

THE POLITICIZATION OF GENDER: FROM IDENTITY POLITICS TO  
POST-IDENTITY

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
OF  
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

NÜLÜFER KALE

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE  
IN  
GENDER AND WOMEN'S STUDIES

SEPTEMBER 2011

Approval of the Graduate School of Sciences

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **THE POLITICIZATION OF GENDER: FROM IDENTITY POLITICS TO POST-IDENTITY**

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September 2011, 106 pages

The aim of this thesis study is to understand the significance of today's feminist politics in Turkey for post-identity politics. When it is considered that identity politics is being widely practiced today, whereas there is still much vagueness regarding the ways of doing post-identity politics, in order to achieve the aim of this study it becomes necessary to make a critique of identity politics and to reveal post-identitarian tendencies through this critique of identity-based political mobilization. In this study, feminist identity politics is analyzed and criticized from the perspective of Judith Butler, who is a poststructuralist feminist questioning identity and its relation to gender politics. These issues are questioned through qualitative research method and semi-structured in-depth interviews are used as the data gathering technique. Five in-depth interviews were conducted with women who consider themselves feminist. The interviews aim at providing individual narrations of the participants to be exposed to deconstruction later on through the analysis process. Therefore, participants are not asked direct and categorical questions about their ideas on specific issues; instead, they are encouraged to talk about how they perceive the gendered world around them and

how they respond to it and how these ideas are transferred to the political arena. It was found that the participants perceived sex, gender and sexuality in a dualistic framework to a certain extent and this relative fluidity enables them to realize the importance of doing post-identity politics, but they do not have a tendency to transfer this to the political arena in the near future.

Keywords: Gender, Duality, Post-Structuralist Feminist Theory, Deconstruction, Post-Identity Politics

## ÖZ

### TOPLUMSAL CİNSİYETİN POLİTİKLEŞTİRİLMESİ: KİMLİK POLİTİKASINDAN KİMLİK ÜSTÜNE

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Tez Yöneticisi: Prof. Dr. Mehmet ECEVİT

Eylül 2011, 106 sayfa

Bu çalışmanın amacı Türkiye'deki bugünkü feminist politikanın kimlik üstü politika açısından ne anlam ifade ettiğinin anlamaktır. Kimlik politikalarının bugün yaygın bir şekilde pratik edildiği ve kimlik üstü politika yapma yollarının hala çok net olmadığı göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, bu çalışmanın amacının gerçekleştirilebilmesi için, kimlik politikalarının bir eleştirisinin yapılması ve bu eleştiri yoluyla kimlik üstü politikaya olan eğilimin ortaya çıkarılması gerekli görülmüştür. Bu nedenle, bu tez çalışmasında, feminist kimlik politikaları, kimliği ve kimliğin toplumsal cinsiyet politikasıyla ilişkisini sorgulayan post-yapısalcı feminist Judith Butler'ın perspektifinden analiz edilmiş ve eleştirilmiştir. Bu sorgulamaları gerçekleştirmek için, niteliksel araştırma metodu kullanılmıştır. Veri toplama tekniği olarak yarı yapılandırılmış derinlemesine mülakat gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırma için kendini feminist olarak tanımlayan 5 kadınla görüşülmüştür. Mülakatların amacı, analiz sürecinde yapı sökümü uğratılmak üzere görüşmecilerden bireysel anlatıların toplanmasıdır. Bu nedenle, direkt ve

kategorik sorular sorulmasından ziyade görüşmecilerin toplumsal cinsiyetli dünyayı nasıl algıladıkları ve buna nasıl tepki verdikleri ve bu tutumlarını politik arenaya nasıl aktardıkları konularında konuşmaları için teşvik edilmeleri tercih edilmiştir. Çalışmanın bulgularına göre, görüşmeciler kimlik üstü politika yapmanın önemini fark etseler de, cinsiyeti, toplumsal cinsiyeti ve cinselliği belli bir ölçüde ikili bir çerçevede algıladıkları ve bu görece sınırlı akışkanlığın onların yakın gelecekte bu eğilimi politik arenaya aktarmasına engel olduğu anlaşılmıştır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Toplumsal Cinsiyet, İkilik, Post-Yapısalcı Feminist Kuram, Yapısöküm, Kimlik Üstü Politika

**To My Family**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I wish to express my gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Dr. Mehmet C. Ecevit for his invaluable guidance, encouragement and patience. Without him, I would not have been able to finish this long journey of thesis writing. I also thank Assist. Prof. Dr. Canan Aslan-Akman for her support and encouragement.

I would also like to thank my mother Lale Yeşim Kale, my father Orhan Yılmaz Kale, my brother Cenker Kale and my grandmother Yümel Cenker for their love, support and faith in me in any case through my life.

I thank all my dear friends for their company and encouragement. I would especially like to thank Elif Ece Adal since she has always been with me with a supportive, kind-hearted, cheerful, sensitive and inspiring attitude.

I would also like to thank my participants which took part in my research group. Their contributions had been very valuable and beneficial to my study.

I also thank TÜBİTAK for the financial support it provided during my master's study.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

*“[Gethenians] do not see each other as men or women. This is almost impossible for our imagination to accept. What is the first question we ask about a newborn baby?”*

*– Ursula K. Le Guin*

In my first semester in the department of Gender and Women’s Studies, I took a course named *Introduction to Women’s Studies*. Among the articles in the reading list of the course were two articles by Judith Lorber, which have influenced me a lot and shaped my future academic interests. One of these two articles was “Night to His Day: The Social Construction of Gender,” which was about pervasiveness of gender in Western societies and how gender is used to organize every aspect of our lives. It was thanks to this article that for the first time in my life I read something academic about gender bending, doing gender, third gender and so on. The other article was “Believing is Seeing: Biology as Ideology,” which was predominantly about sex and its relation to gender. With this article, I began to think that not only gender but also sex is not a self-evident category. Moreover, following the names mentioned in these articles, I found myself in the middle of a sea of books and articles and I have never stopped reading since then. On the day I first read these two articles, I decided to study on the social construction of sex and gender.

The quotation above, which is also quoted in Judith Lorber’s article, is from Ursula K. Le Guin’s book *The Left Hand of Darkness*. When I first read this science-fiction novel a few years ago, I was impressed by the genderless world

described by the author. This thought-provoking book made me ask many questions that are still difficult to find accurate answers: What is a woman? What is a man? What are the differences between a woman and a man? How would it be like if we were living in a world where gender was of no importance? Is it still possible for us to ignore the differences between women and men rather than exaggerating and thus polarizing them? Can this be a solution to the problems in this world regarding gender?

The question of “What is a woman?” led me to Judith Butler. After reading *Gender Trouble*, I started to question “woman” as a category and the relation between sex, gender and sexuality. Therefore, I realized that the problem is not only sex and gender but also sexuality. This was a three-legged system designed to function perfectly and unfortunately, we contribute to this system by policing gender - no matter whether this happens deliberately or unconsciously. As Kate Bornstein (1994) puts it,

[W]e look at somebody and say, “that’s a man,” or “that’s a woman.” And this is important because the way we perceive another’s gender affects the way we relate to that person. Gender attribution is the sneaky one. It’s the one we do all the time without thinking about it. . . . Gender attribution depends on cues given by the attribute, and perceived by the attributer. The categories of cues [...] apply to a man/woman bi-polar gender system, although they could be relevant to a more fluidly-gendered system. (1994: 26)

Therefore, we all look for the traces of people’s “real” gender in order to put them into one of the two boxes, pink and blue, rather than seeing the other hues of the palette. And this begins with the first question we ask about a newborn baby: is a girl or a boy? From the very first day of a baby, society as a whole teaches it how to grow into either a biologically female feminine heterosexual woman or a biologically male masculine heterosexual man. Whenever this consistency between sex, gender and sexuality is disturbed, the price of nonconformity for the individual might sometimes be extremely high. I think that our gender

performance in general is too diverse to categorize under two socially predefined genders. Also there are various combinations of the subcategories of sex, gender and sexuality. Then, why not destroy the binaries and let everybody express themselves in whichever way they want?

As for gender politics, there are many different strands of gender politics: feminist movement, men's movement, LGBTTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, transvestite, and intersex) movement and so on. Moreover, each of these movements is also divided into substrands. The problem arises from the same source: heteronormative dualistic gender system, but each group has been trying to deal with only one aspect of this problem. While I was questioning what politics might look like when all dualities are destroyed, I came across post-identity politics as a way of doing politics without putting emphasis on any identity. Destroying the dualities means destroying all identity categories, even the ones through which political mobilization has been achieved so far. Therefore, post-identity politics should not be performed through identities; rather, it should destabilize all identity categories.

This is the story of how I started to be interested in the subject. As a feminist in Gender and Women's Studies department, I felt myself responsible for questioning the issues I mentioned above and canalize these concerns into my academic studies. Therefore, in my thesis study I decided to study on post-identity politics. I believe that a feminist self-critique is necessary to adapt to the changing world and take feminist politics one step further. The aim of this thesis study is to find out whether or not today's feminist politics in Turkey bears the traces of post-identity politics. When it is considered that identity politics is being widely practiced today, whereas there is still much vagueness regarding the ways of doing post-identity politics, in order to achieve the aim of this study it becomes necessary to make a critique of identity politics and to reveal post-identitarian tendencies through this critique of identity-based political mobilization. Therefore, in this thesis study, feminist identity politics will be analyzed and criticized from the perspective of Judith Butler, who is a poststructuralist feminist questioning identity and its relation to gender politics.

The following chapter presents the theoretical background of the study. It gives a comprehensive overview of the conceptualization and politicization of gender in feminist theory and politics. This chapter is divided into two main sections: “A Discussion on the Gendered Subject” and “A Discussion on Political Power and Agency”. Both these two sections discuss the issue comparatively, giving references to both second-wave/modernist feminism and post-structuralist challenges to second-wave feminist approaches to the issue. In the first section, how gender is conceptualized through the sex/gender distinction and theories by second-wave feminist scholars on how individuals become gendered will be given. More specifically, the period when gender started to be considered a separate analytical category is described and three main modernist approaches to how gender is constructed are explained in detail. Moreover, the impact of the conceptualization of gender on feminist theorizing is discussed. Then, post-structuralist challenges to this modernist view of sex, gender and sexuality are introduced to provide a conceptual basis for the discussion on gender politics. Post-structuralist feminists criticize modernist feminists basically on the grounds that they were successful in theorizing the link between biologically determined sex and culturally constructed gender, but they did not go beyond the dualistic and essentialist mode of modernist thinking.

In the second section, how all these theoretical discussions and challenges are put into practice in the political arena by both modernist and post-structuralist feminists is discussed. For this discussion the relation between the subject and politics is of crucial importance. In modernist mode of political mobilization, in order to lay any political claims there has to be a powerful, self-conscious and rational subject with a fixed, consistent and unitary identity. Therefore, identity politics is the way modernist feminists do politics, whereas from the perspective of post-structuralist feminists, identities are normative and disciplinary rather than descriptive. Finally, some suggestions regarding how politics might look like when identity is not centralized are given.

Chapter Three introduces the methodological background of the study. The post-structuralist theoretical framework of this thesis study informed the

methodological approach. Therefore, the interviews aim at providing individual narrations of the participants to be exposed to deconstruction later on through the analysis process. For this aim, the participants of the study are not asked direct and categorical questions about their ideas on specific issues; rather, they are encouraged to talk as much as possible about how they perceive the gendered world around them and how they respond to it and how these ideas are transferred to the political arena.

Chapter Four presents the results of the study. In order to analyze the current feminist identity politics from a Butlerian perspective, the data is categorized into two main groups: problematic dualities inherent in identitarian politics and ways of doing non-identitarian (or post-identity) politics. The former contains dichotomous identity categories that are problematic. These identity categories are considered problematic because from a Butlerian post-structuralist perspective they are essentializing, hierarchical and regulatory rather than descriptive. These categories are female/male (i.e. sex), woman/man (i.e. gender), sex/gender and homosexuality/heterosexuality (i.e. sexuality). The latter includes coalitional politics and subversive gender politics. Coalitional politics is seen as a way of doing post-identity politics because it is defined as political alliances of different groups of people without an emphasis on any identity. Subversive gender politics, on the other hand, is individualized political activities of daily life revealing the constructed nature of gender identity categories. A Butlerian analysis of feminist identity politics under these two main categories is expected to show the relation between identity and feminist politics and also to shed light on the significance of today's feminist politics for post-identity politics.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: POLITICIZATION OF GENDER

*“Laughter in the face of serious categories is indispensable for feminism.”*

*– Judith Butler*

*“There’s a real simple way to look at gender: Once upon a time, someone drew a line in the sands of a culture and proclaimed with great self-importance, ‘On this side, you are a man; on the other side, you are a woman.’ It’s time for the winds of change to blow that line away. Simple.”*

*– Kate Bornstein*

*“Somewhere in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, sex as we know it was invented.”*

*– Thomas Laqueur*

#### **2.1. A Discussion on the Gendered Subject**

In this section, a comprehensive overview of how gender is conceptualized through sex/gender distinction and theories by second-wave feminist scholars on how individuals become gendered will be given. Then, post-structuralist challenges to this modernist view of sex and gender (and of course sexuality) will be introduced in order to provide a comparative conceptual basis for the discussion on gender politics.

### 2.1.1. Conceptualization of Gender in Second-Wave Feminism

With her statement in *The Second Sex* that “one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman,” Simone de Beauvoir implied a distinction between biologically determined sex and socially/culturally constructed gender<sup>1</sup>; therefore, she is considered the first feminist scholar to make such a distinction although she did not directly use the term ‘gender’ (1972: 301). Two decades after Beauvoir, in the early 1970s, to distinguish sex from gender Ann Oakley started to use the term ‘gender,’ which was borrowed from Robert Stoller, a social psychologist working on individuals with ambiguous genital sex (Holmes, 2007). According to Oakley,

‘Sex’ is a word that refers to the biological differences between male and female: the visible difference in genitalia, the related difference in procreative function. ‘Gender’, however, is a matter of culture: it refers to the social classification into ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’. (Colebrook, 2004: 9)

After the emergence of sex/gender distinction in feminist scholarship, feminist theorists spent an effort to identify the sources of hierarchical gender order in society and they offered some solutions to eliminate this hierarchy. There are three main modernist approaches to how gender is constructed. The first one is gender socialization theory, which is also adopted by Oakley. In this approach, children learn what it means to be feminine or masculine from both ‘significant others’ and ‘the generalized other.’ In other words, girls and boys identify with their parents “not just as individuals but in terms of the social groups to which their parents belong” (Holmes, p. 43). Therefore, femininity and masculinity are regarded as the products of nurture or how and where people are brought up. Kate Millett in her book titled *Sexual Politics* discusses how this ‘gendering’ process takes place:

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<sup>1</sup> In *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir maintains that ‘the Other’ as a concept is useful to show women’s status in patriarchal cultures. In this hierarchical positioning, men are ‘the One’ and women are ‘the Other,’ which is defined only in relation to men. Therefore, according to Beauvoir, ‘woman’ is not only a social construct but also a less valuable category compared to man, which is “between male and eunuch.”

Implicit in all the gender identity development which takes place through childhood is the sum total of the parents', the peers', and the culture's notions of what is appropriate to each gender by way of temperament, character, interests, status, worth, gesture, and expression. Every moment of the child's life is a clue to how he or she must think and behave to attain or satisfy the demands which gender places upon one (1971: 31).

Gender socialization takes place in the family when mothers and fathers treat their female and male children in different ways such as promoting gender-stereotypical behaviours, praising appropriate personality traits for their genders, encouraging them to play different toys. As for gender socialization at school, the gendering of subjects, lack of role models, sexist resources and general classroom interaction favoring boys can be given as the factors that emphasize gender differences in school environment. Since this socialization process results in the subordination of women and dominance of men in society, some early second-wave feminists, especially liberal feminists, proposed the idea of gender-neutral child-rearing as a route to social change. To eradicate the negative effects of socialization on women, they highlighted the importance of changing children's environments, particularly "what children played with, how they dressed, what they read, what they watched on television, and the roles that parents modeled" (Martin, 2005: 459). Moreover, they emphasized changing parents' responses to gender-nonconforming behaviours in children. However, gender socialization theories and related gender-neutral child-rearing as a way to attain social change received much criticism on the basis that early parental influence is overemphasized where the impact of society is unavoidable. Furthermore, gender socialization is considered unsatisfactory to explain gender differences.

The second approach to the process of gender construction is object-relations theory. Nancy Chodorow holds a prominent place in this theory with her women-centered re-reading of Freudian understanding of psychological differences

between women and men<sup>2</sup> and concept of ‘the reproduction of mothering’ that she suggested. Chodorow (1999) claims that generally mothers are the caretakers of their babies, so there is a strong bond between the baby and the mother. As children grow old, boys realize that being masculine means being different from their mothers, which results in a break with her. On the other hand, girls realize that they are very similar to their mothers and being feminine is closely linked to being a mother. Therefore, they continue to identify with the mother, which results in the confusion between being feminine and being a mother. Chodorow calls this process ‘the reproduction of mothering.’ According to her, ‘the reproduction of mothering’ accounts for the subordinate position of women in society since women remain interested in nurturing and caring for others in a competitive masculine world. In order to eradicate the stereotypical differences between women and men in society, Chodorow suggests that both mothers and fathers should be equally involved in parenting.

In the third approach, gender is seen as feminine and masculine sexuality. Catharine MacKinnon’s contribution to this approach is significant. In her theory of gender, which can also be considered a theory of sexuality, MacKinnon maintains that gender differences result from the sexual objectification of women. In her book named *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State*, she claims that genders are “created through the eroticization of dominance and submission. The man/woman difference and the dominance/submission dynamic define each other. This is the social meaning of sex” (1989: 113). Masculinity and femininity refer to the position that one occupies in the sexualised dominance/submission dynamic where men hold the sexually dominant position, whereas women hold the sexually submissive one. Therefore, for MacKinnon gender is hierarchical and this

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<sup>2</sup> According to Freud, individuals become men and women by gradually separating themselves from their mother. For a baby the first source of pleasure is their mother since she satisfies his/her basic needs. When this desire for satisfaction turns into sexual desires, boys realize that it is impossible for them to desire their mothers because this requires a competition with their fathers, who is more powerful, and because their attachment to their mother might cause castration. Therefore, they start to separate themselves with their mothers and try to be like their fathers. Girls, on the other hand, realize that they do not have a penis, which results in penis envy. They also know that their mother cannot provide them with a penis and that they cannot have their father’s penis due to the incest taboo. As a result, they try to become like their mother and behave in a feminine way in order to first attract men and then get a substitute for a penis: a baby.

hierarchy is closely linked to sexualized power relations. However, this does not mean that men are naturally dominant and women are naturally submissive; rather, masculine and feminine sexualities are socially conditioned: “men have been conditioned to find women's subordination sexy and women have been conditioned to find a particular male version of female sexuality as erotic.”<sup>3</sup> MacKinnon emphasizes that socialization or psychological orientation does not account for these gender differences; on the contrary, males and females socialize differently because there are underlying power inequalities. In order to counter social inequalities between women and men, some feminists, especially radical feminists, argued that women have to be lesbians and employ lesbianism as a political tool in their struggles, which would enable them to go outside the borders of heterosexual power relations.

Deployment of gender as an analytical category was a cornerstone in feminist theorizing. Quite many feminists adopted the idea that sex is fixed and based in nature, while gender is fluid and based in culture so that they could argue against biological determinism (i.e. “anatomy is destiny”) by claiming that differences between men and women are not rooted in biological or natural differences. In other words, they argued that existing subordinate condition of women in society is not due to their nature but due to the patriarchal system of male domination; therefore, there is the possibility to attain women’s emancipation and empowerment through political struggle. However, there is one essentialist assumption underlying all the approaches explained above, which makes them problematic: Gender is constructed independently of race, class, ethnicity, nationality or sexual orientation and thus *all* women essentially have something in common just because they are women. Therefore, although these theories can explain the differences between men and women to some extent, they fail to explain the differences among women and ignore the particular conditions of women all around the world. Therefore, feminist theory is accused of being dominated by white, middle-class and heterosexual women, which results in a ‘white solipsism’ in Adrienne Rich’s terms (1979: 306). However, as Spelman

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<sup>3</sup> <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-gender/>

argues, “females become not simply women but *particular kinds of women*” (emphasis added, 1988: 113).

