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ANKARA YILDIRIM BEYAZIT UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

**THE TRANSFORMATION OF RELIGIOUS, ETHNIC, AND
GENDER IDENTITIES OF KURDISH WOMEN IN TURKEY:
THE CASE OF AĞRI**

DOCTORAL THESIS

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ACCEPTATION AND CONFIRMATION PAGE

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DECLARATION

Hereby I declare that this thesis is my own work, I did not infringe any patents and copyrights, and I did not have any unethical behavior of any sort, I gained all knowledge presented in this thesis within academic and ethical rules, and I have provided necessary references for all knowledge and comments. 04.10.2019

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DEDICATION

To my family and all women in the world



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ÖZET

Türkiye’de Kürt Kadınların Dini, Etnik ve Toplumsal Cinsiyet Kimliklerinin Dönüşümü: Ağrı Örneği

Küreselleşme çağında kimlik siyaseti konusundaki tartışmalar daha görünür hale gelmiştir. Bir yandan tek tip kimlik oluşum sürecine tepkinin yansıması bağlamında, diğer yandan da dinsel, cinsiyet, etnik, bölgesel ve/veya yerel kültürel kimlik unsurlarının oluşumu aynı süreçte meydana gelmektedir. Söz konusu süreç dil, vatandaşlık, kimlik vb. kavramların yeniden yorumlanmasını da beraberinde getirmektedir. Özellikle 1980 ve sonrası çalışmalar, kadın, kadın kimliği ve dönüşümü konularına dikkatleri çekmiş, Kürt kadını imajı daha görünür olmakla birlikte, farklılıkları ve çeşitlilikleri de bir arada bulundurma eğilimi göstermiştir.

Tezin temel amacı; Ağrılı Kürt kadınların etnik, dini ve toplumsal cinsiyet kimliklerinin küreselleşme dönemindeki kırılmalar ve süreklilikler ekseninde modern ulus-devletin dönüşüm inşa sürecinden nasıl etkilendiklerine dair analizi ortaya koymaktır.

Çalışmada aynı aileden üç kuşak kadın olmak üzere toplam 54 kadın ile yarı yapılandırılmış mülakat gerçekleştirilmiştir. Mülakatlarda Kürt kadınların etnik, dini ve toplumsal cinsiyet kimlikleri deneyimlerinde kuşaklararası kesinti veya süreklilik yaşayıp yaşamadıkları gözlemlenmiştir.

Çalışmada ortaya çıkan sonuçlar şu şekilde değerlendirilebilir: Kürt kadınları etnik, dini ve toplumsal cinsiyet kodlamalarının taşıyıcısıdır ve ulusal kimlik inşa sürecinde üç kuşak boyunca etnik, dini ve toplumsal cinsiyet kimlikleri bakımından dönüşüm yaşamışlardır. Etnik ve dini kimlikleri birbirini tamamlayan veya kesen, toplumsal cinsiyet kimlikleri ise birbiriyle çatışan eksenli Kürt kadın kimliği çalışmanın temel bulgusudur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kadın, Kimlik, Kürt, Kuşaklar, Toplumsal Cinsiyet

ABSTRACT

The Transformation of Religious, Ethnic, and Gender Identities of Kurdish Women in Turkey: The Case of Ağrı

In the age of globalization, the discussions on the issue of identity are more visible. This transformation of identity was shaped by both the uniform process of formation of identity against which the transformation was a reaction and by the formation process of the religious, gender, ethnic, regional, and/or local cultural identity factors, which was happening simultaneously. This process brings about the reinterpretation of the concepts such as language, citizenship, and identity. Especially the post-1980 works on the issue focused on and drew attention to woman, identity of woman, and the transformation of the identity; moreover, while the image of Kurdish woman became more visible, distinctiveness and diversity were present at the same time.

The main aim of this thesis is to show how the ethnic, religious and gender identities of Kurdish women living in Ağrı, were affected from globalization during modern nation state's formation and transformation processes and to find continuities and discontinuities.

In the study, semi-structured interview was conducted with 54 women with three generations of women from the same family. During the interviews, it was observed whether Kurdish women experienced intergenerational interruptions or continuity in their ethnic, religious and gender identity experiences.

The results of the study can be evaluated as follows: Kurdish women living in Ağrı are the bearers of ethnic, religious, and gender codes, and for three generations, during national identity building process, have had identity transformations in all three types of identities. Kurdish woman identities of which ethnic and religious identities are complementary or transecting while its gender identities conflict with each other is the main finding of the study.

Keywords: Women, Identity, Kurdish, Generations, Gender

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

After 1980, the debates, disputes, and discussions on identity and identity politics have become more visible. The concept of identity, because of its dynamic structure, appears in many different categories. The main reason of this is the evolution of globalization in a bilateral process. On the one hand, globalization is the removals of borders and internationalization, while on the other, local dynamics create new and unique models within themselves. The process, which is called globalization, becomes an important triggering force by which the local identities also come to the fore.

According to The Oxford Dictionary of New Words (2004: 317), the term glocal, and glocalization, the term that describes the process, is created by combining the words global and local. Again, according to the Dictionary, this idea is first derived from the Japanese word dochakuka (which also is a derived word, from dochaku, meaning one's living in his own soil), the Agricultural principle of adapting Agricultural techniques to local conditions, and meanwhile it is adopted by Japanese business-world as a global localization in which global perspective is adopted to local conditions.

In contemporary world, the concept of identity is used in various settings. The most important reason of this is the relation of the concept of identity to differing and various fields. The concept does not stand alone but it is intertwined with fields like political science, sociology, history, or economy. The most important outcome of this is the potential conflicts as a result of increased intensity in social and political movements. The definitions and meanings, especially by ethnic and religious discourses, are the main elements which triggered this potential.

The ideology of nationalism, which spread around the world following the French

Revolution, deeply affected empires which were made up of various multi-national structures. Different ethnic groups in the Ottoman Empire were not spared from this wave, which triggered the establishment of a nation-state in the Empire. In one sense, nationalism can be seen as a way of establishing collective identity in modern nations (Calhoun, 2012: 50).

The formation process of modern nation-state brought with it the establishment of collective identities based on similarities and differences. With this process, the discussion of women's identity as a subject gained currency. These identities rendered the efforts towards understanding how the identity of woman changed over time in the senses of understanding, knowing, and making known one's self more important. The processes of uniform-identity-building and regional and/or local identity formation occur at the same time. This process brings about the reinterpretation of concepts such as language, citizenship, identity, etc.

It can be said that, within the framework of the ideology of nationalism, the concept of identity changed and transformed. Nationalism is considered as the principal tool in nation-state establishment process, and it helped the restructuring of identity and identity politics to serve the same aim. Ethnic identities' emergence and showing themselves as a power which can affect the social and political arena also demonstrates that nationalism also holds a potential to be a discriminating power.

Nationalism, with its impact on public and private spheres, shapes and leads the forms of relationships in these spheres. The differences between public and private spheres are manifest in the role of nationalism in the establishment and formation processes of ethnic, religious, and gender identities. Considering the historical process of the relationship between men and women, it can be said that nationalism played the leading role in the categorization of gender roles.

Throughout history, religion has been an element which affected societies in social, political, and cultural arenas. It is also seen that religion had some functions in the reconstruction of society. Berger (1995: 425-465) argues that symbolic unification, social control, and social configuration are the social functions of religion. At this point, it should be said that studying religion sociologically is an important endeavor in order to understand the society. Understanding how religion directs the society through its functions, along with

empirical studies, contributes to the comprehension of the subject. Herein the impacts of religion on identity construction, considering the everyday practices, become more visible. Questions regarding the relationship between religion and identity, the effects of religion in identity construction, and the roles religion plays in identity transformation gives information on the social functions of religion.

Gender studies help the production of fine-quality studies on women recently with their influence and diversity. The existence of women with the “woman” identity in the social arena has been expressed more commonly in both academic circles and individual research in women’s studies. It is for certain that, once the social gender roles designed by the society are analyzed, it is seen that subordination of women and androcentric discourses robustly continue. On the other hand, feminist perspective opposes the subordination of women and the premise that women are inferior to men. In addition, the fact that the feminist theory differs within itself and brings the issue forward by including the elements such as identity, diversity, equality between genders, religion, language, and race serves the studies to remain up to date. Indeed, all these struggles show that there is a problem of women in view (Arat, 1986: 19).

The studies made in Turkey, especially since 1980s, have drawn attention to the issues of woman, woman identity, and the transformation of woman identity, while the image of Kurdish women has become more visible and accommodated differences and diversity together. It can be said that the scope of women’s studies has expanded through feminist studies and by the addition of different identities to the traditional Turkish woman.

In recent years, studies concerning women have started to be carried out in regions with a lower level of socio-economic development. The city of Ağrı has one of the lowest levels of socio-economic development in Turkey. *The Survey for Ranking the Socio-Economic Development of Cities and Regions* carried out by the Ministry of Development in 2011 reports that the city of Ağrı ranks 79th among 81 cities in Turkey from the aspect of the level of socio-economic development (İllerin ve Bölgelerin Sosyoekonomik Gelişmişlik Sıralaması Araştırması (SEGE, 2011). According to the study of Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK) titled *The Cities’ Rankings on Life Index and Index Values*, the city of Ağrı ranks 79th by the indicators of housing, working life, income, wealth, healthcare, and education.

A study was conducted by the Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV) on the state of Turkey's cities regarding the gender by taking into consideration the equality of women and men in 2014. While in this study the city of Ağrı ranked 80th from the aspect of gender equality, it advanced to the 62nd place in a similar study in 2016 (Demirdirek, Şener, 2014: 83 Kavay Urul, 2016: 17).

It is therefore considered that studies on women in Ağrı should be seminal with regard to understanding current problems and developing policies for solutions.

1.1. The Topic of the Thesis

This thesis is an analysis of how the Kurdish women's ethnic, religious, and gender identities have been affected from the development of nationalism and the formation process of the modern nation-state. The analysis in question comprises the women's practices on the reflection forms of their ethnic, religious, and social gender identity transformation over three generations. The focus of the thesis is on finding out if these practices became elements of assimilation or unity in their everyday lives.

Although studies were conducted on the women who were subject to this thesis, the research on the transformation of the identity is insufficient. In this thesis, the continuities and discontinuities in the transformation of the identities of three generations of women are comparatively studied, and it is questioned whether the transformations of identities occurred by themselves or by design.

1.2. The Scope of the Thesis

The study includes Kurdish women from the province of Ağrı. Fieldwork was carried out with 54 women from 18 families to include all three generations. The sample consists of women who were aged 55 and older for the first generation, between 31 and 54 for the second generation, and between 15 and 29 for the third generation.

There are a total of seven chapters. In the first chapter, the topic, hypotheses, aim, scope, the applied method, and the materials of the thesis are covered. By including existing literature on the topic in the introductory part, the significance of the study is briefly emphasized.

In the second chapter, general knowledge on the thesis is presented. Along with

national identity building process in Turkey and nationalism, clashes between ethnic identity and national identity are covered. By reviewing nationalism's relationship with ethnic, religious, and gender identities, it is attempted to show its effects on the transformation of identities. In the part on the politics of Turkish Republic on nation-state and homogeneous identity building, the theses of the intellectuals of the time are presented. Along with the discussion of Kurdish identity's relationship with nationalism, how women were articulated into nationalism is also deliberated. Here is examined the women's role of producers and bearers in the identity transformation as part of the nationalistic ideology.

In the third chapter, the fieldwork is explained. The questions and answers on the transformation and change of the ethnic, religious, and gender identities are presented in this chapter.

In the fourth chapter, the findings acquired from the fieldwork are presented. In this study, the ethnic, religious, and gender identities are reviewed for the first, second, and third generation women respectively. In ethnic identity analysis, women's sense of belonging to the Kurdish identity, their perceptions of mother tongue, and their thoughts on the Kurdish problem are examined. In religious identity analysis, the everyday practices of Kurdish women of Ağrı on how they carry out religious rituals are shown primarily through wearing hijab but not restricted to it. Finally, gender identity is attempted to be analyzed based on their views and practices of education, marriage, violence, perceptions of sons and daughters, divorce, and space. The interviews conducted during the fieldwork were analyzed and the similarities and differences of the outcomes of the fieldwork with the existing literature was compared. The three-generational categorical analysis is made by including the intra-generational similarities and inter-generational differences.

Discussed in the fifth chapter are the the general results and how much the thesis achieved its aim. Also, how can the study be of help and reference for further studies is presented as suggestions.

Lastly, in the sixth and seventh chapters, the bibliography, the interview questions, and the author's CV are presented.

1.3. The Hypotheses of the Thesis

The main problematique of the thesis is how the transformation of identities of

Kurdish women living in Ağrı has been concluded. This transformation is studied via three variables: ethnic, religious, and gender identities. By this, the effects of the transformation on the lives of these women are examined.

In the thesis, the issues of how cultural change is transferred between generations, how much the official state policies were effective, and if the change is continuous or not is discussed with the following premises:

- Women are the bearers of ethnic, religious, and gender codes.
- Kurdish women have been transformed in ethnic, religious, and gender identities for three generations during national identity formation.

Because the topic of the study is Kurdish women living in Ağrı, the samples were chosen from the province of Ağrı. Along with that, the following restrictions affected the study:

- Because semi-structured interview, which is a qualitative method, is used in the study, the sample consists of 54 women from three generations. As a result, the findings of the study cannot be generalized. But it would surely help to understand the women of Ağrı.
- The samples include only the women from the province center of Ağrı. Therefore, it cannot be argued that the thesis is able to explain the transformations of all Kurdish women.
- The thesis is limited to the transformations of the ethnic, religious, and gender identities of Kurdish women in Ağrı and remains in these limits.

1.4. The Aim of the Thesis

The main aim of this study is to analyze whether the three generations of Kurdish women in Ağrı changed and transformed in terms of their ethnic, religious, and gender identities; what changes and transformations they had if they had changes; and the effects of these changes and transformations on their everyday lives. In the interviews, the answers to the following questions were sought:

- How have the identities of Kurdish women been changed and transformed in three generations?
- How inter-generational changes and transformations are transferred to the next generations?
- How did the national identity building process affect Kurdish woman identity in terms of ethnicity, religion, and gender?
- Did the identity building process create the sense of “the other” in Kurdish women?
- What type of an image of a “Kurdish woman” did the identity building process create?

As expected, the topic that this study works on is not possible to be fully grasped and understood only by collecting the ideas of women. The places that they live in, their intra-familial relations, or the changes of the streets that they live in give clues about their lifestyles. Therefore, both during and after the interviews, the environment in which they lived was observed, and the comments were made accordingly. In this context, one thing that catches attention is the writings on the walls. These writings which are likely to be written by the youth are the reflections of their moods or the feelings that they want to express. The space is the expression of the residents’ economic, social, ideological projections (Torlak, 2016: 11-12). A writing, which I believe to be an expression on the everyday life than a political expression, caught my attention: “I don’t know about heaven, but it is hell here”. As it is known that the neighborhood was made up of poor families, I suppose that this writing points to poverty.

The analyze of a topic includes the analyze of the way that the people think as well; and this thinking happens only in and between the people who, either by themselves or altogether, try to reveal the reality. I cannot think for the other, but also without the others, and they cannot think for me. Even if their thinking is based on superstitions or naïve, humans can change only if they reconsider their assumptions in action. This

process should be made by producing ideas and acting in accordance with those ideas (Freire, 2017: 101-102).

Communicating with the groups which can be considered “the others” is one of the main arguments of this study. From the perspective of a social scientist, the question, “How should we communicate with the others?” (Eriksen, 2014: 11, Levi-Strauss, 2018: 14) matters in this study.

1.5. Method and Material

The semi-structured interviews were made with 54 women from 18 families, by which all three generations are represented. The samples from the population for the fieldwork were chosen based on their ages: the first-generation women, who were aged 55 and above (grandmother), the second-generation women aged between 30 and 54 (mother), and the third-generation women aged between 15 and 30 (granddaughters). For the generation in which the youngest woman is 56 and the oldest is 85, it is believed that, because they are more traditional in their lifestyles and discourses, it would be better for them to be named the first generation. Second generation women are those who are aged between 35 and above. Lastly, the third generation indicates the youngest generation aged between 16 and 29. The answers which were provided by women that belong to the generation aging between 15 and 29 are distinctively different than the previous generations.

In the interviews, the questions were prepared so that the ethnic identities of the women, how inter-generational transfers are made, and how these experiences are lived through would be understood. To understand inter-generational similarities and differences, comparison-based questions were used.

In the study, the socio-economic structure, traditions, and customs of the region, as well as the cultural values of the region are referred to. It should be reminded that the answers in the interviews are related to them and the discourses are shaped on these values. For all the interviews, not only the answers but also the neighborhood that the family lives in, their economic conditions, sources of income, etc. are taken into consideration and the comments are made accordingly.

Aliases were used in the thesis instead of their real names while they narrated their

experiences and sub-sections are designed as the first, second, and third generation.

In the study, based on the findings in the fieldwork, it is aimed to present a critical perspective on whether an inter-generational experience sharing existed, and if it did not exist, what were the causes of the interruptions.

If we really want to build a new thing, or if we want the big systems to lead to some real questions in the end, we should seek data and questions in their own places [where they exist]. Moreover, I don't believe that the intellectual cannot ask real questions on the society in which he lives only by being surrounded with books as an academic or a scientist. On the contrary, one of the prominent ways of collaborating with non-intellectuals is listening to their problems and working with them to formulate the problems (Foucault, 2016: 302).

Following Foucault, a fieldwork was required in order to study the identity transformation of women of Ağrı. The best method would be to understand the everyday and ordinary experiences, which are interiorized yet not realized, by talking to them face to face. Of all the methods of social sciences, for women's studies, qualitative research method seemed to be the best to be applied in the case. Rather than asking whether there really are methods which have their limits, the idea of limits should be opposed (Harding, 1996: 34-47).

In the first phase of the study, a sample is chosen. Working on a sample helps finding something that can be generalized to everything of a kind (Becker, 2015: 121). In the selection of the sample, the age ranges were in focus so that there would be a balanced distribution of all three generations. Members of each generation from a total of 18 families were aimed to participate in the study. Also, in the selection of families, their living at the same place was not considered as a requirement. The women, belonging to different generations but the same family, were visited in different homes and places. Some of the interviews were made with appointments while some others were made by coincidence. Although there were families which refused to be interviewed, in general there were more families which accepted to be interviewed.

In the second phase, questions were prepared so that they fell under the same topic but were modified in order to be related to each generation. In the semi-structured interviews (Böke, 2017: 291), these questions which were initially prepared in the open-ended form were asked to the interviewees by taking into consideration their education levels, and a local, everyday, simple language was adopted for them to understand the concepts. While the interviews were conducted, the voices of the interviewees who had given consent were recorded, while the answers of those without consent were recorded as written notes. In the analysis phase, these recordings and notes were analyzed.

The interviews were conducted with semi-structured interview method. The reason for using interviews in the study was that they allowed being more active in the study, and this way the interviewees would feel that the author was no one but one of them. Also, a study which is based on and concluded with only numeric data would not serve the aim of the study. In qualitative research, the researcher does not aim to control [the interview and the interviewee] but shares experiences, feelings, and ideas mutually, and removes the differences between herself and the interviewee (Kümbetoğlu, 2017: 59).

Reaching to these families was not hard. Being have worked in Ağrı for more than seven years enabled the researcher to find and reach the sample families. Also knowing Kurdish provided an advantage to the author as it was easier to convince the women to conduct interviews with her. Although some of the families had prejudices about the study, after the researcher provided them with detailed information about the content of the study, she managed to convince them. The aim here was not to find answers based on the causes and effects with the questions. The aim was to understand the experiences of the women in an interactional manner in the light of their experiences, feelings, and knowledge. In this regard, the feminist method aims to make the researched an important part of the research by using the technique of “interactionist method” (Kümbetoğlu, 2017: 58).

The study, above all, has importance as it presents the women’s experiences on their womanhood through their own words. Their experiences and perspectives as to their lives, ethnic identities, religious beliefs, and gender identities were to provide sources for the study to reach its aim. Thus, conducting interviews by visiting them in their living spaces allowed mutual trust to be built easily.

Being an insider played an important role for the acquisition of reliable information

in the study. Being in the same mood with the interviewees, being like one of them also allowed the author to use a frank language in my interpretation of the study. This also allowed the establishment of the necessary setting for the study to reach its aim. Kümbetoğlu (2017: 53) says the following on the issue:

According to the feminist theory, the stance of the researcher is important in obtaining the knowledge on the women and the efforts to understand other women. The same stance brings about seeing and evaluating women as “subjects that know” as the primary data sources.

The language used while writing the thesis also brings forward the issue of a distance between the interviewer and the interviewees. It is observed that when “I” or “we” was used in the interviews by the author, the form and the course of communication and relationship were more genuine. Conducting the interviews in a genuine environment allowed the women to explain their experiences without hesitation, by the virtue of which the data for the study is obtained properly and reliably. Hence thinking sociologically (Bauman, 2019: 28) made a difference on understanding and interpreting their concerns, pains, longings, and dreams.

Another point that needs to be mentioned about the language used in the thesis is that a simple language is used in the thesis so that it can be easily understood. Although doing this was not easy in the literature review and theoretical framework chapters, the researcher tried to use everyday words. Rather than asking the interviewees, “What is your ethnic identity?”, it was attempted to ask indirect questions over relation, language, and culture. To make what the researcher aims to say clear and comprehensible (Becker, 2016: 110-111), unnecessary and extensive passages and lexicaphanicism was avoided.

Along with using semi-structured interview method, the literature was reviewed for the topic to be better understood.

The books addressing the topics of the thesis were particularly benefited from, while articles, theses, and internet resources were extensively used. In addition, the periodical studies in the journals which focus on the issue of women were accessed online.

The most up-to-date sources on the topics that the thesis focuses on, namely identity, nationalism, ethnic and gender identities, and modern nation-building process in Turkey were attempted to be accessed. It was attempted to convey the historical change and transformation to the reader by applying a comparison with the past so that today's issues could be understood.

The fieldwork is comprised of the data and information gained by the semi-structured interviews made with the women. As a result, these women are the primary data sources of the fieldwork.



CHAPTER 2

NATIONAL IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION AND WOMEN IN TURKEY

The process of national identity construction since the establishment of the Republic of Turkey has an important place in history. This identity construction process of which effects are significantly felt even today, created changes in today's concept of citizenship and its content. To bring and keep different elements together, nationalism gained great importance. There was a need of various theories and theses to bring people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds together and to create homogeneity by a common heritage myth. Moreover, the monotype nation construction process method was going to be unique as well.

In this chapter, the ideology of nationalism, which contributed to the national identity building process, and this ideology's decisive role on ethnic, religious, and gender identities will be explained. The main aim is to explore how nationalism affected ethnic, religious, and gender identities in nation-state building process, what meanings this ideology attributed to these identities, what roles it has provided to these identities, and how these roles can, be unveiled by gender theories in the context of everyday practices. The issues related to nationalism and its functions in relation to women and identity, the role of religion on woman's identity, and the relationship between gender and woman identity are separately discussed in the chapter. In the following parts of the chapter, the second and third focuses of the study, which are religious identity and women and gender will be explained.

2.1. National Identity Construction and Nationalism

National identity construction is parallel to nation-state building process. In this sense, it can be said that both of the processes are modern. Nation-state formation process brought along the formation of a single national identity. There is no single definition of the concept of national identity and it is seen that there are different characteristics that it has. Smith (1999: 31-32) mentions a historical land/country, or habitat, shared myths and historical memory, a common and mass public culture, common legal rights and duties which are in effect for each member of the community, and a common economy to which

the members of the community have free access within the borders of the country.

When it is taken into consideration that nationalism is not an identity by itself, that it can be articulated into ideologies like fascism, conservatism, liberalism, etc., that it can compete with or form an association with these ideologies, it can be concluded that national identity can be associated with these concepts easily as well. Like many modern currents of thought that are born during and after the French Revolution, national identities found their place in international political arena. With the rise of nation-states, national identities of the citizens that live within national borders became the most important identity, and religious and ethnic identities, which had their values up until then, started losing their previous functions (Şimşek, Ilgaz, 2007: 194). Nation-state is the most important product of modernity. Along with modernization, rational mind, nature and positivism, and universal values, the ideas regarding that the best forms of government can be established in nation-states became more visible. As a result, it can be said that the idea of nationalism was the sparkle for the formation of nation-states.

Modern nation-state came into existence following political and social developments in Western societies. Nation-state is a unique political organization of which roots are found in the Treaty of Westphalia of 1648, and is a form of organization which came into existence as a result of historical conditions (Gülalp, 2015: 11-12).

Nation state opposes the traditional thinking and governing and uses two separate processes at the same time. On the one hand, nation state aims to cut the ties with the traditions; on the other hand, it refers to the traditions when defining the concept of 'nation'. This dilemma became more visible especially during the process of globalization.

There are different arguments by different philosophers and scholars regarding the formation of modern nation-state. Gellner (Gellner, 2013: 26-27) argues that the roots of nationalism are found in modernity. "The idea of nationalism was the product of modernity, not the producer". For him, nationalism is a function of modernity and nations and nationalism came into existence with industrialism. Gellner also says the following on the issue:

"Ethnicity" or "nationality", in the simplest sense, is the name of the situation in which these borders coincide or overlap (to the extent that the borders of the

language, common history are the same), and in which the people, between whom there are no borders, have ethnomy and strong feelings towards each other (Gellner, 2012: 59).

M. Guibernau (Guibernau, 1996: 92) defines nation as “the group of people which has consciousness of a society, share a common culture, settled upon a clearly defined piece of land, have a common history and a future projection, and have the right to rule their own selves” and argues that there are five dimensions of the concept nation: Psychological, cultural, related to land, political, and historical (Doğan, 2015: 9). As a result, based on this definition, a nation is not made of a single element but is made of elements which become integrated and have functional relations between each other.

For Heywood (Heywood, 2016: 119), nationalism shows itself on the belief that state’s borders should overlap with nation’s borders, and all nations should have the right to self-determination.

In the discussions on nationalism, the concepts of ‘nation’ and ‘state’ are much referred to. There are different definitions of the two concepts though there is no consensus on any clear-cut way of defining them. The concepts of nation and state melted in each other following the revolutions at the end of 18th century (Habermas, 2015: 15-16). For Max Weber, the state is the institution which holds the monopoly of legitimate violence in the society (Gellner, 2012: 73). According to this, the state is the sole legal authority in the society which has the right to use violence legitimately. The state also has the right and power to use different means to establish cultural and political unity among individuals. Especially common language, culture, history, memory, and identity building are the tools for the state to establish unity. Nationalism is the most important tool to establish this unity and collective consciousness.

Geographic border has an important role in the definition of modern state. The state should establish a dual structure in this geography: On the one hand, it should allow the desires to join government; on the other hand, it should penetrate into the society (Kerestecioğlu, 2016: 307-350). Along with that, in order for nation building to be successful, the individuals should totally feel belonging to the common values and

symbols. Nationalism is considered to be the most important ideology which created nation-state.

The state, by definition, while representing the interests of a ruling class or group and functioning against the interests of the oppressed, relies on force and violence. The state tries to actualize a homogenizing project and uses violence to remove differences and to silence the opposition. Nation-state is based on the fictional unity idea in form of a top-down official nationalism (translated from Saigol, 2016: 227-259).

As a result, it can be said that nation-state formation process does not always happen using mild methods but can be made top-down and against the society.

2.2. Nationalism

Today the discussions on nationalism have changed in form and content and, what nationalism is not has started to be more discussed than what nationalism is.

Nationalism is clearly a modern expression and a prominent expression of political autonomy and self-determination (Calhoun, 1993: 211-239). Although nationalism has an important power on contemporary political institutions, there is no consensus on the definition of nationalism. The scholars have defined the concept differently and attributed different meanings to the concept based on the era that they lived and the conditions that they experienced.

Although there are many approaches, three of them stand out in the discussions on nationalism: Premordialist, modernist, and ethno-symbolic. Premordialist approach considers nations as “structures which are natural or existent since the ancient ages” (Özkırımlı, 2016: 74-229) while for modernist approach “nations and nationalism appear along with or as a product of processes like capitalism, industrialization, the establishment of centralist states, urbanization, or secularization” (Özkırımlı, 2016: 74-229). Lastly, ethno-symbolic approach is used to define the method of theoreticians which pay more attention to ethnic background and culture in their studies on nationalism.

Most of the discussions on nationalism are on if nations created nationalism or if nationalism created nations. In other words, there are differing ideas on the roots of nationalism. Gellner, while explaining his theory, argues that there are three eras in humanity's historical development: Hunter-gatherer, agricultural, and modern-industrial societies. For him, nationalism is a sociological reality only in modern societies (Özkırımlı, 2016: 159-160). Smith (2013: 20) argues that the main concern of nationalism is nations, and this concern is at the core of the ideology.

Anderson (Anderson, 2015: 20) defines the root of nationalism as “imagination”: “Nation is an imagined political community – it is an imagined community which is imagined as having both sovereignty and constraints”. For Anderson, the interactions of capitalist book publishing with technology and linguistic diversity allowed the imagination of new communities, which are the bases of nations (Akça, 2005: 237). Here the “imaginary” reality is emphasized that nations are communities even if they do not know each other. Anderson (Anderson, 2015: 21-22) emphasizes three characteristics of a nation: The nation is imagined as a limited entity. The reason of this is that however big a nation is, there is an end of it. Second, the nation is imagined as sovereign because with enlightenment, the legitimacy of traditional methods is started to be questioned. Lastly, the nation is imagined as a community. This is because although there are inequality and exploitation against which vertical and horizontal relations are intertwined with each other.

For Smith (Smith, 1994: 32), “a nation is the name of a human community which shares a historical land/country, common myths and a historical memory, a public culture of a community, a shared economy, common legal rights and duties”. What separates Smith from the others is his reference to the history and his argument that national identity cannot be explained based on one element.

Hobsbawm (Hobsbawm, 2010: 70-83) emphasizes the elements of language and ethnic roots in the establishment of proto-national unity. According to this, the use of national language is one of the important tools in nation-state's establishment.

In its everyday use, ethnic roots, almost always, although not clearly expressed, is related to the common root and lineage of an ethnic group's members, which are the roots of common characteristic

traits of them. As “kindredship” and “blood” create a clear advantage in interconnecting the members of a group to each other while excluding the foreigners, these have enormous importance for ethnic nationalism (Hobsbawm, 2010: 70-83).

When the afore-presented explanations about the formation process of nation-states are taken into consideration, the elements on which it is built, and the above-mentioned definitions, it can be said that nationalism is a fictionalized ideology. With the modern forms of government, the state, with holding the right to legitimately use of power and using it to form authority over a piece of land, with approaching the citizen with legal equality, and using its right of sovereignty, allowed itself to exist on and on.

2.2.1. National Identity Formation Process in Turkey

After Ottoman rule, in the Republican era, the new order was based on the transition from a multi-ethnic and multi-faith structure to a secular and uniform nation-state structure. In the new order, the attention-grabbing case is its raising the questions such as whom the nation will be made up of and how, and if religion will have its role in this formation process or not (Çaylak, Çelik, 2017: 117).

There are different changes in the period following the formation of Turkish Republic in terms of modernization and the consequences of it. Especially the steps for the establishment of a national identity served to the institutionalization of nationalism. The central role of the state in national identity formation can be seen in the way national education system works (Caymaz, 2007: 11). The main aim was to remove the institutions and the operations left from the Ottoman era and to make Western-like modernization moves. The first group of the elite supporting the Republic aimed at both Turks progressing in being a national community and this community’s taking place in Western civilization (Bozdoğan, Kasab, 2017: 33). Bingöl (2004a: 155-186) remarks that a nation building process started after Ottoman Empire, and this process was aimed to be made by top-down rebuilding process.

It should be noted that in the building process of the Republic, there was no homogeneous nation. During both Ottoman and Republic Turkey, there were millions of

Turks which were not ethnically Turk while sharing the same culture (Karpas, 2015: 33). As a result, in the nation that was to be built, the condition of creating a citizen and “the other” was creating “us”. Once “us” was created and interiorized by the citizens, the existence of “the other” was going to be possible, and as a result of this, there was going to be a spring on which the feeling of citizenship was to be fed (Üstel, 2016: 209).

It will be beneficial to provide some information on the millet system of Ottoman Empire which allowed the different ethnic and religious groups to stay together. Millet system is a system by which the continuation of different religion, language, community, ethnicity, and families. Karpas (2015: 139-181) remarks on millet system: This system was created taking into consideration the administrative and cultural structures of the groups which were under the Ottoman rule. In this structure, ethnic and religious identities were Ottomanized while also keeping their cultural differences. As a result, millet system was a social, cultural, and a communal system which was based on religious and linguistic differences. Community was one of the main elements of millet system and while religion allowed millets (i.e. groups) to gather around a universal belief system, different languages had a functional role in the division of Christians in sub-units. With the help of that, religious and linguistic differences were integrated in Ottoman administrative system in harmony.

