WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN ISLAMIC FOUNDATIONS IN ISTANBUL

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This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Modern Turkish Studies.

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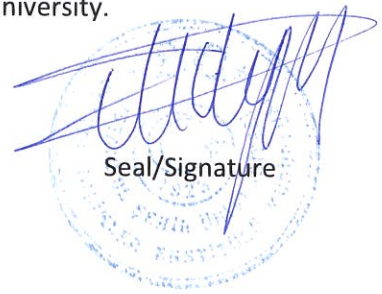|	DECISION	SIGNATURE
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ABSTRACT

WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN ISLAMIC FOUNDATIONS IN ISTANBUL

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This thesis deals with the construction of women's representation in relation to the use of space in Islamic foundations and organizations. The thesis study women's representation by taking the following three factors to its focus: (1) the use of space, (2) forms of relationships between women and men and (3) spatial division of labor. Based on a qualitative research, the study introduces an Islamic Foundation as a case, for which in-depth interviews were conducted with either staff or volunteer women working at this foundation. The foundation constitutes an important space in terms of its activity areas as well as the educational background and social and employment status of the people joining activities there. The foundation relies on Islamic references and the people joining these activities construct their life on Islamic references, too. The theoretical background of this study relies on the mutual relationship between gender and space. While the gender roles are spatially constructed, the space is also reproduced and experienced depending on the gender roles. This discussion will serve as a way of understanding for women's spatial experiences in Islamic foundations and organizations. The findings also show that it is not possible to discuss a unique and homogeneous representation of women in Islamic foundation and organizations.

Keywords: gender, place, women's representation, space, Islamic foundations and organizations

ÖZ

İSTANBUL'DAKİ İSLAMİ VAKIFLARDA KADIN TEMSİLİ

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Bu tez İslami vakıf ve derneklerde Müslüman kadınların nasıl bir temsil oluşturduklarını mekan ile kurdukları ilişki üzerinden ele almaktadır. Meseleyi, mekan kullanımına bağlı olarak, özellikle kadınlar ve erkekler arasında kurulan ilişki biçimleri ve iş bölümü üzerinden analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu tez için örnek çalışma olarak seçilen İslami bir vakıfta gönüllü ve maaşlı olarak çalışan kadınlarla derinlemesine mülakat yapılarak niteliksel bir araştırma ortaya konulmuştur. Araştırmada kadınların mekânsal deneyimlerini ortaya çıkarmak amaçlanmıştır. Bu noktada vakıf gerek faaliyet alanı, gerekse gönüllülerin eğitim durumu, sosyal statü, çalışma durumu gibi noktalar açısından önemli örnek teşkil etmektedir. Öte yandan bu vakfın faaliyetlerinin çıkış noktasının İslami referanslara dayanması ve gönüllü ve çalışanların yine hayatlarını İslami referanslarla çerçevelendirmeleri çalışmanın çıkış noktası konusunda önemli bir etken teşkil etmektedir. Çalışmanın teorik arka planı toplumsal cinsiyet ve mekan arasındaki karşılıklı ilişkiye dayanmaktadır. Nitekim toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri mekana bağlı olarak inşa edilirken, mekan da toplumsal cinsiyet rollerine bağlı olarak yeniden üretilir. Bu tartışma kadınların İslami vakıf ve derneklerdeki mekânsal deneyiminin anlaşılması için bir çerçeve sunmaktadır. Çalışmanın bulguları göstermektedir ki İslami vakıf ve derneklerde kadın temsili noktasında tek ve homojen bir temsilden bahsetmek mümkün değildir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: toplumsal cinsiyet, mekan, kadın temsili, islami vakıf ve dernekler

Babasız büyüyen kız çocuklarına.

To all daughters who grew up without a father.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This research aims to analyze women's representation in Istanbul-based Islamic foundations primarily with regards to the use of space, but also the division of labor; the use of discourse both each other and with male colleagues, and gender.

1.1. Motivation for the Research

My initial motivation to study this particular topic comes from my experiences and observations that I gained in few of the Islamic foundations I joined for educational, cultural and voluntary activities. During my university education, I wanted to increase my knowledge about Islamic subjects such as fıqh, hadith and tafsir and also help other people. With this intention, I attended the seminars of a particular foundation in Istanbul,[1] which organizes various events for university students. It was when I had some very first observations about the use of space and the discourse created in the daily communication.

My early experiences and observations let me gain awareness regarding the position and the status of women in these foundations, and later encouraged me to ponder on the status of women in these foundations. I was curious about how or in what ways women have influence in the decision-making mechanisms of these foundations. Because I was only a student and volunteer participant that time, it was not possible for me to gain in-depth knowledge about the hierarchy of these foundations with respect to the representation of gender. The observations I made offered some implications on women's representation, but it is not enough to see the whole picture.

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[1] General information about the foundation is given in the second chapter of this study.

I observed women in similar foundations, especially those carrying out cultural and educational activities based on an Islamic[2] perspective. The women working there organize their activities under certain bodies – e.g. "Commission of Women" or "Ladies' Commission" (Hanımlar Komisyonu), "Women's Branch" (Kadın Kolları). These practicing Muslim women are interested in Islamic studies including the subject areas of *fiqh, hadith,* and *tafsir,* and they economically support the foundations through various activities such as charity sale (kermes). They are also generally not employed in anywhere else.

Relying on my observation, I had also some questions about why most of Islamic foundations do not tend to pay specific attention to women's problems such as violence or rape. Still, I kept in mind the fact that while women's issues may not specifically take place in the agenda of these foundations, people may individually pay attention to these issues in their daily lives. I realize that my question may look a bit reductionist, because a Muslim person is ideally considered the one who is expected to take a stand against oppression and cruelty. An additional point is that a Muslim person is already expected to construct his/her life against any form of abuse without distinction.[3]

Another interesting observation I made with regards to the Islamic foundations is about the use of space. The Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief (IHH - İnsan Hak ve Hürriyetleri ve İnsani Yardım Vakfı), an Islamic rights-based NGO headquartered in Istanbul, can be given as a good example, where there is a strict separation of the use of space based on gender. To illustrate, the

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[2] Here, by the statement of "Islamic perspective", I mean that they have a religious dimension, being Muslim is not only the identity of the authorized people in the foundation but also it is the identity of the foundation

[3] Additionally, there are also foundations such as *Hazar Eğitim Kültür ve Dayanışma Derneği* (Hazar Education, Culture and Solidarity Association) and *KADEM - Kadın ve Demokrasi Derneği* (Woman and Democracy Association) where Muslim women work actively. These foundations have activities about women issues but they do not prefer to introduce themselves as feminist organizations. Furthermore, such foundations as Mazlumder— another Islamist NGO—which perform its activities upon human rights discourse, carried out activities about women's issues and Women's Studies Group was also founded in Mazlumder.

department at IHH in which women are working is isolated from other common areas, and male staff cannot have access to the women's space without consent. However, I did not see such separation of space based on gender at Mazlumder, another local Islamist NGO. These varied practices at Islamist NGOs led me to ask questions about how women use the space in these foundations, and where and how they spend most of their time there including free time and breaks. As I mentioned above, the IHH is a relevant example for the women working there as staff. The motivation of this research thus takes its departure point to depict the diversifying practices of the use of space based on gender within their own dynamics. It is also important to keep in mind that people arrange spaces in a practical way in order to practice their belief.

1.2. My Approach to Women's Experiences in Islamic Foundations

When addressing the experiences of women, I think it is necessary to take into account their social, academic and professional backgrounds. It is possible to see women working at these foundations, who had to drop out university or could not work in other public and private foundations or institutions due to the long-standing headscarf ban, or other religious reasons and choices. On the other side, there are also women joining these foundations only for social and cultural voluntary work together with religious reasons and choices. In line with the former argument, Yıldız Ramazanoğlu, practicing Muslim female author and intellectual, puts it "most of the women in "not working" category are actually working in NGOs, political parties, relief organizations anyway, and struggle for the development and solidarity of the society by spending working hours outdoors" (2012, p. 158).[4]

Actually, as mentioned above the experiences of Muslim women in public places and also their struggles for participating in public sphere with their headscarf has become the main subject of many research and analysis. Headscarf ban is essentially related to construction of public space by states. Secondly "city" as a concept where these struggles take place should be taken into consideration as dealing with the relation

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[4] Translation of the quote into English belongs to the author.

between headscarf issue and space. Because this is the problem of the women living in city or women moved to the city and want to exist in public sphere with their religious identity. In relation with such ban, Muslim women began to create their own publicness through Islamic foundations, NGOs and even political parties. In other words Islamic foundations and institutions began to play a role as public spaces of Muslim women, especially the women who are not wanted to be appeared in public spaces which are under the control of the state both as serving and served.

These experiences and struggles of Muslim women include a struggle through the inside/ outside of the house, i.e. public/private dichotomy. In terms of space it refers to a struggle occurred in the city. For this reason, while making analysis for any current Islamic foundation (no matter foundation or NGO) taking into the consideration such experience in terms of similarities, continuities, interruptions between these past experiences and today's foundations in terms of space will lighten the analysis made about these foundations.

It is here critical to emphasize the distinction between the public and private sphere. Many women in these foundations refuse to be within the "public" sphere because they do not wish to be represented by the identity imposed on them by the state. This imposed identity is also generally determined from a male-dominant perspective. These women refuse to get educated and work in a sphere that does not accept their identity. On the other hand, when I deal with the private sphere formed in these foundations, I am compelled to ask whether this private sphere belongs to women or not.

The women who work in these foundations educate themselves in Islamic sciences on the basis that wisdom is a religious duty for everyone. As I mentioned above, they have a leading role in charity sales to economically support the foundation. Despite their efforts, the majority is not generally given any right to take part in the decision-making processes or assigned to a senior position.

When addressing the use of space at these foundations, spatial permeability with respect to gender, the form of communication, and the relationship between women

and men should also be a point of focus due to the mutual relationship between these three elements.

The experiences of Muslim women and men on their mutual encounter in public sphere constitute an important point with regards to the women's representation in such foundations. Hidayet Şefkatli Tuksal, a practicing Muslim academician, emphasizes a kind of specific behavior and describes it as "taqwa blindness" (takva körlüğü). She states:

> …when you come across a religious couple, you find yourself in the same situation. While you are talking with the woman very sincerely, the man will not greet you or talk with you. He will only be standing as if he was deaf and dumb. This is unfortunately what we call "taqwa blindness". (Tuksal, H., Düzce Yerel Haber, http://www.duzceyerelhaber.com/Hidayet-Sefkatli-TUKSAL/14087-Gorunmez-insanlar ,D.P. 13.02.2013., D.A. 25.06.2016)

The case of "taqwa blindness" is also seen in some of these foundations, where men treat women rudely and pejoratively, and they are generally not aware of their behavior. In her column, Tuksal gives an example from twenty years ago. She tells that a lecturer only addressed male participants during a language course where there were both women and men, as it is seen as a necessity of *taqwa*. She ends her column saying, "Some people continue not to see and consider other people but simply insult them. (Tuksal, H., Düzce Yerel Haber, http://www.duzceyerelhaber.com/Hidayet-Sefkatli-TUKSAL/14087-Gorunmez-insanlar, D.P. 13.02.2013., D.A. 25.06.2016)

Most studies dealing with Muslim women from a feminist perspective show them as passive receivers of patriarchy and sees them only as victims. Ramazanoğlu and Abu-Lughod criticize such perspectives in their studies[5]. In this study I would like to analyze the women's representation in Islamic foundations in terms of own dynamics of the foundation. My aim in this study is to analyze how Muslims engage and struggle with the patriarchal system consciously or unconsciously without the bias of seeing

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[5] i.e. Abu-Lughod, Lila. *Do Muslim women Need Saving*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press and Ramazanoğlu, Yıldız, *İşgal Kadınları*, Istanbul :Kapı Yayınları, November 2012

all Muslim women as victims of a patriarchal structure. Secondly, I do not see Muslim women as a homogenous group and I would like to take into consideration the differences in their educational, occupational, and ideological backgrounds and life styles.

1.3.   Research Design

The aim of this study is to analyze and understand Muslim women's experiences of space, and how they position themselves in Islamic foundation, where they come together with men, in a framework of religious identity.

The study is built on a framework of three phases. First, I draw an analysis of how the "place" is used, referring the organization of the foundations' physical space. If the building of the foundation is divided into the so-called "private" and "public" spaces, then I would like to ask the question of who needs privacy (mahremiyet), and who needs the public space. The answer of this question also lies on the definition of the "public" and "private". Is the private area for women where men are not allowed to enter, and is the public area kept especially for men or used as a common area.

Second, I try to deal with the question of how do men and women construct the communicational discourse by focusing on the gender relations between both.

Finally, I focus on the division of activities, works and tasks between men and women in these foundations, introducing the question of is there any strict division of activities in terms of women and men.

The main research question of this study is how Muslim women's representation is constructed in Islamic foundations where they work either voluntarily or salary-based. This study also seeks to find the answers to the following questions in terms of women's representation in Islamic foundations:

1.   Do women have influence on the decision-making mechanisms of the foundations? And if yes, in what ways their influence is visible?

2.   Is there a gendered division of labor and activities in these foundations?

3.   Do women encourage to employ gender perspective on some of the issues in these foundations?

4.   In what way is the place used and do women need a private space? How does the private space affect their life at work?

5.   What kind of a relationship is established between men and women at these foundations?

This study refers gender studies and its relevant concepts like representation and place in order to analyze the representation of women in Islamic foundations through the relation between place and discourse. To carry out this study, I use a theoretical framework based on the concepts of gender and place. The conceptualization of feminist geographers establishes the main ground of the theoretical framework of this study.

The sample of the study consists of 5 women involved in the activities of this Islamic foundation voluntarily, and one of them works as the secretary of the Ladies' Commission secretary as staff. In-depth interviews and the participant observer method are used in this study. A questionnaire is prepared within the scope of this research.