At this point, criticism by black feminists and lesbian feminists gains importance. For example, black feminist bell hooks states that feminism in the USA has never originated among the women who are most oppressed by sexism, “women who are daily beaten down, mentally, physically, and spiritually – women who are powerless to change their condition in life” (cited in Fenstermaker & West, p. 57). According to West and Fenstermaker (2002), this white, middle-class character of most feminist thought is due to the identities of people who produce it, namely white, highly educated female academics. Therefore, current feminist understanding of gender has prevented the movement itself from theorizing the particular conditions of women of color.

Lesbian feminists also criticized feminist conceptualization of gender for its ignorance of sexualities outside heterosexuality. Adrienne Rich’s essay ‘Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence’ is a crucial one that needs to be mentioned here. In this article, Rich criticizes the causal relationship between gender and sexual orientation in feminist thinking, which is represented in the idea that women are innately sexually oriented toward men, and states that a feminist critique of what she calls ‘compulsory heterosexuality’ for women “is long overdue” (632). As a result, it can be said that feminists used ‘gender’ effectively as a political tool to counter biological determinism and its negative consequences on women; however, at the same time, they had to make a definition of woman as one of the two available genders, which led to essentialism as it is clearly seen in cultural feminism<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Cultural feminism tries to re-validate undervalued female attributes and claims that women’s liberation will be achieved through the development and preservation of a female counter culture. Therefore, they try to preserve gender differences rather than eradicating them.

### 2.1.2. Post-structuralist Challenges to Modern Gendered Subject

Although modernist feminist scholars were successful in theorizing the link between biologically determined sex and culturally constructed gender, they are strongly criticized by post-structuralist scholars for not going beyond the dualistic and essentialist mode of modernist thinking, where sex/gender is also one of those dualisms. First of all, in modernist feminist thinking, both sex (female/male) and gender (woman/man or feminine/masculine), the latter following the former, are considered within a dualistic framework and thus these categories are regarded as normative, exclusionary and regulatory by post-structuralist feminists. Secondly, gender as a concept to explain and struggle against the differences between women and men in the society is employed both theoretically and politically, but sex is not problematized, which has resulted in another dualism between sex and gender. As Alan Petersen puts it in his book titled *Unmasking the Masculine*:

[W]hile early second-wave feminists criticised the nature/culture dualism, as part of their effort to challenge the notion of biology-as-destiny, they did not extend their criticism fully to the derivative sex/gender distinction, and so biological determinism and dualistic thinking have been carried over into feminist theorising in the correspondence of 'sex' with 'nature' and 'gender' with 'culture'. ... Although the sex/gender distinction has, arguably, proved useful in the development of a 'second-wave' feminist movement, its practical and theoretical limitations have become increasingly evident. (1998: 121)

Judith Butler is one of the most prominent scholars in this area who particularly focused on the sex/gender dichotomy. The feminist assumption which Butler deals with in her book *Gender Trouble* is that sex precedes gender. Because she claims that sex is also constructed, she rejects the idea that there is a causal relationship between sex and gender where natural sex determines social/cultural gender and gender identity. According to Butler:

Gender ought not to be conceived merely as the cultural inscription of meaning on a pre-given sex (a juridical conception); gender must also

designate the very apparatus of production whereby the sexes themselves are established. As a result, gender is not to culture as sex is to nature; gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which “sexed nature” or “a natural sex” is produced and established as “prediscursive,” prior to culture, a politically neutral surface *on which* culture acts (10).

Therefore, sex is not the determinant of gender; on the contrary, sex is one of its effects. In addition to claiming that not only gender but also sex is a social construct, in her book titled *Bodies That Matter*, Butler argues that sex is a regulatory force through which material bodies that it claims only to describe is produced:

The category of “sex” is, from the start, normative; it is what Foucault has called a “regulatory ideal.” In this sense, then, “sex” not only functions as a norm, but is part of a regulatory practice that produces the bodies it governs, that is, whose regulatory force is made clear as a kind of productive power, the power to produce – demarcate, circulate, differentiate – the bodies it controls (1).

From this point of view, ‘sex,’ which has long been in the realm of nature, is not descriptive; it is rather a normative construct regulating the bodies it is supposed to describe. Moreover, sex and gender are produced dichotomously within the discourse; therefore, the bodies with biological (genital, hormonal, chromosomal and anatomical) differences are categorized into two exclusive sexes, namely female and male, and (only) two exclusive genders, woman and man, which follow those two ostensibly natural sexes. In other words, a person with a female body has to be a woman, while another one with a male body has to be a man. Suzanne J. Kessler, in her article titled “The Medical Construction of Gender,” shows how genitals of intersex infants are ‘corrected’ and brought in alignment with the two genders through surgical operations:

[M]embers of medical teams have standard practices for managing intersexuality that rely ultimately on cultural understandings of gender.

The process and guidelines by which decisions about gender (re)construction are made reveal the model for the social construction of gender generally. Moreover, in the face of apparently incontrovertible evidence – infants born with some combination of “female” and “male” reproductive and sexual features – physicians hold an incorrigible belief in and insistence upon female and male as the only “natural” options. This paradox highlights and calls into question the idea that female and male are biological givens compelling a culture of two genders (4).

This process of medical construction of sex in intersex infants supports Butler’s argument that sex is normative rather than natural. First, non-normative genitals of intersex infants are converted into a normative state and then, these normative sexes are considered natural. In other words, genital ambiguity is ‘corrected’ so that the sex of the infant will conform to culturally indisputable gender dichotomy. In her book *Sexing the Body*, Ann Fausto-Sterling, who is a professor of biology and gender studies, claims that the sex/gender distinction where gender is placed in a dichotomy limits feminist analysis (2000: 21). She argues that a body’s sex is too complex to apply an either/or schema since there are many components of sex other than genitalia and that scientific decisions about which criterion will be used to determine sex depend on scientists’ cultural -not scientific- beliefs about gender. Fausto-Sterling recounts the story of a woman hurdler, Maria Patino, who had failed the sex test<sup>5</sup> required to compete in Olympic Games and disqualified from the 1988 Olympics. After the shocking result of the test, Patino was advised to fake an injury and withdraw from the competition in order not to cause any embarrassment. However, Patino refused to

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<sup>5</sup> Sex test as a requirement for sportswomen began at the 1966 European Track and Field Championships in Budapest in response to the rumors that some of the athletes from the Soviet Union and East Europe were in fact men in disguise. At that time, sex test relied on physical appearance of the women athletes, who were asked to walk naked in front of a group of gynecologists. Two years later, the International Olympic Committee set up a new method to test the sex of sportswomen, which is called buccal smear. In this method, a sample tissue is taken from the inside of the athlete’s cheek and it is exposed to microscopic examination to find out whether the athlete has two X chromosomes. The important point here is the fact that although in the beginning this test relied solely on the primary and secondary sex characteristics (sex organs and enlarged breasts) of women, later experts relied heavily on chromosomes to validate the sex of the athlete.

hide her situation as a secret and the European press broke the news. As a result, she was stripped of her past titles and barred from further competition. Her boyfriend also broke up with her. Since what she experienced after her 'true' sex was revealed shows how difficult it is to make a quick conclusion regarding a person's sex, Patino's story helps Fausto-Sterling to make her point even more clear.

Referring to the distinction between sex and gender made by modernist feminists, Butler (2006) maintains that even if we assume for a moment that there are two stable sexes, there is no reason to assume a causal relationship between sex and gender, resulting in a dichotomous gender order:

Assuming for the moment the stability of binary sex, it does not follow that the construction of "men" will accrue exclusively to the bodies of males or that "women" will interpret only female bodies. Further, even if the sexes appear to be unproblematically binary in their morphology and constitution (which will become a question), there is no reason to assume that genders ought also to remain as two. The presumption of a binary gender system implicitly retains the belief in a mimetic relation of gender to sex whereby gender mirrors sex or is otherwise restricted by it (9).

In Western societies, one can either be a man or a woman and this is usually determined by that person's assigned sex at birth. There is no status in these societies that a person can neither be a man nor a woman or there is not any possibility to become both. Being assigned a sex guarantees the gender. If the sex of a person is obviously not in accordance with their gender, that is, if a female bodied person, for example, claims to be a man, that person is categorized as a transsexual (which is regarded as a transitional state) and until a surgical operation is performed that person will still be considered a woman. However, in non-Western societies third or even fourth genders exist. The Native American *berdache*<sup>6</sup>, Indian *hijra* and the *xaniths* of Oman are some of the examples of

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<sup>6</sup> Susan J. Kessler and Wendy McKenna, in their book titled *Gender: An Ethnomethodological Study*, try to make a distinction between the berdache and transsexual. They claim that berdache

genders outside the man/woman dichotomy (Lorber, 1994). Then, it is clear that Western view of dualistic gender is not universal and this view makes the lives of individuals with gender ambiguity quite difficult since they are either stigmatized or forced to conform to one of the two genders – preferably the one which is congruent with their sex. In her article “What It Means to Be Gendered Me,” where she uses her own experience as a masculine woman as her data, Betsy Lucal explains in detail how challenging it is to live on the “boundaries of a dichotomous gender system.”

My most common experience is being called “Sir” or being referred to by some other masculine linguistic marker (e.g., “he,” “man”). ... Using my credit cards sometimes is a challenge. Some clerks subtly indicate their disbelief, looking from the card to me and back at the card and checking my signature carefully. ... My identity as a woman also is called into question when I try to use women-only spaces. Encounters in public rest rooms are an adventure. (1999: 787)

Another important criticism made by post-structuralist theorists is the link between gender and desire. Just like the causal relationship between sex and gender where gender is thought to follow sex (females become women and males become men), there is a causal relationship between one’s gender and sexuality. In other words, it is assumed that being a woman entails a sexual desire for men, while being a man requires a sexual desire for women. In this heteronormative framework, the coherence and continuity among sex, gender and sexuality is maintained. Butler, in the preface of 1999 edition of her book *Gender Trouble*, points to the heterosexual assumption underlying feminist theory and its consequences:

In 1898 I was most concerned to criticize a pervasive heterosexual assumption in feminist literary theory. I sought to counter those views that

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was an institutionalized gender (role), whereas transsexual is not because it implies a transition from one gender to the other. Moreover, berdache was most probably considered neither a man nor a woman, but rather a third type of person, showing that Western assumption that there are only two genders is not universal. On the other hand, transsexualism does not undermine the dichotomous gender order; on the contrary, it reinforces this dichotomy (27).

made presumptions about the limits and propriety of gender and restricted the meaning of gender to received notions of masculinity and femininity. It was and remains my view that feminist theory restricts the meaning of gender in the presuppositions of its own practice sets up exclusionary gender norms within feminism, often with homophobic consequences. It seemed to me, and continues to seem, that feminism ought to be careful not to idealize certain expressions of gender that, in turn, produce *new forms of hierarchy and exclusion*. (emphasis added, viii)

In conclusion, post-structuralist theories on sex and gender have attempted to deconstruct the analytical categories and to challenge the essentialist and dualistic tendencies in modernist feminist theorizing. The deconstructive challenges posed by post-structuralist feminists can be summarized as follows: (a) not only gender but also sex is socially constructed; (b) there is no reason to assume that only two sexes and two genders exist; (c) the causal link between sex and gender is not universal; (d) a causal link between gender and sexuality/desire cannot be assumed.

Although post-structuralism is mainly seen as a critical and deconstructive approach to existing theories and concepts, post-structuralist theories as alternatives to modernist ones are also proposed. Regarding gender, Butler's theory of performativity needs to be mentioned here. In her theory, gender is constructed through culture and discourse and is based on repetition of everyday acts and regulatory practices, which provides a sense of continuity and consistency:

Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of the substance, of a natural sort of being. A political genealogy of gender ontologies, if it is successful, will deconstruct the substantive appearance of gender into its constitutive acts and locate and account for those acts within the compulsory frames set by the various forces that police the social appearance of gender. (2006: 45)

Elaborating on Nietzsche's claim in *On the Genealogy of Morals* that "there is no 'being' behind doing, acting, becoming; 'the doer' is merely a fiction imposed on the doing – the doing itself is everything", she argues that "there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results (2006: 34). In other words, gender is not performed by the subject; instead, these gender acts performatively constitute a subject which is the effect of discourse rather than being the cause of it. Then, gender does not refer to an essence or core, but rather it refers to a process. At this point, Butler offers drag performance<sup>7</sup> and parody as a transgressive strategy leading to gender liberalization gains importance. According to her, through drag performances, the rigid gender categories will be transformed and it will be clear that there is nothing essential about gender.

## **2.2. A Discussion on Political Power and Agency**

After a discussion on how gender is conceptualized and used to explain the inequalities among people from different genders in both modernist and post-structuralist feminist theory and a review on the relations of gender to many other concepts such as sex and sexuality, in this section it is necessary to show how all these theoretical discussions and challenges are put into practice in the political arena by both modernist and post-structuralist feminists. This section is divided into two subsections on the basis of the deployment of identity as a political tool. At this point, the relation between the subject and politics is of utmost importance. Therefore, throughout these two subsections the way feminists regard the gendered subject as the agent of their political activities will be discussed in detail.

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<sup>7</sup> Drag performances as a political strategy will be discussed in detail in the following sections of this chapter.

### **2.2.1. Identity Politics in Feminist Movement**

Feminist politics began as an attempt to represent women's interests which aimed at liberating women from patriarchal dominance. After 'gender' started to be used as an analytical tool to explain women's subordinate position in society, feminists realized that this unequal position was changeable through political struggle. All strands of second-wave feminism (whether it is liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, socialist feminism or radical feminism) have tried to improve women's position through the politicization of gender. For example, embracing the dominant conception of politics, liberal feminists argued that women should be allowed to participate in political arena (voting, electoral candidacy, political representation, and so on) on equal terms with men (Lloyd, 2005). Radical feminists, on the other hand, questioned the very idea of politics and particularly showed that the division between public (as the realm of politics) and private (as the realm of personal issues) is artificial and that masculinity is associated with the public, whereas femininity is associated with the private. This claim is well reflected in the radical feminist slogan 'the personal is political.' Therefore, it can be said that radical feminists have challenged the representations of 'the personal' and tried to transform the assumptions about what could be counted as political in a patriarchal society. As a result, they regarded every aspect of women's lives as political showing that the private is not insulated from politics.

In the feminist movement of that time, it was assumed that all women have something in common just because they are women living under the hegemony of patriarchal order and this shared experience of subordination is assumed to form the basis for political action. They believed that a proper way to bring all women together was to make them aware of their unequal position in society. Thus, feminists formed consciousness-raising groups in order to meet regularly and share their experiences as women living in a male-dominated society, which was expected to result in an awareness of a woman's connection with other women. This notion of sisterhood helped women to mobilize around their key identity: woman.

The second half of the twentieth century witnessed the emergence of a wide range of political movements based on the claims of injustices done to particular social groups. These political activities including second-wave feminist movement, black movement, gay and lesbian movement were grounded on the basic assumption that some social groups are oppressed and this shared oppression provides a common ground for those people to lay their political claims. In this modernist mode of thinking, in order to lay any political claims there has to be a powerful, self-conscious and rational subject with a fixed, consistent and unitary identity. In other words, these rights-based politics assume the prior existence of a political subject to whom specific rights are to be granted.

As Diane Fuss (1989) argues, there has been a tendency to assume that there is a casual relationship between identity and politics, with the former determining the latter. Here Fuss mentions the statement of Barbara Smith to show the close link between identity and politics: “We have an identity and *therefore* a politics” (cited in Fuss, p. 99). Therefore, it is expected that individuals will claim or discover their true identity before they elaborate a personal politics. For feminist politics, especially for second-wave feminism, identity was of central importance. In order to draw attention to the fact that women are oppressed as women, second wave feminism needed to involve the idea of a universal women’s experience of male domination. It was simply assumed that women were and should be united by common feelings about or experiences of oppression by men.

However, this experience-based approach to politics were heavily criticised by lesbian, black and working class women. According to Grant (1993), the problem with experience has been that white, middle-class, heterosexual women have generalised from their own experiences to arrive at the experiences of women in general, which results in the erasure of differences among women. This exclusion of experience of women with different backgrounds was particularly criticized by black women and, as Moya Lloyd states, the reaction of these women “required [white feminists] to reflect on the epistemic privileging of their own experiences within feminism and on their participation in structures of domination” (2005: 13). Moreover, the anti-essentialist trend within contemporary social theory has

had a profound impact on thinking about identity. Within the humanities and social sciences, identity is increasingly seen as a normative ideal that is assured through the use of categories such as gender, sex, sexuality and race rather than as a descriptive aspect of experience. Mobilisation around an identity has been put under scrutiny as well.

### **2.2.2. Post-structuralist Challenges to Identity-Based Politics**

Many contemporary feminists have now abandoned previous feminist understandings of the unified female subject and rejected unproblematised notions of women's oppression as a commonly shared form of experience and of patriarchy as a monolithic power structure. They are now in favour of an analysis of the discursive construction of the gendered subject and of the reiterative practices of gender without necessarily referring to an overarching patriarchy. Ramazanoğlu and Holland (2002) explain how poststructuralism has undermined the theory of patriarchy since it is part of grand narratives as well:

Feminism's general theory of male power, patriarchy, has taken a knock in postmodern<sup>8</sup> attacks on totalizing metanarratives. Feminist ideas of emancipation emerged from the binary thinking and humanism of modern thought, from women's experiences of living in male-dominated societies, and from the possibility of women having collective interests. Postmodern thought offers escape from seeing women as oppressed by male power, and undercuts any general political project of emancipation and empowerment for women. (95)

The problematisation of identity, of course, has had an important effect on feminist politics since 'woman' has been the main identity label under which the dominating paradigm of feminist identity politics is practiced. Second-wave feminists posed general challenges to essentialism very successfully and rejected

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<sup>8</sup> Ramazanoğlu and Holland use the term 'postmodernism' to refer both to poststructuralism and postmodernism although they acknowledge that there are significant differences between these two strands of theory. However, the reason why they still prefer to use a single term without pointing to any of these differences is that they are interested in the implications of 'postmodern thought' for feminist social research rather than an effort to dwell on the diversity of theories in this field (p. 84).

the idea that ‘woman’ is a fixed or essential identity which is hierarchically defined in relation to ‘man’; however, they had to retain a commitment to ‘women’ as the agent of their political struggle. It was thought that in the name of identity and identification, all women would join together solely on the basis of what they have in common, as it is clear in the idea of universal sisterhood. In other words, identity politics is “essentialist in that it assumes not only that what unites the group is somehow intrinsic to it but that what a group shares transcends history, culture and geography” (Lloyd, 2005: 37). However, in this way of political mobilization, differences among women are not just ignored but also erased. From a post-structuralist point of view, identities are regarded as normative and disciplinary rather than descriptive, so it becomes obvious that feminist identity politics work to exclude or simply ignore all of those individuals who fail to conform to the correct model of womanhood. As Moya Lloyd pointed out “all identity categories, whether those generally accepted as ‘normalizing’ (the good woman) or those charted as ‘liberating’ (gay, lesbian or feminist), act in a regulatory fashion” (Lloyd, 2005: 57).

Diane Fuss, in *Essentially Speaking*, points to the exclusionary nature of identity politics claiming that although identity politics “unites disparate social groups on the basis of shared political strategies and goals,” it also “frustrates the possibilities for successful ‘coalition politics’<sup>9</sup> by insisting on the exclusive nature of these identities” (1989: 96). Reflecting on ‘gay identity,’ on which gay activism is based, she claims that although in the past this identity referred to the notion of a gay essence, from the perspective of recent gay theory, such adherence to a natural, essential or universal gay identity has been rejected. Instead, the discursive construction of modern homosexual<sup>10</sup> is emphasized.