Although there were different ethnic and religious communities under Ottoman rule, reform acts of 19th century, which strengthened central authority, is the beginning of the Kurdish problem. Sheikh Said Riot of 1925, Ağrı Revolt of 1930 and Dersim Revolt of 1938 happened just after the establishment of the republic and they are the results of these regions’ Turkification and the reactions to religious, political, and cultural reconstruction (Ersanlı, Özdoğan, 2016: 21).

The national identity construction in Turkey was being made on different elements during the earlier era of the republic. As a result, referring to nationalism to build the nation depended on different dynamics in various periods. Nationalism relied on religious elements between 1919 and 1923, secular elements between 1924 and 1929, and ethno-cultural elements between 1929 and 1938 (Yıldız, 2016: 16-17).

National identity construction, especially from 1930s on, was based on a homogeneous structure and monolingualism. This argument is based on the one identity

and one language principles in “Turkish History Thesis” and “Sun Language Theory”. Language and history were the two most important and most functional tools in the building of the new national identity. From the beginning of 1930s to the death of Atatürk, with Turkish History Thesis and Sun Language Theory, the argument that Turks are a glorious nation, and with First Turkish History Congress, the emphasizes on the cultural, lingual and racial distinctiveness of Turks made racial and lingual characteristics the basic indicators of Turkishness (Çağaptay, 2017: 245-262). In short, Turkish History Thesis and Sun Language Theory contributed to ease national identity construction process.

Turkish History Thesis which originates in pan-Turkism argues that those inhabit Anatolia all have Turkish roots because those Turks that came from Central Asia were the first settlers of Anatolia (Yıldız, 2016: 184-185). As a result, it can be argued that history and language were the legitimizing means of the creation of “the others” in national identity seeking and building in 1930s Turkey. The standardization and similarization policies of elements from different ethnic and religious roots needed a state intervention. At this point, Hobsbawm’s (1995: 37) argument, “the more the revolutionary nation was one and indivisible put forward, the more the heterogeneity in it caused problems” becomes important. Bingöl (2004b: 27-58) says the following on what was aimed to be made:

For Mustafa Kemal and his friends, the newly built republic should use all its energy, within realistic limits, on the establishment of a comparably small, secular, and a national state which is grounded on the ethnically heterogeneous Anatolian Turkishness. Because of this, Kemalist modernists, consciously and with rational reasons, ignored Islamic and non-Anatolian-Turkish elements (translated from 2004b: 27-58).

Ismail Beşikçi (Beşikçi, 1986:127) argues that the thesis proposed by Turkish History Thesis is in accordance with contemporary official state ideology. According to this, once “there is no nation as Kurds, everyone is Turk”, Kurds are ignored. Beşikçi (1986) emphasizes that all the people living in Anatolia and Mesopotamia are considered Turks and it is wanted to be known as the sole reality.

The reforms to establish a national identity and common belonging in the newly established Turkish Republic are all on “being Turk”. As a result, all elements other than “Turk” are aimed to gather around this collective identity. Collective identity, in modern terms, reflects the manifestation of differences of ethnic groups that have taken root in a certain area from other groups, their belonging, conscience, and singularity. (Alakel, 2011: 14). Turkification policies are aimed to be made possible by actualizing policies which would allow the establishment of a collective identity. For Aktar (Aktar, 2014:101), Turkification policies can be applied only with the following prerequisites:

The emergence of Turkish nationalism in the historical scene as a systematized political ideology, the acceptance of this ideology by the majority of the political elite which hold power, and the availability of the international conjuncture to execute these policies (translated from Aktar, 2014: 101).

Similarly, McDowall (McDowall, 2004:25) emphasizes that in modern Turkish Republic, even if they are not ethnically Turks, all new identities are defined, ideologically, as Turks.

It is seen that nationalism is the keystone in Turkification policies. Ethnic, religious, linguistic and historical elements are the basic dimensions of social similarity. As Doğan (Doğan, 2015: 15) states, “the reason of this lies at the aims of separating itself from other states with significant differences and becoming a specific one the newly constructed state”.

Ziya Gökalp (Gökalp, 1982:228) puts emphasis on the “culture” element contributes to nationalization. Using the term “hars”, Gökalp defines the concept of nation as follows:

Nation is not a geographical, racial, political, or a voluntary community. Nation is a cultural community which is made up of individuals which share the same language, i.e. the same education. A man would prefer to live with the people that he had the same education and shares the same mother tongue than those that he

has common blood [i.e. kin]. Because our human character is in our soul, not in our body. As our material qualities come from our race, our spiritual qualities come from the society from which we receive education (translated from Gökalp, 1982: 228).

Once it is acknowledged that nation-state did not come into existence by itself but it is the result of a set of historical events, it would become apparent that national identity formation would follow its own nationalist path. Tanıl Bora (Bora, 2017b: 13) says that “the political authority establishes a nation and an identity with its acts and discourses and fixes the answers of the questions ‘who we actually are’ and ‘how we should be’”. As a result, the authority, on one hand, builds its own nation with a progressive perspective; on the other hand, it tries to create a different nation than the existing ones. Nationalism’s ties with the past and the future strengthen the ties with progressivism and conservatism.

Establishing homogeneous identities in the process of society formation of nationalism is seen as a strategic policy. The saying “how happy are those that say ‘I am Turk’” is to be seen as the “new way” in this process (Özcan, 2017: 175-208). Considering that “non-Turks” are excluded in this saying, it can be considered as a way of creating “others”. Moreover, nationalism’s functionality in creating “others” is strengthened once more.

Kadioğlu (2012: 35-43) trichotomizes the “others” in the process of Turkish national identity creation process: The *non-Muslim* Christian and Jewish people who were under Ottoman rule, *non-Turkish Muslims* which are different because of their language and religious sects, and lastly its own past. Armenians, Greeks, and Jews are considered non-Muslims and with the Treaty of Lausanne, they are considered minorities. Kurds, Arabs, people rooted from Balkans and Caucasia (Bosnians, Albanians, Circassians, and Georgians) belong to the second group as being non-Turkish Muslims. Kadioğlu explains that Westernization is becoming an aim for the country to reach the level of modern civilisations with the help of making people forget about their past. As a result, erasing all marks of the past would remove the potential clashes.

There are other ways to establish a homogeneous society and nation for sure. One of the methods that Turkey used for modernization within the framework of nationalism

was ensuring homogeneity with resettlement policies. The settlement law, numbered 2510 and passed in 1934 (T.C. Resmi Gazete, 21 Haziran [June] 1934, No.2733) was the essential tool of this policy. According to the law, there were three groups in the society: Turkish speaking and ethnically “Turkish” people, not Turkish speaking but still considered to belong to Turkish culture, and the people which neither belonged to Turkish culture nor spoke Turkish (Kirişçi, Winrow, 2000: 103). It is seen that neither Kurds nor the other ethnic groups are mentioned in the law.

The 11th article of the law regulates the mother tongue issue. The article is as follows:

It is forbidden for those whose mother tongue is not Turkish to re-establish a village or neighborhood, workers or artists’ organizations, or the monopolization of a village, neighborhood, a business, or an art to the members of their own nation (translated from T.C. Resmi Gazete, 21 June 1934, No.2733).

Beşikçi (1977: 132) considers the settlement law a mandatory settlement (exile) law and evaluates the law as follows: Kurds those whose mother tongue is not Turkish, are banned from re-establishing a village, neighborhood, or workers or artists’ organizations.

As seen, Kurds were not only sent to exile but also they were prevented from forming a community and doing business wherever they were sent to (Beşikçi, 1977: 142). Yeğen (2015: 92) says that “the reorganization of Anatolia’s demographic composition in ethnic standards is the main aim of the law”.

Settlement law can be considered as one of the political means which was designed in accordance with the conditions of the period during which, in the formation of the nation, the unity and togetherness of similarities rather than differences were implemented.

2.2.2. The Conflicts between Ethnic Identity and Nationalism

Nationalism’s way of envisioning of itself and the nations may become possible by creating the sense of “us” and “them” (Çağlayan, 2013: 104). As a result, the formation of the “other” brings the potential conflicts between nationalism and ethnic identity together.

Balibar and Wallerstein (2007: 103) say the following on the connection between nationalism and ethnic identity:

No nation has a natural ethnic base, but as social formations become nations, the communities that they include, share, or rule become “ethnic”. In other words, as if forming a natural community which has a premordial identity, culture, and interests which is beyond and above individuals and social conditions, it becomes to be represented in the past or the future (translated from Wallerstein, 2007: 103).

It is said that the first use of the concept of ethnicity in the discussions of ethnic identity and nationalism was by American sociologist David Riesman in 1953 (Yıldız, 2016: 39).

Identities, in the simplest sense, can be categorized as individual and collective identities. Individual identities can change in accordance with the external and social conditions based on family, gender, class, region, religion, ethnicity, and nation. Collective identities are not based on conditions but are overarching and inclusive, and it tends to differ at the core of ethnic and national bonds (Yorulmaz, 2012: 61).

The individual demands that came to the forefront with modernization opened and paved the way for identity politics. Identity politics are made not only by individual demands but also collective identities. Especially from 1970s on the social movements of which the themes were changing tried to put forward and draw more attention to the differences and aimed for more care about local identities. Serpil Sancar (2018: 54) calls “the politics which struggles against cultural exclusion” the “*identity and difference politics*”. As Bilgin (1994: 53) states, “collective identity is the demand of some groups (ethnic communities) which are rooted at a territory to exposure of their differences from other groups”.

As it can be understood from the definitions, collective identities are made by the groups which come together for common aims and needs. There are some hardships to define this formation objectively. First of all, the concept of identity can change according to the way that one defines herself in accordance with the others and there are subjective

elements in it. The hardships in answering the questions, “Who am I?”, “where do I belong to?”, and “how can I accommodate?” by the individual makes making a clear definition of the concept even harder (Göktolga, 2013: 122). As a result, the differences in the question “who am I?” causes differences in the definitions of the concept. Buckingham (2008: 1-24) mentions that there are paradoxes caused by the nature of the concept of identity: Identity, on one hand, is something for us about which we think we are more of something, what differs us from the others; on the other hand, it is an element which is in relation to a wider collective or social group.

Collective identities maintain their existence in line with the social relations and needs of the individual. Elements like the past, traditions, language, religion, etc. are the primary elements of the collective identity. The individual defines herself with this identity as a social necessity and carries various roles.

Collective identity includes the belongings and the sense of self in itself. According to Bilgin (2007: 55), “the terms ethnicity or ethnic identity are used for the concept of collective identity in anthropological and sociological studies. The feeling of identity is in relation with the struggles of an ethnic group for the creation of a collective history which would serve as a reference point for itself for the aim of building its own distinctiveness from the others”. As a result, identity is shaped in the way that it would include biological, cultural, etc. elements from the past. With ethnic identity, the individual can differentiate herself from other individuals and emphasize on her difference from the “others” as “we”. At this point, the relationship between nationalism and ethnic identity comes forward.

The studies on ethnic categories which are conducted regarding the bonds between ethnic identity and nationalism, can affect studies on nationalism. As previously emphasized, the clashes between primordialist and structuralist approaches can as well happen in ethnicity studies. Primordialist approach considers ethnic identity an entity which is free of historical and social conditions and it argues that it is determinant on the political biases of the individual that has a power which cannot be wiped off with economic and institutional regulations. Primordialists also brings kindredship into forefront. On the other hand, instrumentalism and constructivism, contrary to primordialism, argue that ethnicity is a social category which created, changed, and suppressed by the elites of the society for their own interests (Aktürk, 2006: 24-26). Lastly, there are differences in ethno-symbolicist approaches in the ways that the concept of ethnic

identity is handled in readings of nationalism. In this approach, the forms of belongings of the ethnic community are adapted to the modern times, and by this, the perennial ethno-cultural context gained a political form and functionality (Smith, 1998: 158-159). This approach defines nationalism as the product of the modern times and an ideology which includes cultural belongings that come from the past to today.

The relationship between ethnic identity and nationalism can be read as a tool which allows expressing the ethnic identity demands of social communities. Here it can be said that a discussion on “belonging” would be made the way that it would include religion, culture, history, and gender. Yalçiner (2014: 205) underlines that *“the attributed importance of the ethnicity in the definition of nation, nationality, and nationalism presents a different and important ground about the normative framework on the relationship between nationalism and ethnicity”*.

Ethnicity, what is defined as “the identification of one’s own self with her ethnic group” by Yıldız (2016: 29) is shaped by the way that the definitions are used, its content, and the period.

The clashes between ethnic identity and nationalism can also be read as the clashes between the old and the new. If nationalism is accepted as being modern and new, it can be said that ethnic identity has a longer past historically. Calhoun (2012: 41) says the following about the potential conflict:

Specific nationalist identities and projects sit on the ethnic identities that exist for a long while, kinship and community relationships, and a commitment to land that is grounded with the ancestors. These nationalist identities and projects take their cultural substances, emotional commitments and organizational powers largely from these. But what differs nationalism from ethnicity, and from kindredship both of these as a form of identity construction has analytical importance. This difference cannot be made only on the content, because ethnicity is generally presented as an extension of kindredship and nationalists present nations as large

families which have cultural and blood bonds. The key question here is which solidarity forms these are, and how they are reproduced (translated from Calhoun, 2012: 41).

According to Calhoun, differentiating between nationalism, which is modern, and ethnic identity, which is old, requires caution and one should pay attention to how this will be made.

2.3. Gender and Nationalism

Although lately there has been an increase in the studies on the relationship between nationalism and gender, the relationship between gender and nationalism is ignored in almost all studies in nationalism research, and in their definitions the gender dimension is missing. Nonetheless, today, there are different ways in which women are articulated into nationalism. According to Walby (2016: 35-36), many studies on nationalism do not consider gender an important issue and do not include gender. For Walby; Enloe, Jayawardena, Yuval-Davis, and Anthias are those that come into prominence on the issue by including gender in their studies on nationalism.

In the premordialist approach, nation is seen as an extension of kindredship while in the modernist approach there is blindness towards gender (Coşar & Özman, 2015: 82-83). In the nationalist projects which include gender, women come to the fore and there are oppositions by some authors in making the role of women insignificant in the formation of the nation and identity.

According to Anthias and Yuval-Davis (Anthias, Yuval-Davis, 1989: 7), there are five main ways in which women participate in ethnic and national process:

1. Being the biological producers of the members of ethnic communities,
2. Being the reproducers of the limits of ethnic and national communities,
3. By having a central role in the ideological recreation of the community, and by being the

transferor of culture,

4. By being the demonstrators of the ethnic and national differences, i.e. by being the symbols which are at the center of ideological discourses, that are used for the transformation, reproduction, and the building of ethnic and national categories,

5. By participation in national, economic, political, and military struggles (translated from Walby, 2016: 35-63).

The roles that women play and the way that they participate in ethnic and national identity building processes can be expressed as a process in which gender and nationalism feed each other mutually.

For Yuval-Davis (2016: 93-94), women are set to be the symbolic carriers of the community's identity and honor, both individually and collectively, and because of this, they, and especially they, are expected to carry this "burden of representation". The gender roles of men and women are shaped based on sexist grounds. Claudia Koontz cites the following slogans that were presented to girls and boys in Hitler Youth Movement: For girls, the slogan was "believe, be pure, be German" while for boys the slogan was "live with belief, fight with courage, and die smiling". The national duties of boys were to live and die for the nation, while the girls did not need to do anything except being the incarnations of the nation (Yuval-Davis, 2016: 94).

Sylvia Walby (2016: 41) agrees with Yuval-Davis and Anthias's ideas, yet she points out to the differences between men and women in participation to national projects and says that "*national projects affect men and women differently, and because of this it arouses interest in varying degrees*". As can be understood from Walby's mentioned passage, national projects affect women, but they arouse less interest and women are less influenced with them considering the ways that they take part in the projects.

Enloe (2016: 203-226), says that "the militarization of nationalist movements is a process which has many contradictions and struggles in relation with gender" and points out that men and women differ from each other in being constituent elements of nation

building. Nationalism plays a changing role in the prestige-gaining of women's status. Thanks to nationalist movements, women became free of domestic works and found place in the public sphere, and "*women acquired rights not together with patriarchal nationalist men but in despite of them*" (Enloe, 2016: 203-226).

Chatterjee (2016: 103-125), argues that nationalism has its own solution, parallel to its aims and strategies, to the problem of women. Chatterjee takes into consideration the India case, and argues that nationalism has defined gender roles over interior/exterior, material/spiritual, and home/world categories.

Material world is external to us – a world which affects and conditions us, a world that we struggle to keep pace with, a world that is totally out of us: But this world, at the end of the day, is unimportant. What is internal to us, what constitutes our real self is the spiritual world, it is what is important (translated from Chatterjee, 2016: 103-125).

Saigol (2016: 227-259), similarly, discusses the relationship between nationalism and militarization, and emphasizes how woman body is instrumentalized in this set of relationships:

Women do not only create and protect images of violence and war; meantime it also constitutes the bodies on which gendered violence narrative is written down. War images are divided into feminine and masculine parts. For example, defeat means being feminine, victory is being masculine (translated from Saigol, 2016: 227-259).

Nagel (2016: 65-94) argues that there is a strong tie between militarism and nationalism. According to Nagel, men dominated, both in the past and the present, many state institutions like the army and because of this, it is normal for hegemonic masculine culture and ideology and hegemonic nationalist culture and ideology to go hand in hand. Nagel emphasizes that manhood and nationalism can be articulated into each other very well and nation-state, actually, is a masculine institution. Nagel also mentions that the

hegemonic tie between manhood and nationalism is not only marked in the minds and hearts of men but also of women.

Najmabadi (2016: 129-165) takes into consideration the relationship of nation-states with women from a different angle. According to this, the establishment of the national community as a fraternity caused the centralization of manhood ties and the exclusion of women from this social contract. Najmabadi emphasizes the strong ties between the concept, chastity¹, and the social union of the motherland and over the case of Iran says that the nation is male while the motherland is female, which is the key concept in how a religious community transformed to a national community (2016: 131). The identification of the motherland with women's body caused the men and women to undertake two different roles at the same time.

The homeland being a woman figure to which the male desires are fronted to, and meantime also being defended and embraced by the men, created a narrative sphere in which women's citizenship became paradoxical: Women, on the one hand were claiming equality, on the other hand were protected by men (translated from Najmabadi, 2016: 134).

Şerifsoy (2016: 167-172) studies the ties between family and nationalism and researches how family is used to legitimize nationalist values both as a metaphor and as an institution. Nationalism's envision of family as an institution and a metaphor to establish "national unity" serves different aims. First of all, family is valued as an institution because family causes the physiological production of the population and it is the basic socialization. "Fertility is being encouraged to happen in the family by the state. It is not only because of concerns about health but also the state, this way, aims to 'morally' keep its citizens under control". The family being seen valuable metaphorically has a meaning which is similar to what is explained by Najmabadi. According to this, the similarity created by the discourse between the family and the nation creates "brotherhood" between the people that actually have no ties. Meantime the family's having qualities like "naturalness", "limitedness" and "moral structure" lets it to be used as a metaphor. In

¹ The term "chastity" is used to mean both "chastity" and "honor" as the Turkish word "namus" is used to mean both of them. Although contextually the term "honor" can be used, for the integrity of the content, and not to replace terms in the text, the term "chastity" will be used to mean both "honor" and "chastity".

short, the state, at the one hand determines the definition and the social duties of the “family”, and on the other hand, the “family” as a metaphor, determines the limits of the construction of the state and the nation.

The discussions on nationalism and gender show that women are articulated into nationalism in different ways. What draws the attention in these discussions is this: Women, knowingly or not, play the roles that would serve the aims of nationalism.

2.4. Religious Identity and Nationalism

One of the aims of the study is to analyze the changes and transformations of the women of Ağrı. For this, understanding how religion functions in women’s gender roles has primary importance. It is known that, along with the biological differences between men and women, the gender roles affect the religious identity as well. More importantly, it should be accepted that religion has an enormous importance in the creation of gender roles.

Religion plays an important role in an individual’s outlook on life and regulates the social relations. There is undeniable weight of religion in determining the social, economic, and political choices and belongings of the individual. Modernism turned traditional mentalities upside down with realism, positivism, and enlightenment, and as a result, individuals started searching for new identities. At this very point, religion comes to forefront with its functions which connect and bring people together. While religion affects social structures, social structures affect religion as well. According to Berger (2011: 25), there is a dialectic understanding between religion and social relations. Accordingly, religion is the product of the society and the society is the production of religion. But what would be the role of religion in identity construction? On what parameters are religion-nationalism relations are built?

Islam’s aspect, bringing people together, plays an important role in the formation of individual and collective identities. “Islam played an important role in the establishment of national identity, as it did in the formation of individual, group, and society identities” (Yorulmaz, 2012: 69).

Along with having an active role in identity formation as the elements such as race, color, sex, language, occupation, etc., religion also is a protector. In this context, while

nationalism can go to the extent of being racist and having exclusionist discourses, religion has its place in the social structure which becomes a factor that connects and brings people together.

There are many different definitions in the field of sociology of religion on the way that religion affects the social order and the way that it regulates social relations. Günay (2012: 229-232) makes four main definitions which are grounded on the explanations of religion as “*the experience of the holy*” or “*the living of the holy*” which are classified as “*frightening and fascinating mystery*”. First, having holiness as the base, it is aimed to express that sociologically religion’s best definition can be found with the religion’s own essence, substance, and nature. Second, any individual has the ability to experience this holiness and it is actually interior to humans. Third, religion roots in the individuals one by one and then it gains the quality which is beyond individuals. Lastly, religion has a social character which is not only individual but meantime beyond individuals. Based on this truth, it can be said that a religion which is not widely accepted by a society, i.e. which cannot manage to form a religious community, is a “*dead*” born “*embryo*”.

Berger (1993: 65) points out to the legalization function of religion:

Religion, historically, has been the most widespread and effective means of legalization. Every legalization protects the reality which is defined by the society. Religion legalizes so effectively that even the empirical communities’ inconsistent [fictional] realities are bound to absolute reality (translated from Berger, 1993: 65).

Religion actually functions as a model to understand the world and to put one’s self at a certain point in that world (Mardin, 2012: 30). While carrying out this function, with the premise that the social, political, and economic belongings of the individual are all united, religion functions as a social bridge.

The assumed relation between religion and nationalism has even more meaning once ethnic identities are the subject. Bülent Kara (2017: 121-138) makes some categorical classifications in his examination of the relationship between religion and nationalism. According to this, the trio, religion-community-tradition, puts the religious aspect of

religious nationalism to the forefront and the nation-state-authority trio puts the nationalist aspect of nationalism to the forefront.

Akçura (2015: 34) associates the relationship of nationalism with Turkishness and Islam and says the following: One of the main regulations of Islam is explained with the principle, ‘the religion and the nation is one’ (i.e. united). Here Akçura points out to the gathering aspect of Islam and refers to the Turkish identity as it also has a similar mission. Also, seeing the nation and the religion equivalent to each other remarks the unity of similar or homogeneous elements as well.

Nationalism and religion relationship can be classified in three groups historically: The religion-nationalism relationship in the Ottoman Empire’s modernization era, the religion-nationalism relationship during the Republic era, and lastly the religion-nationalism relationship in Turkey up until today.

In the Ottoman era, it is seen that Islamism and nationalism are elements that have gathering properties. Religious unity is aimed to be established with nationalism and the concept, “millet”, is used to mean religion and sect². In this way, the ruling “millet” identity was based on religion and the Ottoman administration by providing religious freedom to Orthodox Christians, let Serbs, Bulgarians, Greeks, etc. to live in accordance with and have their own identity via religion (Karpas, 2015: 13-14).

The mentality in the last period of the Ottoman era shows that the religious elements were of primary importance in the establishment of national identities. Şerif Mardin (1991: 56) writes the following on the issue:

What the sultan wasn’t aware of was that even if he would manage to succeed in the feeling of a Muslim, or even Ottoman identity among some of his subjects, the political message of Islam wasn’t enough to gather Muslims that were part of the empire around itself and to keep them united. Islam was seen to have a large effect to create some sort of a social identity and a sort of fraternity at the extreme borders of the Empire. But

² The word “millet” means “nation” in Turkish.

even today the nature of Islamic order as a form of proto-nationalism cannot be understood (translated from Mardin, 1991: 56).

In the republican era, at the establishment, the principle of “the religion of the state is Islam” was accepted in the Constitution of 1921. When the philosophy of establishment is considered, it is seen that the nationalist policy is argued to be in effect for religion as well. Religion was to have its own share in the modernization steps that the newly established state was going to take. The translation of the Quran into Turkish is only one of them (Kara, 2017: 130).

The conflicts that would potentially occur when Islam comes face to face with modernity has the potential to affect relations between nationalism and religion. The conflict is actually unavoidable as on the one hand there is the struggle for progress while on the other hand there are the historical roots of the traditional and local dynamics. In the building of modern and national identities, local seeds of Islamic legacy were the important constituents (Özdalga, 2014: 19).

2.5. Identity and Women

The main theme of the thesis is to analyze the changes and transformations of ethnic, religious, and gender identities of women. To understand the identities of the women of Ağrı, the way that the ethnic, religious, and gender identities created will be focused on. Also the effects, contributions, and the results of nationalism in the formation of Kurdish woman identity will be analyzed. The social role of women regarding ethnic roots and language elements will be mentioned. Along with these, how religious identities of women found meaning will be attempted to be explained with including the regional conditions of women. Lastly, the place of women’s identity in gender discourses will be questioned and how women identity is recreated in discourse and acts will be analyzed. The focus of the chapter will be on the creation and transformation of “the other” in the recreation of the ethnic, religious, and gender-based identities of women in traditional/patriarchal system.

2.5.1. Nationalism and the Identity of Women

Lately there have been different ways on the role of nationalism in the creation of the identity of women. The way that women became the subject by being taken into consideration within the framework of nationalism is explained by some authors by questioning the role of women in social, political, and economic relations. Sirman (2017: 226-244) says “*the most important impulse that ensures this movement is the expansion of the creation and recreation fields by including the role of the state in recreation to explain the secondary position of women in the academic literature*”. Indeed, the gaps in the literature on the gender roles of women started to be filled with the above-mentioned theoreticians’ ideas.

The ways that women took place in nation formation differ according to the needed field. The position of women in the “national question” changes according to the way that women are invited to the “constituent power”, which is to believe that to become a “contemporary civilization”, an independent state should be established (Sancar, 2017: 58).

There also is no parallelism between progression of the societies and the articulation of women to build a nation. According to Sancar (2017: 58), except for the women in the West, there is no model or pattern of women’s participation to nation-building processes. All nation-building processes considers women the dominant factor in the beginning, yet after the building process is over, the achievements of women are not parallel.

Pateman (2017: 19) has a different view about the exclusion of women from the debates on nationalism. Pateman says the following, basing his ideas on the difference between public and private spheres: Without the private sphere, public sphere cannot be fully understood. Similarly, without having the two halves which are mutually dependent on each other, the meaning of the original contract would be misinterpreted. Civil liberty relies on patriarchal rights.

Anthias-Yuval Davis (2016: 19) focuses on the position and way that women are positioned and mentions the role of women in nation building. “*It is not (only?) bureaucracy and intelligentsia that recreates nations biologically, culturally, and symbolically, but it is the women.*” Gender roles are shaped by using recreation

mechanisms by the state and the women are at the center of this mechanism.

Identity formation process, as explained above, is one of the most important elements of nation-building process. But what is the role of nationalism in women's identity formation?

2.5.2. Nationalism and Kurdish Women

Considering the above-mentioned issues on the ties of women with nationalism, it is seen that women, especially on identity formation, come to the forefront. Authors like Walby, Enloe, Jayawardena, Yuval-Davis and Anthias, Nagel, and Jayawardena have expressed their ideas on the way that women are discussed in the context of nationalism.

They have presented productive and effective theories on the space that women take on “national projects”, and on the way that the identity of women are perceived and featured, and they have prepared the ground to the current discussions on the nationalism and women issues in social sciences (Doğan, 2015: 24).

As the carriers of ethnic identity and culture, which is explained by Anthias and Yuval-Davis, Kurdish women are distinct examples. The historical change and transformation of Kurdish women caused the perception of identity to change as well.

The new images that appear and constantly change during this process, along with other consequences, lead to questioning the issues like the image and the traditional imagination, the position in the society and the family, and along with these, the central cultural concepts like gender and “chastity” of Kurdish woman, Kurdish villager woman (Yalçın-Heckmann & Van Gelder, 2016: 325-326).

An important issue that draws attention here is the differentiation between the villager and urban images of Kurdish women. While there is a categorical definition of Kurdish woman in itself, it is seen that within the framework of these definitions, gender

roles of Kurdish women are defined.

Lale Yalçın-Heckmann and Pauline van Gelder (2016: 344-352), in their study on Kurdish women, agree with Anthias and Yuval-Davis on them being the carriers of culture and identity, yet they argue that Kurdish women are both the symbol and the actor at the same time, and they do it on four categories:

- Woman as the representer of ethnic/national differences or the women as the icons of nations,
- The central role that women play in the ideological reproduction of collectivism and culture transformation,
- Women as the biological reproducers of ethnic community members,
- Women as the contributors/modernizers of nationalisms or the salvation of women.

The role of Kurdish women in nation-state building changed cyclically.

On the one hand nationalist movements call the women for higher participation and national action as mothers, teachers, educators, workers, or warriors. On the other hand, they rearrange the feminine acts which would be culturally acceptable, and force women to express their womanly interests within the frameworks of given nationalist discourse (Yalçın-Heckmann & Van Gelder, 2016: 344-352).

The analysis above, for sure, enlightens the assessments on the building of Kurdish woman identity and the roles that they play in social life.

Especially from 1980s on, Kurdish woman's visibility in politics allowed different identities to be mentioned as well. Çağlayan (2017: 19) says that:

Kurdish women, with their colorful and shiny dresses

in written and visual sources that circulates in public sphere were represented as the carriers of “Kurdish culture”, with their images in front of jails were represented as the symbols of “victimization and demands for rights”, or with their military uniforms, were represented as “the symbols of liberty”.

Because of this, in the nation building process, just like the formation of national identity, formation of Kurdish woman identity has a fictional dimension.

Economic developments in Turkey from 1950s caused important changes in the positions of Kurdish women. The change, which started with especially the rural-urban migration, caused the rise of villager-urban woman difference, which led to the transformation of political, social, and economic roles of women. In the villager woman image, the woman still is an important part of the patriarchal system. The traditional role of women is clearly seen in issues like marriage, education, labor, space, and woman’s body.

Çağlayan (2017) explains this issue as follows: Woman can exist in the smaller and closed parts of the home; the larger and open areas belong to the men. In the tribes, women have more workload than men. Marriage happens mostly because of the need for the labor of women, marriages happen with arrangements, and divorces and separation are rare. Woman’s body’s control by men with the justification of “chastity” is accepted by women as well. Especially in the families that belong to the lower socio-economic groups, the effects of the above-mentioned factors continue even at the cities. Migration to the city does not change woman’s identity or the cultural codes of this identity, but it only paves the way for incremental change.

Periodical nationalisms must be examined in order to understand what determines Kurdish women’s social position. As mentioned before, women can be articulated into the nation building process spatially and temporally in different ways. Baskın Oran (2017: 871-879) points out that nationalism, which plays an active role in the nation building process, creates a reaction against itself and says the following:

When different ethnic/religious/etc. groups that live in the country see that they are tried to be fit in a mold, the mold of dominant ethnic/religious group, they become

alienated and start to react to this situation in the form of a third-degree nationalism.

Similarly, Ömer Çaha (2017: 363) says that women are designed to be the supplementary and substantial power, or the driving force, of nationalist and ethnic nationalist movements.

The historical past and the reasons of Kurdish women becoming a political subject will allow understanding the relationship between Kurdish woman and nationalism.

Republic's national identity formation process, of course, left permanent impacts on Kurdish women as well. It can be said that there are four periods of the transformation of Kurdish women until today in terms of national identity and ethnic movements:

Considering the pre-republic – late Ottoman period, it is seen that parallel to the nationalisms that appeared in the Ottoman Empire, Kurdish nationalism rose as well. In 1913, the women question became a social issue which would make national contribution to the progress and modernization of Kurds (Klein, 2013: 43-74). The Kurdish Women's Ascension Society, which was founded in 1919, aimed the participation of women to "national awakening". In this period, the most important mission cast to women was being the "natural sources" of standardization projects which would take place with the language reform. Women, as educators and mothers, were to ensure the continuation of Kurdishness of Kurdish children. Yet Ottoman-Kurdish thinkers used the woman question to strengthen their gender ideas in different ways and to form their own nationalistic ideas and modernities (Klein, 2013: 56-71).