1.4.   Content of the Thesis

Following this section, the second chapter of this study deals with the methodology, while the theoretical framework of the study is provided in the third chapter. The fourth chapter presents a historical outline of women's representation in Turkey beginning from the Late Ottoman Period, the Republican Period to the present day. The fourth chapter aims to show how the Muslim women representation and perception has been changed over different political periods of Modern Turkey. In the last chapter, the findings obtained from the field research are presented in terms of women's use of the place in Islamic foundations in accordance with the conceptualization put forward in previous chapters. Division of labor and - activity field of women are reviewed in relation to the place. The main issue here is how the tasks are shared between men and women, and how the decision-making

mechanisms are operated. Additionally, the final chapter deals with the relationship established among all staff and volunteers in these foundations. This part of the chapter focuses on the questions such as how the daily relationship is formed among the people of the foundation, and how they call and behave each other. The final chapter draws a conclusion discussion based on the findings obtained from the fieldwork and analysis made in the previous chapters.

CHAPTER 2

FRAMEWORK OF THE FIELD RESEARCH

2.1. Choosing the Case

Jennifer Platt identifies the functions of a case study, and says that "case studies can do a whole variety of things but some case studies do not do any of them well; and this often because no particular rationale has dictated the choice of case" (1988, p.177). It is thus important to choose a case, which will help the researcher find answers to the research questions, that's why the reason behind the choice of the case determines its function in the study.

Robert E. Stake describes case study as both "a process of inquiry about the case and the product of the inquiry." (2005, p.444) In this direction, this study aims to understand the dynamics of the foundation in terms of Muslim women's representation. This aim—understanding the dynamics of the foundation—consists of the process of inquiry, because it constructs the way to find the answers for the research question. Furthermore, addressing the foundation as an example for Muslim women's representation in public space makes the foundation "the product of the inquiry".

The reason for why I address an Islamic foundation in this study in terms of women's representation is to show the differences and also similarities in Muslim women's everyday life, and as a part of it, their status in public sphere with regards to Islamic institutions and foundations. In this regard, the case of the foundation, where the participation of women to its activities is high, helps us illustrate the issue in terms of women's professional life, educational background, age and social class. For this reason, it provides significant source for the analysis of women's representation in Islamic institutions in terms of space, relationships and division of labor between men and women.

Stake divides the types of a case study into three. A case study can be intrinsic, instrumental, multiple or collective. According to Stake, an intrinsic case study "is not undertaken primarily because the case represents other cases or because it illustrates a particular trait or problem, but instead because in all its particularity and ordinariness, this case itself is of interest." (2005, p.445) Secondly, an instrumental case study refers to the study in which "a particular case is examined mainly to provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization." (2005, p. 445). Finally, the multiple case study or collective case study is a kind of an instrumental case study which includes several cases. As Stakes points out:

> "Individual cases in the collection may or may not be known in advance to manifest some common characteristics they may be similar or dissimilar with redundancy and variety each important. They are chosen because it is believed that understanding them will lead to better understanding and perhaps better theorizing about a still larger collection of cases." (2005, p. 446).

According to the categorization put by Stake, this study is an instrumental case study. The analysis of the foundation in terms of women representation by taking into consideration the factors of space, discourse and division of labor between men and women, will provide a better understanding for Muslim women's representation in Islamic institutions and foundations.

It would be misleading to identify Muslim women by referring to a fixed categorization due to the fact that social, economic and educational background, age, and marital status as well as other related factors are crucial elements to be taken into account while addressing the representation of Muslim women.

In this thesis, An Islamic foundation was chosen as the main case study, and semi-structured interviews were conducted with 5 women working there either voluntarily or as staff. My previous experiences and observations were used as data source. I took the consent of the participants to record the interviews. The names of the interviewers are changed for anonymity. Aside from the first-hand interview findings and observations, other written and online sources such as websites, publishing and of the foundation are also used to gather data.

2.2. Interviewing Women

Interviewing is determined as an effective tool to access the personal experiences within the foundation. This method also help to gain explicit clues about the research question dealt with in this study. For this reason, interviewing is found as one of the most proper and relevant ways to generate data. As I focus on the personal experiences of women, semi-structured interview method seems to be the ideal way to construct an interaction between the researcher and the women targeted for this study.

As Jennifer Mason says "Just because you are planning a loosely structured or semi-structured interview which is going to feel (to the interviewee) like "a conversation with a purpose", this does not mean that you do not need to engage in some detailed and rigorous planning" (p. 67). There is a preparation process before the interview. During this process, I outlined the questions[6] which set the frame of the interview. The questions are about the personal experiences and perceptions of the participants regarding the use of space, spatial permeability, their expectations and complaints regarding the space, discourse and their activity fields within the institution. In addition, Mason also emphasizes that "it is not possible to carry out a research in a whole structured way "because the decisions and the judgments the researcher makes give some form of structure and purpose to the data generation process" (2002, p.69).

Ann Oakley see the interviewing as a marriage and says that "everybody knows what it is, an awful lot of people do it, and yet behind each closed front door there is a world of secrets" (1982, p.44). Each interview preserves its own uniqueness. Issues such as how the interview is carried out, the environment and atmosphere of the interview, the communication between the interviewer and interviewee, the duration of the interview which are directly related to the interview itself are as important as the data obtained from the interview.

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[6] see appendix A, Questionare of the Interviews

It will be beneficial to have a glance on views of feminist social scientists' views about interview. Rapport is one of the most important principles. With the words of Ann Oakley, the basic condition to provide rapport is "being friendly but not too friendly" (1982, p.46). Oakley further explains: "The manipulation of interviews, as objects of study, sources of data, but this can only be achieved via a certain amount of humane treatment" (1982, p.46). Oakley also states that main paradigm of social research interview emphasizes four points. These are;

> a) its status as a mechanical instrument of data collection; (b) its function as a specialize form of conversation in which one person asks the questions and another gives the answer; (c) its characterization of interviewees as essentially passive individuals, and (d) its reduction of interviewers to a question asking and rapport promoting role (1982, p.48)

According to Oakley, these factors are derived from the masculine form of social science as she says "the entire paradigmatic representation of "proper" interviews in the methodology textbooks, owe a great deal more to a masculine social science and sociological vantage point than to famine one." (1982, p. 49) The reason for Oakley's such discrimination as masculine and feminine is that, according to the mainstream methodological views, a proper interview contains certain values such as "objectivity, detachment, hierarchy, and science," while a poor interview contains "subjectivity, involvement, fiction of equality, an undue concern with the ways in which people are not statistically comparable" (1982, p.49). In this regard, the so-called proper interview represents the masculine aspects, while poor interview represents the feminine. Oakley states that sociology "mirrors society in not looking at social interaction from the view point of women" (1982, p.51). It therefore shows that the expected way of a conducting interview is the masculine one.

In this context, how to conduct a "proper" woman to woman interview –with the statement of Oakley "objectifying your sister"—and what will be the function and the meaning of such an interview to us. When a feminist researcher conducts an interview with women, Oakley says that these three points come out:

1. Use of prescribed interviewing practice is morally indefensible
2. General and irreconcilable contradictions at the hearth of the text book paradigm are exposed, and

3. It becomes clear that, in most cases the goal of finding out about people through interviewing is best achieved when the relationship of interviewer and interviewee is non-hierarchical and when the interviewer is prepared to invest his or her own personal identity in the relationship" (1982, p. 51)

Maria Mies takes attention to a contradictory point in terms of women studies. Mies emphasizes that women consist of a "target group" for the researches and the studies about this subject are gradually increasing. She sees the existence of woman scholars in academia who aim to contribute to woman's emancipation with their studies as contradictory. According to her, being a woman and academician at the same time is a contradictory situation because they as women subjected to the sexual oppression in one hand and they as academicians "share the privileges of the (male) academic elite" (p.69). In terms of the reflection of this contradictory situation to the methodology of the studies, Mies says that:

> Woman scholars have been told to look at their contradictory existence, i.e. at their subjective being as women as an obstacle and a handicap to pure and objective research. Even while studying women's questions they were advised to suppress their emotions, their subjective feelings of involvement, identification with other women in order to produce objective data. (1983, p.70)

In my master education entrance interview, when I explain the subject that I want to study (the subject of this thesis), said that I'm also a part of the story that I will try to explain as a case. One of the jurors then asked me that "do you think that it will be an objective study?". This question is the summary of the discussions that I transmitted from Oakley and Mies. The objectivity of a study in which the researcher's fundamental motivation is his/her own experiences is found suspicious. While dealing with the studies that Maria Mies conducted with women from different backgrounds, in terms of the rapport promoted with the women, she says that:

> This women's gossip was obviously encouraged by the fact that we were women, belonging to the same social category and were also outsiders and researchers who were ready to listen to their stories. The general feeling of 'being on the same sides' helped overcome the usual barrier between people from different classes and cultures. The establishments of an open and friendly rapport between us and the women was mainly due to the commitment and enthusiasm of the Indian women on the research team, who were not capable of partial identification with the problems of the rural

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women, but who also enjoyed being with them and temporarily sharing their lives. (1983, p. 83)

Another important point that feminist researchers emphasize in terms of the interviews about the women's experience is the language. As the language has a big, actually main role in naming and adding meaning to the acts, activities and experiences, it also becomes main focus in such discussions about women's experiences. In this regard, it would be beneficial to share Marjorie l. DeVault's views:

> The names of experiences often do not fit for women. For an example that is simple and immediate, consider the difficulties that arise in an attempt to apply the terms "work" and "leisure" to most women's lives. Many of the household activities so prominent in women's lives do not fit comfortably into either category (see e.g. Smith 1987:68), and many of women's activities, such as family, community, and volunteer work, are best described as "invisible work" (Daniels 1987). There are other examples—the terms "public" and "private," for example, construct a distinction that obscures women's "multiple crisscrossing" of fluid and constantly shifting boundaries (Saraceno 1984:7). Such disjunctures between language and women's lives have been central to feminist scholarship; presumably, there are many more to be revealed. Presumably, as well, the lack of fit between women's lives and the words available for talking about experience present real difficulties for ordinary women's self-expression in their everyday lives. If words often do not quite fit, then women who want to talk of their experiences must "translate," either saying things that are not quite right, or working at using the language in non-standard ways. (1990, p.87-88)

DeVault argues that the purpose of the feminist research is to find out and analyze the neglected and unnoticed experiences, but the standard language and expressions are not sufficient in expressing these experiences. For this reason, she emphasizes the importance of choosing the words carefully and creatively while naming the experiences. (1990, p.105) In this regard, against the general expectation in social sciences for abandoning the tradition of "women talk" in order to conduct concrete, objective studies which don't contain feelings and emotions, DeVault suggests that "as we construct feminist discourses in sociology, we can instead recognize those distinctively female traditions, borrow from them, and build upon them in our practice as researchers" (1990, p. 107).

I can give an example from a previous interview that I participated as an interviewee. The study is about the Muslim women's movements in Turkey. At the beginning I'm

not so willing to attend the interview for the study. Because almost in every interview which I attended as a Muslim women, I was asked similar questions of "do you describe yourself as a feminist, why or why not", or "is virginity a taboo for you". I think that these questions do not have the right and appropriate perspective to understand a Muslim woman's experiences and views about the life. I still accepted the interview despite that I was expecting these questions.   Rather than understanding the actual experience, asking such questions adds meaning to the experience with the interviewer's own point of view upon identity issue. For this reason, I was reluctant to participate in the studies about Muslim women. When thinking of the question of "is sexuality/virginity a taboo for you," there is the sexual freedom argument of feminism at one end, and there are Islamic rules and borders, as well as social norms and cultural codes at the other. I answered the question with such an expression that "I care about the limits put by Allah". However, if we deal with the issue—virginity is a taboo or not—in terms of Muslim women without taking into consideration such questions, whether this limit is determined by religious doctrine or social norms can be only known with a serious and honest inner questioning of the individual about his/her own life and relationships. Transmitting such experience to the study can only be possible with sincere answers of the interviewees again. This is a very critical point where the feminist point of view and most Muslim women's views collide with each other. Yıldız Ramazanoğlu puts it:

> The argument of limitless sexual freedom is seen as offensive for woman's body and soul as it invades the legitimacy realm drawn by the religion. At this point it is observed that the practices carried out in terms of feminist discourse are problematic" (2012, p.46)[7]

As it can be seen in the quotation from Ramazanoğlu, to understand an experience and give a meaning to it, it is necessary to have a knowledge about the meaning and value world of the interviewee or at least it is important to try to understand it. [8]

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[7] Translation of the quote into English belongs to the author.
[8] Here the question—is it a taboo for you—is asked with a direct postulate, for this reason, the result obtained from answer against this questions via giving meaning to the experience will be suspicious.

After one of the interviews I conducted for this study; the interviewee told me that "It will be probably a descriptive analysis, rather than a critical one, won't it?". I think the interviewee thought that I was a feminist[9] in the period that we conducted that interview. This is why she expected a more radical attitude from me in terms of feminism, and to use feminist jargon in my questions more intensely. I remember that she was a little bit stressed and nervous at the beginning. At the end, I realized that she got calm and she indirectly told me what she expected at first, and the result was different from what she expected.

For both cases, we can ask such a question: Does researcher's having a feminist identity or the interviewee's having a feminist identity affect the interview itself and the findings obtained from the interview? It is clear that a concordance between the interviewer and interviewee (both of them are feminist or not) will provide a commonality in terms of their perspective. However, it cannot be claimed that an interview which doesn't contain such a commonality will be insufficient in showing the experience.

In the light of all these discussions while asking my questions, I tried to gain participants perceptions and experiences with the own words of the participants during interviews, and expressions rather than reflecting my perception and perspective. For example, I sometimes avoided myself using a concrete feminist jargon. Because my purpose is to achieve a common language, and that I do not carry feminist hesitations in terms of language and discourse. During the interviews, while asking the questions, I took into consideration the personal information I know about the interviewees. I prevented focus of interviews from changing, I also tried to make the conservation flow in a way that the interviewees are not bored, which in return facilitated the process. Most of the participants also found it interesting to talk about their experiences on this particular topic.

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[9] The interviewee stated that she has a perspective which give priority to the human itself not the woman. Her question made me think that as I study gender and involved into the activities about women's issue, she might think that I will make a negative analysis relying on "feminism" rather than trying to understand her experience.