In *Gender Trouble*, Butler presents “a feminist genealogy of the category of women” and by claiming that sex, gender and desire are all constructed and that

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<sup>9</sup> Coalition politics as an alternative to identity politics will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

<sup>10</sup> Foucault is one of the pioneering anti-essentialist theorists in the field of discourse theory. He has made an important contribution to gay activism. In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault tried to de-essentialize homosexuality and presented it as a modern invention through making references to its history.

gender identity is performative, she challenges the feminist assumption that a stable and unitary conception of women can be the basis for feminist politics (p. 8). Butler even argues that the modernist understandings of the category of women is limiting feminist politics because she thinks that political subjects are produced within the discourse of their representations rather than preceding them, an idea which she derives from Foucault's concept of 'juridical power.' In other words, feminism produces the subject through its activities rather than acting on behalf of a pre-existing subject. As a result, 'women' as a concept becomes coercive which normalizes femaleness and femininity in a restrictive and exclusionary way (Lloyd, 2007, p. 45). Moreover, in *Beyond Identity Politics*, Moya Lloyd (2005) also argues that feminism's need for a stable, unified and coherent subject to form the basis for its politics "sets a limit how feminism conceives politics and disguises the power relations that underpin this conception" (p. 3). In addition, just as in the case of black and lesbian feminists who claim that they are not represented within the mainstream feminist movement, according to Butler, "the fragmentation within feminism and the paradoxical opposition to feminism from 'women' whom feminism claims to represent" reveal the limited nature of identity politics (Butler, 2006: 6).

Having seen the problems posed by a gender movement which adheres to a stable and coherent subject as its political agent, many post-structuralist feminists, including Butler, reflect on the possibility of doing politics without a stable subject claiming an identity or on the possibility of using identities only strategically. For post-structuralist theorists, the subject is "fluid rather than stable, constructed rather than fixed, contested rather than secure, multiple rather than uniform, deconstructed rather than whole" (Genz & Brabon, 2009, p. 107). This poststructuralist subject is called subject-in-process, which is inessential and open to continuous transformation. Moya Lloyd clearly explains how feminist politics could benefit from the idea of subject-in-process:

[E]mbracing the idea of the subject-in-process, far from depoliticizing feminism, breathes new political life into it. It opens up spaces for political contestation and allows for the flourishing of new forms of politics to sit

alongside its more conventional ones. Feminism does not need the stable unitary subject to guarantee its politics. It needs a deeper understanding of the *political* nature of subjectivity and of dynamism of politics. (11)

However, many feminists feel uncomfortable with the idea of politics without a concept of woman as a coherent identity. The opponents of the idea of destabilized subject claim that critiquing the stable subject risks the possibility of any kind of feminist politics (e.g. di Stefano, 1990; Hartsock, 1996). Therefore, rather than totally abandoning identity, feminists have tried to pluralize identity, which, according to Fuss, cannot be considered a direct solution to the problems with political identity. She presents the feminist concern regarding the deconstruction of identity as follows:

The fear is that once we have deconstructed identity, we will have nothing (nothing, that is, which is stable and secure) upon which to base a politics. “Non-identity politics” is quickly rejected as a less than exciting and no less secure foundation upon which to organize community activism. A more appealing alternative is to shift from identity to *identities*, but such attempts to pluralize merely displace the problems surrounding questions of identity and identity politics rather than address them head on. (104)

Mouffe directly addresses this critique from feminists who think that deconstruction of identity will preclude any basis for political mobilization:

Many feminists believe that, without seeing women as a coherent identity, we cannot ground the possibility of a feminist political movement in which women could unite as women in order to formulate and pursue specific feminist aims. Contrary to that view, I will argue that, for those feminists who are committed to a radical democratic politics, the deconstruction of essential identities should be seen as the necessary condition for an adequate understanding of the variety of social relations where the principles of liberty and equality should apply. (cited in Nicholson & Seidman, 1995:27)

However, like Mouffe, many other post-structuralist feminists argue that moving beyond identity politics will open up new possibilities for feminist politics. According to Riki Wilchins, “the loss of unity and the incompleteness of the category might even promote new meanings, new ways of being, and new political possibilities for women to engage” (2004: 129). On the other hand, in recognition of the limitations of a strict deconstructivist approach to identity and identity politics, a number of scholars have recently advocated the deployment of deconstructive strategies together with the strategic use of identity. For example, Biddy Martin mentions the necessity for a doubled strategy in which the category of ‘woman’ is maintained to make politics possible but the constructed character of this category/identity has to be realized (1988). Gayatri Spivak also suggested the strategic use of essentialism for political purposes (1997). This type of essentialism does not attribute an ontological essence to womanhood; instead, it focuses on positive aspects of being a woman as a political strategy. Alan Petersen explains the need for strategic essentialism as follows:

The concept of ‘strategic essentialism’, proposed by some feminist and queer scholars suggests that identity labels can be strategically employed according to perceived situational advantage, political gain and/or conceptual utility, and indeed must be used in this way if one is to protect and advance social rights in a context of ‘backlash’ against the gains of feminists and virtually all minority groups. (1998: 124)

Steven Epstein also argues that identity and difference should be maintained in productive tension, and notions of identity and identity politics should be relied on for their strategic utility as long as one remains cautious against reification. However, even the operational deployment of a category/identity is considered problematic and not a good enough alternative to identity politics as Stormhoj argues: “Even if the category of ‘women’ is used strategically, such a strategy may have effects exceeding the goals intended, for example the exclusion of women who are unable to identify with the category” (p. 14).

### 2.2.3. Post-Identity Politics

*“Gender is the mechanism by which notions of masculine and feminine are produced and naturalized, but gender might very well be the apparatus by which such terms are deconstructed and denaturalized.”*

**–Judith Butler**

It is important here to question what politics might look like when an anti-essentialist stance is taken or what kinds of political organizations and mobilizations are possible when identity no longer limits gender politics. Feminists who insist on the need for a stable subject as the guarantor of feminist politics claim that destabilizing the idea of a universal and unified feminist subject will result in the dissolution of feminist movement. Some of these feminists even think that post-modern anti-essentialism and its questioning of subjectivity is like a Trojan horse which acts as if it is expanding the feminist debate, but, in fact, it has a potential to enable male critics to ‘invade’ feminist theory and to jeopardize feminist politics (Brabon & Genz, 2009). For example, Tania Modleski, who is one of the most important proponents of post-structuralist approaches to feminism, entitles her book *Feminism Without Women*, a phrase which she uses to refer to both a male feminist perspective excluding women and a radical feminist anti-essentialist perspective which avoids any use of the term ‘woman,’ and she claims that this post-structuralist “play with gender in which differences are elided can easily lead us back into our ‘pregendered’ past where there was only the universal subject – man” (1991: 163). However, the deconstruction of the feminist subject does not signal the end of feminist politics, but it rather signals a paradigm shift in politics and this paradigm shift is possible only if feminists question the very assumptions they have made. As Lloyd puts it: “feminism, like other political movements, needs to reflect on the strategies it deploys and to constantly engage in (self-)critique” (2005: 67).

Since in post-structuralist theorizing all identities, without any exception, are seen as essentialist, and thus regulatory and exclusionary, politics alternative to identity politics should be inessential and non-identitarian. For many post-structuralist theorists, it is crucial that feminists understand that the causal link between subject and politics is itself political. Nevertheless, for them, breaking the link between pre-given identities and political mobilization does not mean that identity is of no political use. They claim that from time to time feminism will be in need of politics of identity in order to make demands for women's needs and interests; however, these identities (and their needs and interests) should be regarded as political constructs rather than pre-discursive entities existing prior to politics. Post-structuralist feminists' suggestions regarding post-identity politics, or 'new gender politics' in Butler's terms, can be analysed at two levels: micro politics and macro politics.

Patricia Mann in her book *Micro-Politics: Agency in a Postfeminist Era* examines agency in a postfeminist era and formulates a theory of individual agency in which a more "dynamic and flexible model of political agency" is adopted and promotes "a struggle that is not only without a unitary political subject but also without a unitary political opponent" (1994: 159). As a result, this micro-politics is put into practice not by a politically activist community but by individuals and their daily gender-based struggles. Moreover, there is not a unitary political opponent to struggle against as in the case of second-wave feminism and its relation to patriarchy. Judith Butler's subversive politics of performative gender, which is sometimes called politics of dressing up, can be given as an example of micro-politics in this postfeminist era.

As Butler nicely puts it in the quotation above, regarded as a regulatory mechanism from a post-structuralist point of view, it is gender itself that should be the target of new gender politics. The reason for that can be clarified through the commonly accepted idea that two (and only two) genders follow two 'natural' sexes and a consistency between the two, sex and gender, is maintained. In other words, "if becoming a woman is an invariable result of being born female," then it seems that now not biology/anatomy –i.e. sex– but culture –gender– is our

destiny (Wilchins, 135). On the other hand, gender might also function as a means to achieve relief from these regulatory, exclusionary and normative categories. Butler's performative gender politics, particularly drag performance, needs to be mentioned here as a way of political activism aiming at the deconstruction and denaturalization of identity categories. However, in *Bodies That Matter*, Butler argues that heteronormativity has to be subverted politically from within, which means that not all drag performances are subversive (1993). For example, the drag performances presented in some movies by heterosexual culture (performances of Dustin Hoffman in *Tootsie*, Julie Andrews in *Victor/Victoria* and Jack Lemmon in *Some Like It Hot*) do not subvert gender norms; on the contrary, these performances re-idealize and reinforce heterosexual norms.

Judith Butler's contribution to feminist theorizing on post-identity politics is important. She has proposed a subversive gender politics which is based on her theory of performative gender and aims at challenging the naturalness of heteronormative order. In the preface of 1990 edition of *Gender Trouble*, she offers "a set of parodic practices based in a performative theory of gender acts that disrupt the categories of the body, sex, gender and sexuality and occasion their subversive resignification and proliferation beyond the binary frame" (1999: xxxiv). To show that all gender is parodic, or imitative, Butler advocates a subversive politics which she clarifies through the case of drag. According to Butler, drag is a way to 'trouble' gender norms since it denaturalizes gender categories and reveals their status as performative constructions through the repetition of acts, gestures and discourses which produce the effect of an identity at the moment of this drag performance. Therefore, drag is not a copy of a 'real' woman, but it is a copy of a copy – since 'woman' itself as a category is a construct (Butler, 1999).

Butler's theory on post-identity politics is criticized for being limited since she restricts political activism to isolated individual acts of insubordination; therefore, performative politics is not regarded as a satisfying alternative to identity politics by some post-structuralist theorists. For this reason, they have suggested building

alliances, or coalitions, as a way of doing politics. At this point, it is important to question with whom or which groups these alliances will be built. Riki Wilchins (2004) emphasizes the importance of gender rights for all people, independent of their sex, gender, sexual orientation and so on. Therefore, to Wilchins, these alliances can and should be built together with people from all gender related groups (feminists, gays and lesbians, heterosexual people, transsexuals etc).

I have heard about ... experiences from feminists; gays and lesbians; minority genderqueer youth; artistic, chubby, asthmatic little boys beaten up in locker rooms and tough, athletic, little straight girls who've been ridiculed and bullied. All have paid a price for transgressing and transcending gender norms. ... [Therefore] gender rights are too fundamental to belong to any one group and too important to leave anyone behind. Gender rights are human rights, and they are for all of us. (149-150).

As a result, it can be said that coalitions built among people from different groups is important in order to overthrow this heteronormative gender order. Shane Phelan defines coalitions as “mechanisms for bringing people together, in their difference, in some kind of ‘strategic alignment’ over a particular issue” (1994: 139). These coalitions are not based on an abstract principal of unity, but they are “created around family resemblances between subordinated or marginalized social groups with regard to the different kinds of exclusions they are exposed to” (Stormhoj, p. 13).

Donna Haraway promotes building coalitions through cyborg politics, offering a particular concrete example: women of colour. The cyborg is a hybrid which is produced through a variety of discourses and practices; moreover, it might be animal and human, machine and animal, or human, animal and machine. These features bring it closer to non-identitarian politics. According to Lloyd:

As an image, the cyborg, like that of the nomad, trickster or coyote, encapsulates the instability and hybridity of subjectivity. Since cyborgs negate the unity and/or singularity underpinning conventional identity

politics, it is safe to say that cyborg politics will not be grounded in pre-discursive essentials (shared identity, natural features, and so on). (2005: 154).

After discussing the cyborg in relatively abstract terms, Haraway supports her discussion by giving an example of a cyborg affinity group. Haraway claims that women of colour are excluded from existent categories because they are black and women and through the “conscious appropriation of [that] negation” they evolved as a political group (cited in Lloyd, 2005: 155). Different from typical identities, women of colour does not signify completeness; on the contrary, particularly politics of women of colour – in general terms, cyborg politics – is incomplete and shifting, which is the source of its strength. Moreover, in the case of women of colour, affinity is not “based on positivity (the assumption of a set of substantive ontological characteristics joining women of colour) but rather on negativity (what they were not)” (Lloyd, 2005: 156). This potential of cyborgs for intersubjective – and inessential – political connection with others paves the way for coalitional politics.

Shane Phelan is another feminist theorist who supports building coalitions instead of doing identity politics. In her book *Identity Politics: Lesbian Feminism and the Limits of Community*, she criticizes the lesbian feminist tendency to deploy an essentialist mode of identity since this type of politics is nondemocratic silencing the voices of lesbians that do not fit that unitary schema. She assumes that when an abstract unified identity is generated, concrete differences between lesbians disappear (Lloyd, 2005: 157). Therefore, to Phelan, a more democratic lesbian politics should be based on postmodern coalition politics. It is important here to mention that postmodern coalition politics is a non-identity politics, based on the absence of an identity, not on the presence of it.

Phelan examines queer politics as an example of inessential coalitional politics. According to Lloyd, Phelan’s example of queer politics is very similar to that of Haraway’s, politics of women of colour, since neither of these two communities is unified by a shared identity. As Lloyd puts it, “just as ‘women of colour’ emerged

*against* other forms of identity (in negation, that is), so too ‘queer’ is also defined *against* that which it rejects” (emphasis original, 2005: 159). Queer as a term is used for all sexual minorities. The term, once offensive and derisive, is re-appropriated and used “to describe a sexual orientation and/or gender identity or gender expression that does not conform to heteronormative society.<sup>11</sup>” Judith Butler, one of founders of queer theory, explains how queer politics has succeeded in breaking the link between identity and politics and in building coalitions among different groups: “[Q]ueer theory and activism acquired political salience by insisting that antihomophobic activism can be engaged in by anyone, regardless of sexual orientation, and that identity markers are not prerequisites for political participation” (2006: 7). Therefore, if ‘queer’ as an umbrella term to practice coalitional politics starts to function as a unitary identity defining any group of people with political claims, it means that it has lost its specificity and critical edge as a provisional identity to go beyond identity politics.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.algbtcal.org/2A%20QUEER.htm>

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

In this thesis study, a post-structuralist feminist research methodology will be adopted. Before focusing on the details of this study as a feminist research study, it is first necessary to clarify what is (and is not) meant by ‘post-structuralist feminist methodology’. Just because feminism emerged as a theory and praxis in order to find ways to improve women’s position in society, it should not be assumed that a feminist research study has to be conducted by a female researcher and/or that it has to focus on female bodied people as its research subjects. In other words, a feminist research study can be carried out by anyone who has a gender perspective regardless of their sex, gender or sexual orientation and does not have to focus on women’s experiences only. That is, it may also include men, transsexuals and intersex people as its subjects. Moreover, post-structuralist pluralistic approaches to sex and gender made it clear that there are no easily drawn distinctions between women and men (and even between female and male), meaning that all dualistic categorizations are now questionable and there are various life experiences of people who have been left outside these dualistic identity categories. Therefore, as Ramazanoğlu and Holland claim in *Feminist Methodology*:

Once it is established that what it means to be woman / man / neither-woman-nor-man can be different within different ways of knowing and being, feminist researchers cannot simply take ‘women’ as the subject of feminism, and cannot assume that the feminist is simply a woman. If a feminist methodology has distinctive rules, a politically sympathetic man should (in theory) be able to use them. If only women can do feminist research, where does this leave intersexual or transsexual researchers? (2002: 8)

Therefore, what makes a research study a feminist one is not the sex/gender of the researcher or of the subjects of this research study, but its centralization of the social construction of gender and its questioning of gendered power relations. That is, research studies can be considered feminist “if they are framed by feminist theory, and aim to produce knowledge that will be useful for effective transformation of gendered injustice or subordination” (Holland & Ramazanoğlu, 2002: 147).

In addition, there is not one feminist methodology to be adopted in every feminist research study; the methodology chosen for a feminist study depends on the theoretical framework. Particularly, the post-structuralist theoretical framework of this thesis study informed the methodological approach, which will be referred to as ‘postfeminist’ in this study. At this point, what it means to be a postfeminist or to adopt a postfeminist perspective should be clarified. Because of what the prefix ‘post-’ seems to suggest (as in *postmodernism*, *poststructuralism*, *postcolonialism* and so on), it is frequently taken as a term announcing the end of feminism. In other words, from this perspective it is thought that postfeminism implies that feminism has achieved its mission and now there is no need for a feminist theory and politics. However, this cannot be what (post)feminists are suggesting since when the current position of women, in which they still struggle for equal pay for equal work, they are still exposed to sexual and physical violence, and they still lack equal representation in the parliament, is considered, it becomes obvious that there is still much to do to improve women’s situation in society and that, unfortunately, feminism has not fulfilled its mission yet. Also, postfeminism is sometimes regarded as even equal to anti-feminism and considered a backlash as if the advocates of the term aim at ‘*posting*’ feminism.

However, as Ann Brooks asserts in *Postfeminisms*, the term ‘postfeminism’ is “now understood as a useful conceptual frame of reference encompassing the intersection of feminism with a number of other anti-foundationalist movements including postmodernism, post-structuralism and post-colonialism” (1997:1). Therefore, postfeminism is far from signaling a tendency toward the depoliticization of feminism; it is rather “a political shift in feminism’s conceptual

and theoretical agenda” (Brooks, 2007: 4). Particularly, this political shift refers to “a shift in the understanding and construction of identity and gender categories [like ‘woman,’ ‘man,’ and ‘feminist’]” (Brabon & Genz, 2009:1). As for politics, postfeminism also signals a theoretical shift posing deconstructive challenges to identity politics. Therefore, it can be said that postfeminism is a critical engagement with previous feminist theory and politics for change, which results from its engagement with other anti-foundationalist approaches. Particularly for this study, adopting a postfeminist stance enables the feminist researcher to take a critical look at modernist mode of feminist mobilization around and politicization of gender from within a post-structuralist feminist theoretical framework. Moreover, it is also expected to make it possible for the researcher to trace the changes in feminist movement and ways of doing politics.

### **3.1. Research Design**

The aim of this thesis study is to reveal what the current feminist politics in Turkey means in terms of post-identity politics. In other words, this study tries to find out whether or not today’s feminist politics in Turkey bears the traces of post-identity politics. Considering the fact that identity politics is being widely practiced today, whereas there is still much vagueness regarding the ways of doing post-identity politics, in order to achieve the aim of this study it is decided to make a critique of identity politics and to reveal post-identitarian tendencies through this critique of identity-based political mobilization. Therefore, feminist identity politics will be analyzed and criticized from the perspective of Judith Butler, who is a pioneering feminist post-structuralist theorist questioning identity and its relation to politics. According to Susan Hekman (2000),

To say that Judith Butler’s *Gender Trouble* changed the theoretical landscape of feminist theories of identity and identity politics is an understatement; it is more accurate to say that, since *Gender Trouble*, any feminist analysis of identity has to take Butler’s theory into account. It is obvious, furthermore, that profoundly altering feminist theories of

identity and the feminist practice of identity politics was precisely Butler's intention. . . . Specifically her intention is to reveal the liability of the first [the identity of 'woman'], and, consequently, the futility of the second [the kind of politics informed by this identity]. (291)

To analyze the current feminist identity politics from a Butlerian perspective, the data is categorized into two main groups: problematic dualities inherent in identitarian politics and ways of doing non-identitarian (or post-identity) politics. The former includes dichotomous identity categories that are problematic because from a Butlerian post-structuralist perspective they are essentializing, hierarchical and regulatory. These categories are female/male (i.e. sex), woman/man (i.e. gender), sex/gender and homosexuality/heterosexuality (i.e. sexuality). The latter includes coalitional politics and subversive gender politics. Coalitional politics is considered a way of doing post-identity politics because it is defined as political alliances of different groups of people without an emphasis on any identity. Subversive gender politics, on the other hand, is individualized political activities of daily life revealing the constructed nature of gender identity categories. A Butlerian analysis of feminist identity politics under these two main categories is expected to show the relation between identity and feminist politics and also to shed light on the significance of today's feminist politics for post-identity politics.

