the movement changed to brutal behavior against civic members of civil society. PKK carried out several armed terrorist attacks, which led to it being recognized as a terrorist organization by Turkey, EU states including Western countries, and international organizations such as the United Nations (UN) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

The principal political and social motivations for the PKK are identified below:

a)   Political reasons:
-       Suppression of Kurdish Identity by the state;
-       No education in the mother tongue and prohibition of Kurdish language;
-       Forced resettlement policies by the Turkish State;
-       Demanding a democratic autonomy;
-       Having the same identity rights as Kurds as those of Turkish citizens;

b) Social reasons:

- Traditions of a feudal and tribal Kurdish system;

- Forced marriage;

- Unemployment;

- Economic problems;

- Little to no education;

2.5.3. Women Military in the Kurdish Movement

After the active participation of Kurdish women in the armed Kurdish Movement the term "The women of the PKK" came into use. The leader of this movement developed new strategies for women; one of them was that the Kurdish women in the mountains should be organized separately. Within the movement there was criticism against this and although some were in favor, many women refused this idea. According to Kurdish parliamentarian *Gultan Kisanak*, the women used to ask, "How can we be separated?", "How will we transport the sacks?" etc. Furthermore, this situation meant that the men would say that if you are organized separately and if you are equal with us, then you should do all this hard work yourselves (Karabulut, 2013: 218).

Other experts about the role of women in the armed union consider that Kurdish women should be given more liberty and a free area. One expert, *Zubeyde Zumrud*, the local representative of the Kurdish BDP from Diyarbakir, agreed with this point in an interview and is in favor of the empowerment and freedom of Kurdish woman.

The war of the Kurdish Movement, which began in August 1984 against the Turkish State, means that the formulation of the Kurdish army from a gender perspective has been implemented since that year. According to Delal AfsinNurhak, a writer in an online news portal, the first networking of

women in the mountains was at the end of 1980s and their aims with regards liberation include not only the liberation of Kurdish women but of all women who are suppressed:

"Women fighters in the ranks of the PKK established YJWK (the Union of the Patriotic Women of Kurdistan) in 1987. YJWK is the first revolutionary and liberationist movement of the women of Kurdistan. This organization was not only aimed at Kurdish women; revolutionary women from all over the world joined the organization. The joining of the guerrilla ranks was not seen as a simple participation in a war. Guerrilla life was seen as the overcoming of the lifestyle asserted by the system by creating the will to live independently of any other external power."[16]

However, this organization later became the Women's Kurdistan Liberation Union (YAJK). According to Nurhak, YAJK was the women's pioneer of war, education and self-evaluation and took on the responsibility of the transformation of men.

The Basic Principles of the Women's Liberation Ideology[17] are:

I.   Patriotism
II.   The principle of free thought and free will
III.   A sharing of life based on freedom and the principle of organization
IV.   The principle of resistance

In an interview[18] with German newsletter TAZ, one Kurdish woman said:

"My mother was a strong woman. She told me: You have to be cleverer, more beautiful and stronger than your man. […] But if you want to be free, you have to go to the mountains and become a PKK fighter. "

---

[16] Women's Kurdistan Liberation Union,
http://www.pkkonline.com/en/index.php?sys=article&artID=180
[17] Women's Kurdistan Liberation Movement,
http://www.pkkonline.com/en/index.php?sys=article&artID=180
[18] Frauenarmee der PKK, Töchter der Berge. 07. 01. 2014http://www.taz.de/!130491/

Female militants are very young. The Kurdish woman considers the army to be a place where she has equality and freedom. But the conditions and requirements are not easy: currently the average lifespan on the mountains is just 5-6 years. The Kurdish army has its own rules and regulations for its militants. Partnerships, sex, having a family or becoming pregnant are prohibited in the mountain for the Kurdish militants. These are taboo for both male and female militants:

"Family or relationship is not allowed, it is even taboo. If a married couple joins the PKK together, from that moment on their relationship ceases to exist. If a woman becomes pregnant here, that results in her immediate exclusion. Abortions are not allowed. Homosexuality is despised."[19]

The violation of these regulations has resulted in executions and deaths. According to Cakan, there is a kind of marriage in the mountains called the "revolutionary wedding" (*devrim nikahı*), which signifies the promising of beloved militants to each other in marriage after the liberation. The real number of Kurdish woman in PKK is unknown. As an official army secret it is not obtainable. But in the research of Alkan (2012:139) the author writes: After the studies of the curriculum vitae reports of 835 PKK women, some 18% of the army is made up from women. The highest participation of women in armed organizations is in the PKK (Alkan, 2012:139).