2.3. General Information About the Foundation

The foundation that takes the center of the case-study is an educational and cultural foundation. It identifies itself as a Muslim organization. Several voluntary people came together in a large town in Central Anatolia at the beginning of 1980s. During this period, this community did not maintain its activities on an official basis. In 1990 this community founded its foundation in Istanbul. The founder of the foundation started to give *tafsir* lectures at the headquarters of the foundation.

When the website of the foundation was analyzed in terms of how it presents itself regarding to its activities, it is seen that the foundation gives different services under the specific commissions in the body of the foundation. Under the title of activities, there are sections like child activities, Commissions of youth, elderly, ladies, and sacrifice. As it can be understood, besides its activities for adult, there are activities for young individuals and children. Even though women actively participate in the activities from the very beginning, Commission for Ladies was realized later.

Now there are associations (dernek) affiliated with the foundation in different districts of Istanbul. Additionally, a television channel and a charity organization were founded by the voluntaries of the foundation. Through the TV channel, the foundation and the charity organization are able to announce and advertise their activities. Beside, Islamic perspective adapted by the foundation and its surroundings can be represented through the programs shown on the TV.

Previously, I conducted a study focusing on the attachment forms of young female students to an Islamic foundation. I aimed to research how young female university students establish their relation with an Islamic foundation and whether and how they develop a sense of attachment towards this foundation. My approach to this issue was that university students are encountering with different ideological, political, religious and cultural groups in their daily life. This situation obviously cannot be restricted to only university students, because big cities we live in include multicultural aspects, yet if we deal with universities, it can be seen that they include many different groups from different political perspective in terms of student clubs

and similar groups. For this reason, I wanted to search how female student establish their relation with a more homogenous foundation.[10]

For the sample group, I tried to reach the female university students who have in relation with the foundation now or stayed in contact in any way before. I used snowball method to reach them. I made in-depth interviews with four women who continue their university education in Istanbul. The participant and the information about them is listed as below.

Table 2.1. General Information about the Sample Group of the Study on the Attachment Forms of Female University Students in Islamic Foundations.

Name	Age	University	Where does she stay?	Where does her family live
Tuba	22	Yeditepe University	With her family	Istanbul
Şeyma	22	Istanbul University	Student house of the foundation	Mardin
Kübra	27	Istanbul University	With her family	Istanbul
Hilal	26	Istanbul University	Student house of the foundation	Istanbul

The sample group was chosen from the same foundation again, and it consisted of 4 girls. As a result of the study, three attachment forms came out, which are religious/intellectual attachment, forced attachment due to the student house, and the attachment due to voluntary activities. There is a kind of religious and intellectual attachment to the foundations arising from the views of founder of the foundation. All participants expressed that the knowledge that they received from the lectures of the founder of the foundation is the biggest gain for them in terms of their relation with the foundation. Two of the participants affirmed that the foundation expect them to participate in the activities of the foundation as they stayed in the students' house of the foundation. Evaluating her current situation in the foundation, Kübra states that her only connection with the foundation is a kind of voluntary activity. She

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[10] Even If some Islamic foundations claim that they are open to different perspectives we can not talk about a heterogenity as in the universities or other institutions.

gives a class in the children's club of the foundation. She says "there is nothing special about the foundation, if there is another foundation where I can serve people in that way, I can go there". This study will contribute to see the influence of the age factor on representation of Muslim women in the foundation.

The foundation also participates in social aids and social awareness activities. For this reason, at first glance, it is seen that young people, male or female, are not restricted in youth activities. In this regard, while youth generally consists of high school students, the university commission as it is understood from the title aims to reach the university students. Higher Education Seminars of the foundation refer an important point about educational activities regarding the university students.

Beside the information above, it is known that the foundation provides accommodation for students for both male and female university students and financial support for the expenses of the student houses like the rental of the house. The foundation also provides scholarship for the students especially the ones staying at the student house of the foundation. This is an important point because there are a lot of individuals who establish their relation with the foundation firstly through student house or by receiving scholarship from the foundation. The foundation sets some rules while giving scholarship and receiving them for student house. These are not written and strict rules but they are expressed verbally only as a request, yet it is clear that this also creates another kind of attachment (can be said forced attachment) apart from religious, social or ideological attachment[11].

Even though the foundation is an institution rather than a close religious community, there is also a religious leader, namely *Hoca* on the top of the foundation, he is also known as the founder of the foundation and has the power to affect and lead people intellectually. This is one of the most dominant factor in the connection between the foundation and the participants or followers of the activities of the foundation.

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[11] For more information about the attachment forms see page 18.

Accordingly, this creates a kind of attachment depending on the religious and ideological perspective of the leader.

2.3. General Profiles of the Interviewers

Participants of the study from the foundation consist of generally middle-aged women and they were affiliated with the foundation for more than 10 years. The women with whom I interviewed have participated activities of different Islamic communities and foundations before they were active in this foundation. Besides, there are women among the interviewees who voluntarily worked at the district organizations of a political party by carrying the same concern as in the foundation in terms of being voluntary.

Only one of the respondents is 26 years old. The results of the interview I made with Zübeyde, which I will deal with in detail in the last chapter of this study shows that there is an important difference between middle-aged women and young women in terms of their opinion, expectations regarding the space and how they use the space. Four of the interviewees are above 40 years old. Majority is married, except one and three of them are housewives. Zübeyde is working as secretary of Ladies' commission, she has been continuing this job for seven years; Feyza is an educator in a Religious Quran School.[12]

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[12] For more information also see the appendix B.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND and LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. Theoretical Background

This study explored how Muslim women's representation is constructed in Islamic foundations and organizations. The study searches the answer for this question under the spatial structures of Islamic foundations, and it is expected that the answer will reveal (1) how gender differentiations constructed through the spatial structures, (2) how this foundation and other organizations become a place for Muslim women, (3) how the spatial structure affects the division of labor and activity fields between men and women and (4) finally, the communication style between them.

In the light of these questions, the conceptual framework of this study is built on gender and space/place. In social sciences, especially sociology, anthropology and geography, "gender and place" as a subject have become a research and discussion focus. In this regard, the studies of feminist geographers like Don Mitchel, Linda McDowell, Doreen Massey, Nancy Duncan, Gillian Rose are the most important contributors to the field of feminist geography in general, and the subject of gender and place in particular. As in many other departments in academia, these scholars also struggle with the male dominant structure of academia including universities as places in one hand, and they also try to influence the masculine views in social sciences with their studies. With regards to the aim of the feminist geography, Linda McDowell says:

> The specific aim of a feminist geography, therefore is to investigate, make visible and challenge the relationships between gender divisions and spatial divisions, to uncover their mutual constitution and problematize their apparent naturalness. Thus the purpose here is to examine the extent to which women and me experience spaces and places differently and to show how these differences themselves are part of the social constitution of gender as well as that of place. (1999, p.12)

Don Mitchel also clearly summarizes what feminists, especially feminist geographers, did in the field:

Feminists, and feminist geographers, have long been involved in social movements designed to transform and make more acceptable these spaces, to remake them less after an image of patriarchy and more after an image of a more gender equal world. (2000, p.213)

Gillian Rose in her book *Feminism and Geography* (1993) focuses on the relation between feminist ideas and concepts like patriarchy, hegemonic masculinity, gender and geography and place itself specifically. She also deals with the connection between these subjects and everyday life.

Feminist geographers develop a strategy for the denial of women and they refer to "different spaces and other worlds; they focus on women's everyday world and the centrality of women's embodiment" (Rose, G., 1993, p.40). On the other hand, place is one of the primary focus of human geography. Human geographers deal with the "emotional response of people to places" (Rose, G., 1993, p.43). In that way, Rose deals with the congruence between feminism and geography and develops strategies for its masculine aspects.

With regards to gender and place as a field, its origin dates back to 1970s. During these years, women began to enter into the places like factories, universities, namely public spaces. The general view that "the place of a woman is the home" began to be undermined. Thus gendered constructions of the places and gendered boundaries of the spaces have become a subject of study. (Spain. D, 2001, p.5966)

Firstly, the subject included women and real spaces like house, cities. The focus of the researchers especially consists of women's participation and spatial permeability in these spaces. Architectural aspects are also included in the field at the second stage. As it is stated by Spain, "urban and neighborhood analyses are not abandoned. Rather they were seen as the longer context in which the design of buildings reinforces the stereotypical gender association" (2001, p.5967). Later, body entered into the field as a concept which has a meaning as space especially when Judith Butler published her books *Gender Trouble* (1990) and *Bodies That Matter* (1993). According

to Butler (1990) body is also constructed by the social, political norms and rules as well as the space.

The fact that there is study field as "gender and place" in literature, primarily arises from the fact that gender and place are the concepts which have mutual relationship. In the following part, I deal with the gender and place as two separate concepts in mutual relation.

3.1.1. Gender and Place as Different Concepts in Mutual Relation

Daphne Spain under the entry of gender and place in the *International Encyclopedia of Social & Behavioral Sciences* identifies the differentiation between gender and sex. As generally known sex is the term referring to "biologically determined category of male and female while gender has a socially constructed aspect (2001, p. 5965) It is understood that gender is not a stable concept, it is dynamic and changing. Linda McDowell says that:

> There are many different ways of 'doing gender' (West and Zimmerman 1987), of being a man and a woman. Multiple and oppositional as well as hegemonic versions of feminity and masculinity exist. They are geographically and historically specific and vary across the range of spatial scales. (1999, p.21)

The basic connection between gender and place is that they gain meaning by the interaction with each other. Activities, use of space and experience give meaning to the space. Don Mitchell says "gender is spatially constructed in that it is constructed in and through particular social spaces" (2000, p.219). This is a mutual relation; as gender is spatially constructed, space is also constructed and its construction is also gendered. McDowell also emphasizes that:

> For places as territorially bounded spaces at different spatial scales are social constructions too. Like ideas about gender, ideas about place, boundaries and membership are social constructs. … For young women and men, or older women and men, for straight or gay people, different spaces have particular significances and different relations of power that vary over time. For women with small children, for example, the home may be simultaneously a place of safety and a trap; for waged workers at the end of the day it may be a longed-for haven or a place where complex relations of age and gender have to be negotiated and renegotiated. (1999, p.31)

Place is also socially constructed. Spain says that "like gender place is socially and subjectively created from the objective elements" (p. 5965). According to Spain "place is experienced" (2001, p. 5965).

Linda McDowell emphasizes that the geographers argue that the place gain meaning from spatial practices, power relations and experiences. In order to deal with the idea "place is also socially constructed" more elaborately McDowell's explanations will be useful for us.

> Places are made through power relations which construct the rules which define boundaries. These boundaries are both social and spatial they define who belongs to a place and who may be excluded, as well as the location or site of the experience. (1999, p.4)

3.1.2. Space and the Construction of Symbolic Boundaries

The term "boundary" is the key concept for the discussion on Muslim women's representation and space in general, and specifically in Islamic foundations. Firstly, the design of the building of the foundation or any other institution is constructed upon the boundaries. Accordingly, these boundaries point certain questions as in which places male individuals are allowed, and in which places female individual are allowed and which places are common.

Secondly boundary becomes the key factor in different representations in public space. For example, headscarf issue[13] has had a big place in the agenda of Turkey until near past, and even in some parts still today. And on the focus of discussions toward several ban against wearing headscarf in some public spaces, there are the subjects of the issue namely women wearing headscarf. Therefore, it is important to take into consideration the headscarf ban, Muslim women's challenge against this ban and also their experience within Islamic groups and political parties in order to

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[13] Hatice Babacan, a female university student was expelled from the school because of her headscarf 1968. This was the first case about the headscarf ban in universities. Several other cases were experienced in universities between 1968-1980. In 1981, a dress code was issued for teachers and students. According to this code, it is not allowed to wear headscarf both by students and teachers at schools. Headscarf ban was spread to universities and other state institutions in the following years and it continued until 2013. For more information see also Mazlumder, Report for Chronology of Headscarf Ban in Turkey and around the World.

understand Muslim women's experiences about public space in recent years. Besides understanding the relation, it will be possible to make a comparison between today when wearing headscarf in public sphere is not forbidden anymore and near past, and to observe the change.

Before dealing with the public sphere experience of Muslim women, it is important to understand clearly the hypothesis about gendered construction of public private dichotomy.

3.1.3. Gendered Construction of Public and Private Dichotomy

Actually before underlining the gendered construction of public private dichotomy, it is important to focus on the difference between public and private. Ali Madanipour has a sociological approach to this difference. Firstly, he points the difference between sphere and space, and he regards the sphere as a broader concept. Public and private spaces are component parts of public and private sphere. The distinction between sphere and space is important for the discussion about struggle of women with headscarf to exist in the public sphere in Turkey. Because as it is mentioned before, women with headscarf create their publicness in through Islamic foundations and organizations.[14]

Madanipour's distinction between public and private can be regarded as the distinction between social and personal. He made a terminological analysis of the words "public" and "private". According to him public refers to "a large number of people, who are either conceptualized as society or as state, and what is associated with them" (2003, p.96). In this regard, he has an elaborated description of public space:

> Within the broad frameworks of state and society, a public space is therefore often provided and managed by the state and is used by the society as a whole. Using the criteria of access, agency and interest, a space can be considered public if it is controlled by the public authorities, concerns the people as a whole, is open or available to them, and is used or shared by all the members of a community (2003, p.98,99)

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[14] for a detailed discussion see the page 29, 30

And his description of private space helps us to understand the distinction between public and private:

> Private space is a part of space that belongs to, or is controlled by, an individual, for that individual's exclusive use, keeping the public out. Much of the private sphere unfolds in private spaces, although it can also go on outside private territories, such as in a public library or in a park, which is a part of private life played out in a public place. (2003, p.35)

According to Nancy Duncan, the public and private dichotomy is used to "to construct, control, discipline, confine, exclude and suppress gender and sexual difference preserving traditional patriarchal and heterosexist power structures" (1996, p.128). The space divided into two roughly as inside (private) and outside (public) of the house becomes a thing that strengthen the power structures. Social and gender roles are determined and separated according to this dichotomy and while one side –public- refers to power the other side –private- refers to what is not powerful. In terms of the gendered construction of public-private dichotomy, it will be beneficial to make such a long quotation from Duncan:

> It is clear that the public-private distinction is gendered. This binary opposition is employed to legitimate oppression and dependence on the basis of gender, it has also been used to regulate sexuality. This private as an ideal type has traditionally been associated and conflated with: the domestic the embodied, the natural, the family, property, 'the shadowy interior of the house hold', personal life, intimacy, passion, sexuality, 'the good life', care, a haven, unwaged labor, reproduction and immanence. The public as an ideal type has traditionally been the domain of the disembodied, the abstract, the cultural, rationality, critical public discourse, citizenship, civil society, justice, the market place, waged labor, production, the police, the state, action, militarism, heroism and transcendence. (1996, p. 128)

If we follow Duncan, most of the concepts she places in public sphere, especially citizenship, market place, police and state are related to power and they determine who will appear and, how and to what extent it will appear in this sphere. In addition, public sphere and private sphere are constructed on a gendered base.