Republic period is the time in which the building of the foundations of Turkish Republic was the most apparent. "Newly established states see the reforms on women's rights as one of the legs in the struggle to gain a place in modern international system" (Çaha, 2017: 123). This is the case for Kurdish women, as it is for Turkish women as well.

Once the key features of Kurdish society are taken into consideration, it is seen that its patriarchy and feudality are mostly emphasized. Arakon (2015: 298) adds the following to these:

Once the homogenization policies of Turkish Republic are added to this patriarchal structure, we can say that

Kurdish women were under pressure both as a woman, and as Kurd: The oppression by Turkish political system, which demolished the patriarchal Kurdish social structure and identity.

Considering the reforms regarding women during the republican era, it is seen that women are described as an important part of social structure. During the period in which “motherhood” was rendered as the essential duty of women, with the regulations in education system, it is observed that gender roles are designated. Çaha (2017: 128) argues that the existence of women in the public sphere was attempted to be popularized over the duty of “motherhood”, which was criticized seriously by Turkish feminists by 1980s.

1970s is the third period and it is seen that the second-wave woman movement was on the rise. Sancar (2017: 68) defines this period as “the period of class politics and social welfare period” (1968-1985). According to Sancar, the democratic transformation movement which started in 1968 all around the world, because of the junta regime in 1980, could not gain strength. Accordingly, the woman movement in Turkey, which is under the influence of feminism, could only manage to form in 1990s when parliamentary regimes were replacing authoritarian/military rules as in the cases of many Middle Eastern, Latin American, and Sub-Saharan African countries (Sancar, 2017: 71-72).

Lastly, the intensity of the culture and identity-based demands in 1990s are shaped by the social and economic conditions of the period. With neo-liberal economic policies that started to be applied in 1980s, social state started to be left and the process for involvement in global economies started. Here, rural-urban migration, job seeking, and the break from agricultural production accelerated the identity-seeking process of masses. Çağlayan (2017: 89) says that “*while the disengagement from the rural areas removed traditional lifestyle, the marginalization in cities made the identity discourse of Kurdish movement, which promoted solidarity and belonging, effective over these people.*” Kurdish women’s taking place in more spheres with the collapse of capitalist relations of production increased and became permanent. The collective action permanency of women necessitated the formation of collective identities (Çağlayan, 2017: 166).

2.6. Religion and Women

One of the main aims of the study is to present the changes and transformations of religious identity of the women of Ağrı. In this part, detailed information on the Sunni sect of Islam is not present, but potential features that can affect the changes and transformations of religious traditions, customs, and habits of women will be mentioned. In the beginning, the arguments of religions on women's body and position will be presented. Later, after presenting the position of women in Islam, the relations between religious and women identities will be examined to see the effects of religion on woman identity.

The concept of modernization can be defined as a process that affects societies economically, politically, and socially. It can be said that when scientific and technological progresses combine with industrialization, there can be a total social change. Would this period of change affect women? If it would, towards what and how would it effect? It can be said that with the modernization process, there were not big differences in the way that women were perceived, the womanhood roles, which were redefined over the concepts of family and motherhood, can be said to be idealized (Karakaya, 2017: 55-166).

The perception of religions of women can create mindscapes about how women render their life experiences and legitimize the things that they live. Berktaş (2016: 9) says that *“the secondariness of women and this being considered as the legitimate reason to control their body is the common property of the three Abrahamic religions”* on the perception of religions of women.

Berktaş, on his discussion of the effects of religion on women, mentions the objective functions and aspects as well: An efficient means of legitimization and reification, its role in the establishment of strict gender roles and patterns, women's dependency and lower position's constant expression in Abrahamic religions... (2016: 9). Women's norms and patterns of behavior which are accepted to be unchangeable in social relations can be seen as traditional acceptance or that gender roles are built.

Berktaş (1998: 83-84) also emphasizes that, on the issue of human rights, it is not the women's but men's rights that are mentioned and says the following on the way that women were perceived in the 18th and 19th centuries: Jews, in their morning prayers, say *“thanks to God for not creating me a woman”* and Plato thanks God, first for creating him

a free man and not a slave and a man not a woman. Aristotle says that “*women are women because of the lack of some qualities*” and St. Thomas says that “*woman is half man, an accidental being.*”

It is required to know the economic, social, political, and cultural elements of the society when it is the aim to analyze the effects of religion on women’s body and social status, not only the religious elements. As a result, the perception of religion of women can change because of these elements.

In explaining the functions of religion, Şerif Mardin (2018: 55) emphasizes that religion ensures the continuity of society, that there are learned thinking patterns, and that it allows the elements which constitute social structure to remain unchanged continuously. It should be said that the way that religion is perceived has the potential to create a negative image of women. The judgements about women will be continuous if they are considered in the religious framework.

The behavioral patterns or prejudices that are built in man-woman relationships, with the assumption of monotheistic religions being the carrier, even the producer of the patriarchal system, can be sorted as follows (Berkday, 1998: 26-27; Berkday, 2018: 63-64):

Men and women are different not only biologically but also in their needs, abilities, and functions. Also, there are differences between men and women in the way that they are created and the social functions that are given to them by God. Men, “by nature”, are stronger and rationalist, therefore are created to dominate and rule. Here we can conclude that men are more suitable to represent the political, the state. Women, on the other hand, “by nature”, weaker, lower in mind and rational ability, and unbalanced emotionally, which makes them unreliable and inconvenient in terms of political participation. As a result, they should be excluded from the political/public sphere (translated from Berkday, 1998: 26-27).

In countries in which there are weak ties to democracy

and human rights, women are oppressed under oppressive and exploitative socio-economic conditions. The practices which are carried out and legitimized for the names of religion and culture keeps women in a secondary position and blocks reconstruction which would improve the conditions and women having equal rights in their family relations. The struggles to remove the oppressions over women face resistance from the established powers in in power structures. Religion, national sovereignty, or nationalist ideologies can be used as excuses to deny the rights of women (translated from Berktaş, 2018: 63-64).

As seen, in monotheistic religions, women are secondary to men and the roles of women are socially constructed. These roles also determine how women should act in political, economic, or even everyday lives.

In the study, when the perception of religions of women is studied, only Islam will be taken into consideration and views from different sources on the outlook of Islam to women will be mentioned.

There are known and generally accepted facts like Islam's teaching has solved the basic problems on the woman question, with progressive and revolutionary efforts Islam changed the ignorant ideas and restored women back to humanity where women constitute half of humanity (Aktaş, 1991: 252).

Al-Ghazali's *Iḥyā' 'ulūm ad-dīn* (The Revival of the Religious Sciences) can be considered as a work which allows to understand how the question of women is handled and to see the perceptions of women in detail. In the second chapter, marriage is taken into consideration. According to Ghazali, for marriage to be complete, there are some qualities that the wife and the husband should have. The qualities that the wife should have are being pious, moral, beautiful, fertile, virgin, noble; not being a close relative and having a low bride price (Gazali: 107-123).

Elsewhere Ghazali says that all Muslim men should avoid a type of woman: Shadaka, the woman that talks much (Sabbah, 1995: 7).

All opinions on women actually serve to recreate men-women relationships. Especially woman body, said by Foucault, is a social, historical, and imaginary space which carries power relationships and hierarchy. Discourse is a social design which includes both discourse and the act, and at the same time it includes the object and the subject, i.e. power relations (Foucault, 2017: 24-25). Woman body appears as one aspect of gender and power relations.

About body-religion relationship Marcos (2006: 14) says the following:

May it be ancient or modern, we can see how human relations and sexual reproduction are predicted, manipulated, and processed

From the partial deep inspections which are focused on specific religious cultures and set in contemporary contexts, be it ancient or modern, we can see how women body, in holy texts or rituals, in cultural histories or symbolical order, human relations and sexual reproduction are predicted, manipulated, and processed.

Privacy, especially when women are the subject, is one of the prominent issues which is most thought and written on. No doubt the perception on what is private and privacy gives us hints about the social position of women. Privacy at the one hand limits behavioral patterns, yet on the other hand it can be seen as a means which avoids breaking the bans. “Above all, in a socio-cultural environment religion is the main source of personal values. But it meantime has very important roles on determining and protecting the social and cultural identity categories” (Günay, 2012: 419).

There is a strong tie between veil and privacy:

In Islam, social order is by determining the internal and external spaces and is based on the privacy (deprivation) of women. Veil references to the private

space, the banned space (Göle, 2016: 28-129).

According to this, veiling of women brings about the public/private sphere distinction. Women's remaining inside and not crossing the line of privacy is the acceptable thing. Veiling appears as the determinant means in the distinction of private/public sphere. As a result, private sphere, which is about the in-home life of women, leaves its place to public space when it is the public sphere that is the issue, but there, women are highly invisible.

Considering veil a "national issue" (Çağlayan, 2013: 100) raises the issue of men-women relations being approached by the state. Veil's appearance as a political symbol lately is parallel, in the background, to the women in which religious identity is dominant gaining place in political arena.

The conservative women who take their references from "religion" and "religious tradition", unlike Western feminists, try to scan and reconsider the Quran and hadith literature in a new and extraordinary perspective and new methods (Şefkatli Tuksal, 2018: 25).

Pınar İlkaracan (İlkaracan, 2018:11-32), in the book that she edited, *Müslüman Toplumlarda Kadın ve Cinsellik (Women and Sexuality in Muslim Communities)* aims to present the ideas of different authors on the issues that affect women like marriage, virginity, pleasure, rape, violence, etc. Emphasizing that not only Muslim women but all women experience things in the patriarchal system, and adds:

In 21st century, women's bodies and sexuality are still under the control of men and patriarchy. The mechanisms that aim to control women's sexuality and fertility are still the prominent means for the patriarchal system's continuing existence.

Virginity of women can be under the control of family in the beginning, then the person that she gets married to or the family of the husband, all directly on the body of the woman. The woman is under the surveillance of her family while she is single and should show sheets the next day that she gets married by her husband or mother-in-law to prove her sexual purity. Tillion (2006: 204) says that this tradition continues in Greece and the

mother-in-law announces it to the neighbors.

İlkkaracan (2018: 14) also emphasizes that religion justifies violations of women's rights by social, economic, political, and cultural manipulations. Religion has its legitimate ground on these manipulations.

The narratives that were formed throughout history on the social position of women could manage to become universally accepted realities. For sure these narratives, which aimed to locate women below men, are products of the patriarchal system and play a prominent role in shaping Muslim societies' outlook on women. The negative image, which begins with the way that woman is created, also affects the way that women's lives are shaped.

The most important characteristics of the narratives on the creation of the first woman is their inclusion of the argument that Eve is created from a rib of Adam. Hence, there are two forms of expressions in these narratives:

1. *Woman's creation from man's rib,*
2. *Woman nature being curved like ribs, i.e. being spoiled in its nature* (Şefkatli Tuksal, 2018: 75-81).

Women being considered this way at the moment of creation show us that women start life disadvantaged compared to men. Moreover, in the narratives and commentaries, it is seen that issues like the self, life, the process of being a slave to God, what kind of problems it creates, etc. this spoiled nature creates are not discussed (Şefkatli Tuksal, 2018: 84-85).

The issues of marriage and divorce take an important place in women's lives. In the Quran, there are many ayahs on marriage. The general opinion is that a man can marry more than one woman.

And if you fear that you will not deal justly with the orphan girls, then marry those that please you of [other] women, two or three or four. But if you fear that you will not be just, then [marry only] one or those your right hand possesses. That is more suitable that you

may not incline [to injustice] (Quran, 4:3).

There the legitimation is made on the idea that a man cannot ensure justice between his wives.

Again, in the Quran, there is an ayah on which women a man can marry and which women he cannot:

O Prophet, indeed We have made lawful to you your wives to whom you have given their due compensation and those your right hand possesses from what Allah has returned to you [of captives] and the daughters of your paternal uncles and the daughters of your paternal aunts and the daughters of your maternal uncles and the daughters of your maternal aunts who emigrated with you and a believing woman if she gives herself to the Prophet [and] if the Prophet wishes to marry her, [this is] only for you, excluding the [other] believers. We certainly know what we have made obligatory upon them concerning their wives and those their right hands possess, [but this is for you] in order that there will be upon you no discomfort. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful (Quran, 33:50).

According to the ayah, if conditions allow, a man can marry up to four women but once a man is married to more than one woman, he should be just to the women.

The issue of divorce is covered in the Quran as well, like in the ayahs 2:226-232, 4:130, 33:4, and 33:49.

The ayahs in Surah al Baqarah are as follows (2:226-232):

226: For those who swear not to have sexual relations with their wives is a waiting time of four months, but if they return [to normal relations] - then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.

227: And if they decide on divorce - then indeed, Allah is Hearing and Knowing.

228: Divorced women remain in waiting for three periods, and it is not lawful for them to conceal what Allah has created in their wombs if they believe in Allah and the Last Day. And their husbands have more right to take them back in this [period] if they want reconciliation. And due to the wives is similar to what is expected of them, according to what is reasonable. But the men have a degree over them [in responsibility and authority]. And Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise.

229: Divorce is twice. Then, either keep [her] in an acceptable manner or release [her] with good treatment. And it is not lawful for you to take anything of what you have given them unless both fear that they will not be able to keep [within] the limits of Allah. But if you fear that they will not keep [within] the limits of Allah, then there is no blame upon either of them concerning that by which she ransoms herself. These are the limits of Allah, so do not transgress them. And whoever transgresses the limits of Allah - it is those who are the wrongdoers.

230: And if he has divorced her [for the third time], then she is not lawful to him afterward until [after] she marries a husband other than him. And if the latter husband divorces her [or dies], there is no blame upon the woman and her former husband for returning to each other if they think that they can keep [within] the limits of Allah. These are the limits of Allah, which He makes clear to a people who know.

231: And when you divorce women and they have [nearly] fulfilled their term, either retain them according to acceptable terms or release them according to acceptable terms, and do not keep them, intending harm, to transgress [against them]. And whoever does that has certainly wronged himself. And do not take the verses of Allah in jest. And remember the favor of Allah upon you and what has been revealed to you of the Book and wisdom by which He instructs you. And fear Allah and know that Allah is Knowing of all things.

232: And when you divorce women and they have fulfilled their term, do not prevent them from remarrying their [former] husbands if they agree among themselves on an acceptable basis. That is instructed to whoever of you believes in Allah and the Last Day. That is better for you and purer, and Allah knows and you know not.

We see from the ayahs that men are more privileged than women and have the right to divorce before women. In other words, the position of women is determined according to men.

Fetna Ayt Sabbah (1995: 26), in the book *İslam'ın Bilinçaltında Kadın (Woman in Islam's Subconscious)* provides much information on the position of women in Muslim communities and she makes the following evaluation on the issue:

Never Islam saw woman below men. As we see in the analysis of Orthodox discourse, the backwardness is nothing more than a [judicial] opinion. The theme that the progressives and the conservatives discussed on never was like “women lack the ability to understand, women aren't as smart as men”. These reasons, which came to the fore each time women of the West

presented when they were seeking rights, were never a topic of discussion in Muslim communities. The discussions have always been on the moral and traditional dimensions: If we let women be, immorality will rise.

Sabbah (1995: 26-27) explains the Islamic perspective of women's existence in work life. For her, women's making money by working is a rejection of patriarchal system and this situation is against the obligation of men to take of women.

The Muslim family ideal excludes the idea of woman that participates in economic production. The role of woman is limited to recreating the family and assuring sexual satisfaction of believing men.

As seen, women are mentioned only with the private sphere and the private sphere is defined with the continuity of family and sexuality. From the economic life, which happens in public sphere, women are excluded.

We again find the same ideas on education of women. Education, in Muslim communities, ruins women's status to the detriment of the society. The meaning of this can be expressed as follows: Education retards the marriage age of women and decreases the number of children she wants to have. As a result, like working, women's education is considered undesirable. But what is the truth behind trying to keep women always in home? Sabbah (1995: 28-29) says that "they increase 'fitnah' on the streets. By piling into the places where previously only men could go, it is against them that increase 'adultery'."

The lack of union of speech among Muslim women can cause the ideas on women to be understood wrongly or differently. Amine Wedud-Muhsin, who defines herself as an Islamic feminist, works on the different perspectives on women between Western feminists and Muslim women in Turkey. In her *Quran and Woman* (2005: 9), she says that in the West, feminists deconstruct Christianity and Judaism and from the perspective of women, they reinterpret the religion. Some feminists do not see monotheistic religions the cause of patriarchy any more and a new era in which women are also "actors" and the "masculinity" of God is questioned is starting. In these religions which are reinterpreted from women's perspective the importance of "goddesses" and "female saints" are

emphasized.

Wedud-Muhsin uses a new technique in the interpretation of the Quran of women. Her aim is to present a meaningful reading of the Quran for modern women and she classifies the Quran commentaries into three: Traditional, reactionary, and holistic. She opposes the traditional commentaries, arguing that all traditional commentaries are written by men and these commentaries only include the experiences of men while excluding women and women's experiences (2005: 19-20).

On the way that Islam treats women, Sibel Özbudun (2016: 79-82), along with hadiths, mentions a source which she considers neglected: Islamic erotic literature. She examines the book, *the Perfumed Garden* by Sheikh Umar ibn Muḥammad Nafzāwī, written in the 15th century. In the book, the views on how women are imagined in Islam are mentioned. Women are defined as “insatiable sexual beings, and a slit which absorbs and sucks everything” in the book.

Along with having both social and cultural elements, religion has an important place in the formation and interaction of one's identity. Historically religion gained momentum with the changes in societies and had different functions.

One of the aims of the study is to show the role of Islam in affecting and even shaping women's identity. The Islamic woman identity, which is on the agenda, made the effects of religious rituals and practices on woman identity more visible.

There are different views of various authors on the emergence and approaches to Islamic woman movement. Here only the main elements that gave birth to Islamic woman movement will be presented, along with the main ideas of the women that involve in the movement.

As in any other woman movement, for Islamic woman movement, the presence of women in public sphere is one of the most important topics of discussion. Especially where women should be placed within the framework of public/private spheres created serious discussions.

Cihan Aktaş (Aktaş, 2005: 826-836), one of Muslim women authors, focuses on women's retreat from the public sphere to experience religious traditions and symbols in the historical process. With the dress reforms, the republic created the inclination for the

families not to send their daughters to school. Limiting women and girls to have a life only within their homes, surely, determined their gender roles: Women's raising children, doing in-home works, being a good wife, etc.

Aktaş (2005: 830) argues that the problems that men suffer are discussed with the leadership of men, and these discussions do not create problems. Yet there are problems that women suffer from and these problems are not talked about because of privacy and accumulate over time. This, for her, is one of the most important things that should be discussed for Muslim women who are stuck between modernism and religion and tradition.

Islamic woman movement in Turkey can be said to be in between traditionalist view and modern view. Zehra Yılmaz (Yılmaz, 2015: 18) says the following on this issue:

... Turkish case, not only in the past but also today, with its social-political characteristics, is an authentic case in which the intersects or conflicts between globalism and locality are most explicitly presented.

The questioning on the coexistence of Islam and feminism are actually preparations to questioning if there is a harmony between women in Islam and Islam and gender equality. Zahra Ali (Ali, 2017: 13) argues that Islamic feminism is not an emergent topic, and says that with the intersect between Islamic sphere and feminist sphere, on the one hand the Western view that feminism is against the religion, and on the other hand the Islamic law that is constituted against women in Islamic field are questioned.

Tuksal (2013: 31-43) mentions the relationship between the Quran and gender and says that there are oppositions in the Quran against the society's acceptances on gender. But the Islamic written literature shows women a sub-type which is created for men and the hadith narratives that create bad images of women legitimize the perspectives that subordinate men to women.

The struggle of Muslim women for existence in public sphere came up mainly with the question of veil. Aktaş (2016: 7-10) focuses mostly on the concept of "sister" on veiled women's quest to find and exist in the public sphere. Studying the changes in the concept "sister" in the last twenty years, she evaluates the transformation of the discourses, sister-hijab-veiling, in the context of public/private sphere. She argues that the concept of sister

in Anatolia represented the warmer side of the social relations with non-relatives and veil was not only a symbol of worshipping Allah but also was a symbol of will of being a sister. Veil, hence, was a means by which women could exist in public sphere with a clear identity. When women entered in the public sphere with veil, then the privacy relations in public sphere needed to be redefined.

One example of the organization of Islamic woman movement since 1990s is Başkent Kadın Platformu (Capital [Ankara] Woman Platform). İlyasoğlu (2013: 9) emphasizes that the platform does not define itself as a platform of Muslim women but uses a wider term, “religious women”. The platform aims to be the voice of the pious women who are excluded from the woman movements and to be a bridge between other women, which is a good example to show that Islamic woman movement opposes the gender roles which are constructed in the patriarchal system and considers women secondary to men. Platform also aims to go beyond the roles and unite women of different segments of the society within its struggle against the traditional identities.

2.7. Gender and Women

Along with ethnic and religious identities, it is assumed in the study that gender roles are socially constructed and, like the others, this role as well does change spatially and temporally. Feminists’ view argues that within the historical process, the woman movement gained power with the achievements over time.

The starting point of the woman movement, which started with questioning the social position of women, was the demands for liberty and equality (Çakır, 2016a: 55).

The concept of gender became a highly debated topic in the recent era. Along with different views on the meaning of the concept, there also are different ideas on what the concept actually is and is not. The concept, in the simplest sense, is defined as “*gender does not only mean difference in sexes but also the unequal power relations between sexes*” (Berkday, 2016: 16)

Scott (2007:38) argues that gender roles are the founding element of the differences between sexes and is one of the main ways of determining power relations.

Sex means a biological difference while gender states the different roles that the

society imposes upon women and men. Simone de Beauvoir (1993: 143) calls women the “second sex” and says that *“there is not even one evidence that shows that women are inferior to men. There, for sure, are some differences between the bodies, but none of these differences make men superior.”*

Nowadays, defining men’s hegemony over woman body is a common phenomenon. To put it better, discussions are observed to deal with the differences between men and women within “gender molds” (Bora, 2019). Women’s social, political, and economic statuses are shaped by these “gender molds”. Even if women are similar to men in these statuses, although it changes from society to society, men are still superior because it is inured.

Michel (1993: 6) defines feminism as *“a doctrine which predicts the role and rights of women in the society.”*

Arat (2017: 29) defines feminism as follows:

Feminism is a political ideology that is based on the equality of sexes which demands equal rights for women for the principal aim of changing the power relations between men and women.

Çakır (2016b: 413-475) defines feminism as developing ways to struggle with the system that encircles and suppresses women while women also try to understand, perceive, and politically define this system.

Durakbaşa (2017: 53) argues that the following is the reason because of which feminism emerged:

Feminist questioning started when women realized the chains that existed because of their position and feminist demands, generally, formed and raised to defend equal civil rights and to defend women.

As can be derived from the definitions of feminism, it has a critical perspective before everything. It criticizes, even refuses the assumption that women are the “second sex”, which is born out of the patriarchy in men-women relationships.

The focal point of feminism and gender is to find the reasons of the differences between men and women and the roots of it. This form of relationship, which ends up against women, is the main reason because of which women are perceived as “the other”. Simone de Beauvoir (1993: 17) explains that women, historically, were the “other” of men as follows:

... humanity is masculine, and men define women not for themselves but in accordance with men: women are not seen as autonomous being. ... Men are not defined based on women, women are defined based on men and differentiated. Woman is the accidental one. Compared to the subjective, it is the non-subjective. Man is the subject, the absolute, woman is the other sex.

Otherness is based on different factors depending on gender. In a patriarchal culture, men or masculine are either positive or the norm and “the other” is excluded while women or feminine are negative, not the main, abnormal, or, in short, is formed as the other (Donovan, 2016: 232).

Women’s definition based on otherness made the definition more visible. At this point, in sociological means, feminist theory’s efforts to make of societies and historical events to be understood in a man-centered way and by altering, and even marginalizing women had meaningful effects on questioning woman identity and the need and belief in creation of woman knowledge (Doğan, 2015: 46).

The identity of woman started to be discussed in parallel to the phases of feminism. For this study, it would be beneficial to present a short history of feminism and the phases of it in historical process. Here, it is deemed beneficial to present the types of feminism, namely Marxist feminism (Walby, 2016a: 59), nationalist feminism (Bora, 2017a: 750), radical feminism (Donovan, 2016: 265), individualist-equalitarian feminism (Arat, 2017: 53), eco-feminism (Savran, 2019: 47).

With the French Revolution, the expression “liberté, égalité, fraternité” affected women as well and women started their struggle for existence in political, social, and economic spheres. Women’s realization that they were members of an oppressed group was the first and the most important step in the emergence of feminism (Çakır, 2016b: 413-

475). Women are the main topic of feminism and issues like the roles of women in and out of home, suppression and exploitation of women, gender differences, patriarchal social structure, and men-dominated power relations and oppressions are widely discussed (Taş, 2019: 164).

The concept of feminism was affected from social, political, economic, and cultural changes, both local and international, and in different eras, it presented different perspectives and attitudes. There is no doubt that there is consensus between all feminists on the solution offers that they present for the problems that women face and there is no such necessity also (Hill, 2003: 11).

The history of feminism has shown us many cases which proves that women can be as effective as men on things such as paid work, education, or citizenship (Scott, 2013: 210-211). The rights that women gained with their struggle vary in accordance with the conditions they live through and the eras.

There are three waves of feminism: the first-wave feminism, the second-wave feminism, and the third-wave feminism (Çakır, 2016b: 413-475). In the first stage, the main topic of feminism is women and the status of women in the society. It temporally covers half of the 19th century and the early 20th century while spatially including different countries such as the US, the UK, France, Germany, Russia, and Turkey. The stage started with the demands for suffrage and later included demands for participation in social sphere and labor force, equal with men (Çaha, 2017: 44). This movement emphasizes the equality between men and women.

The second-wave feminism (Çakır, 2016b: 413-475) was in 1960s and 70s when student movements rose and was effective. In this period, woman movements became more radical. In Simone de Beauvoir's works, the concept of the other is mentioned more. With her sentences, "man is the subject, the absolute being, woman is the other kind" (1993: 14) or "one is not born woman, one becomes woman" (1993: 17), the discussions on how woman body, sexuality, and motherhood roles are socially constructed became more visible (Çakır, 2016b: 413-475). As a result, the second-wave feminism, unlike the first wave, does not focus on equality between men and women but emphasizes the differences between men and women.

There are three innovations of the second-wave feminism. First, with this

movement, woman became the subject of the movement. Second, “oppression” was expressed as creating “victims” with the patronage of the government. Lastly, this movement underlined the patriarchal system. Family and relative relations are considered the creators of patriarchal system (Yarar, 2015: 13-51).

Violence is one of the topics that the second-wave feminism emphasizes. Violence is a problem which affects all the members of the society, particularly women. The violence that women face is not only physical but also includes other forms like sexual, economic, or psychological violence. Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) (TC Official Gazette, March 3, 2012, Number: 28.227) aims to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and violence against women is defined as follows:

“Violence against women” is understood as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

Violence is defined as a violation of human rights and is classified in different types such as physical, sexual, psychological, and economic. The second-wave feminism considered violence against women as “domestic violence” and resisted its being considered free from sex and gender (Yarar, 2015: 13-51).

The third-wave feminism is a radical opposition to the first- and second-wave feminism from 1970s on. A new era in which whether feminism includes all women or women from certain groups was questioned along with the studies made in previous eras. Çaha (2017: 355-357) calls the third-wave feminism the “*non-white and non-western woman movement*” and says that the concept of woman started to be discussed together with other concepts like religion, history, sex, society, ethnicity, race, and class . The third-wave feminism, which is the basis of this thesis, brought the woman identity forward and allowed studies that approached woman from different dimensions.

Karen Offen (1988: 119-157), in her *“Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach”*, after presenting the definitions of feminism, says that the concept, historically, can be defined in two general ways, namely relational and individualist. Such a definition of feminism would not only help the concept be taken into consideration within the context of historical relations but it would also benefit new feminist policies. Offen argues that definitions which are grounded upon historical roots, more realist, and more individualist would succeed, and the concept should include all women – rich, poor, married, single, with different ethnic and religious background.

Similarly, Scott (2013: 57) argues that the role of gender in determining social relations should be redefined and restructured by extending it to include not only sex but also class and race.

As seen, the concept of gender is expressed with different perspectives with feminism and takes into consideration all relations that women have with all elements of the society, not only women-men relations. In the study, hints on when the roots and the sources of the roles designed for women were given and how and which way these roles were determined by governments.

It will be beneficial to mention the effects of space and “sisterhood” on the identity of woman. Lefebvre (Lefebvre, 2016: 184-185), in *The Production of Space*, says that space both creates social classes and processes them as a means of production.

One of the prominent concepts in the third-wave feminism is “*sisterhood*”. Actually this concept is guaranteed with the position of men in patriarchal system, the “divide and conquer” policy. Woman abides by the masculine structure and is prisoned within the home and is kept away from creating a collective consciousness against her suppression together with other women. Here *sisterhood* is an attack against this order (Mitchel, Oakley, 1998: 17).

The gender roles are shaped based on private and public sphere separation as well. The ideas on private and public sphere differ. The woman is deemed to have a voice in the private sphere and men are deemed to have a voice in the public one. Private sphere is the sphere where woman’s secondary position and her role as the generator of social norms are reinforced. Carole Pateman (Sirman, 2017: 226-244) takes into consideration public and private spheres to study the categorization of gender roles. According to Pateman (Yuval-

Davis, 2016: 151), public sphere is related to the political sphere and the private sphere is related to the familial sphere where women are primarily placed.

For Pateman (Pateman, 1988: 4), what social contract theoreticians said are missing an element and says that social contracts actually are sexual contracts and are legitimized over the power that men apply over women.

Another view, specifically that gender roles are built within a hierarchical order, is presented by Butler (Butler, 2016: 19-20). Butler brings a different perspective to the concept of gender by emphasizing performativity: According to this, gender is built upon a series of acts and the body is revealed with gender stylization.

Understanding gender-power relationships helps to understand the source of legitimization of contemporary men-women relations. Connell (Connell, 2017: 167) says that “if we define authority as the legitimate government, we can say that in the power structure which includes gender, authority is the main axis of the general connection with masculinity.”

Authority is the one that holds the monopoly to use violence, as it is the legitimate government. Violence does not need to be physical. It is possible for the patriarchal system to dominate the woman body and life by psychological, cultural, traditional social norms. In the division of labor between sexes, the roles assigned to the genders provide a very serious superiority to men against women. Especially the woman body is considered as a tool which strengthens the authority of men. In the study, rather than presenting detailed information on the discussions on woman body, only the ideas of some authors will be provided.

One of the prominent points that feminists oppose is the sexist ideas that are presented on woman body (Hooks, 2016: 45). The most important reason of this is the body's becoming the most important part in reflecting the relationship between gender and power. Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 2016: 22-23) says the following on the issue:

Whereas the idea that the social definition of the body, and especially of the sexual organs, is the product of a social labor of construction has become quite banal through having been advocated by the whole

anthropological tradition, the mechanism of the inversion of cause and effect that I am trying to describe here, through which the naturalization of that construction takes place, has not, it seems to me, been fully described. For the paradox is that it is the visible differences between the female body and the male body which, being perceived and constructed according to the practical schemes of the androcentric worldview, become the most perfectly indisputable guarantee of meanings and values that are in harmony with the principles of that worldview: it is not the phallus (or its absence) which is the basis of that worldview, rather it is that worldview which, being organized according to the division into relational genders, male and female, can institute the phallus, constituted as the symbol of virility, of the specifically male point of honor (nif), and the difference between biological bodies as objective foundations of the difference between the sexes, in the sense of genders constructed as two hierarchized social essences. Far from the necessities of biological reproduction determining the symbolic organization of the sexual division of labor and, ultimately, of the whole natural and social order, it is an arbitrary construction of the male and female body, of its uses and functions, especially in biological reproduction, which gives an apparently natural foundation to the androcentric view of the division of sexual labor and the sexual division of labor and so of the whole cosmos. The particular strength of the masculine sociodicy comes from the fact that it combines and condenses two operations: it legitimates a relationship of domination by embedding it in a biological nature that is itself a naturalized social construction.

Thomas Lemke, in his *Biopolitics* (Lemke, 2017: 19-20) explains the definition and the properties of the concept and the way that the term has been used throughout history. In his book, Lenke says that he recommends a relational and historical biopolitical concept which is an alternative to naturalist and politisist ideas and resembles Foucault at this point.

The concept of biopolitics is introduced with Foucault while it was developed with philosophers like Gilles Deleuze, Michael Hardt, and Antonio Negri and is a concept which is the inclusion of humans as a living being, i.e. as a biological being to the strategies and the accounts of the political power, i.e. the government (Ecevitoglu, 2012: 262-263). The effects of this form of politics, which can be described as the actualization of a sort of governance on body as a strategy, on woman body will be questioned in the study.