It is the same on an international level. PKK is the armed organization, which has the most female militants, largest female army, women's ideological organizations etc.

The everyday life of female militants is description below:

"The everyday lives of women in the PKK begin at 04.30. If there is no operation or mission taking place, they hold a meeting. After the meeting they do sport, physical and

---

[19] Frauenarmee der PKK, Töchter der Berge. 07. 01. 2014 http://www.taz.de/!130491/

cultural training. Afterwards they have breakfast. After breakfast they participate with men together in education and training." (Birand, 1992[20]; Alkan, 2012:222)

It was the first armed attack of Kurdish militants on 15th August 1984 which sparked the Kurdish Question. Until this date armed confrontations had not taken place; only peaceful ideological networking. But the bloody period from 1984 – 2013 has seen roughly 50,000 casualties from both sides. The conflict continued until the beginning of 2013.

---

[20] Abdullah Öcalan, Mehmet Ali Birant Interview, 1992, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Sxx65qmqH4

CONCLUSION

The role of women throughout the world has changed considerably in the last century. Socio-political activities such as voting, electing, participating in demonstrations, education etc. have been made available to women after men. But since the end of the twentieth century, women have quickly developed (in the spheres of education, social and political participation), organized (movements, networks, parties, groups, lobbies) and strengthened their positions in socio-political life alongside men.

This study has explored the social and political development of Kurdish women based on both ethnic identity and gender. This change has led to Kurdish women being politicized and participating in the political sphere. However, the reason for the politicization of Kurdish women has been due to events that have taken place via the political parties and movements, most notably due to feminist elements in the ideological basis of the Kurdish movement.

Moreover, Kurdish women have become the most influential part of Kurdish political parties and political life. Kurdish women began by taking part in street demonstrations, then in the establishment of political parties and finally in the illegal armed struggle.

These changing activities of Kurdish women have been with the aim of changing their oppressed role in society. Historically, Kurdish women have been in different degrees of freedom: In the past, during the Ottoman Empire, the Kurdish woman was freer

than she was during the republic period. But after 1990 she has changed in all her roles and positions. She has become visible, rather than invisible. She has become a symbol of Kurdish culture and Kurdish identity.

The politicized Kurdish women achieved the establishment and subsequently control of their own trade unions, political parties, media organizations, magazines and newspapers. The answers to the following questions have been investigated and clarified in this study: what is the women policy of the Kurdish political movement and political parties? Which factors have had an impact on the mobilization of women in legal Kurdish political parties and Kurdish illegal movements, such as the PKK and similar organizations? What kind of responsibilities do Kurdish women carry in nation building?

In fact, the Kurdish movement has both directly and indirectly affected the gender composition, institutional basis and formation of policies of political parties. The prevention of equality between women and men and exclusion of women from social life will continue to be criticized by the parties, who demand the elimination of legislation that prevents equality between women and men. These same parties also protect economic, social, cultural and legal measures to ensure the equality of women and men. Parties consider gender discrimination and violations of human rights as a serious problem for democracy.

These factors have influenced the politicization of woman and led to a massive political mobilization of Kurdish women. Women's participation in both politics and an illegal armed struggle could

create an expansion of women's unity. Moreover it could drastically alter the character of relations in society.

However, the Kurdish movement – in whose ideology the principle of "A country whose women are not free cannot be free" is firmly ingrained – is completing a period of politicization; this politicization is being transformed from an emotional one to a conscious one. Besides giving motivation and promoting activeness, the principle of "The name of woman is power and hope" exposes the decisive power of the mass of Kurdish women who have been in limited activeness until now. Today it is very obvious that most Kurdish women who were in different roles and positions at different times have now cultivated a new identity.

Women are the creators of culture; this applies to the Kurds as well. The involvement of women in armed struggle is an end point of social resistance; it was at that point, in fact, that woman broke the social framework and the point of resistance. Women's changing roles in society results in, and reflects, the change of balance. This balance provides the ground for the new identity of Kurds – a homogenous society. The most important finding in the study is that it has showed how, step-by-step and overtime, women have been politicized, and that the political mobilization of women has reached a level, which cannot be ignored.