Women with headscarf were treated strangely when they were present in public places and they faced with behaviors which can be regarded as verbal harassment.[15]

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[15] For a detailed discussion see also "Hijabi Girl in X concert" in Reçel Blog http://recel-blog.com/hijabi-girl-in-the-x-concert/, D.P. 15.05.2019, D.A. 13.07.2019

Due to the fact that only women with headscarf are subjected to this situation, this issue presents an important example for that the public sphere has a gendered division. The fact that most of the Muslim man moves around the public sphere without being pointed as the "other" might be the easiness provided by public-private dichotomy which is constructed on a gendered based for men if he does not wear clothes which refer symbolically to Islam. In terms of this easiness in general meaning Nancy Duncan says;

> Historically in legal terms at least, women have been treated as private and embodied, in the sense of apolitical. They have long been treated as if not fully capable of independent disembodied political thought and objectivity as evidenced by the fact that it was relatively recently that women were given the vote. Still today most men move between public and private spaces and spheres with more legitimacy and physical safety (see Pain 1991; Valentina 1989)., and less burdened by responsibilities as care givers of children and the elderly than most women. (1996, 129).

3.2. Literature Review on Muslim Women and Their Experiences in Public Sphere

Experiences of Muslim women in public space have become an issue discussed from many aspects by various writers from different political backgrounds. Cihan Aktaş, another practicing Muslim female author and intellectual, is an important name because she questions not only the status of religious Muslim women in public space but also the patriarchal relations in Islamist groups and parties in her book *Bacıdan Bayana.* Apart from Cihan Aktaş, there are also other woman writer such as Yıldız Ramazanoğlu and Nazife Şişman who both question the patriarchal structure and make criticism on feminism.

Yıldız Ramazanoğlu and Cihan Aktaş enlightens the public space experiences of Muslim women as an "insider" because of their identity as Muslim woman. Nilüfer Göle, Yeşim Arat other influential writers on Muslim women and public space, on the other hand, play a role as an "outsider observer".

Arat points the diversity among Islamist women in terms of ideology and distance from the state and their class. It is important to point out the diversity among the Islamist women in order to find the common point what make them come together.

Arat describes the diversity as follow and refers the headscarf issue as their common point.

> This broad category of women included self-conscious Muslims who expected the state to respect public expressions of religiosity, some who were ready to fight for these beliefs and others who did not want any confrontation with the state, some who were influenced by feminist and other who rejected them (2005, p. 21)

As public space is organized by the power structures on a gendered base, women with headscarf experienced the conflict between public and private seriously because of the headscarf ban. For this reason, women with headscarf started to be politically and socially active in political parties, NGOs and other similar bodies. In this way, while women with headscarf struggle for their rights in public space in one hand, they have exceeded the limit determined for them by questioning the traditional codes integrated with religion.

Instead of behaving in accordance with the gender role which was imposed to them, they had to deal with and cope with the headscarf problem as an agency. The point emphasized by Ramazanoğlu is important: "Another interesting point here is that women conserved in the mother and sister categorization demand for sharing the same area for struggle in social life and also become prominent with headscarf issue" (2000, 143).

Another question which should be asked here is that how headscarf ban affected the experience of Muslim men and Muslim women towards public sphere or whether it equally affected their use of public sphere. Well, what kind of division is created between Muslim women and men by this struggle?

Public sphere is organized by power that is the state wants from citizen who want to be exist in public sphere to be in a certain profile. Women with headscarf were not appropriate for this profile. While women are forced to struggle for their right for public sphere or return to their home, Muslim men can exist in public space more easily and develop different relationships in public spheres. Ramazanoğlu says:

> While the brains of the women who are desired not to go outside from private sphere (from inside of the house in Islamic terminologies) are taken under control, public sphere is defined as the rational and cultural production area of only men. This situation makes itself felt by evolving a strange approach in which Mumin men who go all lengths in order to be accepted by the existing status quo respect the women without headscarf and behave women with headscarf suspiciously. (2000, 145)[16]

Although analysis of Ramazanoğlu focuses on headscarf ban and the struggle about this, I use this analysis as a source for the discussion about public-private dichotomy, one point about the religious people in Turkey should be taken into consideration: The house –private sphere- is not free from political and social production. For this reason, it is necessary to find out that when the religious conversations for which women came together in any house in the neighborhood and read Quran or made tafsir, hadith and prophetic biography lectures. Because such kind of examples show us that some kind of concrete activities have also taken place in private sphere. Although the discourse preached in these home lectures have not the power to change or to be against to this dichotomy, it is important for adding a different feature to the private sphere. The house is not only a domestic area but it turns into an area which is open to social and political production and activities.

It can be said that besides the political parties, Islamic foundations are the places where a huge population of religious women participate in voluntarily activities. These women, as it is also stated in the study of Arat consist of women from low and middle class. Additionally, they spend long working hours for these activities. This statement of Yıldız Ramazanoğlu is important even though she argues the issue in a different context: "Most of the women in "not working" category are working in NGOs, political parties, relief organizations anyway and struggle for development and solidarity of the society by spending working hours outside" (2012, p. 110). [17]

Actually the city notion itself is a key concept for the discussion of public-private dichotomy in terms of Muslim women's experiences. The city is subjected to a

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[16] Translation of the quote into English belongs to the author.
[17] Translation of the quote into English belongs to the author.

division in terms of production, conception, socialization. The struggle with headscarf is also related with this division. Ramazanoğlu analyzes this relation as follows:

> The momentum gained by exchange of knowledge and experience, realities encountered at the stage of adaptation to the city during the urbanization process forced the women to be more active. Obtaining the experience and competence in order to exist and survive here, realizing the fact that with what and how we can exist in public sphere, "what does the city want from us" and the struggle for taking the portion from the values and richness produced in the city. (2000, 147)[18]

Cihan Aktaş also deals with experiences of Muslim women in public sphere in her book *Bacıdan Bayana*. Aktaş analyzes this experience as a process through which the discourse for Islamist women evolved from "bacı" (sister) to "bayan" (Ms). Aktaş presents sources for the analysis to be made in terms of both spatial experience and the discourse. Aktaş see "headscarf" as an intention for being "bacı" and evaluates the "bacı" discourse as an approval for the existence of women with headscarf in public place. However, she states that this discourse (bacı) "expresses the feeling that will send her (woman) to the home readily" (2005, p. IX). According to Aktaş, Muslim women have taken shelter in this discourse by accepting the identity imposed by this discourse in order to be able to take place in public sphere. For this reason, she states that Muslim women see not causing sexual intimation in public space as a religious responsibility. Aktaş explains the experience toward public sphere in terms of headscarf and the "bacı" discourse as follows:

> It was going on to provide conveniences to be named as "bacı" for both parties in terms of Muslim woman's maintaining her claims for public sphere. Bacı was a guest in public sphere and she emerged in public sphere tentatively under the cover of her brothers who were her fellows (dava arkadaşı), maybe she would come back to private sphere by marring with a man who called her as "bacı". (2005, pp. 24, 25)[19]

The existence of Muslim women in public sphere was a kind of existence which was limited and temporary in all aspects. It can be said that the limits of the city is continued upon the gender roles determined by relying on the public-private dichotomy. The issue about "the place of women" consists a focus point from everyday speeches to the intellectual discussions in terms of the criticism of

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[18] Translation of the quote into English belongs to the author.
[19] Translation of the quote into English belongs to the author.

modernism and capitalism. This is a frequently discussed issue in many TV programs, newspapers etc. In order to understand this point of view completely it will be beneficial to look the analysis of Cihan Aktaş:

> Women's claim for appearing in public sphere with their headscarf requires to develop a new kind of relationship between Muslim men and women in public sphere. Beside the all kinds of problems and troubles it will bring, this new relationship means for Muslim (or let's say Islamist) men the collapse of the house and the changing of the status of the man within marriage. … Woman can exist as long as she integrates with the home and private sphere. While Muslim woman has been treated as the daughter in the house, she faced with a treatment which can be described as an adopted maid. (2005, p. 27)[20]

In her book, Aktaş focuses on the change in the twenty-year experience of women with headscarf in public sphere. These facts point that women with headscarf continuously have to struggle for representation and existence in public sphere where they had the opportunity to exist in public sphere through the headscarf and the "bacı" discourse. They have lived a conflict between public and private sphere (inside of the house and outside of the house) because of both the discourse they subjected to and the limits drown by the power. Yet, Muslim women start to resist both the discourse and the limitation:

> A huge change has been lived for the last twenty years. Bacı (Muslim sister) is at a point that she gives importance to the genuine participation in which she is threated as equal, and can make herself heard and search answers for her questions rather than being called with an abstract respect. (Aktaş, 2005, p. 50)[21]

In terms of the search for new spaces and opportunities, it is possible to see the foundation as a new publicness. In fact, Muslim women both before and after 28th of February 1999[22], have regarded these foundations both as an area for struggle and as source for gaining cultural, religious and intellectual knowledge and education as they were not satisfied with the secular education, and they also do not want to enter into the universities to get education without headscarf.

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[20] Translation of the quote into English belongs to the author.
[21] Translation of the quote into English belongs to the author.
[22] It is military memorandum which is named the postmodern coup. For detailed information

Nilufer Göle also adds another framework to the public space experience of Muslim women through her study conducted with Muslim women. Göle focuses on the political and social representation of veiling since the *Tanzimat* period in terms of the turn points such as the formation of Modern Turkey and Islamic movements rising after 1970s. Göle argues that Islamist women's "participation in to secular education and religious politics … necessitates public participation …adherence to the principles of Islamist communalism sanctions the individuation of women" (1997, p.3). As it can be seen from the emphasis made by Göle this situation causes a conflict for Islamist women. In this regard, Göle states that in terms of the significance of veiling today:

> In its contemporary form veiling conveys a political statement of Islamism in general and an affirmation of Muslim women's identity in particular. In this respect it is distinct from the traditional Muslim woman's use of the head scarf. While the latter is confined within the boundaries of traditions, handed down from generation to generation and passively adopted by women, the former is an active appropriation by women that shifts from traditional to modern realms of life and conveys a political statement. (1997, p. 4)

According to Göle, this "new veiling", "represents the public and collective affirmation of women who are searching for recognition of their Muslim identity" (1997, p. 21). In addition, Muslim women's participation in Islamic movements provide them "opportunities for their self-realization" (1997, p. 22). Thanks to this participation, they become visible in public space and achieves professional works such as columnists, journalists, writing novels, making films. In this regard, as Göle says "an elite cadre of Islamic women is thus emerging from within Islamism" (1997, p. 22).

According to Göle, existence of Muslim women in public sphere refers to a transformation in the image of traditional Muslim woman. The distinction that is proposed by Göle related to this transformation is very sharp:

> Paradoxically, as Islam politicized itself, it moved women toward the political scene, and the black veil, the symbol of the return to premodern Islamic traditions, acted as an expression of the active participation of women in political demonstrations. Rising Islamist movements, on the one hand, call for the return of women to their traditional settings and positions. On the other hand, they replace the traditional portrait of a Muslim woman with a politicized, active one. The prevailing of a fatalist, passive, docile, and obedient traditional Muslim woman was replaced by that of and active,

demanding, and even militant Muslim woman who is no longer confined to her home. (1997, p. 84)

The most important point here as Göle addresses is the new characteristic of Muslim woman "who is no longer confined to her home" (1997, p. 84). In this regard the "city"[23] notion is again encountered us, as Göle underlines:

> Above all, it moves Islam from the "periphery" to the "center." The phenomenon of Islam, on the one hand, geographically moved into urban settlements and, on the other, penetrated the central apparatus where modern cultural values and symbols are created. Veiled women are not simply passive conveyors of the provincial traditional culture; they are, rather, active and self-asserting women who seek opportunities in modernism. They have come into the public scene not at the periphery, where traditions prevail, but in urban settlements and the universities, where modernism flourishes. (1997, p.92)

As it is stated above, Muslim women claim the public space as to represent and declare their identity. This causes a conflict upon public space from different points. Göle draws a new typology of Muslim woman who declare her identity in urban space and she regards the "literate, Muslim, militant profile" as challenging to "Islam-western contrast" on one hand and "old elites" on the other hand. Göle emphasizes that in spite of Muslim women's claim for modern institutions such as universities, they don't give up their "politicoreligious" identities. This cause the emergence of a new Muslim woman profile. (1997, p. 98)

Göle sees the political movement as creating a way for their own publicness as it is stated in terms of participating in the activities of foundations, organization and political parties. With her own word, "the political movement has enabled women to exist from mahram sphere to the public one" (1997, p. 114). Göle thus points the agency of Muslim women in terms of having a voice.

> On top of this, regardless of its conservative attitude toward the position of women in society, the Islamic movement empowers women to claim their individual freedom- as seen in their participation in demonstrations organized to promote the right to veil as well as their involvement in publishing and Koran meetings- as well as providing alternative lifestyles for them. (1997, p. 114)

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[23] For a detailed discussion see page 26

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Finally, the common point of these studies is presenting a new image for the claims of Muslim women for public sphere, their position and situation for having a voice within the movement they participate and the emphasis on the challenge to the roles imposed by society, state or the movements they participate or the transformation of the representation aroused from these imposed roles.