These issues are questioned through qualitative research method and semi-structured in-depth interviews are used as the data gathering technique. In-depth interviews are preferred to obtain information from the interviewees for two reasons: to establish an interactive and non-hierarchical environment. Face-to-face interaction provides the interviewer with an opportunity to get into close contact with the interviewees and to respond to the needs of the interviewees by making further clarification when necessary. This mutual interaction creates a valuable experience both for the researcher and the participants. Moreover, through this dialogue between the two parties, the hierarchy between the researcher and the participants is expected to be eliminated, which results in a more comfortable and relaxed environment where the participants could be more open to share their ideas and experiences.

Since in this thesis study a post-structuralist feminist theory is utilized, the research methodology is also shaped by this theoretical standpoint. What is meant by this is that the interviews aim at providing individual narrations of the participants to be exposed to deconstruction later on through the analysis process. Therefore, participants are not asked direct and categorical questions about their ideas on specific issues; instead, they are encouraged to talk as much as possible about how they perceive the gendered world around them and how they respond to it and how these ideas are transferred to the political arena. First, they are shown some pictures of people and asked to make-up stories for each of them and answer the questions accordingly and second, they are given some scenarios and asked to imagine themselves in those scenarios and then answer the related questions<sup>12</sup>. By this way, subjective narrations are obtained from the participants and these texts are deconstructed to reveal particular meanings attached by the participants to some categories and concepts regarding identity and politics. Moreover, research tools, which were developed by the researcher, aim at destabilizing the dualistic categories such as sex, gender and sexuality and providing the participants' feelings rather than ideas, which is in consistency with the post-structuralist emphasis on irrationality rather than rationality. According to Mary Klages,

What Derrida does is to look at how a binary opposition--the fundamental unit of the structures or systems we've been looking at, and of the philosophical systems he refers to--functions within a system. He points out that a binary opposition is algebraic ( $a=\sim b$ , a equals not-b), and that two terms can't exist without reference to the other--light (as presence) is defined as the absence of darkness, goodness the absence of evil, etc. He doesn't seek to reverse the hierarchies implied in binary pairs--to make evil favored over good, unconscious over consciousness, feminine over masculine. Rather, *deconstruction wants to erase the boundaries (the*

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<sup>12</sup> This technique was developed by the researcher.

*slash) between oppositions*, hence to show that the values and order implied by the opposition are also not rigid.<sup>13</sup> (emphasis added)

Therefore, through the analysis of the data gathered, the main aim was to deconstruct the binary oppositions regarding identity categories, namely female/male, woman/man, homosexual/heterosexual, and erase “the slash” between these oppositions. Klages simply and clearly explains how it is possible to perform deconstruction as follows:

Here’s the basic method of deconstruction: find a binary opposition. Show how each term, rather than being polar opposite of its paired term, is actually part of it. Then the structure or opposition which kept them apart collapses . . . Ultimately, *you can’t tell which is which, and the idea of binary opposites loses meaning*, or is put into “play.” This method is called “Deconstruction” because it is a combination of construction/destruction--the idea is that you don’t simply construct new system of binaries, with the previously subordinated term on top, nor do you destroy the old system--rather, you deconstruct the old system by showing how its basic units of structuration (binary pairs and the rules for their combination) contradict their own logic.<sup>14</sup> (emphasis added)

Deconstruction is of utmost importance in a post-structuralist feminist study since feminism may develop into a stronger movement through the ‘destruction’ of the binary categories. Instead of using the modernist toolbox to understand the gendered world, feminists should use a new one or at least should carefully use the modernist identity categories. At this point, a feminist deconstruction offers a new way of understanding the gendered world without falling into the trap of dualisms. By this way, feminism will be able to question the existing identity categories, even when they are liberatory, and to avoid establishing new identity categories, which are again hierarchical, regulatory and exclusionary. Derrida (1985) states that feminism has two phases: firstly, they realized that there is no

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.colorado.edu/English/ENGL2012Klages/1derrida.html>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/~sflores/KlagesPoststructuralism.html>

reason to say that masculine characteristics are inherently male; therefore, they tried to take on these masculine traits. Secondly, feminists tried to reverse the binary and privileged the feminine one. However, both of these two approaches function in opposition to deconstruction. Instead, fixed categories should be deconstructed in order for feminists to take up a new position outside the masculine/feminine binary.

Although deconstruction is frequently criticized for not being a political strategy informing a political change, it offers feminists a new way of (re)defining the political and its relation to agency. According to Ermarth (2000),

Postmodernity offers to women precisely the opportunity to redefine problems of identity and agency in terms suitable to their experience. It would be ironic, though not without precedent, for feminists now to deflect an opportunity that has been so patiently built. (2000: 117)

### **3.2. General Profile of the Participants and the Field Experience**

The number of in-depth interviews conducted for the study is five<sup>15</sup>. Before starting each interview, the participants were asked whether they are feminist or not because in order to be chosen as a participant for the study they had to state that they consider themselves a feminist. The reason for this prerequisite is the fact that the study aims to evaluate the current feminist politics in Turkey; therefore, the participants should be feminists with feminist concerns in mind. However, it was not necessary for them to be activist feminists because being a feminist cannot be confined to activism. In fact, feminism is a lens through which a person makes sense of the gendered world and each and every feminist should be considered a political agent itself even if that person has not (yet) engaged in feminist activism together with a politically mobilized community. Moreover, although a feminist is not necessarily a biological female and a woman in terms of gender performance as it is mentioned in the beginning of this section, the participants of this study were all women (who also stated that they are

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<sup>15</sup> The participants are referred by alphabetical pseudonyms in the analysis section.

biologically female). This was the informed choice of the researcher since the study would provide a Butlerian analysis of identity politics, so the category of ‘woman’ would be mainly questioned through the study, as it is the case in Butler’s theory of gender and politics.

The ages of the participants are between 25 and 44. All participants have spent at least four years in Ankara. The geographical location of the study is limited to Ankara because this city is the one where the researcher has spent 12 years and has a familiarity with the feminist individuals and the movement itself. Four of the participants completed their undergraduate education in Ankara and all of them are still graduate students in Ankara at various departments. More specifically, two of them are currently students in Gender and Women’s Studies department. In addition, all participants stated that they are biologically females and culturally women; four of them stated that they are heterosexuals and only one of them said that she is a lesbian.

The interviews were conducted in July in Ankara and Eskişehir. In order to provide the participants with a comfortable and relaxed environment where they could talk freely without any uneasiness, the interviews were made either in the interviewer’s house or the interviewees’ own houses. The duration of interviews vary from one hour and a half to two hours and a half. All interviews were recorded and then transcribed by the researcher for analysis. NVivo<sup>16</sup>, which is a qualitative data analysis computer software, was used for analysis to organize and classify the transcribed data. The participants agreed to give permission to be recorded as they were informed by the researcher that the information gathered through the interviews would be used only for scientific purposes. Before starting the actual interviews, two pilot interviews were conducted and the activities and cases were revised accordingly.

When the participants realized that they were expected to look at some pictures and try to create stories about them and then imagine themselves in some specific

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<sup>16</sup> The transcriptions were uploaded to the program and then categorized under many themes with the help of this program.

scenarios, they said that it would be fun for them to have such an interview. However, after the interview was completed, most of the participants stated that they had to think a lot about some issues and concepts that are usually taken for granted. In addition, during the interviews some participants realized that they had some prejudices and tried to avoid stating biased opinions. Therefore, it can be said that this study has also achieved its aim to make the participants question some very basic concepts and to leave question marks in their minds.

### **3.3. Introduction of the Activities and Scenarios**

All the participants were given two activities where they were expected to comment on four pictures and three scenarios where they were expected to imagine themselves in some specific situations. Each activity and each scenario has a particular focus; however, the information provided by each activity and scenario was not limited to this focus, which means that from time to time the intended data has come from different steps of different activities or scenarios. Below is the explanation of each activity and scenario with their particular foci.

The first activity consists of four pictures, which are formed by making some modifications on the characters of a computer game named *The Sims*, and a few questions related to the people in those pictures. In this activity, the participants were expected to look at the pictures and talk about how they perceive those people and what kind of a life they attribute to them. The main focus of this activity is gender duality, namely the duality of woman and man. Therefore, the participants were encouraged to think about the genders of the characters in the pictures and explain how they attributed that gender by giving the reasons. For this reason, pictures of dressed people were chosen because, as Alison Shaw states (2005), clothing is “a universal symbol of gender difference” (p. 6). Moreover, gathering information about the participants’ ideas about politics and their tendency to form coalitions with other people is also another focus of this activity.

The first two pictures are used because they are thought to bear a close resemblance to a stereotypical woman and man and these two pictures are expected to pave the way for the participants to tell their ideas about a woman and a man and the gender roles they assign to them. In the first one, there is a woman standing indoors with a vacuum cleaner in front of her. In the second one, there is a man standing in front of a mirror. In fact, it is impossible to decide on the biological sex of these two people since there is information only about their physical appearances, namely clothes; therefore, these two people might also be a transsexual woman and a transsexual man.



**Figure 1. Typical Woman and Man**

**Source: Maxis. *The Sims 2*, EA Games, 2004**

The other two pictures are more open to interpretation because they bear a mixture of characteristic features attributed to woman and man. Therefore, they symbolize queer performances in terms of gender. In the third picture, there is a person with a beard and mustache, but at the same time, this person has breasts. In the last picture, there is a person wearing a mini skirt and a shirt leaving the stomach open; however, this person does not have any breasts as it might be expected. Because of this variety in their gender performances, these two

characters were expected to make the participants talk about gender nonconformity and how they respond to it.



**Figure 2. Atypical Woman and Man**

**Source: Maxis. *The Sims 2*, EA Games, 2004.**

The questions that were asked to the participants in this activity are below:

1. Which one of these could be your best friend? Why?
2. Which one of these could never be your best friend? Why?
3. Suppose that these all these four people are doctors and will perform an operation on you. Which one would you prefer? Why?
4. Can you tell us about the daily life of the person in the picture?
5. Can you tell us about the possible concerns of the person in the picture?
6. The person in the picture has been subject to discrimination. On what basis?
7. You see the person in the picture in a public demonstration. What is it protesting?

8. You are standing shoulder to shoulder together with the person in the picture in a public demonstration. What are you protesting?
9. You are standing shoulder to shoulder together with all these four people in a public demonstration. What are you protesting?

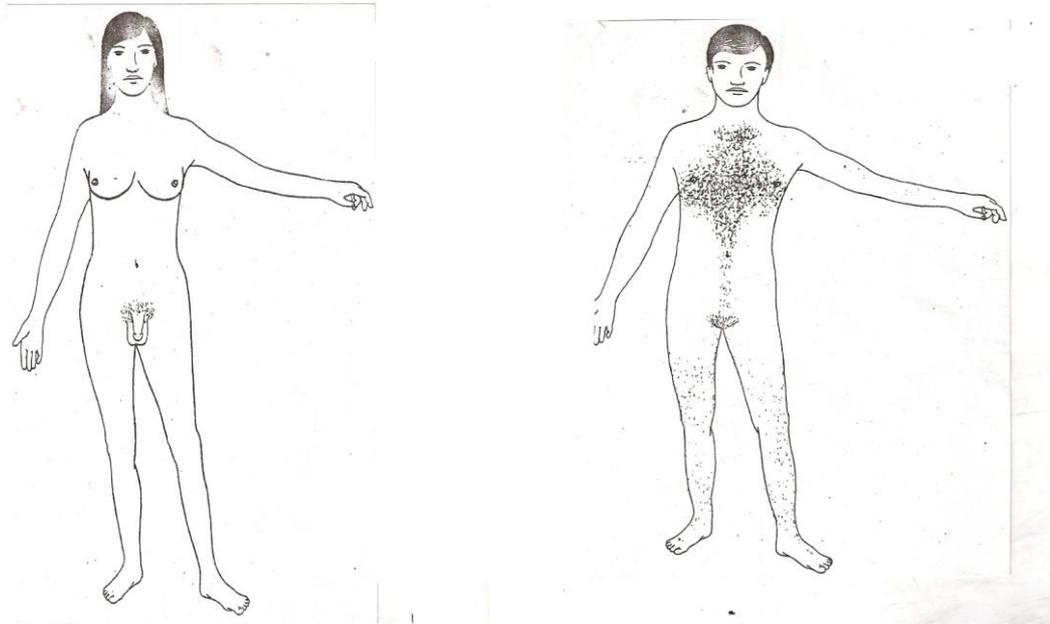
The second activity consists of again four pictures and questions to be answered accordingly. The main focus of this activity is to gather information about duality of sex, namely the duality of female and male. Moreover, it is expected to find out about the relation between gender and sex. In other words, to what extent the participants look for a consistency between gender and sex and whether they see a causal relationship between the two. In this activity, participants were shown pictures of four naked people and were asked to assign a biological sex to each of them providing the reasons.

The first two pictures are chosen for this activity because they symbolize the stereotypical female and male with primary and secondary sexual characteristics. When a participant assigned a sex to the person in the picture, she was asked on what basis she made that decision and expected to list features that helped her.



**Figure 3. Typical Female and Male**

The last two pictures are more challenging to assign a biological sex when compared to the first two pictures as the people in these two pictures bear a combination of female and male sex characteristics. The person in the third picture has a male sexual organ and breasts, while the one in the fourth one has a female sexual organ and body hair in the chest and legs. Therefore, the last two pictures are also planned to be used to encourage the participants to state their ideas about intersex and transsexual people.



**Figure 4. Atypical Female and Male**

**Source: Kessler, Susan J. and Wendy McKenna (1978) *Gender: An Ethnomethodological Approach*. Michigan: Books on Demand.**

Below are the questions that were asked to the participants during this activity:

1. What is the biological sex of the person in the picture? On what basis have you made that decision?
2. Assume that you visited the person in the picture at home and opened the wardrobe. Can you tell us what you have seen there? What would be surprising to see there? Why?

3. Assume that the person in the picture is your close friend and you want to give it a special birthday present. What would you prefer? Why?
4. The two people in these two pictures are in a relationship. How would you name this relationship? Can you describe us their relationship?
5. Assume that you have seen these two people while having sex. How would you name it? Could you describe us their sexual relationship?

After these two activities, the participants were given three scenarios where they would respond to particular situations. Like the two activities mentioned above, each of these scenarios has their own specific focus and each scenario has also provided information about other issues of the thesis study. The first of these scenarios is called *The Tour*. Here it is aimed to obtain information about the participant's approach towards homosexual and heterosexual people. This scenario has two versions: one is a tour for women and the other is tour for men. The scenario given to the participant and the related questions are as follows:

**Scenario 1:** Assume that you are organizing a tour for a group of woman/man. You are going to a hotel with 5 double rooms, so only 10 women/men can join. 9 women/men have registered for the tour. Two women/men, one of whom is gay, want to be the 10<sup>th</sup> person. Which one would you prefer? Why?

The one who is gay offered to pay more money to be accepted, why do you think?  
The other one offers to pay more, what might the reason be?

Eventually, your boss wants you to accept the one who is gay. What might be the reason for that?

During the tour, you see the one who is gay flirting with a woman/man from the group. How would you feel? On the same day, you see this person flirting with another woman/man. How would you feel about this?

During the tour, you see the one who is gay arguing with two women/men from the group. What might be the reason for this argument?

The second scenario is called *The Café*. In this scenario the aim is to reveal the participants' stereotypical opinions about homosexual and heterosexual people. Moreover, the dichotomy of heterosexual and homosexual and the causal relationship between gender and sexuality are also questioned through this scenario. This scenario has four versions: a gay woman, a heterosexual woman, a gay man and a heterosexual man. The scenario and the related questions are below:

**Scenario 2:** You went to a café to meet your friends. At the café you are introduced to a woman/man. This woman/man told you that she/he was gay/heterosexual and you were very surprised. What might the reason be?

After a while you saw this person, who said that she/he is gay/heterosexual with a man/woman. How would you feel about this?

The third scenario is called *The Ball*. In this scenario the aim is to gather information about the participants' tendency to do subversive gender politics, which is a Butlerian way of doing politics where the performer tries to show that all gender is fictitious by their daily gender performances. In addition to this, it is important to obtain information about the participants' ideas and feelings about other people's reaction to their performance of subversive gender politics. The scenario is given below:

**Scenario 3:** Assume that you are going to a ball. You are wearing a mini-skirt that you like a lot. You feel very well; however, you realize that you haven't shaved your legs. How would you feel about this?

Two people standing in the ball room are talking to each other, and at the same time, they are looking at you. What do you think they are talking? Could you describe us these two people?

At the ball, you see a man in skirt wearing make-up. How would you feel? Would it relieve you?

In order to encourage the participants to talk about subversive gender politics, the case of not shaving body hair was chosen. The reason for this is the fact that after the two pilot studies, it was realized that people had a tendency to perceive the clothes or the behavior as feminine and it was hard to make them consider the woman in the scenario performing subversive gender politics. On the other hand, a man wearing a skirt or make-up was far easier to see as subversive. As a result, the scenario was revised to make it easy for the participant to think about subversive gender politics.

Finally, the participants were given a quotation and asked to interpret it. The quotation is as follows: "Liberation of homosexuals will also result in the liberation of heterosexuals." This quotation was chosen because it was thought that the responses of the participants to it would reveal their opinions about coalitional politics and whether they see a parallelism between the concerns of homosexual and heterosexual people.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **ANALYSIS**

In this chapter, the findings about dualistic subjectivities and post-identity politics will be presented. Firstly, the analysis of the dualities of sex, gender and sexuality and of the possible relation between these subjectivities will be given. In other words, dichotomy of female and male, of woman and man, and of homosexual and heterosexual will be discussed and whether there is a link established between these three categories will be analyzed. Secondly, in relation to how these dualities are constructed, findings regarding the participants' tendency to do post-identity politics will be discussed.

#### **4.1. Duality of Gender**

In this sub-section, it is important to analyze to what extent the participants see a duality between a woman and a man. For this sub-section, the data was gathered mainly through the first activity. The participants were asked some questions about the people in the pictures (their daily life, concerns, basis of discrimination, political affinities), which are grouped as typical and atypical genders, and were then encouraged to talk about women and men in general. Therefore, the pictures in this activity helped the researcher to start a conversation about gender with the participant and to question the very basic concepts regarding gender.

##### **4.1.1. A Typical Woman**

The participants in this study shared their opinions about a woman whom they considered a typical woman. Through the activity, both their generalizations about a woman and the individual differences between those generalizations were revealed. For example, when the participants were asked to describe the daily life

of a woman, they gave information about her daily habits, her employment and marital status, her social life, socioeconomical status, her location and so on. One of these daily life stories is given below:

She might be a student who lives alone. Of course, she is not a very young student. She goes to school and comes back home every day. She does the housework by herself; I guess she has a vacuum cleaner. She likes listening to music. She might be a sociable person. She pays attention to her appearance; she wears a mini-skirt. She is a bit charismatic. She goes out with her friends; maybe she goes out at nights as well. She dances. (Aslı)

Another participant told a different story about a day of a woman:

She wakes up at 8 in the morning and prepares her children for school, sets the breakfast table and then does the cleaning. After that, she cooks the food. In the meantime, her friends come and she sits together with them drinking tea or coffee. Her friends are probably very similar to her; they do the same things during the day. Afterwards, she prepares the dinner and then changes her clothes. When the children come back home, she takes care of them. Most probably, her day ends in front of the TV. She lives in a big city. This is the exact picture that came to my mind. (Burcu)

As it is clear in the two quotations above, each participant described the woman differently and these descriptions reflected the participants' generalizations about a woman. However, there was a very specific image of a woman which existed in almost all participants' descriptions: a woman who lives in a big city, does not earn her own money and has financial concerns, belongs to middle or upper-middle class, pays attention to her physical appearance and has concerns about it, has a limited social life, and is heterosexual. These are the typical features of a woman in the minds of these five feminist women. However, as the conversation proceeded, it became clear that these generalizations differed from each other in many respects, revealing individual beliefs and prejudices shaped by particular life experiences of each participant.