Kurdish women, whose freedom of activity began with political activities, have aimed at the modernization of not only the Kurdish society but also of the Middle East. Over the last two decades, Kurdish women, represented in all aspects of political, cultural and social life, have been successful in changing the balances that

have existed since long ago in the past and in this way, have become a modern character in the construction of an entirely new identity.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

AÇIK, Necla; **Ulusal Mücadele, Kadın Mitosu ve Kadınların Harekete Geçirilmesi: Türkiyedeki Çağdaş Kürt Kadın Dergilerinin bir analizi,** İstanbul, İletişim Yayıncılık, 2002.

AKKAYA, H. Ahmet, JONGERDEN, Joost Jongerden;**Nationalism and Politics in Turkey: Political Islam, Kemalism and the Kurdish Issue***, 2010.

ALKAN, Necati; **PKK'da Semboller, Aktörler, Kadınlar,** İstanbul, Karakutu yayınları, 1.Baskı, 2012

ALTINAY, Ayşegül; **Vatan Millet Kadınlar**, İstanbul, İletişim Yayıncılık, 2000.

BARTH, F.; **Kürdistanda Toplumsal Örgütlenmenin İlkeleri,**İstanbul, Avesta, 2001.

BAYRAK, Mehmet; **Geçmişten günümüze kürt kadını**, İstanbul, Özge yayınları, 2002.

BAŞKAN, Filiz, GÜNEY, Aylin; **Turkey's June 2011 Parliamentary Elections**, Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies, 2010.

BDP Tüzük, 2013

BERKTAY, Fatmagül; **Cumhuriyetin 75 yıllık serüvenine kadınlar açısından bakmak***, İstanbul, Tarih Vakfı yayınları, 1998.

BERKTAY, Fatmagül; **Kadın tarihi tarihin neresine düşüyor**, Cogito, 2001.

BLOOM, Mia; **Bombshell: The many faces of women terrorists,** London, Hurst and Co. Publishers, 2011.

BOZARSLAN, Hamit; **Türkiye'de Kürt Milletçiliği: Zimni sözleşmeden ayaklanmaya,** İstanbul, 1998.

BOZKURT, Emine; **Gender Equality and Turkey's 2023 Goals**, TQP Turkish Quarterly Policy Journal, Volume 12, Number 2: 35, 2013.

BRUNIESSEN, Martin; **Agha, Shaikh and State The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan**, Zed Books, 1992.

BRUNIESSEN, Martin; **From Adela khanum to Leyla Zana / Women as political leaders in kurdish history,** Mazda California, 2001.

BRUNIESSEN, Martin; **Von Adela Khanum zu Leyla Zana: Weibliche Führungspositionen in der kurdischen Geschichte,** 2001.

ÇAĞLAYAN, Handan; **Analar, Yoldaşlar, Tanrıçalar,** İstanbul, İletişim Yayıncılık, 2007.

ÇAĞLAYAN, Handan; **Kürt Kadınların Penceresinden**, İstanbul, İletişim Yayıncılık, 2013.

CEMAL, Hasan; Kürtler, İstanbul, Everest Yayınları, 2. Basım, 2014.

CHATTERJEE, Partha; **Kadın sorununun milliyyetçi çözüm,** Vatan Millet Kadınlar der, İstanbul, İletişim yayınları, 2000.

CHATTERJEE, Partha; **Ulus ve parmaları**, İstanbul, İletişim yayınları, 2002.

CYNTIA, Enloe; **Muzlar, Playlar ve Asgeri Üstler, Feminist Bakış Açısından Uluslararası siyaset,** Çitlembik yayınları, 2003.

DRYAZ, Massoud Sharifi; **Women and nationalism: How women activists are changing the Kurdish conflict,** N.D.

MADENLI, Ergani; **Kürtlerde kadın meselesi**, Roj-i KurdJimar, Istanbul, 1911.

IBRAHİM, Alp,MÜRSEL, Yılmaz; **Başka dilde anne olmak ya da Simurgun gözyaşları**, İstanbul, Belge Yayınları, 2013.

JAYAWARDENA, Kumari; **Feminism and Nationalism in the third world**, Zed Books, 1994.

JEFFREY C. Dixon, ENGIN, Murat; **Explaining Anti-Kurdish Beliefs in Turkey: Group Competition, Identity, and Globalization,** Social Science Quarterly, 91/5, 2010.