CHAPTER 4

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1. The Changing Experience and Profile of Muslim Women during the History of the Republic

Any study related to Muslim women in Turkey should take into consideration the relation between religion—Islam—and the state as well as the political changes beginning from the Late Ottoman period, especially the Second Constitutionalist period, and changes experienced during the Republican period in terms of secularism and modernism. In order to understand Muslim women's current political activism and movements, their participation to Islamic foundations, and also their presence and representation in public space in Turkey, which is the main focus of this study, it is important to deal with the key stages of Turkey's political history. This would include the foundation of the Republic, the reforms implemented during the foundation, the 40-year political process between 1940s and 1980s together with the military coup of 1980 and the military memorandum of 1997 with the period onward. All these political processes have influenced (Muslim) women's participation in social life in many aspects from education to professional life. For this reason, it is important to focus on the political history of Turkey beginning from the Second Constitutionalist period, with a focus on changes in the status of women, especially Muslim women, and the rise of Islamic political movements and activities.

4.1.1. Late Ottoman Period

To begin with the Late Ottoman Political history, it can be said that the changes and reforms implemented in the political structure of the state in terms of modernism and Westernization reflected on social life as well as other areas like education and law. Alongside the modernization process started in 19th century, women's claim for status in social life increased and they made several achievements. Women raised their social and political claims via periodicals and foundations established by women themselves.

In this period, women had the opportunity to discuss and question intellectually many problems and issues about the different dimensions of women's political and social roles in magazines published by women. *Women's World (Kadınlar Dünyası)*, *Newspaper for Ladies (Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete), and Young Woman (Genç Kadın)*, were the most famous media organs maintained by women.[24] (Çakır, 2001, pp. 59-86)

Secondly, women were able to organize their claims and secure their participation in social life through the foundations established by them. These foundations have functions of charity and social support, giving support to women in terms of professional skills, carrying cultural aims and goals, searching solutions for the problems of the country, participating in the defense of the country during the First World War and the War of Independence. There were also feminist women foundations and foundations established by different ethnical groups, women's foundations of political parties and foundations with political aims. (Çakır, 2011, pp. 87-133)

We should note that, especially within the foundations established for the defense of the country[25], women actively worked and participated in the defense of the country because of the national emotions. Such foundations became the major tools for mobilizing women for the defense of the country. Women participating in the activities of these foundations organized public meetings in different regions of the country and work in the hinterland to provide moral and material support to the army. My aim in giving this detail is to illustrate that on one hand women tried to improve their social status during the late Ottoman period. On the other hand, they also demonstrated their perception of national identity by participating actively in the defense of the country. This perception was generally constructed on Muslim and

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[24] It is important to note that their approach to feminism differs from each other—for example, *Women's World* did not hesitate to describe their activities as feminist, whereas *Young Woman* rejected such a description proposing that it was rooted in Europe.
[25] For example Anatolian Women's Community for the Defense of the Country (Anadolu Kadınları Müdafa-i Vatan Cemiyeti), Women's Branch Office of Defense of Law (Müdafai Hukuk Kadın Şubesi)

Turkish identity. As it will be dealt with in the following sections in this thesis, the representation of Muslim Turkish woman was transformed with the secularization process which is undergone with the foundation of Republic.

4.1.2. Early Republican Period

With the foundation of Republic, a set of modernization and secularization projects were put into operation in social and political realms, and reforms were implemented in this context. The most important of these reforms are the abolition of the caliphate, the alphabet reform (using Latin alphabet instead of Arabic Alphabet), and the adoption of civil law instead of Islamic law. Women became a kind of object of this process (Arat, 2005, p.17). Rights entitled for women in political arena and attempts for changing the appearance of women in public space and women's social and political status became a basic factor for the modernization process and they also became the indicator for the success of this process.

In *Rethinking Islam and Liberal Democracy Islamist Women in Turkish Politics,* Yeşim Arat explains why women were so important for the secularization process. In her book, Arat questions the issues relating the women from the very beginning of Republic and Turkey's modernization project. According to Arat, women's social status is changed by several implementations such as prohibition of polygamy and giving equal rights to women in terms of heritage. Secularism versus Islam is justified upon the equal rights entitled for women by replacing Islamic law with secular civil law. Besides, Arat emphasizes that "founding fathers" of the republic see the improvements in women's rights as promotion of democracy and as a part of modernization process. (2005, pp. 16, 17)

The relation between the religious women and the "secular state" has been a problematic matter since the foundation of the Republic. The new, modern state imagined a style for Turkish women visible from their lifestyle to dressing. This is because religious women cannot find a suitable space in the public to exist or represent themselves. Arat argues that modernization project was realized upon women. In this regard, secularization and modernization were realized by expanding

the rights of women. Expanding the rights of women was displayed as a requirement and the yield of democracy. Arat summarizes this situation as follows: "Expanding women's rights and women's role in the public realm was not merely a symbolic act on the part of the founding fathers but a functional move in promoting the project of modernity" (2005, p. 17).

Arat deals with how these "founding fathers" limited the rights they "give" to women. According to Arat, expanding women's rights was a modernization project not a project for woman issue itself, and it naturally had limitations. In this context, activities of many leading women were limited or interfered by the state. Arat refers to the modernization project of the state in terms of women as state feminism.

Even though the modernization and secularization process was completed with improvements in women's rights, a certain kind of limitation was implemented in women's activities as in every field during one party period. Instead of pioneer intellectual women who worked actively during the national struggle period, more modest role models were produced in order to prevent the opposition against the regime. Women working for the same goals in previous times were kept out of political arena, and the most important examples of this case can be seen in the political life of Halide Edip and Nezihe Muhiddin. In *Türk Modernleşmesinin Cinsiyeti*, Serpil Sancar notes that:

> It is understood that women who were called for active support and invited people to resist against the occupation during national struggle period were not called to participate in the foundation of new state in equal conditions. The dominant discourse is that women are not ready to use their political rights and they are the mothers who will grow child and soldier for the nation. A kind of failure has been lived where women such as Halide Edip who are the closest ones to the state government were kept outside and send themselves to a kind of sensitive exile. Instead of them, new women are presented, produced and trained as public role models. Even if they are in very limited number, they become effective because of the state support and masculine will behind them. (2012, p. 172)[26]

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[26] Translation of the quote into English belongs to the author.

Intellectual transformation that Sancar deals with in the context of "early woman rights movement" shows the transformation in women's perception for their national identity. According to Sancar, with the foundation of new government, a discourse produced by seeing a similarity and equivalence between themselves and European women was established. A new kind of understanding of women's right "which will be articulated to the republican mentality and will be shaped within it under the thumb of nationalist and Turkist movement" began to be dominant (2012, p.179). Sancar shows Halide Edip and Nezihe Muhiddin as an example to the second issue. In this regard, Sancar focuses on how the search for women's rights have developed relying on the opinions of Halide Edip and Nezihe Muhiddin, and she notes that there are two separate groups—"Feminists in one hand and Nationalist women on the other hand"—in terms of women's rights (2012, p.185). Even if it is a fact that Halide Edip's opinions were articulated to Republican mentality in terms of woman's rights, it is widely known that she opposed to Atatürk. In terms of the argument that the opinions of Halide Edip and Nezihe Muhiddin that their opinions "were articulated to Republican mentality" is confirmed by these statements of Nezihe Muhittin in her book *Türk Kadını:*

> From the beginning of the national movement to the declaration of the Republic, Turkish women have stated their effectiveness by showing their farsightedness and ability to help their men for common national works. Indeed, there was no other big and valuable specific work than this at those times. When the Republic was declared Turkish woman was virtually provided with civil and political rights as her ability deserves. Because Turkish Republic relied on a strong democracy. (2006, p. 115)[27]

In short, a change and transformation occurred in terms of the social role and status of women in the process entered with the foundation of the Republic. Turkish women became the basic factor and indicator of this process with modernization and secularization. In such a society which is imagined and tried to be constructed upon a male-dominant understanding, improvements in the status of women and developing women's rights emerged as a "mercy" of "founding fathers". Woman profile imagined in this context has a national characteristic as well as being modern and Westerner, and she searches her rights in accordance with these characteristics.

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[27] Translation of the quote into English belongs to the author.

For this reason, "women who stated independent feminist claims were rejected by modernist men" on the other hand nationalist women caused a kind of "development which make the syntheses between the traditional and modern" (Sancar, 2012, p. 186).

As parallel to the issues discussed above, Fatmagül Berktay also note that what shapes both Ottoman feminism and Republican feminism is the nationalism phenomena. She argues that "women" issue—as it is dealt with above in terms of late Ottoman political history—is a part of nationalist project even before the Republican era. She also links the parameters of "woman issue" during the Republican Era to "the particular historical conditions of Turkish Nationalism" beginning from Second Constitutional Period to Kemalist Republican period. In terms of the new role model produced during the Republican period, Berktay shows that even if "founding fathers" define themselves as "new man", they had nothing to do with something like a new model, but they shared the same characteristics with traditional men. Because even though the fundamental mentality in Republican period encouraged the women to "exist in public space, to have professional job and to work outside their home", profile for new woman imagined by Kemalist men is a woman "adopts her domestic, social and national responsibilities and lives for others." (2004, pp. 356,357)

There is a point that should be noted in Berktay's statement about the encouragement of women to exist in public space by the Republican mentality: there is a general category of women but there was still a group of women whose existence in public sphere was still problematic. This group consists of religious women. The regulation for public sphere, the adaption of a Westernized model for dressing of women created a kind of withdrawal from public space among religious people. In this regard, public sphere was seen as a dangerous place for women by religious families, because religious and traditional symbols were removed from the public sphere. Islamic publications of that period still located the social role of woman into the domestic area. Even though a kind of flexibility was experienced in terms of the secular limitations in the beginning of the Democrat Party's coming to power in 1950,

religious people's opinions about women's use of public space were not changed. Cihan Aktaş states that there were not so many critiques about religious women which were directly proposed by religious women themselves apart from the articles of Neslihan Kısakürek in *Great East (Büyük Doğu), which* was first published in 1943 by Necip Fazıl Kısakürek with an Islamic-intellectual focus and was known for its rigid opposition in both single party regime and the Democrat Party period. (2006, pp. 826-827)

4.1.3. 1960s and 1970s

In the late 1960s, the number of women with headscarf in public space increased. Actually most of these women were not coming from religious families, but they headed for the religion as a result of the information they obtained during their educational life. The rise of Şule Yüksel Şenler, famous Muslim writer with headscarf occurred in those years. Şule Yüksel Şenler headed for Islam and wore headscarf in the middle of 1960s, then began to write in different newspapers, and arranged conferences in different cities of the country. She is also the writer of a widely known novel, *Huzur Sokağı* which was filmed by Yücel Çakmaklı in 1970. In 1968, Hatice Babacan was expelled from the school because of her headscarf. This might be the first concrete example about the headscarf issue in universities. This event remained on the agenda of the society for a long time. It can be said that Muslim women's struggle for public space started in those years. (Aktaş, 2006, p. 829)

Yıldız Ramazanoğlu also argues the same point mentioned above and begins with asking this question as follows: "What makes religious women who are spend all their times in their houses beginning from the republic era, began to read the veil as a mean to go outside and participate in public life, instead of staying at home" (2000, 140).[28]

Another answer for the question above can be found in the process of migration from village to cities. According to Ramazanoğlu, education was a means for holding on to

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[28] Translation of the quote into English belongs to the author.

city life and this was case with the openings of *Imam Hatip* schools, where religious families could send their children. (2000, pp.141-143).

During 1970s, the headscarf issue remained on the agenda of Turkey. As women began to face with problems in educational and professional life because of headscarf, they began to participate in the discussion about this problem. As Muslim women started to take reference from Islamic sources to learn their religion instead of their family and culture, they began to search the rights entitled to them in their religion. While the political tension between secularism and religiosity was going on, and the religious symbols such as veil, headscarf and men's beard were seen something against the secular society, a new kind of dynamism was emerging on the Islamist side. While such a conflict was going on, Muslim women's role and status in the society was going on to be questioned by Islamist side as well. Aktaş refers two cases, firstly the books of Meryem Cemile—*Muslim Woman against Feminist Movement*—which encourages the Muslim women's role in the society. Secondly, with the openings of Girls' *Imam Hatip* schools in 1977, the families began to send their daughters to the school, who did not want to do so. Additionally, in those years, Muslim women established foundations and they arranged conferences and meetings in holy nights (kandil) or the nights of conquest (fetih). In those years, Muslim women were writing articles about fashion, and oppressions against headscarf, and also criticized feminism by declaring that Muslim women do not need it. (2004, p. 832). It should be noted that in the late 1970s, the Iranian Islamic Revolution occurred in the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini, which transformed the regime from constitutional monarchy to sharia republic in Iran. Events occurred in Iran had an impact especially on Muslim women's struggle for public space in Turkey because of the Iranian women participation in revolution. It should be mentioned that the political situation in Turkey have influenced Muslim women's participation to the public sphere.

In terms of the political life in Turkey, 1970s passed with coalition governments one by one. In 1974, a coalition was established between an Islamist party—National Salvation Party—and a secular republican party—Republican People's Party. In the

following years, the National Salvation Party was included almost in all the coalition governments. In 1979, the Justice Party and the Turkish Rightist Liberal Party established a minority government. In 12 September 1980, the military coup brought economic and political instabilities, and created conflict between right and left. The growing "Islamic reactions" were given as the reasons for this intervention.

4.1.4. 1980s and Changing Perspectives

In 1981, a dress code was issued for teachers and students. According to this code, it is not allowed to wear headscarf both by students and teachers at schools. Headscarf ban was spread to universities and other state institutions in the following years. Because of the headscarf ban in universities, some of the students continued their education by taking off their headscarf, and some of them left their school (Mazlumder, Report for Chronology of Headscarf Ban in Turkey and around the World, 2011). Additionally, it can be said that the number of women with headscarf who wanted to enroll in the universities increased in those years because of the conflict between those in favor of the ban and those on the opposite side (Aktaş, 2004, p. 833).