First of all, it was realized that being well-groomed is an important feature frequently emphasized in the descriptions of all participants; however, there were differences in other aspects of this woman's life described by the participants, all

of which the participants again related to her physical appearance. For example, one of the participants stated that a well-groomed woman cannot be a working woman. Moreover, she added that this woman must also be a married woman:

I don't think that she is a working woman. I guess this is because I feel that a working woman cannot be this well-groomed. If she is this much well-groomed, even when she is cleaning the house, then she is most probably a woman who is not working because working women have less time to take care of themselves. [...] She is probably married. Her being a well-groomed woman makes me think this way. This is interesting; what automatic thoughts these are. I thought that if she pays special attention to her physical appearance, she must be married. (Ceyda)

On the other hand, another participant said that a well-groomed woman must be a working woman:

She works on week days. Look! She is well-groomed even at the weekend. She has bought herself some special clothes to wear at home, which look like a nightgown. (Duygu)

Yet another participant stated that a well-groomed woman is probably not a politically active person:

I don't think that she is in a political circle because in my mind I have an image of a blonde florid woman like this one. And this image doesn't fit in with [the image of a politically active woman.] (Esra)

As the quotations suggest, all the participants agreed that a woman gives special importance to her physical appearance and three of them directly mentioned a concern about looking good, but this idea caused the participants to make different assumptions about other aspects of a woman's life. More interestingly, when the fact that Ceyda is a working single woman, that Duygu is not working at the moment, and that Esra is a very politically active feminist was considered, it was realized that these women had a general tendency to distance themselves from this woman.

As for work life, only one participant described the woman as a working woman and consequently, mentioned discrimination at work based on gender. She stated that a woman might feel herself forced to be presentable at work:

The job she has been doing might require being presentable, such as secretaryship, and there the directors or the boss might be using her as a showcase product in their relationships with the customers. Therefore, [she might be exposed to discrimination] on the basis of gender. (Duygu)

Interestingly, when the participants were talking about possible bases of discrimination, they had difficulty to find a basis of discrimination for a woman who does not work. Instead, they immediately started to talk about a working woman who is exposed to gender discrimination at work. The reason for this might be the fact that the woman they described spends most of her time in private space and has a limited interaction with the social world; discrimination starts when a woman enters public space. Additionally, one participant emphasized that she might be subject to discrimination if she is a lesbian:

But this woman might be a lesbian as well. When I saw these pictures, I first thought that there is a woman, she must be a heterosexual woman and there is a man, he must be a heterosexual man. So I looked at them quite straightforwardly. But now, when I think about discrimination, I feel that this woman might also be a lesbian woman. (Esra)

On the other hand, others either made no direct reference to sexual orientation or mentioned a man as the partner of a woman while talking about the daily life of the woman since they described her as a heterosexual woman.

In addition, the woman they described has a limited social life, consisting of meeting friends at home or going shopping with friends. Only one participant mentioned a very active social life, but this might be related to the fact that this participant thought the woman as a student.

Although at the beginning none of the participants portrayed a woman with political interests, when they were encouraged to think about a politically active woman, they frequently emphasized feminist political concerns, most of which

were related to sexual harassment and violence against women. Therefore, it can be said that most of the participants thought that a woman's political mobilization is directly related to her identity as a woman.

#### **4.1.2. A Typical Man**

In this part, the participants' opinions about a man whom they saw as a typical man will be discussed. The participants again described the life of an ordinary man in many respects. An extract from the testimony of one of the participants is given below:

This is a working man. I don't know why I think this way, but I feel that he must be working; he is not a student. It might be related to his age. It might also be related to the shirt he is wearing. He goes to work and comes back home every day. After work he goes out. He might be married or not, I don't know. [...] He has a car and travels a lot. He has no difficulty with transportation. He goes wherever he wants without any difficulty. (Asli)

Although there were differences in the descriptions of the participants, the general profile of a man was quite vivid: a man who works and earns his own money, but still has concerns about his job and money, lives in a city, but it does not matter whether it is a big or a small city, belongs to middle class, has an active social life and socializes with his friends of the same gender, and is heterosexual. Moreover, it was clear that according to the participants of the study, a man would not normally be subject to discrimination based on gender. He also does not have any affiliations with gender politics.

The man described by the participants uses private space very effectively. Most of the participants stated that he has a job and in his spare time he meets his friends outside. Moreover, all of them mentioned many concerns about his job, most of which are related to being successful at work and earning more money, emphasizing stereotypical personality traits attributed to men:

This man most probably has worries about whether he is good at work or not. (Asli)

He must have concerns about work life; he wants to earn more money. (Burcu)

He has concerns about employment, about what he should do after completing his doctoral studies. (Ceyda)

Among his concerns are earning money and being successful in the future. (Duygu)

He has concerns about money because he is not in a good economic condition. He must be thinking about the ways of earning money and making a living. (Esra)

When the participants gave examples about his job, two of them directly stated that he must be a small business owner and one of them said that he is a policeman or a bus or taxi driver. In addition, while the participants were talking about the man's social life, they mentioned going out with friends of the same sex and playing football. According to one of the participants:

He spends his time mostly with his male friends. He works but he does not give so much importance to his career. These are very prejudiced ideas, I know, but he might have been graduated from the department of business administration or he might be a small business owner. He goes to work and then meets his male friends again. He plays football with his friends but, for example, he does not have the habit of going to a pub. (Esra)

Therefore, it is clear that although they emphasized the active use of public space, this is very limited since it revolves around similar activities lacking any variety.

Among other concerns of a man was military service. Two of the participants stated that he might have concerns regarding completing his military service, but none of them mentioned an anti-militarist tendency for the man. Another concern mentioned by three participants was his relationship with women. For example, one of them stated that he must be worried about whether women have a sexual desire for him or not. Another participant said that his mother wants him to get married and she is looking for a woman for his son.

When the participants were encouraged to talk about discrimination, they had difficulty to find a basis of discrimination for a man and spent a long time before giving an example. Almost none of them mentioned a gender based discrimination

for a heterosexual man and two of them said that if a man is exposed to discrimination, then this might be on the basis of his sexual orientation. In other words, it is possible for a man to be subject to gender discrimination only if he is gay. Moreover, two of the participants mentioned discrimination based on religion. For example, one of them said that if he is a religious man, he might be subject to discrimination.

In addition, the political interests of the man described by the participants are limited to financial issues and issues related to football such as match-fixing investigations. For example, one of the participants directly stated that he is not an active person in terms of political mobilization. Three of them mentioned a protest about money (money he earns or money he pays) and two of them mentioned a protest about football. Only one of the participants said that a man might involve in gender politics on the condition that he is gay and she mentioned attending gay pride as an example for political activities.

Furthermore, the participants were inclined to think of the sexual orientation of a man as heterosexual. Only two participants mentioned being gay, but this happened when they were asked to talk about possible bases of discrimination or political activities for the man. However, it was still difficult to imagine a typical man as gay since the participants expected a man to display his “gayness” through his physical appearance. According to one participant:

He might be gay, too, but this is really subtle and I guess he doesn't share this with anybody because -all my prejudices are on the surface now- he, for example, doesn't look feminine. But of course, he doesn't have to be feminine though. I mean he is masculine and he is proud of his masculinity. (Esra)

Therefore, for this participant it is clear that a man looking masculine would not be a gay because the image of a gay man is a person who openly displays his sexual orientation through his physical appearance.

### 4.1.3. Atypical Genders

In order to gather information about the participants' opinions about atypical genders, two pictures were shown to the participants. The aim for choosing these two pictures was to “trouble gender” in Butlerian terms since the people in these pictures are not typical woman and man. By this way, information about how the participants assigned gender to a person and how tolerant they were to gender variance was gathered.

First of all, all the participants had significant difficulty identifying the gender of the person in the third picture since she had both feminine and masculine marks on her body. The participants looked for a consistency in her gender performance leaving no doubt about her “real” gender as a woman. One of the participants expresses the difficulty she experienced as follows:

The reason why I couldn't decide on the gender is that it has breasts but a beard at the same time. Its clothes are like a woman's clothes but I don't know; it's a bit complicated. It seems like a woman with hormonal problems but at the same time, she doesn't look like a woman of that type because the beard is very well-shaped. If she had hormonal problems, the beard would be a bit messy. And it doesn't have the appearance of a man; her hair and clothes are quite feminine. So I couldn't decide. (Ceyda)

As Ceyda stated very clearly, the participants were confused about seeing a woman with a very well-shaped beard because if the beard were “messy,” it would have been easier to attribute the existence of facial hair to the woman's hormonal problems. Therefore, what makes this woman atypical was not directly related to her facial hair; it was mainly about its shape: a beard that they were accustomed to see on a man's face. Moreover, although her beard was very well-shaped, none of the participants thought that this woman is a well-groomed woman, which shows that to consider a woman well-groomed they needed to see the consistency in her gender performance.

Another participant clearly admitted that she was confused about the gender of the person in the picture since, like other people in the society, she was conditioned to assign one of the two and only two genders:

There is something inconsistent here; it looks like a queer person. I mean I feel a dilemma regarding its gender; whether it is a woman or a man. I feel myself as if I have to answer this question. I mean everybody in the society is directed to one of the two genders; therefore, we are conditioned to do so. It has a beard and breasts at the same time. [. . .] It's a bit confusing. (Duygu)

As a result, none of the participants could comfortably say that the person is a woman (or it is a man). Most of the participants mentioned a possibility of being a transsexual for this person; however, they admitted that even in this condition they would look for a gender consistency since they see transsexuality as a transitional period either from woman to man or from man to woman. According to one participant:

But this cannot be a trans because they usually try to perform only one gender perfectly, without any mistake or insufficiency. There is no such think like being happy with the ambiguity or not being disturbed by it. There is no effort here to put itself into any form. (Duygu)

Only one participant said that she thinks this person is a transsexual from man to woman; however, she also emphasized not being a woman completely:

In the third one, I see a woman, who is biologically male, but she has grown a beard and she has grown her hair, too. She has silicon breasts; most probably, she had an aesthetic operation, but she hasn't become a woman completely yet. (Esra)

Although all the participants thought that this is a working person, when the participants were talking about the job of this person, they tried to imagine a work place where this person would feel herself comfortable. For example, two of them directly mentioned a job with minimum visibility. Another two participants stated that this person must be self-employed. One participant stated that this person might be a waiter/waitress at a pub because she thought that pubs are relatively more cosmopolitan places where people are used to seeing different people

around them. In the same line, all the participants said that this person must be living in a big city since it would be far more difficult to survive in small cities for a person with an atypical gender. For example, one participant said that:

I don't think that this person lives in a small city because even in most of the big cities it wouldn't feel comfortable; I think that even in a big city it could feel comfortable only in a very limited number of neighborhoods. Most probably, it is İstanbul.  
(Duygu)

Moreover, all the participants had difficulty talking about the sexual partner of the person. They frequently referred to the family of the person; however, they said that by family they meant her parents and relatives, not her partner or children. Only one participant thought that she might be married to a woman, but this participant identified the woman as a transsexual woman (male to female) and she stated that this marriage must have happened before her transition, when the person was still a man. In addition, one participant said that this person might be sexually attracted to women since she had a beard, establishing a direct link between a person's gender performance and sexual orientation. Another participant stated that which gender she is sexually attracted to was not clear since the participant could not assign a gender to this person, again implying a link between gender and sexual orientation. The reason for the difficulty that the participants experienced while talking about the person's marital status or sexual partner might be related to the atypical gender presented in the picture. When the participants saw something "troubling gender," their assumptions regarding sexual orientation are also automatically troubled.

All the participants agreed that it is highly possible that this woman would be subject to discrimination based on gender and expressed political interests in gender issues. However, they thought that she would politically mobilize with LGBTT people (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and transvestite) rather than feminists and gave gay pride and "trans pride" as examples of political activities that she might participate in. Moreover, two participants said that this person would probably *support* feminist groups. It was interesting that the participants could not imagine this person in feminist politics, which shows that in order to do

feminist politics a person needs to be a complete woman without any inconsistency in her gender performance. In her testimony, where she implied a tendency among activist feminists to ignore masculine looking women and male to female transsexuals, Esra, who is a very politically active feminist, explained the reason very clearly:

She might attend a political demonstration to support women. She would come to *support* women because women might not want her and she might not have the opportunity to politically mobilize with women due to her masculine appearance; therefore, she comes to *support* them. (Esra)

When the participants were shown the picture of an atypical man, it was observed that it was easier for them to comment on when compared to the atypical woman. They generally had no difficulty to assign a gender to the person and most of them stated that this person is a man. Only one participant stated that this person seems to reject being either a woman or a man. Moreover, the participants agreed that this man is a feminine looking man since he wears clothes generally attributed to women. The interesting point was that almost all the participants directly stated that this is a gay man, which means that they established a direct link between gender performance and sexual orientation. One participant expressed her opinions about feminine looking men as follows:

I don't think that he is married because he looks quite feminine and a marriage between two men is not allowed yet. I think that feminine looking men have a sexual attraction to men. This is what I have in my mind. There might be some exceptions of course. (Aslı)

Another participant expressed a similar opinion about the relation of a man's gender performance to his sexual orientation:

I think that he is gay because I haven't seen a man wearing feminine clothes like this but is not gay or bisexual. (Burcu)

Moreover, three participants said that a gay man would be more emotional, sensitive and moderate when compared to a heterosexual man. Therefore, it is clear that they established a link between a man's sexual orientation and his personality, attributing stereotypical feminine characteristics to him.

In addition, two participants stated that a feminine man might be working at a pub as a waiter because people going to a pub are more tolerant towards other people. Two participants stated that a feminine man might be a dancer. Neither of the participants mentioned stereotypical jobs that a man is expected to do.

When the participants were talking about possible bases of discrimination for this man, all of them stated that this man would be exposed to discrimination based on his appearance and accordingly, his sexual orientation. However, as two participants clearly stated, men discriminate against a feminine looking man and they even display violent acts due to homophobic tendencies; on the other hand, women would get on well with him. For example, Aslı says that:

I don't think that women would discriminate against a feminine man; it is usually men I guess who cast aside this type of people because they want to be masculine and they ignore feminine tendencies. Women don't do that because they usually get on well with this kind of men. Men, on the other hand, have a fear in their mind and they don't want to be a man like this; therefore, they have a tendency to reject the existence of a feminine man, which results in discrimination and cruel behavior. (Aslı)

Furthermore, almost all the participants thought that this man would be politically active in gender issues and would attend demonstrations together with LGBTTT people. Therefore, it can be said that if a man has feminine marks on his body, this shows that he is a gay and politically mobilize around his gay identity. It was interesting that none of the participants mentioned any feminist political activities that this man could attend. Moreover, one participant mentioned an anti-militarist demonstration since she thought that this man would not want to hold a gun in his hands:

It might be a political protest about conscientious objection. [...] I think that he would be anti-militarist because I believe that he wouldn't want to go into the military service. I guess he doesn't want to hold a gun in his hands; he doesn't want to kill anybody. (Esra)

#### **4.1.4. Conclusion: Dichotomization of Gender**

In this part of the study, the aim was to understand what assumptions and generalizations the participants make through the person's gender performance when they see a person. In order to understand how they perceive the gender of a woman or a man when there is nothing that may cause the participant to have doubts about a person's gender, they were shown two pictures of people that they considered a typical woman and man. In addition, in order to obtain information about how the participants perceived the gender of a person when the gender of that person is "troubled" by a mixture of feminine and masculine marks on the person's body, they were shown the pictures of an atypical woman and man.

First of all, it is understood that when the participants see a woman who has a feminine physical appearance, they attribute feminine gender roles to that woman and imagine the woman as a heterosexual woman. In the same line, when they see a man who has a masculine physical appearance, they attribute masculine gender roles to that man. They also imagine the man as a heterosexual man. For example, the typical woman they described does not effectively use public space and she is largely confined to private space, dealing with domestic issues such as preparing the food and taking care of children. However, the man they described effectively uses public space in his both social and professional life.

Moreover, although during the interviews they frequently expressed that it is not possible to say anything about a woman's sexual orientation through her physical appearance, none of them thought the woman as a lesbian woman. Being a lesbian became a possibility only when they were talking about possible bases of discrimination. However, the participants expressed that they expect a gay man to openly display his "gayness" through his physical appearance; therefore, when they saw a man in pants, they thought that the man would be heterosexual and when they saw a man in skirt, they thought that he must be gay. Therefore, although the participants did not establish a direct link between a woman's gender performance and sexual orientation, they immediately established the link for a gender variant man.

Interestingly, the participants had difficulty to attribute a gender to a woman with a masculine mark on her body, while they easily identified the man although he had feminine marks on his body. Moreover, they expected to find consistency in the gender performance of a transsexual since they saw transsexuality as a transition period from one gender to the other. They did not have much tolerance to gender variance both in a woman and a man. When they saw a strong masculine mark on a woman, that woman was no longer considered a woman. On the other hand, when they saw a strong feminine mark on a man, they considered him a man but attributed this feminine mark to his sexual orientation.

As for politics, there were significant differences between the political affiliations of women and men. A woman with a consistency in her gender performance was expected to politically mobilize with feminist women, but if she had masculine features, she was expected to do politics with LGBTT people and support feminists. On the other hand, a man was not expected to involve in gender politics at all unless he is a gay. Moreover, if a man is gay, he is expected to be anti-militarist. Therefore, it is understood that politics is strongly related to a person's gender and sexual identity: women were expected to politically mobilize around their identity as a woman and men are expected to do politics only if they are gay and in this case, through their gay identity.

#### **4.2. Duality of Sex**

In this sub-section, the aim was to understand to what extent the participants see a duality between two sexes. Through which clues they assign a sex to a person and what relations they form between sex and gender are also analyzed. For this aim, they were shown four pictures of naked people. First two pictures were shown since they demonstrate a typical female and male. The other two pictures were shown to the participants to trouble sex and make them think about sex when there is a mixture of typical female and male marks on the person's body.

#### 4.2.1. A Typical Female

When they were shown the picture of a naked female, all the participants stated without any hesitation that this person is a female, making references to primary and secondary sex characteristics. All the participants made emphasis on the sex organ and breasts of the person after they assigned the female sex. A short extract from the testimony of one of the participants is given below:

A female because she has the physical appearance of a female: she has a slim waist, buttocks, and round body lines. *Although we cannot see her sex organ clearly, I can at least see that she doesn't have a penis.* She has breast, too, big breasts. Her lineaments are elegant, bones, too. Her feet are small. (Burcu)

As it is clear in the italicized part of the participant's testimony, not recognizing a penis caused them to make the assumption that she has a vagina. Three participants made a direct reference to the nonexistence of a penis. When this nonexistence was fostered by other female features such as secondary sex characteristics, the participants quickly became sure that the person is a female.

When the participants were asked to think about the gender of the person, all of them again without any hesitation stated that this person is a woman. Only one participant mentioned the possibility of being a transsexual woman. She said that:

[Her gender] could be anything: she might be a trans woman; it is not clear. She might be a male to female trans because her vagina is not clearly seen. It might be as a result of an operation. Her breasts, too, might have undergone an operation. She might be heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual. (Esra)

Therefore, although all the participants, including Esra, saw a direct link between a person's sex and gender, only one participant felt the need to state that she does not have to be born female and having a female anatomy does necessarily determine a person's sexual orientation.