Foucault associates biopolitics, which he defines as the regulative power technology, with the state (Foucault, 2018: 245-269; Foucault, 2017: 24-25). While Foucault approaches disciplining of the individuals by military, education, and factories by anatomo-politics on the one hand, on the other hand he writes on the government technology which ensures the regulation and direction of the population by factors like birthrate, death rate, morbidity, etc. by population biopolitics (Ecevitoglu, 2012: 263-264). What is the perception of these policies on the realities of chastity and honor killings, which allow the penetration into every field of an individual's life of the political power by letting the individual live or die?

The concept of chastity can be defined as the concept by which the government dominates over the body. It is assumed that the term chastity is used for women; it includes the terms honor, dignity, and pride. The saying, “woman with honor³” (or “woman with chastity”) means that the woman has moral values and it is yet another way to establish domination over woman's body. Ecevitoglu (Ecevitoglu, 2012: 315) explains this as follows:

Killing of women in the name of honor, i.e. honor
killings, honor as a value that prompts the perpetrators

³ Albeit it is previously said that the term chastity will be used to mean both honor and chastity due to the dual meaning of the term in Turkish language, here and in the below quotation, the term honor will be used as the term, in this context, is wholly used with its honor meaning rather than chastity.

seems related wholly to sexual morality. The aim of honor as the sexual morality code of the community is to ensure that woman experiences sexuality within the limits of the community's understanding of morality or, to put it more clearly, to protect the purity of the woman. But when we analyze the stories of honor killings, we see that the behavior or the incident that leads to the perpetrators argue that is "dishonoring" is not limited to sexual act [i.e. intercourse]. Things like the woman's being seen on the street with a man that is not a member of the community, woman's attendance to social events, or even woman's roaming on the streets can be the causes for murders. So, honor code, to ensure chastity or for the woman to experience sexuality only within the limits of the community, includes prohibitions and practices which robs woman from the ordinary social activities of everyday life. Hence, honor is an umbrella term. Honor defines the embodiment of chastity, or, to put it better, the honor of the community, in woman's body.

As a result, with honor, protection of the honor of the community on woman body is essential and honor killings can be seen legitimate to ensure the continuity of this. To ensure that the community is "honorable", the role of bearer and even re-creator is once more displayed here, just like the roles that are given to women like "motherhood" and "womanhood".

The impetus, honor, causes the control of woman's body by the woman herself, along with the family and the relatives. The woman, on the one hand, defends her "honor" not to "get dirty", and on the other hand she programs herself not to harm the honor and dignity of the family. The family and the relatives, meanwhile, consider themselves responsible on the protection of the honor of the woman, so that their blood remains "clean", as well as their honor and dignity. Kandiyoti (Kandiyoti, 2015: 81) says the following on the protection of woman's honor:

One important reason of the collective control on woman sexuality is the connection between woman's sexual chastity and the honor of the family or the lineage. An enormous[ly] negative power is attributed to women: In the case that she takes a false step, her act will bring shame or dishonor to the whole community, lineage, or the family. Because of this, women live under very solid external oppressions from being totally locked in the home to their veiling, from their participation in the public sphere to the limitation of their behavior.

The association of woman body directly with honor can be considered as a norm which serves as a biopower controlling mechanism. As a result, this function ensures the recreation and the continuation of patriarchal system. Along with not having her own say on her body, the external necessities like what she should not do, i.e. a set of prohibitions are included in this norm. "It can be said that honor [or chastity] means the limits of sex and sexuality, which is defined by the power while the definitions constantly change, and the power [holders] can decide which behaviors will be excluded from these limits, and be punished" (Mutluer, 2013: 14-30).

Sexuality, the expression of sexuality over body, is to be one of the fields on which the power dominates. Foucault, in *History of Sexuality* (Foucault, 2017: 24-25), says the following:

One had to speak of sex; one had to speak publicly and in a manner that was not determined by the division between licit and illicit, even if the speaker maintained the distinction for himself (which is what these solemn and preliminary declarations were intended to show): one had to speak of it as of a thing to be not simply condemned or tolerated but managed, inserted into systems of utility, regulated for the greater good of all, made to function according to an optimum.

Control of sexuality determines the norms of women on the perception of women on sexuality and reproduction. Whether woman experiences sexuality with someone before marriage or how many children she should have can as well be shaped according to these norms. Acting in contradiction to these norms can be the legitimate reason for the woman to be considered “bad”. In Ancient Greece, losing of virginity of a girl, in that clearly patriarchal world, meant both a shameful lack of control for both the girl and her family and a commodity crime against the father of the girl. The girls were owned by their fathers, just like slaves (Blank, 2017: 199).

Tillion (2006) associated the dominance of chastity on woman identity as a means for biopower with ownership-land-kindredship relations. In *Le Harem et les Cousins* (The Harem and the Cousins), published in 1966, she elaborates the role of kindredship relations on the way that it directs the local lives in what is called Mediterranean societies. Nükhet Sirman (Sirman, 2006: 22) says the following in the epilogue of the book: “... *with the concept of blood, it is expressed with the words respect, love, friendship, enmity, revenge, jealousy, fear, trust, abstention, eschewing, servitude, dictate, and protection*”.

The third-wave feminism created a field for struggle for women of different ethnic backgrounds, together both with men and women. In Turkey, the third-wave feminism made its presence felt from 1990s on with the changes and transformations of women’s political, social, and economic lives. Feminism, during this era, unlike previous eras, was reformed to include what can be described as the “other” women. Kurdish women were addressed questions on the one hand the patriarchal structure of nationalism and on the other hand the “Turkishness” of feminist movement in Turkey (Bora & Günel, 2016: 8).

There are limited numbers of studies that work on Kurdish women. Mojab (Mojab, 2005: 32) says the following on the reasons of this:

There is a circle which blocks the tradition to study Kurdish women to come into existence: There is no academician that studies on Kurdish women, there is no student that writes essays on the topic, there are no library collections, research bursaries, or publishing opportunities.

The ideas of Kurdish women on gender, the topics of discussion, and the meanings

attributed to the concepts can be learned from Kurdish woman journals that have been published since 1990s. The prominent journals, *Yaşamda Özgür Kadın (Free Woman in Life)*, *Roza ve Jujin*, *Jin u Jiyan* (Açık, 2016: 279-306), provides in detail the ideas of Kurdish women on gender. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Kurdish women's role as "culture bearers" is frequently mentioned by Yuval-Davis (Yuval-Davis, 2016: 93-94). Similarly, in these journals, this role is strengthened. A Kurdish woman, with her role as "patriotic mother", is expected to raise her children the way that the child will, in the future, serve the national movement (Açık, 2016: 279-306). Women are given the role of transferring customs and traditions across generations by motherhood. This role is considered to enhance the social status of women, even making them privileged. As a result, Kurdish women play an active role in the recreation and transfer of social norms and values. Gender role's definition over motherhood and motherhood having to be carried out as good mothers carries the potential of creating good mother-bad mother duality among women. With this, an "alienation" process among women starts.

The movement which Kurdish women lead is different than the previous movements and its distinctive characteristic is the movement's double identity: being Kurdish, and being woman. As a result, the Kurdish woman movement formed its identity and stance with criticizing Turkish feminist movement, the state, assimilation policies, and the traditional values of Kurdish people (Çaha, 2017: 383).

One of the things that are discussed in recent years is the effects of migration on identity. "*When they left their homeland, they were homeless, then they left their state, they were stateless, when they were deprived of their human rights, they were rightless, they were the sediment of the earth*" (Arendt, 2016: 256). As expressed by Arendt, migration plays an important role in the formation of identities. Both as the departed and the remainders, it provides positive or negative outcomes on the formation of the identity of both parties. The assimilation or integration roles of migration play a prominent role in identity transformation. The migration wave of Kurds in 1990s, since when the Kurdish population has largely lived in metropolises, is one of the elements of this transformation. In women's journals, for Kurdish women, it is considered as a means of "*alienation from the self*". Migration unties national values. With the effects of migration, Kurdish women's integration with new cultures or adopting new values is seen as "*betrayal, denial of identity*" (Açık, 2016: 279-306).

Violence is a reality which affects both physical and emotional worlds of women. In the formation of gender roles, violence, on the one hand, leads to women's suppression and becoming secondary while on the other hand it strengthens male domination. For sure Kurdish women experience different forms of violence. Here the remarkable difference is that, in Kurdish journals, along with the violence by men, the cases like "*abuse, harassment*", which are argued to be systematic, by the "*state*" are considered the most striking expression of violence.

Woman, which is considered to be owned by men, just like country and land, the man that occupies the land/country, seizes woman's body as well. With rape, woman's body is occupied and is **planted with the enemy's seed** (Açık, 2016: 279-306).

As can be understood from above quotation, sexual violence against Kurdish women creates two sides, "we" and "the other", and the woman body becomes a part of the power competition between the parties. Here it is clear that women are given the role of the means of nation's future.

The Kurdish language is one of the focal points in Kurdish woman identity discussions. Language has a strategic importance in the existence and sustainability of the Kurdish nation. Çaha (Çaha, 2017: 388) says that as in every nation, women are the bearers of the mother tongue in the Kurdish community. Woman is in constant communication with the child both in and out of home and plays the primary role in teaching and using the language. As a result, it is the woman's duty to transfer the Kurdish language to children and future generations.

In woman identity's transformation process, language and education are two basic topics that feed and complete each other. In Kurdish women's journals, the most important critique against the state is this: The state, by education, aims to assimilate, in general Kurdish society, and in the narrower sense, Kurdish women (Çaha, 2017: 386). But how does this process work? During education process, children are estranged from their mother tongue. This causes negative effects on both identity progress of children and on Kurdish identity's progress. As a result, non-Kurdish speakers would lose reputation as individuals that are "assimilated", as in the case of "citizen mothers" (Açık, 2016: 279-

306). In summary, the Kurdish language is an important part of the nation's future and the determining factor of ethnic identity. Moreover, it is clear that women effect, and got affected from, national and ethnic processes (Yuval-Davis, 2016: 94).

It was attempted to observe whether Kurdish women were aware of the dominant relations that commanded the woman body throughout the fieldwork. It was observed that the approaches towards having children and equality between daughters and sons are in parallel to the general gender roles. Moreover, women were observed to have accepted and were used to these norms in respect to the historical process and tended to defend these norms.

Space is considered as one of the elements on the distribution of gender roles. The spaces which are formed to hinder women's participation in economic, social, and political lives allow reinforcing sexist discourses. Because of this, the definitions of manhood and womanhood in social reconstruction and the relations with the space and spatial separation play an important role (Alkan, 2017: 13).

As explained above, along with the use of violence against women both in public and private spheres, these spheres are the producers of violence. While in the private sphere it is the father or the husband that reinforces the patriarchal system, in public sphere this duty is handed over to the state (Şenol Cantek, 2015: 163-164). As a result, it can be said that classifying violence spatially is not a right thing to do.

In the study, information on the space that the women lived and the changing conditions of women in relation to the space was obtained. The proximity of the spaces or the existence of spaces in which women are together strengthens intra-women relations (Wedel, 2013: 3-35). Also the ways that women's behavior changes in accordance with the place they are at is explained in the interviews. Women see the home a free place while the streets are considered belonging only to men.

The idea that Kurdish women are more equal and freer than other women is expressed by Kurdish thinkers (Van Bruinessen, 2013: 132).

Martin Van Bruinessen (2013: 131-151) considers the social and political roles of Adile Hanım and Leyla Zana and the projections of these roles within Kurds. Neither Adile Hanım's being the leader of a tribe nor is Leyla Zana being one of the prominent figures in

Kurdish politics means all Kurdish women are equal, free, and like them. In the end, the Kurdish society is a patriarchal society and women get their share of it. Moreover, because in the historical process there have been women that became prominent, not all women in the society have the same or equal conditions with them. As a result, the argument that today Kurdish women are freer than other women of the society is one that needs to be thought on.



CHAPTER 3

IDENTITY TRANSFORMATION OF KURDISH WOMEN IN AĞRI

The fieldwork is explained in this chapter. In the chapter, the answers to the questions on the changes and transformations of ethnic, religious, and gender identities of Kurdish women from three generations are presented in the order of gender, ethnic, and religious identities.

3.1. The Transformation of Gender Identity in Three Generations of Women

In this part, the ways that women of Ağrı experience their gender identities are elaborated. While it was observed that whether or not the women who were interviewed in the fieldwork had any knowledge on the concept of gender, it should be added that the knowledge accumulated as a result of the studies with women over the years are taken into consideration as well.

To be able to reveal the gender identity experiences of three generations of women of Ağrı and to be able to make a comparative analysis, almost all groups were asked similar questions. Basically with the following questions the boundaries of the topic were determined:

- Do you have an occupation?
- Have you ever worked?
- Do you know how to read and write?
- What was the last school that you finished?
- Why couldn't you attend school?
- At which age did you get married? How did you get married?
- Was there a kin marriage or tribe marriage?
- With whom did you live when you got married?

- Have you ever been used violence against any time in your life?
- Who makes decisions at home?
- What do you think about divorce?
- What do you think about the social position of women?
- How many children do you have?
- Are daughters and sons equal?

While gender identity is approached, issues such as the change and transformation of the space, the position of women against men and women's outlook on this, and methods of contestation are examined, and it is aimed to understand if there is continuity or not in transferring gender identity among women from three generations.

3.1.1. Gender Identity in the First Generation

How the first-generation women's life experiences have been shaped is found from the answers that were provided to the questions about various topics. One of the most important points that drew attention was that the experiences related to gender were considered as "fate, destiny, foreordination", and they do not show resistance to the events. This, along with leading to the opinion that there is little awareness on the concept of gender, led to the opinion that such awareness was not much needed by women.

Almost all women from the first generation continue their lives within a definite space and pattern. They almost accepted the lives which continue within the triangle of home-garden-neighbors and relatives. Most of them believe that they have such a life simply because they are women. They believe that they are naturally expected to do physical works like housework and childcare. This reveals the justification of gender-based division of labor: Women's contribution to production and life's recreation is defined as a function, a part of their "nature" (Mies, Bennholdt-Thomsen and Von Werlhof, 2018: 103). As a result, in the first-generation women's identity experiences, this point has importance in all aspects.

Maybe the most important experience that draws attention in the first-generation women is that all of these women married so early. Given that most of the marriages were arranged, it can be said that the tribal culture is well alive and active.

Ayşe got married at the age of 13 with an arranged marriage (Interview with Ayşe, 21.07.2018). She had never seen her husband, who was not her relative, and saw him for the first time at the wedding. Her husband is now 87 years old and about the age difference between her and her husband she says: *“fate. Back then it was always this way.”* She had her ID 10-15 years after her marriage.

Hatice got married with an arranged marriage at the age of 14 (Interview with Hatice, 21.07.2018). She says that she loves her husband and the husband loves her and had her first son when she was 15. Her husband joined the army two months after they got married and served for 3.5 years. When her husband returned, he couldn't recognize his son. She tells these laughingly.

For Fatma, marriage is a milestone. She also had an arranged marriage at the age of 16 and went to the city from the village as a bride. She had her first child when she was 18. When asked if anyone had asked her if she had wanted to get married or not, laughingly, she says: *“O girl! I was so ashamed, who was to ask us? The man was a child, I was a child. I saw the man on the day of the wedding”* (Interview with Fatma, 22.07.2018). In the interviews, it caught attention that all women who got married at an early age, similarly, had children and became mothers at an early age. The village's socio-cultural characteristics made the opinion that after marriage, right ahead *“children should be born, women should become mothers”* dominant.

Nuriye got engaged when she was 14, had an arranged marriage when she was 15, and had her first child when she was 16. She is married to her cousin, son of her uncle, and says (Interview with Nuriye, 22.07.2018): *“I got married at an early age. It is a very bad thing, not a good thing at all. Especially if people could not develop themselves at all.”*

Fadile, who had an arranged marriage when she was 15, says the following (Interview with Fadile, 23.07.2018): *“I had never seen my husband. I came home and saw then, I had a wedding and I came and saw then. Back then they never asked if we should marry or not. We didn't know.”*

Most women from the first generation were married in the beginning of their puberty and it is observed that those who lost their husbands are more sensitive about children. Second marriage is totally unacceptable for them. Remarriage is seen both “shameful” and “unnecessary”.

The number of children that a woman has and the sexes of these children are seen as an important means of recreation and insurance for the continuity of the social role of women. We can say that, compared to boys, sensitivity towards the education of girls increased in the recent era. Çağlayan (Çağlayan, 2013: 112-113) argues that this sensitivity is not the product of an assimilation policy and adds that projects like “Baba beni okula gönder” (Dad, send me to school), “Kardelenler” (Snowdrops, in Turkish literal translation, those that drill the snow) are practices that reveal this interest.

On education, almost all first-generation women had similar experiences. Most of them did not attend school at all and they all share the same reasons for this lack of attendance: Living in the village, absence of schools, the elders or the parents not allowing them, the opinion that girls’ studying is “shameful”, etc.

Gülistan is 78 years old and says that she never went to school because there was no school in their village (Interview with Gülistan, 21.07.2018). “*We didn’t go; we are a tribe.*” She emphasizes that going to school was considered “*shameful*”, aiming to emphasize that the outlook of the environment and the family to education had a very dominant role.

Meliha is 66 years old and says the following (Interview with Meliha, 29.07.2018): “*I have never gone to school; they didn’t let me study... How will she be among boys as a girl? Ignorant, I don’t know, back then they were even more ignorant. My father didn’t let me.*” Considering the era, it is found that one of the biggest obstacles against girls’ attendance to school is the negative outlook on girls’ inclusion in education system along and together with boys. Here, it should be emphasized that girls are perceived as “the others” against boys.

Fatma is 56 years old and says the following once she is asked if she had faced discrimination in education or not: “*They let my brothers study, but we girls were not allowed. Because we were girls. Oh, sit down, sit down, so-and-so will take you, then will backbite. We were ignorant as well, I was a child*” (Interview with Fatma, 22.07.2018).

Exclusion of girls, unlike boys, from the education process can be considered as the outcome of the traditionally-settled gender perception in the society.

70-year-old Zarife shares similar experiences (Interview with Zarife, 24.07.2018):
“I swear to Allah, I did not go to school. During our time, they did not allow girls to study. And we, I don’t know... They did not let us be together with boys.”

Fadile moved to the city from the village when she got married and says that she has never attended school (Interview with Fadile, 23.07.2018):

Where, was there a school? Back in our times, there was no school. There were sheep, there were cattle. We were working at home.

Another reason because of which women were not allowed to study was housework or animal care. About the era, many women who were living in the villages complained that they didn’t have time to rest, needless to say to go to school.

Fadile’s experience shows that the role of women in housework is a big obstacle in women’s schooling. As mentioned in previous parts, the formation of gender roles is a “building” process and in this process, manhood and womanhood are taken as social constructions than biological features coming from birth (Bora, 2010: 22).

Ayşe, who is 64 years old, says the following while telling her experiences about schooling (Interview with Ayşe, 21.07.2018):

No, I have never gone [to the school], I have never seen the inside of the school. I swear to Allah, they registered me, but my dad, mom, and uncle did not let me. Because I am a girl, they didn’t let me. Girls are guilty. I swear to Allah; they consider girls guilty. It is a girl, she may not go and be spoilt, may not become a street walker. All those who studied are better than those who did not study, they know the better way. I wanted to study so much, it still is an unfulfilled desire for me.

One of the reasons because of which women could not receive education is the family members seeing education as *“a means by which one gets spoiled, by which one becomes a street walker.”*

Violence was one of the topics on which there were long discussions with all interviewed women. In the interviews, it was observed that some women did not want to talk about violence. Also, it was observed that they could not develop an attitude towards the topic, although they were subject to violence.

The women who mentioned that they were subject to violence said that it was not only their husbands but also the mothers-in-law and fathers-in-law that committed violence on them. Kader says the following on the issue (Interview with Kader, 26.07.2018): *“I wasn’t allowed to go anywhere. He was jealous of me. Because of poverty I wasn’t able to get out as well. Now as well he applies violence, but less,”* Like in this case, almost in all interviews, the strong relationship between women’s poverty and violence showed itself.

In the interviews, once the reasons of violence were asked, women presented different reasons with deep sorrow. One of the important issues that draws attention is that very few of the women consider violence legitimate.

Fadile, to the question whether her husband committed violence against her or not, answered as follows (Interview with Fadile, 23.07.2018): *“A lot. I have been beaten jut out of nowhere, there was no reason.”* Once the reason was asked, she said: *“I don’t know. When he gets angry, out of nowhere he beats you.”*

It is observed that women had no method to challenge once they were subject to violence. It has been learned from the women that violence is mostly swallowed and considered as “fate” and the situation is not shared with anyone else.

Hatice rigorously expresses her attitude towards violence (Interview with Hatice, 21.07.2018): *“I do not accept violence. If a woman is beaten, that is oppression. People should be free as long as they are just.”*

Nuriye’s answer normalizes her experience (Interview with Nuriye, 22.07.2018): *“How would it not be? He was beating [me] while there was absolutely nothing going on. He was drinking... There was insult. After my children grew up a little bit, he didn’t say anything to me. Still it was there, but not like before.”*

Meliha was not subject to violence by her husband, but expresses her experiences with her mother-in-law as follows (Interview with Meliha, 29.07.2018):

Oh, don't mention that. Mother-in-law was like a man. She was eating, drinking, going out and walking around, coming home and getting in bed. We were, because of our fear of her... Now it is not like that. Before, it was that way. Before, they were asking, 'How is your mother-in-law?' Now they are asking 'How is your daughter-in-law?'

In this case, the weakness of women's current social position is clearly observed. In the case, the woman receives psychological violence from her mother-in-law, who is the dominating power within patriarchal family structure, not from the husband. While the husband remains passive, the mother-in-law has the monopoly of using violence against her daughter-in-law.

As mentioned above, although most of the women are against violence, some of them consider violence legitimate under certain circumstances and take a step forward and argue that it is a right of men over women.

Makbule says that she has never been subject to violence and says the following (Interview with Makbule, 30.07.2018): *"No no, I have never seen that, I would not want as well. I am against violence. Some women deserve, though. If woman gets on her husband's nerves on purpose, then it is right."* Considering violence right even though she normally is against violence can be considered as seeing women "the others". A woman's thinking different from her husband can cause violence to be deemed justified.

The social and cultural environment in which the woman lives also affects the effectiveness and the variety of the mechanisms which are referred to in violence experience. Sometimes trying the referrals or telling the experience to the closest friends and relatives is impossible. Medine talks about this. Saying, *"I don't want violence. I was subject to violence so much by my husband. Because of cousin marriage, I couldn't say anything"*, she narrates the despair she once was in (Interview with Medine, 07.08.2018).

In this case, kin marriage is considered as the most important factor which

prevented violence from coming to light. The violence was hidden because it could be considered “shameful” by families. It is seen that in the regions or parts of the society in which extended families and relative relations are dense, social relations are shaped within the framework of “kindredship code” (Duben, 2016: 93).

All first-generation women of Ağrı have large families. In every family, an average of three sons and three daughters existed.

In this part, the women were asked about the number of children they had and how many sons and daughters they had in order to examine whether there was equality between boys and girls.

Halime has four sons and two daughters and reveals the unequal relationship between boys and girls by mentioning that her husband allowed her sons to attend school and study while not allowing the daughters to study (Interview with Halime, 28.07.2018).

Nuriye has two sons and two daughters and says the following about boy-girl discrimination in the family (Interview with Nuriye, 22.07.2018):

A lot, boys were prioritized. I swear to Allah, I loved my younger son a lot and my older son is our blue-eyed boy, but whatever I did and told my younger son, he didn't listen to me, however much I showed him the right path, he took the wrong one. But still I pitied for him a lot; he couldn't get along well with his father.

Nuriye's point of view to boys and girls can summarize not only the outlook on the issue of the people of Ağrı but also of the whole of Turkey. Boys being preferred and prioritized over girls is a socially habitual fact and it is assumed that there is no problem in doing so.

In family structures, the number of children changes in accordance with the sexes of the children. Most of the interviewed women expressed that they had to give birth to more children in order to have sons. It is observed that this inclination is more dominant with the women that have more daughters.

Aysel had a similar experience. She has three sons and ten daughters and

laughingly adds that after the eighth daughter she had a son, and she needed to give birth to many children so as to have sons (Interview with Aysel, 04.08.2018).

Melek has four sons and two daughters and experienced the differentiation between boys and girls differently. She defines herself as Turkish and after saying that she married into a Kurdish family, says the following (Interview with Melek, 12.08.2018):

I don't see discrimination, but girls are closer. In my family, there's no such discrimination. I gave birth to boys, one after another. Kurds like boys very much. Each time a child was born, my father-in-law sacrificed an animal.

In the interviews with the women it was seen that, although they had given birth to many boys, they value their daughters more. Hatice has seven daughters and four sons and says the following with a mixture of Turkish and Kurdish (Interview with Hatice, 21.07.2018): *"They were saying, may it be a boy. Girls go, boys stay."* When asked about equality between boys and girls, she said: *"May boys be well, but girls are desperate. Girls are more of a hope."*

Hatice says that girls are more sensitive than boys and by saying that girls are *"desperate"*, she voices, unwittingly, that girls are *"weaker"* than boys. (Interview with Hatice, 21.07.2018).

Considering the conditions in which the first-generation women lived through, it is observed that they were not much conscious about having children. These women got married at a very early age and it was observed that they had given birth to their first child as early as at the age of 16 or 17. As a result, it is not possible to expect women to have a word on their own body at this young age.

Sevcan has five sons and five daughters and, emphasizing the above-mentioned point, narrates her experience as follows (Interview with Sevcan, 05.08.2018):

I swear to Allah, I didn't want many children. I was taking those daily pills, but I was still pregnant. I swear to Allah, I have seen at certain places, it exists. For example, at some places they don't let girls out, even to

the school. I am very disturbed with this situation. I want the girls to study. I wanted my own daughters to study but their brothers didn't let them. Because that is a girl, she may not study. May not be together with guys.

Divorce can be defined as the legal ending of marriage in situations like the ending of family unity, failure in fulfilling expectations, etc. Divorce, in all interviews, was the part on which there was the least opinions but these opinions were the most striking ones.

In all interviews, it was observed that women did not provide a clear answer and they evaluated the topic based on certain reasons. Also, it caught attention that, just like marriage, the women considered divorce as "*fate*". It is obvious that the women who were not asked about their opinions on marriage had no say on divorce as well.

It is seen in the fieldwork that divorce should be considered together with honor killing. Especially in families in which strong tribal structure is dominant, women cannot raise the issue of divorce as such a thing could easily turn into a *matter of honor* or *honor killing*.

Fatma is the bride of a family in which tribal ties are strong and says the following on divorce (Interview with Fatma, 22.07.2018): "*No, we don't have such things.*"

Fatma's solid attitude towards the issue reflects not her own opinions on the issue but the stance of the family or the tribe that she is a member of.

Along with such opinions, opinions in which divorce is justified under certain circumstances are often encountered (Interview with Meryem, 24.07.2018; Interview with Halime, 28.07.2018; Interview with Altun, 28.07.2018; Interview with Makbule, 30.07.2018):

"If I face injustice, I'd divorce. I don't have to suffer for everyone."

"I swear to Allah I am so much against divorces but if you two cannot get along well, you have to get divorced and be disposed of it."

"I am against divorce, it's not a good thing. If a woman divorces, it is not good. If

there is much violence, then if she wants to divorce, may she do it then.”

“I am against divorce. If she suffers from violence, if she has an income, then she may divorce. If there is no income, then you have to suffer.”

Once the reasons are considered which, according to the women, justifies divorce, it is found that “unjust treatment, not being able to get along, and violence” come to the forefront. The important point here is that, depending on the level of violence, divorce can be justified. When violence is not much, divorce is not deemed necessary while when it increases, divorce is seen justified.

3.1.2. Gender Identity in the Second Generation

In this part, similar to the previous part, interviews with the second-generation women of Ağrı on their gender identities are presented. In the interviews, questions under headings, marriage age – marriage type, education, violence, son-daughter relations, and divorce are asked to the women and their experiences and opinions on these issues are shared.

The second-generation women of Ağrı’s marriage ages and types resemble the experiences of the first-generation women. Most of the marriages were arranged and it is observed that tribalism and kindredship densely lead their lives.

Gülten is married to her cousin and says that she is married to her aunt’s son with an arranged marriage (Interview with Gülten, 25.07.2018). She saw her husband only once before the marriage, she was engaged for around a year, and reproachfully adds that because of kin marriage, all three children of her are dead.

Esmer also had an arranged marriage at the age of 17 and says that “no one asked [me]” (Interview with Esmer, 24.07.2018). She was engaged for five months, she went out with her fiancé only twice, and then they got married.

Mehtap, who had an arranged marriage when she was 20, desperately says “*it’s fate*” (Interview with Mehtap, 07.08.2018).

Songül had an arranged marriage and shares her experiences as follows (Interview with Songül, 26.07.2018): “*They actually didn’t ask, he was a neighbor. I was engaged when I was 13 and my wedding happened when I was 16.*”

Many women mention that they got married “*unwittingly*”, “*suddenly*”. This shows that, even in such a matter which concerns the woman directly, women’s opinions are either not asked or not much cared about.

Another important point that draws attention is that the women got married or engaged at a very early age. In the fieldwork with the second-generation women, it was seen that the youngest marriage age was 14 while the oldest was 26. The second-generation women are comparably luckier than the first-generation women in terms of education. While still there are women who did not attend school at all, there are also women who attended school yet dropped out later.

The women who did not attend school could not do that because of the same reasons as of the previous generation. The outlook of the society, and especially of the father and brothers, on the education of girls and the consideration of the schooling of girls “shameful” are the reasons because of which women remained out of education process.

Halide struggled so much to be able to attend school. She could not manage in the beginning because her father did not let her. Later, with a literacy campaign, she wanted to attend school, yet this time her husband did not let her. As a result, she could not receive education (Interview with Halide, 29.07.2018).

Gülten is another example who couldn’t study because of the father. Her father thought “girls don’t go to school, they should sit at home”, and she, as a result, failed to attend school (Interview with Gülten, 25.07.2018).

The era that the second-generation women of Ağrı lived through is the era of 28 February. During that time, there were many women whose education processes were interrupted or totally finished because they were covered. In the interviews, Ünzile was one of the cases who could not continue her education because of 28 February. She graduated from middle school and says that she had to quit during 28 February (Interview with Ünzile, 21.07.2018).

In the interviews, the equality of opportunity and sexes in education was questioned and it was observed that boys were prioritized over girls. Girls’ schooling was considered “shameful” for this generation. Esmer, sighing, says the following (Interview with Esmer, 24.07.2018): “*In the old times they did that way. They didn’t see, they despised it. They*

considered it shameful. Brothers all went [to school], none of the five sisters went to school.”

There were some women who did not attend school, or dropped out, because of her own will and not because of family or environmental issues. Asiye studied until second grade and says: *“We were in the village, my father wanted so much but I didn’t want. I regret now, wouldn’t one regret? As I grew up, I realized, understood”* (Interview with Asiye, 06.08.2018).

There are experiences of the second-generation women that show the existence of physical and psychological violence. Like the first generation, the second-generation women consider it as their *“fate”*.

Nurhayat is not subjected to violence (Interview with Nurhayat, 27.07.2018).

In the interviews, the question who used violence was mostly answered as the husband and the mother-in-law. While husbands applied physical and psychological violence, mothers-in-law applied psychological violence.

When asked if Safiye had conflicted with her mother-in-law, she said the following (Interview with Safiye, 22.07.2018): *“I did, a lot. She embraces her son so much, for her he is flawless. She doesn’t think I am suitable for him, or I feel this way”*. To the question, *“Because you have five daughters, did she make you feel this?”* she says: *“No, my mother-in-law wanted, wanted so much, there was always the pressure of this on me. But she didn’t insult me because of this or I didn’t feel it at all. She didn’t have attitudes, reactions towards me.”*

Mahmure lived with her mother-in-law for three years and says the following on her relationship with her (Interview with Mahmure, 05.08.2018):

There is no physical violence but we do not have a dialogue, we couldn’t become warm to each other. I swear that I had cancer. Because there are no such things in our family, I was not happy. My husband was supporting me, couldn’t accept it because he saw with his own eyes. I had the support of my family also. I was about to commit suicide. For 20 years I don’t get it, I

cannot understand it.

When asked if there was violence:

There hasn't been physical violence by my husband. In the beginning, if we were going somewhere, when they didn't let us, with the anger, he was getting angry with me. He is a very good person, but because he does many good things, he is oppressed.