1980s witnessed the increase in the number of women who wear headscarf in public universities, and the rise of feminist movements. Yeşim Arat focuses on the reaction of feminist groups to the headscarf ban and makes a distinction between the Kemalist feminists and other feminists. Arat points out two different feminist groups: the first group include Kemalist feminists advocating Kemalist and secular values of the state and regard the women with headscarf as "brainwashed." The second group include other feminists challenging to the ban by referring to the patriarchal structure of the Kemalist secularism. The latter group is more concerned with the agency of women with headscarf and they object the view of Kemalist feminists' description of women with headscarf as "brainwashed". This shows how women with headscarf are encountered by various group of women with different ideological background in public scape and social life.

In 1983, the Motherland Party, a right wing political party famous for its neoliberal policies with the leadership of Turgut Özal, came to power and remained in power as the ruling party untill 1991. Aktaş points a transformation in the discourse produced for the role and the status of Muslim women in the society during those years. In this period Muslim women began to manifest their claims for professional carrier, social life and the use of public space rather than framing themselves within domestic areas. In 1987, a group of Muslim women —Yıldız Ramazanoğlu, Mualla Gülnaz, Tuba Tuncer, Halime Toros, Hatice Öncül—wrote about the matter "women in Islam" in a daily newspaper—*Zaman*. In these articles, they discussed whether Muslim women need feminism or not, and keep themselves apart from feminism in one hand and in some way they searched for the rights entitled Muslim women in the Quran. They were called "Islamist Feminist" by some journalists and sociologists, though they did not accept such a definition, and a local magazine—*Nokta*—published an feature article with the title of "Feminists with Turban" (Türbanlı Feministler). Another Muslim woman who became famous with her articles and books is Emine Şenlikoğlu. She published a magazine with the name *Mektup* (Letter). In her writings, she called Muslim women to live their religion actively and read and search about it. (2004, p. 835)

4.1.5. 1990s and Welfare Party

Regarding Muslim women in 1990s, there are two facts that should be focused. Firstly, with the rising of the Welfare Party in 1994—Islamist party—in the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan, who was the leader of the National Salvation Party and the National Order Party in the previous years, a large number of Muslim women were mobilized in the Ladies Commission of the Party and they worked actively for general elections as well as local elections. It can be said that it was the Ladies Commission of Welfare Party, which reached biggest number of women working actively for the political party during the Republican period.

The second one is 1997 military memorandum which is named as 28 February coup or the postmodern coup. In 28 February 1997 National Security Council arranged a meeting to discuss the events occurred in those day in the country as "Islamic

reactionary" activities, in this regard took several decisions regarding the educational regulations, and closing down and banning the activities of Islamic foundations or communities etc. During this period, Welfare party was banned. The effects of the military memorandum were also observed in educational and professional life of Muslim people in Turkey. Persuasion rooms (ikna odaları) are created in universities in order to persuade woman students with headscarf to take off their headscarf, officers especially in the army who were thought to be religious individuals were fired.

In such a political environment, women were going on to be organized under the roof of different platforms such as Gökkuşağı Kadın Platformu (Rainbow Women's Platform), and Ankara Women's Platform which included Muslim women to their discussion agenda. Aktaş also states that Muslim women's profile began to turn into a profile which gives importance to "'innate' woman sensitivity and heritage of women's traditional knowledge." (2004, p. 836)

Muslim women's experience in the Welfare Party Ladies Commission during 1990s attracted attention. Arat published a report in 1999 analyzing the Ladies Commission of Welfare Party. The aim is to understand how the Welfare Party reached such big women population, and how it mobilized women in the political arena.

According to Arat, in addition to the exclusive discourse towards women with headscarf, Welfare Party had created a new space for Islamist women. She makes an analysis on the general perspective within the party towards the activities of Ladies Commission and status of women within the party.

The study of Arat shows two and most important aspects of the Ladies Commission of Welfare party. The first aspect—as mentioned above—is the ability of such an organization to mobilize a big number of women and make them stable voters and "militant" of the party. This success of the commission is a point that many secular parties and organizations could not reach. Arat summarizes this situation as follows:

> They were successful not merely because they mobilized a mass of women for their party but also because they provided an opportunity space in which marginalized women could seek empowerment. … They did what many secular groups did not do as they reached the women who were left out of the political space (2005, p. 61)

In this regard, the fact that women who "were left out of the political space" were mobilized by Ladies Commission is described by Arat as "apolitical politization". As the women did not have any political engagement, got the opportunity to "be active in a social sphere apart from home, to match their need for expanding their social networks" (2005, p. 26) by participating the activities of a political party, they created a political area within apolitical relations. Arat also points the method of Ladies Commission in order to create relations with women. It is seen that women in the Commission benefitted from the traditional "socialization form", such as socialization in wedding ceremonies, circumcision feast, engagement ceremony, and different religious ritualistic ceremonies (1999, s.5).

Another important point showed by Arat lies under her questioning existence of women under a patriarchal structure. Arat refers to two points with regard to the perspective of the political party towards women. Firstly, the party from the very beginning did not make any reference to women but family. Arat puts it:

> The program of the Welfare party, just like its processor the National Salvation Party, had no reference to women. After all it was in the context of the family, not as individual women … In the declaration prepared for the 1991 general elections, there was a section named "Ladies, Mothers" which elaborated the role the party expected women to play in the society. (1999, p.36)

Secondly, even though the women worked actively and hard for the interest of the party, they did not have the chance to participate in decision making mechanism within the party. This situation is emphasized by Arat several times in her studies. Arat questions how women participated so actively into this organization within such a patriarchal structure. The answers from her interviewees point out another problematic.

> Religion was an effective means of political mobilization. It could prompt sacrifice from the people who believed in the cause and the party they believed to be promoting this cause. In the case of women, "working for the

God's sake" meant that they didn't expect any mundane rewards such as elective or appointive office in return for their work. (1999, p. 63)

The status of women within the patriarchal structure is legitimized with the religious values. However, such values, "for the God Sake" does not make any change in the case of men. In this regard Arat concludes her argument by saying "perhaps women needed more time and experience to seek higher office 'for God's sake'" (1999, p. 68).

On the other hand, Sibel Erarslan, a practicing Muslim female journalist and author, argues that "modern political understanding never understands and also accepts" the notion "for God's sake" (2004, p. 820). In terms of mobilization of Muslim women by Welfare Party's Ladies Commission, Erarslan notes that:

> …Ladies commission as "women's ghetto" can be regarded as a homeland where there are women understanding each other and having similar characteristics. This community soul do not arise from a virtual ghetto. Because this "woman to woman" situation is not something carried out from meeting to meeting but also it is something to do with sharing and acting with solidarity in all aspects of life. For example, taking after each other's children, helping for households, financial support… Spaces in a "woman to woman" characteristics are also places where solutions are found for the problems of women. Women are glad with finding themselves in an important, effective position and in a situation managing something outside. (2000, pp. 211-218)[29]

It is understood, from the statement of Erarslan, Welfare Party creates the spaces that will lessen or remove the conflict between house and outside. With that way these women who will work for the party with their heart and soul would not be labeled as "women leaving her houses" and furthermore women leaving their house are provided with an easiness and to some extend power domain.

> WP led these women who will be the actors in political arena to the field with their children. While WP extends women's work spaces with childcare and game rooms, and baby sitters, they also transformed the political and serious working spaces for the good of women (bathroom, sleeping and game rooms for children are arranged in the building in provinces and districts). Furthermore women were provided with transportation vehicles (such as minibuses for children and women) which make women to reach the work field with their children easily, and this makes women to move in political arena more easily. … In these spaces where women feel themselves at home

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[29] Translation of the quote into English belongs to the author.

(grounds covered with carpets on which they step without shoes, managerial offices where they walk with slippers, bureaus with floor cushion) women learn the politics and gain experience without taking off their sexes and identities by giving up their roles as mother, wife, sister. Time will show whether they would discuss these identities, roles and status in family after they become aware of their power in political arena. … The image of Women' branches and comities as ghettos without men presents reliability for Islamist women in political arena. These women who are learning, experiencing and organizing the relationship to be established with public sphere with this body are the organizers in the kitchen of politics. (2000, pp. 222-229)[30]

After Welfare Party was banned, Virtue Party was established in 17th December, 1997 and achieved to get into parliament in general elections arranged in 1999. When deputy member Merve Kavakçı came to the parliament with her headscarf, other parties objected to this situation.[31] At the end Merve Kavakçı and other several politician were given political ban and Virtue Party was banned.

4.1.6. 2000 and Justice and Development Party

Since 2002, the Justice and Development Party has come to power alone in general elections. During this period, when neoliberal policies have been implemented by the party, a kind of liberalization has been operated in terms of headscarf ban. Since 2012 it is allowed to wear headscarf in universities and other public institutions.

Women are going on to work actively in Islamic foundations and NGOs, they participate in the professional life in public institutions, in universities and in private sector. Beside they express themselves in an organized way through the social media as well as other initiatives and platforms created by themselves. For example, a group of young Muslim women founded Initiative of Muslims against Violence against Woman (Kadına Şiddete Karşı Müslümanlar).[32] This initiative aims to oppose to the approach which justifies the violence against woman with reference to religion and arrange organizations to increase the awareness in this regard among Muslim people. Furthermore in addition to the Muslim women who are going on to write articles in

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[30] Translation of the quote into English belongs to the author.
[31] for more information see also https://www.dunyabulteni.net/tarihten-olaylar/14-yil-once-mecliste-yasanan-basortusu-krizi-h278772.html
[32] for more information see also http://kskmi.com/

newspapers and magazines, a new blog—Reçel[33]—was created in September 2015 with an aim to reflect women's—especially Muslim women's—everyday experiences, their perceptions towards social issues and problems, their struggles and so on. Another important media body is a magazine named *Nihayet* which is published by two famous writers Nazife Şişman and Fatma Barbarosoğlu with the aim of to tell the story of everyday lives of Muslim women.

In conclusion, this part dealt with the experiences of Muslim women in especially political and social life and transformation of "Muslim woman profile" and the relation between this issues and state policy from the Late Ottoman Period to the recent years. It is seen that from the very beginning of Republican period, Muslim women struggled for their existence in public space. This struggle sometimes maintained against the state and sometimes against the discourse produced in terms of their status and role within Islamic environment. The struggle has been generally shaped by headscarf ban. Because they were removed out of public space, they created their public representation under the roof of political parties, Islamic foundations and NGOs. Besides, intellectual Muslim women always search for the ways to express themselves via media instruments like newspaper and magazines. Today, such kind of a mobility is still going on in both political parties, NGOs and foundations.

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[33] for more information see also http://recel-blog.com/recel/

CHAPTER 5

THE CASE of the FOUNDATION

5.1. Use of Space, Spatial Arrangements

I paid a specific attention to the mutual relation between space and gender in one of the previous chapters. In this part of this chapter, I focus on the relation between the construction of gender roles and the space in the foundation. This quotation from Don Mitchell consists of a good example for the perspective of this chapter where she focuses on the relation between gender and construction of space:"There is an intimate relationship between the social construction (and policing) of space, the cultural construction (and policing) of gender and the ways we comport ourselves, the experience we have, and, at least to some degree, the very morphology of our physical bodies" (2000, p. 217).

Because of this mutual relation between the construction of gender and space, there is a difference between men's use of space and women's. The part of the building separated for the Ladies' Commission of the foundation is designed differently. This design constructs a symbolic boundary and makes the Ladies' Commission a gendered space.

5.1.1. Ladies Commission of the Foundation as a Gendered Space

It was a Sunday morning. There was a "tafsir" program in the foundation. This was the first time that I came to this foundation in such a crowded day. Friday and the weekends are the most crowded days in the foundation. Fridays are crowded because of the Friday pray, while seminars for university students and other programs for everyone as tafsir course are organized during the weekend.

When I entered the building of the foundation, I began to search for a chair to sit. There were empty chairs around two tables. One was surrounded by women, while there were three men around the other table. I intrinsically headed to the women's table. Such kind of sitting arrangement is not of course something which is regulated

as a rule. It is something to do with gender relations which can be defined as "normal" or "natural" by most of the people living here. This situation is repeated or reproduced everywhere in everyday life, such as at buses, hospitals, bank and so on. This arises from the "socially" constructed boundaries around us. Doreen Massey's statement below enlightens the discussions carried out until here and the discussions to be carried out in the following parts:

> The only point I want to make is that space and place, spaces and places, and our senses of them (such related thing as our degrees of mobility) are gendered through and through. Moreover, they are gendered in a myriad different way, which vary between cultures and over time and this gendering of space and place both reflects and has effects back on the ways in which gender is constructed and understood in the societies in which we live. (1994, p. 186)

There is not a kind of rigid segregation in the foundation which is a common situation for some other Islamic institutions. Women and men uses the same entrance door to enter the building. The events are arranged with mixed-sex participation. However, a kind of sitting arrangement is seen as women sit in one side and men sit in the other. Women and men are not separated with something like a curtain or wall. Some of the interviewers regard this situation something that "happens by itself".

The Ladies' commission has a separate place in the building of the foundation. The building is a small apartment with a small garden. On the cellar, there is a *masjid* and conference hall. On the ground floor, there is a cafeteria and a book shop. First floor consists of 2 rooms for the administration. Second floor is separated for Ladies' Commission. Third floor includes the classes used for Kids' Club and other staff. The top floor is used both as a dining hall and also for different activities such as meetings and seminars. The building is constructed for the foundation's mission and it is organized as an NGO.

All the flats on the building are in the same arrangement. There is a small room for the secretary of Ladies Commission just opposite of the stairs. On the right side of this room, there is a small hall for women used both as a masjid and resting hall. It has an entrance area and three other small rooms, and a small store. The grounds are all covered with carpet and it is not allowed to enter with shoes. Two of the rooms

are furnished with sofas, there were curtains on the windows. The arrangement of this part of the Ladies Commission is different from the general arrangement and design of the building. Women organize all their activities here and the use this place when they participate Friday Pray.

The other side of the secretary's room is like a meeting room. The ground is not covered with carpets and the windows do not have curtains. Bookshelves are located towards two walls. There is a big white table in front of them and a corner couch is placed towards the other two walls.

The spatial design of the foundation is a good example for the analogy made by Irwin Cemil Schick in terms of genderization of spaces.