While the participants were describing the wardrobe of the person, they mentioned clothes attributed to women and almost all of them gave skirts and dresses as examples. Moreover, two participants stated that if they saw men's

underwear in her wardrobe, they would be surprised. For instance, one of the participants said that:

[I would be surprised] if I saw boxer shorts because I don't think that she would wear such a thing. [...] She looks so happy with her sex so she doesn't show any sign that she has a dilemma, a different tendency or orientation when I look at her. (Duygu)

Therefore, it was clear that a person with a female anatomy is expected to be feminine in her gender performance and if there is something that disturbs the consistency, it might be considered a sign of her "different" sexual orientation.

#### **4.2.2. A Typical Male**

When they were shown the picture of a naked man, all the participants quickly said that this is a male, again making references to primary and secondary sex characteristics. All of them mentioned the existence of a penis as the clue and three of them mentioned his muscular appearance, as well. One participant, who had previously stated that a female-bodied person does not have to be born female, needed to emphasize that:

He might be again a heterosexual or a gay. But he is not a trans I guess because there is nothing here that resembles the body of a female. The sizes of these two pictures are the same but [the person here] makes me think of a bigger man. His hands are big. *He might have had a penis after an operation but it doesn't feel like that. I believe this person is born male.* (Esra)

Moreover, all the participants said that the gender of the person is man, without spending any time on thinking, which means that according to the participants, there is a direct link between sex and gender. Except for Esra who particularly avoided establishing a direct link between sex and sexual orientation, as it can be seen in her testimony above, none of the participants directly mentioned anything about sexual orientation. However, the link between sex and gender was quite obvious since while the participants were describing the wardrobe of this person, they frequently mentioned clothes attributed to men such as shorts, pants and suits. Moreover, all the participants admitted that they would be surprised if they

saw feminine clothes such as ballerina costume, garters, dresses and women's underwear in his wardrobe:

[I might be surprised] if I saw dresses in his wardrobe because I don't think he would wear dresses. I imagined him as a man so I would be surprised. (Ceyda)

Even though the participants said that she "imagined him as a man," it means that she imagined him as a *heterosexual* man and this is the reason why she would not expect to find clothes attributed to women in his wardrobe. In addition, one of the participants stated that she would feel herself deceived if she saw women's underwear in his wardrobe since she thinks that he should have given a sign that he has feminine tendencies:

Let's say a thong. The same thing again; when I look at his hair style, it doesn't feel like he has a problem with his sex. You get surprised that you couldn't realize [that he had a problem with his sex]. You feel deceived. After you see the thong, you ask why he didn't make it clear that he had a tendency like this. (Duygu)

Therefore, it can be said that the participants had no tolerance to feminine clothes in a heterosexual man's wardrobe because wearing feminine clothes is considered a very clear sign of homosexuality as one of the participants expressed it very openly:

There might be anything in his wardrobe: it might be all men's wear, but he might also be a businessman or there might be sportswear or clothes of a rocker. This picture, for example, made me think that this person doesn't have to be a heterosexual man; he might be a gay so he might even have scaly clothes, but also clothes of a businessman, too. (Esra)

#### **4.2.3. Atypical Sexes**

In this part, the aim was to "trouble" sex; therefore, the participants were shown the pictures of two naked people who had a mixture of female and male attributes. The person in the third picture had male sex organ but female secondary sex characteristics and the person in the fourth picture had female sex organ but male secondary sex characteristics. The participants had great difficulty assigning a sex

to these two people since these people did not fit exactly into either sex. For example, one participant described the person with a male sex organ as follows:

Should I think that these are muscles or breasts? If this person is like this, then I guess it is called hermaphrodite. Its biological sex is hermaphrodite; neither female nor male. They are called [hermaphrodite] as far as I know. [It has] both a female organ and a male organ. When these two exist together biologically, they are called hermaphrodite. (Aslı)

As it is clear in the quotation above, this participant stated that the person is “neither female nor male”. On the other hand, another participant said that this person is “both female and male”:

We can say that this person is both female and male. Here there is a male sex organ but big breasts at the same time. Because of these two [it is both female and male]. Again there are round body lines although they are not the same as the ones in the first picture. Again its lineaments are not so sharp but there is a male sex organ. (Burcu)

Other three participants stated that this person should be a male since he has a penis and tried to rationalize the female secondary sex characteristics accordingly. For instance, two participants explained why they attributed the male sex to this person saying that it is easy and possible to have breasts by taking hormone injections. Another participant said that men can sometimes have big breasts like the ones of a female.

However, when the participants talked about the gender of the person, almost all of them stated that this person wants to be a woman and accordingly, they described the wardrobe of the person as a woman’s wardrobe, including skirts and dresses, but they admitted that they would not expect him/her to wear clothes that reveal his/her body lines or male sex organ.

When the participants were shown the picture of the person with a female sex organ but male secondary sex characteristics, three of them stated that this person is a male who does not have a penis for some reason and two of them stated that this person is a female trying to be a man. For example, one participant described the person as follows:

This is a male. I said “both female and male” for the third one. The fourth one doesn’t have a male sex organ but the rest is completely a male body. His body is again a bit muscular, body lines are not round, he has hair in the chest. [...] Except for the nonexistence of the penis, the body is a male body. (Burcu)

The description of another participant who assigned to female sex is given below:

This one is a female undergoing hormone therapy to become a man. A female to male transsexual; her biological sex is female, but gender is man. (Duygu)

However, while they were talking about the gender of the person, almost all the participants stated that this is a man. Two participants stated that this person’s wardrobe would be very similar to the typical male’s wardrobe. One of them stated that she would be surprised if she saw a skirt in this person’s wardrobe since she thought that this person is a female to male transsexual trying to get rid of her female anatomy:

[I would be surprised] if I saw a skirt because just like the third one, I imagine that this person is trying to get rid of her [female] sex; therefore, a skirt is a sign showing that she still has something from that sex and that she could still wear that way. (Duygu)

#### **4.2.4. Conclusion: Dichotomization of Sex**

In this part, the aim was to understand how the participants assign a sex to a person and after assigning a sex, what assumptions they make in relation to that person’s gender (and sexual orientation). Moreover, in order to get information about how much they dichotomize sex, two pictures of sex variant people were shown to the participants.

Firstly, according to the participants, female sex is more limited than the male sex since it requires having both primary and secondary female sex characteristics. Moreover, the penis, no matter it exists at the moment or not, is the determining factor to assign a sex to a person. For example, a person having either primary or secondary male sex characteristics or having both is considered male. However, to assign the female sex to a person, the participants needed to see both primary and

secondary sex characteristics at the same time. For example, although the participants were not sure whether there was a female sex organ or not in the first picture, they were sure that there was not a male sex organ and they assigned the female sex basing on the secondary sex characteristics. However, when they saw that the person in the fourth picture did not have a penis but had secondary male sex characteristics, they had a tendency to assign the male sex and to rationalize the nonexistence of the penis. On the other hand, when the participants identified the penis in a person's body, no matter which secondary sex characteristic the person has, they had a tendency to assign the male sex. This result is consistent with Kessler and McKenna's study (quoted in Devor, 1989, p. 49):

[M]aleness is readily seen whenever there are indicators of it, whereas femaleness is seen only when there are compelling female cues and an absence of male cues. This way of seeing corresponds closely to patriarchal gender schema notions of maleness as a positive force and femaleness as a negative force; of maleness as a presence and femaleness as an absence; of maleness as primary and femaleness as derivative. (49)

Furthermore, it was clear that when there is nothing troubling the sex of the person, without any hesitation the participants assigned a sex and a gender that is consistent with the person's anatomy. A female-bodied person is expected to be a woman wearing feminine clothes and a male-bodied person is expected to be a man wearing masculine clothes. However, if the person has a sex variant body, that person can perform either gender, but he/she is still expected to choose only one gender and modify his/her body to conform to that gender. Therefore, according to the participants, although gender is not something people "are" but something people "become," a person with a typical body is not expected to become a gender which is not in consistency with his/her sex. Moreover, if a person wants to become a gender, first he/she should choose which gender he/she wants to become and then, modify his/her body accordingly. Therefore, it can be said that the participants had no tolerance to sex and gender variance. They think that both sex and gender is constructed: it is possible for people to change their sex and gender. Interestingly, what determines sex, however, is gender; in other

words, a female-bodied person might decide to become a man but in that situation, she is expected to bring her body in accordance with her “new” gender.

### **4.3. Duality of Sexuality**

In order to gather information for this sub-section, the participants were given a case (*The Tour*) where they organized a tour for a group of women and then, for a group of men, and asked what they would do in some specific situations. Through this case, the participants’ approach towards heterosexual and homosexual people is understood. Moreover, they were encouraged to talk about the sexuality of the couples formed by the combinations of people in the second activity. By this way, how they construct sexuality is researched. Finally, they were given another case (*The Café*) where they were encouraged to imagine themselves in some specific situations again and their responses to heterosexual and gay people were collected. By this way, what kind of links they form between gender and sexuality is questioned.

Firstly, when the participants were given *The Tour* case and encouraged to imagine themselves as a tour organizer, they were asked to make a decision between a heterosexual and a lesbian woman to add to the list of the women attending the tour. It is important to mention that all the participants assumed that the rest of the women in the tour would be heterosexual women. Two participants stated that they would draw lots to decide which one to accept. Two participants stated that they would choose the heterosexual woman. One of these two participants said that she thinks that the lesbian woman would not feel comfortable in this group and the other participant said that she might have economical concerns as a tour organizer and would not want to risk the company:

If I am a tour organizer, I most probably have economic concerns; therefore, I might say to myself “don’t choose the gay woman” because the woman that will share the room with this woman might cause trouble when she realizes that this is a gay woman. So my economic concerns might intervene. The tour might start to be known as a “lesbian tour” etc. I might also say

to myself thinking “normal,” I shouldn’t think as if gay people attack on other people to have sex and I should think her as a normal person. You know this is a very common belief. As a result, I would choose the heterosexual one if I have economic concerns. (Ceyda)

Only one participant, who stated that she is a lesbian in the beginning of the interview, said that she would choose the lesbian woman since she feels herself close to her.

When they were asked to make a decision for a tour which was organized for men, almost all the participants assumed that the men in the group would be heterosexual men. Only one participant said that if a group of men want to join a tour and go somewhere together, they are probably gay men:

To be honest, different from the previous group [of women], I would think that the sexual orientation of the men in this group is bisexual or gay because it is common for women to come together and go on a tour, stay in the same rooms but men in general have something; imagine a heterosexual man. He would ask why he stays in a double room with another man, why the group consists of all men. He would have these kinds of ideas and concerns. [...] Therefore, I would think that this group consists of bisexual or gay men. (Ceyda)

Three participants stated that they might choose either one, while two participants directly stated that they would choose the heterosexual man because they thought that the other members in the group would be all heterosexual men and they would be disturbed to have a gay man among them. As a result, none of the participants displayed a tendency to discriminate against gay women and men; however, the participants who made a decision in favor of heterosexual people admitted that they would be worried about other people’s reaction.

As for the pictures of naked people and their relationships, when the participants were shown the pictures of the typical female and male and asked to think about their relationship, all the participants stated that this is a heterosexual relationship of a woman and a man. Only two participants emphasized that they are not sure whether the people in this relationship are heterosexual or bisexual, implying that being in a heterosexual relationship does not necessarily make a person

heterosexual. However, all the participants agreed that there would be penetration in their sexuality since the male one had a penis.

When the participants were shown the pictures of a typical female and the person with a male sex organ and secondary female sex characteristics (third picture), almost all the participants stated that this is a lesbian relationship, which shows that sexual orientation depends on gender of the person not the sex since all the participants had previously stated that this person is a woman. Accordingly, while the participants were describing the sexuality of these two people, three of them stated that this would be like “lesbian sexuality,” which is more emotional and does not require the use of a penis, even if it exists:

I attributed feminine characteristics to these people; therefore, their relationship would be more emotional and romantic. Their sexuality would also be [more emotional and romantic]. (Aslı)

[Vaginal sex] might sometimes happen but it is not necessary. They wouldn't prefer that because afterwards the person in the third picture might feel herself bad. She is heading towards an aim; she wants to be a complete woman, but *experiencing something related to her old sex might upset her*. The person in the first picture might not be bothered by this and might let her make the decision in sex. (Duygu)

When the participants were shown the pictures of the typical female and the person with female sex organ but male secondary sex characteristics, two participants directly stated that this is a heterosexual relationship and another two participants stated that this is “close to heterosexual” relationship since they previously thought that the person in the fourth picture is a man, again establishing a direct link between a person's gender and sexual orientation:

I cannot name this relationship but it seems close to a heterosexual relationship because I thought that the person in the fourth picture is a man in terms of gender and that he wants to be a man. Therefore, I would call it heterosexual. (Ceyda)

Only one participant said that this might not be a heterosexual relationship if the person in the fourth picture intentionally had an operation to remove his penis:

Did he lose his penis because of an illness? Did he have an operation? Then, he might be a heterosexual; he feels himself heterosexual and he is a man while having sex. But if he wanted his penis to be removed, then the relationship is not a heterosexual one. [...] The body is a male body without a penis. In fact, what differentiates the body of a woman from the body of a man is the existence or nonexistence of the penis. One has a vagina and the other one has a penis. When the person doesn't have a penis, it becomes something different. But if he lost his penis due to an illness, doesn't have any problem with his penis and he is sad because he cannot use his penis, but acts in accordance with masculine norms and sees himself as a heterosexual man, then it is a heterosexual relationship. (Esra)

Therefore, what makes this relationship heterosexual is not the sex organs of the people in the relationship, but their decision to be a woman or a man. If a person, for example, sees himself as a man and tries to conform to that gender, then he is considered a man and considered heterosexual when in a relationship with a woman.

Moreover, when the participants were asked to talk about the relationship of the typical male and the person with a male sex organ but female secondary sex characteristics, almost all of them stated that this would be a heterosexual relationship or close to heterosexual relationship and all of them mentioned anal sex. For example, one participant described it as follows:

I would name it heterosexual thinking the same way again: the gender of the person in the third picture is woman and she is going to have an operation. Therefore, it is close to heterosexual. (Ceyda)

When they were asked the relationship of the typical male and the person with female sex organ but male secondary sex characteristics, all the participants stated that this is a homosexual relationship referring to the gender they assigned to these two people. For example, one participant's description of their relationship is given below:

I would name it homosexual I guess because the person in the fourth picture sees himself as a man and again he is in a relationship with a man. This is the same for the other person [the person in the second picture]. (Duygu)

Finally, when the participants were shown the pictures of two sex variant people and asked to comment on their relationship, almost all the participants stated that this would be a heterosexual relationship again referring to their gender. One participant had a different explanation why she named this relationship heterosexual:

It is as if there are 4 different people here, not 2. Maybe it depends on which one will be which person; there might be different versions. I think that they must choose to become one [of these 4 people] or maybe I cannot imagine the other way. In terms of their sex life, each person has to play one role depending on their activities. I mean there are 4 roles here: for each of them there are 2 roles, being a woman or a man. There might be different variations. At different times in their relationship they might try different versions. [...] This is a perfect heterosexual relationship. Different from the relationship of these people, the first and the second people would have a monotonous relationship. (Burcu)

Although this participant said that this would be a heterosexual relationship, she implies fluidity in her description. The people in the third and fourth pictures have the opportunity to “play” the woman’s or man’s role, but it is not the same for the people with typical sexes. Another participant also stated that there is fluidity in this relationship but this fluidity is caused by the difficulty to assign a gender:

This seems more transient. You know, I had difficulty to assign a gender to both of them. Now if I say heterosexual, is this one a woman or a man, or the other one, is it a woman or a man? I really don’t know. (Esra)

As a result, when the participants could not assign or when they had difficulty to assign a gender to the people, commenting on their sexuality also becomes challenging. Homosexuality or heterosexuality is not sexuality between people of the same sex or opposite sex; it is gender that determines whether a person is in a homosexual or heterosexual relationship. However, this relative fluidity in sexuality is attributed to people with atypical sexes since people with a typical sex is not expected to perform a gender that is not in consistency with his/her sex. Moreover, when a person is assigned a sexual orientation, what he/she is expected to do when having sex is also very clear. For example, if a person with a male sex

organ is considered a woman, that person is not expected to use the penis when having sex.

To obtain information about the link between sexual orientation and gender, the participants were given a case where they were encouraged to think about what would surprise them about a heterosexual woman/man and a homosexual woman/man. Although most of the participants frequently stated that it is not so possible to understand whether a woman is a lesbian or heterosexual, when they were asked what would surprise them about a lesbian woman, two participants made direct references to her physical appearance. Their narrations on a lesbian woman are given below:

I guess I again have a stereotypical image in my mind. For example, you know there are *dolly girly women wearing pink*. She might be that type of a woman with *a pink ribbon on her head*, a girl with *a feminine emphasis*. Then I learn that she is [a lesbian]. I expect that a lesbian woman wouldn't emphasize her *feminine sexuality*. This is the stereotype in my mind. I wouldn't expect this type of a woman to be a lesbian. (Asli)

If it is not obvious in her physical appearance, [I would be surprised] because I expect it [her sexual orientation] to be obvious in her physical appearance. I expect her to have a different dressing style and hair from other woman. In this case, if I am surprised, she must be wearing *a very feminine piece of clothing* and she should have *long hair, but not tied up*. (Duygu)

Therefore, according to these two participants, a lesbian woman is not likely to have a feminine gender performance. The same two participants stated that they would not expect a heterosexual woman to be masculine or to hide her femininity saying that:

She might be wearing *a suit and a tie*. This might be the reason [why I am surprised] because this type of clothing is preferred by people who want to *look masculine*. [...] She is wearing a suit and I think that she is a bit masculine and then, she says that she is heterosexual; I might be surprised. (Asli)

Now this woman has style which is just the opposite of the previous one. She wears clothes like the ones that we are accustomed to see on lesbian women. She has *short hair* and she

wears *sportswear*; then, I would think that I was wrong [to think that she is a lesbian]. (Duygu)

The other three participants made no reference to the physical appearance of the lesbian and a heterosexual woman; rather, they explained the reason why they would be surprised by making references to the women's acts such as flirting with women/men.

On the other hand, when they were asked what would surprise them about a gay man, only one participant made a direct reference to his physical appearance:

He might be married or he looks like a heterosexual man a lot in his physical appearance. He has a moustache; his clothes are the same as the ones of a heterosexual man. He is *like an ordinary man* on the street wearing *trousers*; he *looks like a father*. (Duygu)

However, when the participants were talking about what would surprise them about a heterosexual man, all of them made frequent references to his physical appearance. Two examples from the narrations of the participants are given below:

He *wears make-up*. He is wearing *very feminine clothes*; then, I would be surprised. [...] For example, he wears really *tights clothes*. He wears *make-up* and he has sort of *feminine behavior*. When I see him like this, I would be surprised. By *feminine movements* I mean smoking a cigarette *like a classical woman* and *the way he moves his hand and wrist*. (Burcu)

He is, for example, very much *like a gay man*. He *speaks very feminine* and his clothes etc. *look really gay*. By *gay* I mean his *clothes, behavior, facial expressions and movements*. There is something that made me think that he is homosexual or even there is something that makes me sure that he is gay. Then, if he says he is heterosexual, I might be surprised. (Esra)

Therefore, it can be said that the participants had a clear image of a gay man that a heterosexual man would not fit into. Although most of the participants had difficulty finding something that would surprise them in a gay man, all of them admitted that if a man looks feminine in his gender performance, they would not expect him to be a heterosexual man. This shows that there is a very strong link

between gender and sexuality for a gay man because, as it was stated in the previous part of this chapter, the participants expect a gay man to openly display his “gayness” through his gender performance.