There were also cases in which the woman was subject to violence yet could not tell this anyone, hid it, just like the cases in the first generation. Hanife says that she was subject to violence and could not tell this even her family (Interview with Hanife, 04.08.2018). She says that she still loves her husband and her experience can be considered as *"learned helplessness"*.

When Merve was asked about violence, she says: *"I am so much against violence. I wouldn't do such a thing to my daughter-in-law. They may live their own lives. Because I was oppressed too much..."* (Interview with Merve, 03.08.2018).

Merve acts in accordance with the motto, "Don't do unto others what you don't want done unto you," which is based on her own life experiences and is one case which interrupts the violence circle between the previous and following generations.

The relationship between sons and daughters is similar to those of the first-generation women. But in the second generation there are, in average, two daughters and two sons per family. Compared to the first generation, there are less children.

Fidan has six children and her opinions on son-daughter comparison are as follows (Interview with Fidan, 23.07.2018): *"Nowadays they are so conscious. We were so unconscious back then. My daughters are over my sons; they are desperate. I wish all my children were girls, sons are bad"*.

Melahat has a son and two daughters and shares her experience as follows (Interview with Melahat, 23.07.2018):

In our hometown, of course it happens in some

families. And when there is something, it is always the son. Let us leave to the son, let us do something to the son. When it is the daughter, she is always oppressed. To the son houses, furniture is bought. But the girl works more, is oppressed more.

Şehriban has three sons and a daughter and says the following: *“My daughter is special. I am fonder of her, she is one, worth all three. I used to like girls more when I was younger also”* (Interview with Şehriban, 05.08.2018).

Asiye has two sons and two daughters and says: *“For me a child is a child”* (Interview with Asiye, 06.08.2018).

Zeytin has two daughters and a son and says the following: *“I swear to Allah, I never did such a comparison. They are all equal for me”* (Interview with Zeytin, 09.08.2018).

Miyase has a different perspective. Miyase has two sons and two daughters and after saying that she was forced to have more children, adds (Interview with Miyase, 25.07.2018): *“Kurds love sons but there is no such thing in Turks. Kurds prioritize boys but boys don't take care of their mothers.”*

It is observed that women do not discriminate between their children, yet with the effects of environmental factors, boys are more prioritized.

The second-generation women of Ağrı did not present their opinions on divorce much and the expressed opinions are as follows (Interview with Safiye, 22.07.2018; Interview with Melahat, 23.07.2018; Interview with Songül, 26.07.2018):

“I would take it for my children.”

Divorce is not a so nice, good thing. One shouldn't just divorce just so. If it doesn't work out, then they should get divorced. It became so widespread. Even a one-month-long married one gets divorced right ahead, no one is patient. If woman suffers from violence every day, of course she should divorce. In my opinion, men

also suffer from physical and emotional violence. No one listens to both sides.

“If there is dissension religiously as well, lastly it should be divorce.”

Women with whom interviews were made on divorce share different opinions, yet similar to the first-generation women, once there are justified reasons, they, like the first-generation women, also argue that the people should get divorced.

3.1.3. Gender Identity in the Third Generation

The third-generation women, considering the characteristics and the dynamics of the era that they live in, are different from the first two generations in many aspects.

All women from the third generation attended school; some of them completed their education and some of them still continue. One of the points that draw attention in the interviews is that they presented opinions on gender that are the opposite of the opinions of the previous generations. While on some topics they had similar opinions, on some others they, comfortably and without caring about environmental pressure, presented their opinions which can be deemed contrarian.

The questions asked to the third-generation women on marriage changed in accordance with their marital status. While questions on how they got married were asked to the married ones, to the single ones, with what style and with what type of a person would they want to get married with are asked. The third-generation women answered questions generally taking into consideration the previous generations.

Women from this generation, with participating in education system and having access to mass media, have more self-confidence compared to previous generations and emphasized that it is their will rather than the will of their families that matters more. Also, it is found out that in arranged marriages, the sides first got to know each other and agreed to get married.

Aslı is single and wants to have an arranged (convenience) marriage (Interview with Aslı, 27.07.2018)

Rojda is single and 27 years old, and says the following on marriage (Interview

with Rojda, 21.07.2018):

It doesn't matter if the person that I'll get married with is Kurdish or Turkish. What matters is if he respects my opinions. I wouldn't get married with someone whom I don't know. I wouldn't live with the family of my husband. If he needed help, I'd give him my helping hand. But I don't want to suffer from the same problems that my mother had.

Rojda's mother still lives with her mother-in-law and had very big problems. Rojda, based on these experiences, does not want to have the same "fate" with her mother. Her answer on with whom she'd get married hints that only she will make the decision.

Elmas is 19 years old and says the following to the questions (Interview with Elmas, 08.07.2018):

If I'm vouchsafed, I'd get married. Now I'd not stereotype. I'd look for morality first. I'd want him to have moral values. These aren't seen acceptable by society. What's taught to us by Islam, a prophethy morality. The much I could do, I'd want him to be more than me. Then he'd add something to me. The spouse is the biggest teacher for a person. I want it to be that way, more mature than me. I'd not make Turkish-Kurdish discrimination. I want to have an arranged marriage.

In the interviews made with the third-generation women of Ağrı, it is observed that married women got married later than the previous two generations. The youngest marriage age is 18 while the oldest is 23.

Dilara is 30 years old. She says: "First he came, we got to know each other, and then I accepted." She had an arranged marriage when she was 23 (Interview with Dilara, 28.07.2018).

Zehra is 16 years old and single, and says the following to the question, "Do you

think of getting married in the future?” (Interview with Zehra, 29.07.2018):

After economic freedom, yes, but first economic freedom. Because when you have economic freedom, then, especially in our region, they respect you. When one isn't respected, her life progresses negatively. Especially if you are a woman. Being a woman here is something like this: If you don't respect yourself, no one respects you. I see, I know from the people around, if women are subject to violence, are hungry, a man can complain about his situation while women cannot complain ever because it is shameful, she should be silent. When she is silent, everything will be okay. No one will blame her father, her brother. To be seen good by her family, she makes concessions from her life, this makes her worthless.

To the question, “What would you want your husband be like?” she says the following (Interview with Zehra, 29.07.2018):

First and foremost, he should be educated. He shouldn't be uneducated and neither fish nor fowl. He should have an income. Ah, as long as he is a good person. Turkish, Kurdish. No need of racism. There are bad people among Kurds, also among Turks. That's a good person, we get along, that is enough. May it be Jewish even. What's the need?

Zehra's words are a summary of the opinions of all women.

All women from the third generation have had education. Contrary to the women from previous generations who couldn't study because of their family members or environmental factors, the third-generation women expressed that they had dropped out of school by their own will.

Another important point related to the third-generation women is that after having a

break during primary or middle school, with their own efforts and will they return to the school from where they dropped out.

Ayla had the experience mentioned above. She studied until the fourth grade in primary school, and finished middle school after she got married (Interview with Ayla, 24.07.2018). She dropped out of school when she was single, and says that her mother said: “Will you study and become a lawyer?”

Many of the women graduated from high school. When they were asked about their future plans, almost all gave the same answer: “*We are at home, there is no job...*”

Başak is a sophomore at high school. Başak says the following about the education of women in Ağrı (Interview with Başak, 30.07.2018):

Here girls aren't going to school. The guy doesn't send her daughter to school. Because if they study, they'll have an occupation and make money, and a stranger will spend her money. With this nonsense, he ruins his daughter's life.

In the interviews, it was observed that high school graduates and university students are more conscious about education and more determined about which occupation they will choose.

Selma is a high school graduate and shares the following (Interview with Selma, 30.07.2018): “*I am waiting for YKS scores. I want to study nursing. My mom and dad are willing for me to study.*” Selma is supported by her family and states that she does not suffer from the problems that the previous generations had.

Most of high school graduates who are waiting for YKS scores think that there will be familial problems about the city that the girls will want to study in. As a result, while the families make all kinds of sacrifices for their daughter to study, they are against their daughter leaving Ağrı and going to far places to study at the university.

Dilan is a high school graduate and is waiting for YKS scores, and says: “*My father does not want me to go outside, he says I should study in Ağrı. But I want Van*” (Interview with Dilan, 22.07.2018).

The answers to the questions on violence showed differences in accordance with the marital status of the interviewee. It is observed that they were not subjected to violence and they criticize violence more rigorously than the previous generations. Also while women from the previous generations justified violence conditionally, the third-generation women had no such inclinations.

Ayla has never been subjected to violence and emphasizes that her situation is the normal one, no violence is what it should be (Interview with Ayla, 24.07.2018).

Zuhal is asked whether she was subjected to violence by her family and she says the following (Interview with Zuhal, 25.07.2018):

Thanks to Allah, there is no such thing with us. Men kill more women, then the problem is with men. When I hear of a woman who died because of men's violence, I feel so sorry like all of us. And I say that if that person, at that moment, could think like a human, would not do such a ferocious act. If the man is right, with this act, he makes himself wrong. No one can be right in such a thing.

To the question, if violence is only physical:

No. Even not apologizing is the biggest violence for me. A wound can be healed, but the wound in the soul cannot be thrown out of the heart. Like all of us, I feel so sorry about violence against women. Man, with violence, makes himself wrong, even if he was right. There is no justification of violence. Violence is not only physical. The wound in the soul does not heal.

Zuhal separates violence as physical and psychological, and points out, after a comparison, that psychological violence is worse than physical.

Helin has never been subject to violence and shares her experience saying, "*My husband, because he lost his parents when he was young, is in need of love. He loves me and the children so much*" (Interview with Helin, 23.07.2018).

Hanife says the following on violence (Interview with Hanife, 06.08.2018):

Before, my dad used to beat my mom more. Compared to then, no. We were little, we couldn't oppose him. Now I would. I am so much against it. There is no justification of femicides. I can't understand murders anyway.

Rojda says that she argues for men-women equality, but this cannot enable violence against women and adds the following (Interview with Rojda, 21.07.2018):

Of course it is a very bad mentality. Just because we said that men and women are equal, men do not need to do such things. Women should be able to respond; women should defend themselves. Men, to prove that they see themselves superior, apply to violence.

One important point found out in the interviews is that, to the question whether violence exists, all answers are positive. Dilara says the following on this (Interview with Dilara, 28.07.2018):

Of course there is violence, it cannot be denied. Today, physical violence can be prevented but no one can prevent psychological violence. For me, violence can never be justified. People can solve any issue by talking.

Similarly, Ayla says the following (Interview with Ayla, 24.07.2018):

According to me, there is no justification of violence. It is said that sometimes women deserve it, but I never consider violence justified. Men resort to violence to reveal his self, to have influence. I would definitely stand against if I was subject to violence.

The third-generation women are of the same opinion on rejecting violence. In regard to the experiences they narrated and the views they stated, they think differently

than the previous generations and they advocate that violence can under no circumstances be seen legitimate.

Most of the third-generation women expressed that there has not been discrimination between boys and girls. They said that they have not been discriminated in their own families and mostly narrated the experiences of the relatives and the people around the city. Similar with the previous generations, women from this generation mentioned that boys are prioritized over girls.

Dilara says the following when she is asked if there is discrimination between boys and girls (Interview with Dilara, 28.07.2018):

Yes, there is. Men don't apologize even when they are wrong, do not use that word, apology. Because he sees it unnecessary, absurd, a technicality, an insult, loss of his authority. The reason of this is the ignorance of the people. If a person lives in accordance with Islam, he would not do this to his wife. In my opinion, really, women are very strong. Because women build the society. Everyone becomes a mother and that mother's children become men. A mother raises a man.

On the comparison between men and women, Dilara argues that women are strong over the role of motherhood and emphasizes that women's fertility is determinant in the establishment of society.

Some of the answers on the topic are as follows (Interview with Zelal, 26.07.2018; Interview with Sevcan, 09.08.2018; Interview with Aydan, 11.08.2018; Interview with Dilan, 22.07.2018): *"Not in my family, but it exists in the society. It is seen more in my father's side. Boys are prioritized more. They can do whatever they want, but the girl..."*

I didn't feel such discrimination in my own family. Generally, they prioritize boys in education. You know, there is the mentality, the boy should study, and there is no need for the girl to study. This changed compared to the previous times.

No, I don't feel that. Boys are the same, girls are the same. I don't go out alone. The world is such a bad place... They kidnap many children. I am scared. I go out with my parents.

“There is no son-daughter discrimination in my family.”

On divorce, both single and married women expressed their opinions.

The third-generation women have a more determined attitude towards divorce, unlike the previous generations. While women from the previous generations approach divorce because of economic or familial issues with caution, the third generation consider divorce a normal phenomenon.

Aslı says the following on divorce (Interview with Aslı, 27.07.2018): *“If I am subjected to violence, I would divorce even if I had a child. I cannot take it even for my child. I'd take my child and go and get divorced.”*

Ayla says: *“Well, if the woman is suppressed in the home, scorned, of course she should divorce”* (Interview with Ayla, 24.07.2018).

For Rojda, divorce can happen if there are very serious problems (Interview with Rojda, 21.07.2018):

If there is something serious, of course divorce can happen. Some divorce just arbitrarily. You know, there are some who cannot take one or two [bad] words and files for divorce. If there is a child, if there is a very serious problem, divorce may well be.

Other opinions on divorce by the third-generation women are as follows (Interview with Zehra, 29.07.2018; Interview with Elmas, 08.07.2018; Interview with Selma, 30.07.2018; Interview with Hanife, 06.08.2018; Interview with Zelal, 26.07.2018; Interview with Sevcan, 09.08.2018):

“It should be a consensual divorce. If we cannot get along, we would get divorced.”

“I mean, if there are conflicts, of course they will divorce. With a person that you cannot get along, life would be miserable.”

“If there are disagreements, I’d divorce. I don’t see any problems with divorce. In our society, there’s the mentality, ‘What will the people say if I will divorce’.”

“I don’t listen to others. I lead my life the way so that I am happy.”

“If there are conflicts, divorce is the right thing.”

“Marriage is right, divorce is right, of course it can happen.”

3.2. The Transformation of Ethnic Identity in Three Generations of Women

The interviews were made so that it would be considered as a chat by the interviewees, which allowed the women to be able to answer the questions more comfortably. The women were asked the following questions to try to understand their life experiences:

- Do you know Kurdish?
- If no, why don’t you know Kurdish?
- If yes, where did you learn it?
- If yes, how and from whom did you learn it?
- What do you know about your mother tongue?
- Did you ever have to emigrate?
- How do you define yourself ethnically?
- In which senses do you feel “the other” the most?
- What comes to your mind about the “Kurdish problem”?
- What do you understand from the term “Kurdish nationalism”?

Yes, for sure “identity” is represented to us not

as something that needs to be discovered but as something that needs to be totally invented, the outcome of a work, “an aim”, something that the person should build in the beginning, or choose from alternatives, for which later the individual should struggle, and protect with even more effort (Bauman, 2017a: 25).

As expressed by Bauman (2017a), the discussions on the issue that identity is something that is reconstructed and invented in this process were presented above. Aside from being obtained, the existing discourses on identity let the concept to have motion and change.

Recently, ethnic identity has become a concept which has been widely discussed yet has not come to terms with. It is observed that while the concept’s separating and unifying aspects change based on social and economic conditions, it is generally shaped as “us” in traditional lifestyles. Moreover, hints on belonging were yielded without awareness of the concept itself.

In the study, questions on ethnic identity awareness and belonging were asked. The inter-generational transformation of the concept was examined with the questions on mother tongue, ethnic roots, alienation, the Kurdish problem, state-citizen relationships, and Kurdish nationalism.

3.2.1. Ethnic Identity in the First Generation

In this part of the study, the ethnic identity is discussed in the context of the experiences of the women on the issues of “Kurdishness”, “mother tongue”, “Kurdish problem”, and “state-citizen relationship”. In the interviews conducted with the first-generation Kurdish women of Ağrı, it was noted that their perspectives on the concepts in question can be different from as well as complementary to and even a continuation of one another. The facts that the number of women who speak Kurdish as mother tongue was high and that most women who were denied education have shaped their experiences as to their ethnic identity.

Regarding the discourses of the women on ethnic identity, it can be argued that a

traditional mindset dominates their discourses. The answers to the questions, “With which identity do you identify yourself?” and, “Do you know the Kurdish language?” complete each other. On the other hand, in all generations, there are answers which do not fit this category, in which generation gaps are clearly visible.

It is observed that the discourses of the women on their everyday lives are not elaborated and thought on and they are shaped with the traditional motives. Edward Shills’s (Shills, 2003-2004: 111) definition of tradition is interesting at this point: “*It is created, performed, or believed in the history, or the thing that is believed to have existed, performed, or believed*”. The role of tradition in the discourses of women on ethnic identity is notable in determining the limitedness of these discourses.

The point on which the women have most difficulty while defining their Kurdish identity is defining themselves through novel discourses. In addition, they behave so that they seem to aim to demolish the perception of “the other” when the Kurdish language or Kurdish identity is in question.

Ayşe says the following on the question whether she has ever been subject to discrimination anywhere out of Ağrı (Interview with Ayşe, 21.07.2018):

When I say I am from Ağrı, it is it. I swear to Allah that I am from Ağrı. We are Muslims; we are the ummah [people] of Muhammed Mustafa. There are the Laz, Turks, Kurds, Circassians. How would Allah recognize if they all were Turks?

And she says the following to the question, “Did you ever argue with them?”

I argue. For example, I went to Erzurum; they said “It smells like Kurd here.” When they asked, “Are you Kurdish?”, I said, “I am Kurdish, I am honest, I am hardworking (A reference to the oath that was sworn at schools in the beginning of the day, which started as “I am Turk, I am honest, I am hardworking.”). This is my

oath. I am a supporter of National Vision⁴, I do not support the PKK”.

Ayşe defines herself prominently with her religious identity. Her expression, “I am Kurdish, I am honest, I am hardworking,” can be considered as a sign of her commitment to her Kurdish identity. On the Kurdish problem, she says the following (Interview with Ayşe, 21.07.2018):

There is a Kurdish problem. Kurds do not unite. May Allah give Kurds some wisdom. Kurds don't want good⁵. They are miserable because of this.

When she was asked about her relations with the state, she said:

May Tayyip [Erdogan] not be missed; Allah may not make us Apocu [i.e. supporters of the PKK].

At this point, it is seen that she makes a distinction between being Kurdish and supporting or being a member of the terrorist organization. Ayşe does not deny her Kurdish identity and emphasizes her conservative identity politically.

Changing the oath, “I am Turk, I am honest, I am hardworking,” to, “I am Kurd, I am honest, I am hardworking,” is the equivalent of the formation of the identity over ethnicity during the republican nation building process.

Ayşe says that she is Muslim and belongs to the ummah of Muhammed, and defines herself over the conservative elements of the Kurdish identity. For her, there is no difference in being Turk, Kurd, Laz, and Circassian. As mentioned in previous chapters, religion is the dominant factor that ensures the coexistence of different ethnic identities.

It wouldn't be wrong to say that there is a linear relationship between nationalism and “the other” that feeds each other. “*Nationalist way of thinking includes ‘those that are not one of us’, i.e. ‘the others’.* Nationalist identity is not universal but is local, and gains meaning within a limited community” (Millas, 2017: 192). For sure, the concept of other's existence with nationalist discourse plays a prominent role in creating itself a field of

⁴ An Islamist political view, previously led by Necmettin Erbakan, in which Turkish President Erdogan was raised.

⁵ Here she uses the Islamic term, “hayr”, which means good in the religious sense.

motion and the togetherness of the two concepts ensures the existence of the local within certain limits.

The discourse of “the other” gained importance in the study in terms of the place lived in and the experiences gained in the place arrived. Ayşe’s Erzurum experience can be interpreted as an alienation experience. Being Kurdish shows the separatist aspect of the expression, “You are not one of us.” Here, the concept of “the other” appears in the form that is shown in the concept of “tradition”: “believed to be as such”. “What we inherited – culture, history, language, tradition, identity – cannot be destroyed, but can be crumbled, questioned, rewritten, and redirected” (Chambers, 2014: 44).

Emphasizing ethnic identity while the “alienation” is experienced can be perceived as the way that one defines her limits and positions herself against the society. With the expressions of being from Ağrı and being Kurdish against the expressions of being from Erzurum and being Turkish, Ayşe aims to emphasize that she is categorically the same with “the others”.

Hatice says that she has traveled to Sakarya, Iğdır, Denizli, İzmir, and İstanbul, all alone. To the question, “Have you experienced anything negative there because you are from Ağrı or because you are Kurdish?”, she said the following (Interview with Hatice, 21.07.2018):

Yes, many times. Some were asking, “Are you from Ağrı?” When I said, “Yes, how do you know?”, they said, “It is understood from your way of talking.” I knew Turkish; I didn’t experience something like that. Maybe some did not know that I was Kurdish but from my veil⁶ it was so obvious.

Hatice, who immediately understood what was meant by “negative experiences”, had gone through a similar experience with Ayşe. The evaluation over the way of talking and dressing strengthens the perception of the person’s “alienation”. Also her traditional veil is a piece of clothing that mostly Kurdish women use. This way of veiling is widespread around Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia and lets the identity be resolved in the West.

⁶ Leçek, a traditional veil.

When she was asked about her identity, she says, unwittingly, “[in Kurdish] *We are Kurds, should we lose our essence [identity]? [in Turkish] We are Kurds deep down. Thank Allah we are Muslims, our lineage is Kurdish,*” speaking both Turkish and Kurdish. Emphasizing the religious identity along with Kurdish identity is similar to Ayşe’s experience.

Fatma tells her experience as follows (Interview with Fatma, 22.07.2018): “So far I have gone to İstanbul, Aydın, Iğdır, İzmir, Bursa. Because my skin is darker, and because of my clothes, they asked, ‘Are you from Kars?’”

Here, clothing again is a way of categorization. In other regions, being defined as “the other” can be considered as the determinant dead-end of identity. Skin color and clothing is perceived as being from Kars, and “being darker skinned” is considered as an element of ethnic identity.

Language is the most important means for inter-personal communication. Especially with written media, social media, and visual media’s becoming popular, day by day it is perceived even better that languages are the “dominant” power of the society. Language is not only a means of communication, but it also serves to draw certain lines.

Language, in almost all applications of nationalism, is a cultural element which is intervened and controlled to shape the public sphere. Language is seen as the basic indicator and proof of common identity and the conscience of “us” in the formation of nation, and in the cases that this formation is politically practiced, it is accepted as a means to transform the population which belongs to the nation-state (Balçık, 2017: 776).

As a result, the experience on Kurdish, which is the dominant factor of Kurdish identity, shows both the unifying and discriminating functions of language.

In the transference of intra-generational experience, the undeniable role of language is obvious. In the interviews with the first-generation women, “language” appears as a distinguishing element. Some women “automatically”, and some others due to “obligation”, spoke Turkish-Kurdish, only Turkish, or only Kurdish. While most of the

women knew Kurdish, they said that they understood Turkish, yet could not speak it.

Gülistan, on language, says: “*We always spoke Kurdish. My mom’s village was a Turkish village. In the family it is always Kurdish, mixed*” (Interview with Gülistan, 21.07.2018).

As seen in the case, the family environment appears as the primary location of language acquisition. Those who do not know Kurdish learn Kurdish in the family environment and those who do not know Turkish learn Turkish, again, in the family environment. But there were cases in which there was no such experience.

Fadile, who does not know any Turkish, laughing, said: “No, no, I don’t know. Did it exist back in our times?” (Interview with Fadile, 23.07.2018). She is a different case with her age and the place that she lives. She’s older than the others, and she was raised in a village. From her experience, it can be deduced that speaking Turkish wasn’t widespread and in the family there weren’t many who spoke Turkish.

On the other hand, Zarife, who knows both Turkish and Kurdish, expresses her love of her “mother tongue” by saying, “*I love Kurdish*” (Interview with Zarife, 24.07.2018).

The effects of lifestyle and the environment are seen in all interviews. The women that lived in the village resettled in the city mostly by marriage. The women, who had no knowledge of Turkish in the village, meet with Turkish in city life. Meryem is one of those that moved to Ağrı after marriage and learned Turkish there. She expresses her experience as follows: “*I learned Turkish in Ağrı. I swear to Allah, my children know no Kurdish. They understand but they rarely talk. At home we spoke Turkish*” (Interview with Meryem, 24.07.2018).

The shift from village life to city life affected the language acquisition experience of later generations as well.

Similarly, Halime said: “*I learned Turkish later. I knew some, but not much. When at home we spoke Turkish and I learned. Of course, Kurdish is our mother tongue, I feel more comfortable*” (Interview with Halime, 28.07.2018).

In Halime’s saying, “Kurdish is our mother tongue,” the effects of the environment, era, and space that she was raised in are present. The practices to hinder the use of Kurdish

especially after 1980s are still fresh in the memories of the first generation of women.

Once it is accepted the premise that language is a means for communication, its facilitating effects on everyday life can be found. Altun, one of the interviewees, said that she only knew Kurdish and added: *“I wish I knew Turkish”* (Interview with Altun, 28.07.2018). Especially after moving to the metropolises from Ağrı, she has faced hardships when she used public transport because she did not know Turkish.

In Turkey, Turkish functioned as one of the most important tools of the nationalization process and this process created a negative perception against the people who spoke their local language. Mostly local language is either insulted or banned. The forced migration of Kurds in 1990s because of terror, along with poverty in metropolises due to migration, created two problems in language: First, with migration, the loss of the language that allows communication with the world, and second, with migration, the limitations created by the domination of the dominating language which is not the mother tongue (Demirler & Eşsiz, 2013: 165-180).

The estrangement of women from her language within the framework of ethnic identity on the one hand created problems in expressing herself, and on the other hand, it created the communication problem in the public sphere. In the interviews, most of the first generation interviewees mentioned the uneasiness and the hardships that not knowing both languages well created in their lives. Their lack of good command of both languages created the situation of being stuck “between the devil and the deep blue sea”.

Memmi (Memmi, 2014: 115) says the following on the issue:

The people of colony is freed of illiteracy only by lingual duality. This happens only if he is lucky, because most of the colonized cannot have the chance to suffer from the tortures of bilingualism. They do not have anything other than their mother tongue; i.e. they have a language which is neither written nor read, a language which only allows the development of weak oral culture that is far from being certain.

There were different answers to the question, “Is there a Kurdish problem, and if

there is, how it can be solved?” But the answers were limited with everyday experiences and were not related to the historical context.

Ayşe said the following on Kurdish problem (Interview with Ayşe, 29.07.2018):

The state doesn't like Kurds. Turks are always in the foreground. Kurds cannot share posts on social media as comfortably as Turks. Death is not the solution. May this problem be solved brotherly. Everyone is brothers and sisters. Previously there were many that took to the mountains [to join the PKK], but now no one goes because they are scared.

Giving the answer, “May Allah solve it,” to the question if the problem can be solved, she shows that she does not believe that it can be solved.

Meliha said the following with a mix of Turkish and Kurdish (Interview with Meliha, 29.07.2018):

Sibling is sibling. Turks and Kurds are brothers. May Ahmed-i Hani, Veysel Karani, Aziz Hüdai [religious leaders at the level of saints] be the heralds of peace and this problem be solved. We are Kurds. Turks and Kurds fight because of lack of mind. May Allah solve this. May Allah ensure justice between the Kurd and the Turk. May Allah turn all evils to good and comfort. All are siblings. All are at the same level [i.e. close relatives of each other]. No one benefited from evil.

Nationalism can exist with separating people from each other, by which it becomes universal. As a result, any definition made over “the other” is the struggle of nationalism to create a legitimate ground for itself. As explained in previous chapters, the uniqueness of nationalism is the aim of limiting the other with the definitions and references to issues such as homeland, nation, language, religion, flag, etc.

Gülistan says the following (Interview with Gülistan, 21.07.2018):

No one can live without a homeland. Those who die are also humans but no matter how sorry we feel, no one should make mistakes against their country. When there is a martyr, there are ceremonies but only God knows where the others are... For me, what matters is being martyrs for Islam.

Gülistan's references to "homeland" and "martyrdom" are the clearest example of this.

The answers to the question, "How are your relationships with the state?" among these women are more or less similar. The answers to this question complete each other with the previous question, whether there is a Kurdish problem. Therefore, the women who believe that a Kurdish problem exists emphasize that there are bad state-citizen relations.

Medine says the following on the issue (Interview with Medine, 07.08.2018): "The state does not like Kurds. There is separation between Kurds and Turks in the State. Kurds are not even allowed to speak Kurdish."

Hatice says the following (Interview with Hatice, 21.07.2018):

We live under the same flag. May Allah not harm our state. If this state, police, police force didn't exist, these Kurds would enter homes and rape girls and women back in the time. They still protect us. If the police didn't exist, God knows what these boys would do.

Hatice points out that although she did not experience problems, there are problems between the state and Kurds.

Aysel also says that there are problems with the state because of the Kurdish problem (Interview with Aysel, 04.08.2018):

Kurdish problem exists or not. They want to wipe Kurds out and our Kurds are in deep sleep. Kurds need to unite, they need to be together within the palm, but it doesn't happen. Turks made Kurds to side with them,

Turks made Kurds adapt to them.

Aysel, talking about the relations of Kurds with the state, actually talks about Turkish citizens. For her, Kurds have problems not because of the state but because of Turks and Kurds are assimilated by Turks, unwittingly.

There are different views of the first-generation women of Ağrı on state-citizen relationships. Especially women who live in rural areas believe more that there are problems between Kurds and the state. The first-generation women shared their experiences in the light of the events in recent years.

3.2.2. Ethnic Identity in the Second Generation

In the interviews with the second-generation women, it was found out that they had similar experiences with the first generation on ethnic identity. The same way as the first generation, the women were asked questions regarding mother tongue, ethnic roots, alienation, Kurdish problem, state-citizen relationships, and Kurdish nationalism were in order to analyze their experiences.

It was seen in the interviews with the second-generation Kurdish women of Ağrı that the women were generally involved in the education system only until a certain level. From the aspect of language, the fact that, compared to the previous generation, the second-generation women speak both Turkish and Kurdish enabled them positively both to communicate and endeavor to take place in the public sphere.

Although in Ağrı there have not been bad experiences gone through by both the residents and visitors of Ağrı, women expressed that they had had bad experiences outside Ağrı because of their identity. Here, the problem is that “being Kurdish” and “being terrorist” are seen identical and women face and experience this way of thinking regularly in their everyday lives.

In the study it is seen that on the questions regarding their identity and language, women had dilemmas. They had no problems in their own towns because they were Kurds, but in cities out of Ağrı they claimed to have been accused of speaking Kurdish.

“Identity is always explained by the position of the other as a process, as a narrative, as a discourse.” As explained by Hall, the use of “you”, “I”, “we”, and “they”

allows the existence of both “us” and “the others” in the identity. As a result, the existence of “I” obliges the existence of “the other”. These two live together, giving life to each other.

Ünzile says the following on her experience on “alienation” (Interview with Ünzile, 21.07.2018):

They despised us in Yozgat. They called us terrorists. For a year they did not connect our phone only because we were Kurds. The same happens in Erzurum, too. When I experienced these, I felt more proud of being Kurd. I wanted to learn Kurdish but because they would ridicule and say, “As if you were born of an Armenian, shame on you,” we couldn’t learn it. I swear to Allah, when Kurdish is spoken, people are insulted. In Erzurum, when a patient spoke Kurdish, the doctor did not examine them.

In this experience, being Kurd is considered equal to being terrorist and Kurdish identity is alienated over Armenian identity. In this case, the decisive power of the external elements on living in accordance with the identity is once more seen.

Women who want public services to be provided with their mother tongue expressed that they felt like foreigners in their own country each time when it is not provided and that they experienced problems because of their identity.

Social events and the way that they take place are directly related to how the collective memory is shaped. Moreover, the codes that are used form the legitimate ground of the formation of the collective memory. Assmann (Assmann, 2018: 23) says the following:

Every binding structure’s main principle is repetition. By this, chain of events will not get lost in eternity and it turns into recognizable and recollected samples of a common “culture’s” elements.

Safiye has visited İstanbul and Ankara outside Ağrı and says: “*They say, ‘Oh these*

Kurds, ' to me. I don't accept it; I won't accept it" (Interview with Safiye, 22.07.2018).

With "oh these Kurds", Safiye faces humiliation and alienation both of and over her identity. Also "*oh these Kurds*" can be considered as the expression of Turkish people's collective memory, even if not her own experience.

Melahat says: "*On the way to pilgrimage, a woman from Erzincan said, 'Kurds are always this way, that way.' I didn't care at all. I am pleased with my Kurdishness*" (Interview with Melahat, 23.07.2018). She did not care because she had lived abroad before. She had visited many European countries before and said that she had not faced any problems with her identity being accepted there. The perception of identity in space and cultural codes is seen here.