KAYLI, Ş. Derya; **Özgürleşme ve kadın bedeni**, İzmir, İlya İzmir Yayınevi, 2007.

KAYA, Elif. **Zilan bir manifestodur,** Heviya Jine (Mayıs, Hazira), 2013.

KARABULUT, Asiye Eylem; **Sarı Kırmızı Mor, Belge Yayınları**, 1.Baskı, 2013.

KISACIK, Raşit; **Diyarbakır Cezaevi**, İstanbul, Ozan Yayıncılık, 2. Baskı, 2011.

KUTLUATA, Zeynep; **Gender and War during the late Ottoman and Early Republican Periods**: **The Case of Black Fatma**, Sabanci University, Thesis, 2006.

SOMER, Murat, LIARAS, Evangeleous; **Kurdish Opening: Religious versus Secular Values**. Middle East Policy, XVII/2, 2010.

MAE, Michiko; **Japan zwischen Asien und dem Westen. Transkulturelle Grenzüberschreitungen und der Weg zu einer machtfreien Gender gestaltung**, Wiesbaden, VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaft, 2007.

MATUR, Bejan; **Dağın ardına bakmak**, İstanbul, Timaş Yayınları, 10.Baskı, 2013.

MOJAB, Shahrazad; **Women of a Non-State Nation/The Kurds,** Mazda, California, 2001.

MOJAB, Shahrazad; **Kurdish Women in the Zone of Genocide and Gendercide**, Al Raida, Volume XXI, No. 103, 2003.

MOGHDAM, Valentine; **Gender and National identity, Women and Politics in muslim societies,** Zed books, 1994.

NO NAME; **Kara Fatma, The Amazon,** New York Times From the Pall Mail Gazette, November 8, 1887.

ÖZGÖKÇE, Zozan;**Bağımsız Kürt Kadın Örgütlerine Karşı Politik Hazımsızlık,** Istanbul, 2009.

ÖZCAN, Z. Seda; **The Dual Identity of Roza Journal: Womanhood and Ethnicity in the Context of Kurdish Feminism**, TJP Turkish Journal of Politics, Vol.2, No 2, 2011.

ÖCALAN, Abdullah; **Jenseits von Staat, Macht und Gewalt**, Köln, Internationale İnitiative, 1. Auflage, 2010.

PAKER, Hande; **Kimlik Siyaseti ve Türkiyedeki Kadın Örgütlerine Katılım**, İstanbul, TÜSEV, 2011.

PKK 10. Kongresi, **PKK Tüzük**, 2008

ROWBATHAM, Sheila;**Kadınlar, direniş ve devrim**, Payel, 1994.

SOANE,E. Banster; **To Mesopotamia and to Kurdistan in Disguise**, Amsterdam, 1902.

TAN, Altan; **Kürt Sorunu**, Istanbul, TimasYayınları, 7.Baskı 2010.

TEKIN, G. Gülçiçek, **Beyaz soykırım: Türkiyenin Asimilasyon ve Dilkırım Politikaları**, İstanbul, Belge Yayınları, 3.Baskı 2012.

TUZCUOĞLU, Müge; **Ben bir taşım**, İstanbul, Doğa Basın Yayınları, 3.Baskı 2012.

ULUGANA, Sedat; **Ağrı Kürt Direnişi ve Zilan katlıamı**, İstanbul, Peri Yayınları, 2.Baskı, 2012.

HECKMANN, Yalçın, VAN GELDER, Pauline; **90larda Türkiyede Siyasal Söylemin Dönüşümü Çerçevesinde Kürt kadınların imajı: Bazı eleştirel değerlendirmeler**, İstanbul, İletişim yayınları, 2000.

HEPER, Metin; **Devlet ve Kürtler**, İstanbul, Doğan Kitap, 3.Baskı 2010.

YEGEN, Mesut; **Prospective Turks" or "Pseudo Citizens: Kurds in Turkey**, Istanbul, Middle East Journal, 2009.

YÜKSEL, Metin; **Diversifying Feminism in Turkey in the 1990s**, Ankara, Bilkent University, 2003.

Interviews

Sırrı Süreyya Önder, Member of Turkish Grand National Assemble, BDP, 2012

Zubeyde Zumrut, Chair of Municipality in Diyarbakir, 2013

Seyhmuz Cakan, Journalist of Star TV in Diyarbakir, 2013

Hatice Kamer, Freelance Journalist in Diyarbakir, 2013

Thesis:

KUTLUATA, Zeynep; **Gender and War during the late Ottoman and Early Republican Periods**: **The Case of Black Fatma**, Sabanci University, Thesis, 2006.