> An apt analogy might be an archipelago in the midst of an ocean, where the islands collectively represent the subspace devoted to women, and the sea the subspace devoted to men. The women's subspace included harems, public baths, saints' tombs and shrines, reactional arenas, cemeteries, and so forth; movement between them was carefully regulated, most notably by the practice of veiling, which allowed to remain ritually "inside" while physically "outside". (2010, p. 72)

Due to the fact that men's community (cemaat) is bigger than women's community in number and they do not even fit into the masjid located on basement floor on Fridays, women's community (cemaat) uses this space as masjid. Furthermore, a part of men's community makes pray on grounds floor because of the same reason.

However, the rooms separated for Ladies' Commission cannot be regarded only as masjid[34]. While voluntary women of the foundation have their meetings there, this place also meets the need of women living in very different and distant places of the city for coming together or socializing. The foundation as a common place thus makes it easy for women to encounter and meet, because it is difficult or impossible for them to meet in daily life as they live in distant places of the city.

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[34] Actually, in Islamic tradition masjid refers to a place where in addition to religious activities, social activities also takes place. However in modern life, people see and use masjids only as place where they can fullfil their religious tasks such as pray.

We used to drink tea and talked with each other on Fridays and Sundays after lectures. We organized the meeting of Ladies Commission at homes for a while. In these meeting, we made several decisions. For example, Kids' Club was under the control of women, decisions about who would give lectures in the club, what kind of lectures would be given, who would be in charge, and contacting with the ladies commission of the foundations in Anatolia, organizing *ribat*[35] (Feyza, 42, from Kayseri, 11 years in the foundation)

Furthermore, one of the interviewees stated that the circumcision ceremony one of the female volunteer's son was organized here.

These narratives show that this place becomes a common place where Muslim women living in different and distant districts of Istanbul meet, socialize and cooperate for voluntary, religious and cultural activities. It can be also seen as a strategy which is created against the handicaps the city produced because of the difficulty of transportation, and different kind of intensities. For this reason, women can come together in a common place instead of their homes in different parts of the city.

One of the activities for which women make effort mostly is the preparation of charity bazaar (kermes)[36]. There is a labor division between men and women for its preparation and organization. While men are responsible for collecting the contributions, women are busy with the works such as embroidery work which require socially constructed female skills. They both prepare such goods and also similar goods donated by the contributor for sale. They do most of these works here.

The formal and regular meetings of Ladies Commission take place here. Decisions about the commission and its activities are taken here. Interviewers also mentioned that they sometimes- even though rarely- meet at homes.

Women were working very hard and all of them were voluntary, and they did not receive money. One of them was coming from Kağıthane, the other was

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[35] *Ribat* literally means coming together. It is a kind organization including both holiday and religious and educational activities.

[36] Charity Bazaars are organized in order to provide the money, for the cost of Akabe Vakfı. In such organizations products in a huge range—from foods to home textile, clothes, kitchen tool etc.- collected from contributors or prepared by organizers themselves are sold.

coming from Okmeydanı, and another one was coming from Gaziosmanpaşa. (Feyza, 42, from Kayseri, 11 years in the foundation)

An interviewee states that they have no limitation for using or spending time in other parts of the foundation such as garden and cafeteria. Emine emphasizes that they spent time without hesitation and any discomfort while using other parts of foundation's building. Emine's statement shows that women can physically exist in all parts of the foundation.

> On Fridays, we organized lectures after Friday prays, after lectures we used to stay here and arrange tea time, and eat what we took from home. On Sundays we had tea time again after lecture as on Fridays. We used to meet at least twice a week. We also used to meet at homes occasionally. In terms of space we had no limitation, we used to sit in the garden or cafeteria. (56, from Elazığ, 10 years in the foundation)

On the other hand, Feyza points a difference between young women and adult women. This difference shows that even though women can physically exist in all part of the foundation, boundaries are constructed for the behaviors. These boundaries affect the spatial permeability and visibility.

> We used to sit in the garden and drink tea. Because we have not such an attitude as escaping from men... We do not think that we should not sit and talk there because there are men. However, the young individuals exaggerate this a little bit. They are bursting into laughter (kah kahlar, kihkihler havada uçuşuyor) ... The young individuals are exceeding its limits. These are something to do with the frailties of being young. We have different aims with "that girl" while sitting there. "That girl" is trying to show herself and establish a kind of friendship. (Feyza, 42, from Kayseri, 11 years in the foundation)

Feyza's narrative points the influence of the space on the body and behaviors. She idealizes a point with regards to space and gender role while comparing her own use of space and spatial behavior with another "use of space" or "spatial behavior". In this regard it will be beneficial to give a quotation from Irwin Cemil Schick in terms of the relation between reproduction of gender roles and space.

> Indeed, since one of the main organizing principles in most societies in gender, it stands to reason that social differentiation along the lines of gender should influence the configuration of space, and that spatial structures should in turn produce and reproduce gender difference, as a pair of examples illustrates. (2010, p. 76)

However, another interviewer emphasizes another point about the behaviors expected from young women:

> Discussions about that matter also came out before. Men do not appreciate the behaviors of girls talking and laughing in cafeteria. According to them, girls should not sit there. That room has become something like girls' cafeteria, it is generated with that aim to some extent. But it did not prevent girls' using cafeteria. (Zübeyde, 26, from Malatya, 6 years in the foundation)

This situation means the limitation of bodily movements within the space. In this regard Tovi Fenster conducted a seminal study about the Bedouin women's use of space. She makes her analysis for use of space through the "boundaries between the forbidden and permitted spaces for women" (1999, p.229). She mentions:

> These projected meanings of space are naturally connected to, and derived from, power relation within communities. Identifying spaces as forbidden and permitted is actually a spatial emphasis of the patriarchal power of men over women, and the resultant limitations imposed on the mobility of women. These cultural meanings attributed to space include codes of 'honor', 'modesty', 'shame', 'disgrace', 'manhood', 'women as property', and 'men as women's owner's. (1999, p.229)

This conceptualization of forbidden and permitted becomes a useful tool to understand how the spatial boundaries are constructed in the foundation. While some behaviors such as laughing loudly—are forbidden in a place of the foundation, the same behaviors are permitted in another place of the foundation. Accordingly, space is arranged according to this forbidden and permitted behaviors. Actually Feyza repeats the discourse which Zübeyde points above. Women's laughing loudly outside of house- that is to say in public spaces- has something to do with her chastity and being the ideal Muslim woman.[37] However as young Muslim women have grown and live in an atmosphere where this representation and discourse lost power or aim to

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[37] In 2014, a similar discussion is started with a sentence of Bülent Arınç who was deputy Prime Minister; Cumhuriyet Gazetesi: "Arınç: 'Kadın iffetli olacak, sokakta kahkaha atmayacak', http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/video/video/99661/Arinc___Kadin_iffetli_olacak__sokakta _kahkaha_atmayacak_.html. D.P. 28.07.2014, D.A. 20.07.2018With respons to this issue Rumeysa Çamdereli as a Muslim woman challenge this discourse; Reçel Blog, Kahkaha Meselesi Üzerine, http://recel-blog.com/kahkaha-meselesi-uzerine/ , D.P. 24.09.2014, D.A. 20.07.2018

weaken and challenge this representation and discourse, they success in strategies established related to spaces.

5.2.   Space and Communicational Codes and Relations

In this section, the communicational codes and relation forms between men and women are analyzed. This discussion will be also constructed up on the analysis about the space. The encountering between Muslim men and women is the kind of one that comes out fundamentally in public space. The fact that how this encountering is coded and transmitted to the everyday life is important to understand the effects of space on the construction of gender differentiation in such foundations.

Firstly, it was an important starting point for me how they call each other in this foundation. Because the way they call each other determines the limits of the relation and communication. In the foundation, the general addressing is in the form of sister-brother relationship or in a more formal way such as *miss* and *mister* (hanım-bey). Most of the interviewees stated that this kind of an addressing changes according to the relation between the individuals; *miss-mister* is common among the individuals who recently meet and, in long period relations, depending on the age gap, the addressing get more of sister-brother relationship. Younger individuals are also called as "brother-sister" or directly with his/her name. It is seen that as the younger individuals are called with their names, the age itself is a boundary between people.

The experiences of the interviewees show that this encountering in public space has some rules. Ayşe talked about a kind of distance (mesafe) for relations. This kind of distance surely arise from the Islamic point of view.

> Generally, the addressing is in the form of "sister-sibling-brother". This kind of addressing determines the distance in the relation. When you say brother, you see him in a different way and when he says sister, he sees you in a different way. This –sister-brother—is a kind of a trust word (eminlik sözü). (Ayşe, 44, from Kayseri, more than 10 years in the foundation)

The statements of Çiçek both supports the statements of Ayşe and they also show that to establish family relationship in this foundation underlies the women's representation here.

The relations were not institutional in early times. As there are few people in the foundation, emotional relations have been established for many years. But we also had some friends with whom our relation stayed in an institutional dimension. Sixty or seventy percent of the relationships were established as family relationship. We called each other as sister-brother for a long time. Elders still continues this. We call men as mister in more official meetings. We established the communication with the people whom we met later in accordance with the addressing form of miss-mister (hanım-bey). Here as men know our husbands generally they call us as *yenge* (aunt-in-law) and *abla* (sister)... I want people to communicate with me in accordance with my status when carrying out and institutional activity. But apart from the institutional works we didn't bring that identity (status) into the forefront. I want people to call me as *abla* (sister), to talk with me about their problems and to ask me for an advice. (Çiçek,43: from Çorum, 25 years in the foundation)

The statements of Zübeyde who is younger than the other interviewees in the foundation show that there are differences between the point of views of the young people and elders.

As I spent so much time with them, I have kind of a sister-brother relationship (abi-kardeş). We talk about our problems, drink tea together, talk with each other, I know their problems. Bu this situation is not same with the people who are in higher positions. There is always a limit, but I think that it is necessary. There is a point he must stop while sitting with you and talking with you. Everybody cannot stop at that point every time. People in this foundation are not used to the situation in which a man and a woman frequently have conversation with each other. Especially if the individuals are not married, this situation can be misunderstood. For example, when I started to work with Ali here, elder individuals were suspicious about whether there is a private relationship between us or they think about the possibility of such a relationship. When I realize that, I directly take up a position. For example, I diminish the dialogue and I leave the door of the room open where we work. You keep a distance. Actually the burden of such a situation mostly on the shoulders of men in the foundation. For example, I wasn't warned by anybody, the he was warned. Someone told him that "leave the door open". Brothers (abiler) act responsibly in order not to offend us. (Zübeyde, 26, from Malatya, 6 years in the foundation)

Here it is seen that a kind of a concern for not being misunderstood by the other individuals lies under the distance-setting strategy of Zübeyde. For this reason, not only Islamic-religious concerns but also social concerns are also important in relationships.

Even if there is a general framework consisting of cultural codes in terms of relationships there are also individual preferences and differences in establishing relationship, naming the relationships and giving them a meaning. Feyza (42) says that "she doesn't have a line of descent" in the foundation so she prefers "to be called as miss or teacher (hocam)".

Gender segregation (haremlik- selamlık) is not a concrete rule in the foundation. The interviewees stated that they received serious criticisms from other religious communities as the foundation do not have such a sitting arrangement. In this regard the transformation in Şule's point of view who took the madrasah education and came to the foundation from another religious community which the separate sitting arrangement is very dominant.

> You don't talk with men. You see men as an enemy. My mind recognized it like this... After, I realized that I'm not sibling only with Ladies or I don't share a common cause (dava arkadaşlığı) only with them... You don't go beyond the limits; you have a conversation very normally. I see them (men) not as a friend but as a brother. (Feyza, 42, from Kayseri, 11 years in the foundation)

However, there is a kind of division in these places with the words of the interviewees "happened by itself" even if it is not so concrete thing relying on a rule. In the foundation during the conferences, tafsir courses even if men and women sit together in the same hall, men sit at one side and women sit at the other side. Actually in Islamic form of gender segregation, women sit an isolated place so that men cannot see them. A kind of separation in meetings emerges by itself. In this kind of separation, women and men sit in one hall or around a table and can see each other but men sit at one side of the table and women sit at the other side of the table. The interviewees states that this situation "happens by itself" without any rule. Even though such separation is seen in meeting, there isn't any rigid attitude. If the hall is full during a meeting, the ones who come later sit the available and appropriate place without taking care of the distinction of sex. In this regard the bodily discrimination between two sexes as woman and men shows the relation between the use of space, and the discourse. And the effects of it on the communicational codes cannot be denied. When the relationship in these places are asked to the interviewees, they usually focused on woman-man relationships in their answers. One of the

determinant factors here is the Islamic rules about the woman-man relationships. The most important of these rules is the rule about the clothing style of Muslim men and women. The veil for women and the limit for the men's clothing style constitutes the primary stage of the bodily limitation.

The Islamic codes do not approve the bodily contact between men and women. Actually in Islamic doctrine Muslim men and women are not allowed to shake hand, hug or kiss each other if they are not next-of-kin. The concern for setting a distance and limitation starts with the body and reflects the communications between men and women and individuals care about not going beyond the fundamental limits that mentioned above in the conversation and communication by taking into consideration the sex. For this reason, the most appropriate ways of communication are the addressing styles as miss-mister, sister-brother-sibling.

The interviewees talked about the friendship they established in the foundation here very excitedly and emotionally. They state that their friends in the foundations are even more than a relative for them.

Another point about the relationships in the foundation is the relationship established with the founder's wife. Most of the interviewees seen her as an elder sister whom they can consult something and become happy when they keep in touch with. Additionally, there are people who try to bring together the young individuals for marriage. It is not carried out in a systematically way, but it is stated by the interviewees that some of the elder individuals in the foundations took steps for the marriage of the young individuals whom they see appropriate for each other to get married. One of the interviewees stated that one woman working actively in the foundation firstly came to the foundation to look for a girl who is appropriate for marriage with his son.

There is a kind of gap between the generations in the foundation in terms of both activity fields, relationships and use of the place. The experiences about the use of the garden that I mentioned previous part is the clearest example of this case.

Moreover, elder interviewees do not appreciate the young male and female individuals' working together in the same place for youth activities. Some of the interviewees think that young individuals should come together and carry out their meetings under the supervision of an adult or older person.