The concepts of assimilation and integration should be mentioned here. Bilgin (Bilgin, 1994: 75) says the following on the issue:

Social integration is the expression of the mutual dependency of the members of a society with a transformation relationship, and the participation of the members to common values and the rules of order. Assimilation includes melting in the whole while integration includes becoming the part of a whole.

And on integration, maintains:

... when different cultures want to protect each other while living together, there is no other way than integration. Integration is meaningful only when the nation is conceptualized as a political community based on a contract (Bilgin, 2007: 267).

Although the second-generation women are more integrated into the education system compared to the first generation, there are some who don't know any Turkish. Esmer, who lives in the village, knows no Turkish and says the following (Interview with Esmer, 24.07.2018): "*I wish we knew Turkish.*"

Esmer defines herself as Kurdish and wants to know Turkish so that her everyday

life would be easier, she could communicate with people more comfortably, and maybe also she could communicate with her children who study in the city. She points out that she had “integration” problems. The communication problem between village life and city life creates being “*between the devil and the deep sea*”. As Assmann (Assmann, 2018: 154) says, ethnic groups face cultural integration problems when they join another ethno-politic domain by migration, shift, or conquest. “*The dominating culture, the culture of the dominating group, becomes more validity than culture, and marginalizes the cultures that it dominates, by which it becomes the superior culture*”.

Memmi’s (Memmi, 2014: 115-116) ideas on the above-mentioned situation are as follows:

The difference between the mother tongue and the cultural language is not unique for the colony, but colony bilingualism is not comparable to any other bilingualism. Having two languages is not an issue about having two means; it actually means participation in two spiritual and cultural fields. Here the two worlds that are symbolized and carried by two languages are in conflict; these are the worlds of the colony and the colonizer.

Esmer says the following on the Kurdish problem (Interview with Esmer, 24.07.2018): “*May Allah fix it. May Allah fix [end] the war. Both are brothers,*” and adds: “*Nothing is being done for Kurds.*” She repeats her wish for peace, “Turks and Kurds are brothers” again.

Gülten is luckier than Esmer. She is bilingual and says the following (Interview with Gülten, 25.07.2018):

My mom is Kurd, my dad is Kurd -- it is our mother tongue. We spoke both Turkish and Kurdish when we were children. At home we spoke Kurdish. The children cannot talk, only understand a bit. They want to learn it, too, since they are Kurds.

The wish of the children to learn Kurdish is not to ease everyday life but stems from their “Kurdish” identity. Speaking Kurdish at home is transferred between generations, and Gülten can speak as a result. Yet because there is no such an environment now, the children cannot speak Kurdish. In addition to that, there is no inter-generational transfer in teaching mother tongue.

Identity is a reality in which the individual defines herself with different elements. There are differences in the ways that the individual defines herself in accordance with the environment. To the question, “Do you think language is an identity?” Nurhayat says: “*Of course, it should be.*” To the question, “How will you define yourself according to the language?” she says: “*We learned that way, of course I would want to speak Kurdish as well, but I am not comfortable*” (Interview with Nurhayat, 27.07.2018). Nurhayat has the chance to choose between the two languages, and with identifying identity with language, has a different approach than the others.

The experiences on language of the second-generation women show that choosing between the two languages brings identity conflicts. Harmonious coexistence of language and identity is what is desired, yet the experiences show that differences bring alienation.

The dilemma on language also exists on the issue of the Kurdish problem for the second-generation women of Ağrı. The intertwinement of speaking Kurdish and the Kurdish identity causes Kurdish nationalism discourses to come to the agenda.

Halide experiences alienation similar with the first-generation women and says the following (Interview with Halide, 29.07.2018):

When I said that I was from Ağrı, they were so surprised. First, it's my complexion. People of Ağrı are always dark- or black-skinned. Second, my accent. And also, my comfort, I mean my clothing. I was trying to explain that I was not not that way. Of course, I was feeling uneasy, especially when I said that I was Kurdish. But I'm against Kurdism. Actually, they are right in some senses. Because they watch it on the TV, look at the way that Ağrı is introduced to people. They always show Mount Ağrı [Ararat] and the people at its

foothills. This is how it is done from outside. I believe it is also because of us. It is always reflected with bad things. There is no good news. This child is kidnapped, that terrorist is from Ağrı. They shouldn't be blamed but we shouldn't have prejudices. Not all are the same.

Halide's experience is the same as that of Fatma from the first generation, as she also is dark skinned. She makes a difference between "being Kurdish" and "Kurdism" and she has the capacity to oversee the issues differently because of her level of education. She says that she means "Kurdish nationalism" with "Kurdism" and emphasizes that the perception socially created and managed causes Kurds to be seen as "terrorists".

Songül believes that there is a Kurdish problem and her comments on the issue are as follows (Interview with Songül, 26.07.2018):

It exists. According to me, it exists on both sides. There are those meaninglessly extremist Kurds for example; you know these [terrorist] organizations, this and that. But there are Turks that think all Kurds are the same. For example, I have lived among Turks and felt this discrimination. When I said I was Kurdish, even my neighbor took me as if I was a member of the PKK. Because of this, even if there is not conflict, there is this prejudice. They ask why you don't call yourself mixed-blood. My mother-in-law doesn't like Kurds at all. When she talks about something bad, she says "like dirty [bad] Kurds". She is Kurdish, her husband is Turkish. She doesn't accept Kurdishness. She speaks perfect Kurdish.

To the question, "What can be the solution to the problem, she says:

In my opinion, they should take down all those at the mountains [the terrorists]. The result of the solution process is worse. I believe that the state should show its

power, they should understand that the state cannot be divided.

Here, a Kurdish person does not accept her Kurdish identity, in which “alienation of the alienated” is seen. The expression, “dirty Kurds” can be considered as the outcome of “remembrance” and “repetition” of the past.

Believing that the solution process did not end the way it was aimed in the beginning, she says that as the state did all it could to solve the issue, from now on, the measures taken should be “tougher”.

In another case, though, the opposite of this is argued for. Ayten says the following on the issue (Interview with Ayten, 04.08.2018):

For example, I go to İstanbul, to my children. When I say that I am Kurdish, they get away from me. When I say that I am from Ağrı, they exclude me. They do not talk to me; they do not care. Well, let it be. It is because Kurds are so suppressed. May there be equality between Turks and Kurds. They exclude Kurds. I was scared when I was going there. I said, feeling that I had to, that I am from Erzincan so that they wouldn't exclude me. Statesmen are to solve this; they should make Kurds and Turks equal.

Ayten says that the solution is establishing equality among citizens, and she said she is from Erzurum and hid her being from Ağrı with the fear of exclusion. Here, it is once more seen that the perceptions, “terrorist sympathizer”, “terrorist organization membership”, being related to simply being Kurdish, hinder living the Kurdish identity freely.

Asiye is the one that knows Kurdish the least among the interviewees and says the following (Interview with Asiye, 06.08.2018): *“I actually tried to learn it, but failed. There is the Kurdish problem, it is not right to deem terror and Kurds equal. The PKK fools Kurds; there are those that believe them, though. If racism did not exist there, it would be solved.”*

Asiye couldn't learn Kurdish because it wasn't spoken much around her and thinks that Turkish and Kurdish nationalisms are obstacles against the solution of the Kurdish problem. She makes a difference between the PKK and Kurds and sees the PKK as a means which uses Kurds, which shows that she is more conscious than the previous women in terms of identity.

Women seemed to relate the Kurdish problem with state-citizens relationship, similar to the previous generation. The ongoing continuation of the Kurdish problem is considered as a sign of the existence and continuation of potential identity crises.

Hanife says the following on her relationship with the state (Interview with Hanife, 04.08.2018): "Nothing is being done for Kurds."

Mehtap has a different perspective on the problem. Her answers to the questions, "How do you see the Kurdish problem, does it exist; and if it does, is it economic-, social-, or identity-based, and how will the problem be solved?" are as follows (Interview with Mehtap, 07.08.2018):

If you mean identity that is up to the individual it is not given, but obtained by the people. If you mean state policies, I have seen many bad places in the west [Western Anatolia], ruined villages.

It is social; it is some kind of an inferiority complex in Kurds. It is because they insult, okay, but it is done to some others by some others. It is not related to being Kurd. Non-Kurd insults someone else somehow if he wants to insult. But this became an identity with us, this is how I see it. This caused some sort of a complex in us, as if we are inferior to them. In Kurds, this is something made. With reading, trying to understand, without hating, with loving, this problem will be solved. I talked to someone recently. "All of these should be killed." Not those that sympathize Kurds, those that sympathize the PKK. If killing is the solution, all might kill each other. First of all, this

hateful discourse should stop. After that, with good sense. Because if someone hates another, he wouldn't manage to understand her. To understand, first he should think calmly.

The solution? In the family. Of course from below, from the ground.

Mehtap, similar to the previous generation, makes a clear difference between being Kurdish and being member of the organization.

To similar questions, Miyase says the following (Interview with Miyase, 25.07.2018):

If one is beneficent to our state, to Islam, whichever works for Allah, whichever has belief, whichever is not unjust to the people, whichever is not unjust towards the people, may it be. What matters is if this duty is given to you, do it for Allah, not to please others. I don't know. The [price] raises made people so, something. Now the people don't know who to trust. One kilogram of tomatoes is five Liras now. Turkey is in a very bad situation. Before, we were able to buy everything. That is over now. Believe me, we cannot afford our expenses for home now. We cannot send our children to school. We cannot spend for eid comfortably.

Miyase, different than other women, shared her experiences on the effects of the problem on economy. Actually, it can be said that she became the voice of other women. The women that were interviewed before her had hinted the relation of the problem with economy, but they had not shared their ideas on the issue.

Merve, like Songül, accepts the existence of the Kurdish problem and says the following on the issue (Interview with Merve, 03.08.2018):

Sure there is a Kurdish problem. We live with it,

willingly or not. Kurds' situation is visible. People are scared to say that they are Kurds, especially nowadays. We just wait and watch the events from outside.

Zeytin makes a difference between Kurdishness and Kurdism and says the following (Interview with Zeytin, 09.08.2018):

I mean that I am against extreme nationalism when I say I am against Kurdism. My race is Kurd. Kurd is the same with Turk. We are from the same state, same flag. For me, we all have the same rights. For example, our past president Turgut Özal was Kurdish. Is there discrimination, no. Yes, back in time there was discrimination, but now it is not possible.

Second-generation women argued that there was a Kurdish problem, and this created the perception that all Kurds are PKK members while it is not true. They said that ethnic-identity-based discrimination would harm everyone. The responses to the question of various women are as follows (Interview with Mahmure, 05.08.2018):

There is a Kurdish problem. I don't know if this is done by other states or from inside. We live on the same land. Syria's situation is obvious. We are scared of becoming like them. I don't know, may Allah make it better.

There is a Kurdish problem. Deeming terror and Kurds the same is not right. The PKK fools Kurds; there are those that believe in it, though. If racism does not exist, it will be solved (Interview with Şehriban, 05.08.2018).

3.2.3. Ethnic Identity in the Third Generation

In the interviews with the third-generation women of Ağrı on ethnic identity, it was found that the common point of these women was that they were involved in the education system and they either were in the process of the current 12-years education process or

graduated. Another common point is that these women were living together and were grown up together with the first- and second-generation women who had alienation and discrimination experiences on identity and language issues. As a result, their experiences were expressed within the recent social/economic developments. Also, official history and education narratives were often emphasized.

All of these women were involved in the education system, therefore they all know Turkish. With Kurdish, they all had different experiences. While some knew Kurdish from birth, others learned it later at home or among their friends.

Helin, who didn't know Kurdish until she was 14-15, is one of those that learned Kurdish later. She said that she still did not know the numbers and, on the Kurdish problem, she said, "*Kurds are always in the background, the state discriminates them*" (Interview with Helin, 23.07.2018). She tells her experiences based on the experiences of the first- and second-generation women and talks about the unequal situation between Turks and Kurds.

One important point observed in the interviews with the third-generation women is their freer and not abstained way of expressing their ideas. In this, being educated, benefiting from social opportunities and the mobility between rural and urban areas have important effects.

Dilara does not know Kurdish but wants to learn it (Interview with Dilara, 28.07.2018):

I can understand it. I wanted to learn it so much. Because it's my own language. I even blame myself so much for this but... In my family it's not used much. Only my grandmother. My mom also doesn't know Kurdish much. My father speaks Kurdish well.

Dilara said the following to the question, "Do you want to learn it because of your Kurdish identity?" (Interview with Dilara, 28.07.2018):

It is my own language in the end. A language is a fortune. Why not? Just because it is Kurdish... I am studying at a place like Erzurum. A city of *dadaşş* [the

people from Erzurum are called dadaş]. You are Kurdish, this and that... But I did not feel lowly because of this.

The answer to the question, “Did you feel any discrimination?” is as follows (Interview with Dilara, 28.07.2018):

Discrimination. In all jokes there are Kurds. In the beginning, I was uncomfortable so much because I was so young. I went to the madrasa at the age of 12. But later I realized that, as there are extreme Kurdistans, they have the same sensitivity like, ‘I am Turk’. I respect it, it is not so visible but there is some perception because of the way that the people are raised. I was the first Kurd that attended the course. Before I went there, my reputation went there. They apparently talked about me a lot. When I went there, friends from the next table said, ‘Are you Kurdish? Are you really Kurdish? You don’t look like Kurds. After you, our perception of Kurds has changed’.

To the question of how Kurds are, she said:

My closest friend said, “I hated Kurds. They are dirty, they smell bad, they were spitting on the corridors of the hospital, dark and weak, ignorant. When I saw you, I was so surprised. Now I like Kurds.”

To the question of how she felt when her friend said these, she answered:

I of course felt bad. They treat you as if you are a foreigner. This didn’t change my feelings about Kurdishness; I was just upset, heartbroken.

Assimilation is an important means to actualize identity policies. “*Assimilation, generally, means the power relations between two groups, one sovereign, and one not*”

(Kirişçi & Winrow, 2000: 15). Dilara, who was attending the madrasa in Erzurum, went through the experience of rediscovering her identity with the difference of “the good Kurd” and “the bad Kurd”. Her struggle to reintroduce and make herself accepted with her Kurdish identity is similar to silent scream, “*No, I am not assimilated.*”

In the Turkification policies that were practiced as a result of the national identity building process and struggle for modernization during the republican era, there are signs of this reality. Mesut Yeğen (Yeğen, 2006: 90) explains how Kurdish problem was seen by state during republic era as follows:

... Kurdish problem is coded as the resistance of reactionaries, tribes, or the local lords against Turkish Republic by Turkish nationalism, or an issue of public order which was provoked by foreigners and caused by some citizens, at times and a matter of development that is caused with the backwardness of the region. Within all these, one thing in the perception of Turkish nationalism on the issue has never changed: **Kurds could become Turks.**

Bauman (Bauman, 2017b: 199), over the case of the German Jewish experience, approaches the concept of assimilation as follows: For him, assimilation is a phenomenon more than an intercultural exchange. The concept’s meaning and importance is from the nationalization of the modern state, i.e. the struggle for lingual, cultural, legal, and ideological unity of the people it rules. The biggest intolerance of homogeneity projects of nation states is disapproval of differences, i.e. diversity and vagueness.

The third-generation women expressed their ideas on the Kurdish problem in the light of recent developments.

Dilara says the following on Kurdish problem (Interview with Dilara, 28.07.2018):

For example, I don’t like this: I am Kurdish. First, people should settle their Muslim identity. Because they are lacking something in this, they need a different identity. The only identity of a person is being Muslim.

Turkish, Kurdish, these are races. Because I have a different race than a person, I cannot act as if I am superior. It doesn't matter if I am Turk or Kurd, both are wrong. Because our Prophet says, 'Nationalism is under my feet.' What matters for me is the person being Muslim. Both sides always push each other, one saying, "I am Kurdish," the other saying, "I am Turkish." Kurdishness is not an identity for me. I only want to say I am Muslim.

To the question how it will be solved, she said:

Awareness on Islam needs to be raised in people.

Dilara makes ethnic identity and race separation and sees her being Muslim as an identity and refuses Turkish-Kurdish identities. She explains her dislike towards nationalism with religious references and emphasizes that being Muslim is superior to both.

Aslı, who knows Turkish and Kurdish, says the following to the question whether she had problems in Istanbul because of her Kurdish identity (Interview with Aslı, 27.07.2018):

In Istanbul, I... Generally it is a Kurdish thing but I was so uncomfortable always in one thing: In the bus, when they asked where I was from, and when I said I was from Ağrı, they said, 'So be it.' I feel so offended then. I am not ashamed of my Kurdishness. I am more comfortable in Turkish; I cannot translate some words of Kurdish. I would want my children to learn Kurdish; they may learn their mother tongue.

Akhtar (Akhtar, 2018: 57), who analyzes the effects of migration over individuals, says the following:

May it be from one country to another or from a region to another, migration always causes a "culture shock".

The anxiety that follows it threatens the psychic organization's balance. Another threat that can cause problems is the mourning of those that are lost that are caused by the nature of migration. Coexistence of culture shock and mourning causes trauma in the identity of the individual. Psychic disintegration happens and the feeling that identity durability is spoiled. Newcomers, as if they left their ordinary natural environment, cannot have the necessary environmental support which is necessary for self-identity. The severity of the threats against the identity of the individual is parallel to the severity of the mourning that accompanies it. Because of this, the extent of the breaking of the newcomer's identity durability increases longing for the love objects (abandoned culture) which give the individual comfort and allowed durability which are lost. On the other hand, as longing for those abandoned love objects increase, threats against the identity become more painful and distressing.

As Akhtar (2018) states, the immigrant experience difficulty in continuing with their previous life while also exhibit a tendency to protect their identity. In the sample below, Aslı, who wants her children to learn Kurdish, in one respect shows a reflex of protecting her identity and maintain the continuity.

Aslı says the following on the Kurdish problem (Interview with Aslı, 27.07.2018):

I believe it exists. For example, the investments to the West are way more than what is done here. Sometimes they make us feel that Kurds are second-class citizens. For example, in bigger towns, they say, 'We understand that you are from the east from the way you talk,' and I feel so offended by this. When I went to Istanbul, I became more conscious. In every respect. I feel sad for

those [that join the PKK], too. Maybe if they knew the truth, they wouldn't join. I feel sad, I feel sad for both sides.

When she was asked which side is more tolerant, she said:

I have never seen the reactions of that side. They are getting angrier with Kurds. For example, between 2011 and 2013, my landlords were saying, "Why aren't those Kurdish villages at the borders getting bombed? May they wipe Kurds off the map." It tears my heart out. Because I was so little back then, I couldn't define myself. Now if you asked what I'd say to your neighbors, I'd say, "You say that but maybe those that joined the PKK are hurt? Not everyone is fanatical. Okay, maybe most voted for the HDP [the pro-Kurdish political party] but they do it because of valid reasons for themselves." When the majority is Turkish, one cannot respond. They label you as a terrorist.

When asked if she felt changes in her Kurdish identity, she said:

I became more... I became more nationalist. Because everywhere in Istanbul is mixed, you go to a town ... But because of my personality, they always liked me a lot. Until they got to know me, when it was said that I had come from Ağrı, they called me ignorant, a peasant. After they got to know me, they got so surprised. Ağrı is mostly known by its backwardness in the West. Ignorance is not because of Kurdishness; it is because you are from Ağrı.

Aslı's experiences show the effect of the environment on the perception of how ethnic identity is perceived. Similar to the previous cases, she went through redefining her identity in different cities, as well as trying to make it accepted. Aslı, who admits that a Kurdish problem exists, shares her experiences by comparing them while in Ağrı and

İstanbul. She has no problems with her ethnic identity in Ağrı while experiencing a “culture shock” at first hand in İstanbul. The culture shock, while inconveniencing her daily life, also brings about the process of becoming the other. The experience indicates the difficulty in admitting the Kurdish identity.

Safiye learned Kurdish within her family and the surrounding people and while accepting her Kurdish identity, she says the following (Interview with Safiye, 04.08.2018):

I am disturbed with the Kurdish identity this way: You know, there are terrorist organizations. We are seen as if we are involved in terrorism. This disturbs me because I love my homeland, my country.

Safiye calls for a differentiation between Kurds and terrorist organizations and, like Aslı, she accepts the existence of the Kurdish problem (Interview with Safiye, 04.08.2018):

There is a Kurdish problem. The reason is that “a man is a wolf to another man.” The saying of a philosopher. No one has problems with another. Because our country is rich both geographically and culturally, it left its own heritage. Ottomans, Mesopotamians, Seljuks. This country is one that isn’t allowed to be developed. I don’t believe that the terrorist organization is originally Kurdish. There is a plot by which they can push the country to the corner; they don’t want the country to develop.

To the question how will it be solved, she said:

Kurds will not be fanatical, you also know that the organization is not Kurdish, you won’t follow it. The state does its best right now. This is not a one-sided thing. The opposite side is us, too.

Safiye talks about the international aspect of the problem and has a different view than the previous women. She points out that the problem should be sought abroad and says that the real “enemy” should be sought abroad while the “insiders” should act in

accordance with this.

Zuhal knows only Turkish and no Kurdish and says the following on the issue (Interview with Zuhal, 25.07.2018): *“I went to a Kurdish course only once because I was interested. When I saw that it was so hard, I quit.”*

Many women from the third generation said that they had attended some courses to learn Kurdish but they failed to continue.

About her identity, she says the following (Interview with Zuhal, 25.07.2018): *“After my Muslim identity, my Kurdish identity comes – even though I don’t know the Kurdish language.”* Here, Kurdish identity is embraced even if Kurdish is not known. It can be said that this is the result of the memory that comes from the family, from history.

Zuhal’s opinions on Kurdish problem are as follows (Interview with Zuhal, 25.07.2018):

There is such a problem in many places. Kurds are mostly seen as criminals. Everywhere they think Kurds are guilty. Kurds are so religious and they aren’t like that. Turks aren’t like that and see this as guilt. They see Kurds this way. Kurd and Turk are one. Turks are martyrs, Kurds are martyrs. Not all Kurds should be considered the same. Now those that join the PKK and those that are here are the same. They are so different; these are so different. The mentality is different.

According to Zuhal, there is a categorical discrimination against Kurds and for her “being Kurdish” and “being guilty” are synonymous and this is widely interiorized by the society.

Ayla knows both languages and says the following to the questions (Interview with Ayla, 24.07.2018):

I don’t know Kurdish very well because my family speaks Turkish. I speak both languages. My human identity comes first. I have traveled a lot. Mostly when

I was at the university, in Erzincan and Erzurum, I was both humiliated and excluded because of my Kurdish identity. When something bad happened, they thought that Kurds did it. When there were similarities, directly to Kurds... Even our professors were doing it. After all, I was born Kurdish. This is my identity. Whatever they do, I can't change it, neither can they. Just like they were born Turk, I was born Kurd. I am not to hide my identity.

On the Kurdish problem she says the following (Interview with Ayla, 24.07.2018):

I don't think that Kurds, you know... We do it to ourselves. We don't value our daughters, we don't send them to school, to outside, we don't let them have a social circle, there is no social life. I don't think it'll change this way. They say, "May Turk and Kurd be equal," but that is rather hard. If the environment doesn't change, the people don't change. First, the environment should change. We live in a small place, if there will be transformation, it will change here faster.

It is seen that the third-generation women's bad experiences that they had because of their Kurdish identity are similar to each other. It is thought that the biggest reasons of this are the recently ended solution process, ditch politics, etc. The fracture in the social arena and the events which in the meantime triggered the disintegration process made ethnic identity consciousness settle in the younger generation, and them interpreting events with this, made it more visible.

Zehra says that she is Kurdish and learned Kurdish in school later in her life, and says the following (Interview with Zehra, 29.07.2018): "*I understand Kurdish but cannot speak it.*"

She believes that the Kurdish problem exists and says the following on the issue (Interview with Zehra, 29.07.2018):

Of course there is such a problem. They mix up, they compare normal Kurds with those on the mountains. I am Kurdish, I have nothing to do with them, but there are ongoing comparisons. Turks and Kurds are equal. In the [National] Assembly, they have their say as well.

Selma knows Turkish and on Kurdish she says, “*I wish I knew it*” (Interview with Selma, 30.07.2018). When she was asked about her identity, she says: “*I am a good person, then Muslim, then Kurdish, I say*”. Her opinions on the Kurdish problem are as follows (Interview with Selma, 30.07.2018):

There is no Kurdish problem. Kurds and Turks live in the same conditions. They can speak their languages and attend schools. The PKK definitely isn't a problem related to Kurds. They use the name of Kurds. The solution is killing all PKK members.

Selma, unlike the previous ones, finds the solution in killing all PKK members.

Selma's will to learn Kurdish can be better understood with Memmi's (Memmi, 2014: 115-116) following arguments:

The mother tongue of the colonized, which sustains the feelings, ideas, loves of them, actually is the *least valued* language. In the society or the union of the people, it has no prestige. To have a position in the society, to find a job, they first should obey to the official language. He himself tries to put aside, hide from foreigners this weak language. In short, this is neither a bilingual situation in which a local language coexists with the language of a purist, nor the richness of multilingualism in which an additional but comparably new alphabet is being used: This is a *linguistic drama*.

The women's will to speak their own language in the interviews on the one hand

involves the fear of exclusion and on the other hand contains the contradiction of seeing it a part of their own identity.

State-citizen relations' association with the Kurdish problem by the first two generations applies to the last generation as well.

First two generations of women, in general, have an idea on whether the Kurdish problem exists or not, but there are those in the last generation who said that they have never heard of the problem. Hanife said: *"I have never heard of a Kurdish problem"* (Interview with Hanife, 06.08.2018). After this, she adds that she doesn't like the people of Diyarbakır because they see themselves too separate and apart from Turks and they make discrimination. Hanife's experience, unwittingly, hints the existence of the Kurdish problem.

Connerton (Connerton, 2014: 11) says the following on the collective memory and remembrance.

... When the images of the past come together, they show the existing social order as legitimate. It is a hidden rule to assume that those that joined a social order have common memories. These people, based on the level of the differences in memories related to the society's past, neither will have common experiences nor common assumptions. The results of this are most visible in the obstacles that exist in the communication between different generations that have totally different memories. The clusters made up of different memories, that are visible as inter-generational background narratives, will conflict with each other. It can be to the extent that different generations, even if they lived together at a certain place and time, can be totally disconnected mentally and emotionally. The memories of a generation can be locked in the brains and bodies of the members of that generation, to the extent that they cannot be recovered.

In Hanife's experience, although the previous two generations can provide detailed information on their everyday lives on the issue, she says that she has never heard of a Kurdish problem, which demonstrates that there was a serious interruption in experience transfer between generations. Because her way of remembrance is different from the previous generations, inter-generational conflicts must be taken into consideration.

Zelal's experience is so different from Hanife's and is a case in which individual remembrance is highly active. On the Kurdish problem, she says the following:

"I want the middle ground to be found, everyone should get their shares. I am not hopeful of peace. I didn't think things would go this wrong after the peace process".

The process between 2013 and 2014, which was called "solution process" or "peace term", especially in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolian cities, increased hopes that the problem of terrorism was going to be finished and hopes were raised for a transformation process as there were efforts for normalization in relations between the state and the citizens. Nonetheless, these hopes disappeared when the process was cut in the following term. Zelal says that she has information on the process within the conditions of the region and could observe the changes before and after the process (Interview with Zelal, 26.07.2018).

There are differences at some points on state-citizen relations between the third generation and previous generations. Because they are younger and because they had limited relations with the state yet, they express themselves based on the experiences of their environment, family, and in general, the society.

Ayla tells her opinions on the way that the Kurdish identity is lived in the public sphere (Interview with Ayla, 24.07.2018):

Actually I don't make much discrimination. There is such a problem. For example, my friends also make Turk-Kurd discrimination. They question if you are Kurd or Turk. This is wrong. We should question if you are human first. For me it doesn't matter. Many families speak differently with their children. And children reflect to the people what they hear from their

families. For me, people should change their ideas. For example, in my class such a thing happened: “You are Kurd, you don’t like Turks. But you study in Turkish schools, live in Turkey, live under the Turkish flag, why aren’t you Turkish?” There are such problems. They may be Turk or Kurd. There is no problem in this. They only need to unite.

Equality in the public sphere is essential. Habermas’ ideas on the topic are as follows (Habermas, 2004: 95-102):

... Access to this sphere of all citizens is guaranteed. In each speech case that private individuals gathered together forming a public body, a part of the public sphere comes into existence. The acts of individuals in such coexistences aren’t similar to either the acts of employers or workers during carrying out their private matters, nor the acts of the members of a constitutional order that are limited with the legal boundaries of a state bureaucracy. Only when citizens can discuss issues that are related to public good with no limitations, i.e. when their gathering, organization, expression, and publication rights are guaranteed, they act as a public body.

3.3. The Transformation of Religious Identity in Three Generations of Women

In this part, how religious identity perception of Kurdish women in Ağrı is reflected on their everyday experiences is studied. In the study, the effects of religion on the woman identity are aimed to be understood.

The following questions were asked to women, which are related to the way that they experience religious identity:

- How do you define yourself in terms of religious identity?

- Can you give some information about your religious ceremonies?
- Do you fast and do you pray?
- For you, which one of the two is more prominent: Religious identity or ethnic identity?
- Where do you learn about your customs and traditions?
- What do “Kurdishness” and “being Sunni” mean for you?

In the fieldwork, it was observed how the women that were raised in an environment in which traditional social values dominate perceive especially their Sunni identities and how it affects their lives. In the study, by asking questions on how religious rituals are carried out and how traditions are transferred, the experiences of women and the effects of these experiences on their everyday lives are scrutinized based on the whether social memory is transferred inter-generationally, the term in which the women attend services like funerals, fasting, or prayers, Quranic knowledge, and veiling.

During the study, within the general theme of religious identity transformation, internal and external factors that affect religious identity formation of women from all three generations were taken into consideration. The effects of upbringing, education levels, and the environment in which the women live are aimed to be understood. As a result, so as to learn about the legacy of the religious identity in their memories and how they live and transfer it, the questions and answers that have findings on the religious lives and perceptions of the interviewees are present in this part.

3.3.1. Religious Identity in the First Generation

In this part, the everyday experiences of the first-generation women on religious rituals, veiling, funeral services, and the way that traditions and customs are learned are studied. Almost all women in this generation fast and pray. The women expressed that they carry out their religious services in the Sunni sect of Islam. Many said that they had started fasting and praying at an early age, yet the way that they had learned these differ from each other. In the interviews with the first-generation women, it was found out that most of them had transferred religious traditions to the next generation.

In the study, veiling and headscarf issues are considered based on their everyday clothing. Veiling or headscarf is seen as a customary tradition by these first-generation women.

Ayşe says the following on the question to veiling (Interview with Ayşe, 21.07.2018): *“I have been in veil since I was a child.”* During the interview, she could not recall how old she was when she had been veiled and emphasized that such an inclination had been in general practice around her.

To the question when she had been gone in veil, Hatice says: *“Later, we got married, I was always veiled, we have been in veil for a long time”* (Interview with Hatice, 21.07.2018). Marriage was experienced as a justification for her veiling.

Fatma has a similar experience to that of Hatice (Interview with Fatma, 22.07.2018): *“Until I was married I had not been veiled and after marriage I got the veil. I wear headscarf not in accordance with Islam but in accordance with traditions. Because of respect, shame.”*

Fatma’s experience shows a difference in veiling. Fatma makes a difference between the types of veiling and emphasizes that she is veiled similar to the previous generations, not in the Islamic fashion. Also by approaching to veiling with reasons *“shame, respect,”* etc., she legitimizes the traditional view on veiling.

Most of the first-generation women cover their heads in the traditional way. Many women did not start veiling by their own will but by the effects of the environment and the family. Altun’s experience, which is similar to the one mentioned above, is as follows (Interview with Altun T., 28.07.2018): She says that she has been veiled since she was 14-15, and adds: *“This is our tradition.”*

Fadile has been veiled since childhood and says: *“It was sin”* (Interview with Fadile, 23.07.2018).

Fadile, who considers not covering her head a *“sin”*, has the same experience with the women from her generation.

Makbule says that she has been veiled since a latter age compared to her

contemporaries and adds (Interview with Makbule, 30.07.2018): “*Taşlıçay is suggestive⁷, I covered my head after my grandchild was born.*”

When the experiences of the first-generation women of Ağrı on veiling are considered, it is found that almost all are transferors of experience of the previous generation. Women do not take initiatives about veiling and they express their reasons of veiling based on the learned experiences. Especially after growing in age and reaching puberty, women are seen to be more inclined towards veiling. Veiling is justified with “*shame*” and “*customs*”.

Environmental difference was a factor which led to differences in shaping religious teachings and rituals. Women from Central Ağrı are more conservative figures while in other districts where different socio-economic cultures exist consent is sought rather than traditional ways of thinking.