#### **4.3.1. Conclusion: Dichotomization of Sexuality**

It was clear that the participants did not have a tendency to discriminate against homosexual people. However, they established a direct link between a person’s sexual orientation and his/her gender. While deciding on whether a relationship is a heterosexual or a homosexual one, the participants based their opinions on the people’s gender in that relationship, not on their sex or sex organs. For example, when they thought that a person wants to be a woman although his/her body is not a female body in all aspects, it was possible for that person to be in a homosexual relationship with a person who sees herself as a woman. However, in that case, the participants still expected to see consistency in the person’s gender performance even in sex. For example, the same person was not expected to penetrate the woman. Furthermore, although in the narrations of the participants at times there seems to be fluidity in terms of sexuality, this fluidity was reserved for people with an atypical sex. None of the participants expected a female-bodied person to perform a gender which is not consistent with her sex when she is in a relationship with a person.

In addition, it was understood that although the participants avoided making any assumptions regarding a woman’s sexual orientation through her gender performance, all the participants admitted that they would expect a feminine looking man to be gay and would expect a gay man to display his “gayness” through his gender performance.

#### **4.4. Post-Identity Politics**

Departing from the participants perceptions about the duality of sex, gender and sexuality, in this section the aim was to question the tendency of the participants to do post-identity politics. From a Butlerian perspective, there are two ways of doing post-identity politics: subversive gender politics and coalition building.

##### **4.4.1. Subversive Gender Politics**

In this part of the study, the aim is to understand whether the participants had a tendency to do subversive identity politics to destabilize gender and disturb the dichotomy. For this aim, they were given *The Ball* case where they shared their feelings and opinions about going to a ball without shaving their legs. The case of not shaving body hair was chosen for this study because body hair as a secondary sex characteristic is considered a masculine mark on a female body. Firstly, it was aimed to gather information about how the participants felt about having body hair. Secondly, whether the participants preferred to do this intentionally or not as part of gender politics and whether they believed that it would cause a positive change are questioned.

When the participants were talking about how they would feel if they forgot to shave their legs while going to a ball, almost all of them admitted that they would feel ashamed. One of the participants expresses the feeling as follows:

Ohh my god! I would feel that I am publicly disgraced because women are not admired in the society when they have body hair; people find her odd or poorly groomed. The woman might be found dirty when she has body hair; as if she does not pay attention to her hygiene and appearance. Therefore, I would feel really bad. [...] I would feel ashamed. (Aslı)

Only one participant stated that although at first she would feel ashamed, later on she would be happy not to have shaved her legs since she is a feminist:

At first I would be ashamed but then I would stay at the ball and say that I am a feminist but I am in pain to shave my legs; people should get accustomed to it! (Duygu)

Another participant admitted that she would be happy with this situation and the chance to experience the feeling of relaxation:

This situation wouldn't make me feel ashamed. Rather, I would say that how lucky I am to forget [to shave my legs]. Otherwise, it would be really difficult to do this intentionally and I would absolutely have shaved it if I remembered in order not to deal with the consequences of this situation. But I forgot! That relaxed mood would make me happy. (Esra)

As it is clear in the quotations above, for a woman having body hair is closely associated with not paying attention to physical appearance. Therefore, the participants were encouraged to share their opinions about whether this could be a way to destabilize the image of the woman in the society. Three participants stated that they would not go somewhere and wear a skirt without shaving legs as a political act because of the negative feelings it causes. One of these participants stated that although she would not grow her body hair as a political act, she admitted that she liked doing things that a woman is not expected to do:

I don't know whether it counts or not but I, for example, wear boots under a very stylish piece of clothing while going to somewhere like a ball, whereas other women wear high heels under that. To me, this is not something that a woman is not expected to do, but I know other women don't expect to see this. (Burcu)

One of the reasons why the participants were reluctant to act in such a way that women are not expected to do was the negative feelings as one participant put it:

I wouldn't do this intentionally because it disturbs me. It is not something that I'm accustomed to. I am not used to being outside with this appearance. You will go out and people will think that you're weird and they'll start to laugh at and talk about you. You wouldn't want it. But this would be a political act. I would really like to do it but I cannot. (Ceyda)

Another reason was the fact that they did not believe it would make a positive change. For instance, one participant stated that:

Since other people think that people do such things just for the sake of being strange, it doesn't make any change. (Burcu)

Therefore, it can be said that since the participants thought that subversive gender politics would not make a significant change in the society or destabilize the dualistic gender norms, they were generally reluctant to do it. Moreover, they were not willing to spend any effort to overcome their anxiety and try to subvert the dualistic gender frame because they, as one of the participants put it very clearly, saw it “sacrificing oneself.”

Interestingly, when the participants were asked to describe two people who look at them and whisper to each other, four participants mentioned two women, who look very feminine and well-groomed. All of them stated that these two women must be talking about their body hair and making fun of them. Therefore, according to the participants, it is again women who make the other woman feel bad because she is “not enough feminine.” The description of one of the participants is given below:

Both of them are women; if they look at me and laugh at me, they are looking at my legs. Men wouldn't do that because they wouldn't realize [the hair on my legs], but women pay attention to each other more; they realize everything. And men wouldn't look at me and laugh at me because women have trouble with body hair. If they look at me and laugh, they are most probably very stylish. They must be excellent, without any hair. (Burcu)

When the participants were talking about how they would feel if they saw a man wearing make-up in the same ball, three participants stated that they would not feel more comfortable just because there is a man with make-up and all of these participants mentioned that they would consider a man with make-up more beautiful than a woman with body hair and this might be the reason why the existence of this man does not relieve their anxiety. Another participant stated that she would feel relieved when she saw the man because she would think that she is “not the weirdest person at the ball.” The only participant who stated that she would be interested in that man since according to her, his coming to the ball with make-up on his face should be considered a manifesto. Moreover, she mentioned a man in İstanbul who wears a skirt and puts on make-up although he has a

mustache. Her description of the man, which reveals her attitude towards subversive gender politics, is as follows:

His walking down the street is something that will cause a lot of negative reaction: people will swear, children will look at him and could not make sense and then, ask their mom who he is and the mom says “forget about that pervert.” [His performance] might cause negative reactions like these among the people who are really indifferent to something like this. They may think that people have got really sick and they don’t know what they are doing. And people like me, who have seen and heard about these kinds of things but who are not accustomed to seeing them: when I, for example, see them, I look at them and I really examine them. This is not something reactionary but I think that I am still not used to it and nor are other people. Then, the way I look at him disturbs me because it is still like looking at a person on a wheelchair: you look at the person but you don’t want that person to realize that you look at him/her. It is at this level for people. When you see a person who dyed his/her hair, you don’t look at that person this way because many people have dyed hair. Maybe in the future there is a possibility that this might turn into something like dying hair. But it might result in negative reactions, as well. Just like shaving body hair: many people might say “offff,” and many others might say “look at her, she didn’t shave her legs.” But many others might feel themselves more comfortable when they don’t shave their legs since they have seen somebody who didn’t. But this is a very very long period. This is not something worth doing to change anything. (Esra)

As it is seen in Esra’s testimony, when people see a gender variant person they would display a very negative reaction and this negative reaction would not result in a positive change. Moreover, a change in people’s perception of a gender variant person, and accordingly, of gender duality, is thought to take a lot of time and effort. Therefore, as a feminist Esra does not think that this is a risk worth taking.

#### **4.4.2. Coalitions**

In this part of the study, the aim was to understand the participants’ tendency to build coalitions, mostly issue-based coalitions, with other people who have concerns with gender. These coalitions are not based on identification; rather, the

members of these coalitions are loosely connected to each other without an emphasis on any identity. Queer politics is frequently given as an example of coalitions in the literature. In order to understand the participants' tendency to form coalitions with other people, they were asked to imagine a political demonstration that they would attend together with other people. Then, they were given a quotation and asked to interpret it.

Firstly, they were encouraged to imagine a demonstration that they would be together with a typical woman. Most of the participants gave a feminist demonstration against discrimination, violence and rape as an example; however, when they tried to imagine a demonstration that they would be together with a typical man, they had great difficulty and none of them mentioned a political demonstration on gender issues. On the contrary, one of the participants felt the need to emphasize that this demonstration cannot be a feminist one, implying a reluctance to see men in feminist movement.

I don't think that men would take part in a political demonstration on women because I don't find them sincere. There is a problem about sincerity; I really don't find them sincere. A man protests against discrimination against women, while he is doing the same thing in his private life. This possibility always exists in my mind. Therefore, I think that I wouldn't be together with a man in such a demonstration.  
(Ceyda)

When they were asked to imagine a demonstration that they would attend together with people with atypical genders, without any difficulty, they said that it might be gay pride, a demonstration against homophobia and trans pride. It was interesting that almost none of the participants mentioned a feminist demonstration, even the ones who thought that one of these gender variant people is a woman. Moreover, since a gender variant man is considered a gay man, they did not have as much difficulty as they had when they were talking about a typical man. Therefore, it can be said that a gender variant woman is expected to *support* feminists, but politically mobilize with LGBTT people and a gender variant man is considered more politically active when compared to a typical man.

Finally, when the participants were asked to imagine a political demonstration that they would attend together with all the people in the pictures, they frequently mentioned a gender politics with a broader scope although they again had difficulty to include the typical man. One participant stated that:

It would be easier to imagine a demonstration with the man in the second picture because I cannot imagine this man as a politically active man protesting anything. If we remove the man and I force myself to find a demonstration for us, then we might be together to protest gender discrimination. [...] Let's now include the man. Let's say that he realized that he is gay and cannot live it because his friends put pressure on him or he wants to dress like the man in the fourth picture but he cannot. Then he would come and we would be together. (Burcu)

It is clear in the quotation above, if she had to form a coalition with a man, the participant thought that he must be a gay man. Two of the participants again mentioned LGBTT movement which might welcome all four people.

After this activity, the participants were given a quotation to comment on: "Liberation of homosexuals will also result in the liberation of heterosexuals." This quotation reflects the Butlerian perspective, implying that gender is everybody's concern and freedom of gender will relieve all people, not just sexual minorities. Except for one participant, who limited the message of the quotation to only homosexual people, all the other participants agreed that the sources of the problems of both heterosexual and homosexual people are the same. Two of these participants made direct references to patriarchal gender system and the other two referred to heteronormative gender system. An extract from one participant's testimony is given below:

The thing that makes homosexual people feel need to be free is in fact this: Some particular gender identities are continuously imposed on people and within the framework of those gender identities, people are expected to act in particular ways. Therefore, there is no such thing that a person's sexual orientation, whether he/she is homosexual or heterosexual, has to be the same with that person's physical appearance. But it is expected to be like that, so if homosexuals are liberated, it means that all those forms are destroyed. As a result,

heterosexual people will also be relieved because people also think that heterosexuality has only one form. (Burcu)

Another participant who emphasized the necessity to struggle against this heteronormative system together with other sexual minorities said that:

I remember something I said today about the demonstrations that I would attend and whether I would be there for myself or to support. I wanted to say something like this. This is just a part of a grand system, of a puzzle. You are not there just to support somebody; you go there for yourself as well because when you think about patriarchy, one of the assumptions in that system is heterosexuality, which is valid for everybody and accommodates homophobia and hatred for women. Supporting homosexual people in their struggle against homophobia is valuable for all people because if this system does this to homosexuals, it does something else to you as a heterosexual, maybe different versions of it, but the big boss is the same; it doesn't change. (Ceyda)

It was interesting that although the participants had a general difficulty to imagine a demonstration to attend together with all four people in the first activity, they stated positive opinions about building coalitions with other sexual minorities when they were asked to comment on the quotation. Therefore, it can be said that what made it difficult to imagine a demonstration was the existence of the typical heterosexual man. These feminist women had a tendency to struggle against heteronormative gender system, but it was hard for them to include a heterosexual man in that struggle.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

This thesis study reflects the hope of a feminist woman about a world where nobody is discriminated just because they try to become the person they want. Gender has been a revolutionary concept in both feminist theory and practice which provided feminists with an opportunity to struggle against the inequality and discrimination that women are faced with. From the time gender started to be used as a concept different from sex, it has been accepted that sex is not the destiny of women. However, feminists should be careful about how they perceive gender since there is the risk of turning gender into our destiny, which determines our lives depending on whether we are a woman or a man. Riki Wilchins (2004) points to this risk as follows:

Feminism may have torn down many gender boundaries. But by unconsciously basing itself on binary genders, it has actually solidified structures like male/female, man/woman, and masculine/feminine in new and unexpected ways. (126)

Therefore, in this thesis study a post-structuralist Butlerian perspective was adopted. From this perspective, gender affects people in such a way that our perceptions of material body are also affected by social and cultural norms. Moreover, since gender is perceived in a dualistic framework, sex and sexuality are also constructed in that dualistic framework. As for feminist politics, this might cause a problem regarding the subject of feminism: who is a woman? As a result, doing identity politics starts to limit feminist politics since all identities, including the liberatory ones such as woman and gay, are normative and regulatory, and thus exclusionary. According to Wilchins (2004):

Feminism has actually helped to obscure the notion of gender transgression and the political aspirations of those who transcend gender norms by articulating its politics as if the whole world was divided neatly, naturally, into Boys and Girls. (126)

The aim of this thesis study was to reveal what the current feminist politics in Turkey means in terms of post-identity politics. In other words, this study tried to find out whether or not today's feminist politics in Turkey bears the traces of post-identity politics. When the fact that identity politics is being widely practiced today, whereas there is still much vagueness regarding the ways of doing post-identity politics is considered, in order to achieve the aim of this study it was necessary to make a critique of identity politics and to reveal post-identitarian tendencies through this critique of identity-based political mobilization. Therefore, feminist identity politics was analyzed and criticized from a Butlerian perspective.

The data is categorized into two main parts: problematic dualities inherent in identitarian politics and ways of doing non-identitarian (or post-identity) politics. The first part includes dichotomous identity categories that are problematic as they are essentializing, hierarchical and regulatory. These categories are female/male (i.e. sex), woman/man (i.e. gender), sex/gender and homosexuality/heterosexuality (i.e. desire). The second part includes subversive gender politics and coalitional politics. Subversive gender politics is individualized political activities of daily life revealing the constructed nature of gender identity categories. Coalitional politics is, on the other hand, considered a way of doing post-identity politics because it is defined as political alliances of different groups of people without an emphasis on any identity. A Butlerian analysis of feminist identity politics under these two main headings is expected to show the relation between identity and feminist politics and to shed light on the significance of today's feminist politics for post-identity politics.

The theoretical background of this thesis study is given in Chapter Two. This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the conceptualization and

politicization of gender in feminist theory and politics. Two sections of this chapter, “A Discussion on the Gendered Subject” and “A Discussion on Political Power and Agency”, discuss the issue comparatively, by referring to both second-wave/modernist feminism and post-structuralist challenges to second-wave feminist approach. The first section gives theoretical information about how gender is conceptualized through the sex/gender distinction and theories by second-wave feminist scholars on how individuals become gendered. Moreover, this section discusses the impact of the conceptualization of gender on feminist theorizing. After that, it introduces post-structuralist challenges to this modernist view of sex, gender and desire in order to provide a conceptual basis for the discussion on gender politics.

The second section discusses how all these theoretical discussions and challenges are put into practice in the political arena by both modernist and post-structuralist feminists. The relation between the subject and politics is of crucial importance for this discussion. In modernist mode of political mobilization, in order to lay any political claims there has to be a powerful, self-conscious and rational subject with a fixed, consistent and unitary identity. Therefore, identity politics is the way modernist feminists do politics. However, post-structuralist feminists claim that identities are normative and disciplinary rather than descriptive. Finally, this section provides some suggestions regarding how politics might look like when identity is not centralized.

The methodological background of the study is given in Chapter Three. The methodological approach of this thesis study is informed by the post-structuralist theoretical framework. For this reason, the aim of the interviews aim was to provide individual narrations of the participants, which were exposed to deconstruction later on through the analysis process. For this aim, instead of asking direct and categorical questions about their ideas on specific issues to the participants, it was preferred to encourage them to talk about how they perceive and respond to the gendered world around them and how these ideas are transferred to the political arena.

The analysis of the data is presented in Chapter Four. One interesting result of the study was that although the participants did not think that social and cultural gender directly follows biological sex, they usually expected to see a consistency in a person's both sex and gender. According to the participants, a person might want to perform a gender which is not consistent with his/her sex, but this person is still expected to do the necessary modifications on his/her body to achieve a coherence between his/her sex and gender. Therefore, the participants did not see a queer performance; rather, they saw a transition period from one sex to the other and accordingly, one gender to the other. This result supports what Holly Devor (1989) says in her book *Gender Bending: Confronting the Limits of Duality*: "It is believed that there are two, and only two, genders, and that individuals can effectively change genders only by also changing their sex" (p. 46).

Moreover, the participants usually established a direct link between a person's gender and his/her sexual orientation. Although this link is relatively loose for women, they still believed that a lesbian woman would be different from a heterosexual woman in terms of her gender performance. On the other hand, the participants established a very strong link between a man's gender and his sexual orientation. They believed that if a man has a feminine appearance and personality, he is most probably gay. According to Wilchins (2004):

Each gendered identity must maintain a strict coherence among sex, gender identity, gender expression, and desire. Female is to woman as woman is to feminine as *feminine is attracted to Male*. (130)

Judith Butler (2004) also points to the same issue claiming that establishing a link between gender performance and sexual orientation obscures "queer crossings":

[I]t would be a huge mistake to assume that gender identity causes sexual orientation or that sexuality references in some necessary way a prior gender identity. [...] Even if one could accept as unproblematic what "feminine" traits are, and what "masculine" traits are, it would not follow that the "feminine" is attracted to the masculine, and the masculine to the feminine. That would only follow if we used an exclusively heterosexual

matrix to understand desire. And actually, that matrix would misinterpret some of the queer crossings in heterosexuality, when for instance a feminized heterosexual man wants a feminized woman, in order that the two might well be “girls together.” (79-80)

Moreover, the participants expressed that they expect a gay man to openly display his “gayness” through his physical appearance; therefore, when they saw a man in pants, they thought that the man would be heterosexual and when they saw a man in skirt, they thought that he must be gay. Furthermore, according to the participants, although gender is not something people “are” but something people “become,” a person with a typical body is not expected to become a gender which is not in consistency with his/her sex. This flexibility is reserved for people with atypical sexes.

It became also clear in the analysis of this study that the participants did not have a tendency to destabilize gender duality through subversive gender politics since subversive gender performances cause anxiety in them and they did not think that the result of this type of politics is worth the effort to overcome the anxiety. According to the participants, subversive gender politics might cause negative reactions from people and will most probably take a long time to bring a change, if there is any.

Furthermore, although the participants emphasized the necessity to come together with other sexual minorities and struggle against the heteronormative gender system, they frequently made a distinction between *supporting* a movement and *being* in a movement. Even though the participants admitted that they would like to be together with LGBTT people, it was understood in this study that they had a tendency to do politics through their identity as a woman. Since they do not have much tendency to tolerate gender variance and they do not perceive queer performances outside the dichotomy, they were not willing to leave behind their identity as woman, which results in identity-based coalitions, not a post-identity coalition.

Moreover, it was clear that the participants felt reluctant to do gender politics with a heterosexual man since they think that a heterosexual man would not have any problems with his gender or masculinity. However, a gay man is considered more politically active, but he is still not welcomed in feminist politics. Therefore, it was understood that a feminist is a woman; it does not matter whether she was born female or male, but she is expected to do politics through her identity as a woman. In addition, although queer politics seems to welcome all people with a concern regarding gender, it cannot be seen as a way of doing post-identity politics since people in queer politics is considered as different groups mobilized around different identities.

According to the results of the study, it is understood that the participants perceived sex, gender and sexuality in a dualistic framework to a certain extent and this relative fluidity enables them to realize the importance to do post-identity politics, but they do not have a tendency to transfer this to the political arena in the near future. Although the participants seemed to be careful with using identity categories, when politics is concerned they were reluctant to experience new ways of political mobilization and preferred more traditional strategies that they were accustomed to.

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## APPENDIX

### Glossary<sup>17</sup>

**Bisexuality:** Also bi. A person who is attracted to two sexes or two genders, but not necessarily simultaneously or equally. This used to be defined as a person who is attracted to both genders or both sexes, but since there are not only two sexes (see intersex and transsexual) and there are not only two genders (see transgender), this definition is inaccurate.