YÜKSEL, Metin; **Diversifying Feminism in Turkey in the 1990s**, Ankara, Bilkent University, 2003.

TEKIN, Ferhat; **Hakkari Örneğinde Aşiret, Cemaat ve Akrabalık Örgütlerinin Modernleşme ve Kırsal çözülme sürecindeki siyasal ve toplumsal sonuşları**, Selçuk Üniversitesi, Konya, 2005

Links

MULAKAT, Aşiret kültürü kadın için soylu bir baskı demektir. 21.11.2010
http://www.sabah.com.tr/Pazar/2010/11/21/asiret_kulturu_kadin_icin_soylu_bir_
baski_demektir

BAYRAK, Mehmet; Geçmişten Günümüze Kürtler'de
Anaerkillik,29.12.2010. http://www.binboga.org/gecmisten-gunumuze-kurtlerde-
anaerkillik/

Birant; Abdullah Öcalan Mehmetali Birant Reportajı,
1992.http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Sxx65qmqH4

Caglayan, Handan; 17th Annual Conference on Feminist Economics. Torino.
Italy, 2008.
https://editorialexpress.com/cgibin/conference/download.cgi?db_name=IAFFE2
008&paper_id=276

DelalAfsinNurhak, Women's Kurdistan Liberation
Union, http://www.pkkonline.com/en/index.php?sys=article&artID=180

Frauenarmee der PKK, Töchter der Berge. 07. 01. 2014
http://www.taz.de/!130491/

Kadin mücadelesinin ideolojisi
Jineloji.10.06.2013 http://www.yeniozgurpolitika.eu/index.php?rupel=nuce&id=2
1156

PKKlı üç kadına suikast, 12. 01.
2013http://www.radikal.com.tr/dunya/pariste_pkkli_3_kadina_suikast-1116188

Radyoda kadın paneli.
19.11.2013, http://www.yeniozgurpolitika.org/index.php?rupel=nuce&id=25944

Sharifi, Kurdish Women, their pligt and socio-political
inertia,2013.http://kurdistantribune.com/2013/kurdish-women-their-plight-sociopolitical-inertia/

The Kurdistan Woman's Liberation
Movement, http://www.pkkonline.com/en/index.php?sys=article&artID=180

Women Fighters of Liberation Tigers,
http://tamilnation.co/books/Eelam/adeleann.htm

ÖZET

Bu tez, Kürt kadınlarının geçmişten bugüne dek siyasetteki yerini, rolünü ve önemini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Cumhuriyet döneminde, özellikle 1970 sonlarında tekrar canlanan Kürt politik hareketinin giderek önemli unsuruna dönüşen Kürt kadının siyasal aktifliği 1980 sonrasında belirginleşmiştir. Bu olgular çerçevesinde, bu tezde Kürt kadınını değiştiren, rolünü biçimlendiren, ona yeni kimlik inşa eden sebepler ve faktörler, Kürt ulusçuluğunun oluşumundaki yeri incelenecektir. Bu tez, Kürt kadınının sosyal gelişimini, değişimini ve şu anki pozisyonunu belirterek, Kürt toplumunda kadının rolünün nasıl yer değiştiğini ve bu toplumdaki bireyler arası dengenin yeni boyutunu incelemenin dışında Kürt politik hareketinde kadının katkılarını değerlendirmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Kürt kadını, Kürt feminizmi, Kürt harekatı, Yeni kimlik, Özgür kadın, Türkiye

ABSTRACT

This thesis is aimed at investigating the importance of Kurdish women's place and role in politics. The political activeness of Kurdish women, which became an important part of the reviving Kurdish political movement during the Republic period – in particular during the 1970s – has become more pronounced since 1980. Within the framework of these developments, the reasons and factors, which have changed Kurdish women, shaped their role and built a new identity for them, as well as the contribution of those women to the reformation, revival and development of their nation, will be investigated in this thesis. This thesis will assess women's contribution to the Kurdish political movement while exploring the way women have changed and the new dimensions of relationships between individuals in the Kurdish community, by bringing clarification to the social development, change and the current status of Kurdish women.

Key Words: Kurdish woman, Kurdish feminism, Kurdish movement, New identity, Free woman, Turkey