The question of whether the first-generation women veil themselves willingly or not proved to be unfruitful. The ages and the perception of traditions-customs of the environment for women of this generation forced them to be veiled. As a result, “*obligatory*” became equal with “*that is with consent*”. At this point, the cultural memory, which was also mentioned by Assman (Assmann, 2018: 13), reveals the historical process of the experiences.

Religious rituals include different types of worship for women from men. As a result, in the study, types of worship are limited to praying, fasting, going to pilgrimage or umrah, and knowing or reading the Quran.

Ayşe says the following on her experiences about her worships (Interview with Ayşe, 21.07.2018): “*I pray, I fast. I learned the Quran just recently. We don’t have a religious sect. We gather at the mosque to read the Quran. I don’t do dhikr like religious sects. What’s the need...*”

Hatice who has been fasting since the age of seven and praying for 47 years says that she doesn’t know how to read the Quran and has gone to umrah thrice and pilgrimage once (Interview with Hatice, 21.07.2018).

⁷ Here the saying “açık saçık” is used. This idiom mainly means not covering heads while also being sexually suggestive. As a result, rather than not covered, suggestive is used in the text.

Meliha says that she has been fasting all her life, started praying after giving birth to her last child, and learned the Quran when she was in Yozgat (Interview with Meliha, 29.07.2018).

Meryem has been praying for 30 years. She does not know how to read the Quran and tells the reason of this as follows (Interview with Meryem, 24.07.2018): “*I swear to Allah, they did not let us. Our responsibilities...*” Just as she could not attend school because of housework, she could not learn the Quran as well.

Because her father was an imam, Gülten knows how to read the Quran. She started praying and fasting with the effects of her father’s vocation. She said, laughing: “*I once fasted when I was little and I fainted*” (Interview with Gülten, 29.07.2018)

For almost all women, the period of time in which religious rituals starts has similar characteristics. For some, veiling starts with marriage while for others, it starts in childhood.

On the field, women were asked about what they did in funerals. Most of the women narrated their experiences from family, traditions, or the environment. In these experiences, inter-generational continuity is found. It is observed that in spontaneous experiences, women are not as active as they are in other rituals.

Makbule says the following on her experiences in funerals (Interview with Makbule, 30.07.2018): On the fourth day, Islamic memorial service is held and halva and food is given. On 40th and 52nd days, and the anniversary Islamic memorial service is held and hayr is given⁸.

Sevcan’s funeral experiences are as follows (Interview with Sevcan, 05.08.2018):

For three days, mourning, and for three days, food is given. Meat, rice, salad, and tsatsiki is given. On the third day we hold Islamic memorial service. On 40th and 52nd days, and on the anniversary, we hold Islamic memorial service. The Quran is recited.

Meliha shares similar experiences (Interview with Meliha, 29.07.2018):

⁸ Here “hayr” means generally money that is given to needy for the soul of the deceased.

In funerals, on the third day we hold Islamic memorial service and give food. For a week Quran is recited. After the third day, the funeral house is closed and the house of the relative of the dead is visited. Weekly prayers and 52 days don't exist. We hold Islamic memorial service on 40th day and the anniversary. A sum of a person's one year's food expenses is given to orphans or widows.

Ayşe also has similar experiences (Interview with Ayşe, 21.07.2018):

On the third day food is given and Islamic memorial service is held. On 40th and 52nd days, and the anniversary, again, food is given and Islamic memorial service is held. On the anniversary, hayr is given to poor.

Gülten, on funerals, says: *“On the third day we hold Islamic memorial service. Now I do on the seventh. On the 40th, and 52nd days, and the anniversary, the Quran is recited, and bead prayers are dona”* (Interview with Gülten, 29.07.2018).

Fadile is not different from the others (Interview with Fadile, 23.07.2018):

On the third day Islamic memorial service is held, the Quran is recited. On the seventh day, food is given. On the 40th and 52nd days, the Quran is recited, food is given. On the anniversary, food is given according to financial availability and the Quran is recited.

Kader's experience is as follows (Interview with Kader, 07.08.2018):

They go and bury the body. Men are at one funeral house and women at another. They recite the Quran here. On the third day, they hold Islamic memorial service and give food. Food is fried meat, rice, salad. Before, the family was covering the expenses, now it is given as hayr, it is done collectively. In the old times,

the condolence lasted for 1-2 months. People used to go for condolence. TV wasn't turned on. Now it is not like that. Now, after three days, TV is turned on. Before, there were the weekly prayers, the 40th and 52nd were held. Now it doesn't exist. When a year is over, an animal is sacrificed and to each home, one kilogram [of the meat] is given.

Kader compares old and new experiences. In her comparison, she complains that the past experiences were more "right and good" and over time, traditions have been lost slowly. She finds previous generation's experiences more precious and it can be argued that she had formally different experiences with the previous generation.

In the first-generation women of Ağrı, almost all styles of funerals are similar to each other. The uniform practices in religious rituals are related to the homogeneity of religious preferences.

It is seen in the interviews made with the women, especially on funerals, that all women are conservative and they intend to take good care of each phase of the services. As a result, it can be said that women continue to live with the knowledge and experiences that they gained from the previous generation.

3.3.2. Religious Identity in the Second Generation

In this part, religious identity experiences of the second-generation women are presented. The second-generation women of Ağrı's religious identity experiences differ from the first-generation women's experiences at certain points. One important point that catches attention in experiences is that women are veiled mostly by their own will. Another point is that the second-generation women approach their religious identity experiences more critically. Considering the socio-economic and political developments of the period that they live through, it is seen that the second-generation women witnessed an "alienation" process on their religious identity that they experienced alienation themselves, and the effects of these reflected on their current everyday experiences.

Veiling, for the second-generation women, shows up at certain milestones in their lives. In this sense, asking these women, who have different experiences than the first

generation, whether they have been veiled because of their own will or because of pressure was very meaningful.

Getting engaged, marriage, puberty, and motherhood eras were effective in the women of this generation's decisions to become veiled.

Melahat's experience, who started using veil after getting engaged, reveals the reality that she did not get covered with her own consent but because she got engaged (Interview with Melahat, 23.07.2018). Also, her father, who taught her that religious duties should be carried out, did not give permission to her education. In one sense, Melahat was forced to choose between being veiled and having education.

Esmer, to the question, "*When did you get covered?*" says the following (Interview with Esmer, 24.07.2018):

I started wearing the veil in secondary school, with my own will. My mom wanted it, so I didn't get covered that consciously. After I got married with my husband, I started wearing burqa because my husband wanted it and I didn't oppose him because of religious reasons. My husband is not a conservative person. I didn't see it much in my family. My father did not pray but fasted. When I was little, I used to go to the village and there was a khodja whom my father called the mullah, to whose house I used to go and I started praying there this way, which continued after I got married.

Esmer's experience reveals the dominant aspect of environmental and familial factors in formation of religious identity. Her changing the way of veiling first by the will of the family when she reached puberty and later by her husband's will reveals the involuntary veiling adventure of the woman.

Gülten says that she got covered after puberty and Asiye after engagement (Interview with Gülten, 25.07.2018): "*Of course with my own will. We are a tribe; it is a disgrace. In our tribe, women do not roam around.*"

How the tribal culture affects religious rituals or how the way that religion

experienced affects is seen in Asiye's case (Interview with Asiye, 06.08.2018). It should be noted that there is a continuation of experience with the first-generation women, as they also justify veiling with reasons such as "*shame*" and "*sin*".

Van Bruinessen (Van Bruinessen, 2008: 82) defines tribe as follows:

Kurdish tribe is a socio-political unit that has its distinctive internal structure, which is organized, based on a real or assumedly real common ancestor and kindredship, and also has territorial (as a result economic) integrity.

As a result, the family that women of Ağrı were raised in and the environmental effects that form the family also affect the way that religious identity is formed and experienced.

The second-generation woman of Ağrı's method of learning the religion is different from that of the previous generation. As a result of their age, the women express that they learned about religion in mosques or Quran courses and the mosque khodja Osman Khodja is an important figure. It can be said that Osman Khodja, who is well known in all of Ağrı and trains students, played an important role in forming women's experiences.

Gülizar is a rare case which expressed clearly that she is not veiled with her own will. She tells that she got covered because of her older brother's pressure at the age of 15, adding that the older brother took her father's role and all decisions were made by him (Gülizar ile Görüşme, 11.08.2018).

As mentioned in the previous part, religious rituals are limited to praying, fasting, going to pilgrimage or umrah, and knowing or reading the Quran. The ways that religious services are learned are more apparent in second generation.

Melahat does all five daily prayers and fasts and says that she learned about religious duties from her father (Interview with Melahat, 23.07.2018).

This experience, unlike the other women, is transferred to her by a man.

Gülizar has a similar experience. She was trained about religion mostly by family

members at home and adds that she learned praying from her mother and reading the Quran from her mother-in-law. Although she started fasting in her childhood, due to sicknesses, now she cannot fast (Interview with Gülizar, 11.08.2018).

Esmer's experiences are as follows (Interview with Esmer, 24.07.2018):

I didn't see much from my family, my father did not pray but he fasted. I used to go to the village when I was a child, there was a khodja whom my father called the mullah and I used to go to his house where I started praying and it continued after I got married. About the Quran, my mom sent us to the course every summer when we were little girls.

Gülten says: "We were the students of Osman Khodja. We gathered together with other women and read the Quran", by which she narrates her experience on the way that she learned, after saying that she prays and fasts (Interview with Gülten, 25.07.2018)

Songül has fasted since she was six and for 16-17 years she has been praying: "*For the Quran, when we were children, we used to go to Osman Khodja, after I got married I learned by myself*" (Interview with Songül, 26.07.2018).

Miyase says that she does not know how to read the Quran but she fasts and prays (Interview with Miyase, 25.07.2018). She remarks that she is not a congregant and reveals an important point on the form that religious rituals are performed by the second-generation women: Women's emphasizing that they are not members of any cult or congregation during the interviews did not escape from the researcher's attention. As a result, religious rituals and duties are learned and experienced either through families or mosques.

Merve learned fasting from her parents and does not know the Quran although she has been praying for 20-25 years (Interview with Merve, 03.08.2018). The women who cannot read the Quran or have not learned the Quran provided reasons such as housework and childcare for this.

Mahmure, who has been praying and fasting since she was 15, mentions that she learned religious traditions from her mother and father (Interview with Mahmure,

05.08.2018).

For Fidan, marriage was the time when she started praying. Hasret stated that she has been praying from time to time after she got married and added that she has been fasting since she was a young girl and learned how to read the Quran in Quran courses (Interview with Fidan, 23.07.2018).

All of the second-generation women's experiences on funeral services are similar to those of the first generation. Nurhayat shares the following experiences (Interview with Nurhayat, 27.07.2018):

In funeral services, on the third day, Islamic memorial service is held. After three days, the funeral house is closed and then condolences start. At the house of funeral, for three days, food is arranged from outside. In the East, there are the 40th- and 52nd- day services but in our religion, there is no such thing. The yearly [expenses that the deceased would spend on food] and alms are also given away. Before, the alms were given as wheat, now it is given as gold.

Nurhayat is one of those women who had the chance to be in Western cities. She provides information on the funeral services from other cities and points out to the differences in traditions between East and West, using the experiences of previous generations in making this description. Her experience shows that the space shows differences once religious rituals are in question, in other words, spatial differences play a role in shaping religious rituals.

Hanife shares her experiences on funeral services as follows (Interview with Hanife, 04.08.2018): *“On the third or fourth day Islamic memorial service is held. Also, on the 40th and 52nd days and the anniversary, Islamic memorial service is held. If the family is a large one, memorial service is held on the fourth day.”*

It draws attention that funeral services are the rituals in which women are the most organized and experience unification. It is observed that almost all women have a consensus on the ritual which is practiced traditionally.

In the interviews, the characteristic of funeral services, which is that it brings families together, is emphasized. Also, it is especially underlined that the good deeds increase solidarity and the inclination to do favors to the needy appears.

Some examples that are shared about the experiences on funeral services are as follows (Interview with Ünzile, 21.07.2018; Interview with Ayten, 04.08.2018; Interview with Merve, 03.08.2018):

“As a family, when they have a deceased, they hold the 40th and 52nd days, and the anniversary memorial services. On the third day, halva is cooked. Islamic memorial service is held and food is made. The Quran is recited from the beginning to the end and the surah Yasin is recited.”

“At funeral services, on the fourth day Islamic memorial service is held, and halva and food are given. On the 40th and 52nd days and the anniversary, memorial service is held and hayr is given”.

“In funeral services, for three days there is mourning and for three days, food is given. There is no third day tradition. There is no 40th and 52nd days and anniversary traditions”.

The second-generation women have an uninterrupted experience sharing with the first generation on the way that funeral services are held and made.

3.3.3. Religious Identity in the Third Generation

All third-generation women of Ağrı know Turkish and receive religious education within the education system in which they participate. It is seen that the women’s religious identity experiences are shaped mostly in the environments in which the Sunni Muslims are the majority.

Women of this generation have different experiences, temporally and spatially, from the first two generations. First, these women are younger than the others and it is seen that they are inclined to revise and question the religious identity experiences of the first two generations. Second, the third-generation women, spatially, have the chance to be in environments that are more dynamic and changing. Most of these women were born at the city center and have the opportunity to go to bigger cities both for education and

healthcare. As a result, their religious identity experience is shaped in the light of the experiences that are gathered from other people.

Once the sectarian structure of the region where the interviews were held is examined, it is seen that most of them are Sunni Muslims that are Shafiis. Nonetheless, it was observed that there were differences among Kurds in terms of religious ceremonies. When the women were asked if they were members of any sects, it was learned that none of them was a member of an sect. In essence, it can be said that sects played an important role in the historical process for Kurds. Van Bruinessen (Van Bruinessen, 2016: 11) says the following on the roles of sects:

Religious orders are widespread among Sunni majority, and Naqshbandi and Qadiriyya are the two prominent ones. The extensiveness of these orders, and the prestige of the sheikhs of these orders have among villagers and lower-class townsmen is remarkable. Some sheikhs have more economic and political powers than the leaders of many tribes... Orders are free of the tribe structure which is the source of various rivalries and blood vengeance, and because of this, they could manage to coordinate the movements of even historical rivals.

The third-generation women had different experiences on veiling than the first two generations. There are women who had similar experiences with both the first and second generations and women who had new experiences within their own course.

In the fieldwork, it was observed that the third-generation women's style of veiling was rather different from the first- and second-generation women.

Ayla says that she is covered by her own will (Interview with Ayla, 24.07.2018), Dilara says that she got covered when she was a junior student at the university and shares her experience, saying, "*My family was surprised, they did not expect me to cover*" (Interview with Dilara, 28.07.2018). When Dilara's experience is considered, it is seen that although she got covered by her own will, she needed to express directly the opinions of the people around her on covering.

Aslı is the only woman who wears the burqa among the women who were interviewed and says: “*It is totally my own preference*” (Interview with Aslı, 27.07.2018). Aslı is continuing her madrasa education and is trained on the Arabic language and memorizing the Quran, i.e. she is to become a hafiz. Also, she is attending open high school and is at third-grade, and provided information on how the profession, being hafiz, has been suggested to her by her father since her childhood.

In essence, as seen in the example, religious inclinations getting affected from environmental conditions and materializing are an often-seen reality. Family, work environment, kindredship relations, tribal bonds... play an effective role on the formation or shaping of religious identity. Aslı’s experiences also point out to another reality on the field: In general, women have an active role in experiencing religious identity, but in this case the male, i.e. Aslı’s father, is effective in her daughter’s inclination to become a hafiz. In this sense, an example which is rarely seen among the second-generation women is repeated.

Education process did not prevent the third-generation women from getting covered. As a result, the suffering of the previous generation during 28 February was not experienced by the third generation.

Rojda had similar experiences with Aslı. She says that she got covered at the age of 12 and adds the following (Interview with Rojda, 21.07.2018):

Well, I wasn’t covered consciously. It wasn’t because of some sort of education. “You are a girl, you reached a certain age, get covered,” they said and I did. Tradition. They did not raise us that consciously. My mother was saying, “They are girls; they cannot get a bad name.”

Rojda’s experience overlaps with especially the first-generation women. In the first-generation women, brides and daughters not being covered is described as “*sin*”, “*shameful*”. In this case, by talking about “tradition”, as a precaution against “having a bad name”, being covered was made mandatory. Also, it is seen that while performing the religious ritual, by emphasizing on the “*young girl*”, the ongoing discrimination efforts between sons and daughters are once more revealed.

There are those among the third-generation women that got covered by the will of their families, along with getting covered by their own will. Aydan is covered by the will of her family and adds that she was not only forced to get covered but also forced about education (Interview with Aydan, 11.08.2018): When Aydan got covered, her education life ended.

There are women without a veil among the third-generation women as well. They mostly stated that they considered covering later in their lives and emphasized that they would cover only when they are willing to. Necla said that she was so young yet but considers covering later in her life with her own will (Interview with Necla, 23.07.2018).

Dilara said that she uses veil because of a different reason from the reasons of other women (Interview with Dilara, 28.07.2018). While the third-generation women state that they use veil because of religious sensitivity, Dilara said that she had started wearing the veil at the age of 12 because she had thought that “*it had suited her better*”. The experience which Dilara had around the beginning of puberty can be considered as the outcome of fluctuating between the suggestions of the people and the formation of her own self and finding a legitimate justification.

An important point on which there is experience interruption between the third-generation women and the first two generations is that the third generation prefers modern ways of veiling rather than the traditional way. The third-generation women try out different sorts on headscarfs and prefer more vivid colors.

Religious rituals, just like in previous parts, is limited to praying, fasting, going to pilgrimage or umrah, and knowing or reading the Quran. As mentioned before, the third-generation women, spatially, were raised with the elders of the family and, as a result, it can be said that environmental factors were effective in shaping their religious identity experiences.

Ayla says that she started praying while she was single, that she knows how to read the Quran, and is continuing the course reading the Quran (Interview with Ayla, 24.07.2018).

Dilara mentions that she learned the Quran at the mosque; she fasts and prays five times a day (Interview with Dilara, 28.07.2018).

Rojda expresses her experiences regarding religion as follows (Interview with Rojda, 21.07.2018): *“They didn’t let any of us attend the course. Since when I was little, I have been praying, fasting. I learned the Quran from the khodja of the mosque, not by going to the course.”* It is Rojda’s mother that prevented her from attending the Quran course. In this experience, it can be said that a second-generation woman interfered with a third-generation woman and, as a result, the religious identity experience of the third-generation woman took place differently.

Başak started fasting when she was seven and prays from time to time. She knows how to read the Quran and adds that she is going to the Quran course that is close to their home (Interview with Başak, 30.07.2018).

In the interviews with the women from all three generations, fasting, praying, knowing or reading the Quran is experienced by almost all women, yet none of the third-generation women went to pilgrimage or umrah.

An important point that caught attention in the interviews is that there are no serious interruptions in praying, fasting, and knowing the Quran. In other words, women who don’t know how to read the Quran mention that they will learn it later, women without a veil mention that they will get covered later, those that do not fast mention that they will fast later, and the women that do not pray mention that they will be praying later in their lives. This hints the effects of environmental factors on the formation of religious identity. Günay (Günay, 2012: 424-425) says the following on this issue:

Child, consciously or not, is affected by the religious culture, which makes its presence felt in the culture of the society in which the child is born, in language, in the behavior and attitudes and various customs and traditions, in faiths and worships, and in rites and ceremonies. In other words, during socialization, which is previously stated as being made up of the process of a person’s personality’s formation, a person obtains matters like the society’s beliefs, practices, norms, values, ideas, behavioral models that are rooted in religion, and matters that are related to spiritual-

religious culture from her environment, and appropriate for themselves by assimilation. The process, from the viewpoint of the individual, begins with birth and continues until death. Socially it is somehow uninterrupted, i.e. as long as the society exists; it more or less maintains its existence.

Dilan does not pray, learned to read the Quran by attending a Quran course, and fasts (Interview with Dilan, 22.07.2018). Similarly, Asude does not pray. Asude has been fasting since she was 12 and on reading the Quran, says: *“I have learned it at the Imam Hatip [a state school which gives religious education] and from Osman Khodja”* (Interview with Asude, 26.07.2018).

Helin expresses her religious identity experiences by saying, *“I have been praying since I was 13, but at times I skip, of course,”* and adds that she has been fasting regularly since she was seven and learned reading the Quran from her cousin (Interview with Helin, 23.07.2018).

For the first- and the second-generation women, the neighborhood mosque and Osman Khodja were the primary sources for learning the Quran, while for the third-generation women, it is seen that there are various sources. Women from this generation learn the Quran primarily from imam hatip high schools and also from the Quran courses that are active during summers, their family members, Osman Khodja, and mosques. As a result, by having more means, more members of the third-generation know the Quran – i.e. there is an increase among the third-generation women that know the Quran. Also, while the first- and second-generation women could not have free and spare time to learn the Quran because of reasons like house work, childcare, etc. the third generation is not limited in having free and spare time.

The religious ritual that the third-generation women uninterruptedly experienced from the first two generations is funeral ceremonies. There is linearity between the experiences of the third-generation women related to funeral ceremonies with the previous two generations. Many women shared experiences on issues like the way that funerals are carried out, prayer, hayr, etc. after asking for the confirmation of the previous generation.

In the fieldwork, the everyday experiences of the three generations of women on

funeral ceremonies are as follows (Interview with Zehra, 29.07.2018; Interview with Elmas, 08.07.2018; Interview with Selma, 30.07.2018; Interview with Hanife, 06.08.2018; Interview with Zelal, 26.07.2018; Interview with Sevcan, 09.08.2018):

“On the third or fourth day, Islamic memorial service is held. On the 40th, 52nd, and the anniversary, Islamic memorial service is held”.

“On the day of funerals and on the third day, halva is given to people, Islamic memorial service is held, and treats are offered. On the 40th, 52nd, and the anniversary, the same is done.”

“In funerals, on the third day, Islamic memorial service is held, halva and food is given to people. On the 40th, 52nd, and the anniversary, hayr is given away.”

In funerals, on the third day, Islamic memorial service is held, and food is given to people. For a week, the Quran is recited. After the third day, the funeral house is closed and the owner of the funeral house is visited. There is no weekly prayers and the 52nd day. On the 40th day and the anniversary, Islamic memorial service is held. A person's expenditure of food for a year is given to either orphans or widows.

“In funerals, there is mourning for three days and food is given for three days. There is not a third-day tradition. There is no 40th and 52nd and the anniversary tradition.”

In funerals, on the third day, Islamic memorial service is held, and the Quran is recited. On the seventh day, food is given. On the 40th and 52nd days, the Quran is recited and food is given. On the anniversary, food is given in accordance with financial power and the Quran is recited.

As the women of this generation are still young, they experience funeral ceremonies exactly the same way as the previous generations. These women were raised together with the elders of the family and they have funeral service experiences with family support. As a result, women from the last generation are mirrors to the experiences

of previous generations or the example of experience transfer that happened by itself.



CHAPTER 4

IDENTITIES AT THE INTERSECTION OF CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITIES

In this part of the study, the findings from fieldwork, which was carried out to find out the ethnic, religious, and gender identities of three generations Kurdish women in Ağrı, are presented. The samples were chosen from among women of Ağrı who are classified as the first-, second-, and third-generation women. These women were interviewed with the semi-structured interview method and based on the observations and the interviews, the differences, continuities, and discontinuities of inter-generational experiences are examined. Evaluations on the reasons of disconnections and discontinuations in inter-generational experiences are made. No doubt, these analyses and evaluations are limited with the findings from the interviews and the observations made.

Evaluations on and about concepts like nationalism, language, religion, veiling, the social position of women, and gender roles are made while analyzing inter-generational ethnic, religious, and gender identity experiences. In the end, why and how transformations, discontinuations, and continuations in or between the three-generations of Kurdish women of Ağrı's identities is the focal point of the chapter.

As a result, by determining the breaking points in transformation, continuity or discontinuity of ethnic, religious, and gender identities, how these led everyday life is attempted to be analyzed.

In the study, if existent, the intersection points of the experiences expressed within the context of ethnic, religious, and gender identities will be mentioned and evaluations on the dynamic and non-stable structure of identities will be made. It should be remembered that the evaluations will be made within the framework of the transformations of opinions and thoughts within the context of traditionalism and modernity.

In the thesis, the topics of how inter-generational cultural changes are transferred, how much official state policies were effective in these changes, and whether changes were continuous or not are evaluated. The premises of the study are

- a) Women are the bearers of cultural codes, and
- b) In the process of national identity building, they changed.

Studying women as women is one of the most meaningful reasons of the thesis. It should be noted that this study was made with the disposition of doing one which is different from those that have been made so far in all those years which can even be described as facsimile. Because of this, a feminist approach and method was adopted, which was seminal for the research, as the method was chosen to serve the aim of the study. As a result, carrying out studies on women with efforts, belief, and patience will be possible with seeing, understanding, and empathizing with women.

Although the studies that allow women to be addressed in ethnicity, religion, and gender categories are not high in number, lately both in terms of quality and quantity, they are on the rise. In this study, especially on unequal categories, how the identities of women are constructed aimed to be answered. It is obvious that the interviews, which were made mostly with Kurdish women, provided invaluable information on the traditional historical identity codes of the city.

In the study, nationalism is considered to be the most important element in ethnic identity building process. Nationalism is not an ideology in itself but can be articulated into different ideologies, primarily conservatism. Although it has changed and transformed since its first appearance, today's discourses on nationalism have been built upon that era. Nationalism serves as a functional means in nation building process of states, yet it also played a dominant role in determining the policies which were to be implemented by later governments.

In the study, detailed information on how nationalism was used in Turkey with the republic, both during nation building and the later regulations. It can be said that the regulations and practices on language, religion, and ethnic identity, which are to be discussed in this thesis, are in the area of political sciences.

In the thesis, primarily the effects of nationalism on ethnic and gender identity building and the later transformations are evaluated. As expected, the ways that religious identity and nationalism are articulated and the means through which lead the society were connective. Nonetheless, looking from the other sides, for ethnic and religious identities,

the situation changes: Nationalism's function of raising awareness on ethnic and gender identities and creating a specific ethno-nationalism come to the fore.

The study does not work on one problematique but works on multiple problematiques. At this point, it is found that these problems are not free of each other. On the contrary, studying these problems in terms of cause and effect relations appeared as a necessity. Examining the woman identity, the "citizen" woman's togetherness with the "mother" identity at home and "worker" identity out of home appeared as a reflection of gender roles.

In the thesis, it was aimed to reach findings by using semi-structured interview method and asking questions to the women on their ethnic, religious, and gender identities. The interviews were made with 54 women from 18 families, with one member of each of the first, second, and third generations. With the knowledge and experience sharing between these generations, the differences, disconnections, and continuities among the lives of women are examined. Evaluations are made by regarding questions such as, "Are women, really, as said, the 'bearers of culture', or are they active producers in gender role building processes?" These women's experiences are not made solely of their own everyday life stories. It is noted that an ordinary, the least important experience has references to historical, economic, or political resources. Also, it was aimed to understand how aware and conscious the women were on the issues, along with religious, ethnic, and gender identities; geographical belonging, mother tongue, and assimilation.

Once the inter-generational experience sharing is observed, it is found that religious, ethnic, and gender identity experiences, almost wholly, remained and transferred unchanged. Moreover, it is found that there was visible resistance and changes between the first two generations and the third generation. Especially the opinion on gender reveals a sort of "questioning" adventure of the third generation.

In the thesis, it was attempted to conduct an ethnic identity analysis on the perceptions of "Kurdishness", "mother tongue", and the "Kurdish problem". At this point, it was seen that all three generations have gone through similar experiences. When questions regarding ethnic identity were asked to the women, rather than asking about the concept itself, the questions were on the cases so that the questions would be better understood. Considering that there were women that did not know Turkish, which were few in numbers, linguistically there was continuity. This continuity is not because of the

transference of the Kurdish language to next generations, but on the contrary, there is the will to learn Kurdish, i.e. they say, “I wish I knew, I wish I could learn.” Almost all women from the three generations accept that their mother tongue is Kurdish, yet they have little to no awareness or arguments that they should be able to use their mother tongue in public life, or that they should work to ensure the continuance of the existence of their mother tongue. While the first- and second-generation women feel “indebtedness” to the previous generations in terms of language, the third generation had the experience of “re-learning” the language.

The Kurdish problem, in the interviews, was taken into consideration only with the current misuses. While the experiences of the first and second generations are similar, it is observed that some of the third-generation women particularly emphasized that such a problem did not exist.

In the thesis, within the framework of public and private life discussions, different reflections of identity transformations on everyday life are considered. Especially Kurdish identity and Kurdish language and veiling are considered as the problematic issues in public sphere. The women who were excluded in cities other than Ağrı are rather abstaining on Kurdish language and even if they speak Turkish, because of their accent, they are excluded or became “the other”. Religious identity transformation process has led to different experiences for all three generations, yet it can be said that there is uninterrupted experience continuity.

Another important issue on identity transformation of women of Ağrı in all three categories is the examination of the relationship of this transformation with time. The relationship is most visible in the first and third generations. First generation always referred to previous generations in explaining their experiences. The collective conscious, which is created based on the experiences of previous generations, is transferred to the second generation. Nevertheless, the third generation, rather than accepting these experiences directly, resorted to filtering the experiences of the first generation and interpreting them. Especially the transformation of gender identity, because the third generation lived in a different time and was affected by different dynamics, had more visible interruptions.

In the axis of gender identity, in the identity analysis of women, the role of

“motherhood” has an important place. Women’s being mothers, and especially having sons, within the patriarchal system, appears as a reality which strengthens their positions. But it is also seen that within the current system, there are no changes in their social status compared to men. As a result, women’s social position has been shaped with the natural and given roles.

In literature review, it is questioned whether the ethnic, religious, and gender identities were shaped by themselves or by social construction process. In the historical process, ethnic and gender identities are shaped cyclical and by external factors based on the needs, and religious identity is reflected in everyday experiences as products of cultural memory.

4.1. Discontinuity in the Gender Identity: Break from Traditional Roles

The inter-generational way and the direction of the change and transformation of gender identity were revealed in the interviews with women from the three generations. The notion of the concept either had continuity or interruptions in accordance with the environment, education, intra-family relations, and the types of traditions and customs. The roles of ethnic and religious factors on shaping the woman identity are still effective once gender factors are the subject.

In the fieldwork made with the three generations of Kurdish women living in Ağrı, it was found out that experiences on gender had interruptions and moreover, it was seen as the field in which there was the most conflict of generations. Especially the third-generation women are different on their outlook to women from the previous two generations and many women from the third generation deny views and opinions on women which are similar to the views of and from the past. It should be said that there are intersecting yet conflicting ideas and experiences on the social position of women, women’s body, marriage age and style, violence, divorce, the existence of women in public and private spheres, labor within home, and women-men relations.

In the interviews, marriage was found out to be the milestone in women’s lives. Especially the married women from the first and second generation needed to tell about their experiences and the hardships of marriage when they needed to explain their situation before and after marriage. Most of the first- and second-generation women were married

during puberty or just after that. Saying, “I had no information,” they reveal not only that they had no idea about marriage but also the person that they were getting married to. In addition, most of the first- and second-generation women are married to their relatives or their marriages were arranged. This experience, which reveals the reality that women have no control of their body, is a legacy from the first to the second generation with little to no interruptions.

The third-generation women’s individual experiences are significantly different than the experiences of the first- and second-generation women. Most of the married women that belong to the third generation expressed that they got married with their own consent, even if it is a marriage with a relative, and they faced no suppression. The single women from this generation mentioned that, unlike the previous generations, they were not willing to get married at an early age and that they wanted to get married with their own consent as much as it is possible. The third-generation women expressed that they did not take the second generation as examples for themselves on this issue and are one of the aspects of inter-generational interruptions in both narrative and action.

Education played a key role in the lives of women from all three generations. Inclusion in and exclusion from education process largely led and shaped the life stories of women. Women’s existence in public sphere is largely limited with the level of education they could receive. In some sense, “dead public spheres” (Sennett, 2016: 26-31) were created for women.

Women from the first two generations were not as “lucky” as the last generation in attending education system. Reasons like absence of schools in villages, families not allowing to attend school, seeing girls’ schooling “shame” led these women to be absent from education processes. As a result, the existence of women in the family and especially in public sphere is limited with the roles of “daughterhood”, “motherhood”, “bridehood”. The third generation, though, by being integrated into education system, has the potential to say, “*I exist*,” in both private and public spheres. Nonetheless, although there were no interruptions in education process, their opinions on education and the social position of women are rather ambivalent. Education is mostly carried out with own struggles of women, yet they “cannot choose” the cities or the field of education in universities “without the consent of the father”. It draws attention that the women could not find ways to fight these obstacles or could not develop alternatives.