**Drag:** The act of dressing in gendered clothing as part of a performance. Drag Queens perform in highly feminine attire. Drag Kings perform in highly masculine attire. Drag may be performed as a political comment on gender, as parody, or simply as entertainment. Drag performance does not indicate sexuality, gender identity, or sex identity.

**Gay:** Men attracted to men. Colloquially used as an umbrella term to include all LGBTTI people.

### **Gender:**

- A socially constructed system of classification that ascribes qualities of masculinity and femininity to people. Gender characteristics can change over time and are different between cultures. Words that refer to gender include: man, woman, transgender, masculine, feminine, and gender queer.
- One's sense of self as masculine or feminine regardless of external genitalia. Gender is often conflated with sex. This is inaccurate because sex refers to bodies and gender refers to personality characteristics.

**Gender conformity:** When your gender identity and sex “match” (i.e. fit social norms). For example, a male who is masculine and identifies as a man.

**Gender identity:** The gender that a person sees themselves as. This can include refusing to label oneself with a gender. Gender identity is also often conflated

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<sup>17</sup> [http://geneq.berkeley.edu/lgbt\\_resources\\_definiton\\_of\\_terms](http://geneq.berkeley.edu/lgbt_resources_definiton_of_terms)

with sexual orientation, but this is inaccurate. Gender identity does not cause sexual orientation. For example, a masculine woman is not necessarily a lesbian.

**Gender non-conforming / variant:** Displaying gender traits that are not normatively associated with their biological sex. “Feminine” behavior or appearance in a male is gender-variant as is “masculine” behavior or appearance a female. Gender-variant behavior is culturally specific.

**Gender role:** How “masculine” or “feminine” an individual acts. Societies commonly have norms regarding how males and females should behave, expecting people to have personality characteristics and/or act a certain way based on their biological sex.

**Heterosexuality:** Sexual, emotional, and/or romantic attraction to a sex other than your own. Commonly thought of as “attraction to the opposite sex” but since there are not only two sexes (see intersex and transsexual), this definition is inaccurate.

**Heterosexism:** Assuming every person to be heterosexual therefore marginalizing persons who do not identify as heterosexual. It is also believing heterosexuality to be superior to homosexuality and all other sexual orientations.

**Homophobia:** The irrational fear and intolerance of people who are homosexual or of homosexual feelings within one's self. This assumes that heterosexuality is superior.

**Homosexuality:** Sexual, emotional, and/or romantic attraction to the same sex.

**Intersex:** Intersexuality is a set of medical conditions that feature congenital anomaly of the reproductive and sexual system. That is, intersex people are born with "sex chromosomes," external genitalia, or internal reproductive systems that are not considered "standard" for either male or female. The existence of intersexuals shows that there are not just two sexes and that our ways of thinking about sex (trying to force everyone to fit into either the male box or the female box) is socially constructed.

**Lesbian:** A woman attracted to a woman.

**LGBTTI:** Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transvestite, Intersex.

**Queer:**

- An umbrella term to refer to all LGBTIQ people
- A political statement, as well as a sexual orientation, which advocates breaking binary thinking and seeing both sexual orientation and gender identity as potentially fluid.
- A simple label to explain a complex set of sexual behaviors and desires. For example, a person who is attracted to multiple genders may identify as queer.
- Many older LGBT people feel the word has been hatefully used against them for too long and are reluctant to embrace it.

**Sex identity:** The sex that a person sees themselves as. This can include refusing to label oneself with a sex.

**Sexual minority:**

- Refers to members of sexual orientations or who engage in sexual activities that are not part of the mainstream.
- Refers to members of sex groups that do not fall into the majority categories of male or female, such as intersexuals and transsexuals.

**Sex:** Refers to a person based on their anatomy (external genitalia, chromosomes, and internal reproductive system). Sex terms are male, female, transsexual, and intersex. Sex is biological, although social views and experiences of sex are cultural.

**Sexual Orientation:** The deep-seated direction of one's sexual (erotic) attraction. It is on a continuum and not a set of absolute categories. Sometimes referred to as affection, orientation or sexuality. Sexual orientation evolves through a multistage developmental process, and may change over time.

**Stereotype:** An exaggerated oversimplified belief about an entire group of people without regard for individual differences.

**Straight:** Person who is attracted to a gender other than their own. Commonly thought of as “attraction to the opposite gender,” but since there are not only two genders (see transgender), this definition is inaccurate.

**Transgender:**

- Transgender (sometimes shortened to trans or TG) people are those whose psychological self ("gender identity") differs from the social expectations for the physical sex they were born with. To understand this, one must understand the difference between biological sex, which is one's body (genitals, chromosomes, ect.), and social gender, which refers to levels of masculinity and femininity. Often, society conflates sex and gender, viewing them as the same thing. But, gender and sex are not the same thing. Transgender people are those whose psychological self ("gender identity") differs from the social expectations for the physical sex they were born with. For example, a female with a masculine gender identity or who identifies as a man.
- An umbrella term for transsexuals, cross-dressers (transvestites), transgenderists, gender queers, and people who identify as neither female nor male and/or as neither a man or as a woman. Transgender is not a sexual orientation; transgender people may have any sexual orientation. It is important to acknowledge that while some people may fit under this definition of transgender, they may not identify as such.

**Transition:** A complicated, multi-step process that can take years as transsexuals align their anatomy with their sex identity; this process may ultimately include sex reassignment surgery (SRS).

**Transsexual:** Transsexual refers to a person who experiences a mismatch of the sex they were born as and the sex they identify as. A transsexual sometimes undergoes medical treatment to change his/her physical sex to match his/her sex

identity through hormone treatments and/or surgically. Not all transsexuals can have or desire surgery.

**Transvestite:** Individuals who regularly or occasionally wear the clothing socially assigned to a gender not their own, but are usually comfortable with their anatomy and do not wish to change it (i.e. they are not transsexuals). Cross-dresser is the preferred term for men who enjoy or prefer women's clothing and social roles. Contrary to popular belief, the overwhelming majority of male cross-dressers identify as straight and often are married. Very few women call themselves cross-dressers.

## Toplumsal Cinsiyet Görselleri



## **Toplumsal cinsiyet**

1. Bunlardan hangisi en yakın arkadaşınız olabilirdi? Neden?
2. Bunlardan hangisi kesinlikle arkadaşınız olamazdı? Neden?
3. Bunların hepsi doktor ve birisi sizin ameliyatınıza girecek hangisi olsun?  
Neden?
4. 1. Resimdeki kişinin günlük hayatını tarif eder misiniz?  
2. Resimdeki kişinin günlük hayatını tarif eder misiniz?  
3. Resimdeki kişinin günlük hayatını tarif eder misiniz?  
4. Resimdeki kişinin günlük hayatını tarif eder misiniz?
5. 1. Resimdeki kişinin kaygıları neler olabilir?  
2. Resimdeki kişinin kaygıları neler olabilir?  
3. Resimdeki kişinin kaygıları neler olabilir?  
4. Resimdeki kişinin kaygıları neler olabilir?
6. 1. Resimdeki kişi ayrımcılığa uğramış neden?  
2. Resimdeki kişi ayrımcılığa uğramış neden?  
3. Resimdeki kişi ayrımcılığa uğramış neden?  
4. Resimdeki kişi ayrımcılığa uğramış neden?

7. 1. Resimdeki kişiyi bir eylemde görüyorsunuz neyi protesto ediyor?

2. Resimdeki kişiyi bir eylemde görüyorsunuz neyi protesto ediyor?

3. Resimdeki kişiyi bir eylemde görüyorsunuz neyi protesto ediyor?

4. Resimdeki kişiyi bir eylemde görüyorsunuz neyi protesto ediyor?

8. Siz 1. Resimdeki kişi ile bir eylemde yan yana omuz omuza yürüyorsunuz neyi protesto ediyorsunuz?

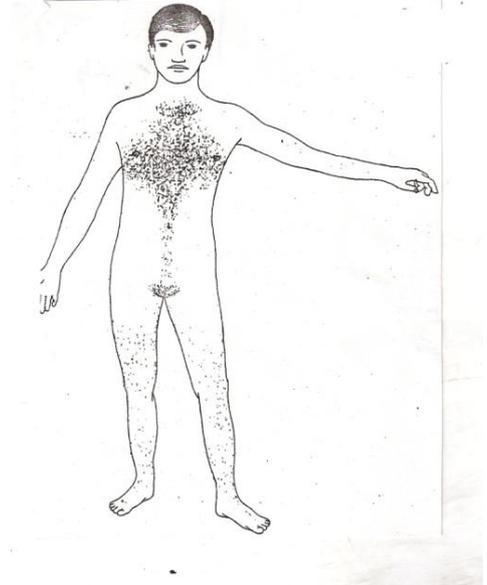
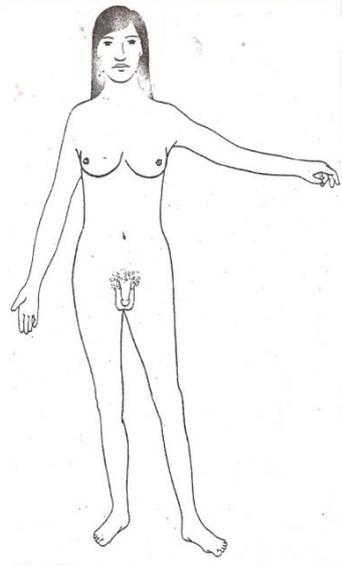
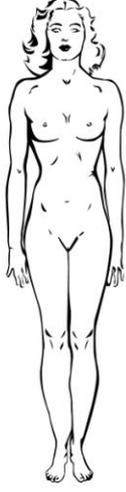
Siz 2. Resimdeki kişi ile bir eylemde yan yana omuz omuza yürüyorsunuz neyi protesto ediyorsunuz?

Siz 3. Resimdeki kişi ile bir eylemde yan yana omuz omuza yürüyorsunuz neyi protesto ediyorsunuz?

Siz 4. Resimdeki kişi ile bir eylemde yan yana omuz omuza yürüyorsunuz neyi protesto ediyorsunuz?

9. Hepsi ile birlikte bir eylemde yan yana omuz omuza yürüyorsunuz bu neyleyi olabilir?

## Biyolojik Cinsiyet Grselleri



## **Biyolojik Cinsiyet**

1. 1. Resimdeki kişinin biyolojik cinsiyeti nedir? Neden?
  2. Resimdeki kişinin biyolojik cinsiyeti nedir? Neden?
  3. Resimdeki kişinin biyolojik cinsiyeti nedir? Neden?
  4. Resimdeki kişinin biyolojik cinsiyeti nedir? Neden?
  
2. 1. Kişinin evine ziyarete gittiniz ve gardırobunu açtınız? Bize bu kişinin gardırobunda neler gördüğünüzü anlatır mısınız? Gardırobunda ne görseniz yadırgarsınız? Neden?
  2. Kişinin evine ziyarete gittiniz ve gardırobunu açtınız? Bize bu kişinin gardırobunda neler gördüğünüzü anlatır mısınız? Gardırobunda ne görseniz yadırgarsınız? Neden?
  3. Kişinin evine ziyarete gittiniz ve gardırobunu açtınız? Bize bu kişinin gardırobunda neler gördüğünüzü anlatır mısınız? Gardırobunda ne görseniz yadırgarsınız? Neden?
  4. Kişinin evine ziyarete gittiniz ve gardırobunu açtınız? Bize bu kişinin gardırobunda neler gördüğünüzü anlatır mısınız? Gardırobunda ne görseniz yadırgarsınız? Neden?
  
3. 1. Kişi sizin çok sevdiğiniz bir arkadaşınız, doğum gününde ona özel bir hediye almak istiyorsunuz. Ne alırsınız? Neden?
  2. Kişi sizin çok sevdiğiniz bir arkadaşınız, doğum gününde ona özel bir hediye almak istiyorsunuz. Ne alırsınız? Neden?
  3. Kişi sizin çok sevdiğiniz bir arkadaşınız, doğum gününde ona özel bir hediye almak istiyorsunuz. Ne alırsınız? Neden?
  4. Kişi sizin çok sevdiğiniz bir arkadaşınız, doğum gününde ona özel bir hediye almak istiyorsunuz. Ne alırsınız? Neden?

4. 1. Kişi ile 2. Kişi sizin karşı apartmandaki komşunuz ve sevgililer. Bu ilişkiyi nasıl adlandırırınız? İlişkilerini tarif eder misiniz?

Ay tutulmasını izlemek için pencerenin önüne teleskop kurdunuz. Ayarlamayı yaparken tesadüfen bu iki insanın seviştiğini gördünüz? Cinselliklerini nasıl adlandırırınız? Cinselliklerini tarif eder misiniz?

1. Kişi ile 3. Kişi sizin karşı apartmandaki komşunuz ve sevgililer. Bu ilişkiyi nasıl adlandırırınız? İlişkilerini tarif eder misiniz?

Ay tutulmasını izlemek için pencerenin önüne teleskop kurdunuz. Ayarlamayı yaparken tesadüfen bu iki insanın seviştiğini gördünüz? Cinselliklerini nasıl adlandırırınız? Cinselliklerini tarif eder misiniz?

1. Kişi ile 4. Kişi sizin karşı apartmandaki komşunuz ve sevgililer. Bu ilişkiyi nasıl adlandırırınız? İlişkilerini tarif eder misiniz?

Ay tutulmasını izlemek için pencerenin önüne teleskop kurdunuz. Ayarlamayı yaparken tesadüfen bu iki insanın seviştiğini gördünüz? Cinselliklerini nasıl adlandırırınız? Cinselliklerini tarif eder misiniz?

2. Kişi ile 3. Kişi sizin karşı apartmandaki komşunuz ve sevgililer. Bu ilişkiyi nasıl adlandırırınız? İlişkilerini tarif eder misiniz?

Ay tutulmasını izlemek için pencerenin önüne teleskop kurdunuz. Ayarlamayı yaparken tesadüfen bu iki insanın seviştiğini gördünüz? Cinselliklerini nasıl adlandırırınız? Cinselliklerini tarif eder misiniz?

2. Kişi ile 4. Kişi sizin karşı apartmandaki komşunuz ve sevgililer. Bu ilişkiyi nasıl adlandırırınız? İlişkilerini tarif eder misiniz?

Ay tutulmasını izlemek için pencerenin önüne teleskop kurdunuz. Ayarlamayı yaparken tesadüfen bu iki insanın seviştiğini gördünüz? Cinselliklerini nasıl adlandırırınız? Cinselliklerini tarif eder misiniz?

3. Kişi ile 4. Kişi sizin karşı apartmandaki komşunuz ve sevgililer. Bu ilişkiyi nasıl adlandırırınız? İlişkilerini tarif eder misiniz?

Ay tutulmasını izlemek için pencerenin önüne teleskop kurdunuz. Ayarlamayı yaparken tesadüfen bu iki insanın seviştiğini gördünüz? Cinselliklerini nasıl adlandırırınız? Cinselliklerini tarif eder misiniz?

## **Eşcinsel – Heteroseksüel**

1. Kadınlardan oluşan bir gruba yönelik bir tur düzenlemektesiniz. 5 tane çift kişilik odası olan bir butik otelde konaklanacak. Bu nedenle grubunuz 10 kişiyle sınırlı. 9 kadın kayıt yaptırdı. Kalan tek kişilik kontenjan için biri gay olduğunu söyleyen 2 ayrı kadın başvurdu. Hangisini alırsınız? Neden?

Gay olan fazla para ödemeyi teklif etti, neden? Diğeri fazla para ödemeyi teklif etti, neden?

Nihayetinde patronunuz gruba gay olan kişiyi almanızı istedi? Neden olabilir?

Gay olan kadının gruptan başka bir kadınla flört ettiğini gördünüz. Ne hissedersiniz? Bu kişinin aynı gün bir başka kadınla daha flört ettiğini gördünüz. Ne düşünüyorsunuz?

Tur esnasında gay olan kişinin gruptan iki kadınla tartıştığını gördünüz? Sebebi ne olabilir?

2. Erkeklerden oluşan bir gruba yönelik bir tur düzenlemektesiniz. 5 tane çift kişilik odası olan bir butik otelde konaklanacak. Bu nedenle grubunuz 10 kişiyle sınırlı. 9 kadın kayıt yaptırdı. Kalan tek kişilik kontenjan için biri gay olduğunu söyleyen 2 ayrı erkek başvurdu. Hangisini alırsınız? Neden?

Gay olan fazla para ödemeyi teklif etti, neden? Diğeri fazla para ödemeyi teklif etti, neden?

Nihayetinde patronunuz gruba gay olan kişiyi almanızı istedi? Neden olabilir?

Tur esnasında gay olan kişinin gruptan iki erkekle tartıştığını gördünüz? Sebebi ne olabilir?

Gay olan erkeğin gruptan başka bir erkekle flört ettiğini gördünüz. Ne hissedersiniz? Bu kişinin aynı gün bir başka erkekle daha flört ettiğini gördünüz. Ne düşünürsünüz?

Tur esnasında gay olan kişinin gruptan iki erkekle tartıştığını gördünüz? Sebebi ne olabilir?

3. Arkadaşlarınızla buluşmak için bir kafeye gittiniz. Orada bir arkadaşınız sizi bir kadınla tanıştırdı. Bu yeni tanıştığınız kadın bir süre sonra size eşcinsel olduğunu söyledi ve siz şok oldunuz? Neden?

Bu kişiyi bir süre sonra bir erkekle beraber olduğunu gördünüz. Ne düşünürsünüz?

Arkadaşlarınızla buluşmak için bir kafeye gittiniz. Orada bir arkadaşınız sizi bir kadınla tanıştırdı. Bu yeni tanıştığınız kadın bir süre sonra size heteroseksüel olduğunu söyledi ve siz şok oldunuz? Neden?

Bu kişiyi bir süre sonra bir kadınla beraber olduğunu gördünüz. Ne düşünürsünüz?

4. Arkadaşlarınızla buluşmak için bir kafeye gittiniz. Orada bir arkadaşınız sizi bir erkekle tanıştırdı. Bu yeni tanıştığınız erkek bir süre sonra size eşcinsel olduğunu söyledi ve siz şok oldunuz? Neden?

Bu kişiyi bir süre sonra bir kadınla beraber olduğunu gördünüz. Ne düşünürsünüz?

Arkadaşlarınızla buluşmak için bir kafeye gittiniz. Orada bir arkadaşınız sizi bir erkekle tanıştırdı. Bu yeni tanıştığınız erkek bir süre sonra size eşcinsel olduğunu söyledi ve siz şok oldunuz? Neden?

Bu kişiyi bir süre sonra bir kadınla beraber olduğunu gördünüz. Ne düşünürsünüz?

## **Bireysel Yıkıcı Toplumsal Cinsiyet Politikası**

1. Bir baloya gidiyorsunuz. Çok sevdiğiniz bir eteğini girdiniz. İçeri girdiniz her şey çok güzel, herkes çok şık. Siz de kendinizi çok mutlu hissediyorsunuz. Birden fark ettiniz ki bacaklarındaki kılları almamışsınız. Nasıl hissedersiniz?
2. İki kişinin arada size baka baka ve gülüşerek konuştuğunu fark ettiniz. Bu iki kişiyi telefonla baloda olmayan bir arkadaşınıza tarif eder misiniz?
3. Bu iki kişi sizin hakkınızda ne konuşuyor olabilir?
4. Aynı baloda bir erkeğin dudaklarının boyalı olduğunu görüyorsunuz. Nasıl hissedersiniz? Böyle bir erkek görmek sizi rahatlatır mı?
5. Böyle bir şeyi bilinçli olarak yapar mısınız? Bunun bir değişiklik yaratacağını düşünür müsünüz?

## **Alıntı**

“Eşcinsellerin kurtuluşu heteroseksüelleri de özgürleştirecektir” sözü ile anlatılmak istenen ne olabilir? Siz bu konuda ne düşünüyorsunuz?