5.3.   Division of Activities between Women and Men

Islamic foundations and organizations are the places for women to exist in the public space through the voluntary activities. Women's works and activities in such foundations and organizations shows both their relation with the public space and the spatial relation they established in the foundation and organization specifically.

There are two types of waged work for women in the foundation. One of them is the cleaning and the other is the secretarial. There isn't any female employee in such departments as the financial affairs, administration, cafeteria, book shop where there are full time employees in the body of the foundations. The tasks of the secretary are to provide the communication between the voluntaries and the foundation, to host the women who come to the foundation for the first time and fulfil some tasks in the organization of some programs. The fact that there are only two woman employees in the foundation shows that there isn't any demand coming from neither the general mass of the foundation nor the women for women's existence in the other departments in the foundation.

Additionally, the number of the women who participated in both the voluntary activities and the programs in the foundation is very high. In terms of voluntary activities Ayşe said that even though she became a mother at an early age, she didn't avoid from the voluntary activities in Islamic issues.

> There isn't a television in our home. It was good for me; I spend the time remained from my son with education instead of complaining about being bored. I wanted to share what I know with women. I used to invite the women in my neighborhood to my home every week. In traditional Islamic perceptions the Surah of Tabaraka, Amma, Yasin are read. I wanted to inform women about Quran giving them a half-hour speech with the occasion of that practice. I worked in that way for two years. During this period my son grew and he was two years old. He was a difficult child, he was hyperactive. I carried

out these activities by shaking him on my knees. In that way I confute women's excuses such as I have child, I have home, I have husband, for this reason I can't participate in social activities. When women give such an excuse I say to them that they don't want to do it. Because these activities make you happy, give you a meaning and bring you to an existence. If we come to the world as a khalif, we should do something and we should add something to it. (Feyza, 42, from Kayseri, 11 years in the foundation)

Ayşe's statement shows that a Muslim woman always should be active in social life and should work for the sake of the society. While she recognizes the traditional gender roles in domestic area on one hand, she also emphasizes that women should not take these role as a center in their life. Here, there is an ideal representation of women who both fulfil her responsibilities at home and works for the sake of society. On the other hand, domestic area and the social area are integrated in this way.

One of the most important examples of the integration between the domestic area and social and public area is the preparation of charity bazaar (kermes)[38]. Majority of the works in the preparation of the charity bazaars are carried out by women. In this regard, while men work to collect the contributions, women are busy with the works such as trousseau, household goods which require socially constructed female skills. They both prepare such goods and also they prepare similar goods donated by the contributor for sale. Men help woman carry the products and goods to the place of charity bazaar and stand in front of the counter and sell the goods and products. During the charity bazaar women come to the place of charity bazaar early hours in the morning and stay there till late hours in the evening. There are also woman and men attend the charity bazaar as couples.

Another activity field in the foundation which is managed by women is the Kids' Club. The story of birth of this club is as follows: Parents who came to the foundation for the tafsir courses at weekends, became aware of that they should do something here for their children. Firstly, a room where the children can play games with the accompaniment of an adult was arranged. Afterwards they think that this was not

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[38] Charity Bazaars are organized in order to provide the money, for the cost of Akabe Vakfı. In such organizations products in a huge range—from foods to home textile, clothes, kitchen tool etc.- collected from contributors or prepared by organizers themselves are sold.

sufficient and their children should learn something in the foundation and they prepare a curriculum unprofessionally by adding religious courses in addition to the courses they learn in the schools. And the club increasingly became professional and started to give service In Istanbul and other regions of Turkey. The club gained the official status as a Kindergarten. Women both perform organizational tasks of this club and also give courses in this club in accordance with the branch that they educate themselves in the foundation.

There is a program in the foundation named as "*ribat*". İt is organized as both a holiday and a kind of religious courses and prayers. Most of the interviewees stated that they attended these programs with their family. This situation shows that is in the case of charity bazaars the family constitutes the basic of the activities in the foundation. The number of the youth whose childhood passed in the foundation because of the active voluntary activities of their parents are also high.

In general, the women's mutual relations reflect the activities they participated in the foundation and organization. Members of Ladies' Commission created their own publicness in the building of the foundation and they both perform the works based on the traditional gender roles and they participate in and contribute to the educational and cultural activities.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Within the framework of my study, I mainly focus on how gender relations are reproduced in terms of use of space, communicational codes and division of labor between men and women in Islamic foundations. I tried to find out a framework about the women's representations in Islamic foundations and organizations. The conceptual framework of the study relies on two main concepts; gender and space. I analyze the data obtained from the fieldwork though the analysis of mutual relationship between space and gender. This mutual relationship refers to the fact that gender is spatially constructed as well as space is also constructed in a gendered way. In this way space becomes an area where gender relations are reproduced.

Within the scope of the research question addressed, the issues such as the visibility of women in the foundation building, construction of gender roles through the design of space and spatial practices within these foundations are analyzed. In terms of the public experiences of Muslim women, I deal with the studies by Cihan Aktaş, Yıldız Ramazanoğlu, Nilifer Göle and Yeşim Arat in the literature review. The analysis of fieldwork is drawn up by relying on the thesis of feminist geographers such as Don Mitchell, Nancy Duncan, Doreen Massey, and Linda McDowell.

As the study is conducted with Muslim women and Islamic foundations, it is important to take into consideration the experience of Muslim women in public sphere from a historical perspective. For this reason, the starting point of Muslim women's claims for public sphere and their experiences about this issue, their position in Islamic movements and also in modern institutions like universities, effects of headscarf ban are important to understand the current situation and changing dynamics. It is concluded that as almost all of the participants experienced the headscarf ban, there is a concrete link between the headscarf issue which is also related with construction of public space and women's participation into these foundations and organizations.

Muslim women with headscarf saw the voluntary activities in Islamic foundation as a way to participate in social life during the years when wearing headscarf in public institutions was banned. This means that Muslim women with headscarf created their own publicness through Islamic foundations. However, these women still face male dominance as a secondary disadvantaged situation. Naturally, religious women and men come together under the roof of these foundations where they consider themselves primarily Muslims. However, in some foundations women have no or little effect in the decision-making mechanism of these foundations.

Actually, likewise the Welfare party, women branch or ladies commission of Islamic foundations are very successful in mobilizing women for the activities of the foundations and the women in these organizations are very active in terms of supporting the foundation, arranging the educational programs special for women in the name of the foundation and expanding the network and supporter or volunteer population of foundation. However, there is a huge gap between men and women in terms of the rate of participation into the decision making mechanism.

In first part of the field work analysis, I mainly focus on spatial behavior of women and spatial design of the foundation. The gendered division of the space is more distinct in the foundation regarding the design and use of Ladies Commission, the space is used more in the way of activity-oriented. There is a conflict between the perspective of adults, especially men and the use of the space by young members. There is a discomfort about the visibility of young women in cafeteria and a certain behavioral pattern is expected from these young women. According to these behavioral patterns, space is divided into forbidden and permitted spaces with symbolic boundaries. Furthermore, women's representation is constructed upon the boundaries. Women who are not laughing or talking loudly become appropriate representatives of Muslim woman profile in the foundation.

Age is an important factor in the construction of the symbolic boundaries in use of space. While middle-aged women do not resist to traditionally expected behaviors and gendered spatial arrangements as forbidden and permitted, young women use

different strategies to resist the boundaries. So women who as Cihan Aktaş says leave the private space-home- within the "bacı" discourse, could not completely own this space even if they exist there.

In terms of relationship and communicational codes; even if there is a general framework consisting of cultural codes in terms of relationships, there are also individual preferences and differences in establishing relationship, naming the relationships and giving them a meaning. However, it can be clearly said that, Islamic concerns and cultural codes are the main factors in arranging the relationships in the foundation.

The general framework of the relationships in the foundation is Muslim sisterhood and brotherhood. However, age is a determinant factor in relationships. As the "bacı" discourse has undergone a change, young generations' perspectives about the relationships in the foundation and young women's concern for their relationship with men have gained flexibility in terms of forbidden and permitted.

 Members of the Ladies' Commission created their own publicness in the building of the foundation and they both perform the works arising from the traditional gender roles and they participate in and contribute to the educational and cultural activities. While voluntary women and men work together; their domestic roles, especially men's roles in everyday life remain same. As the men's domestic roles are static their wives also maintain the traditional gender roles.

The Ladies Commission of the foundation as a gendered space shows that there is a gendered division of labor in the foundation. This firstly affects the visibility of women in the foundation. The number of the women who are salary-based in the foundation is extremely low in accordance with the number of men. This also shows that number of the women who are effective in decision making mechanism highly lower than men. While women make a big effort in attending activities of the foundation, participating in the social life, and contributing to the society, they do not make the same effort in gaining a position in decision making mechanism. The reason for this

links to the traditional gender roles expected from them especially in domestic area as a mother and wife. This also constructs a mutual relation between division of labor and gendered use of space.

As this study focuses on only one Islamic foundation in Istanbul as a case, it has limitations in depicting Muslim women's representation in Islamic foundations as a whole. However, it constitutes a contribution to the studies about women in Middle East in consequence of the sample group of the thesis. The thesis can also be regarded as a response to the studies which regard Muslim or Middle East women as a passive receiver of the patriarchy. Because the women who are working actively in Islamic foundations try to construct their agency by participating the social life through these foundations.

The second limitation of this study is that the sample group consists of only women. Even though I dealt with my own observation and experiences as ethnographic data source which includes everything about the foundation—the building of the foundation, men and women coming to the foundation and their relations with each other—interviews with men could have helped me to make a more elaborated analysis in terms of women's representation in the foundation. Future researches can benefit from this study in contextualizing both the use of space and Muslim women representation.

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APPENDICES

A. QUESTIONARE OF THE INTERVIEWS

1)Kişiyi tanımaya yönelik sorular.

Adı, yaşı, eğitimi (resmi, gayri resmi)

2. Kaç yıldır vakıftasınız?

3. Hangi faaliyetlerine katılıyorsunuz? (Katılmak ve organizasyonunda bizzat aktif olma noktasına dikkat etmek gerek)

4. Vakfa hangi sürelerde geliyor ne kadar vakit geçiriyorsunuz?

5. Vakıf içinde ve dışında birlikte çalıştığınız kişilerle ilişkileriniz basıl şekilleniyor?

6. Burada çalışmak sizin için bir şans mı yoksa zaruretten mi buradasınız? Bu kurumun dışında bir yerde çalışmak ister miydiniz? Nasıl bir yerde çalışmak istediniz? (Maaşlı çalışanlar için)

7. Vakıf içinde karar alma mekanizması ne şekilde işliyor? Muhalif olduğunuz durumlar oluyor mu, bu durumları nasıl hallediyorsunuz?

8. Vakıf bünyesinde kadınlar ve erkekler arsında belli bir iş bölümü var mı? Cinsiyete dayalı iş bölümünün yapıldığı işler neler? Birlikte çalıştığınız faaliyetler de oluyor mu? Bu tarz faaliyetlerde ilişkiler nasıl kuruluyor? (Kermes örneği)

9. Burada sarf ettiğiniz çaba sizin için ne anlama geliyor?

10. Vakıf çalışanları yahut gönüllüleri birbirine nasıl hitap ediyorlar?

11. Burada çalışan erkeklere karşı kendinizi nasıl konumlandırıyorsunuz? Yaş, statü vb. Etkisi var mı?

12. Sizin bu kurumda uygun gördüğünüz, benimsediğiniz ya da tam tersi onaylamadığınız bir muamele biçimi var mı? Genel olarak (müslüman bir kadın olarak) kendinize ne şekilde hitap edilmesini istersiniz?

13. Burada oluşturulan sosyal ağ üzerinden gündelik hayata dair yeni ilişkilerin imkanı aranıyor mu, evlilik gibi? Bunu için çaba sarfediliyor mu? Birbirine uygun görülen çift anlaşıyı varsa bunun çerçevesi nedir?

14. Mekanı kullanma biçiminiz nasıl? Hangi alanda vakit geçiriyorsunuz? Nerede çalışıyorsunuz?

15. Eviniz ile vakıftaki aktivitelerinіz arasındaki durum nedir?

17. Buradaki deneyimlerinizi sizden daha genç gönüllülere aktarma gibi bir bakış açınız var mı? Vakfa gelen daha genç kadınlarla ilişkinizi nasıl kuruyorsunuz? Farklılıklar ve benzerlikler neler?

18. Vakıf bünyesinde çalışmak isteyip de kısıtlandığınız alanlar oldu mu? Ya da çalışmak istemeyip de zorlandığınız alanlar?

19. Emeğinizin karşılığını aldığınızı düşünüyor musunuz? Var ise üstleriniz ve diğer çalışanlar ile ilişkiniz nasıl?

20. Burada bulunduğunuz süre bayunca, kendi sosyal çevreniz dışında birileri ile tanıştınız mı? Bu vakfın sizin sosyal hayatınızdaki yeri nedir?

B. INFORMATION ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

Feyza is 42 years old. She is married with two children. She is from Kayseri but lives in Istanbul. She graduated from primary school. After primary school she got madrassa education. She has been participating to the activities of the foundation for 11 years. She has been especially active in the Ladies' Commission. She is working as an educator in Quran School.

Çiçek is 43 years old. She is married with three children. She is from Çorum but lives in Istanbul. She graduated from the Electrical and Electronic Engineering Department of Erciyes University. She has been volunteer of the foundation for twenty-five years. She is not working for salary in anywhere.

Zübeyde is 26 years old and she is single. She is from Malatya. She lives in Istanbul with her family. She continues distance education for her graduate degree. She has been participating the activities of the foundation for ten years. She has been the secretary of Ladies' commission since 2010.

Ayşe is 44 years old and she is married with two children. She is also from Kayseri. She lives in Istanbul. She graduated from secondary school. She has been participating the activities of the foundation for more than ten years. She has been working voluntarily especially for the Ladies' Commission. She is the manager of a Quran School.

Emine is 56 years old. She is married with two children. She is from Elazığ. She lives in Istanbul. She started to study in the School of Economics in Marmara University but left the university because of the headscarf ban in 1980s. She has been in contact with the foundation for fifteen years. She has been especially active the in Ladies' Commission. She is not working.