The existence of violence is accepted by women from all three generations. Along with that, the physical and psychological dimensions of violence also could not be denied. In the interviews, the first- and second-generation women mentioned that they were against violence, yet they had reflexes by which violence could be justified in certain cases. Especially the first-generation women had different experiences on violence. Along with physical violence, they expressed that they were subjected to verbal violence from their mothers-in-law and fathers-in-law, yet were silent once the reasons of this violence was asked. Nevertheless, still both generations expressed that violence is their “fate”. The third-generation women have a clearer stance against violence. They expressed that they were not subject to violence and emphasized that violence cannot have any legitimate reasons based on the experiences of their mothers or grandmothers. Here, the sharpest break between generations is that while women from the first two generations legitimized violence with various reasons “according to them” (children, relative marriage, social pressure, poverty, etc.), the third-generation women, both married and single, argued that violence is always unfair and there can never be legitimate reasons for that.

In the study, the perception of women on daughters-sons and equality between sexes is examined. The expressed opinions have small differences among each other but are parallel to the common perception in Turkey on daughters-sons. Generally, the first two generations of women puts sons before daughters. Although they know that it was the men who deprived them of education, the first two generations contribute to the continuation of the traditional patriarchal system with prioritizing boys over girls.

Family structure has a prominent role in the formation and transformation of women’s identity. The first generation shows a rather large family structure. When the reasons of this were asked, they mentioned that to have sons, they needed to give birth to more children. Rather than their own will, because of social pressure, they had this experience and it drew attention that they had accepted the opinion that boys were *superior* to girls. Women from this generation expressed that the previous generation had similar experiences. Although it was emphasized that there was no discrimination between daughters and sons, the existing situation can be evaluated as the reflection of the social acknowledgement. They also shared that the previous generation deemed boys superior to girls and girls were not sent to school as a result. Also, they said that because of this situation, while their brothers were studying, they were not sent to school. It can be said

that especially in the first-generation women, traditional family structure dominates and the family is the basic means and unit of the patriarchal system from the past to present (Özdeş, Özdeş, 2017: 54-55).

The second-generation women's experiences are similar to the previous generation. They said that they believed in equality between their daughters and sons while they were more "fond of" their daughters. Women's being fond of their daughters, considering the social position of women, can be considered as the acceptance of the fact that girls are more disadvantaged than boys. They expressed that environmental factors were more dominant about boys. It is observed that the second-generation women are more conscious than the previous generation on the number of children. The opinions of women from the second generation on girls are far from expressing that girls are equal with boys. On the contrary, the opinions they expressed mean that the position of girls is secondarized against the position of boys.

While the third generation's married women said that they did not discriminate their children, like the second-generation women, pointed out that the environmental factors affected this situation. The single ones, emphasizing woman's "motherhood" role and "fertility" characteristic, give women prominence. Women are made meaningful by the third generation by these roles which were socially constructed. Compared to the previous two generations, the third generation-women see themselves "lucky" as there was no discrimination between sons and daughters. Moreover, it is seen that the third generation-women had not shared much experience on gender equality by previous generations.

The opinions on the discrimination between boys and daughters show this: While boy-girl discrimination, which is one of the pre-Islamic customs, still continues (Bilgin, 2019: 33), there are no reasons to make people discriminate. Boys and girls can take part in all parts of the society based on their abilities. At this point, the ideas that boys are more valuable than girls leave their place to a more equalitarian one.

It is detected that there are inter-generational experience interruptions on the issue of divorce. The first-generation women consider divorce "*fate*" and say that divorce can happen only with the reasons "*honor/chastity, honor killing*". It should not be overlooked that while women show such conservative reflexes, most of them are married to their

relatives or one in their tribes. The second generation, similar to the first generation, find divorce acceptable once there are “right” reasons. Lastly, the third-generation women have a different perspective than the other generations. The married ones argue that divorce can happen even if there is a child in the family. The single ones consider divorce “normal”. The inter-generational experience interruptions on divorce can be seen as the product of the time and conditions that they live and the cultural memory from the past.

How women’s social position, over public/private sphere differentiation, was shaped is also examined in the study. In the interviews, it is seen that private sphere is mostly, or even solely, made of in-home lives of women. It was expressed that especially the first-generation women could not leave home unless it was utterly needed and the places that were considered “outside” belong to only men. Women live mostly in the places which are defined as belonging to them (Reiter, 2016: 278). The other two generations’ experiences are different from the first generation. Almost all members of the latter two generations have been to places, beginning with schools, like official state institutions, markets and bazaars, etc. In addition, both generations complain that women are stuck in what is defined as private spheres. When women get out of these limited spheres, they face different treatment. On the issue, Nilgün Yıldırım (Yıldırım, 2007: 50) says the following:

When women, who are equipped with the traditional wife and motherhood roles, choose other roles and behaviors than these, their act is considered disobedience, they face reactions, and women are punished with loneliness, alienation, and exclusion.

In the thesis, how private/public sphere is experienced by veiled and not veiled women is examined. Contrary to the literature that takes into consideration the public/private sphere difference, for both parties, the transitivity and intransitivity of these spheres came to the fore. Not veiled women can substitute their public and private sphere life experiences while veiled women’s public life is shaped mostly by their private life. İlyasoğlu, while writing about public/private sphere “mediation”, says that this appears differently for veiled and not veiled women (İlyasoğlu, 2013: 120-121).

Space, or environment, appears as a sphere which ensures the consolidation of gender roles with other roles. When humans are considered as an organism which has environmental relations, it is obvious that the interaction would affect every individual. Women's way of affection transforms both her everyday life and lifestyle.

Human-environment relations should be thought upon with a dual dynamism. Thus, space [i.e. environment] has an active power which produces certain patterns of behavior, shapes our relations with others, forces us to put our bodies to certain forms and clothes. In other words, environment has an active power which writes, engraves itself on our lives and bodies (Zengin, 2016: 68).

In the study, how the three generations' gender identity was shaped according to the environment they were in is observed. It was seen that the space's effects are visible mostly in the first and third generations. The first-generation women continue their lives mostly in an environment which is limited to the home. Especially the women who live in villages experience spatial limitedness and they do not leave the village unless it is necessary. Those who live in the city center can go to public places like hospitals together with a relative, not alone. The third-generation women experience spatial differences and voice limitedness, as well. Street, neighborhood, school, hospital are certain places that they can be in, yet due to environmental factors, leaving the city that they live in is still dependent on the permission of the family, especially of the father. Especially those women who reach the age to study at a university expressed that they needed the permission of their fathers to be able to study at a university that was in another city and added that it was impossible for them to choose to study at a university that was in another city. The third-generation women are willing to live their ethnic and religious identities more freely, but they cannot become the decision-makers on shaping the gender roles the way that they please.

How the patriarchal mentality shaped women's lives, which is voiced mostly by the third-generation women, can be understood by looking into everyday life experiences of women. Catharine A. MacKinnon (MacKinnon, 2015: 136), on the issue, says the following: "*Patriarchal perspective dictates the definition of women, encircles women's*

body, limits her speech, and decides her life. It is systematic and dominant... ”

In the study, it was observed that even if the women were educated, they were trapped within certain gender patterns. Educated women displayed two different images: The first group wanted to study at the university and have a profession while the second group preferred finishing high school and becoming housewives. Also, no information could be gathered about and from the women who wanted to study at a university and have a profession if they were willing to make an effort on other fields like science, technology, music, arts, etc. Women having no interest in doing science coincides with the classical patriarchal idea that “*women cannot be, shouldn't be scientists*” (Keller, 2016: 101-121).

Within the framework of the concept of intersectionalism, once the current situation of women of Ağrı was observed, it was found out that they were differently unequal with each other. Women's ethnic, religious, and gender belongings cause them to be excluded and alienated by other women in certain categories. Being Kurdish, speaking Kurdish, being Sunni prevents women from being equal with other women at certain points.

It is estimated that Kurdish women's articulation into women movement happened synchronously with Kurdish nationalist movement. Especially from 1990s on, Kurdish women's being on the forefront of the Kurdish movement consolidated women's role as the bearer of the nation. At this point, Kurdish women's existence on the stage with their identity differences led to questioning the concept of “sisterhood”. According to Handan Çağlayan (Çağlayan, 2017: 185), Kurdish women's identity construction occurs in association with their “socio-economic and socio-political” positions.

Considering the experiences of the women who participated in the study, it is seen that the third generation is under the influence of the feminist movement and that they have the tendency to question the gender roles built in the society, especially the identity of woman.

4.2. Dilemma of Continuity and Discontinuity in the Ethnic Identity

Considering the ethnic identity experiences of women of Ağrı, differences that are caused by elements such as age, religion, language, the style of upbringing, belonging, or migration are observed. These differences were observed to have been shaped and formed by the changes of qualifications and styles of belonging and representation of women in

historical process.

It is known that different religions, languages, and cultural styles that (co)existed during the Ottoman Empire were ignored and even aimed to be homogenized with the establishment of Republic of Turkey and its policies. In today's circumstances, the validity of these policies, with the identity struggles of different ethnic groups, became debatable. Modern genealogy accepts that a pure race cannot exist (Lévi-Strauss, 2016: 21-22).

One important point that catches attention in the interviews is that the first- and second-generation women do not choose their ethnic or religious identity over another, i.e. these two identities are rather equal for them. The women from these two generations, to the question, "With which identity would you primarily define yourself?" said: "Thanks to Allah, we are Muslims." The concept of identity, when considered in the religious aspect, plays a unifying role.

When ethnic identity is considered together with language, it is seen that excluding cases and experiences of identity stand out. The use of the Kurdish language in both private and public spheres led to different experiences in all interviewed women.

Women who spoke Kurdish mostly expressed that they feared being *blamed* once they participated in public sphere. Although they said that they were regarded as strangers in the public sphere because of their language, they added that they were used to this and they did not mind it. In fact, saying, "*Why should we be ashamed, should we deny what we are?*" can be considered as defining identity over language.

Common language and common history have been two of the basic ways to establish a homogeneous society. As mentioned before, in the establishment period of Republic of Turkey, based on the Sun Language Theory, a uniform model was aimed to be created in a different way. According to this theory, all major languages in the world are of Turkish origin (Çağaptay, 2017: 245-262). As a result, the "*realities*" that were formed in our cultural memory in the historical process play a dominant role in shaping our everyday lives. The "*blame*" or "*regarding strange*" of the other side when women spoke Kurdish appears as the legacy of the cultural memory.

While the policies towards creating a homogeneous, uniform nation since the foundation of the Republic (the Turkish History Thesis, the Sun Language Theory, the

Settlement Law, etc.) have affected all three generations, it is seen that a visible transformation has occurred in the third generation. In the historical process, a generation has risen whose Sunnite and Muslim identities have been protected but that has disengaged from the previous generations from the aspect of language. The first two generations experienced practices of speaking Kurdish mostly at home, consciously or unconsciously, against the linguistic assimilation; however, the third-generation Kurdish women were raised as Turkish-speaking individuals by adopting Turkish at home and especially in governmental agencies.

It is found out that especially the first- and second-generation women were more willing to speak Kurdish in the public sphere. The first-generation women played a principal role in transferring Kurdish, which is spoken at home, to the following generation. Nonetheless, with the third-generation women, lingual continuity left its place to sharp disengagement and interruptions. It is believed that the involvement in education system, being born and raised mostly in the city, using mass media intensively, etc. of and by the third-generation women caused this result. Indeed, the first- and second-generation women have higher language-identity awareness on language while the third-generation women do not have as a high level of awareness as them.

The changes and transformations on language among the three generations bring about assimilation/integration debates. The direction of changes and transformations differ in accordance with the space. Especially in the interviews made in villages, all women know Kurdish very well and define Kurdish as their “*mother tongue*”. Those who attained school say that only when they started school they started learning Turkish. On the other hand, inter-generational disconnections in language transfer were observed in women who were raised in Ağrı city center. For example, the first- and second-generation women know Kurdish well, yet there were women from the third-generation who did not know even a word in Kurdish. The following answer is given when the reason of this is asked: “*Time has changed, what is left to us from previous times? Today’s youth’s heads are in the clouds.*” In this example, language can be considered as a conflict area of the third generation with the first two generations.

The language, which appears as an area of conflict between the first two generations and the third generation, differs in regard to its usage. While the first two generations want to speak Kurdish both as a means of communication and an element of

the Kurdish identity, the third-generation Kurdish women tend mostly to use the language as a tool for communication.

Another topic in which there are inter-generational differences is migration. Migration did not only bring spatial change but also socio-cultural, economic, and political changes. Although the earlier generations carried marks of the past, it can be said that new and young generations are affected by them (Chambers, 2014: 36).

The opinions on migration of three generations of women of Ağrı are split in two groups. The first is migration from the village to the city, and the other is migration from city to city. While migration from the village to the city affected mostly the first and second generations, migration from Ağrı to western cities caused serious “*cultural shocks*” in all three generations. Women from the first and second generations generally moved to the city by marriage and met with city life. Women remember the past with longing and yearning and tell that they could not find the beauties of the past any more. On the other hand, women who moved from Ağrı to bigger cities expressed that along with spatial change, they experienced coming together with a different culture, coherence/incoherence, existence struggle. When migration occurred towards bigger cities, it brought about problems starting with financial difficulties, along with other problems with ethnic identity (Kurdish identity) and language (Kurdish), etc. Although the migration’s cause was not political, it was expressed in the interviews that it caused political results.

Space plays a determining role in the transformation of the identities of the first-generation women. Women who migrated with reasons other than marriage, i.e. economic and political reasons, have forgottenness in their life experiences. When they narrate their experiences, they say, “Ah, yeah, there was also this...”, which shows that their limited lifestyles and the environment that they live in consider them as a burden. This situation causes the truth to be transferred from generation to generation with the hegemony of patriarchal discourses. “Woman is lost in a culture which relies upon uniformity, that is external to a far away’s nostalgia on which she lays, or which is witnessed by some masters” (Irigaray, 2014: 17).

The influence of the space on the formation and transformation of identities is shared in the experiences of all three generations of Kurdish women. Especially the experiences of the first-generation women, who live in the country, and the second-

generation women, who live in city centers, as to the Kurdish identity have the potential to reach “Kurdish nationalism” due to their limitedness on space. The third-generation women, on the other hand, remain distant to both Turkish and Kurdish nationalisms with regard to their experiences of identity. It is seen that the third-generation women, who had the opportunity to live and have education in large cities, tend to question and filter the past experiences on the Kurdish identity.



Photograph: Ceren AVCİL, 2018, Ağrı.

The concept of the other, due to its nature, exists with its opposite. On the other hand, “the other”, which is the mirror by which one’s identity is built, is both built negatively by itself and is being built by this “identity” front (Kılıçbay, 2003: 155-159). As a result, it should be said that the concepts identity and the other are the actual builders of each other. The main paradox of the concept of identity is originated from its own structure (Buckingham, 2008: 1-24).

The bond between family and nationalism is evident especially in the experiences of the first two generations. Having multiple children aims to maintain both the unity of the family and the fictional continuity of the nation. The discourse that the boys are seen equivalent to the nation and girls to the homeland reflects, though somewhat covertly, to the experiences. Building the family as a metaphor serves the aim to maintain the

continuity of the social construct.



Photograph: Ceren AVCİL, 2018, Ağrı.

At this point, the concepts of being different and equality should be elaborated. Does being different really necessitate being the other? Or are those that are different equal? From 1970s on, in criticism of modernity, an absolute “difference” which cannot be equivalenced on a common ground started to get ahead of equality. In the political arena, “the war of identities” took its place. Cultural, gender, and ethnic identities became important political symbols (İnsel, 2015:7-14).

It is seen that the women who expressed that their identity is different in the interviews are more alienated and excluded. The saying, “*We are Kurds, should we deny ourselves,*” can be considered as a reflection of the identity that built her seeing differences as “others”. That women identify themselves as Kurdish and considering it essential to themselves is similar in discussions of identity to the ethno-symbolist approach in the theories of nation and nationalism. The theory in question emphasizes that ethnic and cultural elements cannot be ignored in the formation of nation and nationalism.

In a similar fashion, the fact that the women express themselves as “I am Kurdish, I am honest, I am hardworking,” instead of, “I am Turkish, I am honest, I am hardworking,” can be seen as a projection of the uniform national structure that was aimed to be built in the Republican era. An important issue that draws attention here is that the women are not aware that they are part of the nationalistic ideology which played the dominant role in the

nation-building process. From the aspects of both linguistic and ethnic consciousness, Kurdish women are seen to have taken place in national projects as the “indicators of ethnic and national differences, that is, as symbols which are in the center of the ideological discourses that are used in the transformation, reuse, and formation of ethnic and national categories”(Anthias, Yuval-Davis, 1989: 7).

Another point on which almost all women from the three generations agreed upon are the Kurdish problem and Kurdish nationalism. Although the issue is not deeply examined in the study with its historical process, the expressions and opinions of the women include the recent events. The interviewed women accept the existence of the Kurdish problem, yet they have different opinions for the solution to the problem. Their analyses are not based on scientific knowledge and they preferred to comment based on the events in the last four years. For the women, the problem is not “being Kurdish” but “being the member or the sympathizer of the terrorist organization”. Women repeatedly said, “*Not all Kurds are organization members. Not all organization members are Kurds,*” and the perception that being Kurd is equal to being member or the sympathizer of the organization is a heavy burden.

Maybe emotionally the most outstanding finding of the study is the moment in which the women tell their fear of being “*blamed*” and “*regarded strange*” when they speak Kurdish. Even though they have told that they are not ashamed of their identity and they do not abstain, the expressions, “Well, let it be,” are considered as the reflections of the acceptance of this situation. When the Kemalist identity policies which were implemented during the establishment of the republic are considered, it is witnessed that this mood is transferred from previous generations to today’s generations. The different and pluralist identities that existed in the Ottoman Empire were not wanted in the Turkish state (Robins, 2014: 502-536). Nonetheless, it should be added that in the interviews, there were no statements that would mean that the experience transfer was not made consciously or unconsciously. Especially the first-generation women gave hints on the previous generations’ experience on the “suppression” of their identities. They saw themselves “luckier” than the previous generations and emphasized that they are more “at peace” with their identities. Laclau (Laclau, 2015: 87) says the following on the issue:

If difference policy is maintaining difference as the other always, the denial of the other can never be a

radical elimination. At most, it can be repeatedly opening its existing forms up for discussion.

The experiences of the third-generation Kurdish women on ethnic identity exhibit differences and discontinuities from those of the previous generations. The third-generation women, whose spatial mobility is the highest, strive to redefine their ethnic identity especially in large cities. Turkish appears to be the mother tongue of most of the third-generation women, though the previous generations have accepted Kurdish as their mother tongue. The experiences of “otherness” especially in large cities, however, revealed the tendency of tenacity to their own identity especially in Kurdish-speaking women.

That the women from all three generations define themselves as Kurdish highlights the sensitivity in protecting the ethnic identity. It is obvious, on the other hand, that they cannot present a policy as to the alienation of the identity, disability to use the language, and the “negative” Kurd image in the collective memories. It can be said that this stems from the features of vagueness and transitivity that take root from the concept of identity itself.

Finally, the majority in all three generations reject the environment of violence and conflict in the transformation of ethnic identity. It is seen in the study that women remain distant to the spiral of violence and that the dominant opinion favors consensus and liaison in solving the Kurdish problem.

4.3. A Different Form of Continuity in Religious Identity: Relatively Conscious

Third Generations

The religious identity transformation analysis of the three generations of women of Ağrı was made within the framework of religious rituals (funerals, praying, fasting, going to hajj or umrah, reading the Quran). All three generations had different ways of living their religious identities based on the temporal and spatial conditions. The most important point found out in the study is that the first-generation women transferred their experiences to other generations exactly as they were. Especially the way that religious rituals were experienced was transferred to latter generations with no interruptions and changes.

It is seen that in all three generations Sunni Muslim rituals outweighs and religious identity is more dominant than ethnic identity.

The veiling style is almost the same among the women. It is found out that in traditional veiling styles, mostly the third-generation women are inclined to try different models.

When the reasons for veiling were asked to women, there were seen to be differences in the answers provided. The first- and second-generation women told that they are veiled mostly because of environmental conditions, i.e. to fit into the society. Their reasons include “*puberty, engagement, marriage, family pressure*”. The third-generation women say that they are luckier than the previous ones. The third-generation women especially emphasize that they wear the veil willingly, without external pressure. It should be mentioned that although the women from the three generations have different reasons for veiling, there is inter-generational experience transfer and there are no interruptions in this. Nevertheless, almost none of the generations considered headscarf *an issue of power domain* (Aktaş, 2006: 325-356). As a result, neither of the generations considers veiling a political symbol.

Another point that was examined in the transformation of women’s religious identity is the way that funeral ceremonies are carried out. Women from all three generations provided examples and expressed that funeral ceremonies are the same. It was observed that especially the women from the first generation shared their experiences and knowledge on how funeral ceremonies are carried out and which issues should be paid attention. Also, it is clearly observed that the experiences of the latter generations are the continuations of previous generations.

In the study, the women were asked whether they had religious education or if they were members of any religious orders to make religious activities. All of the women from all generations have expressed that they were not members of any congregation, foundation, association, or sect. The opinions on the topic were generally as, “*No, what is the need?*” As a result, it can be said that the women have no particular organization style on religious education. The women expressed that they received religious education mostly by gathering with other women in the mosques, and by mentioning their instructor Osman Khodja’s effect, added that their inter-generational religious education sharing had no interruptions.

In fieldwork, questions were asked on ethnic and religious identity belongings of

the women and it was found out that these two identities were not expressed separate from each other and the two identities are intertwined the way that they complete each other. To religious identity questions, almost all women said, “Thanks to Allah, I am Muslim,” and they were inclined to define their ethnic identity based on their religious identity. It was seen that the women, unwittingly, revealed their “*intersecting and contending identities*” (Aktürk, 2010: 83-114). The women emphasized that their Turkish or Kurdish identities were secondary to their religious identity, and they can be considered as “bearers of the identity” in this as well. The first- and second-generation women’s experiences on emphasizing that their religious identity is ahead of other identities transferred to the third generation.

The coexistence of ethnic and religious identities once more shows the dynamic and changing, unstable structure of the concept of identity. The concept, intersectionalism, which became a current issue especially with the third wave feminism movement, is seen in this part of the study. The concept was coined by Kimberle Crenshaw in 1989. According to Crenshaw, the experiences of black women are different from the experiences of white women and their conditions cannot be understood with the same arguments. They are different from white women by being both black and women and there are some inequality mechanisms that affect black women which sometimes conflict, sometimes overlap with white women (Kesişimsellik ve Feminizm, 2019). As a result, the emphasize on the differences of black and migrant women’s differences with white and middle-class women caused the discourse “global woman sisterhood” to become questioned (Yıldız, 2015: 56-57). In the thesis, studying women in terms of their religious, ethnic, and gender identities, shows that there are overlapping and intersecting different points in class, race, ethnicity, gender, age, and religion. Defining the identities as Muslim, Kurdish, Turkish, and Sunni by interviewed women points out to the coexistence of differences.

To the question to what extent and how rituals and worships are carried out, the first- and second-generation women, almost unanimously, provided the same answers. It was seen that in praying, fasting, and reading the Quran, all three generations are the continuation to each other. There are inter-generational interruptions in the first- and second-generation women on knowing and reading the Quran because of reasons like housework, childcare, breaks from education system, etc. Nonetheless, the third-generation

women expressed that although they were involved in education system and had more opportunities, they had interruptions in continuity of worships.

It is seen that pilgrimage and umrah is attended mostly by the first-generation women. Some of the third-generation women expressed their will to go to pilgrimage and umrah later in their lives as they are still young. An important point that draws attention is that the women who go to pilgrimage and umrah go with their husbands or with a group rather than going alone. As a result, today still Muslim women cannot go to Mecca without the guardianship, or protection, of a man (Bilgin, 2019: 29-43).

Women from all three generations expressed that they did not suffer from “alienation” in living in accordance with their religious identity. The experiences on ethnic identity left their place to “integration”.

Once the formation-development processes of religious identity are considered, it is seen that the third-generation women are different than the other two. The first- and second-generation women are highly affected by the previous generations on the traditional way of living in accordance with religion. While the first- and second-generation women experience their religious identity in environments in which traditional family structures dominate, and act accordingly, the third generation was raised in a comparably “freer” environment. The point that draws attention is that the third-generation women’s religious identity was shaped without being affected from issues like 28 February or the place of veiling in public sphere. These women can experience their religious identities without much struggle with external factors.

Another point that draws attention about the third-generation women is the effects of their young age on their religious identity. These women’s identities are still being formed and it is observed that they do not have a clear attitude against their religious identities. While veiling of the previous generations is associated with tradition, family pressure, etc., there have been cases in which some interviewees among the third-generation women veil themselves simply because they “see it fit”, i.e. they look better with veil. As a result, it can be said that the younger generation women’s religious identity was shaped with reasons such as social status or the need to be approved. In this case, it can be said that religion is a reference which is turned to in identity formation (Kula, 2001: 76-77).

Although the issue of chastity was not one of the topics of discussion in the interviews, there were hints on the issue with their experiences. Considering both religious and gender identities of the women, there is a dual effect of chastity on their lives. Women, with chastity, bring dignity to both her family and the family in which she is the bride, as a symbol of purity. It is observed that especially the first- and second-generation women were inclined towards this opinion and their narratives are in harmony with this reality. Nevertheless, Bilgin (Bilgin, 2019: 30) provides a different opinion, saying that chastity, in Islam, is for both men and women.

When the whole of religious identity analysis of the three generations of women of Ağrı is considered, it is found that the collective memory is highly effective. Although there are differences in the way that religious rituals are experienced spatially, cultural and geographical factors did not prevent the continuous experiencing of rituals. The religious rituals experienced in Ağrı remain in bigger cities as well.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This study, which analyzed the ethnic, religious, and gender transformations of three generations of Kurdish women living in Ağrı based on their everyday experiences, aimed to find out if there was a continuity in these aspects across generations in the light of the historical and social developments.

In the thesis, the identity transformation of the women was not analyzed based on one topic but by focusing on ethnic, religious, and gender-related factors. As a result, it is seen that some of these identities transected while some completed each other. Especially the experiences involving religious and ethnic identities have shown that religious identity is more prominent than the latter.

There are changes in ethnic, religious, and gender-related issues of the woman identity of Kurdish women living in Ağrı depending on time and space. The transformation is in its most visible form in the third and youngest generation while it is slower in the first and second generations, and there are even some cases in which there are no transformations. In spatial terms, the women of Ağrı can experience identity transformation in an easier and faster way. The difference between city and village is one of the baselines in identity change and transformation process.

It is easily understood if ethnic, religious, and gender identities were fictional or genuine by both the experiences of the women and their discourses in which they expressed their social memories. As a part of the construction of the ethnic identities in a national project, for the sake of the continuity of the nation, women are occasionally considered means of raising “good children” for the unity of the family and ensure the continuity of social harmony with the control and inspection mechanisms on her body. The way that religious identity is experienced is shaped by the ongoing traditional rituals, and there is no inclination to question or criticize past experiences.

The women from all three generations were raised in environments in which Sunni sect of Islam is dominant and it contributed to the consolidation of the perceptions and roles of religious identity. The negative image against women was justified by

interviewees by showing reasons like “chastity”, “morality”, “shame”, or “sin”, which supports the idea that women are the producers of gender roles. Although the new generation is open to innovations and change, because of the manners of and suggestions from their families and circles, they cannot think freely, or free from the previous generations.

The differences between Turkish History Thesis and Sun Language Theory, which were put into practice to create a homogeneous society during nation building process of Republican Turkey, are evident in inter-generational experience sharing. Experiencing the results of the afore-mentioned policies, specifically those on monolingualism, the women in the first generation got caught in between Kurdish and Turkish while the women in the third generation experience learning Kurdish, which they call their “mother tongue”, for the first time. It is evident especially in the third-generation Kurdish women that they have forgotten their language and even those who know the language hesitate to use it, and that they continuously tend to redefine their identity.

Based on the hypotheses, the results of the study are as follows: Kurdish women living in Ağrı are the bearers of ethnic, religious, and gender codes, and for three generations, during national identity building process, have had identity transformations in all three types of identities. But what should be mentioned here is that these identity transformations did not occur independently of each other. As a result, with the transection of different identities, transformations coincided. The inter-generational continuities and interruptions in ethnic and religious identities affected the transformation of gender identity. While in ethnic and religious identities, external factors or interferences were more effective, it can be stated that in the transformation of gender identity, internal factors were effective. As a result, the collective consciousness which has been created for ethnic and religious identities of Kurdish women leaves its place to a structure which shows instability and discontinuity when gender identity is put under the scope. At this point, a new image of Kurdish women living in Ağrı appears which is symbolically envisaged: A woman identity of which ethnic and religious identities are complementary or transecting while its gender identities conflict with each other. It can therefore be said that the Kemalist modernization project put into practice with the foundation of the Republic has succeeded in creating a new Kurdish woman image.

Lastly, this study in which the ethnic, religious, and gender identities of the Kurdish

women in Ağrı are evaluated can be used and aims to be used for further studies that will aim to explore relevant themes. That prospective study with relevant foci are conducted in larger spatial areas and with different indicators will undoubtedly amplify the future contributions to the field.



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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interviews

Interview with Altun, 28.07.2018

Interview with Asiye, 06.08.2018

Interview with Aslı, 27.07.2018

Interview with Asude, 26.07.2018

Interview with Aydan, 11.08.2018

Interview with Ayla, 24.07.2018

Interview with Aysel, 04.08.2018

Interview with Ayşe, 21.07.2018

Interview with Ayten, 04.08.2018

Interview with Başak, 30.07.2018

Interview with Dilan, 22.07.2018

Interview with Dilara, 28.07.2018

Interview with Elmas, 08.07.2018

Interview with Esmer, 24.07.2018

Interview with Fadile, 23.07.2018

Interview with Fatma, 22.07.2018

Interview with Fidan, 23.07.2018

Interview with Gülistan, 21.07.2018

Interview with Gülten, 25.07.2018

Interview with Gülten, 29.07.2018

Interview with Halide, 29.07.2018

Interview with Halime, 28.07.2018

Interview with Hanife, 04.08.2018

Interview with Hanife, 06.08.2018

Interview with Hatice, 21.07.2018

Interview with Helin, 23.07.2018

Interview with Kader, 07.08.2018

Interview with Mahmure, 05.08.2018

Interview with Makbule, 30.07.2018

Interview with Medine, 07.08.2018

Interview with Mehtap, 07.08.2018

Interview with Melahat, 23.07.2018

Interview with Melek, 12.08.2018

Interview with Meliha, 29.07.2018

Interview with Merve, 03.08.2018

Interview with Meryem, 24.07.2018

Interview with Miyase, 25.07.2018

Interview with Necla, 23.07.2018

Interview with Nurhayat, 27.07.2018

Interview with Nuriye, 22.07.2018

Interview with Rojda, 21.07.2018

Interview with Safiye, 22.07.2018

Interview with Safiye, 04.08.2018

Interview with Selma, 30.07.2018

Interview with Sevcan, 09.08.2018

Interview with Sevcan, 05.08.2018

Interview with Songül, 26.07.2018

Interview with Şehriban, 05.08.2018

Interview with Ünzile, 21.07.2018

Interview with Zarife, 24.07.2018

Interview with Zehra, 29.07.2018

Interview with Zelal, 26.07.2018

Interview with Zeytin, 09.08.2018

Interview with Zuhul, 25.07.2018

Appendix 2: Interview Questions

Questions about Ethnic Identity

- Do you speak Kurdish?
- If no, why don't you speak Kurdish?
- If yes, where did you learn?
- If yes, how and from whom did you learn?
- What do you know about your mother tongue?
- Did you ever have to emigrate?
- How do you define yourself ethnically?
- In which senses do you feel yourself as “the other” at most?
- What comes to your mind about “Kurdish problem”?
- What do you understand from the term, “Kurdish nationalism”?

Questions about Religious Identity

- How do you define yourself in terms of religious identity?
- Can you give some information about your religious ceremonies?
- Do you fast and pray?
- For you, which one of the two is more prominent: Religious identity or ethnic identity?
- Where do you learn about your customs and traditions?
- What do “Kurdishness” and “being Sunni” mean to you?

Questions about Gender Identity

- Do you have an occupation?
- Have you ever worked?
- Do you know how to read and write?
- What was the last school that you finished?
- Why weren't you able to attend the school?
- At which age did you get married? How did you get married?
- Was there a kin marriage or tribe marriage?
- Who did you live with when you got married?
- Have you ever been subjected to violence any time in your life?
- Who makes decisions at home?
- What do you think about divorce?
- What do you think about the social position of women?
- How many children do you have?
- Do you think daughters and sons are equal?

CV

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